

INTERCULTURALISM AND THE POLITICS OF DIALOGUE

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PREFACE

Interculturalism and the Politics of Dialogue has had several starting points, and perhaps goes off in too many different, if ultimately related, directions. Nonetheless, there are three principal, interconnected themes which may be summarised as ‘intercultural knowledge’, ‘intercultural dialogues’, and ‘intercultural negotiations’. Of these ‘dialogue’ is probably the most important.

In the last fifteen years, interculturalism has received a great deal of attention from academics and policy makers in Europe and North America, notably in respect of contemporary debates about multiculturalism. Among other things, 2008 was declared the ‘Year of Intercultural Dialogue’ by the European Union (EU), and in the same year the Bouchard-Taylor Report (*Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation*) was a powerful advocate for a policy of interculturalism in Québec. Interculturalism and intercultural dialogue are, however, concepts that require a great deal of deconstruction, as various chapters will demonstrate. Moreover, despite the high hopes and expectations that its advocates have for it, interculturalism, or more specifically intercultural dialogue, is no ‘magic bullet’, nor is it an easy option, procedurally or politically. Indeed, some would go so far as to claim that the whole enterprise is impossible since one can never know the other. I certainly reject that viewpoint, and if I say that dialogue is difficult (even perhaps sometimes impossible) it is because my primary concern is with dialogue as a social or specifically as a *political* phenomenon in which power relations are fully engaged. I should also add that although the politics of dialogue rather than its cognitive, communicative or linguistic aspects, constitute my principal interest, I accept the fundamental importance of the latter and their implications for social and political action and dialogic practice (and perhaps vice versa), and will seek to take them into account.

I should also make it clear that my particular interest is in dialogues in multi-cultural, multilingual, multi-ethnic societies when they are concerned with addressing cultural and religious difference; i.e. where they are dialogues *about* cultural beliefs and practices. As Chapter 1 explains, relations between peoples thought by themselves or others to have distinct identities and ways of life (languages, cultures, religions), while co-habiting – or contesting - the same political and social space, have pre-occupied me throughout much of my academic career as an anthropologist, from my first fieldwork in 1960s East Africa onwards. All too often such differences seem to have resulted in conflict, variously described as ‘ethnic’ or ‘national’ or ‘racial’ or ‘religious’, in which one party seeks to impose its will on another, or perhaps deny its rights, or reject its claims. While this is by no means universal or inevitable, our current era seems to be characterised by multiple and reinforcing conflicts of that kind, simultaneously affecting many societies in a globalised world. Elsewhere (Grillo 2015b) I have described this as a ‘crisis of difference’, which interacts with (and to an extent stems from) a multiplicity of other crises (economic, political, social, environmental, medical) which we are presently experiencing.

To recognise the contemporary salience of cultural and religious diversity as a site of contestation is, of course, in no way to deny the significance of socio-economic factors, nor is it to forget that cultural/religious conflict may intersect with, or be mapped on, global and local inequalities. Nor is it, I hope, to succumb to the simplistic idea that our era is characterised by what more than 20 years ago the American political scientist, Samuel Huntington, called - wrongly and unhelpfully - a ‘Clash of Civilizations’. Huntington, of course, was principally concerned with what he saw as the growing conflict, post-Cold War, between the West and the Rest, represented by Islam. Certainly for some people, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, there are differences which they would claim to be perpetually and irresolvably opposed. While I do not believe that the contemporary crisis of difference is indeed a clash of civilisations of that kind (even if there are some family resemblances between the two), I nonetheless fear that recent and current events are actually creating the conditions for such a clash (at both macro and micro levels) in which the voices of those who refuse that interpretation are increasingly muted. My response has to be that this is precisely where dialogue – in this case intercultural dialogue – is desperately needed, and that in turn engages intercultural knowledge and negotiation.

One further caveat. Although, perhaps inevitably given the state of the world (and my own recent research experience), Islam and the necessity for dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims will figure prominently in this book, it is not just about that relationship, nor is the book entirely confined to the current era. Undoubtedly, in the contemporary world, it is difficult to ignore Islam: across Europe and North America, and indeed elsewhere, the intruding 'Other' is often conceived as Muslim, or at any rate what it is thought that 'the Muslim' represents. Nevertheless, the case studies on which I draw range quite widely (albeit highly selectively), ethnographically and historically. While some may think that this results in an arbitrarily selected hodgepodge of unconnected events and instances, I hope they will be treated as heuristic devices through which to reflect on the nature of intercultural dialogue in different contexts and in different epochs, and the difficulties those engaging in it have encountered.

Finally, I must crave the indulgence of readers who are anthropologists. While the book has been written from within an anthropological perspective, it does not consciously address an anthropological audience, and glosses over issues that that audience might think critical. To reiterate, by intercultural dialoguing I do not mean simply people from different cultures, societies and/or language groups talking to each other (in whatever language, and with or without the aid of interpreters), interesting though that is, and whatever other relevance it has to the topic. I am principally concerned with people talking to each other *about* each other's culture and society, where the objective is not only to gain knowledge of the Other, but usually to do something about the relationship in which they are engaged. Almost by definition, the work of anthropologists' might be said to fall within the scope of such a project, and indeed postmodern anthropology has much to say about this; in fact, sometimes it talks about little else. But if the study of intercultural dialoguing were to be construed as an account of the dialogues in which anthropologists engage, I would have little to add to what has been said at great length elsewhere by many others. My concern is, rather, with the everyday (and not so every day) dialoguing which occurs (or does not occur) within the context of human (intercultural) interaction in multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-faith societies.

In many previous publications, I have had the pleasure and duty of thanking innumerable colleagues and friends – including many students, people I have met through fieldwork, and not least members of my own family - who have directly and indirectly shaped my thoughts about the issues in which we have a common interest. They are far too numerous to mention individually by name, so I hope they will collectively accept instead my heartfelt gratitude. My work would have been a lot worse without their participation.

Several sections of this book were previously uploaded in draft form to Academia.edu and Researchgate.net. The present text is an expanded and updated, but by no means a final and definitive version. Consequently, I welcome thoughts, comments, corrections of fact, and, although the book is already far too long (and long-winded), suggestions for further reading and additional references which ought to be consulted.

Please note that all URLs cited in the footnotes were 'live' in December 2017, unless otherwise specified.

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PART I. BUT WHAT *IS* INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE? THEORY (AND SOME PRACTICE)

CHAPTER 1. 'INTERCULTURALISM AND THE POLITICS OF DIALOGUE': A BRIEF OVERVIEW

'There has, perhaps, been no time in modern history when so large a number of human beings, in both the East and the West, have had their notions, and indeed their lives, so deeply altered, and in some cases violently upset, by fanatically held social and political doctrines' (Isaiah Berlin 2002: 167, originally written in 1958).

Interculturalism: Dialogue, Knowledge, Negotiation

The concept of interculturalism, though not always expressed through that word, has at least a century-long history; one landmark was perhaps the American philosopher, John Dewey's, book *Democracy and Education*, published in 1916 (see Chapter 2). Nonetheless, it only attracted the serious attention of academics and policy makers in Europe and North America less than two decades ago; there was an excellent early survey published by Wolfgang Welsch in 1999. There are numerous reasons for this, which are discussed below and in detail in later chapters. Among the most significant have been the difficulties encountered by governments in coming to terms with 'difference' in a globalised, transnational, 'superdiverse' world where they are faced with mobile populations seeking work or refuge in the richer, safer countries of the North, and who have arrived bearing 'Other' cultures with values seemingly at odds with those of the receiving societies. For various reasons existing policies of multiculturalism, where they were operative, have seemed an increasingly inadequate basis for the governance of such diversity. Indeed, multiculturalism has frequently been deemed to exacerbate the problems of governance by encouraging separatism and hindering the 'integration' of those incomers.

Part of the difficulty stems from the claims made by some (if by no means all) of those incomers, both recent arrivals and those of migrant background now perhaps long-settled in the receiving countries, for the recognition and accommodation of beliefs and practices (such as those concerning relations across gender and generation) which are alleged to go against the grain of values cherished, in theory, by majority populations. This so-called 'accommodation crisis', as it was called in Canada, was addressed in the Bouchard-Taylor report of 2008 which advocated a policy - 'interculturalism' - as a way of resolving that crisis, a policy thought preferable to the multiculturalism with which Canada had long been associated. At the same time, policy makers and academics in Europe were alarmed, among much else, by the separatism that multiculturalism seemed to encourage, and by the hostility it was thought to generate, evidenced by the rise of centre- and far-right, xenophobic, populist political parties and movements. In response, the European Union (hereafter EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE), a separate and much broader consortium of European states, embarked on a series of initiatives to encourage an alternative approach, also called interculturalism, which was similar to, though not the same as, that advocated in Canada. Thus, 2008 (when by coincidence the Bouchard-Taylor report was published) was declared the 'European Year of Intercultural Dialogue'.

A third, or rather fourth party to this debate has been UNESCO. Although there had been a long-standing interest in dialogue on the part of the United Nations, roughly since its foundation, after 2000, the UN, through UNESCO, formulated a series of conventions and guidelines, including the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (2005), *Guidelines on Intercultural Education* (2006), the *UNESCO World Report Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue* (2009a, 2009b.) The 2005 *Convention*, for example, included as its 'Objectives and guiding principles' (p. 3),

- '(a) to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions;
- (b) to create the conditions for cultures to flourish and to freely interact in a mutually beneficial manner;

- (c) to encourage dialogue among cultures with a view to ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world in favour of intercultural respect and a culture of peace; (
- d) to foster interculturality in order to develop cultural interaction in the spirit of building bridges among peoples;
- (e) to promote respect for the diversity of cultural expressions and raise awareness of its value at the local, national and international levels.’

Specifically regarding dialogue, the 2009 UNESCO World Report recorded its dissatisfaction with what it called the ‘lost decades’ when ‘dialogue’ was interpreted in a limited way which ‘remained within the logic of [Samuel] Huntington’s “clash” scenario even while contradicting his conclusions’ (2009a: 44). This represented a ‘passive view of culture’, with ‘roots in 19th century traditions of nation-building’ which ‘reduces the creative dimension of culture to a collective instrument for national cohesion and identity’. ‘Traditional modalities of dialogue between cultures’, it continued, ‘have largely failed because of their almost exclusive focus on what cultures and religions have in common. The present crisis calls for dialogue on differences and diversity.’ ‘dialogue events’, it continued have often

‘stressed collective identities (national, ethnic, religious) rather than identities of individuals or social groups. Dialogue fora composed of “representatives” of religious or ethnic groups are counter-productive and contribute to the clash of civilizations scenario rather than preventing it. Dialogue between cultures must create space for mutual perception and appreciation of overlapping, multiple and dynamic cultural identities of every individual and social or cultural group’.

There is a need, said the Executive Summary,

‘to explore the new approach opened up by recognition of the multiple – multidimensional – identities of individuals and groups in order to further the development of cultural pluralism. Increasingly, individuals decline to be limited to fixed categories (whether ethnic, linguistic, cultural, political or otherwise). This is an opportunity to be turned to account. The growing number of potential points of encounter between individuals can reduce the obstacles to intercultural dialogue, and the plasticity of identities can create a dynamic of change conducive to innovations of all kinds and at every level. Such an approach makes it possible to transcend the limits of the multiculturalist policies initiated in the 1970s’ (2009b: 33).

This, then, is the immediate background to this study, and in subsequent chapters these developments are discussed in depth. The book is in three parts (or ‘Acts’, if you will). My old undergraduate tutor in anthropology, Edmund Leach, always said that one should never embark on an empirical study without a theoretical question in mind, and never engage in a theoretical enquiry absent from empirical evidence, from an account of what actually happens, on the ground. Part I (Chapters 1-7), therefore, is mainly, but not exclusively, theoretical, discussing the meaning of interculturalism, and especially intercultural dialogue, through the eyes of the academics and policy makers, principally in Europe and North America, who have debated their significance for contemporary social relations. What that discussion shows is that there is often considerable confusion about the meaning and significance of what is ‘imagined’ as interculturalism and how it contrasts with what is often an equally ‘imagined’ multiculturalism. In the end, I find myself in agreement with those who conclude that interculturalists and multiculturalists are both seeking equitable ways of governing diversity, in globalised, transnational, ‘superdiverse’ societies, but with different, albeit complementary objectives. As Christian Stokke and Lena Lybæk put it ‘interculturalism needs to be complemented by a critical multiculturalist perspective’. ‘Specifically’, they add, one should ‘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’ (Stokke and Lybæk 2016: 2).

‘What actually happens, on the ground’, is the focus of Parts II and III. Part II (an ‘Intermission’) is concerned with Europe and its institutions and has two case studies on interculturalism in both theory and practice. Chapter 8 deals principally with the EU’s so-called ‘Year of Intercultural Dialogue’ which took place in 2008. The CoE had a hand in developing that initiative, but was also heavily involved in another project, the Intercultural Cities Programme, and this is the subject of Chapter 9, which assess what interculturalism and intercultural dialogue mean for the urban centres associated with it. Part III, Chapters 10-16, then has a series of other shorter or longer case studies, investigated from both practical and theoretical perspectives, which explore what interculturalism, and again principally intercultural dialogue, has meant in different contexts and at different times. Chapter 17 sums things up.

The idea of *dialogue* can be said to be at the heart of interculturalism, and in that connection, I must reiterate what I have said in the Preface; by dialogue I do not mean simply people from different cultures, communities and/or language groups just talking to each other (in whatever language, and with or without the aid of interpreters), interesting though that is, and whatever other relevance it has to the topic. My principal concern is with people who, for whatever reason, are talking to each other etc *about* each other’s culture and society. Furthermore, my primary interest is in dialogue as a social, and specifically a *political* phenomenon, rather than a cognitive or communicative or linguistic one. That said, the fundamental importance of linguistic and related aspects of dialogue, and their implications for social and political action, must be recognised and taken into account. Intercultural dialogue entails multiple acts of translation (in the narrow sense) interpretation and understanding, attempts to map the other’s values and practices and extract meaning from them.

Finally, I should add that when writing about dialogue I do not (only) refer to face-to-face, sit-down conversations, but to discussions, debates, arguments conducted indirectly and at a distance, for example through the media, or at different sites where speakers and writers might be addressing absent and perhaps anonymous or at least unnamed interlocutors. Exchanges about cultural beliefs and practices associated with Islam, for example, take place locally, nationally and globally, and in our contemporary societies participants in such debates may be responding to each other directly or indirectly, orally or in writing, although never co-present in the same space.¹

By the ‘culture’ in inter-cultural dialogue I refer, as anthropologists do, to the beliefs, practices (including linguistic practices), and mind-sets associated with a certain of category or collectivity of persons, or claimed by and for members of such a collectivity. While this is similar to what interculturalists generally mean when they talk about culture, it is notable that in certain circles, mainly in the EU and the CoE, the term ‘culture’ (and hence ‘intercultural’) sometimes has a narrower connotation, referring to the product of artistic and creative endeavour, ‘Culture’ with a capital ‘C’, as I will call it, which anthropologists among others would see as part of culture in the broader sense. Nonetheless, intercultural dialogue of both kinds inevitably brings into question the extent of each party’s knowledge of the other’s culture (or Culture), their intercultural *knowledge*, what people think they know about another’s culture and way of life, how they conceive of it, their understanding of it, and what meaning they give to it. Besides this, and alongside *inter*-cultural dialogues in these senses, there are also in many cases ongoing internal, *intra*-cultural dialogues where members of a collectivity debate their own cultural practices, and such dialogues may interact in complex ways with any external, *inter*-cultural dialogues.

Finally, both inter- and intra-cultural dialogues may entail attempts to come to terms with differences, and thus involve *negotiations*, inter- and intra-cultural negotiations, which again may interact with one another. In such negotiations the objective might be (at least for some, if not all the parties so engaged) to recognise and accommodate difference, or perhaps arrive at a *modus vivendi*. In other instances, perhaps often, the idea that dialogue involves negotiation will be a sham; the real

¹ For other ways of extending the notion of dialogue see Bakhtin 1981 (and e.g. Shires 2016).

objective is to use the device as a way for one party to impose its will on the other, seemingly through persuasion, but with no real intention of giving ground or accommodating.

‘Intercultural dialogue’, ‘intercultural knowledge’, and ‘intercultural negotiation’ are thus the three principal organising themes running through the book, and of these ‘dialogue’ is the most important. What the book documents, in both the theoretical discussion and the case studies, are the very real difficulties that meaningful intercultural dialogue encounters, and the great, and sometimes naïve, expectations of what intercultural dialogue might accomplish held by many interculturalists.

Why Interculturalism? Why Now?

The French anthropologist, Jean-Loup Amselle, has rightly advised against ‘overlooking the conditions of production of a culture’ (1998: 33). So, why has interculturalism and intercultural dialogue become ‘good to think’ (as another French anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss, 1966, put it in a different context) in late 20th century/early 21st century Europe and North America? What accounts for this ‘intercultural turn’, as Ricard Zapata-Barrero (2017) calls it?

As mentioned above, on both sides of the Atlantic, contemporary interculturalism has been promoted as a solution to the problems associated with what is believed to be a failed multiculturalism. That is, interculturalism has been represented as an alternative to a policy which has been charged, among much else, with failing to address the consequences of an unbridled recognition and acceptance of ‘Other’ cultures and their practices thought to be at odds with the values espoused by Western liberal democracies. ‘Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism’, said the then British Prime Minister, David Cameron, in a speech to a security conference in Munich in 2011:

‘we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We’ve failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We’ve even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values’ (Cameron 2011).

Those values include ‘freedom of speech, freedom of worship, democracy, the rule of law, equal rights regardless of race, sex or sexuality’ (*ibid.*), values which many opponents would see ‘Other’ cultures and religions (notably Islam) fundamentally lacking, even rejecting. Whether David Cameron’s strictures on multiculturalism, and by implication Islam, along with those of the academics and policy makers who have written in a similar vein are in fact justified, is explored in some detail in later chapters.

What David Cameron had in mind was, of course, a ‘strong’ form of multiculturalism, what Stokke and Lybæk dub ‘liberal state multiculturalism’ (2016: 13). As I have noted elsewhere (Grillo 2007c) multiculturalism is a ‘fuzzy’ concept, its meaning highly contested. At a descriptive level all contemporary European societies are *multicultural*, i.e. ethnically and culturally diverse, though some are more so than others, and some places (major cities) especially so, indeed ‘superdiverse’ (Vertovec etc). *Multiculturalism*, however, as David Cameron implied, is a political project or orientation, encompassing strategies, institutions, discourses, practices, intuitions even, which consciously seek to address multicultural reality. It has signalled a relatively benign orientation towards the governance of ethno-cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, and *to some degree* (that caveat is significant) makes positive provision for it.

Whether one is for or against such an orientation does not mean that one can simply read off a specific content from the word itself. It does not mean that in all societies with a similar orientation the governance of diversity is the same, that, for example, multiculturalism always and everywhere means ‘state multiculturalism’, of the kind to which Cameron is referring. Multiculturalism takes many forms. It is not a thing in itself; there is no ‘essential’ multiculturalism. In that respect it is

similar to other 'isms' such as socialism or capitalism, Islamism or secularism, and indeed interculturalism. In political and other rhetoric, however multiculturalism is often imagined as one (extreme) form of governing diversity though this may in fact be very different from the reality on the ground. What exists (actually existing multiculturalism as Schierup calls it, 1996) is a series of variations on a general theme, and multicultural initiatives across Europe (even in France) may be said to occur along a spectrum, depending on how much difference is tolerated, where and when.

Although there were critics prior to the turn of the millennium, after 2001 many politicians, intellectuals and the media came to believe that multiculturalism institutionalised 'difference' and exacerbated the governability of what, in a neo-liberal, transnationalised world, are increasingly fragmented societies. There was a widespread 'backlash' against a policy said to privilege ethno-linguistic and cultural blocs, encourage 'parallel lives', and promote cultural and religious principles and practices unacceptable in societies espousing liberal, democratic, individualistic, and secular values (see *inter alia* Vertovec and Wessendorf eds. 2010). It came to be widely believed that contemporary societies were characterised by what Giovanni Sartori (2002) called an 'excess of alterity', and more often than not, the overriding (hegemonic) narrative became that diversity, especially that associated with immigrant minorities and settled populations of immigrant origin, is bad, or at least potentially damaging to existing social relations, and must be restrained.

But what about interculturalism? Although, so far as I am aware, neither David Cameron nor any other leading British politician has ever uttered the word – a possible exception is Nigel Farage² - it is against this background of growing criticism (discussed more fully in Chapter 2) that something called 'interculturalism' began to be favoured among academics and some policy makers as an alternative (or perhaps antidote) to 'multiculturalism', though the former is in many ways as fuzzy a concept as the latter. Indeed, as Fethi Mansouri acknowledges:

'despite a recent explosion in the academic and policy literature on all matters "interculturalism", there remains a lack of conceptual clarity around what the term itself (and its many variants) actually means' (2017: 15).

This is not the place for an extended account of the history of the idea (see Chapter 2), but the term was originally highly influential in the USA in the 1920s regarding what was called 'intercultural education'. Often this tended to mean providing the opportunity for learning about other nations (what they ate, how they dressed, perhaps how they worshipped), and respecting the cultural specificity of children from an immigrant background, within an overarching Americanism. While an admirable aim, in practice it came to mean little more than the 'celebration' of cultural difference in the curriculum, of a kind which certainly at one time permeated much education in the UK (and other countries such as France): what was called in Britain the 'samosas, steel bands and saris' approach. Clearly, this is not what 'intercultural' means to intellectuals such as Bhikhu Parekh or Alain Touraine (see below and Chapters 2 and 7), or members of august commissions of inquiry in Belgium and Canada (see Chapters 2 and 5) or members of the European Commission or CoE (Chapter 8). Nonetheless, what it actually means, in theory or practice, is by no means self-evident. Neither is the extent to which it addresses and resolves the problems its advocates identify with multiculturalism (or vice versa). Indeed, one of the purposes of this book is precisely to address such questions through an extended examination of the work of the scholars and practitioners who have engaged in these debates.

² E.g. as reported, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jan/14/nigel-farage-fgm-sharia-courts-interculturalism>.

Responding to a Crisis of Difference?

As has been implied in preceding sections, the critique of multiculturalism and its (alleged) deficiencies must be set in the context of major economic and political developments, local and global, that have affected and changed societies in Europe and North America in recent decades, and which have given rise to a widespread ‘cultural anxiety’ (Grillo 2003a) affecting both majority and minority populations. Such developments, including the consequences of neo-liberal globalisation, of immigration, of the transnationalisation of social relations, and of the superdiversification of major cities in Europe and North America, and their implications for the governance of diversity multiculturalism are reviewed in subsequent chapters, but one aspect needs to be emphasised at the outset.

Our current era seems to be characterised by multiple and reinforcing conflicts, affecting many societies in a globalised world, which are variously described as ‘ethnic’ or ‘national’ or ‘racial’ or ‘religious’, and in which one party seeks to impose its will on another, or perhaps deny its rights, or reject its claims. This ‘crisis of difference’ (Grillo 2015b) interacts with (and to an extent stems from) a multiplicity of other crises (economic, political, social, environmental, medical) which we are currently experiencing. To recognise the contemporary salience of cultural and religious diversity as a site of contestation is, of course, in no way to deny the significance of socio-economic factors, nor is it to forget that cultural/religious conflict may intersect with, or be mapped on, global and local inequalities. Nor is it, I hope, to succumb to the simplistic idea that our era is characterised by what, some 25 years ago, the American political scientist, Samuel Huntington, called - wrongly and unhelpfully - a ‘Clash of Civilizations’ (1993).

Huntington, of course, was principally concerned with what he saw as the growing conflict, post-Cold War, between the West and the Rest, represented by Islam. Although he is invariably associated with the phrase, a similar point of view, indeed the phrase itself, had had been deployed previously in an article (‘The Roots of Muslim Rage’) by the Islamic scholar, Bernard Lewis (1990). Huntington, however, went into the matter more deeply, arguing that ‘culture and cultural identities ... are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold-War world’ (1996: 20). ‘The most important distinctions among people are not ideological, political, or economic’, he said, ‘They are cultural ... People define identify with cultural groups, tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations, and, at the broadest level, civilizations’ (p. 21). And he went on to distinguish eight, such civilizations: ‘Sinic’. ‘Japanese’. ‘Hindu’, ‘Islamic’, ‘Orthodox’, ‘Western’, ‘Latin America’, and [possibly] ‘African’ (p. 45ff.)

There are major objections to such views. First, there is the essentialising and stereotyping implicit in his categorisation of civilisations. Take ‘the West’, for example, which he defines by the ‘classical legacy’, of Christianity, European languages, ‘separation of spiritual and temporal authority’, rule of law, social pluralism, representative bodies, and individualism (p. 69 ff.). One major consequence is that diversity and difference *within* such civilisations virtually disappear. Under the label ‘Islamic’, for example, a vast range of societies and cultures are coalesced into one uniform bloc, and all the vibrant differences and disagreements among and between Muslims, their internal cultural debates, amount to nothing. Such views of Islam, or ‘the West’, are, of course, often reproduced in much popular and political rhetoric, and indeed it is that kind of essentialising and stereotyping (which one finds on all sides) that is itself part and parcel of the crisis of difference.

Secondly, his argument about civilisations swiftly slides from ideology to people in ways akin to a form of cultural racism. While some argue that the West’s quarrel is with Islamist extremists and not with Islam as such, ‘fourteen hundred years of history’, Huntington claims, ‘demonstrate otherwise’ (p. 209). What is at issue is not just Islamism, but Islam and those who practice it, and he regurgitates the all too familiar arguments about Muslims’ propensity to violence. Thirdly, culture is one major source of identification and difference *alongside and in conjunction with* others. Huntington denies such intersectionality. Fourthly, culture must be treated as an *explicandum* not an

explicans. If there is a clash of civilisations, if culture is a site of contestation, then that calls for analysis and explanation.

In sum, it is simplistic to represent the crisis of difference as a confrontation between two deeply entrenched, hostile ‘sides’, each asserting its own moral superiority, with protagonists engaging in what Edgar Morin (2008) has called ‘la réduction d’autrui à son pire aspect’. Nonetheless, a confrontation of that kind is increasingly taking shape, as the speeches of President Donald Trump before and after his election have indicated, with potentially dire consequences. Certainly, some people, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, would assert that there are differences which they would claim to be perpetually and irresolvably opposed. The political economist, Will Hutton, now Principal of Hertford College, Oxford, for example, once argued that Islam

‘represents the biggest challenge to Western civilisation since the demise of fascism and communism. Rooted in a pre-Enlightenment worldview in which religious text has the force of law and the Islamic community is innately superior to all others, the belief that there is redemption for martyrs in the afterlife fuels extraordinary acts of terrorism’ (*Observer*, January 11, 2004).

Reflecting on the West’s ‘uncertainty’ about the best way to deal with this threatening worldview, ‘lurching between a kindly multi-culturalism [and] a clash of civilisations’, and conceding that ‘if we abandon dialogue and interaction we are lost’, he nevertheless affirmed a sticking point around ‘Islamic sexism’, and praised the French for their ‘Enlightenment commitment to equality’ which led them to oppose the invasion of Iraq, but also to ban headscarves. On the latter, he seemed to be saying, there could be no compromise, no dialogue.

Thus stated, Islam would appear to have become a major site of antagonism and contestation between very different beliefs, values and practices. Indeed, much of the case for an intercultural approach, though couched in much wider terms, is based on an assumed, albeit often unspoken, need to respond to the challenges represented by the growing presence of ‘Others’, not least ‘Others’ of the Islamic faith, in Europe, North America, and elsewhere, and their failure to integrate with the majority population (whatever ‘integration’ is thought to mean). In the case of Muslims, concerns about their presence are manifold: how they dress, what they eat, how and where they worship, marry and divorce, their relations between men and women, how they bring up children and with what values, their views of the beliefs and practices associated with the West, their uncertain commitment to, and identification, with the states where they reside, and their looking to other Muslims world-wide, are all questioned, not least after 9/11 and all that followed. Whether, or rather under what circumstances, this questioning, this mind-set of a ‘Muslim problem’, amounts to Islamophobia (a much disputed term) is beyond the scope of this chapter (see Grillo 2015a, Chapter 11, and Elahi and Khan eds. 2017 for a recent survey and update of an earlier highly influential report by the Runnymede Trust in 1997). Nonetheless, while there can be legitimate criticism of Islam as of any other body of doctrine, and adherents of Islam are by no means a ‘race’ or indeed an ethnic group, criticism of and hostility towards Islam and Muslims may sometimes approach classical racism of a biological or quasi-biological character because of a demographic association between Islam and its adherents who are in large majority persons of colour with roots in Asia or Africa.

Beyond that, it is not irrelevant to remark that attitudes towards Muslims, and indeed to many other minorities originating from Africa, the Middle East, or South Asia, are often shaped by the colonial encounter - now part of history, but not forgotten - and what might be called a ‘colonial mentality’. This will be apparent from the cases discussed in Part III (Chapters 10 to 16). For while colonialism provides the immediate context of only one of the cases (discussed in Chapter 11), the rest lie under its shadow, or at least are influenced by attitudes which have their origins in colonialism, even within a supposedly post-colonial world. Thus calls for intercultural dialogue with minorities in Europe or North America (Canada) almost always involve or interpellate peoples whose origins lie in regions of the world which were subject directly or indirectly to a colonial presence. Consequently,

relations between the ‘West’ and the ‘Other’ within the shadow of colonialism are at the heart of intercultural dialogues, certainly in Europe, and the rationale for such dialogues may in large part stem from that.

There is, however, another perspective. In the case of Islam, while there are undoubtedly Muslims and non-Muslims who see the world in terms of a confrontation between two deeply entrenched, hostile ‘sides’ – and Hutton’s view is far from the extreme end of the spectrum of such views - it is simplistic to represent this as the only reality. If this were so, then pleas for ‘understanding, dialogue and mutual respect’ (Phillips 2013: 289), which Hutton also calls for (‘if we abandon dialogue and interaction we are lost’) would be a pipedream. But this is not the case; there are many individuals and organisations, Muslim and non-Muslim, who consciously seek common ground in the conviction that it is necessary to move beyond confrontation, even when differences of belief and practice are substantial (see Grillo 2015a, and Chapter 16).

The importance of intercultural dialogue at the present time should therefore need no underlining. It is the very opposite to what is understood by the contemporary clash of civilisations between the West and Islam (or indeed the Rest). Nonetheless while dialogue is something desirable and always possible in a philosophical sense, in some circumstances it may be politically a waste of time. I doubt very much that there would have been any profit in establishing a dialogue between democrats and out-and-out fascists in 1939, for example. But in the contemporary world, for the vast majority of people (Muslims and non-Muslims, or Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland) the differences are not of that order. There is no intrinsic or inevitable clash. Nonetheless, writing in the Autumn of 2017, I fear that recent and current events are actually creating the conditions for such a clash (at both macro and micro levels) in which the voices of those who refuse that interpretation are increasingly muted. My response must be that this is precisely where dialogue – in this case intercultural dialogue – is desperately needed, and that in turn engages intercultural knowledge, and intercultural negotiation.

A Personal Note

As the Preface suggested, this book has had several personal starting points and in working on the ideas over a number of years I found myself going off in many different, if ultimately related, directions.

Relations between peoples thought by themselves or others to have distinct identities and ways of life (languages, cultures, religions), while co-habiting – or contesting - the same political and social space, have pre-occupied me throughout much of my career as an anthropologist. In different ways it was important – in the background or in the foreground - in my first fieldwork and research on migrant workers in 1960s East Africa (Grillo 1973), and in the period I subsequently spent teaching at Queen’s University Belfast, just as the Troubles got under way. It loomed large in my second major fieldwork and research in 1970s Lyon, France, which was principally concerned with the interaction between French state institutions (housing, education, social services) and immigrants and settlers from North Africa (Grillo 1985). These various experiences further shaped my writing in the 1990s when I embarked on a comparative study of *Pluralism and the Politics of Difference* (Grillo 1998), and that in turn was central to a further project (undertaken by two research fellows, Bruno Riccio and Ruba Salih) on immigration and multiculturalism in Italy in the late 1990s/early 2000s. It was then that I began to get to grips with the increasingly important theme of transnationalism, and specifically with the implications of transnational migration, principally from North and West Africa, and from South Asia, for multiculturalism in various European countries, including Italy, France, and in due course Britain.

Against that general background, there have been various starting points for an engagement with a project specifically concerned with ‘Interculturalism and the Politics of Dialogue’, as it is now called. One has been a long-standing interest in the politics of language (Grillo 1989 and ed. 1989),

which arose out of fieldwork in France in the 1970s. One aspect of that research involved how French institutions at that time obtained and formulated knowledge of the lives of the immigrants of North African origin in their midst (discussed in Chapter 12). This concern with the formation or construction of ‘intercultural knowledge’ (as I originally thought of it) was reinforced by reading undertaken in the 1990s in connection with the comparative study of *Pluralism and the Politics of Difference* (1998). Part of that dealt with the colonial encounter, and I was intrigued by a brief reference in Robert Ricard’s book *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico* (1966) to what have been called ‘Coloquios’, or ‘pláticas’, or ‘dialogues’ (discussed in Chapter 11), ‘conversations’ (in inverted commas), which took place in June 1524, between leaders and priests of the Mexica (Aztecs) who had survived the conquest of their empire and the destruction of its capital, Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City), three years previously, and twelve, indeed THE twelve, as they are known, Franciscan friars who had been sent to conduct the conversion of the new world, and who after a four-month journey had arrived there a few weeks earlier. At the time, I did not have the opportunity to follow this up, but did so later, and though these dialogues turned out to be not quite what I thought they were (and posed more problems than I naively supposed), they nonetheless had considerable pertinence to what was now becoming a long-term enquiry.

A further stimulus, which ultimately provided a link to the writing on European (and Canadian) interculturalism, stemmed from researching and thinking about multiculturalism in Britain and other European countries in the 2000s, and in particular from reviewing the work of Bhikhu Parekh, in Britain, and Alain Touraine in France. ‘Real’ multiculturalism, both seemed to be saying, was not to do with blocks of static, separate, ethnically-based, cultural ‘communities’, happily ensconced behind their cultural walls. It was, rather, to do with interaction, dialogue, the willingness to meet, to exchange and change. In other words, it involved peoples engaged in an *intercultural* relationship; it was, or should be, a dialectical phenomenon.

Subsequently I tried to explore such ideas at a conference in Belfast where participants had been exhorted to be practical and positive (see Grillo 2003b). On that occasion, I tried to sketch out what ‘intercultural dialogue’ might imply in the Ulster context, drawing *inter alia* on ideas from participatory development, and from lessons learned from anti-racist interventions in the UK. What I took from the exercise was the immense difficulty of an enterprise which was apparently trying to operate at both macro (society-wide) and micro (individual and small group) levels. This was further demonstrated in an analysis of another event, the so-called *Behzti Affair* (Grillo 2007a, 2007b), which concerned an attempt by some Sikh elders to engage with the management of a theatre in Birmingham to take into account their objections to a play (*Behzti*) which they believed misrepresented their faith (see Chapter 13).

Although by the mid-2000s other commitments meant that I had to put those thoughts to one side, later research which brought me into close contact with lawyers and political scientists working on legal practice and cultural diversity eventually led me back to those earlier interests through consideration of whether or not the legal systems of societies such as Britain should or could accommodate the beliefs and practices associated with ‘Other’ cultures, notably, but not exclusively, Islam (see Chapters 13-16). Thus in various ways three things - dialogue, knowledge, and negotiation – came together in my mind in very different contexts, extending, roughly speaking, from sixteenth century Mexico to twenty-first century Europe.

There is no way of knowing this, but I fancy that intercultural dialogues between peoples of different languages and cultures are as old as humanity itself. It would be interesting to pursue that idea historically and comparatively, but I leave that task to others. As the above indicates, the present book is much more limited and specific in focus, and I should repeat that my interest in intercultural dialogue, or better perhaps *dialoguing*, concerns those situations where, for whatever reasons, people of varying backgrounds are engaging in exchanges about cultural and social difference, especially where they seek to do something about it. And most, if not all, such situations discussed in this book take place in contemporary Europe and North America.

CHAPTER 2. INTERCULTURALISM VERSUS MULTICULTURALISM: CONTEXTUALISING THE DEBATE

‘Multicultural societies throw up problems that have no parallel in history. They need to find ways of reconciling the legitimate demands of unity and diversity, achieving political unity without cultural uniformity, being inclusive without being assimilationist, cultivating among their citizens a common sense of belonging while respecting their legitimate cultural differences, and cherishing plural cultural identities without weakening the shared and precious identity of shared citizenship. This is a formidable political task and no multicultural society so far has succeeded in tackling it’ (Parekh 2000: 34)

‘Il multiculturalismo porta alla Bosnia e alla balcanizzazione; è l’interculturalism che porta all’Europe’ (Sartori 2002: 112).

Introduction

The theoretical and practical (policy) problematic in which this book is situated is aptly summarised in the quotation from Bhikhu Parekh cited above. What should a multicultural society do about its diversity (social, cultural, ethnic, religious)? To what extent should such societies accommodate difference, and if so how should they set about doing so, and within what limits? As the second quotation cited above, from the Italian political scientist, Giovanni Sartori, also indicates, in contemporary Europe and, elsewhere, notably Canada, that debate has developed around what is often represented as a polar contrast between two alternative strategies - multiculturalism and interculturalism - with proponents of the latter seeing their approach as an answer to the mistakes of governance committed by the former. Multiculturalists, however, respond to interculturalists by asserting that multiculturalism does not do what its opponents claim, and in any case it already does what interculturalists demand. If interculturalism does have something distinct to offer, they say, it is best seen as complementing the work of multiculturalism.

This debate, of which the above is a crude summary, is usually conducted at a high level of abstraction, often with little attention to empirical evidence. This is notably the case when it involves political scientists and philosophers - ‘politologs’, like Parekh or Sartori – who trade in normative arguments, and this is a great source of frustration to someone like myself, an anthropologist, whose province is what actually happens, on the ground. For example, much academic and quasi-academic writing on the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (see Chapter 8) is largely text-based; indeed, whether developing a theoretical argument or a political point about the EU or CoE’s involvement with interculturalism, it is largely confined to a limited number of seminal texts. Thus, when the CoE’s intervention in the debate about interculturalism has been discussed in academic circles, it has been principally through the medium of its White Paper of 2008 (summarised below and discussed in more detail in Chapter 8), which has generally excited greater academic interest than the practicalities of the EU’s Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Likewise, discussion of Canadian interculturalism naturally enough relies heavily on the Bouchard-Taylor Report (2008), the response to the so-called ‘accommodation crisis’ in Québec in 2006-7. That report by two eminent academics, Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor³, is in many respects one of the most profound and important statements concerning the governance of diversity and how it should be approached, alongside Bhikhu Parekh’s *Rethinking Multiculturalism*.

While sophisticated analytically, this text-based theoreticist approach often ignores what is happening on the ground, and those engaged are usually dealing with what are in effect ideal types, or as I would prefer to say ‘imagined’ constructs of multiculturalism (i.e. multiculturalism as it is imagined to be), contrasted with an equally imagined interculturalism, rather than with any ‘actually

3 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gérard_Bouchard; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Taylor_\(philosopher\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Taylor_(philosopher)).

existing multiculturalism' (or indeed interculturalism) as Schierup (1996) has called it; Bouchard's description of multiculturalism (2016: 90) provides one example of this, as does the wider debate about 'parallel lives' (see below). Multiculturalism (actually existing multiculturalism) is often not what interculturalists think it is - Félix Mathieu's paper on 'The Failure of State Multiculturalism in the UK?' (2017, note the question mark) is a valuable overview which shows that the actual practice of multiculturalism does not always correspond to the hostile political or media rhetoric. But then, neither is interculturalism what multiculturalists sometimes think it is; and certainly 'actually existing interculturalism' often falls short of what interculturalists hope it is. As the 'Call for Papers' for a conference in Antwerp on 'Interculturality: Applied and Critical Perspectives' (organised by Albin Wagener and others in 2015) observed, work on interculturalism often seems 'trapped in wishful thinking'.⁴ Consequently, the multiculturalism versus interculturalism debate (whether one is different from or superior to the other) often becomes an argument between two ideological-political (unkindly, perhaps, even 'theological') camps, and at times about as relevant as the ancient, and probably apocryphal, controversy about how many angels dance on a pinhead.

This is not to dismiss the normative debate, though at times the theoretical-ideological-theological differences between the two camps (multicultural-istas and intercultural-istas) are exaggerated, and there would often seem to be broad agreement among many of the protagonists – though admittedly by no means all - about basic aims and strategic objectives (perhaps along lines suggested by Bhikhu Parekh in the above quotation). Where there is such agreement, 'multiculturalism' and 'interculturalism' might best be considered as labelling sets of tools for dealing with diversity; some distinctive and specific, others broadly similar, and with much overlap between them. This may be the case even though there are different varieties of interculturalism and multiculturalism, often contextually specific (as many others have pointed out), with the social and political problems they seek to address, and what they set out to achieve, conditioned by those contexts. This demands an interrogation of the specific programmes, policies and practices advocated in the name of either multiculturalism or interculturalism, to tease out similarities and differences and what they imply for the governance of contemporary diversity.

These introductory remarks pinpoint some of the issues with which this and other chapters deal: different understandings of interculturalism, and its relationship to multiculturalism, how it has been construed in different intellectual (and to an extent national) traditions, what it is intended to do, what expectations proponents have of what it might (often highly optimistically) accomplish⁵, what it actually does or might do in practice, and its association with the ubiquitous term 'dialogue'. But first, and once again, albeit a little more fully, the so-called 'multiculturalism backlash' which in a significant way lies behind the emergence of 'interculturalism', as a diversity-friendly alternative.

The Multiculturalism Backlash⁶

'Multicultural policies are now subjected to continued criticisms, particularly by policy-makers who hold the view that it has failed to deliver. The snowball effect of the proclaimed failure of multicultural policies in Western society is visible at the grassroots level. Largely fomented by public discourse around anti-immigration and antiglobalization, opposition to cultural diversity has received traction among Euro-sceptics in England and France and among far-right activists in Australia, Eastern Europe and the United States' (Elias 2017: 265)

What are the problems with multiculturalism to which its advocates claim interculturalism provides the answer?

4 <https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/73628/interculturality-applied-and-critical-perspectives>.

5 <http://en.abna24.com/service/america/archive/2016/05/15/754332/story.html>, for instance, reports a conference hopefully entitled 'Dispelling Islamophobia through dialogue', held in Calgary, Canada.

6 This section summarises arguments set out previously in Grillo 2010, 2012, 2015a. etc.

Few societies, anywhere, at any time, have been completely homogenous, though in the modern era heterogeneity increasingly characterises urban and industrial centres, and especially capital cities. If most societies are de facto multicultural (though some more than others) it does not mean that they practice multiculturalism. The latter comprises a range of policies, institutions, discourses, and practices which, in ‘stronger’ or ‘weaker’ forms consciously seek to accommodate polyethnicity, governing diversity by making room for it and according it legitimacy within the national framework. In the past, modern nation-states frequently did the opposite, suppressing difference by ‘nationalising’ their regions and assimilating foreign immigrants: ‘Otherness’ appeared anathema to the nation-state, and sadly the current era appears to have reverted to those times. After a longish period during the second half of the twentieth century in which governments felt able to adjust to diversity, we are now in a situation in which many people (across the political spectrum) proclaim the end of the multicultural experiment. Difference has gone too far, it is argued, and must be reined in. ‘No reasonable person wants an unbridled multiculturalism’, said Michel Wieviorka (1997: 7), a trope echoed by former British Home Secretary David Blunkett (2002: 76), but for many critics multiculturalism is always already ‘unbridled’. When Ayelet Shachar observed that ‘the problem of multicultural accommodation is high on the global political agenda’ (2001: 1), her remark reflected the concerns of a period when such accommodation was generally viewed positively, and before it became apparent that in Europe and North America it was *hostility* towards multicultural accommodation that had begun to dominate the political agenda, manifest in widespread reluctance to countenance any space for the Other, and in an increasing tendency to criminalise alterity.

David Scott (2003) has an interesting discussion about when, and under what conditions, culture and cultural diversity began to be problematic for contemporary liberal theorists and the societies in which they are located. He puts this in the context of the end of the Cold War, but the timeline does not seem quite right. Rather, in Europe it partly reflects widespread opposition to immigration, in the light of what is seen as the excessive influx of migrants from an expanding EU and its Eastern neighbours or of asylum seekers from across the globe, while in the USA it is immigrants and settlers from South of the Rio Grande who have generally evoked hostility. It is certainly the case, however, that since c. 1989 – the era of the Rushdie Affair, and the affair of the headscarves in France - there has been in Europe (much later in the USA) a more specific concern about the ‘failure’ of Muslims (whether migrants, refugees or settled populations and their descendants) to integrate which is at the heart of the current backlash against multiculturalism (Bowen 2011). There is alarm about ‘parallel lives (communal separatism and ghettoisation) and the seemingly incompatible values which Islam apparently authorises, along with insistence that Muslims declare their loyalty to the nation-state where they reside, rather than to that whence they came, or to an international *umma*. 9/11 and what followed are part of this, with demands for integration often couched in terms of ‘security’, as in David Cameron’s widely-reported speech (2011), and most recently, in the UK, in the Casey Review (2016). The global ‘Islamic revival’ and the rising attraction of Salafist and similar ideologies among people of Muslim faith manifestly play a part: Islamophobia, which has a long history, is currently voiced through the trope of ‘radical Islam’, and paranoid fantasies about the threatened ‘Islamisation’ of Europe, which statements by some Muslim clerics do little to discourage. Concerns about energy resources and oil prices, along with multiple conflicts in the Middle East, have all conspired to construct ‘Muslim’ as a demonised social and cultural identity. Alongside this, and to an extent in response to it, there has been a return of the historic debate about the role of religion in secular societies.

The Liberal Critique

While the political and social backlash against multiculturalism dominates the debate in the media, in elections and in legislatures, another debate has been going on among liberal philosophers and others, for many of whom ‘multiculturalism’ (or how they interpret it, their imagined multiculturalism) poses serious philosophical (as well as political) problems. In sum, from various directions multiculturalism has been taken to task for, among other things: implicit essentialism; treating cultures as static, finite and bounded ethnolinguistic blocs; fostering systems of social categorisation which privilege a

singular ethnic, cultural or religious identity; and encouraging a form of multicultural politics which supports patriarchy and religious authority and disempowers women. It is further said to allow a concern with 'culture' to override traditional social issues as well as side-lining racism (or alternatively to permit a merely token or symbolic acknowledgement of ethnic difference). In these and other ways, multiculturalism, it is claimed, undermines the 'common core values' essential for social cohesion and transgresses the founding principles of liberal democracy.

The liberal objection to multiculturalism is well-trodden ground with arguments for and against well-rehearsed, for example in the concluding chapter in the second edition of Parekh's *Rethinking Multiculturalism* where he responds to his critics, notably the arch opponent of multiculturalism, Brian Barry. Another such critic is Timothy Garton Ash, Professor of European Studies at Oxford University, and frequent columnist in the *Guardian* newspaper, who in 2008 delivered the annual Isaiah Berlin lecture at Oxford on 'Isaiah Berlin and the Challenge of Multiculturalism'.⁷

Isaiah Berlin himself said very little about contemporary multiculturalism (but see his conversation with Steven Lukes, in Berlin and Lukes 1998), and Garton Ash's lecture is an exposition of his own views in the light of Berlin's ideas. In doing so he states a position towards the 'harder' end of the liberal spectrum; his is a strong liberalism with only limited room for other cultural practices, and firm limits on where the boundary for their acceptance is to be drawn. Thus:

'Liberal pluralism with its values of individual liberty, toleration and personal autonomy is the best way to provide a framework for ... diversity of goods. To provide the social spaces and terms on which individuals can pursue their different goals. The question is of course within which limits, how to proceed ... not with the slogans or the grand ideological concepts - Enlightenment values, multiculturalism - but simply by entering into a debate on the following question. What are the minimum core liberal principles which are non-negotiable, what are the matters which are properly negotiable, and what are the matters which are simply one of individual conscience and choice?'

Among the minimum core principles, he would include individual human rights, equality before the law, defence of freedom of expression and the right to offend, and freedom to 'proselytise change and abandon one's religion'. Among the negotiable he would include the right to practice a religion (buildings, dress, noise etc.) Concerning such practices, he notes exemptions and exceptions (like Sikh helmets), but 'exceptions should be exceptional', and not about creating parallel jurisdictions. This is similar to Hansen (2011: 882) who argues that exceptions should be 'rare and justified by some overriding good. The bar must be high'. On the other hand, says Garton Ash, we need to be careful not to employ double standards. If Jews may have faith schools, then so should Muslims, but this might mean that we should move 'in a liberal republican direction' by reducing the exemptions, removing support from all faith schools.

'Everything I've said is a very considerable demand on those who come from often conservative, religious cultures and who now live in liberal societies in Europe', continued Garton Ash:

⁷ Audio available at <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/isaiah-berlin-and-challenge-multiculturalism-part-1> and <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/isaiah-berlin-and-challenge-multiculturalism-part-2> My transcription.

‘The demand of liberal integration, not assimilation but integration, is indeed a demand in which they have as it were, if I may say “they”, in some sense have to move 70% or even 80% of the distance, and we in some sense have to go 20% or 30%. And because that is true, the other 20% or 30% is particularly important, and has to be emphasised. Precisely because we cannot compromise on the non-negotiable liberal essentials which are so demanding, for example, for many Muslims from rural conservative communities in the Indian sub-continent. The 20% of opening to them of opening to them, of mutual recognition, of what Jürgen Habermas called the mutual opening of believers in different religions, the attitude which says: “Though you speak in a different language and maybe employ a different logic, though maybe you use the language of a religion which is alien to us, nonetheless, nonetheless, there *may* be in what you say poetry and truth, insight and wisdom, expressed in a very different way”. That is an attitude which is very important for us to cultivate if we are to make this combination of liberty and diversity work’.

Note ‘we’/‘they’/‘you’, and the condescension in ‘there *may* be in what you say poetry and truth, insight and wisdom’.

Garton Ash is far from alone in his insistence on the non-negotiability of liberalism’s core principles (Barry is an extreme example), nor in his belief in the necessity of allowing only minimal space for other cultural practices. Like other similarly-minded political philosophers he displays little understanding of the nature of ethnicity and its significance, or of multiculturalism which he frequently identifies with ‘multicultural’. He is equally confused about ‘culture’ which he equates with ‘a culture’, a common mistake, and gives little indication (beyond a few obvious and much discussed examples such as Sikh helmets) of how the negotiable might be identified, or how the boundaries of the tolerable may shift, as has happened in the case of homosexuality.

It is pertinent to ask whether such philosophical arguments have any effect on public opinion, or government policies. How relevant have they been in the thinking of ministers or their civil servants or other advisers? The question merits comparative research, but certainly it would seem that the influence of such sophisticated arguments on those working in the media is minimal. Thus, the columnist, Katie Hopkins, on her radio show⁸:

‘Hopkins slams multiculturalism after carnival stabbings. A FURIOUS Katie Hopkins has slammed multiculturalism after six stabbings and hundreds of arrests at this year’s Notting Hill Carnival. “I think we’re just sold multiculturalism, we have it rammed down our necks. As an outsider, as a Brexiteer, I don’t buy it at all”. “I can’t be doing with this,” said Hopkins. “I don’t buy multiculturalism at all. I get it – inside this London bubble, I come up here to work, I see you all believe in it – hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. The liberal left-wing press, the BBC, they love it! They can’t get enough of it”’.⁹

Nor, would I imagine, do the political philosophers have much purchase among the anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, anti-multiculturalism fringe movements such as the British National Party, the English Defence League or Britain First, or indeed among more widely-supported groups such as the United Kingdom Independence Party.

On the other hand, ministerial discourse (in the UK) certainly reflects the philosophical language in its insistence on the foundational principles of liberal democracy, often cast as ‘British values’, as in the extract from David Cameron’s Munich speech quoted in Chapter 1. ‘Frankly’, it continued:

8 <http://www.lbc.co.uk/radio/presenters/katie-hopkins>.

9 Reported in *Daily Express*, 31 August 2015, <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/705426/katie-hopkins-multiculturalism-stabbings-carnival>.

‘we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and a much more active, *muscular liberalism*. A passively tolerant society says to its citizens, as long as you obey the law we will just leave you alone. It stands neutral between different values. But I believe a genuinely liberal country does much more; it believes in certain values and actively promotes them. Freedom of speech, freedom of worship, democracy, the rule of law, equal rights regardless of race, sex or sexuality. It says to its citizens, this is what defines us as a society: to belong here is to believe in these things. Now, each of us in our own countries, I believe, must be unambiguous and hard-nosed about this defence of our liberty’ (Cameron 2011, emphasis added.)

The previous Prime Minister, Tony Blair, had developed a similar theme in a speech in 2006 on ‘Our Nation’s Future: Multiculturalism and Integration’. In the current context, he said, integration is ‘not about culture or lifestyle. It is about values’:

‘It is about integrating at the point of shared, common unifying British values. It isn’t about what defines us as people, but as citizens, the rights and duties that go with being a member of our society. Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and other faiths have a perfect right to their own identity and religion, to practice their faith and to conform to their culture. This is what multicultural, multifaith Britain is about. That is what is legitimately distinctive. But when it comes to our essential values – belief in democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, equal treatment for all, respect for this country and its shared heritage – then that is where we come together, it is what we hold in common; it is what gives us the right to call ourselves British’.¹⁰

The importance of adhering to ‘British values’ continued to be stressed through to the Casey Review of December 2016 (Casey 2016) which *inter alia* proposed an ‘integration oath’ for migrants settling in Britain. Much more might be said about this, and indeed about the backlash, whether from the point of view of political philosophers, right-wing journalists and political parties, or mainstream politicians; sentiments similar to those outlined above have been expressed by politicians and others across Europe, and there is a substantial literature documenting this. At this point, however, I want discuss the way in which interculturalism has emerged as an alternative to what was perceived as a failed multiculturalism.

Interculturalism: History and Context

Varieties of Interculturalism

When the book he co-edited with Nasar Meer and Ricard Zapata-Barrero (*Multiculturalism and Interculturalism: Debating the Dividing Line*, 2016) was launched, Tariq Modood gave an interview on the *Talking Migration* website¹¹ which explained its origins and the nature of its contribution to the ongoing debate (see also Modood 2017). The book, said Modood, came out of a symposium, published in the *Journal of Intercultural Studies* (33, 2) which led to the realisation that there is currently a strong interest in discussing multiculturalism and interculturalism. This resulted in a workshop funded by the European Science Foundation which eventually became the 2016 edited collection. One thing that was apparent in that volume, and indeed had become increasingly apparent in numerous papers published in the previous five years, was a growing appreciation that there are different types or genres of interculturalism, notably in Europe and Canada, but also elsewhere.

Asked by the *Talking Migration* interviewer whether interculturalism offered anything new, Modood explained that interculturalism is a pro-diversity perspective but one that criticises the focus

¹⁰ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080909022722/http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page10563>.

¹¹ <https://talkingmigration.com/2016/06/01/multiculturalism-versus-interculturalism-and-is-it-the-end-of-open-door-germany>.

on groups and collectivities, through which it is believed multiculturalism encourages ethnic and religious segregation and fosters separatist tendencies in minorities. Modood, however, contrasted the intercultural critique of multiculturalism with David Cameron's 'muscular liberalism'. Rather than emphasising integration or assimilation, interculturalists put more effort into being pro-diversity, but distance themselves from multiculturalists by arguing group boundaries should be looser. Nonetheless, there are different versions of interculturalism of which he identified three (see also Meer and Modood 2012c: 32).¹²

- That of the CoE and UNESCO, wherein it is argued that privileging groups rather than individuals and fluid identities is a fundamental error. In European interculturalism the focus is on the micro level, and on encounters in specific settings and contexts (e.g. in a classroom). Multiculturalism, on the other hand, said Modood, is concerned with the macro level, with national citizenship and policies. (See also Modood 2017: 87-9, and Loobuyck 2016: 234). Interculturalism's skepticism about that approach makes it relatively apolitical; it distances itself from the national by focusing on neighbourhoods, localities, and cities.
- That of Québec where interculturalism is proposed as an alternative to Canadian (federal) multiculturalism (see further below). The central problem (identified in the Bouchard-Taylor Report of 2008) is how to accommodate diversity where, as in the case of Québec, there is a national majority, the Francophone population, mindful and anxious about its culture and history, as well as (immigrant) minorities of various ethnic and religious background. There is a requirement to take into account both the latter's claims for accommodation, and also the claims of the Francophone majority. This problematic makes Canadian interculturalism very different from the European version.
- That characteristic of much of Latin America where nation-building has to unpick the hierarchies stemming from colonialism, taking into account the claims of indigenous peoples. Interculturalism involves dialogue between them and the populations of European origin.

The comment on Latin America is based largely on an overview by Ana Solano-Campos (2016), that on Québec on a much larger set of references, including the Bouchard-Taylor Report and the many Canadian contributions to the debate, not least by Bouchard and Taylor themselves. However, while it is the European/Canadian comparison which is perhaps the dominant feature of *Debating the Dividing Lines*, and other recent writing on interculturalism, the reference to Latin America gives us a clue that the idea of interculturalism has a longer history than is often recognised.

A Bit of History: The Deweyan Perspective

If anything at all is said in the interculturalism/multiculturalism debate about the origins of the intercultural idea it is usually with reference to intercultural education. Modood, for example (2016b: 248, and elsewhere) points to sources which explain that the term was in use in Germany in the 1970s – I can vouch for its presence in discussions on education in France in that period. He also reminds us that Bouchard-Taylor could find no trace of 'interculturalism' in Canadian documents prior to 1985, or elsewhere (in CoE papers) before 1981 (see Bouchard-Taylor, p. 118). In fact, the intercultural idea has been around for much longer than that. See Chart 1, a Google *Ngram* graph which shows the rise (and fall) of the usage of 'intercultural' and 'multicultural' from 1920-2008. The Web of Science indeed lists numerous articles on intercultural education from 1942 onwards (e.g. National Education Association of the United States, 1942), and the idea itself can be traced to the writings of the American philosopher, John Dewey, during and after the First World War, notably in *Democracy and Education*, published in 1916 (for another take on the history of the intercultural idea and its influence see Dahlen 1997). Similarly, the idea of a 'multicultural/intercultural self', discussed in Chapter 6,

¹² From my transcription of the recording available on Soundcloud, available at <https://talkingmigration.com/2016/06/01/multiculturalism-versus-interculturalism-and-is-it-the-end-of-open-door-germany>, accessed 24 October 2016.

also owes a debt to Dewey, and although its preferred term was ‘multicultural’ rather than ‘intercultural’, the UK’s Swann Report on education (1985), in many ways reflected a Deweyesque approach. But what does that imply?

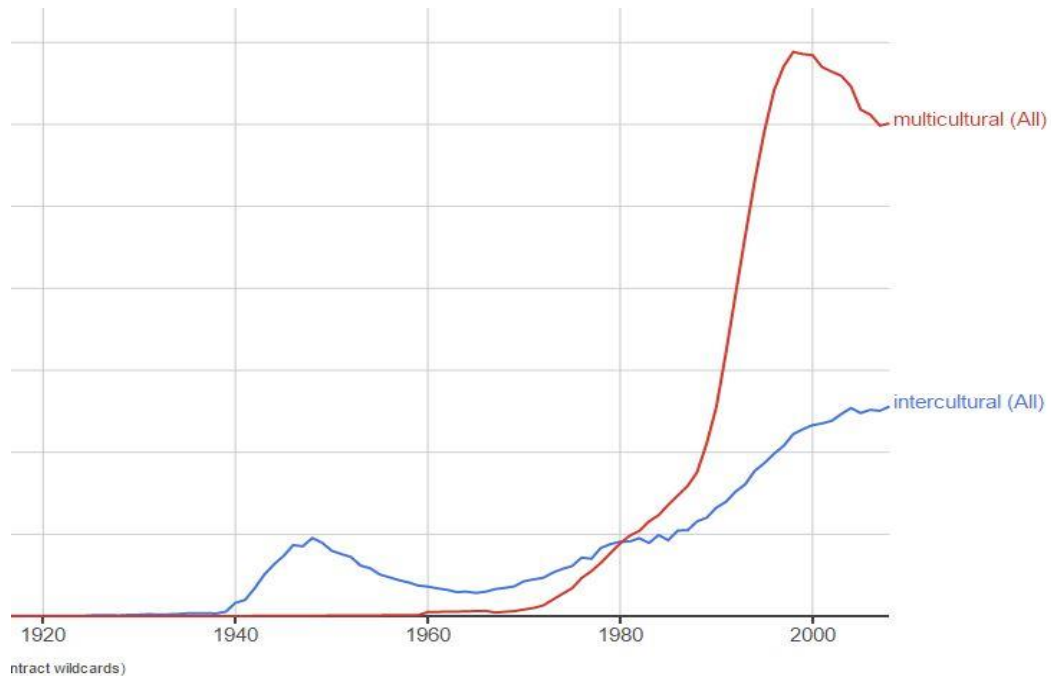


Chart 1. Occurrence of ‘intercultural’ and ‘multicultural’, c. 1920-2008, via Google Ngram Viewer

Dewey’s influence on intercultural education and thence on interculturalism may be observed in the writings of the radical Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, in the 1960s, and among other places, in work on intercultural communication (see *inter alia* Jia 2005, Lustig 1997, Sun 2011).

‘Communication’, said Dewey, ‘is a process of sharing experience till it becomes a common possession. It modifies the disposition of both the parties who partake in it’ (1916: 10). People may live far away from us (he mentions Britons, Germans and Italians), nevertheless they ‘directly concern our own social affairs’ (p. 17). However, ‘the nature of the interaction cannot be understood without explicit statement and attention’ (*ibid.*), and it is the role of the school to ensure that ‘each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and to come into living contact with a broader environment’ (p. 18). Then, in a remarkable passage which has contemporary resonance, he adds:

‘In the olden times, the diversity of groups was largely a geographical matter. There were many societies, but each, within its own territory, was comparatively homogeneous. But with the development of commerce, transportation, intercommunication, and emigration, countries like the United States are composed of a combination of different groups with different traditional customs. It is this situation which has, perhaps more than any other one cause, forced the demand for an educational institution which shall provide something like a homogeneous and balanced environment for the young. Only in this way can the centrifugal forces set up by juxtaposition of different groups within one and the same political unit be counteracted. The intermingling in the school of youth of different races, differing religions, and unlike customs creates for all a new and broader environment. Common subject matter accustoms all to a unity of outlook upon a broader horizon than is visible to the members of any group while it is isolated’ (Dewey 1916: 19)

What is the significance of this for the interculturalism vs multiculturalism debate? First, it shows that the idea has a considerable history behind it, and is not simply the latest ‘fad’ (Kymlicka 2012). Secondly, at its root, at least originally, it stressed the importance, in a world of complex interaction going well beyond the ‘local’, of acknowledging difference, and of each talking to the ‘Other’, in ways which might help to address the problems which diversity might pose – something that later appealed strongly to its European advocates. Thirdly, those advocates shared Dewey’s view that an intercultural perspective had to be inculcated through the education system and was of special significance for young people – much of European policy of interculturalism is based on this. Fourthly, and following from that, if multiculturalism encourages any form of separate, ethnic or religious education, e.g. with separate faith schools pursuing a curriculum largely bounded by their faith, then that would be incompatible with an intercultural perspective. (See, for example, Jackson 2016 on the place of religion in an intercultural curriculum, including whether and if so how it should be taught).

Such a vision, drawing ultimately on Dewey and also on the writings, in the 1920s, of Horace Kallen (1924) on cultural pluralism, who was also influenced by Dewey (Kronish 1982; and see Glazer 1997) was at the heart of (experimental) programmes of intercultural education in many parts of the world (and not just Europe). It also influenced (at least indirectly) the analysis and proposals in the authoritative Swann Report (*Education for All*) published in the UK in 1985, though that Report did not use the term ‘intercultural education’, preferring instead ‘multicultural education’, which appears over 220 times). Thus:

‘We believe that much of the confusion which exists in the multicultural field derives from the fact that there are two distinct dimensions to the debate - on the one hand, meeting the educational needs of ethnic minority pupils, and, on the other, broadening the education offered to all pupils to reflect the multi-racial nature of British society. Whilst these two issues are clearly inter-related and, in our view, complementary, we believe it is now possible and indeed essential to see them within a new and broader perspective - that of offering all pupils a good, relevant and up to date education for life in Britain and the world as it is today’ (Swann Report 1985: 315).

Hence the Report’s title: *Education for All*.

While ‘intercultural education’ does not appear in the Report ‘intercultural understanding’ does, for example in a sub-section entitled ‘Contribution to Intercultural and International Understanding’, with the following comment:

‘It is also argued that an understanding and appreciation of religious diversity contributes to, and is indeed vital to, the development of a young person’s understanding of the motivations, values and outlook of people from’ a range of religious backgrounds, both within this society and in other societies’ Swann Report 1985: 626).

These and other remarks (e.g. on ‘intercultural respect’, p. 629) seem very Deweyesque and in tune with the intentions of intercultural education, and thence of interculturalism as a whole; see, for example, the UNESCO *Guidelines on Intercultural Education* (2006: 18), which discusses the differences between multicultural and intercultural education. Dewey may also have been influential, perhaps indirectly and at some remove, in regard to another, related concept – the ‘multicultural self’; sometimes referred to in the older literature as the ‘multicultural man’ (sic) – to which I turn in a later chapter.

Nonetheless, although the idea of interculturalism has been around for some time (in various guises for nearly 100 years), it only entered the public square in a significant way in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as the following sections and later chapters will make clear. Indeed, it is only since

the mid/late 2000s that interculturalism (rather than multiculturalism) has figured prominently in academic and political debate in Europe and North America. Indeed, it is these two contexts — which have constituted the terrain on which an extended theoretical controversy over interculturalism has been fought.

The next two sections summarise the ways in which interculturalism has been approached in these two contexts: Europe, meaning principally the Europe of the EU Commission and the CoE, and North America, meaning principally Canada, and specifically Québec. Both sections are quite brief; that on Europe because Chapter 8 goes over the ground at much greater length; that on Canada (on which like most other European scholars I am no expert) because its task is simply to provide an overview of the differences between Canadian and European experience.

Interculturalism in Europe

The idea of pursuing interculturality in a European context has had a relatively long institutional history, as Chapter 8 explains, but came to the fore after 9/11. Viviane Reding, a European Commissioner, argued that in the light of the attacks ‘intercultural dialogue, exchange projects, meeting and working together, actions to promote tolerance, understanding and respect for others, and projects to combat racism and xenophobia’ were now priorities for the European Commission (2003: 3). This eventually led to a proposal that the EU should devote a Year (2008) to a topic which its principle proponent, Ján Figel’, then European Commissioner for Education, Training and Culture, described as ‘the linchpin of fair, sustainable and peaceful world orders’ (2004).

The CoE had in fact shortly beforehand taken a significant step towards interculturalism with the publication in 2000 of a report (*Diversity and Cohesion: New Challenges for the Integration of Immigrants and Minorities*), by Jan Niessen, Director of the Migration Policy Group. ‘Diversity is a fact of life in Europe’, said Niessen, ‘not only between states but also within countries, regions and cities and among their populations. Globalisation continues to feed this diversity ... Cultural pluralism needs to be firmly based on the respect of differences, which implies equality, tolerance and non-discrimination’ (2000: 11.) ‘Cultural pluralism’, he added, ‘and *interculturalism* (the exchange and interaction between cultures) enrich life.’ (p. 21, my emphasis). In the light of this Niessen urged the promotion of a wide range of activities to foster ‘intercultural understanding and harmonious relations’ (p. 66), in industry and in the educational curriculum.

While not attempting to define either interculturalism or intercultural dialogue, Niessen asserted their value in the light of three current developments:

- Population movement across national borders, arising from the EU policy of free movement of labour, and the increasing inflow of immigrants and refugees from outside the EU.
- EU enlargement; member states increased from twelve in 1993, to fifteen in 1995, to twenty-five in 2004; seven of the ten countries which joined in that year were formerly part of the Soviet bloc, with very different social, cultural, and to an extent religious histories.
- The expansion of the EU’s overseas economic and political interests.

Intercultural dialogue was seen as a way of meeting the challenges arising from the resultant encounters between those of different social, cultural and religious background, in a context where there was a fear of rising xenophobia exploited by populist nationalist parties. Subsequently, following a lengthy consultation, the CoE endorsed the idea in its *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue “Living Together as Equals in Dignity”*, which appeared in 2008 (Council of Europe 2008a), and which has been extensively discussed in the academic literature.¹³ Indeed, it sometimes

13 See *inter alia*: Bunies 2013, Ganesh and Holmes 2011, Holmes 2014, Kymlicka 2012, 2015, 2016,

seems as if the *White Paper* is the only European institutional source on interculturalism that has been widely read.

Although the consultation had asked respondents to advise on how to define intercultural dialogue, it emerged that there was ‘marked reluctance’ to do so, and therefore the White Paper stuck with its original preferred definition: ‘Open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect’ (Council of Europe 2008a: 10). The key elements were ‘exchange’ and ‘understanding’, with as objective ‘to learn to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging’ (Consultation Para. 4(2)). Interculturalism in this sense was presented as an alternative to multiculturalism. ‘Whilst driven by benign intentions’, the White Paper argued, ‘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 – and, in particular, women’ (p. 19). Nonetheless, this did not signal a return to assimilationism. Michael Emerson and his colleagues (in Emerson ed. 2011), reflecting on recent European experience with its Muslim population, in fact saw interculturalism, or what they called ‘hybrid interculturalism’, as a sort of half-way house or compromise between assimilationism and multiculturalism, acting as a check on the excesses of the multicultural approach. Thus, writing about different modes of accommodating institutions including the portrayal of religious symbols in public spaces, Emerson proposed, as an illustration, that

‘The multicultural policy will tend to be supportive of such symbols, while the assimilationist policy will be restrictive or exclusionary. The intercultural compromise may be tolerant towards the headscarf but exclude the burka, for example, with many finer graduations of policy possible over the visual importance of the symbol or the borderline between the public and private space’ (2011: 6).

Interestingly, a similar point has been made with respect to Canadian interculturalism, which grew out of the specific context of Québec, while, say Waddington et al, having more general significance:

‘With its emphasis on reciprocity, interaction, and the integration of difference in the context of a shared public culture, Québec Interculturalism may constitute a promising “middle way” between the hegemonic tendencies of strict republicanism and the centrifugal tendencies of multiculturalism.’ (2012: 328)

Let me at this stage draw out several points from this brief account, and from the more detailed discussion in Chapter 8.

- First, the interculturalism idea emerged in Europe at a specific point in time, and in a specific context where it was conceived as an approach to the governance of increasingly complex and ramifying diversities.
- Secondly, there is considerable uncertainty as to what intercultural dialogue actually is, and how it should go about doing its work.
- Thirdly, while recognising and respecting diversities (sometimes called ‘heritages’) – it is not assimilationist – interculturalism, it is claimed, avoids treating them as essentialised, ethno-cultural blocs, and reified as ‘communities’, often with unacceptable values, especially regarding gender relations.
- Fourthly, it is accepted that intercultural dialogue would encounter many practical difficulties (language difference, structural inequalities, xenophobia, etc), and acquiring ‘intercultural competences’ would be of considerable importance.

Lähdesmäki and Wagener 2015, Levey 2012, 2016, Loobuyck 2016, Luis Fuentes 2016, Méndez García and Byram 2013, Stokke and Lybæk 2016, Wilson 2013, Zembylas and Bozalek 2011, and many of the contributors to the various edited collections on the multiculturalism/interculturalism debate.

- Nonetheless, fifthly, both the EU and the CoE had great expectations of what would result from implementing a policy of interculturalism and intercultural dialogue.

Will Kymlicka in a review of the European debate about interculturalism rightly argues that the promotion of multiculturalism must be set in its political context. Taking the CoE's White Paper as an example, he contends that that intervention represented an attempt to

‘construct a new narrative in which interculturalism emerges in Europe from the failed extremes of assimilation and multiculturalism. Such a narrative, they believe, can better sustain public support for progressive agendas and inclusive politics. Like all such narratives or myths, it is intended to enable certain political projects, while disabling others, and the Council of Europe and UNESCO authors believe that this new narrative can enable inclusive politics while disabling xenophobic politics’ (2012: 213).

He is skeptical about its chances of succeeding, and in a later paper (Kymlicka 2016) he dismissed interculturalism as a form of rhetoric, and interpreted the White Paper as ‘an attempt to tell a story that can revive the flagging political commitment to diversity’ (p. 163), adding that it ‘offers a rather tepid and apolitical diagnosis of the problems facing minorities [and] renders invisible the privileging of nationhood [while] effectively assign[ing] control over nationhood to conservative and populist forces’ [p. 173]. This is overheated, and I believe he underestimates the factors (beyond the ‘failures’ of multiculturalism and assimilationism), which drew both the CoE and the EU to interculturalism, and what were genuine attempts – misguided or not – to address some very serious issues. In a similar vein, Meer and Modood contend (I believe incorrectly, see Chapter 8), that

‘whatever the Council of Ministers had agreed to at their Council of Europe jamborees they did not intend it for their national audiences and made little or no effort to promote it in their own countries. They may have shared the view that multiculturalism had to be politically dislodged, but they certainly did not have any deep interest in interculturalism (or a new multi-nationalism) to replace multiculturalism’ (2012b: 236)

In fact, what the EU and the CoE sought to address through a policy of interculturalism were the tensions created in the European project by numerous developments, including immigration, but also the very expansion of the EU itself.

And in Canada

In the literature on Canada, a basic contrast is made between the multiculturalism which characterised the (evolving) Canadian national/federal policy from the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the interculturalism (as it has been termed) characteristic of policies adopted in Francophone Québec, and subsequently advocated by the Bouchard-Taylor Report. That report was occasioned by what was perceived as an ‘accommodation crisis’ in the mid-2000s brought on by multiple claims and demands from minorities that their cultural and religious practices should be recognised and accommodated by Québec society, notably within the legal system. This ‘so-called wave of accommodation’, say Bouchard-Taylor, ‘clearly touched a number of emotional chords among French-Canadian Quebecers in such a way that requests for religious adjustments have spawned fears about the most valuable heritage of the Quiet Revolution, in particular gender equality and secularism’ (p. 18).

Central in this was the concept of ‘reasonable accommodation’, a legal construct, defined as:

‘An arrangement that falls under the legal sphere, more specifically case law, aimed at relaxing the application of a norm or a statute in favour of an individual or a group of people threatened with discrimination for one of the reasons specified in the Charter’ [i.e. Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms] (Bouchard-Taylor, p. 289; see also Bouchard 2011: 440-1).

This and the related, but less strictly legal, concepts of ‘concerted adjustment’, and ‘intercultural harmonization’ (see Bouchard-Taylor, p. 285, p. 287) would seem to be of fundamental importance for the governance of cultural diversity, whatever form that governance takes, and whether it is described as ‘multiculturalism’ or ‘interculturalism’. Indeed, the ‘accommodation crisis’ (actual or perceived) which came to the fore in Canada in the mid-2000s is very similar to that which has occurred in Europe during the 2000s, in particular around Islam, and in a real sense it is this which is at the heart of the debate about multiculturalism and interculturalism.

As Bouchard-Taylor and related publications explain, the prevailing (federal) model of Canadian multiculturalism, which originally addressed the problems facing Canada in the 1970s, ‘still adheres to the idea that there is no majority culture in Canada, that diversity defines the country, and that this idea must guide all discussion of ethnocultural reality’ (Bouchard 2011: 463). Québec, on the other hand,

‘continues to embrace [a] duality paradigm, emphasizing the majority/minorities structure. This choice conforms to the minority status of this French-speaking people on the North American continent and the anxieties that it inevitably entails. The crucial point here is that there really is a majority culture within the nation of Quebec whose fragility is a permanent fact of life. This results in a specific vision of nationhood, identity, and national belonging’ (Bouchard 2011: 463).

What Bouchard-Taylor proposed under the label ‘interculturalism’ was a way of proceeding which would attempt to reconcile the possibly conflicting demands of the Francophone majority and those of the immigrant, ethnic and religious minorities.

Gagnon and Iacovino (2016: 123) has a useful table, summarising the differences between federal multiculturalism and Québec interculturalism (see also Gagnon and Iacovino 2004; Gagnon and St-Louis (eds) 2016; Waddington et al 2012: 318-9). Yet in some respects, it is a matter of presentation - rhetoric Kymlicka calls it (2016); Charles Taylor prefers ‘stories’. ‘Between Canadian multiculturalism and Quebec interculturalism’, says Taylor, ‘the differences lie less in the concrete policies than in the stories’ (2012: 416; see also Taylor 2015). ‘The “story” around Canadian multiculturalism as it develops in the ‘60s and ‘70s’, he adds, ‘was essentially the dethroning of [an] anglo-normative understanding’ (p. 417), the idea that the ‘the normative [Canadian] citizen traced his/her ascent from the British Isles’ (p. 416). Multiculturalism ‘could never take in Quebec’, he adds, ‘because this story just didn’t suit’. Nonetheless, Bouchard-Taylor do indeed spell out a number of policies which amount to a form of governance that if not entirely different from what happens in federal multiculturalism emphasises certain alternative approaches.

Interculturalism, says Luc Tremblay (2009: 1) ‘may be understood in a narrow or in a broad sense’; just as there are ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ forms of multiculturalism, there are likewise of interculturalism (see also Levey 2012, 2016, Padilla et al 2015). The first encompasses simply ‘intercultural exchanges and relations’. The second includes addressing, in a certain way, issues arising in relation to ‘cultural integration, collective identity, church-state relations and the manner in which cultural and religious requests must be handled in a pluralist and culturally diverse society. It constitutes a general conception of sociocultural integration’. Bouchard-Taylor, says Tremblay, uses interculturalism in both senses, but it is the latter which is of concern here, and while Tremblay concludes that interculturalism is a ‘rose by any other name’, and that ‘interculturalism constitutes a

form of multiculturalism' (p. 15), it is worth paying attention to what Bouchard-Taylor claim are the differences, though Bouchard perhaps has a greater commitment to the distinction than does Taylor (see Bouchard 2011, 2013, 2016 etc).

The Bouchard-Taylor Report (2008: 12) summarises Québec interculturalism as follows:

'a) institutes French as the common language of intercultural relations; b) cultivates a pluralistic orientation that is concerned with the protection of rights; c) preserves the necessary creative tension between diversity, on the one hand, and the continuity of the French-speaking core and the social link, on the other hand; d) places special emphasis on integration and participation; and e) advocates interaction.'

Thus, one of its defining features is that it takes account of the interests and anxieties of the majority Francophone population, and it has to be admitted that this has not featured strongly as a concern of European multiculturalism, with its emphasis on giving voice to minorities, at least in the past (Modood 2015, 2016a, 2016b). Whether this constitutes a constitutional weakness in multiculturalism which multiculturalism cannot address is a matter for debate. Likewise, communication and dialogue has not always figured as prominently as it might have done in British multiculturalism, *pace* Meer and Modood (in 2012a), and *pace* Parekh's insistence that it is (or should be) integral to his dialogical multiculturalism (see *inter alia* Barrett 2013a: 21). Beyond these, what are the other key features of interculturalism Québec style?

'Integration', say Bouchard-Taylor, 'will serve as the unifying theme of our analyses and proposals' (p. 22), and propose for Québec what they call 'integrative pluralism'. 'In a democracy, at the community or societal level', they argue:

'integration is the array of processes whereby a community organizes institutions, social relations and culture in a way that leads to the support of the greatest number of its members. From an individual standpoint, it is the array of choices by virtue of which a citizen participates fully if he so desires in the life of the host society, especially in the public sphere, and develops according to this traits and outlook' (p. 287)

This might seem not so very different in practice from a 'community cohesion' approach of the kind advocated in the UK by Ted Cantle (2005, 2008; and see Chapter 3). But what form of integration is appropriate for Québec, they ask, and what should be its priorities (p. 112)? Integration is not assimilation, they emphasise ('devoid of any assimilationist connotations', Bouchard 2011: 449), but seeks to encourage minorities to be an integral part of society, socially, culturally, economically, and politically (Bouchard-Taylor, p. 115), and makes space for that. Bouchard himself adds that this kind of 'integratory' pluralism represents 'the best way to counter the unease we sometimes feel towards foreigners':

'not to keep them at a distance, but to approach them in a way that breaks down stereotypes and facilitates their integration in the host society. In other words, exclusion is reprehensible not only on a moral or legal level, but from a sociological and pragmatic standpoint as well' (2011: 450).

Participation and interaction are thus key components, but so is protection of rights, the rights of both minorities *and* majorities. Integrative pluralism entails respect for diversity and for societal interdependence and 'encourages the development of a keen awareness of differences and distinctiveness and their close interrelationship which in turn calls for a comprehensive approach with regard to policies and programs' (p. 115). Interculturalism, characterised by integrative pluralism, is, then,

‘Fundamentally ... a search for balance and mediation between often-competing principles, values, and expectations. In this sense, it is a sustained effort aimed at connecting majorities and minorities, continuity and diversity, identity and rights, reminders of the past and visions of the future. It calls for new ways of coexisting within and beyond differences at all levels of collective life’ (Bouchard 2011: 461).

‘Balance’, ‘mediation’, ‘dialogue’ and ‘negotiation’ thus figure prominently in accounts of Canadian interculturalism, and Bouchard-Taylor review in detail what specific policies putting these ideals into practice might entail; Alain-G Gagnon’s comment (in 2000: 23) on the Québec model of integration that it seeks ‘a balance between the demands of unity ... and the recognition of different cultures’, is cited approvingly in Bouchard-Taylor (p. 119; see also Gagnon and Iacovino 2016: 117).

Conclusion

In a paper which reflects on the ongoing debate over interculturalism and multiculturalism between Ted Cantle and Tariq Modood (discussed in Chapter 3), and in particular on Cantle’s conception of interculturalism, Raffaele Iacovino comments that Québec interculturalism, in contrast to the federal Canadian model of multiculturalism

‘is meant precisely to ensure the continuity of a project for national integration in the face of a model for cultural pluralism that fails to recognise the structuring capacity of majority cultures in organising public institutions. The fine balancing act between reconciling the norms of pluralism, on the one hand, and the constant need for national affirmation on the other, has resulted in a model – interculturalism – which unambiguously seeks to reclaim a culturalist understanding of the political sociology of citizenship as it relates to the nation form.’ 2016: 490).

This makes Québec interculturalism, says Iacovino (2016: 491) very different from the European conception, or at any rate that favoured by Cantle, which is ‘premised on an undifferentiated identity landscape’. On the other hand, as Charles Taylor points out, insofar as there is in a European country a majority (as in Québec) with ‘fears for the future of its culture and way of life’ (Taylor 2012: 420), the Canadian experience may resonate with Europe. Two examples which come to mind are Ulster and perhaps Belgium (see also Bouchard 2013: 105).

That said, Iacovino (and others) are right to point to the very different contexts and social and political problems which interculturalism is said to address, and the purpose of this chapter has been to sketch the debate between multiculturalists and interculturalists in those two contexts. Chapter 3 further explores the differences (and similarities) between the two camps, especially where those involved are political scientists or ‘politologs’. Given my own situation and interests, it is unavoidable that it will focus largely on European experience, and especially, of course, that of the UK. Indeed, the chapters in Part I as a whole mainly have the European context in mind, though Canada (and indeed elsewhere) are not entirely neglected.

Finally, and briefly, to foreshadow a further development in later discussion, I should point out that multi- and inter- prefixed to ‘cultural’ (i.e. as in multi-culturalism and inter-culturalism), are not the only possible ways of signalling concepts which seek to characterise contemporary social diversity, nor is ‘cultural’ the only possible suffix. Thus, as Table 2.1 indicates, besides multi- and inter- there are also trans- and cross-, and in each case the suffixes -cultural, -ethnic etc are available to be added. Though not all such conceptual combinations actually exist (except perhaps in some idiosyncratic usage), where they do, to add to the confusion, they are sometimes used interchangeably, trans- and cross-, for example, in the field of psychology¹⁴, and writing in another field, Michael

14 See, for example, the Wikipedia entry on Cross-cultural psychiatry : ‘Cross-cultural psychiatry, transcultural

Prosser (1978: xi) once unhelpfully defined *intercultural* communication as ‘interpersonal communication on the individual level between members of distinctly different cultural groups’, and *crosscultural* communication as the ‘collective communication between cultural spokespersons of different cultural groups or between whole cultural groups’.

Certainly not all the combinations make sense. For instance, while trans-cultural, trans-ethnic, and trans-national may be deployed in academic studies in the humanities and social sciences - indeed in the case of trans-national widely so - I am not sure that this is true of trans-cultural-*ism*. For sure, a transcultural approach has been advocated as a valuable theoretical, analytical or perhaps methodological tool for understanding what is happening in contemporary diverse, or superdiverse, societies with ‘transculturality’ used to indicate what that is (see Welsch 1999, also Shankman 2017, Tetreault 2015). Although transculturalism is often used to refer to processes of transculturality (which is my preferred term), it is unclear what if anything transcultural-*ism* might mean if set alongside multicultural-*ism* and intercultural-*ism* as a specific *policy paradigm*, the term Ricard Zapata-Barrero applies to the other two: he actually uses the acronyms ‘MPP’ and ‘IPP’. Could there ever be such a thing as a distinctive ‘TPP’?

But this is jumping the gun, and Chapter 6 will later develop some comments on the (equally fuzzy) concept of transculturality.

	-Cultural	-Ethnic	-National	-culturalism
Multi	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inter	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trans	✓	✓	✓	X?
Cross	✓	✓	✓	X?

Table 2.1. Multi-, Inter-, Trans-, Cross-

psychiatry, or cultural psychiatry is a branch of psychiatry concerned with the cultural context of mental disorders and the challenges of addressing ethnic diversity in psychiatric services’ (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross-cultural_psychiatry).

CHAPTER 3. AMONG THE POLITOLOGS

‘Meer and Modood (2012a) argue that multiculturalism, just like interculturalism, (a) is open to interaction, (b) avoids “groupism”, (c) is committed to a strong sense of a whole and to social cohesion, and (d) rejects relativism. If they are right, this should put an end to this debate – which, I believe, is not going to happen soon’ (Bouchard 2016: 98).

‘Tournent, tournent, mes personnages’¹⁵

The controversy over what interculturalism means in theory and in practice, and how it is or is not different from multiculturalism (again in theory and practice) has principally involved a small number of political scientists, and political and legal philosophers, along with some administrators, on both sides of the Atlantic, engaged in an extended dialogue which at times seems, frustratingly, to go around and around in endless circles. Currently (December 2017) two recent collections covering this debate (Mansouri ed. 2017, and a special issue of *Comparative Migration Studies*, 5¹⁶) have included contributions from several of the major players on this field who have themselves written extensively about interculturalism, multiculturalism and the rest elsewhere. Their recent contributions do little more than dot the i’s and cross the t’s, albeit occasionally coming forward with a newish point or response. This is not entirely fair; other contributors to those collections do add usefully to the debate, notably in papers in Mansouri ed. 2017 concerned in broad terms with interfaith/interreligious dialogue, which are less theoretical and more practical in focus, and which will be noted in due course (see especially Chapter 15).

While not wishing to add unnecessarily to all this, I feel bound, partly for my own satisfaction, to rehearse what it has involved, and assess the claims made by the various parties about the similarities and differences between interculturalism and multiculturalism. I will begin by looking over a series of interventions stimulated initially by two British academics, Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood, among others, from around 2011 onwards.

Meer, Modood et al

In 2011-17, Tariq Modood and colleagues developed their arguments over multiculturalism and interculturalism in numerous journal articles, book chapters, and edited volumes.¹⁷ A useful starting point for the current debate is Meer and Modood (2012a), published in a special issue of the *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 33 (2), with commentaries by a number of distinguished scholars in the field, and I will come to that below. But first, a reminder that Modood in particular has been establishing the rationale and justification for a policy of multiculturalism, political multiculturalism, for many years.

As noted above, much of the argument about multiculturalism centres on what protagonists, for and against, imagine it to be, and Modood in his book *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea* (2007) presented a particularly clear vision of his own. His conception is grounded in an expanded view of (multicultural) citizenship which he regards as a ‘framework of rights and practices of participation, but also discourses and symbols of belonging, ways of imagining and remaking ourselves as a country and expressing our sense of commonalities and differences’ (2007: 128). There is a multiplicity of commonalities and differences which should find expression in the public sphere, and this must include religion, notably Islam, discussed at length in a concluding chapter. In explaining and defending this view (which he characterises as ‘moderate multiculturalism’, without entering into discussion of the ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ forms that multiculturalism might take), Modood deploys critiques of, among others, Will Kymlicka, Rogers Brubaker, Gerd Baumann, Stuart Hall, and

15 From an old song (*La Ronde*), <http://lyricsplayground.com/alpha/songs/l/larondedelamour.shtml>.

16 <https://comparativemigrationstudies.springeropen.com/multiculturalism-interculturalism>.

17 See publications listed on Tariq Modood’s website, <http://www.tariqmodood.com>.

Amartya Sen to triangulate his position. Kymlicka, for example, is taken to task for his lack of consideration for religious difference and his ‘multinational’ bias which leads him to be ‘theoretically ungenerous’ to minorities of migrant background; Baumann, Brubaker and Hall are criticised for believing that essentialism undermines the whole multicultural project. In a chapter which is particularly challenging for anthropologists, Modood defends himself against the anti-essentialists by applying Wittgenstein’s notion of ‘family resemblances’ to the concepts of culture and ethnic identity. He does not, however, in this book, tackle claims that multiculturalism leads to ‘parallel lives’ and undermines social cohesion, so let me go on to more recent accounts, notably Meer and Modood (2012a).

Modood’s 2007 book does not discuss (or even mention) interculturalism – the second edition (published in 2013) does, briefly. But in 2012, Meer and Modood drew attention to the growing (academic and political) popularity of the concept of interculturalism, and noted the ways in which it supposedly addressed the standard criticisms of multiculturalism that were being made during the 2000s, i.e. that interculturalism is ‘more geared toward interaction and dialogue’; is ‘less “groupist”’; is ‘more committed to a stronger sense of the whole, in terms of such things as societal cohesion and national citizenship’; and that ‘where multiculturalism may be illiberal and relativistic, interculturalism is more likely to lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices (as part of the process of intercultural dialogue)’ (Meer and Modood 2012a: 177). In response, their own account of multiculturalism and its intellectual history emphasised its ‘polysemic’ character, and the different ways in which it has been understood, and policies implemented, in theory and in practice, across the globe. ‘Nevertheless’, they conclude,

‘the term “multiculturalism” in Europe came to mean, and now means throughout the English-speaking world and beyond, the political accommodation by the state and/or a dominant group of all minority cultures defined first and foremost by reference to race, ethnicity or religion’ (p. 181).

In contrast with those who see the philosophies of multiculturalism and liberalism at odds, in their view multiculturalism is a ‘partial outgrowth of liberalism’ (p. 178), which addresses the problems liberalism has in dealing with societies which are de facto ‘multicultural’. In large part this is accomplished, they contend, through a concept of ‘multicultural citizenship’ à la Kymlicka, which takes into account the ‘sensibilities of minorities marked by social, cultural and political differences’ (p. 182). This is Modood’s ‘moderate multiculturalism’.

There are, in fact, as many varieties of interculturalism as of multiculturalism, but in their article Meer and Modood focus on four commonly associated characteristics, which are also linked to interculturalist criticisms of multiculturalism. These they interrogate to assess whether the claimed characteristics are unique to interculturalism and differentiate it from multiculturalism, or at least their version of it. Thus (citing Wood, Landry and Bloomfield 2006a) while interculturalists claim that communication, dialogue and reciprocity are a central feature of their approach, Meer and Modood counter that they are ‘foundational to most, if not all, accounts of multiculturalism’ (p. 182). In support of this they offer Charles Taylor’s seminal article (1992) on *Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition”* and Bhikhu Parekh’s *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2000), and comment:

‘For both Taylor and Parekh, communication and dialogue are in different ways integral features to their intellectual and political advocacy of multiculturalism, and by implication must necessarily be considered so by those drawing upon their work unless a different reading is offered. The point is that to consider multiculturalists who draw upon these and similar formulations as being unconcerned with matters of dialogue and communication is to profoundly misread and mischaracterise their positions’ (p. 185)

A second claim they contest is that interculturalism opens up communities, while multiculturalism closes them down, and is notably more relevant for engaging with relationships in

contemporary superdiverse societies. Their response is less of a defence of multiculturalism (against those charges) than a critique of interculturalism which suggests that when interculturalists focus on what happens at the micro-level, in city neighbourhoods and school classrooms, for instance, they are simply engaged in a ‘different exercise’ (p. 187). Regarding a third claim, that multiculturalism’s support for sub-national collectivities undermines the cohesion of the wider (national) community, which interculturalism seeks to foster, Meer and Modood respond by pointing to arguments put forward in the Parekh Report (2000) about rethinking the nature of Britishness, and the need to ‘bring[]previously marginalised groups into the societal mainstream’ (p. 190). Far from undermining societal cohesion, they argue, multiculturalism renews it, allowing previously alienated (indeed subordinated) minorities to become an active part of the whole.

A fourth charge is that especially where religion – and principally Islam - is concerned,

‘multiculturalism lends itself to illiberality and relativism, whereas interculturalism has the capacity to criticise and censure culture (as part of a process of intercultural dialogue), and so is more likely to emphasise the protection of individual rights’ (p. 190).

This, they contend, is based on a perception of a ‘radical “otherness”’ in Islamic practice and that multiculturalism is thought to be illiberal because it apparently ‘licences’ that practice (p. 191). Meer and Modood’s respond indirectly to this charge by pointing out that the (illiberal) practices which are often associated with religion are in fact ‘cultural’ (clitoridectomy – female genital mutilation, FGM, is their example), and that to characterise them as ‘religious’ reveals a secularist bias that has ‘alienated many religionists, especially Muslims, from multiculturalism’ (p. 191).

In sum, then,

‘while advocates of interculturalism wish to emphasise its positive qualities in terms of encouraging communication, recognising dynamic identities, promoting unity and challenging illiberality, each of these qualities already feature (and are on occasion foundational) to multiculturalism too. Moreover, multiculturalism presently surpasses interculturalism as a political orientation that is able to recognise that social life consists of individuals and groups, and that both need to be provided for in the formal and informal distribution of powers, as well as reflected in an ethical conception of citizenship, and not just an instrumental one’ (p. 192).

This is a stout defence of multiculturalism, which nonetheless does not always respond directly to the intercultural critics. It sometimes side-steps the issues, as with the argument about illiberalism, or is content to respond that in any case interculturalism is not so very different from multiculturalism and suffers from the same failings (if that is what they are).

In commenting on the paper, the anthropologist Pnina Werbner (2012) likewise offers a vigorous defence of multiculturalism against its numerous critics on right and left and in parts of academia, though she says little about interculturalism as such. Will Kymlicka (2012), too, supports Meer and Modood’s critique of the ‘crude misrepresentations’, and ‘caricatures’ of multicultural theory and practice. As noted in Chapter 2, he also makes the important point that the promotion of the ‘new fad’ (p. 211) of interculturalism (as presumably also the old fad of multiculturalism) must be set in its political context. In a later expanded version of the paper (2016) Kymlicka goes on to maintain that interculturalism ‘offers a rather tepid and apolitical diagnosis of the problems facing minorities [and] renders invisible the privileging of nationhood [while] effectively assign[ing] control over nationhood to conservative and populist forces’ (p. 173). Nevertheless, he believes that ‘in many countries, fighting for diversity in the name of multiculturalism may be a political non-starter’, and that perhaps ‘we need to drop the poisoned term’, and (presumably) fight for the same things under a different banner: interculturalism (Kymlicka 2012: 215). As Parekh subsequently remarked, what matters for some observers 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. What is needed on this view, therefore, is a new or different label that can appeal and be publicly sold, even if only to (re-) present much of what it claims to supplant’.

‘Something of this “political” dynamic’, he adds, ‘is driving much of the current fascination with interculturalism and post-multiculturalism’ (Parekh 2016: 223),

Like Kymlicka, Geoffrey Brahm Levey (2012; see Levey 2016) is also concerned with the politics of/behind interculturalism, and by distinguishing between what he calls ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ interculturalism locates ways in which the differences between it and multiculturalism are less than might be supposed. Regarding dialogue, for example, he argues that ‘there is nothing in multiculturalism that precludes an emphasis on intercultural discursive exchange, indeed, quite the opposite.’ (p. 219). Making the point that ‘one would be hard pressed to find a multicultural policy in any liberal democracy that sanctions cultural practices that violate fundamental human rights and liberties’ (p. 222), he likewise suggests that ‘interculturalism’ is sometimes no more than multiculturalism under a different (and politically more acceptable) guise.

Michel Wieviorka (2012) while ultimately agreeing (in part) with Meer and Modood’s strictures on interculturalism, criticises their ‘Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism’, and accuses them of ignoring some of the fundamental objections to multiculturalism: that cultures are mobile and changing, and never static, that thinking about multiculturalism is constrained by methodological nationalism in a globalised transnationalised world; and that ‘religion’, in his view, must be distinguished from ‘culture’, adding, rather idiosyncratically, that ‘If we exclude Islam ... multiculturalism is only applicable to a much narrower and less sensitive set of problems’ (p. 228). Moreover,

‘In democracies, it is very likely that multiculturalism will constantly clash with individualism, which states that rights are granted to individuals and not to groups ... multiculturalism only provides acceptable models if cultural identities fully accept the working of democracy and respect individual human rights.’ (p. 227).

This, of course, is very much in line with a long-standing French tradition. In a debate on citizenship in the National Assembly in December 1789, the Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre argued:

‘Everything must be denied the Jews as a nation and everything must be granted them as individuals. We should cease to recognize their legal system; there should be none but our own. There should be no legal protection for the maintenance of the rights claimed by their Jewish corporation. They should not form a political body or order within the state. They must be citizens individually. I will be told that they do not want that. Well, then, they should say so, and they should be expelled. It is repugnant that there should be a community of non-citizens within the state, a nation within a nation’ (in Archives Parlementaire, Vol. X, p. 756.)

Nonetheless, Wieviorka concludes, multiculturalism can be rescued (‘re-enchanted’) in ways he has suggested elsewhere (Wieviorka 2011). Interculturalism, on the other hand ‘functions at a much less sophisticated level, and a much less political one for us to be able to assert that it can act as a substitute. At the most, it may be possible to envisage it as complementary’ (p. 230).

In response to Kymlicka, Meer and Modood (2012b: 234) point out that interculturalism is not universally favoured as a political project across Europe, and that political critics of multiculturalism such as David Cameron or Angela Merkel do not use the term, preferring instead ‘integration’ and the like. Rather than replacing the ‘damaged’ term multiculturalism with interculturalism, multiculturalism should itself be represented as one mode of integration. Taking up a point made by Werbner concerning multiculturalism from below, they claim that the intercultural turn

in Europe represented ‘an attempt ... to displace the political; to critique a political multiculturalism with an apolitical, local-encounters-based individualism’ (p. 235). *Pace* Wiewiorka, they emphasise that among certain groups in the UK, principally those with roots in South Asia, their self-identification has increasingly tended to be presented in religious rather than ethnic (or cultural) terms and consequently religion cannot be excluded from multiculturalism’s terms of reference. Otherwise, groups would be ‘silenced or coerced into abandoning what is most important to them by succumbing to hegemonic categories’ (p. 239).

Such a distinction (religion/culture) is very prominent in the debate in France concerning *laïcité*, for example regarding the status of the headscarf or face-veil (see Wiewiorka 2012: 228, and Grillo and Shah 2013). Nonetheless, Meer and Modood find themselves agreeing with Wiewiorka that interculturalism might be ‘envisaged as complementary’ to their own form of multiculturalism (if not his), and accept that Levey’s distinction between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ interculturalism means that differences with multiculturalism may be fewer than supposed. Indeed, Varun Uberoi, in a volume dedicated to the work of Bhikhu Parekh, later commented that while ‘interculturalism helps to illuminate issues about cultural majorities that multiculturalists have somewhat neglected, ... it differs little from what Modood, Parekh, I and others would call multiculturalism’ (Uberoi 2015: 18).

A subsequent paper (Meer and Modood 2013) largely repeats the arguments set out in Meer and Modood 2012a and in their ‘Rejoinder’ (2012b), but with some additional material. These include commentary on the work of Ted Cantle, and on the implications of ‘superdiversity’ for policies of multiculturalism (discussed below), and ‘five key policy suggestions to promote inclusion and participation in multicultural societies’ (p. 123 ff.) These are intended as a re-statement of the case for a multiculturalist perspective: Multicultural policies are still necessary – multiculturalism is an ‘on-going task’; ‘Equality and diversity go hand in hand’; ‘A genuinely democratic public sphere can only thrive if minorities (as well as majorities) feel confident enough to participate and audible enough to contribute’; ‘Political leaders at local and national levels should bolster consultative forums so that minority voices can become more audible’; ‘Meaningful data collection is key, and some research is better than none’. However, it is their engagement with Cantle which deserves more detailed consideration.

Cantle v. Meer/Modood

Ted Cantle came to prominence in the debate about multiculturalism in the UK in the first instance as the author of an influential report on disturbances in the northern cities of England in mid-2001. The report recorded that ‘many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives’ (Cantle Report 2001: Section 2.1), a phrase (originating in Germany) that achieved wide currency and led to the view that Britain was ‘sleepwalking to segregation’, as Trevor Phillips, then Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, put it (2005). The full passage from the original report read:

‘Whilst the physical segregation of housing estates and inner city areas came as no surprise, the team was particularly struck by the depth of polarisation of our towns and cities. The extent to which these physical divisions were compounded by so many other aspects of our daily lives, was very evident. Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives. These lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges’ (Cantle Report 2001: Section 2.1).

This view has been subsequently contested in Finney and Simpson’s systematic demolition (2009) of the myths about immigration, integration, and segregation (see also Heath and Demireva 2014), but surfaced again in the Casey Review (2016), and later in response to the government’s Race Disparity Audit Report (Cabinet Office 2017). ‘Pakistani women are living in “entirely different society” and are “shockingly badly integrated” in Britain says official audit’, claimed a headline in the *Daily Mail* (8

October 2017).¹⁸ In fact, the report said nothing of the kind, but was concerned, rather, to document the disparities in education, employment, and housing among the different ethnic groups in Britain. The origin of the quotes, which were widely repeated elsewhere in the press, was ‘A source close to the Cabinet Office’, who spoke to another newspaper, the *Sunday Times* (see also Hall et al 2017).

To return to the Cattle Report. What the Labour government of the time concluded was that ‘Britain cannot allow “migrant communities” in the UK to establish themselves as separate and distinct cultural groupings that proceed to live in isolated enclaves segregated from “mainstream British society”’ (McGhee 2005: 64). Against this background, and with growing belief in multiculturalism’s divisive character, the government sought to re-orient policy in a series of initiatives concerned with ‘cohesion’, which, while continuing to celebrate ethnic and cultural ‘diversity’, eschewed ‘difference’ (see Grillo 2007c). Ted Cattle himself went on to found the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) in 2005, and publish on that theme (e.g. Cattle 2005). Subsequently the Institute was renamed a Foundation, and Cattle entered the debate about interculturalism of which he has become a prominent British-based advocate.¹⁹

Cattle’s opposition to multiculturalism, in the form he believed it has taken in the UK, and his support for an alternative approach, was already signalled in *Community Cohesion* (2005). The latter he defined as a type of multiculturalism within which there is a

‘common vision and sense of belonging, with fairness and justice at its heart and where diversity is seen as an enriching and positive experience for all faiths and cultures, including for the majority community’ (2005: 160).

The community cohesion perspective, which emerged from his experience of the 2001 disturbances, was intended to engage with the ‘parallel lives’ which separated communities and the ‘resulting ignorance and lack of understanding and trust that pervaded so many of the relationships’ between them (p. 9). This included addressing the anxieties of communities which felt threatened by, and refused to accept, the prevailing idea of multiculturalism. He thus questioned the value of policies which ‘failed to reconcile’ multiple diversities within a common social framework (p. 10), and called for a ‘narrowing’ of those ‘domains of difference ... that perpetuate fundamental barriers, whilst maintaining genuine cultural distinctions’ (p. 84).

This advocacy of community cohesion clearly foreshadowed his embrace of interculturalism (see Cattle 2013: 80), which he developed in a series of articles (2012a, 2013, 2016a, 2016b), in his book, *Interculturalism: The New Era of Cohesion and Diversity* (2012b), and, for example, in a plenary lecture on ‘Interculturalism as a New Narrative’, addressed to the 2012 Annual Conference of the Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism (CRONEM).²⁰ In these interventions he took issue with multiculturalism and its leading proponents, including, of course, Meer and Modood. A key point for Cattle is that the world in which multiculturalism emerged as the dominant approach to the governance of ethnic and religious diversity was very different from the one with which we are currently confronted. In a short article in the journal *Political Insights*, which is a rejoinder to a piece by Meer and Modood (2012c) in the preceding issue, he explained that a ‘new and progressive conceptual framework, based on interculturalism’ was needed to respond to the ‘reality of increasingly super-diverse and globalised communities’ (Cattle 2012a: 38). Multiculturalism, he added, ‘has been locked into the context of the 1960s and 1970s, and has simply not even begun to come to terms with the new era of globalisation and diversity’ (*ibid.*) Besides neglecting the impact of such global changes, multiculturalism refused to recognise that social identity is a dynamic phenomenon, but continued to treat it as ‘static and bounded’. It also failed to take into account other forms of difference besides ‘race’, and acknowledge the contribution of disciplines such as social psychology to an ‘interdisciplinary understanding’ of ways of resolving negative attitudes towards

18 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4960188/Pakistani-women-UK-shockingly-badly-integrated.html>.

19 See <http://tedcattle.co.uk>, and <http://tedcattle.co.uk/publications/about-interculturalism>.

20 <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/cronem/files/CRONEM-UCL2012Abstracts.pdf>.

difference; here and elsewhere he draws on the work of the Oxford social psychologist, Miles Hewstone (e.g. 2012b: 99). Moreover, ‘the multicultural brand has become toxic’ (2012a: 38; ‘poisoned’, as Kymlicka put it), and now – like immigration - has little support. By contrast, the French policy of *laïcité* has, he believes (optimistically), ‘enabled France to cope better with the shift from a largely homogeneous and monocultural society to a multiethnic and multifaith community’ (2012b: 72)

These views are developed more fully (and repetitively) in the book (2012b), in a chapter in Barrett ed. 2013, in a special issue of the journal *Ethnicities* (16 (3) 2016) devoted to the ‘Cantle-Modood’ debate, and in a contribution to the volume edited by Meer, Modood and Zapata-Barrero (Cantle 2016b). In Cantle 2013, for example, he contends that the complexity of contemporary identities, including the increasing numbers who are of ‘mixed-race’ (see also 2012b: 41 on ‘hybridity’), and the idea that identities are ‘transitory and, at least partly, chosen’ (p. 75), as something which multiculturalism is unable to tackle. Similarly, while multiculturalism was ‘difficult, though manageable’ (p. 77) when there was a small number of minorities (e.g. African Caribbean, South Asian etc), it is unable to cope with the superdiversity one now finds in a city such as London (see below). He further censures multiculturalists for persisting with an old-fashioned and outmoded notion of ‘race’, and in line with his views about superdiversity criticises the assumption that interethnic relations can be reduced to a simplistic ‘black’/‘white’ opposition. While it is certainly the case that there is a lack of an appropriate vocabulary to describe the range of antipathies in the contemporary world - our templates are usually (classical) racism and anti-Semitism, neither of which are adequate, as the discussion of the concept of ‘cultural racism’ makes clear – it would seem that Cantle too readily dispenses with ‘race’ as a subjectively lived experience or indeed as a concept which ‘racists’ (and others who still read the world through a ‘racial’ lens), regularly employ (see, for example, Cantle 2012b: 49). (The implications of the argument regarding superdiversity are discussed further in Chapter 6).

In later papers (2016a, 2016b) Cantle comments on interculturalism’s willingness to address inequalities and disadvantages, and acknowledge the concerns about immigration and multiculturalism of the (white, British) majority who feel ‘left behind’ by contemporary (neo-liberal) globalisation, and who are anxious about both their livelihoods and their cultural heritage. The ‘left-behind’ argument draws on Ford and Goodwin’s analysis (2014) of movements such as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP); in 2016 this perception was influential in attempts to interpret the Brexit vote in the UK, and the election of Donald Trump to the US presidency (see also Grillo 2003a on ‘cultural anxiety’).

The nub of Cantle’s approach might, then, be summarised as (a) ‘The Times They Are A-Changin’’, and multiculturalism failed to change with them, and (b) instead of recognising the complexity of identities, multiculturalism (‘state multiculturalism’ in David Cameron’s terms) encouraged the ‘cocooning’ (Cantle (2013: 76, citing Ranjit Sondhi; see also Wood and Landry 2008: 4) of people in ethnic/cultural/religious blocs. Interculturalism, on the other hand, accepts the complexities and acknowledges the need to accommodate diversities within an overarching framework of community cohesion, thus taking account of majority anxieties.

In what is otherwise a piece dismissive of Cantle, Bhikhu Parekh (2016: 276) dubs his perspective ‘cosmopolitan interculturalism’ in contrast to the ‘nationalist interculturalism’ which Parekh associates with the Québec model and which he discusses at some length. Indeed earlier, writing on cosmopolitanism and internationalism, Parekh had argued that one needs both a global outlook, and the rootedness of national citizenship, adding: ‘In contrast to a global citizen who is in exile everywhere, a globally oriented citizen has a home of his own from which he reaches out to others with equally valued homes of their own’ (Parekh, 2008b: 249). Modood, in the 2016 volume, also gives Cantle short shrift (2016b: 247-8), though in a previous essay (2012c), he and Meer had engaged directly with his arguments, and elsewhere Modood had observed that the ‘moral communities and traditions ... at the centre of multiculturalism, indeed at the centre of human existence, have virtually no presence in Cantle or in European interculturalism’ (Modood 2015: 249;

see also Modood 2016a).

Regarding the contention that interculturalism is better suited to the current condition of superdiversity and contrasts with multiculturalism's emphasis on 'strong ethnic or cultural identities at the expense of wider cultural exchanges', Meer and Modood respond that interculturalism's individualistic and micro focus offers a different, and lesser, form of politics to that proposed by multiculturalists (Meer and Modood 2012c: 31; see also Modood 2015). While European interculturalism is 'politically deconstructive of the alleged essentialism of multiculturalism', it 'lacks a constructive politics of its own except for a celebration of cultural mixing and the local. It leaves an empty space where there should be national discourses, policies and belonging' (2012c: 32).

Despite this, there are in 2016a, and in other papers (2016b), some guarded concessions on Modood's part, with interculturalism increasingly seen as complementary to, rather than a rejected alternative to multiculturalism (a 'critical friend', 2016a: 487). Modood also allows that interculturalists have 'expressed better' certain issues (2016a: 486 ff.) These include the 'importance of inter-group contact', and 'valuing national citizenship and of displaying this symbolically and discursively', and accepting 'the multiplication of the "multi" and the fluidity, complexity and internal diversity of the identities at the centre of multiculturalism through concepts such as "new ethnicities" and "superdiversity"'. Nonetheless, recognising multiple identities must be set against the fact that 'for some people, certain identities are absolutely central and paramount' (Modood 2016a: 487).

There is a growing awareness, too, of the desirability of responding to the anxieties of local majorities. Yet, while 'all societies must have a symbolic-normative core' (2016b: 255), says Modood, minorities must be able to contribute to (re)defining that core and being part of it. To be more inclusive is a key feature of multiculturalism, and 'wanting to extend to minorities what majorities claim for themselves', thus enabling them 'to make claims on national culture and identity in their own ways' (2016 b: 254, is one of its foundational values (2016b: 256). He includes this among the four rights of minorities along with 'protection from racism, including cultural racism and Islamophobia'; 'no insistence on assimilation, but nor should there be any hindrance against uncoercive social processes of assimilation or self-chosen assimilation'; and 'multicultural accommodation ... within shared public institutions' (2016a: 481-2).

Interculturalism: A Defence?

Among the most prominent participants in the debate over multiculturalism versus interculturalism, and advocate for what he calls the 'intercultural turn', is the Spanish political scientist, Ricard Zapata-Barrero whose position has been set out in numerous books and articles (*inter alia*, Zapata-Barrero 2016a, 2016b, 2017, ed. 2015, and Meer, Modood and Zapata-Barrero eds. 2016). His views have been much influenced by the Canadian experience and in particular by Gérard Bouchard's approach. At the same time, he takes on board Cantle's advocacy of community cohesion, and in several ways he brings these and other threads together in his engagement with the CoE's intercultural cities project (see *inter alia* Zapata-Barrero ed. 2015, and Chapter 9).

Interculturalism for Zapata-Barrero is grounded in the view that 'interaction among people from different backgrounds matters' (2016a: 155), and that it seeks a way of managing diversity 'based on exchange and interpersonal relations'. Like other advocates, he accepts that at the core of the interculturalist critique of multiculturalism is the view that 'the individual prevails over the group', and that 'culture cannot be an iron cage – either in regards to the freedom of people who do not want to be typified by origin, or in respect to institutions that fail to ensure the system of rights and duties, to distribute goods and services or to incorporate origin or nationality as a criterion' (p. 158). In short, interculturalism opposes an essentialist view of diversity.

That established, Zapata-Barrero (as a good liberal) seeks to justify the grounds for interculturalist intervention in society. These he finds in what he assumes to be the deleterious

consequences of (unmanaged) diversity (it might be better to say the process of ‘diversification’) which intercultural policies seek to rectify. Diversity, he argues, ‘tends to alter the traditional expression of national identities, threatening traditional values and the system of relations of rights and duties, which ensure a common sense of loyalty and stability between citizens and the basic structure of society’ (2016a: 159). It also ‘provoke[s] segregation and exclusion’, what Putnam (2007), whom he quotes, called ‘hunkering down’, presumably among both majorities and minorities. To counter such tendencies, interculturalism operates along three complementary policy strands. A ‘contractual strand’ (2016a: 161-2), which seeks to respect ‘tradition’ (‘established values and beliefs ... jeopardised by diversity dynamics’); this safeguards the ‘survival of the national identity’, but also respects and protects the rights of minorities. This intersects with a ‘cohesion strand’ (p. 163) which ‘sees intercultural policies as a way to promote community cohesion ... generating trust and mutual understanding’, and a ‘constructivist strand’ which sees interculturalist policies as a ‘tool for managing the innovation/dynamics of the diversity nexus [and] as an instrument for promoting development in a diverse society [and] the cultural capabilities of people’ (p. 163). This latter approach, he says,

‘tells us that the important issue is encouraging the creation of conditions for people to have real opportunities to judge the kind of life they would like to have, and the type of person they would like to be. In this sense, enhancing autonomy of the individual to choose the life they want in terms of their cultural capabilities can rightly be considered as a new driver of intercultural policy’ (p. 165).

For Zapata-Barrero, as for other interculturalists, the significance of interculturalism as a policy for managing diversity (the Intercultural Policy Paradigm, or IPP) is, therefore, that it reduces the possibly harmful effects of diversity while evading the collectivist pitfalls of multiculturalism, and enhancing individual autonomy. ‘At the core of IPP’, he says, is one ‘basic idea’:

‘that the interaction among people from different diversity groups matters, and that this has been overlooked by the MPP [Multicultural Policy] paradigm, which has mainly concentrated on securing the cultural practices of diverse groups in terms of rights and equal opportunities’ (2017: 181).

Beyond that, IPP is a ‘bottom-up process’:

‘a social and policy process beginning at the city level rather than the result or product of a top-down process or of academic reflections on diversity without clear contact with policy-making ... a leadership process whereby experts provide authoritative arguments to policy-makers to influence political decision-making (the policy makes politics) and even help policy-makers to articulate their practices and “intuitions” ... an innovative process of policy experimentation and testing through which dynamic change policies and paradigm changes might be achieved’ (2017: 175).

These are high expectations, but not unusual among interculturalism’s advocates, and such expectations will be examined more fully in later chapters.

A Preliminary Conclusion

As I noted in Chapter 1, when in the early 2000s, I was working on issues around multiculturalism and its critics, I found myself influenced by the work of Bhikhu Parekh, in Britain, on the one hand, and Alain Touraine, in France, on the other, who were addressing similar questions. Referring to Touraine, I observed that in his account of multiculturalism in France he rejected extreme forms of communitarianism because they destroy the centre. Multiculturalism, he argued, makes no sense unless it is defined as a combination of social unity and cultural diversity. He goes on:

‘It is not the separation of cultures or the isolation of subcultures which makes a multicultural society, it is their intercommunication, hence the need for a common language which will allow coming to terms with each other while recognising differences’ (Touraine 1997: 301, my translation).

In *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2000), Parekh, who had long been concerned with multiculturalism in Britain, agreed. A multicultural society needs to ‘foster a strong sense of unity’, but ‘cannot ignore the demands of diversity’ (Parekh 2000: 196). It requires a ‘common sense of belonging’ (Parekh 2000: 341). And this is the nub of the matter: ‘Common language’, ‘common sense of belonging’.

Parekh, however, wanted to go beyond a simple shared, pragmatic, commitment to a political and economic association of mutual benefit. Instead, he envisaged common ground as an emergent phenomenon, based on what he calls an ‘interculturally created and multiculturally constituted common culture’, which ‘can emerge and enjoy legitimacy only if all the constituent cultures are able to participate in its creation in a climate of equality’ (Parekh 2000: 221). This is what he calls a ‘dialogically constituted multicultural society’ (*ibid.*), involving intercultural interaction in both private and public realms. Deriving a (minimalist) ‘universal moral consensus ... through a universal or cross-cultural dialogue’, says Parekh (2000: 128), it is ‘possible to arrive at a body of moral values which deserve the respect of all human beings’ (Parekh 2000: 133).

So, then, Parekh, Touraine (and others) converge on ‘intercultural’ and ‘dialogue’, and I am sure they are right. What emerges, optimistically and idealistically, is the idea of a multicultural society, constituted politically through a specific form of, probably ‘weak’, multiculturalism embodied in a non-essentialist way in institutions and practices operating locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, and through individual and collective engagement in intercultural dialogue. To repeat what I said previously, both seemed to be saying that ‘real’ multiculturalism was not to do with blocks of static, separate, ethnically-based, cultural ‘communities’, happily ensconced behind their cultural walls. It was, rather, to do with interaction, dialogue, the willingness to meet, to exchange and change. It involved peoples engaged in an *intercultural* relationship; it was, or should be, a dialectical phenomenon.

The following chapters therefore focus on the dialogic aspect of interculturalism, and seek to examine what both ‘intercultural’ and ‘dialogue’ mean in that context and what problems are encountered when seeking to actualise the practice of intercultural dialogue.

CHAPTER 4. THE ‘*INTERCULTURAL*’ IN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUES

‘To study culture is to study ideas, experiences, feelings, as well as the external forms that such internalities take as they are made public, available to the senses and thus truly social. For culture, in the anthropological view, is the meaning which people create, and which create people as members of societies. Culture is in some way collective’ (Hannerz 1992: 5).

‘Culture is a verb’ (Street 1993).

Introduction

The aims of this and the following chapter are two-fold. First, they address some of the issues touched on in the earlier chapters concerning dialogue, specifically intercultural dialogue, generally considered to be an integral component of the policy of interculturalism that has been advocated by academics, policy-makers and practitioners in Europe and Canada as an alternative to a policy of multiculturalism for coping with ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Beyond that, the chapters also attempt to engage more generally (and comparatively) with the theory and practice of intercultural dialogue, including whether such dialogue is possible (in multiple senses), and if so under what conditions.

Perhaps at this point I should remind readers that my primary interest is in intercultural dialogue as a social, and specifically a *political* phenomenon, rather than a cognitive or communicative or linguistic one, though such aspects and their implications for social and political action must be taken into account. Furthermore, my specific interest is with dialogues in multi-cultural, multilingual, multi-ethnic societies when they are concerned with addressing cultural and religious difference; i.e. where they are dialogues *about* cultural beliefs and practices.

The present chapter (Chapter 4) begins with a review of what the ‘cultural’ in *inter-cultural* (and *intra-cultural*) dialogue means in theory and in practice: what is the ‘culture’ in the intercultural? This is followed by a discussion of ‘incommensurability’ which interrogates the idea that differences between cultures are so fundamental as to be unbridgeable. This in turn leads to questions of translation, of translatability between languages, and of cultural interpretation. Although my primary concern is with intercultural dialogues in which culture itself is at issue, i.e. where participants from different cultural backgrounds are talking about culture, such dialogues are themselves an instance of intercultural communication in general and need to be treated as such. So, although I cannot go into any great detail, what communication studies have to say about how any dialogues (whatever the content) are shaped by culturally distinctive linguistic/discursive conventions (e.g. politeness conventions and strategies) is important, and adds to our understanding of the complexity of intercultural dialoguing. This is one of the themes explored in Chapter 5.

While the concepts of ‘culture’ and ‘intercultural’ in intercultural dialogue required disambiguation, so does that of ‘dialogue’. How is the ‘dialogue’ in ‘intercultural dialogue’ to be construed? And what does ‘dialogue’ entail? This might, at first sight, seem as obvious as ‘intercultural’, but like the latter too needs further consideration, and this is addressed in Chapter 5. That chapter also reveals the grand, and often unrealistic expectations that advocates have of intercultural dialogue, a topic discussed further in Chapter 7, which also summarises what is a confusing debate, and discusses the various genres of writing on intercultural dialogue.

In brief, it would be relatively easy, but mistaken, to demonstrate that the whole enterprise of intercultural dialogue is impossible, and indeed some contemporary anthropology, as well as some contemporary politics, which stresses cultural and linguistic difference, relativism and incommensurability, seems to lead to that conclusion. It certainly must be recognised that intercultural dialogue is sometimes, perhaps often, impossible in a social or political sense - dialogue may be asymmetrical or otherwise distorted - and that language and culturally contexted linguistic practice

mean that intercultural dialogue is often extremely difficult and poses huge problems of understanding and (mis)-interpretation. Nonetheless, I wish at all costs to avoid falling into the trap of cultural solipsism. Thus, my answer to the question: ‘Is intercultural dialogue possible?’, must be: ‘Yes, but ...’

The Scope of ‘Intercultural’

What is the scope of *intercultural* dialogue? To what does – or should - the *intercultural* in intercultural dialogue refer? And what about intercultural *dialogue*? This chapter concerns ‘intercultural’, Chapter 5, ‘dialogue’.

It has been suggested that there is some tension in communication studies between two approaches to intercultural dialogue. On the one hand are those for whom any dialogue is ‘always and already intercultural’, that is ‘embedded in national, political, economic, religious and historical interests, identities, and contexts’ Ganesh and Holmes 2011: 82), along with the corollary that intercultural communication itself is ‘essentially dialogic’ (Holmes 2014: 2); on the other are those who see ‘intercultural’ as indicating a specific ‘site’ where dialogue occurs. Ganesh and Holmes argue that the former perspective has great potential, and indeed their position corresponds with my own understanding of such processes both at macro and micro levels of analysis. Nevertheless, in actual practice (rather than in dialogic theory), for instance when EU Commissioners, or members of the CoE, or advocates of interculturalism refer to ‘intercultural dialogue’, this is not necessarily what they have in mind. For them, dialogue is ‘intercultural’ when it involves certain kinds of actor.

It may seem obvious to what the ‘cultural’ in intercultural dialogue refers, and perhaps it is. Nevertheless, without making too much heavy weather of it, the question deserves attention. The obviousness is because of the connotations of the word ‘culture’ (at least in socio-scientific circles, notably among anthropologists) and its association with the term ‘cultures’ (plural), meaning peoples attached to or associated with a particular ‘culture’ or ‘way of life’. Certainly, as the deployment of concepts such as ‘interculturalism’ or ‘intercultural dialogue’ in the social-scientific literature, or by institutions such as the EU and the CoE, amply demonstrates, *ways of life* (and the people who live them) are what they connote. Paul Morris, however, suggests that alongside interpreting culture in the anthropological sense, EU documents envisage the attachment in national terms, ‘national culture’ or ‘cultures’, which Morris glosses as ‘predispositions and characteristic beliefs and behaviours derived from shared experience, education and histories, particularly where there are significant overlaps of ethnicity, language and religion’ (2017: 157). In the European context, however, those national cultures may also embrace principles which are more widely shared. Thus Ksenija Vidmar-Horvat’s paper, ‘The Predicament of Intercultural Dialogue’, which ‘interrogates’ the role of culture in EU discourse, shows how the idea of ‘culture’ refers to ‘European’ values (of which diversity is one), and that this conceptualisation has been ‘instrumentalized to generate a sense of shared belonging’ among EU members (Vidmar-Horvat 2012: 28).

At the same time, as a later chapter on *The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue* shows, there has been in the EU’s actual practice of intercultural dialogue a tendency when considering ‘intercultural exchanges’ and the like, to treat ‘culture’ as coterminous with artistic and literary endeavour, a narrower sense which I dub ‘Culture’, with capital ‘C’. That ‘Culture’ (which for some also connotes European values) may in turn be further confined to what is sometimes called ‘high Culture’ (classical music etc), while ‘popular Culture’ (think again of music) is put to one side, or better perhaps put in a different box: Mozart in one, the Beatles in another.

That said, clearly in the social sciences and in the discourse of the EU and CoE, *inter-cultural* and *inter-cultural dialogue* is intended mainly to refer to inter-relations and inter-action between peoples thought by themselves or others to have different historic identities and ways of life, specifically where such differences are associated with ‘cultural-national belonging’ (Hage 1998). That is to say, ‘intercultural’ generally refers to relations between groups which are thought to be

ethnically (sometimes even ‘racially’) different, where that difference is also manifested in their adherence to a certain way of life. These are certainly the kind of relationships which the EU and CoE and the Bouchard-Taylor Report generally have in mind, notably where the differences are described as between ‘European’ (perhaps ‘Western European’, or sometimes ‘Judeo-Christian’), and ‘non-European’ cultures and peoples. It is these which are central to the debate about multiculturalism versus interculturalism, for example. Nonetheless, especially in the current conjuncture, ways of life or adherence to beliefs and practices which are not intrinsically related to any ethnic difference, such as religion, also come within the scope of intercultural dialogue, though religious difference can also be read through the lens of ethnicity (‘ethnicised’ or even ‘racialised’). This has been the case with relations between Protestants and Catholics, for example in Ulster, where it could be argued, and indeed some, if not many, people on both sides would say, that the difference ‘Unionists’ (= Protestants) and ‘Nationalists’ or ‘Republicans’ (= Catholics) is also related to ‘ethnicity’, or even ‘race’. The same has been said about Islam where there is a complex relationship between religion and ethnicity (discussed *inter alia* in Grillo 2015a, regarding Islamophobia and in Elahi and Kahn eds. 2017).

Granted that such ‘ethnic’ or ‘ethnico-religious’ relations are the point of most discussions of interculturalism in Europe or Canada, one should not ignore cultural differences associated with other kinds of collectivities, for example those based on occupation, or more pertinently ‘class’. That there are such differences, between ‘working class’ and ‘middle-class’ cultures, has long been a subject for comment and debate in the British context, as in - to cite two low-key examples - D.H. Lawrence’s poem ‘How Beastly the Bourgeois Is’, or the (snobbish) distinction between ‘U’ and ‘Non-U’ forms of speech and practice (Ross 1954); ‘U’ equals ‘Upper’ class. The cultural and linguistic differences associated with class in Britain may be observed in the 18th century distinction between ‘barbarous’ and ‘cultivated’ speech and writing, and in the 20th century in the contrast drawn by Basil Bernstein in his writing on language and education between what he called ‘restricted’ and ‘elaborated’ speech codes (discussed in Grillo 1989). On the other hand, the 1950s and 1960s, for example, were marked by attempts to rescue working class culture and promote its legitimacy, as in Richard Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) and Raymond Williams’ *Culture and Society* (1958), iconic texts, which along with films and novels such as Alan Sillitoe’s *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958; film 1960), had a profound effect on the thinking of what was then called the ‘New Left’.

Although class differences, which often have a significant cultural dimension, should be kept in mind when thinking more generally about intercultural dialogue, it is primarily the ‘ethnic’ or ‘national’ connotations of culture with which interculturalism, and intercultural dialogues in contemporary ‘multicultural’ societies are concerned. For some observers, however, the very idea of intercultural dialogue in this sense raises the question whether it is in fact possible. My brief answer is ‘Yes’, though it faces many problems and is often very difficult. But let me first explore what is meant by ‘impossible’, and whether cultural differences are incommensurable and thus constitute an insurmountable barrier to dialogue.

Is Intercultural Dialogue Possible?

‘Questions: how could we ever describe the other? How could one ever break out of one’s conceptual framework to describe the “otherness” of the other? Could one describe the other without using one’s own categories?’ (Balagangadhara 1994: 453).

‘I do not think that we are so completely conditioned by the socio-historical and cultural environment in which we live so that we cannot question it. I even think we can step out of it ... I claim that exchange between traditions—philosophical and religious—in the form of intellectual debate and sharing of existential experiences, is possible because it has actually taken place and is taking place ... those who, in their theoretical accounts, preclude understanding are simply wrong’ (Pfändtner 2010: 84).

‘To try to understand the experience of another it is necessary to dismantle the world as seen from one’s own place within it and to reassemble it as seen from his.’ (Berger 1975: 92).

‘If I am a man or a woman with sufficient imagination (and this I do need), I can enter into a value-system which is not my own, but which is nevertheless something I can conceive of men pursuing while remaining human, while remaining creatures with whom I can communicate, with whom I have common values – for all human beings have common values or they cease to be human, and also some different values else they cease to differ, as in fact they do’ (Isaiah Berlin, in Hardy ed. 2001: 12).

‘How could we ever describe the other?’, asks S.N. Balagangadhara (colloquially known as ‘Balu’). Are cultural differences such that they are unbridgeable, that ‘reassembling’, as John Berger calls it, impossible, and that those pursuing dialogue are chasing a chimera? Certainly, if, as Balagangadhara also argues, the ‘West’ cannot understand the ‘East’ except through its own lens (as his contention regarding the Christian reading of Indian phenomena implies), then surely the reverse is also true, even though Balagangadhara himself seems to manage well enough. This inevitably leads us on to the terrain of ‘incommensurability’.

There are various senses in which that term has been used. First there is ‘value-incommensurability’ which concerns comparative (ethical) evaluation, value relativism. Two systems of thought and practice, it might be argued, are like chalk and cheese; they are equally valid in their own right and one cannot be compared with or measured against the other. They might also be incompatible, and choices might have to be made (see further below). This sense of incommensurability, may be associated with, among others, the political philosopher, Isaiah Berlin, though Berlin (as in the quotation above) did not conceive of such differences as incommensurable in a second sense, no matter how difficult the ‘entering into’ or ‘reassembling’ might be.

A second sense of incommensurability refers to ‘meaning-incommensurability’, the view that two systems of thought are grounded in principles so fundamentally different (and incompatible) that from the point of view of one the other seems either impossible to understand, or simply nonsensical. Thirdly, there is an extension of this perspective which says that the two systems are so different that not only are they mutually incompatible or incomprehensible but that there is no prospect of the adherent of one ever achieving comprehension of the other’s world-view except in her or his own terms (which is what Balagangadhara seems to be saying), i.e. that there is no possibility of a translation (in literal or figurative senses) between them. Taking a lead from others (e.g. Forster 1998, Thagard and Zhu 2003), I would describe these last two as, respectively, ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ versions of incommensurability.

‘Weak incommensurability’ might, for example, cover circumstances, events, cultural practices even, which pose difficult questions of interpretation or explanation – of ‘translation’ in the widest sense, to use the term preferred by some schools of anthropology to describe the discipline’s project (see further below). What, one might ask, leads people to do this or that to each other, or think as they do? Speaking personally, for all my adult life I have found myself wrestling with understanding what led to the Holocaust, or to atrocities such as those which took place in former Yugoslavia or Rwanda in the 1990s. It is very hard to make sense of them. Nonetheless, I would reject the view that such events are beyond reasoned explanation. Indeed, the aim of anthropology and similar social science disciplines is precisely to provide that, to ‘make sense’ of things and (if you will) ‘translate’ them. Consequently, I objected most strongly when a former UK Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, proposed that ‘To suggest that antisemitism can ever be explained, rather than condemned, is insensitive and, frankly, bizarre’.²¹

21 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/gcse-question-asks-why-do-some-people-hate-jews-1.33543>.

That said, it may be helpful to draw a distinction, which Anthony Connolly (2010) also makes to some extent, between two senses of ‘understanding’ and ‘explaining’. Thus, I may understand (a) intellectually someone’s reasons for what they are doing and why (provide a rationale that explains it), but cannot understand (b) emotionally how they can possibly do it. That is, I could never see myself believing what they believe and doing what they do, a stance which might perhaps be described as ‘cognitive empathy without shared belief’. This is not to say that understanding (a), ‘explaining’ or ‘making sense’ of something, is ever easy – sometimes it is, sometimes it is extremely hard – and many people do not make the effort to ‘read’ an event or a set of circumstances or a set of beliefs and practices other than through the lens of their own cultural, social or religious presuppositions – for example, ‘reading’ a family murder as an ‘honour killing’. They may not have the time or the inclination or the means or ‘sufficient imagination’ to do otherwise.

Although my principal concern is with incommensurability in the second (‘weak’) sense, described above, and the third (‘strong’) sense, to which I return below, some brief account of the first is needed. The following is based largely on John Gray’s (somewhat controversial, but nonetheless in my view convincing) interpretation of Berlin’s writings on pluralism and liberty.

Gray argues that a central theme of Berlin’s philosophy is ‘agonistic pluralism’. For Berlin,

‘ultimate human values are objective but irreducibly diverse ... they are conflicting and often uncombinable, and that sometimes when they come into conflict they are incommensurable; that is, they are not comparable by any rational measure’ (Gray 1995: 1)

Berlin thus rejects any ‘monist vision’ and stresses the ‘diversity and incommensurability of genuine human goods’ (Gray 1995: 23). Berlin himself says:

‘the ultimate ends of life, pursued by men are many, even within one culture and generation; ... some of these come into conflict, and lead to clashes between societies, parties, individuals, and not least within individuals themselves ... ends [which are] irreconcilable ... can lead to tragic and unavoidable collisions ... not all good things are necessarily compatible with one another’ (Berlin 2002: 151).

This diversity (value-pluralism) may occur at three levels, says Gray (1995: 43): between values which themselves are part of a single code of conduct (e.g. between the demands of liberty, equality, and fraternity); between potentially incommensurable or incompatible elements of each of such values (e.g. the demands of freedom of information and of privacy); and, most relevant from my point of view, between ‘different cultural forms’ which ‘generate different moralities and values, containing many overlapping features, no doubt, but also specifying different, and incommensurable, excellences, virtues and conceptions of the good’ (*ibid.*) Gray comments:

‘This is the form of incomparability among values, *cultural pluralism*, that is most easily confused with moral relativism - the view that human values are always internal to particular cultural traditions and cannot be the objects of any sort of rational assessment or criticism’ (1995: 44).

He adds:

‘All three forms of pluralism are found in historical contexts, such as our own, in which cultural traditions are not fully individuated and interpenetrate with one another, and which have a plural inheritance of complex moralities. Indeed, in our own society, which harbours a diversity of highly complex and pluralistic moralities, the three levels or species of value-pluralism ... are sometimes not at all easy to distinguish from one another’ (1995: 46.)

The relevance of Berlin’s ideas to contemporary debates about multiculturalism will be

readily apparent, though so far as I am aware he wrote nothing specifically about multicultural societies, unlike Joseph Raz, also a value-pluralist, whose ideas appear in many respects similar to Berlin's (e.g. Raz 1994: 155-176). But does Berlin's position mean that he might be described as a 'cultural relativist'? Gray's view (see also Crowder 2003, Ferrell 2008, among others) is that Berlin's position does not constitute a form of relativism, but of '*objective pluralism*' and the 'objective pluralist idea of value-incommensurability is central to ... his agonistic liberalism' (Gray 1995: 46.) Nor does Berlin's position make him sympathetic towards 'meaning-incommensurability'. Gray argues that for Berlin 'even between widely divergent forms of cultural life, there can be mutual understanding and communication, of the sort that relativism, and the theses of meaning-incommensurability, deny or foreclose upon' (Gray 1995: 55). Thus:

'though the forms of life human beings invent for themselves are immensely diverse, they are not in Berlin's account of them for that reason inaccessible or incommunicable to one another. On the contrary, these practices are, according to Berlin, mutually intelligible to a high degree: they are not the enclosed *weltanschauungen* or ideologies of relativism, hermetically sealed off from one another' (Gray 1995: 72).

This, of course, brings us directly to incommensurability in the second and third senses, which are my primary concerns.

William Over (1998: 41-2) has remarked that 'much of postmodern thinking operates as a form of exclusionary relativism, perpetuating the judgment that crosscultural dialogue is futile, superficial, or impossible', and that this assumption of cultural incommensurability 'can often lead to a not so benign neglect and usually mutual hostility (1998: 45). Ernest Gellner (1987: 166-7) had earlier attacked what he calls the 'partisans of the fashionable "incommensurateness" thesis [who] maintain that divergences [between different cultural visions] are both common and profound, and even conclude that translations from one vision to another are ... impossible'. I concur with Over and Gellner (and with Berlin), and would cite as an example of where such a perspective can lead Mark Hobart's account, in his review of the anthropology of development (1993), of the differences between what he calls two systems of knowledge: local indigenous knowledges (plural), on the one hand, and western scientific knowledge (singular) on the other. Hobart criticises the view that the gap between these systems may be seen as one which may be overcome by improved communication. This, he claims, 'rests upon a model of knowledge as communicable propositions and presumes rationality to be shared' (Hobart 1993:11), as well as on a 'mirage of perfect communication'. Hobart does not go quite so far as to say so, but what he implies is a form of cultural solipsism: 'local' knowledges are grounded in such different philosophical foundations from 'Western' knowledge that rationalities are not shared or share-able and communication is impossible. Traces of such a perspective, expressed in rather old-fashioned language, may be found in Jürgen Habermas's discussion of dialogue between what he calls 'modern' and 'mythical worldviews', based in large part on a reading of Lévi-Strauss and Evans-Pritchard and of the 'rationality debate carried on in England' (Habermas 1984: 66),

Such a vision of cultural incommensurability is closely associated with views of society, language and culture central to 18th and 19th century Romanticism (notably, of course, Herder – see Parekh 2000: 69; Berlin cited in Gray 1995: 122; Kahn 1995: 81; Kuper 1994: 539). In this view, the world is envisaged as consisting of discrete, impermeable, mutually incomprehensible, cultural and linguistic blocs. Leaving aside the old-fashioned view of culture and cultural difference it represents, it has to be said that such a perspective is often associated with positions which represent 'a not so benign neglect and usually mutual hostility' (Over 1998: 45). This is putting it mildly, since such a vision of incommensurability is also characteristic of what has been called 'cultural racism'. Thus, argues Pierre-André Taguieff (1990: 117), the 'communitarian type' of racism,

‘establishes difference or group identity as an absolute. In this case, it is less a question of inequality than of incommunicability, incommensurability, and incomparability. The human species is broken down into self-contained, closed totalities. The differentialist imperative is the need to preserve the community as is, or to purify it’.

In such a vision, says Alain Policar (1990: 105), cultural differences are ‘naturalized’ and rendered ‘totally unbridgeable’ (see also Stolcke 1995: 4, 6). For Paul Gilroy (1993: 65) this is a form of ‘ethnic absolutism’. It is a

‘a reductive, essentialist understanding of ethnic and national difference which operates through an absolute sense of culture so powerful that it is capable of separating them off from each other and diverting them into social and historical locations that are understood to be mutually impermeable and incommensurable’

That the idea of incommensurability has such allies does not of itself, make it wrong, but it is well to know where things sometimes lead. Thus, as Ulrich Beck puts it: ‘the instrument we use to close ourselves off from others and to reject any outsider’s perspective on “our own” culture is the *principle of incommensurability*’ (his emphases), making it seem there are ‘insurmountable chasms’ between different perspectives (Beck 2006: 54).

Thomas Kuhn on Incommensurability

Contemporary discussions of incommensurability owe much to Thomas Kuhn’s intervention in the philosophy of science; Hobart’s account, cited above, clearly echoes Kuhnian usage. In his work on scientific paradigms (a term with which he will be forever associated) Kuhn argued that

‘the reception of a new paradigm often necessitates a redefinition of the corresponding science. Some old problems may be relegated to another science or declared entirely “unscientific.” Others that were previously non-existent or trivial may, with a new paradigm, become the very archetypes of significant scientific achievement. The normal-scientific tradition that emerges from a scientific revolution is not only incompatible but often actually incommensurable with that which has gone before’ (Kuhn 1970: 103).

Kuhn himself confessed (1970: vi) to having been influenced by reading the work of Benjamin Lee Whorf, and indeed in one of his last papers (Kuhn 1999: 34) confirms that he has long been an ‘unregenerate Whorfian’, referring to what is generally called the ‘Sapir-Whorf hypothesis’ concerning the relationship between language and thought (see also Kindi 2013 on Kuhn and Whorfism).

For a period in the 1930s and 1940s the dominant issue in linguistic anthropology was the relationship between language and world view as summarised in the controversial hypothesis (named after two American linguists, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf), that the structure of a language ‘determines’ (‘strong’ version), ‘conditions’, or perhaps ‘influences’ (‘weak’ version) the way its speakers perceive and think about the world (see Whorf 1956). This view (certainly the ‘strong’ version) was largely abandoned thereafter, though Michael Herzfeld makes a neat point when referring to anthropologists who ‘deprecatingly suggest that the language of the other is so different, so exotic, that we really cannot translate it at all’, adding: ‘We are all, in this sense, Whorfian extremists, if only by affectation’ (2003: 109). One way of expressing the difference between ‘stronger’ and ‘weaker’ forms of the hypothesis is to suggest that while a totally ‘Whorfian’, or if you will ‘Orwellian’, view of language and cognition is untenable, the constant attribution of certain meanings to particular words or concepts may make it difficult for other connotations to gain acceptance, for people to ‘think outside the box’: it is not the grammar, but the authoritative connotation apparently attributed to a word or phrase through constant repetition (‘Crooked Hillary’;

‘Fake News’) which may structure perception (Grillo, Pratt, and Street 1987: 272-3, 290, and Parkin 1978).

Just as there are strong and weak versions of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, there are, as noted above, strong and weak versions of incommensurability. To repeat: strong incommensurability implies that two conceptual systems are mutually unintelligible and that someone who is embedded in one system simply cannot understand the perspective of those in another; weak incommensurability does not carry the implication of profound unintelligibility. Malcolm Forster (1998), among others, identifies both ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ forms of incommensurability in Kuhn’s writing. In the passage from Kuhn cited above, Forster argues that ‘incommensurable’ is used in a ‘weak’ sense, meaning that ‘new terms are not straightforwardly translatable, and the new paradigm leads to at least some incompatible predictions’. There is also, however, a ‘strong’ sense in which the term is used:

‘When Kuhn asserts [in 1970: 121] that “the data are not unequivocally stable,” he is stepping beyond the weak version of his incommensurability thesis. For if the data are incommensurable (because “A pendulum is not a falling stone, nor is oxygen dephlogisticated air”), then it would be false to claim that the two paradigms make incompatible predictions - the one is making predictions about a falling stone, and the other about a pendulum. The strong incommensurability thesis says everything the weak thesis says plus the claim that the empirical data for a given theory cannot be translated in a way that are [sic] neutral between competing theories’ (Forster 1998: para 14.)

In fact, the distinction might be better phrased as between ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’ rather than ‘strong’ and ‘weak’.

‘The proponents of competing paradigms’, says Kuhn (1970: 150) ‘practice their trades in different worlds ... in some areas they see different things, and they see them in different relations one to the other.’ Thus, ‘men who hold incommensurable viewpoints [should] be thought of as members of different language communities and their communication problems be analyzed as problems of translation’ (Kuhn 1970: 175). However, ‘strong’ (or ‘absolute’) versions of this incommensurability would make communication impossible (certainly highly problematic), and in the ‘Postscript’ to the 1970 edition Kuhn refuted the viewpoint which some critics had attributed to him that those holding incommensurable theories ‘cannot communicate with each other at all’. As Forster points out, ‘Kuhn appears to back off from the strong incommensurability thesis, which implied an on-going and insurmountable failure of translation across paradigms’. Instead, Kuhn argues:

‘what the participants in a communication breakdown can do is recognize each other as members of different language communities and then become translators. Taking the differences between their own intra and inter-group discourse as itself a subject for study, they can first attempt to discover the terms and locutions that, used unproblematically within each community, are nevertheless foci of trouble for inter-group discussions ... they can next resort to their shared everyday vocabularies in an effort further to elucidate their troubles. Each may, that is, try to discover what the other would see and say when presented with a stimulus to which his [sic] own verbal response would be different. If they sufficiently refrain from explaining anomalous behavior as the consequence of mere error or madness, they may in time become very good predictors of each other’s behavior. Each will have learned to translate the other’s theory and its consequences into his own language and simultaneously to describe in his language the world to which that theory applies. That is what the historian of science regularly does (or should) when dealing with out-of-date scientific theories. Since translation, if pursued, allows the participants in a communication breakdown to experience vicariously something of the merits and defects of each other’s points of view, it is a potent tool both for persuasion and conversion’ (p. 202).

And this will, in due course, bring us squarely to the question of translation, discussed below.

Theoretically, I would regard the strong or absolute, sometimes also called ‘radical’ version of incommensurability (Benhabib 2002, Forster 1998) as untenable and so, I believe, would most anthropologists. Seyla Benhabib (2002: 21) calls it an ‘incoherent philosophical position’, which ‘distract[s] us from the many subtle epistemic and moral negotiations that take place across cultures, within cultures, among individuals, and even within individuals themselves in dealing with discrepancies, ambiguity, discordancy, and conflict’ (p. 31). It is not ‘on’ even when we are confronted with worldviews operating with different ontologies, assumptions, premises and modes of argumentation. Anthony Connolly (2010) similarly takes a stand against any cultural incommensurability thesis, and does so by rooting the philosophical grounds for his position in theories of ‘physicality’, though I do not feel it necessary to follow him along that particular route. My own view, so far as ‘radical’ incommensurabilists are concerned, is simply to leave them to their own devices; they have dug themselves into a very deep hole.

Radical incommensurability is also suspect empirically. Its ‘culturalist’ vision (Grillo 2003a), assumes a world of static, finite and bounded ethnolinguistic blocs (labelled ‘French’, ‘Nuer’ and so on) which determine individual and collective identities and the subject’s place in social, political, and indeed cognitive schemas. This view is at odds with the dynamic, anti-essentialist idea of culture that is nowadays commonplace in contemporary anthropology. The reality of the world, as anthropologists see it, is ‘mixity’. Speakers of different languages and adherents of different cultural practices have *always* been in dialogue, wherever and whenever human beings come into contact. Cultures always travel, and their carriers are perpetually interacting, sometimes peacefully, often violently; many examples can be cited from pre- and post-Colombian Central America, pre- and post-colonial Africa, or as a recent major study has shown, throughout recorded history along the ‘Silk Road’ (Frankopan 2015; see also Beck 2006: 55 on ‘interwoven histories’).

‘If one wants to see some of the fundamental ways in which people process cultural mixing, translation and difference, then it would be much better to go directly to dialogic interaction’ (Rampton and Harris 2002: 38). A dynamic, dialogic conception of culture and language avoids the pitfall of incommensurability (Grillo 2003a: 161; see also Healy 2013: 266 on the ‘hermeneutico-dialogical approach to the problem of intercultural communication and understanding’). What this dialogic conception entails is illustrated by the work of social linguists such as John Gumperz and others discussed in Chapter 5, but is also apparent in an illuminating passage in one of Kuhn’s last essays.

Kuhn has retailed an early encounter with incommensurability, which eventually led him to write *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. As a graduate student, he was reading Aristotle on physics to provide some background to his lectures on Galileo. He comments:

‘Though in physics his views seemed uniformly strange, I could usually persuade myself that my reading of the text was telling me what those views were. Here and there, however, I encountered passages that to me made no sense. My difficulty was not that these anomalous passages were more obscure ... My problem was rather that I could not believe a person of universally acknowledged intelligence could have written them: they seemed not so much obscure as absurd’ (1999: 33).

He nonetheless persevered and ‘suddenly saw a pattern’, and began to make sense of what had previously seemed absurd, ‘but only if I changed my way of reading’. Intercultural dialogue may thus involve deep reading by means of which what previously seemed absurd is eventually revealed as meaningful.

A further perspective on cross-cultural understanding is offered by the Polish linguist, Anna Wierzbicka (1991: 14). For it to be possible at all, she contends, ‘there must be some common core of “human understanding” [which] must rely not only on some shared or matching lexical items but also on some shared, or matching, grammatical patterns in which those shared lexical items can be used’. There must be, she adds, ‘a semantic metalanguage independent, in essence, of any particular

language or culture - and yet accessible and open to interpretation through any language' (1991: 6). Consequently, 'we must learn to find "human nature" within every particular culture' (1991: 9). Relevant here is Habermas's communicative model of language which, he says, by contrast with other models, 'takes all the functions of language equally into consideration', and

'presupposes language as medium of uncurtailed communication whereby speakers and hearers, out of the context of their preinterpreted lifeworld, refer simultaneously to things in the objective, social, and subjective worlds in order to negotiate common definitions of the situation' (Habermas 1984: 95).

Within his theory of communicative action Habermas gives explicit place to dialogue as a route to common understanding (Habermas 1984: 99), and comments:

'Processes of reaching understanding aim at an agreement that meets the conditions of rationally motivated assent to the content of an utterance. A communicatively achieved agreement has a rational basis; it cannot be imposed by either party, whether instrumentally through intervention in the situation directly or strategically through influencing the decisions of opponents ... Agreement rests on common *conviction* ... Reaching understanding is the inherent telos of human speech' (Habermas 1984: 287).

This perspective resonates with that of Wierzbicka, and of Isaiah Berlin of whom Jason Ferrell writes that his conceptions of pluralism incorporates a vision of shared humanity, a 'common human horizon', and implies that 'human discourse and debate are valid options for dealing with those who are different' (2008: 52). It is all too easy to underestimate the human capacity for learning, for dialogue, and indeed for translation.

Translation and Interpretation

'I assume that with patience I, an Englishman, can learn to speak any other verbal language, e.g. Kachin. Furthermore, I assume that I will then be able to give an *approximate* translation in English of any ordinary verbal statement made by a Kachin. When it comes to statements which, though verbal, are entirely symbolic, e.g. as in poetry, translation becomes very difficult, since a word for word translation probably carries no associations for the ordinary English reader; nevertheless, I assume that I can, with patience, come to understand *approximately* even the poetry of a foreign culture and that I can then communicate that understanding to others' (Leach 1954: 15, his emphases).

'The discourse of incommensurability', says Over (1998: 52) 'has hindered meaningful crosscultural dialogue'. Indeed, a concept of meaning-incommensurability by definition would seem to preclude it. In fact, of course, we know that such dialogue happens, all the time, as does translation. (Vasso Kindi's excellent paper on 'Incommensurability and Translation', 2013, suggests how the problem may be circumvented theoretically).

The theory of translation is fascinating, difficult and important, and it is not my purpose to discuss it in depth; certainly, I cannot claim to contribute to it. Nonetheless, some orientation is required. In brief, I have, and always have had, great sympathy for Edmund Leach's position, and in certain respects the above statement, with the considerable weight put on the word 'approximately', says it all. Perhaps not surprisingly what Leach says is not inconsistent with a more considered and very influential statement by the great linguist Roman Jakobson (1959; on the relationship between Leach and Jakobson see Tambiah 1998, 2002). Both George Steiner (1975) and Umberto Eco (2001), for instance, draw extensively on Jakobson's seminal paper, and though there has been much more recent and advanced work (among many others Finnegan 1992, Favretti et al eds. 1999, Rubel and Rosman eds. 2003, Long ed. 2005, Pym 2009, Venuti 2008, ed. 2012) especially concerned with the

art and artifices of the translator, that paper repays attention for its common sense approach and the clarity with which Jakobson (like Leach) makes his case.

There are, suggested Jakobson, three ways in which verbal signs might be interpreted, involving translation ‘into other signs of the same language, into another language, or into another, nonverbal system of symbols’. He further characterised these as follows (see Steiner 1975: 260-1, and Eco 2001: 67):

‘1) Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language. 2) Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language. 3) Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems’

Regarding 2), he adds that usually there is ‘no full equivalence between code-units, while messages may serve as adequate interpretations of alien code-units or messages’. Moreover,

‘translation from one language into another substitutes messages in one language not for separate code-units but for entire messages in some other language ... the translator recodes and transmits a message received from another source. Thus translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes’ (All quotations from Jakobson 1959: 233).

The problem of equivalence looms large (and note again Leach’s ‘approximately’). Lexical deficiency, says Jakobson, is not a problem, and ‘no lack of grammatical device in the language translated into makes impossible a literal translation of the entire conceptual information contained in the original’ (p. 235). Indeed, ‘any assumption of ineffable or untranslatable cognitive data would be a contradiction in terms’ (p. 236). However,

‘In jest, in dreams, in magic, briefly in what one would call everyday verbal mythology and poetry above all, the grammatical categories carry a high semantic import. In these conditions, the question of translation becomes much more entangled and controversial’.

Since with poetry ‘paronomasia [play on words] reigns’, poetry ‘by definition is untranslatable. Only creative transposition is possible’ (see also Kindi 2013 translating poetry). Poetry is not alone in precluding ‘translation proper’, however – see, for example, Lynne Long’s discussion (2005) of the problem of conveying the word-play in the title of an essay (*Des Tours de Babel*) by Jacques Derrida. This does not, however, preclude gaining an understanding of what is at stake, either through ‘creative transposition’, and/or through extensive exegesis grounded in a detailed knowledge of the language(s) and culture(s) involved, as Long herself, and the contributors to her edited collection on *Translation and Religion* (2005) amply demonstrate. (Steiner’s comment on Jakobson is that ‘every translation of a linguistic sign is, at some level, a “creative transposition”’, 1975: 261)

Eco’s *Experiences in Translation* (2001) appeared after *The Search for the Perfect Language* (Eco 1995). It is an interesting, often enjoyable book, though somewhat disappointing after the verve of Steiner’s *After Babel* (1975) when it covers the same ground. Steiner’s is a fascinating text which brings to bear all his formidable linguistic resources and immense knowledge of European writing. Both Steiner and Eco are mainly concerned with the translation of literary texts and ultimately both are in large agreement, though Eco might contend that languages are ‘sometimes mutually incommensurable’ (1995: 330) and ‘translation proper’ unlikely, whereas for Steiner, translation is both ‘desirable and possible’ (1975: 252).

Steiner argues that misgivings about the possibility of translation are ‘rooted in ancient religious and psychological doubts on whether there ought to be any passage from one tongue to another’ (1975: 239). From the 15th century, however, such doubts took on secular form ‘founded on the conviction, formal and pragmatic, that there can be no true symmetry, no adequate mirroring, between two different semantic systems’. Against this is the ‘universalist’ perspective (represented, for example, by Leach) grounded in the

‘empirical conviction that the human mind actually does communicate across linguistic barriers’ (1975: 94). ‘Given a vocabulary’, says Steiner,

‘and a set of procedural rules (both subject to change), given the limitations of comprehensibility and certain performance boundaries (no endless sentences) we can *say anything*. This latent totality is awesome and should be felt as such’ (1975: 216).

Translation, he adds, is ‘fully implicit in the most rudimentary communication. It is explicit in the coexistence and mutual contact of the thousands of languages spoken on the earth’ (1975: 471). Pointing to the fact of a multilingual world, he emphasises the way that this

‘invites or compels a certain percentage of mankind to speak more than one language. It also means that the exchange of information, of verbalized messages on which history and the life of society depend, are in very large part interlingual. They demand translation. The polyglot situation and the requirements that follow from it depend totally on the fact that the human mind has the capacity to learn and to house more than one tongue’ (1975: 286).

Never was this truer than in the contemporary world of globalisation and transnationalism (yet the significance of this is normally unacknowledged in transnational studies).

Nonetheless there are degrees of translatability (e.g. between metaphysics and ‘the most banal’, 1975: 244) and thus, ‘between “translation proper” and “transmutation” a vast terrain of “partial transformations”’ (1975: 415). Moreover,

‘Not *everything* can be translated. Theology and gnosis posit an upper limit ... Not everything can be translated *now*. Contexts can be lost, bodies of reference which in the past made it possible to interpret a piece of writing which now eludes us ... there are texts which we cannot *yet* translate but which may, through linguistic changes, through a refinement of interpretative means, through shifts in receptive sensibility, become translatable in the future’ (1975: 249).

But to repeat: translation is never easy or simple, as is illustrated by the difficulties encountered when translating Christian concepts such as ‘conversion’ (Léon-Portilla (1974: 251-2), or ‘sin’ (Burkhart 1989: 28 ff.) into the Mexica language, Nahuatl (see also Long ed. 2005, and Balagangadhara 2014 on translating holy texts). ‘Even in direct translation’, says Burkhart (1989: 27), ‘the Nahuatl words used had various denotative and connotative meanings alien to those of the terms they translated’. The complex metaphorical usage characteristic of Mexica rhetoric, e.g. what has been called *difrasismo*, where two tropes are combined to imply a third (Edmonson 1974: 12; Arteaga 1997: Chapter 1), pose numerous hurdles for the translator. Steiner himself has an interesting discussion of the problems of translating from Chinese (1975: 357), and a fascinating account of the pitfalls of translating the innocent French phrase ‘j’aime la natation’ into English (1975: 303). The French language, says Steiner, is a

‘palimpsest of historical, political undertones and overtones. To a remarkable degree, these embed even ordinary locutions in a “chord” of associations which anyone acquiring the language from outside will never fully master’ (1975: 172).

Eco is in close agreement: translation may be ‘the most obvious example of how we try to say the same thing using different sign systems’ (2001: 70), but as such it is ‘only a very limited form of interpretation’ (2001: 76). Translation, he says ‘is not only connected with linguistic competence, but with intertextual, psychological, and narrative competence’ (2001: 13), and always involves ‘a shift ... between two cultures - or two encyclopedias’ (2001: 17). Asking whether translators are ‘entitled to change a surface story in order to preserve an allegedly deeper one’ (2001: 39), Eco suggests that a narrative can be summarised into ‘micro-propositions’ at different levels, which can be ‘embedded in

larger macro-propositions'. Accordingly, he proposes that one can 'change the literal meaning of single sentences in order to preserve the meaning of the corresponding micro-propositions, but not the sense of the major macro-propositions'. So, says Steiner, translators must do what they can, and must

'actualize the implicit "sense", the denotative, connotative, illative, intentional, associative range of significations which are implicit in the original, but which it leaves undeclared or only partly declared because the native auditor or reader has an immediate understanding of them. The native speaker's at-homeness, largely subconscious because inherited and cultural-specific, in his [sic] native tongue, his long-conditioned immersion in the appropriate context of the spoken or written utterance, make possible the economy, the essential implicitness of customary speech and writing. In the "transference" process of translation, the inherence of meanings, the compression through context of plural, even contradictory significations "into" the original words, get lost to a greater or lesser degree' (Steiner 1975: 276).

Acts of Cultural Translation

This latter view of translation is one which is probably widely accepted in anthropology, where the anthropological endeavour has often been described (literally and metaphorically) as an 'act of translation', or more specifically of 'cultural translation', nowhere more so than in the work of Edward Evans-Pritchard and his colleagues at Oxford. In fact, says Talal Asad in his sophisticated and thought-provoking discussion of the idea (1986: 141), the 'translation of culture' had by the 1950s 'become an almost banal description of the distinctive task of social anthropology'. (For an earlier view see Pocock 1961: 88-9; for a more recent perspective *inter alia* Papastergiadis 2000, chapter 6). Evans-Pritchard himself put it this way in his Marett Lecture of 1950 (in Evans-Pritchard 1962: 22):

'[The anthropologist] goes to live for some months or years among a[] people. He [sic] lives among them as intimately as he can, and he learns to speak their language, to think in their concepts and to feel in their values. He then lives the experiences over again critically and interpretatively in the conceptual categories and values of his own culture and in terms of the general body of knowledge of his discipline. In other words he translates from one culture into another.'

This approach was celebrated in the 1971 *Festschrift*, edited by Thomas Beidelman with the title *The Translation of Culture*. In fact, the title is misleading; even allowing for the way in which the two are inextricably intertwined 'interpretation' would be better than 'translation'. Moreover, with one possible exception (a paper by Julian Pitt-Rivers), the essays (interesting though they are) do not address any of the theoretical or analytical problems hinted at in the title or in Evans-Pritchard's own remark regarding on the 'semantic difficulties in translation' (1965: 12) which is cited at the outset of the *Festschrift*. Instead of reflecting on translation or interpretation the contributors simply do it.

One member of the 'Oxford School' who did address the more problematic aspects of this representation of the anthropologist's task was Edwin Ardener in an essay a version of which, though drafted earlier, was published in 1982, as 'Social Anthropology, Language and Reality', and subsequently republished with the title 'Comprehending Others' (Ardener 1989). The paper is fascinating, witty, at times very funny, intermittently brilliant: see for instance his analysis of attempts by ethnologists to represent in English vocabulary the postures and gestures found among primates, 'girming', 'geckering' etc (1989:160-163), his discussion of the difficulties of translating 'hand' in Ibo and English (pp. 166-7), and his account of the use of the word 'Diet' as translation of the term for the Japanese parliament (p. 175). All of these illustrate his perspective that "'translation" is, when we come to life rather than letters, deeply involved in the nature of the contact of the intertranslating entities' (p. 175.) Although occasionally Ardener seemed to sail dangerously close to incommensurability, he usually managed to navigate away from it. The principal message is that translation and cross-cultural communication are formidable if not quite impossible tasks, full of traps for the unwary. Ardener comments:

‘understanding of others, a supposedly social anthropological aim, is impossible with a merely naïve use of language ... and yet even under favourable conditions language alone is not an infallible guide. The idea of translation, implicit in much recent social anthropology, involves us in a world of infinite reflexivity, if not infinite regress’ (p. 182).

Miscomprehension abounds, at times comically so, as in his discussion of the different (anatomical) ranges of reference of the words *hand* in English and *aka* in Ibo. He remarks:

‘To the English-speaker “shaking hands” and “arm grip” are two *kinds* of greeting. To the Ibo they are degrees of intensity, demonstrativeness, of warmth, of “the same” greeting. As a result even a “warm” handshake in the English sense may seem relatively “cool” as a greeting to an Ibo’ (pp. 166-7.)

‘The paradox of total translation’, he concludes, shows both that we do not want it, and that in life rather than in text ... we cannot have it’ (p. 185).

Intercultural dialogue, then, almost by definition will involve cultural translation and interpretation, ‘complex work’ (Melhuus 1999: 74), ‘unmanageable, risky work’ (Clifford 1998: 363), often highly problematic. ‘Much of our knowledge about other cultures’, says James Clifford (1986: 109), ‘must now be seen as contingent, the problematic outcome of intersubjective dialogue, translation and projection’. Asad (1986) has a good discussion of the power relations that may also be involved, as in a colonial or indeed post-colonial context wherein the authority for translation, linguistic and cultural, resides with the powerful and the opportunities abound for ‘undercoding’ or ‘overcoding’ (to cite terms used by Eco, 1984; see further in Chapter 12). As Asad also observed (1986: 159) cultural translation involves translation not only between languages but between, from and into, particular registers. See, for example, his critique of Gellner’s account of the idea of *baraka* among Moroccan Berbers (in Gellner 1970) where Gellner’s ‘too-fluent use of a religious vocabulary with strong, and perhaps irrelevant, Christian overtones must prompt doubts and questions’ (1986: 153) - a point sometimes made about Evans-Pritchard’s *Nuer Religion*.

‘Intercultural translation’, says Clara Sarmiento ‘should foster communication, generate mutual intelligibilities between different worldviews, find convergent as well as divergent points, and share alternative concepts and epistemologies, so that distant (in both space and time) cultures may ultimately understand each other’ (2014: 614). On both theoretical and empirical grounds I abjure the idea that intercultural dialogue is impossible because cultures are incommensurable, but recognise that such dialogues may require a great deal of hard work, skill, and imagination to produce the outcomes that Sarmiento envisages. This is perhaps especially the case where interlocuteurs are trying to get to grips with what the other is saying about ‘their’ culture. The contribution of social linguists such as the ethnographers of speaking to an understanding of the complexities of such intercultural dialogue provides further evidence for this, as Chapter 5 demonstrates.

A further problem with ‘intercultural’ dialogue, touched on very briefly in this chapter, concerns reconciling a dynamic, anti-essentialist conception of culture (as a ‘verb’, as Brian Street put it) with the idea that what is at stake is ‘a culture’, i.e. beliefs and practices attached to a collectivity, who are its bearers, and who have a commitment to it which demands recognition. Interculturalist critics have certainly seen this as a fundamental difficulty with the multicultural policy paradigm, as previous chapters have shown. Nonetheless, in so far as interculturalism envisages intercultural dialogue involving bearers of ‘a’ culture talking to each other, they would seem to be confronted by the same problem.

CHAPTER 5. THE ‘DIALOGUE’ IN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUES

‘A dialogic approach to intercultural communication will give nations and societies a better chance of achieving understanding and compromise to address mutual interests and concerns ... dialogue may be our only rational recourse’ (Day 1998: 28).

Overview

In an excellent summary drawing on research in both Europe and Canada, Martyn Barrett emphasises that dialogue is central to one of interculturalism’s principle objectives, that is to ‘generate a strong sense of a cohesive society based on shared universal values’ (2013a: p. 26). Pace Cantle, who argues that dialogue is only an ‘instrumental’ part of interculturalism’s ‘broader programme of change’ (2012b: 80, see also pp. 83-4), I fully acknowledge its centrality. But if the notion of ‘culture’ and ‘intercultural’ in intercultural dialogue required disambiguation, so does that of ‘dialogue’. How is the ‘dialogue’ in ‘intercultural dialogue’ to be construed? And what does ‘dialogue’ entail?

‘Within the domain of dialogue studies’, notes Paul Weller, ‘many individuals are working in “corners”, and do not necessarily know what is going on elsewhere that is relevant but could benefit from doing so’ (2016: 24). That this is also true of intercultural studies as a whole, may be apparent from other chapters in this book. There is indeed a very large and long-standing theoretical literature on the nature of dialogue which is largely ignored in studies of interculturalism. Sleep, Sener and Weller (eds. 2013) and Sener, Sleep, and Weller (eds. 2016) together assess contributions by 25 authors ranging from Karen Armstrong to Ludwig Wittgenstein via Bakhtin, Freire, Gadamer, Goffman, and Habermas, among others, illustrating their very varied understanding of what ‘dialogue’ means. Tariq Modood (2017) rightly takes us back further, to Socrates and Plato, while Ganesh and Holmes (2011), Ganesh and Zoller (2012), Holmes (2014), Haydari and Holmes eds. (2015) offer yet another lineage of dialogue studies. There is also a *Journal of Dialogue Studies*, published by the Dialogue Society, which carries numerous articles assessing how various thinkers have understood dialogue and contributed to its study, as well as papers concerned with dialogue in practice, often within the NGO sector. The Society, whose foundation was ‘inspired by the Turkish scholar and peace advocate Fethullah Gülen’²², also runs a ‘Dialogue in Islam Course’ aimed at, among others, young British Muslims.²³ It is one of numerous research centres and advocacy groups, such as the *Center for Intercultural Dialogue*, which link scholars and practitioners working in the field.²⁴

Neither the theoretical and philosophical literature, nor the very substantial body of empirical research will, however, be covered in any great depth here, nor will there be any serious attempt to forge linkages of the kind Weller rightly advocates. Nonetheless, the chapter begins with an account of work in the field of pragmatics which considers in broad terms how social context and cultural understandings shape dialogue. Secondly, bearing in mind the contexts of Europe and Canada which are the focus of much reflection on interculturalism, the chapter seeks to demonstrate what its proponents believe rests on intercultural dialogue, what comes from it. This is followed by an extended account of Bhikhu Parekh’s ‘dialogical multiculturalism’ which perhaps more than most appreciates the difficulties that engaging in dialogue actually poses, even if it does not solve them. It is widely recognised that ‘genuine’ dialogue (as it is often called) demands special skills and appropriate training for participants to acquire the necessary ‘dialogical competence’, to engage in it, and a further section of the chapter describes attempts to identify what this entails.

22 <http://www.dialoguesociety.org/about-us/faq.html#q11>, see also <http://www.dialoguesociety.org/about-us.html>.

23 <http://www.dialoguesociety.org/courses/dialogue-in-islam-course.html>.

24 <https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org/about>;

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Center_for_Intercultural_Dialogue; see also Ganesh and Holmes 2011. The Diversity in Organizations, Communities & Nations Research Networks (<http://ondiversity.com/about>) are also partly concerned with dialogue.

The conclusion to be drawn from this chapter is that there are very high expectations of intercultural dialogue entertained by political theorists and by practitioners (and not least by some politicians), accompanied by limited understanding of how those expectations might be achieved. Nonetheless, while the idea that intercultural dialogue is a ‘good thing’ largely prevails, some observers see it as a snare and a delusion and are deeply skeptical about what it is meant to do.

The Pragmatics of Intercultural Dialogue

One important field of research, communication studies, concerns how dialogue is shaped by culturally distinctive linguistic/discursive conventions (e.g. politeness conventions and strategies). Although I cannot go into any great detail about what that research says, I want to point to some of the ways in which its findings contribute to our understanding of the complexities of interculturalism.

Donal Carbaugh, for example, working in the style of the ethnography of speaking, which is also the label applied to the work of John Gumperz (discussed below) or Dell Hymes, is concerned with how the cultural enters communication, and thence with intercultural communication, meaning communication between people from different cultural backgrounds, with different ways of communicating or talking, or indeed maintaining silence.²⁵ ‘We cannot assume’, says Carbaugh, ‘different participants come to dialogue with the same context, acts, events, styles, and meanings in view’ (Carbaugh et al 2011: 106; see also Carbaugh 2013). There may, for example, be different cultural and social assumptions about the very nature of the activity in which the various parties are engaged (a point illustrated by the case study discussed in Chapter 13), with different connotations of what might loosely be translated as ‘dialogue’ in different languages and cultures (i.e. how different cultures categorise and construe verbal interaction between persons). Moreover, through the use of the varied terms employed, for instance in Russian or Japanese, to describe different kinds of verbal communication, people may be speaking, implicitly, about ‘social identities, social relationships, and social institutions [and] about proper conduct as a person, what motives are being targeted, and its preferred styles for action’ (Carbaugh 2013: 14.) The use of such terms signals ‘messages’ about social relations and personhood, and ‘about communication itself’ (pp. 14-16). Consequently, there are, says Carbaugh, ‘cultural differences in discourse conventions that lead to misinterpretations of intent ... and negative cultural stereotypes’ (1990: 155). The sources of ‘intercultural asynchrony’, a term Carbaugh uses to encompass the ‘interactional dynamics’ which generate ‘detrimental outcomes’ (Carbaugh 1990: 157), are many and varied (Carbaugh 1990: 158), and this demands ‘sensitivity to such variations in the shape and meaning of dialogue and communication generally’ (Carbaugh et al 2011: 106).

An influential figure in the analysis of intercultural communication was John Gumperz who investigated the cultural basis of the linguistic and discursive conventions and practices which shape intercultural dialogues, especially in societies (such as Britain), where ‘communicative resources ... can be every bit as essential as real property resources were once considered to be’ (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982: 5). Gumperz (1982: 1) argues that ‘to participate in [] verbal exchanges, that is, to create and sustain conversational involvement, we require knowledge and abilities which go considerably beyond the grammatical competence we need to decode short isolated messages’. One important aspect that much concerns Gumperz is prosody including its role in

‘enabling the conversationalists to chunk the streams of talk into the basic message units which both underlie the interpretation and control the turn taking or speaker change strategies that are essential to the maintenance of conversational involvement’ (Gumperz 1982: 107).

25 *inter alia* see Weller 2016: 19, who asks whether ‘logos’ is necessary to define dialogue. Weller 2016 also notes discussions within the Dialogue Society as whether to include human-animal or indeed human-inanimate ‘dialogues’ within its terms of reference. See also Carbaugh 2013.

Gumperz deploys numerous case studies to illustrate this perspective. Regarding interaction between what he describes as ‘native’ speakers of English and speakers of ‘Indian English’, for example, he observes ‘two striking features’ in the speech of the latter, ‘the subdivision of utterances into small foot length chunks; the rhythmic marking by stress of several words with no one syllable made tonally prominent’ (Gumperz 1982: 121), linguistic devices which derive from ways of speaking North Indian languages. The important point is that such differences in ways of speaking English ‘affect interpretation on several levels’, including

‘the level of rhetorical principles governing such matters as how to respond to a preceding speaker’s move, how to elaborate a point and in what order to present information [These are] matters of basic cultural norms and of the interaction of prosody and syntax reflecting long established, historical traditions that arose in distinct cultural areas, and are maintained through networks of interpersonal relationships’ (Gumperz 1982: 151-2)

These different ways of speaking are generally employed unconsciously (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982: 8, cf. Clyne 1994: 148). Consequently,

‘in committee meetings and to some extent in debates and discussions, tacitly understood rules of preference, unspoken conventions of what counts as valid and what information may or may not be introduced prevail’ (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982: 9).

In individual face-to-face interaction, too, even between those who share a good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz 1982: 15), there may be misunderstandings due to the use of discourse conventions derived from different cultural traditions. In Arpita Mishra’s account (1982) of an interview between a British-born, female staff member of a counselling centre and an Indian-born, male teacher, who had been referred to the centre to seek advice on how improve his language, it is clear that there is a lack of understanding, on both sides, of the conversational conventions being employed. The teacher is a highly competent speaker of English, but after a few minutes the interview breaks down in mutual incomprehension. The teacher’s narrative style or way of what Gumperz calls ‘chunking’ discourse bewilders the career adviser. Both parties become increasingly baffled as the 90-minute interview goes on, and the result is total communicative breakdown (see also Gumperz 1982, Chapter 8, and Holmes 2015, among many others for similar examples.)

More recent work by linguists and anthropologists has revealed other aspects of the dialogues that occur between people of different cultural background, not least where the dialogue is between those in a dominant/subordinate relationship. One feature of the asylum-seeking procedure which anthropologists have observed, and in which they have sometimes themselves participated, concerns the production of refugee claimants’ narratives. Cristiana Giordano (2014), for example, describes Italian ‘cultural mediators’ (discussed further in Chapter 12) assisting claimants in making a ‘denunciation’, as it is called, by translating their often-halting and inconsistent stories and organising them into an account ‘digestible’, as Giordano puts it, by the official bureaucracy. Anthony Good (2011) has likewise observed advisors ‘converting’ personal narratives into ‘legal-speak’ in the UK. Such practices are widespread: see, for examples, Sbriccoli and Jacoviello’s discursive analysis of asylum proceedings in Italy (2011), Jan Blommaert’s account of a Belgian case (2001), and John Campbell’s critique (2013) of the organisations to which the work of interpretation has been outsourced in Britain.

Such studies of encounters which entail dialogues at an intercultural interface, as I will call them in later chapters, frequently reveal the often simplistic assumptions about the social, cultural and linguistic contexts from which asylum-seekers, for example, have arrived. In a detailed essay, based on a report he provided to the British Home Office, Blommaert (2009) describes and analyses the exceedingly complex social, cultural and linguistic background of an asylum-seeker from the Great Lakes region of Eastern Africa and how that background was misconstrued by officials wedded to a

naïve ‘homogeneity’, as he calls it, the assumption of one language, one culture, one people. This ‘modernist reaction’ to ‘postmodern reality’, as he dubs it, has special relevance in the major cities of Western Europe where there is an ‘increasing diversification in language choices, forms of communicative behaviour, new varieties of vernacular languages such as English, and new forms of locality and translocality that create new speech communities and networks’ (Blommaert 2008: 426). To which must be added increasing diversification of literacies, including those based on electronic communication. Indeed, Blommaert has shown how, in asylum-seeker interviews or police interrogations, speakers from different linguistic and cultural background with ‘Other’ oral and literary competencies may appear deficient, even incomprehensible to their interlocutors. For example, they may construct a narrative, recounting the circumstances through which they came to be asylum-seekers, which is different in form and content from the kind of narrative expected by an official educated in another discursive tradition. Such dissonance may undermine their credibility, and lead to their case being rejected out of hand.

It would perhaps, at first sight, seem useful to distinguish between elementary and complex forms of language-based miscommunication. In the first, a speaker’s basic grasp of the language is such that the meaning of what they want to say is not conveyed clearly to the listener, or their usage misleads as to their intention. In the second there is superficial understanding but ‘deep’ miscomprehension, at an unconscious level. That this distinction is not necessarily helpful is illustrated by Ardener’s discussion (1975) of ‘mutedness’. The latter is not in any simple way ‘silence’, though that may be a manifestation of relationships within which mutedness appears. It refers rather to a structural situation in which a group may be muted ‘simply because it does not form part of the dominant communication system of the society’ (Ardener 1975: 22). It is expected that anything that is said should be articulated, if it is to be heard at all, through the dominant mode of communication. That dominant mode may be gendered (as it is in the cases Ardener discusses); it is women who are ‘muted’. But the mutedness concept may also be applied to those in any kind of dominant-subordinate relationship - for example one which is ethnic or class-based - where speakers may be thought (or assumed) to lack command of an appropriate (hegemonic) register, and are simply ignored

Olivia Smith’s account (1984) of *The Politics of Language 1791-1819* examines the hegemonic discourse of language in 18th century England. Making a distinction between ‘barbarous’ and ‘cultivated’ language, that discourse assumed that rationality resided within the latter and its users. ‘Grammar, virtue and class’ were closely connected (Smith 1984: 9). By their syntax, vocabulary, style and topic, some kinds of speech or writing were in this discourse defined as legitimate, others dismissed as simply unworthy of recognition. These judgments were not confined to ‘literature’, for instance determining what could and could not be printed and how the material that was published would be reviewed, but pervaded the world of politics. For example, they influenced the debate about the extension of (male) suffrage (Smith 1984: 29 ff.), and, says Smith, ‘Between 1797 and 1818... Parliament dismissively refused to admit petitions because of the language in which they were written (p. 30). She comments: ‘the disenfranchised could not write in a language which merited attention’ (p. 34). The discourse thus constituted a language of the powerful which defined and legitimated their power. Smith’s book is in large part concerned with attempts by writers such as Thomas Paine to break that hegemony and create what she calls an ‘intellectual vernacular discourse’ (p. x). Thus, Paine’s *Rights of Man* (1791) ‘demonstrated that a language could be neither vulgar nor refined, neither primitive nor civilized... [Paine] stressed the intellectual and moral capabilities of his audience and wrote in a language that was alleged not to exist, an intellectual vernacular prose’ (Smith 1984:35-6). This he did partly through a style in which he united ‘vernacular diction’ (vocabulary, rhythm) with formal syntax (see Smith, pp.47-8). Though the example is more complex, a contrast similar to that between ‘barbarous’ and ‘cultivated’ language may be located in the linguistic and educational writing of Basil Bernstein and his distinction between ‘restricted’ and ‘elaborated’ speech codes which in his view were also class-based (Grillo 1989)

The empirical research represented by the work of Carbaugh, Gumperz, Blommaert, Smith and many others, which investigates interaction between speakers of different languages or operating

with culturally distinct linguistic/discursive conventions, is salutary and has many implications for our understanding of what intercultural dialogue actually involves. Their detailed and subtle analyses move far beyond pragmatics onto the terrain of the comparative analysis of discursive systems and the ideologies underlying them. Another example is Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon's discussion (2001: 110 ff.) of what they call the 'utilitarian discourse system'. Their application of terms such as 'habitus', 'interdiscursivity', 'intertextuality' and 'dialogicality' (pp. 269-273) go a long way to broadening and deepening any approach to intercultural dialogue. Their work and that of others also reveals how ethnocentric (e.g. English-oriented) are conventional takes on dialogue, and as Wierzbicka points out:

'As long as it is widely assumed that English conversational routines reflect what is "ordinary", "normal", "natural" and logical, the prospects for cultural understanding between immigrants and the Anglo-Saxon population [of Australia] are not particularly bright' (Wierzbicka 1991: 64).

Despite this, it is sometimes difficult for anthropologists to get to grips with the linguistic and social psychological material emanating from research in the field of cross/intercultural communication. This is partly a matter of detail and partly of the way in which communication researchers may aggregate peoples into suspect collectivities. This is apparent with Gumperz's contrast between 'Indian' and 'Western' English, or in Wierzbicka's references (1991) to undifferentiated blocks (of peoples and of language): 'Japanese', 'Greek', 'American', 'Anglo-American', 'Israeli', etc. Similarly, Michael Clyne, for example, argues:

'Where Europeans and Latin Americans communicate regularly with other Europeans (and Latin Americans) and with South-east Asians, they tend to "out-talk" the South-east Asians, but indulge in reciprocal turn appropriation and simultaneous conversation with the other Europeans (and Latin Americans)' (Clyne 1994: 154).

In addition, some of the earlier studies may now be misleading. Gumperz's examples of interaction between 'native-English' and 'Indian English' speakers came from material collected principally in the 1970s, and whether the same conclusion might be drawn from the interaction between those of similar cultural background some forty years, and two or more immigration generations later, is unclear. What might still apply to dialogues involving asylum-seekers or recent immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, or Eastern Europe, may not be relevant when those involved have been born, brought up, and educated in Britain, France or Germany. One must guard against overemphasising the problems of (mis)communication etc arising in dialogues with people who are citizens born and bred, though members of an older generation might still experience similar difficulties²⁶, and women of whatever generation, might also face problems in such encounters, albeit for different reasons, while 'racial' perceptions may always influence what happens in a dialogue.

Indeed, in many respects the social, cultural and linguistic landscape has changed considerably, and is now much more complex, as work on so-called multicultural English in a superdiverse city such as London demonstrates. Evidence from elsewhere (e.g. Aitsiselmi ed. 2000, and Tetreault 2015 on France), and work on language (and 'linguaging') in superdiverse cities generally (Blommaert and Rampton 2011, Jørgensen et al 2011, Arnaut et al eds. 2016) suggests numerous developments involving social, cultural and linguistic complexities which were not apparent in earlier studies, as discussion, in Chapter 6, of what is sometimes called 'transculturality' will show.

26 Cabinet Office (2017: 15) has data on the language difficulties of members of the older generation.

Only Connect?

‘Imagine no more wars, but dialogue, conversation and non-violent resolution of conflicts’
(Mofid 2016: 104)

The previous section of this chapter has addressed some of the numerous complexities involved when participants engage in intercultural dialogue. The following discusses how intercultural dialogue is conceived by those concerned with its instrumental role in the governance of diversity, and specifically in a policy of interculturalism, focusing on their expectations of such dialogues and the form they should take.

In previous chapters on interculturalism and its advocates it became clear that there is often great confusion about the terms involved, with many different understandings or readings of their meaning. Nonetheless, concerning dialogue, there is general agreement that, whatever it is, dialogue is a ‘good thing’. The 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (discussed in detail in Chapter 8), was precisely about that, celebrating dialogue and encouraging people across Europe to pursue it. This, of course, is a key feature of policies of interculturalism, but defenders of multiculturalism (against which interculturalism is pitted) in majority also accept that dialogue is important, and claim that contrary to their intercultural critics, it is something which they routinely encourage. I certainly would not depart from that view, though there must be serious doubt as to whether dialoguing, is as straightforward a procedure as many advocates seem to believe.

There are several reasons why intercultural dialogue is thought to be a good thing, as is demonstrated in the various claims made for what it is believed such dialogue might be expected to achieve. ‘Among the justifications articulated for dialogue’, says Weller (2016: 23), ‘one can find the significance and importance of dialogue being explained with reference to a “grand narrative” of conflict-resolution and/or peace building; or as a social narrative in personal or group therapy; or as a contribution to problem-solving in specific fields and issues’. As the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) proposed, ‘dialogue among cultures’ should be encouraged,

‘with a view to ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world in favour of intercultural respect and a culture of peace [and] to foster interculturality in order to develop cultural interaction in the spirit of building bridges among peoples’ (Article 1c).

A conference held in Calgary, Canada, in 2016 was clearly organised in this spirit:

“Dispelling Islamophobia through dialogue” About 200 people attended a conference with a goal of addressing Islamophobia through dialogue. The non-profit group “Think for Actions” organized the “Your Muslim Neighbour” day-long event. It covered many themes on how to get people of all faiths to respect each other.²⁷

Likewise, Willy Pfändtner²⁸, scholar of Eastern religions, has contended that in order to confront the many global catastrophes we currently face, a ‘transformation of our dominant way of life’ is needed, and ‘a dynamic form of interreligious dialogue would be a necessary ingredient in this accomplishment’ (Pfändtner 2010: 66).

Many examples of such grand narratives might be cited, not least in EU and CoE sources. For the CoE, in its Opatija Declaration (2003), for example, intercultural dialogue

27 <http://en.abna24.com/service/america/archive/2016/05/15/754332/story.html>.

28 https://www.sh.se/p3/ext/content.nsf/aget?openagent&key=sh_personal_profil_en_856538.

‘Defines tools used to promote and protect the concept of cultural democracy, and encompasses the tangible and intangible elements likely to foster all forms of cultural diversity, manifesting themselves in multiple identities whether individual or collective, in transformations and in new forms of cultural expression. Intercultural dialogue must extend to every possible component of culture, without exception, whether these be cultural in the strict sense or political, economic, social, philosophical, or religious’.

And in the famous *White Paper* (Council of Europe 2008a: 3, the CoE contended that it

‘allows us to prevent ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divides. It enables us to move forward together, to deal with our different identities constructively and democratically on the basis of shared universal values’.

Finally, from a vast corpus of similar assessments, a Report to the European Parliament (2015) on ‘The Role of Intercultural Dialogue, Cultural Diversity and Education in Promoting EU Fundamental Values’, it is presented as a ‘tool for inclusive democratic participation and empowerment of citizens, in particular in relation to common goods and public spaces’. Intercultural dialogue, it argued, might ‘significantly contribute to the improvement of democracy and the development of greater and deeper inclusivity and sense of belonging’ (p. 7), not least in tackling extremism and radicalisation.

A brief account of debates in Belgium in the late 2000s further reveals something of the hopes for dialogue in official and academic circles (see *inter alia* Alidadi and Foblets (eds.) Forthcoming; CLIP 2010; Loobuyck 2016). There were two initiatives and reports which concerned intercultural dialogue: the *Commission du Dialogue Interculturel* (2005) and the *Assises de l’interculturalité* (2010). In the latter report, the only reference to the term ‘intercultural dialogue (‘dialogue interculturel’) is in connection with the earlier *Commission* (there is also one reference to the CoE’s *White Paper*). Nonetheless, intercultural dialogue is clearly what the *Assises* had in mind, and throughout the virtues of engaging in such dialogue are emphasised. For example, school classes where religion is studied comparatively should be encouraged, since:

‘Les citoyens d’une société pluraliste et interculturelle ne doivent pas seulement connaître leur propre tradition, mais aussi celle de l’autre - y compris la tradition laïque. De leur propre initiative, de nombreux professeurs de cours dits “philosophiques” pratiquent déjà ce dialogue. Il faut encourager ces initiatives’ (p. 41).²⁹

Likewise, concerning a child’s progress at school, the *Assises* emphasised the importance of engaging parents in dialogue about aims and objectives, rather than simply imposing them. Similarly, the authorities should enter into dialogue with (minority) associations: ‘Pour les pouvoirs publics, les associations peuvent être un précieux interlocuteur dans la mise en place de politiques d’intégration’ (p. 106).³⁰

As with many such interventions, the virtues of dialogue are taken for granted, without entering into any extended discussion of what dialogue might involve from a social, cultural, communicative, and political perspective. The enticingly named *Commission du Dialogue Interculturel* of 2005, which preceded the *Assises*, similarly avoided detailed discussion of what

29 ‘The citizens of a pluralist, intercultural society must not only know their own tradition, but also that of the other - including the secular tradition. On their own initiative, many teachers of so-called “philosophy” courses already implement such a dialogue. These initiatives need to be encouraged’.

30 ‘For public authorities, [voluntary] associations can be a valuable interlocutor in implementing integration policies’.

intercultural dialogue might entail, while arguing that it had a place alongside other measures (addressing inequities in employment, housing etc) to improve the situation of minorities. Dialogue, it insisted, had an important role in promoting diversity and a creating a welcoming environment for different beliefs and practices.

Dialogue: ‘Genuine’, ‘Effective’, and ‘Meaningful’

The pattern of great expectations, with little detailed consideration of what form an intercultural dialogue might take, and what obstacles it might encounter, characterises other similar policy interventions, including the Canadian Bouchard-Taylor Report (2008). That Report, which I repeat is one of the most profound statements concerning the governance of diversity and how it should be approached, presented proposals for implementing a policy of interculturalism in Québec as a way of responding to the ‘crisis of accommodation’ arising from demands for the recognition of cultural claims on the part of minorities. While neither the Report, nor Gérard Bouchard’s important commentaries on it (2011, 2013) make any use of the idea of ‘intercultural dialogue’ as such (the term only appears in passing references, e.g. to the CoE’s White Paper of 2008), there are frequent references to ‘dialogue’ (and of course ‘interculturalism’) and how important dialogue is in intercultural relations. Generally, however, any serious interrogation of what dialoguing might mean in practice is lacking. The writing of Charles Taylor is likewise not especially helpful in this regard, despite the references to dialogue in his earlier *Politics of Recognition* (1994) as well as later publications.

Certainly Bouchard-Taylor see dialogue as something to be encouraged, e.g.

‘We believe that an approach aimed at equipping the interveners to whom adjustment requests are submitted and fostering dialogue and the search for compromises between the interveners concerned is the surest way to avoid one of the party’s resorting to the courts. In our opinion, a sound harmonization practices policy must reduce as much as possible the judicialization of interpersonal relations’ (p. 167)

Further, in setting out an approach to ‘promote sensible, enlightened decision-making [when] facing accommodation and adjustment requests’ (p. 168), which they describe as ‘contextual, deliberative and reflexive’, they explain:

‘A deliberative approach relies on dialogue between the interveners concerned by a harmonization request. This is a two-tiered dialogue comprising discussion between, on the one hand, users and professionals, and on the other hand, discussion between the professionals themselves (interveners, managers, resource persons, and so on). A deliberative approach is based on the premise that *genuine discussion* that allows all of the parties to express and justify their positions and structured by general principles fosters mutual understanding and the adoption of mutually acceptable compromises’ (p. 168, emphasis added).

Thus dialogue demands ‘genuine discussion’ (‘genuine’ or ‘authentic’ are found in conjunction with ‘dialogue’ in other texts on interculturalism), but there is little in the way of detailed elaboration of what this might entail. One section of the Bouchard-Taylor Report (on ‘Management by the Milieus Concerned of Harmonization Requests’, pp. 167-173) does, however, discuss an example of procedures developed in the health and services sector (in Québec), along with similar procedures proposed for the education sector, and asks whether these could be adopted more widely. The approach advocated for those sectors by the Fleury Committee Report (2007) for handling ‘harmonization’ or ‘adjustment’ requests, e.g. regarding Muslim students’ observance of Ramadan, or Sikh students wearing a kirpan), is described by Bouchard-Taylor as ‘based on the values of mutual respect, openness and dialogue’ (Bouchard-Taylor Report 2008: 171). It set out a number of steps

which would ‘structure the decision-making process adopted by teaching staff and managers’ (*ibid*). *inter alia*, these steps included, as a ‘prerequisite’:

‘Ensure that a climate of mutual respect and openness prevails at the outset of the approach. Agree on recourse to dialogue to find a solution. Validate the approach through discussion, if necessary, by relying on the relevant resources (decision-making, professional and community resources, mediators, and so on’ (Fleury Committee Report 2007: 37).

Then if it is determined action needs to be taken:

‘Engage in a process of dialogue and a search for mutual understanding to determine different solutions. Agree on the choice of solution and the criteria, the time and duration of its application. Specify the parties’ reciprocal commitments and responsibilities’ (p. 38).

This approach, Bouchard-Taylor add, ‘emphasizes dialogue with the requester’s family and intervention by interlocutors in the community, such as imams, rabbis, pastors and other leaders. This collaboration often makes it possible to find solutions to adjustment requests’ (p. 171). Further, the contextual, deliberative and reflexive approach, they maintain, ‘acknowledges the peculiarity of milieus and individual cases and relies on the responsibility and attainment of autonomy by interveners in a spirit of mutual respect and dialogue’ (p. 172). That said, neither Bouchard-Taylor, nor the Fleury Committee Report, go much beyond the bare bones of such procedures and say little or nothing about how intercultural dialogue might be structured or conducted, or about the parameters within which it might take place. To be fair, the Fleury Committee Report implies rather more than Bouchard-Taylor in this regard (see the organigram at p. 39 of the Fleury Committee Report), but like the latter it stresses the virtues and necessity for dialogue without entering into a substantial discussion of what it might actually involve. It merely (though usefully) sketches a framework within which one might envisage dialogue and negotiation over ‘adjustment requests’ taking place, and Bouchard-Taylor follows it down that path.

Certainly, to return to the Belgian case, the *Commission du Dialogue Interculturel* of 2005 did seek to explore the structural conditions under which a ‘true’ or ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ intercultural dialogue would be possible (‘un vrai dialogue interculturel’. p. 60; ‘authentique dialogue interculturel’, p. 90). For example, it forcefully underlined ‘le caractère intangible des valeurs d’égalité et d’émancipation qui rendent ce dialogue possible’ (p. 31).³¹ Intercultural dialogue, it argues, is possible only if the diverse groups in Belgian society have access to public space (p. 45). It recognises that there is a problem in getting people of different background to meet and dialogue with one another (p. 42), and *inter alia* observes that various associations have organised meetings in local neighbourhoods to bring people together and enhance understanding, ‘intercompréhension’ (p. 76). This is something to which the media should contribute (p. 81), and education (schools) are another highly important sector in which intercultural dialogue should be encouraged. It also recommended the setting up of a ‘Centre d’études interconvictionnel’³², promoting dialogue between religious and secular traditions (p. 8). An appendix of extracts from interviews with the commission provides some evidence for various initiatives in neighbourhoods and schools which sought to do just that (e.g. p. 216 ff., 229 ff.)

‘Genuine’, ‘authentic’, ‘real’, and as we will see later, ‘democratic’, ‘critical’, ‘rational’, ‘open-minded’ are among the many qualities it is assumed intercultural dialogue must have. For others, such as Mike Hardy and Serena Hussain (2017), it must be ‘effective’, ‘purposeful’, and ‘positive’. For others again it must be ‘meaningful’. The Dialogue Society actually defines dialogue

31 ‘The intangible character of the values of equality and emancipation which make this dialogue possible’.

32 On the term ‘interconvictional’, which is described as a ‘neologism’, see <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interconviction>. See also <https://www.linguee.fr/francais-anglais/traduction/interconvictionnel.html>.

as something which in itself involves ‘meaningful interaction and exchange between people of different groups (social, cultural, political and religious) who come together through various kinds of conversations or activities with a view to increased understanding’.³³ But what is ‘meaningful’? The Society’s own publications are unhelpful on this point (Fern Elsdon-Baker, 2013: 32 ff, interrogates the Society’s conceptualisation at length in its journal).

In fact, the UK’s Communities and Local Government Department had earlier issued a ‘Guidance’, setting out what meaningful might mean:

‘Firstly, for interaction to be effective in improving community relationships it needs to be positive. Negative interactions which involve arguments or unpleasant experiences will not build community cohesion (unless by going through them an issue is resolved). Secondly, for interaction to be meaningful it needs to go beyond a superficial level and be sustained.’ (Communities and Local Government 2008: 9-10).

It also quotes from a previous report from the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007: 117) which defined ‘meaningful contact’ as occurring when: ‘conversations go beyond surface friendliness; in which people exchange personal information or talk about each other’s differences and identities; people share a common goal or share an interest; and they are sustained long-term’. Such interaction ‘between people from different backgrounds has been shown to break down stereotypes and reduce prejudice’, said the Commission, drawing on the work of the social psychologist, Miles Hewstone.

If it is contended that dialogue should be ‘meaningful’ in the Commission’s sense, it is also argued that it should be ‘effective’. Thus, the Birmingham-based NGO, brap, which had been commissioned to undertake an assessment of the work of the Baring Foundation on interculturalism (discussed in Chapter 14), sought to identify the “rules” of conduct that enable *effective* dialogue on issues of culture (e.g., conflict mediation techniques, using “pause” and “time out” to allow people to say when issues are difficult or uncomfortable’ (brap 2012: 6, emphasis added). Another opportunity to engage with such issues came in a questionnaire addressed to groups and individuals who might wish to respond to a consultation conducted by the high-powered CORAB commission (Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life), which eventually reported in 2015:

‘What are the principles underlying *effective dialogue* within and between different religious and non-religious individuals and groups? Are present structures and processes for engagement adequate for promoting this dialogue?’ (Emphasis again added).³⁴

CORAB received several submissions dealing principally or in part with ‘dialogue’, and how to make it effective. Some were perfunctory or slight, others tackled the question in greater depth. One (anonymised) submission by ‘an academic’ simply commented that the principles

‘might include mutual respect, social justice, religious inclusivism or pluralism, or some shared theological or other philosophical framework (including concepts of love, truth and justice), but these will vary depending on the context and expected outcomes’.³⁵

S/he also stressed the need for ‘skills of facilitation’ when conducting dialogues. Slightly fuller was the response from the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme (CIP)³⁶ (the wider role of inter-faith groups

33 <http://www.dialoguesociety.org/about-us/our-approach.html>.

34 <http://www.corab.org.uk/national-consultation#specific6> [No longer available, but texts of the questions put in the consultation may also be found in the submissions cited elsewhere].

35 commission-on-religion-and-belief-academic-specialist-in-interfaith-dialogue.pdf.

36 commission-on-religion-and-belief-cambridge-interfaith-programme.pdf, see also <http://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk>.

and networks is discussed in Chapter 15). The CIP called for ‘more and high quality religious literacy’; ‘effective dialogue between people of faith and no faith must be underpinned by the need to understand and appreciate difference’. ‘The use of Scriptural Reasoning’, the CIP argued, ‘whereby people of different faiths read and reflect on their scriptures together’ is a

‘tool which allows for a quality of dialogue that brings many benefits, including a deeper understanding of one’s own faith; a better understanding of other faiths; a better appreciation of areas of agreement and disagreement; and a deepening of relationships, friendships and community’

There should also be a focus on the role of religion in peace-making rather than in violence, and public policies should create spaces/places for religious literacy and dialogue.

Fuller again was the submission from a Scottish Interfaith organisation³⁷, based on a ‘Members Dialogue event’ with 41 people present representing numerous ‘faith communities’. Regarding the principles underlying effective dialogue, the submission emphasises the following:

‘Having empathy for others and an openness to learn about each other’s beliefs’;
‘Sincere acknowledgement that we are living in a multi faith society’; ‘
Tolerance and acceptance of others’ rights’.

‘Mutual respect is important’, it added, and ‘it is a particularly important principal in dialogue and engagement that there are no attempts to proselytise (attempts to convert)’. *inter alia* it stressed the need for those entering into dialogue ‘to recognise that we are one humanity and this whole process is about learning to live together and understand our diverse religions and cultures’. To that end it was important to agree ‘ground rules for engagement’, and ‘shared and common purpose’. There must be an intention to engage in ‘dialogue rather than confrontation’. The meeting from which the submission came also affirmed that:

‘A willingness to learn about others faiths and put aside prejudice (e.g. from the media) was central to dialogue and engagement and that this stems from the twin desire to be understood and to understand others. In order to really engage effectively it was felt that there needed to be trust and understanding and safe spaces for dialogue. It was felt that it was equally important to acknowledge the sacredness of all human life’.

By far the fullest submission was presented by the Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK (2015).³⁸ Reflecting on ‘Dialogue and Engagement’, it recognised that:

‘There are theological and philosophical differences between Britain’s religion and belief traditions that appear to be irreconcilable. In addition, there are significant differences within each tradition about whether and how it should be reinterpreted, and about relations with other traditions. Nonetheless, there do appear to be substantial shared values between people of different religions and beliefs in Britain’ (p, 12).

As well as such differences between faith groups, there are also disagreements within faith communities, and between faith communities and ‘other groups in society’. Consequently, ‘making space for sensible discussion and debate and working is vital, as is courteous engagement and good listening; and availability of mediation and conflict resolution where necessary and helpful’ (p. 7). The Inter Faith Network (IFN), founded in 1987, had since 1993 set out fundamental principles for dialogue in a statement on ‘Building Good Relations Between People of Different Faiths and Beliefs’

37 commission-on-religion-and-belief-submission-from-an-interfaith-organisation-in-scotland.pdf.

38 inter-faith-network-for-the-uk-trustees.pdf. See also <http://www.interfaith.org.uk>.

(1993).³⁹ ‘Living and working together is not always easy’, says the statement:

‘Religion harnesses deep emotions which can sometimes take destructive forms. Where this happens, we must draw on our faith to bring about reconciliation and understanding. The truest fruits of religion are healing and positive. We have a great deal to learn from one another which can enrich us without undermining our own identities. Together, listening and responding with openness and respect, we can move forward to work in ways that acknowledge genuine differences but build on shared hopes and values.’

The key principles are ‘mutual respect, openness and trust’, and any discussion of faiths should be based on ‘sensitivity, honesty and straightforwardness’. These principles are embodied in a ‘Code of Conduct’ which includes the following⁴⁰:

- ‘Respecting other people’s freedom within the law to express their beliefs and convictions’;
- ‘Learning to understand what others actually believe and value, and letting them express this in their own terms’;
- ‘Respecting the convictions of others about food, dress and social etiquette and not behaving in ways which cause needless offence’;
- ‘Working to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict’;
- ‘Always seeking to avoid violence in our relationships’;
- ‘listening as well as speaking’;
- ‘Not misrepresenting or disparaging other people’s beliefs and practices’;
- ‘Correcting misunderstanding or misrepresentations’;
- ‘Avoiding violent action or language’;
- ‘Respecting the right of others to disagree with us’.

The IFN’s CORAB submission pointed to the proliferation of organisations devoted to interfaith work, some 240 in 2015, mostly established since 2000. It also noted that currently there is greater willingness of (non-faith) organisations – it mentions the Scout Association and Girl Guiding UK - to develop an interfaith focus. At the same time, it was important to ensure the adequate representation of women and young people in such dialogues. It also regretted that in the media there was a

‘tendency to opt for gladiatorial styles of encounter between representatives of different faiths (often at far ends of the spectrum of a faith) rather than more rounded dialogues on the basis that it provides more lively TV or radio and keeps audiences interested (this can, we note, also be a problem suffered by those of nonreligious beliefs: some of the most unfruitful and unhelpful debate between ultra secularists and religious people have seen the most extreme voices given disproportionate air time’ (p. 4)

‘The pattern of local inter faith structures’, the submission says, ‘is, today, a rich one. They exist in most diverse areas and in many less diverse areas’ (p. 14), but it also recognised that there were difficulties in facing such initiatives. Inter faith organisations were, moreover, confronted by the issue of ‘over expectation’:

39 Available at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/values-of-ifn>. The current version also lists the presently affiliated organisations. See also CORAB 2015: 50.

40 From <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/values-of-ifn>.

‘There is a hope that somehow they can be places of resolution of many of the more challenging issues of people of different backgrounds living together but to do this with slender resourcing and sometimes without the adequate buy-in of a number of groups in their area’ (p. 16).

Local groups are, however, at times ‘over-burdened with requests to respond to consultations ... or run/give input to civic events ... They want to help, and see it as important, but are seriously overstretched’ (p. 16).

CORAB’s response is contained in a chapter of its Report, *Living With Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good.*, devoted to ‘Dialogue’ (CORAB 2015: Chapter 6) which is mainly concerned with dialogues between people from different (religious) faiths or none. ‘Processes of constructive engagement and dialogue between people holding different beliefs and worldviews, and belonging to different traditions and backgrounds’, the Report says, ‘have vital roles to play in the tasks of building and maintaining relationships of mutual understanding and trust, and of strengthening the bonds of community’ (2015: 49). Through such dialogue:

‘Participants seek to understand each other, to discover the common ground underlying their differences, to resolve their differences when that is possible, and to learn to live with them when it is not. Dialogue brings people together in mutual engagement and helps to create a shared society and a climate of civility and trust’ (*ibid.*)

As well as extolling the virtues of dialogue, the Report goes on to identify a number of practical ways in which dialogue might be encouraged to become more fruitful (2015: 57; see also recommendations listed on p. 83). So, religious leaders, ‘with appropriate training [and] good knowledge of the different traditions and communities’, should ‘encourage their members to participate in dialogue and to help develop and maintain good relations within society’. In line with that, ‘faith communities should consider opening their places of worship at regular intervals to welcome and engage with those from other groups’. The range of dialogues should also be expanded to include both ‘Abrahamic and Dharmic traditions’, and those who are not religious; more should be done to encourage dialogue between young people, and ‘more women should become involved in interfaith structures in representative roles’.

Although the Report received considerable media coverage at the time of publication (end 2015), by no means all positive, there is little indication that it has had any significant impact in the public arena. There was a brief debate in the House of Lords in January 2016⁴¹ in which the responsible minister reported that

‘the Government note this report and its contribution to the debate on faith in Britain today. We continue to celebrate the role of faith in society, with a particular emphasis on co-operation between different faiths as a way of breaking down barriers and strengthening communities. The report raises a number of questions for a range of organisations. I will ensure that all government departments consider the recommendations relevant to their individual policies.’

Then in March 2016, the Commission’s chair, Baroness Butler-Schloss, met with representatives of various ministries to discuss the recommendations. The Report received further mention in a subsequent House of Lords debate, in December 2016, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, on ‘National Life: Shared Values and Public Policy Priorities’⁴² in which the Archbishop

41 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-01-18/debates/1601184000408/LivingWithDifference>.

42 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-12-02/debates/4DA54AC8-9B5F-471C-AEBF-58A49BD9BDE0/NationalLifeSharedValuesAndPublicPolicyPriorities?highlight=Faith#contribution-88418D41-B788-40DE-97F2-760C8586F9E7>.

moved ‘That this House takes note of the shared values underpinning our national life and their role in shaping public policy priorities’. Lord Bourne, the government minister responding to the discussion (which lasted some five hours), noted it had been

‘an outward-looking and all-encompassing debate, one that has focused not merely on our saviour Jesus Christ but on different religions: the Sikh, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu religions and others, along with St Paul, Rabindranath Tagore, CS Lewis, Edmund Burke, Dostoyevsky, Sartre, Emile Durkheim, Voltaire, Peel, Disraeli and, of course, Walt Whitman’.

While this undoubtedly reveals the depths of learning that their lordships are able to bring to bear, it says little about what might actually follow. In fact, a subsequent response by the Department for Communities and Local Government to a Freedom of Information request in November 2017 recorded that, regarding the Report:

‘The main recommendations which the Department ... would have an interest in are: a national conversation led by faith leaders on shared values, encouraging interfaith dialogue and promoting religious literacy. This Department would be happy to support faith leaders and faith communities leading a national conversation on shared values’.⁴³

Indeed, following recommendations in the Report, a series of meetings to develop a ‘national conversation’ of precisely that kind began to be held in 2017⁴⁴; the initiative is discussed further in Chapter 15. Beyond that, it has been difficult to identify any other practical outcome.

Once again, high expectations, accompanied, as all too often, by little more than platitudes (‘mutual understanding’, ‘climate of trust’ etc), and common sense advice, with little attempt to engage with the socio-cultural, communicative, interpretative, and political difficulties that must be addressed. Something similar may be observed in various reports and recommendations put out by UNESCO. Thus:

‘The key to successful intercultural dialogue lies in the acknowledgement of the equal dignity of the participants. This presupposes recognition of — and respect for — the diverse forms of knowledge and their modes of expression, the customs and traditions of participants and efforts to establish, if not a culture-neutral context for dialogue, then at least a culturally neutralized context that enable communities to express themselves freely’ (UNESCO 2009a: 54).

There are, however, other, seemingly deeper investigations of such questions.

Parekh’s ‘Dialogical Multiculturalism’

It is interesting to observe that several of the key figures defending multiculturalism in the UK are academics of South Asian background who perhaps have a closer sense of who and what needs to be defended; Stokke and Lybæk noted that at a major conference in London in 2012 ‘the interculturalists were liberal white men, while the multiculturalists were critical minority people’ (2016), p. 11) – admittedly, there are others of a similar background who see things differently. Among the theoretical and academic writers about intercultural dialogue, whether of minority or other background, few have been more widely read than British political scientist, Lord Bhikhu Parekh, whose approach Michael Barret (2013a: 20) calls ‘dialogical multiculturalism’. I am not concerned, here, to evaluate (defend or

43 https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/departments_response_to_the_reco#incoming-1072439.

44 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/21st-century-britain-moral-sources-civic-good-aina-khan>.

criticise) Parekh's general theory of multiculturalism, and his advocacy of what he himself describes as a 'dialogically constituted multicultural society' (e.g. in Parekh 2000: 340), with which I am largely in agreement, but to examine the place within it that he assigns to (intercultural) dialogue.

Earlier I discussed the claim that whereas dialogue is thought to be a *sine qua non* of interculturalism, it is absent from, or at any rate not considered crucial to, multiculturalism. I will not rehearse that argument except to say that for some proponents of multiculturalism, dialogue, intercultural dialogue and intercultural 'evaluation', are necessary, indeed essential. One such is Bhikhu Parekh as all his writing, certainly from *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2000) onwards, amply testifies (see Modood 2015, Uberoi 2015, 2017, and other contributors to Uberoi and Modood eds. 2015).

One brief example. In a discussion organised by the philosopher, Julian Baggini, in the *Guardian* newspaper in 2005⁴⁵, Baggini posed a number of 'thought experiments' (based on his 2005 book), one of which was called 'The Popadom Paradox'. In this 'Saskia' was said to think of herself as a 'multiculturalist':

'she positively enjoyed the variety of cultures an ethnically diverse society sustains. But her enjoyment depended upon other people remaining ethnically distinct. She could only enjoy a life flitting between many different cultures if others remained firmly rooted in one. For her to be a multiculturalist, others needed to be monoculturalists. Where did that leave her ideal of a multicultural society?'

In his comment on the case, Bhikhu Parekh remarked that 'Saskia is the all-too familiar victim of the current muddle about the nature of multiculturalism':

'She confuses ethnicity with culture and assumes that a culture is the monopoly of the relevant ethnic group. Multiculturalism is not about safeguarding self-contained ethnic and cultural boxes but rather about intercultural fusion in which a culture freely borrows bits of others and creatively transforms both itself and them. Far from implying that each individual should remain rooted in his or her own culture and flit between them, multiculturalism requires that they should open themselves up to the influence of others and engage in a *reflective and sometimes life enhancing dialogue with others*. Multiculturalism is not ghettoisation but a form of universalism, and represents one of the highest expressions of human freedom and self-creation' (in Baggini 2005, emphasis added).

'Multiculturalists cherish intercultural exchanges and fusions', says Parekh (2006: 350). 'By engaging in a critically sympathetic dialogue with other cultures, we come to appreciate the strengths and limitations of our own'. Such multiculturalists seek to foster intercultural learning and intercultural dialogue which are envisaged as taking place on four levels: personal, communal, societal, and universal (Uberoi 2015: 7). Communal and societal dialogues, however, need appropriate policies and institutional structures, and a state which takes on a supportive role. As Uberoi puts it:

'The intercultural learning that requires intercultural dialogue thus requires a political structure that legitimises differences, so that people are not afraid to explore their own and are secure enough to learn from, and not feel threatened by, those of others' (2015: 10).

Political structures will 'foster the unity needed for differences to not seem divisive or destabilising' (*ibid.*) It is this concern with the politics of intercultural dialogue at various levels, and with the structures that condition how such dialogues take place which, in the view of Modood, distinguishes Parekh's multiculturalism (and interculturalism Québec-style) from the notion of dialogue said to be

45 <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/aug/01/philosophy>.

representative of European interculturalism, with its micro-focus on ‘individuals, interpersonal encounters and cultural mixing’ (Modood 2015: 348, see also p. 368).

In a conversation with Ramin Jahanbegloo, Parekh got onto the topic of liberalism, about which he has written elsewhere. One of his main criticisms of liberalism, he confirmed, is its ‘incapacity to engage in intercultural dialogue and its lack of openness to others’ (Parekh 2011: 58). He had also, previously, excoriated ‘intolerant religion’, which likewise ‘refuses to engage in an open-minded dialogue with other points of view’, adding, ‘We may under certain circumstances legitimately restrict its freedom and, in exceptional cases, even ban it’ (2000: 333-4). ‘What we need’, he says, is ‘openness to the other, an appreciation of the immense range and variety of human existence, an imaginative grasp of what both distinguishes and unites human beings, and the willingness to enter into a nonhegemonic dialogue’ (2003: 16).

I can but agree, and fully accept that Parekh’s model of multiculturalism makes the most sense for the governance of diversity. Mookherjee (2015), for example, demonstrates the potential of his approach for an ‘engaged dialogue’ between multiculturalism and feminism as ‘mutually transformative movements’ (p. 100), and for dialogues that are happening, or should happen, not only between, but within cultures (in the case of Muslim feminists, for example). ‘What is necessary’, she says, ‘is a dialogical questioning of fixed borders between liberals and non-liberals; between members and non-members; between cultural and women’s rights; and between well-being and harm’ (2015: 104). David Parkin’s book (1978) contains many examples of such intra-cultural dialogues, or ‘internal cultural debates’, as he calls them.

Well and good. But, what might such dialogues entail, within what parameters, and under what conditions, and with whom? Parekh’s own writing does not address such questions directly and specifically. Indirectly, we may note the adjectives he employs to qualify dialogue positively: ‘nonhegemonic’, ‘open and equal’ (e.g. 2000: 13), ‘critical’ (e.g. 2008a: 7), ‘creative and critical’ (e.g. 2006: 369), ‘sympathetic’ (e.g. 2009: 68), ‘critically sympathetic’ (e.g. 2006: 350), ‘rational’ (e.g. 2009: 73), ‘transformative’ (e.g. 2009: 76), ‘open-minded’ (e.g. 2000: 334), ‘democratic’ (e.g. 2010: in Q&A session). By extension, intercultural dialogue is a ‘necessary precondition of critical rationality, making the latter a shared collective achievement rather than the property of a solitary individual’ (2011: 77) – Mahatma Gandhi is an ‘icon’ of such dialogue (2011: 107; *inter alia* Mookherjee 2015 and Pantham 2015 discuss Parekh’s debt to Gandhi).

The interlocutors between whom a contemporary multicultural dialogue takes place are often envisaged as liberals on the one hand, and Muslims on the other, but while one acquires a good sense of the virtue of such dialogues, and the approach which Parekh favours, there is very little in the way of specific content. The adjectives make unspecific claims which any ‘right-thinking’ academic might support; who would quarrel with ‘critical’, ‘rational’, ‘sympathetic’, or ‘real’ or ‘genuine’? But what do they actually mean, and what is implied about how dialogue might be conducted so that it fulfils these criteria? Within what framework? What obstacles are likely to be encountered – social, cultural, or communicative? How might they be overcome?

Parekh in fact began to address such questions in *A New Politics of Identity* (2008b) which has a lengthy account of the case for ‘dialogue’⁴⁶. He opens with a critique and refutation of Samuel Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilizations’ thesis (1993, 1996), while nonetheless recognising that there are contemporary conflicts between radical Islamic fundamentalists and Western powers. In the light of 9/11 and subsequent events, dialogue is essential to address and attempt to resolve these conflicts. This means ‘not only talking and persuading but also negotiating and reaching a compromise’. It has, Parekh says, a ‘dual focus: to foster better understanding ... and to address sympathetically the deeper

46 In *A New Politics of Identity* Parekh uses the term ‘intercultural dialogue’ only twice in contexts where he is referring to dialogues across ‘civilisations’ (e.g. Muslims and the West) or societies, though he also refers approvingly to Johannes Kandel as ‘a keen advocate of Christian-Muslim dialogue’ in Germany (2008b: 290).

political, economic and other causes of conflict'. The pursuit of dialogue and its desirability he contrasts with the 'war on terror' which (writing in the mid-2000s) he saw as characterising the stance of the USA and other Western countries. In an intriguing and imaginative passage (2008b: 171-177) he sets out the supposed arguments of Muslim fundamentalists on the one hand, and the advocates of a war on terror, on the other, envisaging how they might put their respective cases in the event that they were to be engaged in dialogue. The point of such dialogue, contends Parekh, would be to

'deepen mutual understanding, expand sympathy and imagination, exchange not only arguments but sensibilities, to get both parties to take a critical look at themselves, build up mutual trust, and arrive at a more just and balanced view of both the contentious issues and their wider context. It must be robust, frank and critical, telling the truth as each party sees it, but always in the knowledge that it cannot be allowed to fail' (2008b: 170).

Such dialogue must operate at 'various levels' and include the historical roots of current conflicts, each side's world views, and 'an exchange of memories and better understanding of the past'. (The case of Ulster and the Northern Ireland 'peace process' comes to mind).

What Parekh calls a 'democratic dialogue' must be

'justly structured and conducted when the relevant points of view are allowed to speak in their own voices, and heard with respect. Since every dominant group tends to impose the principles of justice that serve to legitimate its domination, we need to counter it by seeking out those it marginalizes or silence and ensuring their adequate representation in deliberative bodies' (2008b: 51-2).

If it is to succeed, those engaged in dialogue must 'listen to each other. Reflect seriously on its criticisms, and take a fresh look at itself' (2008b: 177). Critical dialogue, which is a 'necessary condition of meaningful dialogue with the other', also requires a 'commitment to reason' (p. 178), i.e. 'to solve conflicts of interest and values by discussion, compromise and mutual accommodation', and to justice, 'the willingness to recognise and respect the legitimate claims of others'. Coming at the problem from within a different tradition, Michael James had earlier reached a similar conclusion. For 'critical intercultural dialogue' to be possible', he says, the participants must satisfy three criteria:

'they must adopt an attitude of openness towards each other's cultural perspectives; they must come to understand each other's perspectives; and they must communicate under conditions which they mutually can accept as fair. Only when these criteria are satisfied can members of one culture criticize the practices of another' (1999: 590).

Such dialogue is not easy, Parekh admits, '[It]has its limits, and to expect more of it than it can deliver is to invite disappointment' (2008b: 5). While dialoguing with 'literalists', religious or political, for example, 'can go a long way to undermine their views, it might not succeed in winning them over and securing their compliance' (p. 139). Indeed, the intransigence of leaders on all sides is likely to render dialogue very difficult. Such dialogues need to be rooted in what he calls a 'vibrant national and global civil society' within which those from different countries 'can meet on a regular basis to exchange views, and to build up extensive and powerful networks committed to better understanding and concerted action' (p. 179). I guess many had hoped the UN would offer this. But as Raymond Plant observes, 'I very much doubt whether the reshaping and redefining of cultural communities, particularly religious ones, can come through dialogue alone' (Plant 2015: 192, see also p. 205). The strength with which their beliefs are held and the significance they have for an individual's sense of identity lessen the likelihood for compromise.

Barrett comments that dialogical multiculturalism 'represents a normative stance on how multiculturalism should be implemented rather than a description of an actual system of policies that has been applied within any given country to date' (2013a: 20). 'It attempts', he adds, 'to delineate the

ethical norms, principles and institutional structures that are required for [open and equal] dialogue to occur'. In the case of Parekh (and other writing about multiculturalism, interculturalism, and dialogue in those contexts), there is much more about norms and principles than about institutions, or about practice, what actually happens when dialogues take place. Specific answers to the sort of questions posed earlier, such as what does 'democratic' or 'genuine' dialogue actually mean, or what are the factors which condition what happens in dialogue, are rarely given, or indeed even asked.

Certainly, Barrett's own work on 'competences' provides some guidance (see below, also brap 2012), and answers up to a point, and of a kind, may be located in the more concrete work on multiculturalism and interculturalism discussed elsewhere in this book. What emerges from the Intercultural Cities project, for example, discussed in Chapter 9, is the importance of creating spaces (in a physical as well as a metaphorical sense) where people of diverse cultural backgrounds can meet. This involves a 'pluralist transformation' of public space and institutions (Wood, Landry and Bloomfield 2006a: 9), and the work on intercultural cities demonstrates in practical terms the kind of initiatives which foster such a transformation. Nonetheless, while such initiatives may make space, it does not mean that they create the conditions within them that are necessary for ensuring that dialogue takes place on the basis of equality etc. Moreover, if, as is sometimes argued, European-style intercultural dialogue is mostly concerned with interpersonal relations at a micro level, then it is not best positioned to address structural conditions.

Dialogical Competence

While there is much discussion in the literature of socio-linguistics and anthropology about the form that dialoguing might take, and what it might involve, many accounts of interculturalism say little more than that it means people (of different cultures etc) simply talking to each other, with the assumption that by so doing intercultural dialogue will work its miracles. There are, however, others who consider more closely what 'genuine' etc dialogue might entail, and the skills required by those engaging in it; what would give participants the necessary 'dialogical competence'?

In his contribution to a booklet published by the EU-funded *Platform for an Intercultural Europe*, Joel Anderson (2010), a philosopher, emphasised that the kind of Europe envisaged by the *Platform* was one in which

'individuals are able to participate freely, fully and equally in the society and in which genuine intercultural dialogue is something in which individuals and groups can and do routinely engage. The practical approach to realizing this envisioned society that the platform emphasizes is one in which intercultural dialogue serves as a means to achieve the end, and in which free, full and equal participation in the cultural life serves to strengthen the capacities that individuals need for life in an intercultural society' (p. 8).

'Fully and equally' is critical, and is reinforced by Anderson's call for an 'explicit statement of the relationship between power and dialogue, in order to highlight the ways in which *genuine intercultural dialogue* can be challenging and transformative for all involved' (p. 9, emphasis added). The phrase 'genuine dialogue' is repeated in his discussion of 'intercultural' which, he says, implies a 'two-way flow that is essential ... to free, full and equal participation in society' (p. 10). But, again, what constitutes 'genuine' dialogue? Anderson in fact suggests there are two 'understandings' of intercultural dialogue. On the one hand, in the 'strict sense' there is

'concrete exchange between two or more parties aimed at resolving conflicts or at addressing tensions, frequently over felt misrecognition and disrespect. These are contexts in which the explicit purpose of the exchange is to come to a new and better understanding, across the gulf of differing (sub)cultural perspectives, about how to proceed' (p. 19)

‘Understanding’ he takes from Habermas’s *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984). In contrast to this strict-sense intercultural dialogue there are ‘intercultural encounters’, which refer to ‘the looser contexts in which different (sub)cultures merely come into contact with one another. Public festivals or other cultural events are examples of such contexts’ (Anderson 2010: 19). Such encounters require much lower competences, and ‘expectations are quite different’ (p. 20).

Thus, interculturalism and intercultural dialogue (like incommensurability or the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis or indeed multiculturalism), may take ‘stronger’ or ‘weaker’ forms, and as Anderson says, what is sometimes described as ‘intercultural dialogue’ encompasses no more than rather weak ‘encounters’. Such ‘low-threshold contact’ may be helpful and enjoyable, but it may also be experienced as ‘insultingly superficial, especially by members of subordinate groups who are keenly aware of deeper disagreements and have been repeatedly frustrated by a lack of progress’ (Anderson 2010: 19). ‘Genuine dialogue’, on the other hand, places ‘demands on participants to rethink their presuppositions in an open and self-critical manner’ (p. 21), and he emphasises such characteristics as ‘openness, reciprocity, reflexivity and recognition’. This demand high levels of competence and participants confront many barriers, not least of which are ‘deep-seated prejudices about other (sub) cultures’ (p. 27, and see further below). Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs, who has a chapter in the same booklet, is also skeptical about the value of ‘encounters’: ‘It would be unrealistic’, she says, ‘to think that sharing popodams and pancakes will overcome the entrenched hostilities of deprived and poorly resourced communities’ (2010: 40).

A further example of a deeper understanding of what intercultural dialogue might entail is provided by Martyn Barrett in his edited collection on interculturalism and multiculturalism (Barrett ed. 2013). It was widely recognised in EU and CoE documents that interculturalism depended on developing intercultural ‘competences’, highlighted, for example, in the 2015 Report to the European Parliament, and these in turn depended on education. Thus, Ólöf Ólafsdóttir, then Director of Democratic Citizenship and Participation in the CoE Secretariat, in her Foreword to the Barrett volume observed: ‘[The] promotion of interculturalism has always been linked first and foremost to education: meaningful intercultural dialogue cannot exist if people are not prepared for it (2013: 13). Barrett himself took this much further in the second of two papers in the volume (Barrett 2013b).

Barrett first cites the CoE’s White Paper of 2008 and summarises its observation that

‘the competence that is required for participating in intercultural dialogue is not acquired automatically by individuals. This competence instead needs to be learned, practised and maintained throughout life ... and education professionals, public authorities, civil society organisations, religious communities, the media and all other providers of education therefore have a crucial role to play in equipping citizens with intercultural competence’ (Barrett 2013b: 147).

In short, ‘citizens require intercultural competence in order to be able to engage in intercultural dialogue with others’ (p. 157), and focusing on the nature of that competence, Barrett examines in detail its ‘core components’. In a lengthy discussion devoted to this (Barrett 2013b: 153-5) covers such matters as the values and attitudes involved; the required knowledge and understanding (including ‘understanding the impact of language and culture on people’s experience and perceptions, including the impact of one’s own language and cultural affiliations on one’s own experience and perceptions’); communicative awareness (‘including awareness of the fact that people with different cultural affiliations may follow different verbal and non-verbal communicative conventions which are meaningful from their perspective, and awareness of the fact that other peoples’ languages may express shared ideas in a unique way or express unique ideas difficult to access through one’s own language(s)’); cognitive skills (including ‘empathy – the ability to understand and respond to other people’s thoughts, beliefs, values and feelings’); behavioural skills (including ‘linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse skills, including skills in managing breakdowns in communication; plurilingual skills (‘to meet the communicative demands of an intercultural situation ... a repertoire of

skills in different languages to different levels for use in situations where more than one language is being spoken'). Moreover, 'for an individual to be credited with intercultural competence, they must also apply their intercultural values, attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills in their behaviour'. That is, they must become 'active intercultural citizens' (see also UNESCO 2009a: 45 ff., on 'intercultural competencies').

All this is hugely demanding, and would seem to require degree-level training at the very least in anthropology, linguistics, psychology, and political science (see also the training 'intercultural mediators', described in Chapter 12). This might very well seem over-kill, but to get beyond mere 'encounters', as Anderson calls them, valuable though such encounters might otherwise be, and engage in meaningful dialogue, undoubtedly requires much more in the way of 'competence' than some advocates of interculturalism envisage. And this is to say nothing of the framework of power and authority and economic and other forms of inequality which structure the conditions within which intercultural dialogue may take place. Dialogue is rarely between equals, as Barrett himself, like Anderson, is well aware (see Barrett 2013a: 31; Anderson 2010: 9).⁴⁷

Dialogical Genres

Much of the writing on intercultural dialogue may be grouped into several overlapping genres and sub-genres. One is mainly philosophical, asking in a general way what is 'intercultural dialogue' - what does it mean, what does it entail, and is it possible or even conceivable? The latter question would be associated with the 'strong' incommensurability thesis which I reject as untenable. On the other hand, there is, secondly, another philosophical tradition, represented by the Anglo-American speech-act theorists criticised by Wierzbicka (1991), for whom dialogue is communicatively transparent (and almost always in standard English), even if meanings need to be teased out through detailed semantic analysis. Such an approach, which takes little or no account of social and cultural factors, may be contrasted with a third genre which engages with the problems of cultural translation and interpretation, perhaps including the moral and affective aspects of dialogue in face-to-face, interpersonal, encounters at the 'intercultural frontier'. A fourth addresses the more technical linguistic and communicative aspects, mostly at a micro-interpersonal level, analysing the various ways in which cultural conventions shape dialogue and how it is construed. A fifth goes beyond the interpersonal and situates dialogue in the social and political arena, principally, but not exclusively, in multicultural and multiethnic societies where collectivities interact with one another and negotiate their needs and concerns. Finally, there is the simple celebration of intercultural dialogue seen as an integral component of interculturalism, indeed its *sine qua non*. As such, it is believed to constitute a 'good thing' and there are high expectations of what it might achieve, albeit all too often with little sense of the difficulties likely to be encountered. Let me situate my own interest in intercultural dialogue in relation to these genres.

An example. Scollon and Scollon (2001: 135 ff.) recount an event in which two men (one Chinese, one American), sitting next to each other on a plane fall into conversation, but are confused by social, linguistic, and cultural conventions and interpretations of body language, and mistake each other's meaning (see also Clyne 1994). Such intercultural dialogue is not my principal concern, albeit there are lessons to be learned from it. As recorded earlier, my primary interest is in intercultural dialogues where the conversation is about culture itself (beliefs, values, ideologies etc), and where participants are attempting to explain to each other what their differences mean, perhaps with a view to finding common ground, or seeking accommodation, or at any rate a *modus vivendi*.

Such dialoguing is, of course, irrespective of the content, a specific instance of (interpersonal) intercultural communication, and should be treated as such. Taking that on board, I find myself on similar terrain to that occupied by Gumperz, with his account of the unconscious discursive conventions through which dialogue is constructed and which misdirect or confuse as to meaning.

47 There is further discussion of competence and training in Chapter 12.

Here too is Ardener and his unforgettable image of two speakers, one of English, the other of Ibo, hopelessly confusing *hand* and *aka*, trying to conduct a handshake, and perpetually missing. Such an approach recognises that there are differences in modes of communication, sometimes quite radical, though one must also guard against exaggerating their import; the problems of cultural translation and interpretation may be of greater significance. *inter alia*, it helps us ‘navigate[] between the Scylla of an ethnocentric universalism and the Charybdis of a self-sealing relativism’, as Paul Healy eloquently puts it (2013: 267), avoiding the perils of cultural transparency on the one hand and cultural solipsism on the other.

That said, while acknowledging that cultural, communicative, and linguistic factors have important impacts, my principal concern is - to repeat - with dialoguing about culture, as a social, or more properly, a political process. I should also repeat that I am not (only) concerned with face-to-face, sit-down conversations, but with discussions, debates, arguments conducted indirectly and at a distance, for example through the media, or at different sites where speakers and writers are addressing, responding to, absent and perhaps anonymous or at least unnamed interlocutors. In none of these situations does intercultural dialogue offer a ‘magic bullet’. This is not because knowing or understanding the Other is inherently impossible on cognitive or communicative or linguistic grounds, though the difficulties of translation (in the broadest sense), and the effort involved in engaging in intercultural dialogue and with other mindsets, should never be underestimated. If dialogue is difficult (even perhaps sometimes impossible) it is generally because of the social or specifically *political* relations which are engaged (see, for example, Levey 2017, on Australian experience).

This is an issue which has been dealt with variably by the writers considered in this book. Habermas, for instance, seems surprisingly innocent from a political point of view, as indeed are many anthropologists, and sometimes the anthropological emphasis on systems of meaning underestimates the power relations involved in human interaction, as well as the capacity for adaptation and change. An Ibo and an English speaker might theoretically have difficulty in shaking hands, but I suspect rapidly come to an understanding and a *modus vivendi*, though in the colonial period the accommodation would undoubtedly have been influenced, if not conditioned, by that overarching relationship. Questions of power, ‘the problematics of power’, as Ganesh and Holmes put it (2011: 84), thus loom large in any understanding of intercultural dialogues. Dialogue implies reciprocity (Keaten and Soukup 2009), and when it simply reproduces existing power structures it becomes monologue. This theme is developed through the case studies discussed in Parts II and III.

CHAPTER 6. MULTICULTURAL, INTERCULTURAL, TRANSCULTURAL

‘Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world’ (W.B. Yeats ‘The Second Coming’).

Overview

The debate between multiculturalists and interculturalists is often repetitive, with the same protagonists trapped in an intellectual bubble endlessly rehearsing the same arguments and grinding away at the same axes. It is also frequently confused and confusing, with multiple (fuzzy) meanings and understandings of multiculturalism or interculturalism being bandied about and contested, often within reference to the same, limited selection of seminal texts, and, with some exceptions, at a considerable distance from the empirical evidence. That latter criticism – I confess - reflects my personal bias as an anthropologist who likes to know what is actually happening, on the ground, while other disciplines such as political sociology are more concerned with elaborating normative constructs, and spelling out their policy implications in a theoreticist vein.

That said, I recognise the importance of engaging with the debate, even if all I can offer is the virtue of testing theoretical arguments against the daily reality of living in a multicultural society, as I do in Parts II and III. The purpose of this chapter and the following Chapter 7, is, however, to reflect on a number of overlapping and intersecting controversies, discussed briefly in previous chapters, sometimes only by implication, which run through the accounts of multiculturalism versus interculturalism. It does not cover all the contested terrain, but focuses on various issues which relate in one way or another to the governance of diversity in a world characterised by globalisation, transnationalism, and superdiversity, and the consequences for thinking about individuals, collectivities and identities in such a world.

The present chapter engages with two principal themes. First, the contention that current conditions of transnationalism and superdiversity have undermined the case for multiculturalism and demand a different approach to the governance of diversity, namely interculturalism. Secondly, the idea that those current conditions require, or indeed create, a different kind of person, with a different view of the world to that entailed in the conventional nation-state or under multiculturalism. Chapter 5’s account of ‘dialogical competence’ has perhaps anticipated aspects of this. In connection with both those themes, the chapter analyses the ethnographic and linguistic literature on what is happening to identities in superdiverse cities like London or Paris, and entertains the suggestion that we are entering a ‘transcultural’ moment.

Globalisation, Transnationalism, Superdiversity

In the 1970s, Peter Adler, an expert on mediation and communication strategies⁴⁸, whose work is discussed in more detail below, sought to locate what he believed to be the emergence of a ‘new type of person’, “transcultural,” “multicultural,” or “intercultural” in the then contemporary world of technological and other innovations. ‘Mass travel systems, publishing syndicates, film industries, television networks, and newswire services’, had, he argued, ‘brought people everywhere have brought people everywhere into potential contact:

48 See <http://www.accord3.com/pg2.cfm>.

‘Barely a city or village exists that is more than a day or two from anyplace else: almost no town or community is without a radio. Bus lines, railroads, highways, and airports have created linkages within and between local, regional, national, and international levels of human organization. The impact is enormous ... Accompanying the growth of human communication has been the erosion of barriers that have, throughout history, geographically, linguistically, and culturally separated people’ (1977: 25).

In a later version of the paper (Adler 2002), ‘modems, electronic mail, facsimile machines, digital recording, cable television, satellite dishes, and desktop publishing’ replaced ‘mass travel’ etc, and ‘television’ replaced ‘radio’. But by the 2000s, what Adler had been saying was commonplace within accounts of (neo-liberal) globalisation, notably with respect to the mass movement of peoples (economic migrants and asylum seekers) from the poorer region so of South and East to the richer regions of the North and West.

Two of the consequences of these developments received increasing academic and governmental attention. On the one hand was their impact on the social and cultural composition of the receiving countries, their growing diversity, indeed ‘superdiversity’ as it came to be called. On the other, there was the fact that contemporary modes of travel and communication of the kind which Adler noted made it much easier for migrants and their descendants to maintain ongoing significant ties with places of origin. This transnationalisation of relationships had important implications for the receiving societies and along with the fact of superdiversity called into question the viability of policies of multiculturalism. In the current conjuncture, it has been argued, multiculturalism must give way and allow interculturalism to take its rightful place.

As we saw in Chapter 3, prominent among those adopting such a position is Ted Cantle (e.g. 2012a: 38, etc). He is not alone: ‘We find ourselves in a context that lacks convincing public policies dealing with the reality of super-diversity’, says Zapata-Barrero (2016a: 156; see also Kaur-Stubbs 2010, White 2014). Ulrich Beck made a similar point (again reminiscent of Adler) in his discussion of what he calls ‘cosmopolitanization’, and in his call for a ‘cosmopolitan sociology’, ‘which develops conceptual and methodological resources for understanding a world that is undergoing a cosmopolitan transformation ... the creeping emergence of multiple loyalties, of the interpenetration of national cultures, of “super-diversity” and the transnationalisation of law and politics’ (Beck 2011: 58).

Concerning superdiversity, it is conventional to refer to the work of Steve Vertovec (2007, 2015), and rightly so, but if we take the long view we can place the concept within a venerable tradition in the social sciences which was especially important in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This was the attempt by sociologists and social historians, among others, to grasp what had happened and was happening in their societies in an era of rapid social, economic, technological and organisational change, principally of course through industrialisation and urbanisation (e.g. Comte, Maine, Spencer, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Tunnies; Castells and Giddens represent much more recent thinking in this vein). In similar fashion, the concept of superdiversity (à la Vertovec) emerged in the mid-2000s, in the first instance as a way of describing and analysing the increasing complexity of diversity in Britain. It had an important precedent in David Hollinger’s reflections in the mid-1990s on ethnicity and multiculturalism in the USA, in which he wrote of the ‘diversification of diversities’. Hollinger criticised what he called the ‘ethno-racial pentagon’, the five categories which characterised conventional representations of US diversity: ‘African American, Asian American, Euro-American, Indigenous, and Latino’. ‘Diversity has become too diversified’, he argued, ‘to be contained within that pentagon’, and called for what he termed a ‘postethnic perspective’ (Hollinger 1995: 12). Robert Putnam (2007) and David Goodhart (2004), writing respectively about the USA and the UK, both viewed the consequences of such diversification negatively.

Concerning the British context, for some 40 years, from the mid-1960s, the general perception of ethnic diversity in British society emphasised two broad categories: people who were migrants from, or descended from migrants from, the Caribbean on the one hand, and from South Asia

on the other, differentiated by culture and language, and in some eyes, 'race', in inverted commas. Although some observers and activists saw these two groups as having a common status as racially subordinated, formerly colonised subjects, and linked them together through the political category 'black', as for example in the feminist organisation *Southall Black Sisters*, other things were happening through the 1980s and 1990s which changed the picture (see *inter alia* Grillo 2015a: Chapter 14). First, the characterisation of these populations, especially from South Asia, shifted from 'race' (or 'colour'), through culture and language, eventually to 'faith', most obviously but not exclusively, in the case of adherents of Islam. Secondly, and this was especially important for the emergence of the concept of superdiversity, migration and settlement no longer involved only people from South Asia and the Caribbean, but from a huge range of countries and cultures, speaking a vast array of languages. Thirdly, contemporary arrivals in the 1990s and 2000s entered via different routes and with different legal and other statuses. But fourthly, complicating the picture, new diversities did not mean that old diversities simply vanished, diversity was increasingly 'layered', as it has been called, with different waves of diversity co-existing, sometimes side by side.

Steve Vertovec's 2007 article took on board these developments and in doing so emphasised the multidimensional character of what he now called 'superdiversity'. Many adopters, however, have fastened on the idea that it simply means a great deal of ethnic diversity. For instance (other examples could be cited):

'London is now more diverse than any city that has ever existed. Altogether, more than 300 languages are spoken by the people of London, and the city has at least 50 nonindigenous communities with populations of 10,000 or more. Virtually every race, nation, culture and religion in the world can claim at least a handful of Londoners. London's Muslim population of 607,083 people is probably the most diverse anywhere in the world, besides Mecca. Only 59.8% of Londoners consider themselves to be White British, whilst 3.2% consider themselves to be of mixed race' (Wood, Landry and Bloomfield 2006a: 1).

This is not wrong, but focusing on ethnicity means that there is a danger that other aspects of superdiversity's multidimensionality are ignored; Vertovec (2015) himself has written about this.⁴⁹ We might, therefore, identify two kinds of superdiversity: 'Superdiversity Heavy' (à la Vertovec) and 'Superdiversity Lite'. The latter would refer simply to ethnic diversity in a broad sense, including culture and usually religion, while the former would encompass socio-legal, political, and potentially economic status as well (see Grillo 2015b). It should also be recognised that while superdiversity may be envisaged as a *state*, it is perhaps better conceived as a process, *superdiversification*. Diversification is taking place for complex reasons and at some point what might be thought of as simple diversity 'becomes', or is perceived as (or both), superdiversity, or indeed 'hyperdiversity'.

Alongside superdiversity, and contributing to it, has been the transnationalisation of relations, signalled by migrants and settlers maintaining social and economic ties with places of origin. It is, however, worth emphasising that transnationalism may take various forms, and that the form it takes may change across generations (Reynolds and Zontini 2016); or should 'transnational' be taken to mean 'postnational', or indeed 'postethnic'. As Adrian Favell points out, 'Empirical research ... often reveals the fragile stability of such transnational forms of life, versus the ever present pressures of nation-centred social integration, for different categories of migrants and movers in Europe' (2014: xii). Nonetheless, transnationalisation has had important consequences for the lives of minorities of immigrant background, not least in respect of the relationship between law and cultural practice which has assumed increasing significance in recent decades for several reasons.

- The plurality stemming from immigration, which is increasingly a family matter, has often brought individuals, families, sometimes whole communities, within the purview of the law, especially if they try to live transnationally. The practice of arranging marriages

49 See also <http://www.mmg.mpg.de/online-media/blogs/2013/reading-super-diversity>.

transcontinentally, e.g. between families resident in the UK and Pakistan, illustrates this. The world of migrants, refugees, and settled minorities is often multi-jurisdictional and trans-jurisdictional, for example where marriage is concerned, often engaging not one but two (or more) nationally-based legal systems.

- Secondly, internationally people are turning to religion to guide their conduct, and seek advice on how to comport themselves in societies which may be seen as individualistic and immoral. We are increasingly in a post-secular world, as the German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas (2006), puts it. This may seem paradoxical given that, for example in Britain, the 2011 census showed a decline in belief and practice among adherents of the historic Christian churches. But against that there has been a rise of new forms of Christian religiosity (the evangelical movement, the Black majority churches and so on), along with new forms of spirituality, and the increasing visibility of non-Christian faiths, including Hinduism, Sikhism, and not least Islam.
- Thirdly, there has been a proliferation of international conventions of human, cultural, religious and gender rights.
- Fourthly, *some* people may seek to maintain practices potentially at odds with those of the societies in which they have settled and therefore seemingly ‘problematic’ so far as the law and public policy are concerned. I emphasise ‘*some*’, and add that legal problems may arise from what is happening *within* migrant and minority families (in the internal dynamics of those populations) as much as from what is happening between minorities and majorities.
- Fifthly, rather than breaking up ‘communities’, transnationalism may stimulate ethnic and religious solidarities, by keeping individuals and families focused socially, economically, politically and culturally on ‘back home’ as much as on the country of residence. The phrase ‘Desh Pardesh’ (meaning ‘Home from Home’), used as the title of an important book on the South Asian diaspora (Ballard ed. 1994), conveys that dual focus.

The combination of these and other factors mean that in Western societies there is now a multiplicity of culturally differentiated and often conflicting norms, a plurality of overlapping, intersecting and interacting moral beliefs and practices (conceptions of the good life and how to live it). There is, in brief, a superdiversity of moral universes which poses a major challenge for the governance of contemporary societies, not least in a legal context. All this has the consequence of making diversity (and its management) to say the least more complex. But whether this justifies ditching multiculturalism in favour of a policy of interculturalism is another matter.

Enclavement and Parallel Lives

While superdiversity is an apt term for describing the complex diversities now found in many societies in the North and West, especially perhaps the major cities (London, Paris, and Amsterdam, for example, or New York, Chicago and Los Angeles), it does not mean that the populations concerned now make up an inchoate mass of individuals and their families, perhaps like the peasants whom Marx described as akin to potatoes in a sack⁵⁰, nor is it the whole story. To take the UK, can cities outside London (or Birmingham, for example) be described as superdiverse in the heavy or indeed lite sense? Moreover, the fact of many ‘new’ diversities does not mean that the old, established blocs (Asians, African Caribbeans, Muslims, Sikhs etc) have simply vanished; superdiversity among other things entails old and new diversities living side by side. British society is highly heterogeneous

50 See <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/subject/hist-mat/18-brum/ch07.htm>: ‘Thus the great mass of the French nation is formed by the simple addition of homonymous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes’.

with different things happening at the same time in different places, and at different times in the same place. Many trajectories are apparent: hybridity and transculturality, yes, but also integration, while maintaining varying degrees of cultural difference; assimilation *and* ‘parallel lives’, ‘conviviality’ *and* racism (Back and Sinha 2016).

This has a bearing on an aspect of multiculturalism that has been extensively criticised (most recently in Casey 2016): that it has allowed, perhaps even encouraged, the creation of separate (ethnic or religious) enclaves, spaces within which migrants and their descendants live in ‘back-to-back’ rather than ‘face-to-face’ societies, to employ much older anthropological terminology. These are the ‘parallel lives’ observed by Cattle in 2001 about which he has continued to write ever since.⁵¹

It would, of course, be ridiculous to deny that such enclaves exist, but where there are separate lives, it should not be assumed that this is primarily, or exclusively, something demanded by Muslim or other similar non-Western immigrant minorities and their leaders, who seek the haven of ethnico-religious reserves in which to practice their faith, or assert their authority; there are more factors at play than state multiculturalism (or pressures from below). It would be quite wrong, for example, to blame multiculturalism for the segregation and parallel lives revealed in the London borough of Kensington and Chelsea by the Grenfell Tower disaster in June 2017.⁵² In the UK and elsewhere in Europe, migrants and asylum-seekers and their families have been routinely ‘parked’ in hostels or other forms of communal or collective accommodation (e.g. multi-occupied tenements) away from the public gaze, or simply concentrated in public sector housing as in the French *banlieues*. Is this really an example of *their* ‘failure to integrate’?

Residential segregation is a world-wide, usually class-based, phenomenon. In the USA in the 1970s and 1980s it was common to refer to what was called ‘white flight’, the exodus of the middle-class white population, from the inner cities towards the suburbs. A more recent extension of this has been the withdrawal into residential areas which are gated, fenced and patrolled, and to which access by outsiders is severely restricted: ‘forting up’ it has been called. The overriding motive for this appears to be fear and insecurity. Gated communities, say Blakely and Snyder (1997: 152), represent a ‘concrete metaphor for the closing of the gates against immigrants and minorities and the poverty, crime, and social instabilities in society at large’. Mike Davis commented scathingly on the ‘security driven logic of enclavization’ (1992: 244) in his survey of urban life in Los Angeles in the early 1990s. Since then the phenomenon has grown apace in the USA itself, in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and South Africa and so on. In the USA, where perhaps a third of new urban developments are gated, Setha Low comments that such communities ‘threaten American values of democracy, diversity, class mobility, and racial integration’, adding that

‘Whether it is kidnapping or bike snatching, Mexican laborers or “ethnic changes” the message is the same, residents are using the walls, entry gates, and guards in an effort to keep the perceived dangers outside of their homes, neighborhoods, and social world’ (2001: 5; see also Low 2003).

This is an important reminder that we must avoid reading superdiversity as simply a matter of cultural difference or indeed style (Maffesoli 1988). London may well be a city of multiple ethnic and religious difference, but for many it is also a city of social and economic division. Indeed, in such global cities we find extreme variation in opportunities for earning a living, and massive, widening and deepening inequality, of a kind revealed in the dreadful Grenfell Tower disaster. For some observers this may suggest that a focus on ethnicity and cultural difference (or the politics of identity) is to fall prey to false consciousness. As Lähdesmäki and Wagener put it, ‘culture itself is sometimes seen as a Trojan horse capable of hiding the real issues and stakes of certain communicational or

51 Most recently in <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/nov/01/call-for-action-to-tackle-growing-ethnic-segregation-across-uk>; also <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/23/britain-more-segregated-15-years-race-expert-riots-ted-cattle>.

52 For a brief account see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grenfell_Tower_fire.

political situations' (2015: 15; they also talk of playing the 'culture card', *ibid.*) Against that, it might be argued that what is required in global, superdiverse cities are policies which take into account multiple sources of differentiation, including those based on inequality and discrimination as well as on culture and religion. In this respect both (conventional) multiculturalism and interculturalism may be lacking

Nonetheless, and returning to the UK and to multiculturalism, I agree with Parekh that in a liberal democracy:

'It is possible that some minorities or some of their members wish to limit most of their significant relations such as marriage, friendship and neighbourhood to their fellow members and lead a relatively self-contained life. If that is their choice and not forced on them by their circumstances or the attitudes and actions of the majority, then multiculturalists think that it should be respected' (2016: 269; see also Parekh 2008b: 91).

But, he adds, while respecting such a choice, multiculturalism 'does not itself seek such an outcome' (p. 271). Bouchard, too, accepts the principle of separate lives, up to a point: interculturalism 'acknowledges the right of ethnoreligious groups to organize themselves in small communities that, while respecting the law, maintain a rather distant relationship from the rest of society' (Bouchard 2011:451). At the same time, it also 'gives great latitude to individuals who wish to identify themselves first and foremost as Québécois by relegating their identification with their group or culture of origin to the background, or by renegotiating this belonging' (*ibid.*) Most, if not all, multiculturalists would surely accept that distinction.

There are then many different things happening in complex, superdiverse societies, and one-size-fits all policies, whether multiculturalism or interculturalism, are unlikely to be sufficient for coping with their governance. But what does this say about the kind of person such developments demand, or perhaps generate?

Citizens of the World?

'Everyone wants the War to end no matter how - I am particularly indifferent to where I live, which nation I belong to, or rather which nation I live under - But in any case, I'm much more partial to the other side, in other words to our enemies - their countries are much more interesting than ours - freedom exists there - and there are more thinking people than here. What's there to say today about the War - every hour it continues is an unfortunate loss' (Egon Schiele, extract from notebooks, 4 April 1916.)

In his article described earlier (originally written in 1974, but revised and republished several times since), Peter Adler developed an idea which subsequently received considerable critical attention as a contribution to thinking about multiculturalism and interculturalism, especially in relation to intercultural communication; see *inter alia* Prosser (1978), Kim (1994), Sparrow (2000) etc.⁵³

'To be a citizen of the world', said Adler (1977: 24), 'an international person, has long been an ideal toward which many strive', and the nature of contemporary society suggested that 'we may now be on the threshold of a new kind of person, a person who is socially and psychologically a product of the interweaving of cultures in the twentieth century.' In a remarkably prescient passage, he added: 'For the first time in the history of the world, a patchwork of technology and organization has made possible simultaneous interpersonal and *intercultural* communication' (p. 25 my emphasis); 'Human connections through communication', he continued, 'have made possible the interaction of goods, products, and services as well as the more significant exchange of thoughts and ideas'.

⁵³ Also <https://prezi.com/vmnpvczgovn-/beyond-multicultural-man>; <https://prezi.com/n0npmoiykd5c/beyond-multicultural-man>; <https://prezi.com/mkhsikeut33t/beyond-multicultural-man-complexities-of-identity>.

Consequently,

‘A new type of person whose orientation and view of the world profoundly transcends his [*sic*] indigenous culture is developing from the complex of social, political, economic, and educational interactions of our time. The various conceptions of an “international,” “transcultural,” or “intercultural” person have all been used with varying degrees of explanatory or descriptive utility. Essentially, they define a type of person whose horizons extend significantly beyond his or her own culture’ (*ibid.*)

‘What is new about this type of person and unique to our time’, Adler insisted,

‘is a fundamental change in the structure and process of his identity. His identity, far from being frozen in a social character, is more fluid and mobile, more susceptible to change and open to variation. The identity of multicultural man is based, not on a “belongingness” which implies either owning or being owned by culture, but on a style of self-consciousness that is capable of negotiating ever new formations of reality. In this sense multicultural man is a radical departure from the kinds of identities found in both traditional and mass societies. He is neither totally a *part of* nor totally *apart from* his culture; lives, instead, on the boundary’ (p. 26).

Although Adler refers to ‘multicultural *man*’ (in a footnote apologizing for the then conventional use of the generic masculine which he abandons in later versions), he also employs ‘intercultural’, as in the above quotation, and that seems a more appropriate term for what he describes. Indeed, what he said, in the 1970s, reminds us that 21st century accounts of identity and interculturalism are not entirely novel.

Adler’s representation of ‘multicultural man’ (a ‘new type of person’) is not unlike that of another personage, proposed by the French social scientist, Joanna Nowicki, who sought to explore the idea of interculturality through the trope of what she called *L’homme des confins* (2001). In an article subtitled *Pour une anthropologie interculturelle*, which was oriented towards contemporary European debates (see also Nowicki 2008, 2010), Nowicki explained that her purpose was to develop through ‘intercultural dialogue’ a model for what she calls ‘cultural cohabitation’ in the context of an expanding Europe, and thus move from national identity towards ‘une identité des confins’. In France, there is a general reluctance to countenance a concern with ideas of cultural identity which run against the grain of hegemonic ideals of universalism and individualism. This ideal - I would dub it a form of ‘a-cultural individualism’ - seeks to ‘liberate the individual from all sources of determinism (race, class, place of birth, religious affiliation) and encourage her or him to choose their identity according to their preferences, their affinities and their values’ (Nowicki 2001: 95, my translation). From a political point of view, argues Nowicki, behind this rejection of a concept of cultural identity lies an obsessive fear of compromising the French Republican ideal of ‘integration’. The French model of the integration of foreigners is based on the assumption of ‘voluntary adherence to the shared values of citizenship’. In this context, one of the consequences of describing someone as belonging to a particular social category is that ‘the boundary between description and determinism quickly collapses’ (Nowicki 2001: 95; see also Favell 1998)

Against this, and mindful of the dangers of culturalist approaches, Nowicki wishes to engage with questions of cultural identity and cohabitation which, she argues, are central to democratic debate. To this end she proposes *l’homme des confins* as ‘an emblematic figure’ who can act as a guide to cultural belonging in contemporary Europe (2001: 100). Drawing on ‘middle’ European conceptions of plural identity (i.e. in Polish, Hungarian and Czech/Slovak-speaking regions), she contends that these were not incompatible with national identity and citizenship, as the quotation from Egon Schiele’s notebooks suggests. As well as overcoming the limitations of French universalism, this ‘Habsburgian’ or ‘Austro-Hungarian’ multiculturalism, as it might be called (not her term), avoids the pitfalls of essentialist models of cultural difference (often associated with Eastern Europe), which

present the most problematic culturalist challenge to the dominant French tradition. Neither *métis* ('half-breed') nor exile, and usually multilingual, *l'homme des confins* is not without a country (*apatride*). On the contrary, she or he has 'double or triple roots' (Nowicki 2001: 102), and it is on the basis of this multiple rootedness that *l'homme des confins* approaches the universal. This life-style, suggests Nowicki, is likely to be increasingly common: 'Little by little, instead of being someone from "here" or "there" we are becoming a kind of *homme des confins*, simultaneously "here" and "there"' (2001: 103).

'Here' and 'there', of course, is a feature transnationalism, but *l'homme des confins* also shares a family resemblance with another term discussed in contemporary cultural and social studies: hybridity. The latter is an awkward metaphor with much historical baggage. For Homi Bhabha, with which it is often associated, it refers to linguistic and cultural creativity in the 'third space', the 'interstitial passage between fixed identifications' (1994: 4). It signals a celebration of polyphony and creativity, of 'mongrelisation', and appeals to a social, cultural and physical postmodernist melting pot, as it were, from which would emerge new forms, and new persons. Ed Soja perhaps identifies something similar happening in what he calls the 'postmetropolis', a city such as Los Angeles, where "'hybridized" movements and coalitions consciously cross racial, ethnic, class, and gender boundaries to mobilize an intercultural politics of space and place that is significantly different from the rigidly polarized politics of capital-labor relations' (2000: 302-3).

Accounts by Nikos Papastergiadis (2000) and Marie Louise Pratt (1992) of creolisation and hybridisation in 'contact zones' are relevant here, as well as research on 'mixed' marriages (e.g. Kofman 2004, Rodríguez-García 2008, Tizard and Phoenix 2002, and many others). Pratt's account of what happens in contact zones influenced an edited collection of studies of life in *transcultural* cities, as the editor chose to call them, across the globe (Hou ed. 2013). Such research has a bearing on yet another concept much discussed in recent years, cosmopolitanism, an idea which also appealed to Dewey (see Saito 2012). Though an extended account is beyond the scope of this chapter, it worth considering the implications of ideas such as the multicultural/intercultural self, hybridity, *l'homme des confins*, and indeed cosmopolitanism for the debate about multiculturalism. (On cosmopolitanism, see *inter alia* Werbner ed. 2008.)

For Ulrich Beck (2006: 66-7) the implications are straightforward. Like Cattle or Amartya Sen (2006), he believed that multiculturalism is unable to handle the complexities of contemporary societies since it is 'trapped in the epistemology of the national outlook ... and its susceptibility to essentialist definitions of identity'; it 'multiplies nationalism internally' (p. 67), and cosmopolitanism must come to the rescue. Ricard Zapata-Barrero makes a similar point on the 'national outlook' when he comments that 'assimilationism and multiculturalism share an interpretative framework of diversity, apparent in the way attributes such as nationality, race, religion and cultural community are similarly categorized' (2017: 179). Whether such an assertion is correct or not is contestable; it certainly misses the point that an assimilative nationalism and a diversity-friendly multiculturalism do very different things with identity.

That aside, are such visions of a transcendent, intercultural/cosmopolitan/hybrid person incompatible with multiculturalism? The answer may depend on whether one interprets interculturalism in 'hard' or 'soft' terms, i.e. whether interculturalism is seen as 'simply' a matter of people from different ethno-linguistic or religious 'blocs', talking to each other, engaging in dialogue in a basic sense, or involves the development of a mind-set of the kind that Adler, Beck, Nowicki and others describe. If the former, which is what I think Modood envisages (see also Padilla et al 2015: 623), then it would seem that there is no incompatibility between multiculturalism and interculturalism. If the latter, if interculturalism seeks to create a new type of (intercultural, transcultural) person then this might seem very different from what multiculturalism sets out to do. But this intersects with another issue, about collectivities and individuals, to be discussed in Chapter 7.

Intercultural or Transcultural?

It is possible that superdiversity, at least in the ‘heavy’ sense, and the problems it poses for the governance of diversity, are peculiar to certain cities under conditions of neo-liberal globalisation and transnationalism, typically ‘global cities’, which are major poles of attraction for migrants and refugees because of the opportunities they offer: London, Paris, Berlin, New York, Los Angeles – but also Johannesburg (significant in the global sub-Saharan African context). These are what Ed Soja has called ‘fractal cities’ (2000), which are ‘fragmented and polarized’. ‘Fragmentation’ is indeed a key metaphor, also employed by Castells (2000) and George Marcus (1995). Often seen as a defining feature of postmodernity, urban fragmentation resembles what Maffesoli called ‘neotribalism’ (1988): the multiplicity of eclectic life styles and representations of self, which generate mutual sympathies of an extremely fluid and fluctuating character.

This observation about ‘fractal cities’ (and the reference to Jefferey Hou’s edited collection, cited above) makes a connection with a point raised in the conclusion to Chapter 2 where I referred to the way in which the idea of transculturality, in various guises, is sometimes deployed in academic studies in the humanities and social sciences to describe and analyse what is happening socially, culturally and linguistically in such cities. Transcultural, like intercultural and multicultural, is another fuzzy concept. It has been around for some time, but is not always used consistently or in a precise sense. As I pointed out in Chapter 2, terms such as trans-, cross-, and inter- are sometimes used interchangeably, so its absence from a text does not necessarily mean that the issues it addresses are being ignored, even when their presence is not consciously recognised and so labelled; one example is a report by the *Platform for Intercultural Europe* (PIE), and especially the contribution by Mark Terkessidis (2012), discussed in Chapter 8 (see also Sarmento 2014). That said, the implications of a transcultural approach (in senses discussed below) are rarely taken on board in the academic or policy literature of interculturalism to which to some degree it offers a counterpoint, as it also does to multiculturalism. Indeed, at least from an analytical or theoretical point of view, it might be set alongside those other two, with multiculturalism, interculturalism and transculturality representing a trio of different understandings of contemporary diversity.

One of the few places where transculturality is discussed specifically in the context of interculturalism is in Steven Shankman’s contribution to the UNESCO volume *Interculturalism At The Crossroads* edited by Fethi Mansouri in 2017; he in fact holds the UNESCO Chair in Transcultural Studies, Interreligious Dialogue and Peace at the University of Oregon. In a section entitled ‘Multiculturalism, interculturalism, transculturally’ [sic; this must be a misprint], Shankman explains his preference for the term transcultural as opposed to multicultural:

‘Any single culture is in fact – in its lived concreteness – a mixture of many cultures and is therefore, by its very nature, a “trans culture”. The adjective “transcultural” is therefore preferable to “multicultural” because the word “multiculturalism” might suggest that individual cultures, which allegedly embody distinctive essences, are homogeneous and insufficiently diverse unless they are seasoned by other cultures. But all cultures are, to greater or lesser degrees, multicultures’ (2017: 47).

This, of course is familiar ground for anthropologists. Ulf Hannerz, for example, long ago reminded us that already in the early 20th century the American anthropologist, Robert Lowie, referred to cultures as ‘things of shreds and patches’ (cited in Hannerz 1996: 66). Shankman, however, goes on to argue that the trans- in transcultural makes it different from the inter- in intercultural. Trans- implies ‘transcends or goes beyond culture’. Inter-cultural implies a dialogue between those of different cultures. Moreover, do those who attend UNESCO assemblies on intercultural dialogue, he asks, truly engage in intercultural dialogue, given their common cultural backgrounds (p. 53). ‘Engaging in intercultural dialogue within one’s own culture’, he adds,

‘may offer a much greater confrontation with cultural difference than the activity of participating in a conference on intercultural dialogue – in say, Almaty or Baku – although you may be from Azerbaijan or Kazakhstan and I from the United States, half a world away’ (p. 54).

Although intriguing in many ways, Shankman’s discussion, which includes an analysis of intra-cultural dialogues in the context of the US prison system, is not especially helpful for understanding interculturality as it is understood elsewhere, and in the kind of context under review here. More pertinent, perhaps, is the writing of Clara Sarmiento (2014), whose work is cited, *inter alia*, in Mike Hardy and Serena Hussain’s contribution (2017) to the Mansouri ed. volume. Although she is writing about interculturalism, and never uses the term transcultural, what she says locates the intercultural within the literature on travel, border-crossing, hybridity, and mixity, all of which ‘reflect[] the dialogic nature of culture’ (p. 604). For example, the ‘intercultural’ she describes as a ‘sort of third space’, referring to Bhabha (1994), ‘for hybridity, subversion, transgression’ (see also Grillo 2005). What she says is thus very much in the domain of what others call ‘transcultural’. Yet when it comes down to a contrast between multiculturalism (as she imagines it: ‘a delimited, static space, within which different cultures cohabit in a self-enclosed, silent ignorance’, p. 606) and interculturalism she seemingly evades the central issue raised by the transcultural approach. For example, while she claims that interculturalism counters multiculturalism’s essentialising of cultures, when it comes to dialogue she still appears to see intercultural communication as involving interaction and communication between ‘individuals who speak different languages and for whom words and objects have diverse meanings’ (p. 611). She also, like others, demands much of such dialogue. ‘Intercultural translation’, for example ‘should foster communication, generate mutual intelligibilities between different worldviews, find convergent as well as divergent points, and share alternative concepts and epistemologies, so that distant (in both space and time) cultures may ultimately understand each other’ (p. 614). Important though this is, going as it does well beyond the outcome of casual encounters, it does not incorporate consideration of the kind of (transcultural) transformations that such dialogue might generate. The following section explores such transformations in the context of superdiverse cities like London or Paris.

Transcultural Cities

An illustration: ‘Ali G’. This British television personage was invented by a Londoner, Sacha Baron Cohen, who happens to be Jewish and a Cambridge graduate. In appearance ‘Ali G’ represents a young African Caribbean man, something made clear in the subject matter of the dialogues in his act, and in his accent, and the vocabulary and grammar he uses. The act is controversial; it is certainly politically incorrect, and some would argue racist. Many people find it extremely funny. However, it is more complex than simply a white man for whatever reason mimicking a black man. Multiple meanings are being signalled by ‘Ali G’, multiple readings are possible. For instance, the ‘Ali G’ character (as the name implies) is not taking off a young Afro-Caribbean as such, but a young British Asian for whom the street-wise black man is a cult figure (see below). ‘Ali G’ is thus a white man mimicking an Asian adopting the style of a black man. The character echoes a multiplicity of voices and is not easy to interpret: is it racist, is it subversive, is it simply a good or bad joke? More importantly, the act plays on, and depends on the existence of, a complex range of cultural and linguistic cross-overs between black, white and Asian youths in England, especially in London and the Midlands. It is thoroughly transcultural (‘tc’ if not ‘pc’).

Les Back (2002: 441) points out that early studies which saw youth as ‘locked in a vice-like grip between two incommensurable cultural blocks’ (‘between two cultures’) lacked ‘appreciation of what was happening in the interstices of social life when young people themselves were writing their own history of negotiation and exclusion’. There is in contemporary London a ‘triangularization in the geometry of inclusion and exclusion’: white, black, Asian (Back 2002: 444). As numerous researchers have shown (e.g. Hewitt 1986, Jones 1988, Rampton 1995, and Back 1996), the language and gestures of the street-wise African Caribbean young men (along with Reggae and Rap music) became powerful

icons for many young white and Asian Britons, at least up to a certain point in their lives. Thus, as Roger Hewitt puts it (1986: 47), ‘they ... appropriate some of the blazonry of black youth style’, using elements of Creole, African American speech, and the South London black vernacular (see also Jones 1988). Creole, sometimes known as ‘patwa’ or ‘broad’, refers to the various forms of a language originating in the Caribbean, and used, for example in reggae lyrics etc. It varies from island to island and within the diaspora. The South London black vernacular is a dialect of English, and in the 1980s there was convergence within the African Caribbean population on the variant spoken by those of Jamaican origin (see Sutcliffe and Wong eds. 1986).

Ben Rampton’s detailed linguistic ethnography (1995), like that of Simon Jones (1988), is heavily indebted to Hewitt (1986), on the one hand, and Paul Gilroy (1987) on the other, and offers further evidence for what Rampton calls ‘language crossing’: ‘the use of Panjabi by young people of Anglo and Afro-Caribbean descent, the use of Creole by Anglos and Punjabis, and the use of stylised Indian English by all three’ (Rampton 1995: 4). Based on fieldwork in a Southern Midlands town with a substantial ethnic minority population, he is mainly concerned with young people in a school context, and draws his material from their interaction in ‘school corridors, dinner halls and playgrounds’ (1995: 13), which he argues are more significant ‘sites for ethnic mixing’ than home and the wider community (1995: 28). A key question is:

‘How do outgroup uses of Panjabi, Indian English and Creole relate to the shifting and contested relationship between race and class in late industrial Britain. How far and in what ways can language crossing practices be construed as a form of everyday cultural politics?’ (Rampton 1995: 14).

Language-crossing is a form of code-mixing (1995: 275-7 ff.), but Rampton differentiates it from what linguists call ‘code-switching’ since, like ‘Ali G’'s act,

‘[it] focuses on code alternation by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language they employ. It is concerned with switching in languages that are not generally thought to belong to you’ (1995: 280).

Crossing entails a ‘basic disparity between speaker and voice’ (1995: 278), and thus has considerable symbolic potential. Rampton also points out that especially when adults, e.g. new teachers, are the target, it represents ‘sport’ as much as ‘resistance’, and has considerable potential for irony and comic effect. Language-crossing (like language/code switching) is therefore part of the multicultural community’s linguistic or rhetorical repertoire, and the repertoires of those individuals and groups who form part of that community. ‘Counterposed to Standard English’, says Rampton, language-crossing ‘challenge[s] normal expectations [and] constitutes a distinctive ‘argot’ that help[s] create a “special collectivity”’ (1995: 315).

Rampton (1995: 297) places his material in the context of Stuart Hall’s discussion of ‘new ethnicities’ (1992, see also Back 1996), but emphasises that crossing arises out of ‘solidarities and allegiances ... grounded in a range of non-ethnic identities’ such as neighbourhood and class. In other words, they are a function of cross-cutting ties. It was such ties, Rampton adds (1995: 312-313) that ‘generated ... the local multiracial vernacular. It was their base in these connections that allowed adolescents to explore the significance of ethnicity and race through language crossing’. Thus ‘crossing emerged from a plurality of identity relations’ (1995: 313). Although Rampton is probably correct in this context, in other contexts (e.g. colonial cities) language-crossing might in fact reinforce ethnic boundaries by emphasising their existence.

Language-crossing often provokes ambivalent feelings about the appropriation (nowadays perhaps it would be called ‘cultural appropriation’) of speech styles (Rampton 1995: 15), and a ‘critical and sometimes hostile response’ from all sides (Hewitt 1986: 97). As Stephen Frosh et al report (2002: 158), many black and other boys thought copying black styles ‘a mixture of envy and

antagonism, making their own response to it uncertain'. One of Rampton's informants, reflecting on the use of what Rampton calls 'Stylised Anglo Indian' on TV and in their own performances, said: 'its alright if we use it, cos we're Indian' (1995: 239), which of course brings us back to how one responds to 'Ali G' (and perhaps to the idea of 'cultural appropriation'). Additionally, although he does not develop this, Rampton's material shows that language-crossing intersects with ideas about masculinity (and indeed about class). For example, as is widely reported elsewhere (e.g. Frosh et al 2002), black speech is regarded as 'tough and cool' (1995: 45) and its use serves 'to differentiate oneself from the posh wimpies' (1995: 46). There is ambivalence here too, however. Discussing the contrast between 'posh' and 'Bengali' (the English spoken by Asians originally from Bangladesh), Rampton notes (1995: 49) that the 'former represented a cluster of attributes that many informants rated highly, while the latter stood for a lower position from which all were keen to dissociate'.

This leads us to a phenomenon also observed by Rampton, what Hewitt has called 'a new ethnically mixed "community English"', emerging from the debris left from the deconstruction of ethnicity (1989: 139). Gerd Baumann (1996: 47), in his study of the predominately British Asian West London suburb of Southall, also notes that young people 'converge on a dialect of English that bears witness to a community of language' – English spoken with a West London accent, but including Americanisms, Afro-Caribbean words and 'Indianisms'. It is in this context that Hewitt, Back, and Rampton and Harris all stress the importance of 'negotiation' (see also Amselle 1998: 54). Back (1996: 158) argues that through negotiation 'in the context of ... friendship patterns young white and black people construct an alternative public sphere in which truly mixed ethnicities develop'. Therein, they are producing 'new forms of working-class Englishness' (Back 1996: 123),

'cultures that are neither simply black nor simply white. These syncretic cultures produce inter-racial harmony while celebrating diversity ... and result in volatile cultural forms that can be simultaneously black and white' (1996: 159).

This negotiated cultural order, Back adds (1996: 227)

'refuses to be located within the either/or-ism of 'identity', but ... manifests itself in a connective supplementarity - ragga plus bhangra plus England plus Indian plus Kingston plus Birmingham'.

Rampton's discussion of performance art as a context for crossing (see also Carrasco 2002, on cities as performance spaces) is relevant here. 'It is in sound', says Back (2002: 443), i.e. language and music, 'that most profound forms of dialogue and transcultural production are to be found' (see also Jones 1988). These 'new forms of working-class Englishness' bear witness to the emergence of a transethnic (to some extent) common culture. It is not always a pretty sight. Frosh et al's study (2002) of masculinities among 11-14 year old boys in multi-ethnic schools in London documents a cross-ethnic, creolised culture emerging around attitudes towards girls, school-work, sport, homophobia etc 'Popular masculinity', they say, 'involves "hardness", sporting prowess, "coolness", casual treatment of schoolwork and being adept at "cussing"' (Frosh et al 2002: 10). 'Having a laugh', not least in the classroom, is a much admired trait. These 'canonical narratives about masculinity', are, they say, 'constructed out of a complex network of identity factors, including "race", ethnicity, social class and sexuality' (Frosh et al 2002: 258). Back (1996) is indeed right to warn against drawing any romantic conclusions from such developments. It is unfortunate, he adds, that any celebration of hybridity 'saddle[s] minority young people with the millstone of being the ones to deliver "newness" and transformation' (2002: 446), and advises that 'hybrid cultural forms need not necessarily be connected with progress or any form of progressive populism' (see also Back and Sinha 2016).

Baumann's Southall study, in which he observed a multiplicity of (at times cross-cutting) identifications, introduced an additional element. Among his informants (or some of them) there was, he argued, a 'demotic discourse' which 'disengages' culture and community. That is, it denies received (hegemonic) definitions and correlations of the two, and seeks to foster emergent alternative,

unifying identities, such as ‘Asian’ or ‘black’, which are transethnic, supertribal, linking people across previous ethnic/national boundaries. In Southall, where children are highly conscious of culture and the language of culture/cultures, this disengagement has two vectors (Baumann 1996: 122-3): the ‘vast cultural variety’ in the suburb itself, and the involvement of some residents in transnational multicultural communities such as the Islamic umma. Baumann, however, contended that such disengagement comes up against the dominant political and civic discourse of British multiculturalism which is ‘highly susceptible to arguments on the basis of communities of “colour”, rather than cross-cutting civic ideas and ideals’ (Baumann 1996: 70). Multiculturalism emphasizes the equation of culture and community, and for many people this is the ‘currency within which they must deal with the political and media establishments on both the national and local level’ (Baumann 1996: 192). If one community gains by ‘playing the dominant game of reified cultures’, then everyone must play (Baumann (1996: 192-3), but to do so locals must be competent in both demotic and dominant discourses.

Baumann, however, also argues that such reifications ‘cannot be written off as irrelevant or false: they form part of Southallians’ culture and need to be recognised as such’ (1996: 107). As I have argued elsewhere (Grillo 1998), there may be an ‘ethnic dialectic’ at work: British multiculturalism does not simply invent such categories, though it may well attribute to them a certain significance and salience in the multicultural context. For whatever reason (or from whatever source), minorities of migrant background may also think of themselves in terms of such categories, and perhaps have a range of institutions (associations, churches, newspapers, language schools, cuisine) through which this is expressed. As Baumann himself put it: Southallians are not ‘dupes of the dominant discourse. But neither are they post-modernist champions of a cult which worships “hybridity”’ (1996: 204). Instead, they develop ‘discursive competencies in close connection with the facts of everyday life, and they cultivate fine judgments of when to use what discourse in which situation’ (*ibid*).

Something similar to what has been happening in superdiverse, multicultural London, has also been reported for other European cities, notably Paris. Farid Aïtisselmi’s edited volume *Black, Blanc, Beur: Youth Language and Identity in France*, published in 2000, for example, documented the way in which youngsters created forms of communication borrowing from different languages (Arabic, Berber, Creole, Romany, African languages, French slang) along with the use of linguistic techniques such as *verlan*, where syllables are transposed (as in *beur*, for *arabe*). A more recent study is that of Chantal Tetreault (2015) in her account of young people, mainly French-born young women of Algerian background, living in a housing project to the west of Paris. She in fact uses the term ‘transculturality’ (indeed ‘transcultural’ figures in the title of her book) to refer to the way in which

‘French teens of North African descent experience and express migration and diaspora in ways that are related to the experiences of their parents, but are also innovative, bifurcated, and differential. Teens’ discursive performances of identity thus hinge upon brokering cultural difference as well as continuity’ (2015: 4).

Simultaneously ‘Arab’, ‘Muslim’, and ‘French’, they should not, she argues, be thought of as ‘neither’ French ‘nor’ North African, but rather as ‘both/and’ (p. 17). They may be described as ‘transcultural’ because of the ways in which they ‘combine cultural and linguistic referents in their communicative styles and identity performances, and [how] they connect and take apart the ideological underpinnings of their multiple social identities in everyday peer interactions’ (p. 196). As was noted above, as with their British counterparts, this is not necessarily a comfortable experience, or one which should be naively celebrated. Their transculturality is

‘born out of a shared sense that, despite being clearly situated as culturally, linguistically, and historically *French* – both as children born of a (post)-colonial France and a France that touts universal, equal citizenship as available to all born on its soil – they are too often the politicized target and supposed *cause* of ongoing public hand-wringing “debates” about the viability and future of the French language and, more troubling, of France itself’ (p. 198)

As Tetreault herself puts it, it’s ‘not all fun and games’ (p. 2).

The above examples, which involve the exchange of linguistic and cultural practices, are illustrative of ‘actually existing’ intercultural dialogue of a kind that ought (in theory) to gladden the hearts of EU Commissioners and members of the CoE, though it may not be quite what they had in mind when advocating dialogue as a key component of interculturalism.

Concluding Observations

What, then, are the implications for multiculturalism (the MPP), and is interculturalism (the IPP) the answer?

As Amanda Wise and Selvaraj Velayutham observe (2014: 406), ‘The frequent refrain that “multiculturalism has failed” ... ignores the fact that intercultural conviviality has existed and continues to thrive in many societies’, *under conditions of multiculturalism and superdiversity* (my emphases added). Much recent research has shown that on the ground (in superdiverse cities) there is a great deal of ‘conviviality’, as Gilroy called it (2004), of the kind favoured by interculturalists. Documenting conviviality has been a guiding theme of the research conducted by the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, notably in its major studies of New York, Johannesburg and Singapore (Vertovec ed. 2015), and other research has confirmed their findings. Taking Singapore as one example, Wise and Velayutham identify several ways in which Singaporeans of diverse background, who live within a fairly tightly defined ethnic framework from a governmental perspective, bridge their differences through ‘talk’ and ‘speech’: joking, gossip, ‘Singlish’, knowledge of key words in several languages, short, stereotyped phrases, and code-and language-switching, in ways which have been documented elsewhere (see above). At the same time, however, in such cities one may also find a convivial urban multiculturalism alongside racism in ‘paradoxical co-existence’ (Back and Sinha 2016: 518).

It is unfortunate that many advocates of interculturalism appear to be unaware of the detailed ethnographic research on what actually happens, on the ground, in superdiverse, multicultural societies such as Britain (where multicultural policies are still practiced to a substantial degree, especially in the principal cities), but seemingly prefer to read off the implications for multiculturalism from the bare demographic facts. Fieldwork by, among many others, Susanne Wessendorf (2003, 2014, 2016) has documented the regular encounters in the public square (involving interaction and dialogue, at least in the ‘soft’ sense) which are commonplace in a superdiverse city like London. Multiculturalism does not, it would seem, entirely inhibit the creation of significant cross-cutting ties, as anthropologists call them. Rather, as Pnina Werbner has observed, ‘everyday multiculturalism ... forms the grounds for an emergent positive, shared intersubjectivity’ (2013: 402). Likewise, Nina Glick Schiller has emphasised the existence in superdiverse cities of ‘everyday sociabilities not based on tolerance of difference but on recognition of commonalities’ (2016: 6), albeit she is at pains to stress that such sociabilities may go well beyond ethnicity (often the official discourse through which diversity is envisaged) to encompass commonalities of a class-based character (see also Glick Schiller and Schmidt 2016).

In the eyes of interculturalists, as summarised by Meer and Modood (2012a: 186), ‘the diversity of the locations from where migrants and ethnic minorities herald, gives rise not to a creation of communities or groups but to a churning mass of languages, ethnicities and religions all cutting across each other’. Interculturalism is consequently proposed as a better way of responding to this

diversity, this ‘churning mass’, compared with multiculturalism’s emphasis on ‘strong ethnic or cultural identities at the expense of wider cultural exchanges’ (Meer and Modood 2012a: 186). Once again it depends on what multiculturalism is imagined to be (as well as what it actually is). For example, multicultural Britain does not resemble the plural society under colonial rule, as described originally by J.S. Furnivall. In such a society, there is a ‘medley of peoples’:

‘It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit. Even in the racial sphere there is a division of labour along racial lines’ (1948: 304).

Additionally, although some people have occasionally voiced support for the idea (as reported in Modood 1992: 273; see also Parekh 2008a: 30, 2008b: 122), very few have actually advocated the reproduction in Britain of the Ottoman millet system, with relatively autonomous self-governing faiths, and certainly nothing in the UK comes close to that model. Yes, there are ethnically and religiously specific institutions (the Jewish Beth Din, for example or the Islamic Shari’a councils), whose status has in recent years been prominent in discussions about multiculturalism and its limits. But they are not the ‘total institutions’ which the millets were, and superdiversity has not put an end to them, nor has it rendered them unnecessary. In fact, what I have called the ‘superdiversity of moral universes’ has, rather, led to their proliferation (e.g. the Somali *gar* or African Pentecostal congregations).

Transnationalism and superdiversity certainly pose additional (practical) problems for governance and administration in many fields (should information about local taxes, for example, be translated into each of those 300 different languages?), and to a certain degree transculturality potentially cuts across everything. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that such developments will reduce the demand for ethnically, culturally or religiously specific institutions or for recognition of practices grounded in collective moral universes, unless, as in a country like France, such ‘communitarianism’ is positively abominated, or indeed suppressed (at least officially). Such collective institutions (their rights and claims) are central to the MPP project, and in that sense the need for a multiculturalist approach is unlikely to diminish. Advocates of interculturalism would not, I assume, normally wish to legislate against such institutions unless they transgressed the established law, a position they would share with most multiculturalists. For sure there is opposition to faith-specific institutions such as Shari’a councils or separate faith schools which unites a range of sometimes strange bed-fellows, but interculturalists are not usually among them.

None of this is to deny the importance of dialogue, which is central to the IPP. But as we have seen in previous chapters, and will see again in Parts II and III, this is far from being a matter of people of different backgrounds talking to each other, but involves complex processes of communication in a world of multiple social, economic and cultural change.

CHAPTER 7. MULTICULTURALISM, INTERCULTURALISM, AND THEIR LIMITS: REFLECTIONS ON PART I

‘Few things have done more harm than the belief on the part of individuals or groups (or tribes or states or nations or churches) that he or she or they are in *sole* possession of the truth: especially about how to live, what to be & do - & that those who differ from them are not merely mistaken, but wicked or mad: & need restraining or suppressing’ (Berlin 2002: 345, from ‘Notes on Prejudice’, originally written in 1981).

Similarities and Differences in Theory and Practice⁵⁴

Multicultural, intercultural, transcultural. Repetitive, confused and confusing the arguments may be, but in this chapter which concludes Part I, I try to pull together my own thoughts on the debate between multiculturalists and interculturalists; are their views *really* different, and incompatible, or do both have something to offer, and what are their limits? The chapter will also include further observations on intercultural dialogue (the focus of Parts II and III), and the high expectations that interculturalists and some multiculturalists have of it.

Both multiculturalism and interculturalism are intended to address the problems facing the governance of increasingly diverse societies – the crisis of difference - and meet certain desired social and political ends. To that extent at the very least they share a strong family resemblance. Transculturality is different in that it is analytical and descriptive, rather than prescriptive. But what seemingly is at stake for multiculturalism and interculturalism is the nature of the desired end. The claim of interculturalism, at least in a European context, is that in an era of globalisation, transnationalism, and superdiversity, it recognises, addresses and resolves problems that multiculturalism ignores, or even has itself partly created - ‘parallel lives’, failures of integration and cohesion, majority anxiety etc – and does so by emphasising dialogue, negotiation, and interaction. These latter may be present in some variants or interpretations of multiculturalism, and multiculturalists would contend that they not precluded by it, but interculturalism’s proponents claim it foregrounds them in ways multiculturalism does not. Thus, whereas multiculturalism seeks out and seeks to protect difference, interculturalism seeks out and seeks to enhance commonalities, what is shared, principally by getting people to talk to each other and co-operate in common enterprises, with a view, for example, to tackling xenophobia. The theoretical justification for such an approach is often located in the long-established work of social psychologists such as Gordon Allport (e.g. Wood and Landry 2008: 52, 107), or more recently Miles Hewstone, whose research is frequently cited in the interculturalism literature.

Certainly, this difference, at least of emphasis, may be observed in the claims of most interculturalists, though multiculturalists such as Tariq Modood, and perhaps most prominently Bhikhu Parekh, would assert that dialogue is very much on their agenda, though it may not have the same strategic or operational significance it has for interculturalists. A further difference, foregrounded by interculturalists, is that while multiculturalism gives priority to minorities, interculturalism has as great a concern for majorities, and seeks to balance the relationship between the two, as in Canadian interculturalism. Thus, Wood and Landry (2008: 264): ‘Multiculturalism needs to be redefined as being applicable to all communities, including the indigenous population. “Multiculturalism” in practice should mean what it says’.

Certainly, Modood has acknowledged that this has not always been the case with multiculturalism, and now recognises that the experience of Québec forces us to think about majority cultures. Thus:

⁵⁴ The following comments were partly stimulated by a lecture on ‘Interculturalism’ given by Ricard Zapata-Barrero at the University of Sussex in November 2016.

‘Multiculturalism is the accommodation of minorities, not just as individuals, but as people sharing, promoting and remaking their group identities within a common citizenship and the rethinking of a national story. No doubt this has sometimes been expressed too simply, both theoretically and politically, so we must learn from critics emphasizing community cohesion, or the fluidity and multiplicity of identities, or what is called “interculturalism”’ (Modood 2017: 99).⁵⁵

Taking cognisance of majority anxieties is thus in Modood’s view not incompatible with multiculturalism. But he also maintains that the majority has no ‘exclusive right to identity preservation or the precedence of seniority, let alone the right to suppress a minority’s right to publicly express and preserve its identity’ (2015: 359), and I suspect most interculturalists would agree. Yet, both multiculturalists and interculturalists face a common dilemma if or when majority opinion comes close to a form of cultural (or other) racism (or Islamophobia or anti-Semitism). The result of the Brexit referendum in the UK in 2016, the election of Donald Trump in the USA, and the flourishing of anti-immigrant, anti-Islam, populist movements in Europe and elsewhere, oblige both multiculturalists and interculturalists alike to ponder the implications for diversity-benign regimes, and consider what needs to be done. Under such circumstances is it enough simply to get people talking to each other?

The following section looks at other ways in which interculturalists seek to differentiate their approach from that of the multiculturalists, and how the latter respond. It also asks what happens in practice? When it comes to what interculturalists and multiculturalist actually do, are their differences as fundamental as they might claim? For example, given that both multiculturalists and interculturalists (for the most part) reject outright assimilationism, it is instructive to compare how what both actually say and do about the accommodation of cultural and religious beliefs and practices, and where and how they establish limits, a point discussed further below.

Individuals and Collectivities

Multiculturalism and the Solitarist Illusion

As noted previously (e.g. in Chapter 3), a charge frequently made against multiculturalism, and often stressed as a marker of its difference from interculturalism, is that it is ‘groupist’, as Meer and Modood dub it (2012a: 177). This is the contention that multiculturalism categorises and sets people into named collectivities on the grounds of their ethnic and/or religious affiliation, and that these ethno-cultural-religious blocs then form the basis for social and political representation and policy interventions. (See *inter alia* Kymlicka 2015, Glick Schiller 2016, Glick Schiller and Schmidt 2016, or Werbner 2013 for critiques of ‘post-multiculturalist’ accounts of multiculturalism’s alleged essentialism.)

Multicultural idol 2: Beyond ethnocentrism and group-based narrative hegemony: the return to the individual, is the subtitle of a section in Ricard Zapata-Barrero’s defence of the ‘intercultural turn’ (2017: 178). As Stokke and Lybæk remark on one of his earlier papers, for Zapata-Barrero interculturalism constitutes a ‘liberal (i.e. individualist) criticism of multiculturalism, one that understands culture as an expression of individual identity that is open, flexible and dynamic’ (2016: 4). In part, such objections have to do with the accusation that multiculturalism is prey to what Amartya Sen (2006) has called the ‘solitarist illusion’; the error of seeing people as having a singular identity. Sen is frequently cited in the interculturalist literature, not least by Ted Cantle. In a passage (Cantle 2013: 73-5) where he refers to Sen’s book, Cantle comments:

⁵⁵ See also <https://soundcloud.com/user-223351495/multiculturalism-versus-interculturalism-and-is-it-the-end-of-open-door-germany>.

‘Identity is increasingly complex and, as well as the now routine hyphenating of nationality, faith and ethnicity, the consequence of people from different identity groups sharing the same society has also led to the growth of “mixed-race” or multiple identities. This is now the fastest-growing minority in Britain’.

He adds: ‘the outdated concept of multiculturalism ... has positioned identity as static and bounded – or ascribed and fixed. The reality for many people today, however, is that identity is transitory and, at least partly, chosen’. Sen himself (2006: 169) refers to what he calls the ‘disastrous consequences’ of identifying people by their religion.

That people have multiple and shifting identities is nothing new, and indeed that idea (though more often in the past discussed via the idiom of ‘role’) is elementary social science; we learn about it in anthropology 101, so to speak. Like the different ‘languages’ (dialects, registers) that form part of any individual’s speech repertoire, we all have various identities which become salient according to context and situation. Certainly, some societies generate more complex sets of identities (or languages) than others, but there is nothing inherently new about this in contemporary superdiverse societies, where members live with the phenomenon each and every day (see *inter alia* Werbner 2013 who argues that such multiple identities, among British Pakistanis, for example, are valorised, viewed positively). Nonetheless, the ‘solitarist illusion’ suggests that currently our societies pick out one identity (say religious affiliation) and treat that as the most salient in every situation, categorising and essentialising someone as, say, ‘Muslim’, thus framing them socially, culturally, politically, and stereotypically.

Now, while the ‘solitarist illusion’ argument points to a state of affairs which many people find philosophically, socially and politically unacceptable (we’re all *individuals* now, aren’t we?), it is sociologically naïve. If there is a tendency (however regrettable) to treat a single identity as the most salient, as the defining identity, it is not happening in a void, and we must understand why it occurs. Take ‘Muslim’. Leaving aside the great diversity within Islam itself, the ‘solitarist illusion’ argument – as in theories of intersectionality - is that a devotee of Islam has many identities besides a religious one (gender, class, ethnicity, age, nation etc), and it is inappropriate to treat or recognise the religious as the deepest, most defining, most authentic representation of that person’s subjectivity. Cultural, in this case religious, essentialism does indeed pose major theoretical problems (Grillo 2003a), but it must be accepted that for some people (outsiders, insiders, Muslims, non-Muslims) a person’s essence is captured by their religion; essentialising is a social fact which analysis must explain. Thus, if ‘Muslim’ (or ‘Jew’), albeit suspect from an analytical perspective, is regarded as the salient identity in the lived experience of the individual concerned, this categorisation (whether top-down and/or bottom-up, outsider and/or insider) must be understood as the outcome of (complex) social and political processes, and not just as an attribute of a failed multiculturalism. And to imply, as does Cante (above), that the ‘growth of “mixed-race” identities’ somehow lessens the likelihood that ‘Muslim’ will be adopted as a salient identity suggests a misunderstanding of the complex relationship between ethnicity and faith in the case of Islam, and indeed Christianity.

Take a different example, perhaps one from a distant and now forgotten past: a man, a Welsh man, married, with a family, *and* a Methodist, *and* a choral singer, *and* working class, *and* a miner. ‘I’m a miner’, the Welsh Labour leader, Aneurin Bevan used to say, or so my mother’s relatives told me. ‘The African newly arrived from his rural home to work in a mine, is first of all a miner (and possibly resembles miners everywhere)’, as the anthropologist Max Gluckman once wrote (1961: 68). Their labour defined them socially (perhaps also culturally, in terms of a certain masculinity), and above all *politically*. In the political and economic context of the 19th and 20th centuries such identities, or rather forms of collective identification, were vitally important as part of the struggle for jobs, wages, and working conditions, a struggle seen (by both sides) as class conflict: ‘Let’s say it – class’ (Wood and Landry 2008: 10).

In the case of ‘Muslim’, as Modood and others have pointed out, from the late 1980s onwards

that identity became increasingly salient for adherents of the faith, both locally (in the UK, for instance) and internationally. Developments in the 1990s-2000s - the heightened salience and attraction of Islam globally, especially fundamentalist versions (Sunni and Shi'ite), ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Central-South Asia, public rhetoric promoting a certain view of such conflicts, and above all the shock of 9/11 and what followed - help explain such perceptions. Always in the shadow of these is the widening and deepening of the Muslim family presence in countries such as the UK (albeit with ongoing ties to places and practices of origin through transnationalism), a growing (re)attachment to faith, the public visibility of the Islamic infrastructure (mosques, modes of dress etc), and increasing claims for the recognition and accommodation of Islamic principles. This has encouraged the perception of Muslims as leading separate, parallel (and transnational) lives in families thought to maintain values (notably in gender relations) at odds with contemporary, liberal values, which are also a breeding ground for extremism. (See *inter alia* Casey 2016).

All this came together in cascading fashion in the first decade of the twenty-first century at a time of increasing tension and anxiety about what is happening to the traditional nation-state in a globalising, transnational, neo-liberal ecumene, to nourish a contemporary 'fear of Islam' (the literal meaning of 'Islamophobia'), and of the 'Islamisation' of Europe and North America, which it is believed multiculturalism sustains. There has thus emerged a mindset of a 'Muslim problem' to be confronted and managed (contained or nullified) on multiple fronts: immigration policy, economic and cultural integration, security, family organisation (marriage, gender relations, the upbringing of children), mosques, Shari'a councils etc. 'Reforming' conservative Muslim practices, and backing institutions supporting British values, is thus a key element in policies designed to tackle and encouraging integration and discouraging radicalisation of the young.

This is not to deny that there are issues to be addressed, but it is unsurprising when the cumulative effect of multiple interventions on these fronts is a *repli sur soi*, a *repli communautaire*, an emphasis on Muslim identity, and *collective* efforts to defend it. This is perhaps an illustration of what Gayatri Spivak (1988) called 'strategic essentialism' (see also Hardy and Hussain 2017: 76). Certainly, as Bhikhu Parekh has pointed out, identity politics can be 'a mixed blessing' (2008b: 37), but, like 'parallel lives', how much can really be laid at the door of multiculturalism? And does interculturalism really provide an adequate response?

Collective Rights

The interculturalist critique of multiculturalism's 'groupism' raises a number of such issues which cannot be discussed at length here. One relates to the disagreement between liberals and multiculturalists over collective rights, which in turn raises the question of the status of 'the individual' in liberal thought, and hence in interculturalism.

'The liberal hero', says Michael Walzer (2004: x), is the 'autonomous individual, choosing his or her memberships. Moving freely from group to group in civil society'; 'Only the individual', says Robin Wilson (2013: 63), 'can vindicate their human rights ... only the individual can be protected by the rule of law'. In liberalism, at least in some versions, the autonomous individual is envisaged as 'parachut[ing] into the world entirely unencumbered by moral, religious or cultural baggage, lacking any sense of obligation to whatever communities may have formed them' (Chaplin 1993: 39). As Stokke and Lybæk put it (2016: 6), for liberal theorists 'citizens are assumed to be "free and equal" and their social positions and cultural beliefs are abstracted away'. This a-cultural individualism in which the idealised citizen is stripped of all cultural (and religious) appurtenances, is, many would argue, a fiction. 'Can we really imagine individuals', asks Walzer (2004: 14), 'without any involuntary ties at all, unbound by class, ethnicity, religion, race, or gender, unidentified, utterly free?' His own account of the extensive nature of these ties in a society such as that of the USA says little or nothing new to sociologists or anthropologists for whom the individual is in every way a social and cultural *person* and for whom the idea of an a-social and a-cultural individual makes no sense. This, however, goes to the heart of the debate between multiculturalism and liberalism, and by extension

interculturalism: should a liberal society recognise the social significance of collectivities (such as those based on kinship, ethnicity, religion, or indeed class) in the lives of its citizens, and should rights claims on the basis of collective rather than individual membership be permitted?

Walzer (2004: 45) observes that ‘liberal theorists ... are unhappy with all forms of culturalist politics’, especially when they involve ‘fundamentalist’ religious groups. This is well-trodden ground, and I can only refer the reader to the work of Will Kymlicka or Bhikhu Parekh, among many others, for an overview and assessment of the relative arguments; a good summary is Parekh’s critique of the views of Brian Barry (in the revised edition of *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, 2006; see also Jones 2015). Tariq Modood also has a persuasive account of how multiculturalists respond to the political liberalism of someone like John Rawls’ in which ‘the principles of social justice can only be worked out by individuals, intellectuals, law-makers, benign governments and so on to the extent that they approximate self-less or identity-less reasoners’ (2017: 84 ff.) For the purposes of this chapter, however, the nub of the argument is whether it is permissible to allow claims from, and allocate rights to, collectivities on the basis of their cultural identification (for an anthropologist ‘cultural’ encompasses ‘religious’). If multiculturalism accepts that this is allowable, but interculturalism does not, then there is a significant theoretical difference between them.

In many, if not most, Western liberal democracies, the right to what Isaiah Berlin (2002) called ‘freedom from’ discrimination on the basis of ‘race’, gender, and increasingly sexuality, is acknowledged and indeed built into legislation. Among others, British multiculturalism, as Modood has explained (2016a: 483-6, and elsewhere), has done a great deal to enhance such freedom in ways which are applicable individually and collectively to all minorities, including religious minorities, no matter how many or how (super)diverse they are, and it is difficult to envisage interculturalists objecting to that. It could of course be argued that ‘race’, gender, and sexuality (as opposed to culture or religion), are ‘natural’, not chosen, and no one should be penalised because of it. Not everyone would, however, accept that these are all natural categories; in the case of ‘race’ it is generally agreed among social scientists that it is a socially constructed category (hence the tendency to put it in quotes), and whether sexuality is natural or chosen (or ‘performed’) is a subject of much dispute. Then again, while religion and culture are clearly not ‘natural’, it is by no means obvious that such social identities are always in any real sense chosen, or discardable at will (like the latest fashion), even if they are by some.

More problematic is what Berlin called ‘freedom to’. Within legal and political circles across Europe and North America, there has been much discussion - not driven in any significant way by the fact of superdiversification - about what to do with ethnic, cultural and religious diversity (see Chapters 14 and 16 in Part III). Should the law make special provision for difference, and protect or enhance minorities freedom to practice their religion, culture or language, or should there be only *One Law for All*, as the slogan has it? And if cultural and religious difference is to be recognised, how might it be accommodated? This, of course, was the initial issue for Bouchard-Taylor in the Québec ‘accommodation crisis’, and what they say about accommodating ‘Other’ religious and cultural practices, and how limits might be set or adjusted, is equally relevant to the crisis of accommodation, as it can be called, in contemporary Europe. Key to their response were the concepts of ‘reasonable accommodation’, ‘concerted adjustment’, and ‘intercultural harmonization’, all three of which are of fundamental importance for the governance of cultural and religious diversity, whatever form that takes, and whether described as ‘multiculturalism’ or ‘interculturalism’. In consequence, one is entitled to question how different *in practice* are the responses of interculturalists and multiculturalist to such challenges.

For example, take the current controversies over Muslim women’s attire (the headscarf, the face-veil, or the burkini)? Or the debate that has been developing since the mid-2000s in the UK over what are called ‘Shari’a councils’ (discussed in Chapter 16). These are Islamic institutions, not unlike the Jewish Beth Din, which are principally concerned with applying Islamic principles in the matter of family breakdown, and administering religious (but not civil) divorces. There was a similar controversy in Canada over a proposal by the Islamic Institute of Civil Justice to establish a Darul-

Qada (a ‘Muslim Arbitration Board’), which would tackle disputes about family matters in accordance with Islamic legal principles (see *inter alia* Boyd 2004, 2013, Korteweg and Shelby ed. 2012, Razack 2007). This proposal was one element in the ‘accommodation crisis’ which led to the Bouchard-Taylor inquiry. In both Canada and the UK there is a spectrum of opinion among both interculturalists and multiculturalists concerning the response to such issues, but while multiculturalists tend to be more accommodative, in practice (as opposed to theory) it might be a matter of emphasis and degree. For instance, in Michael Emerson’s view the interculturalist might tolerate the headscarf but not the burqa (2011: 6), while the multiculturalist would be happy with both (and the French with neither).

“‘Problematic” and a “dog’s breakfast”: Quebec face-covering ban panned by authors of landmark report’.

That was the headline in a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation report on legislation in Québec which restricted the wearing of the Muslim face-veil in public.⁵⁶ ‘I should see your face, and you should see mine’, the Québec premier is quoted as saying. The critical comments were, of course, made by none other than Gérard Bouchard and Charles Taylor, the latter describing the law as ‘excessive and badly conceived, in fact, contradictory’. Whatever their position on the face-veil, it would surely, however, be surprising to find an avowed interculturalist proposing to abrogate the rights, both individual *and* collective, to ‘freedom of thought, conscience and religion’, which are, accorded by the *European Convention of Human Rights* Article 9, though there are undoubtedly others who seek to do so.

Chapter 14 will discuss in some detail various approaches to the accommodation question from within a legal perspective which in the UK might be attributed to multiculturalist orientation. One such approach adopted by the judiciary has been to encourage sensitivity towards other values, meanings and practices, as in the Judicial College’s *Equal Treatment Benchbook*. (The College, formerly the Judicial Studies Board, supervises the training of judges etc.) Drawing on the advice of experts, the *Benchbook* covers topics such as gender, sexuality, disability, and poverty and social exclusion as they relate to the judicial process. The judiciary has also often, though not always, seemingly been willing to make room for difference and be open towards judicial interpretations favourable to minorities; e.g. the ruling which re-interpreted the meaning of ‘ethnic’ in the 1976 Race Relations Act so as to permit Sikhs to wear turbans rather than crash-helmets (see Chapter 14). The Sikh case was one example of a more general practice of making exemptions for particular minorities. In the UK, there has been a long history of this practice, for instance regarding the rules for the celebration of marriages on the part of Jews and Quakers. To what extent would interculturalists (as opposed to activists associated with, for instance, the *One Law For All Campaign*), deny the validity of such approaches even under conditions of superdiversity?

A further, related charge against multiculturalism is that recognising ethnic-cultural-religious minorities as collective entities endowable with rights (‘as if ethnicity is the only factor influencing the way in which people will live their lives in the city’, Wood and Landry 2008: 251), means consulting what may be self-appointed leaders, reflecting the most conservative, indeed patriarchal views, who seek to gain public acceptance as the legitimate voice of ‘the community’ (see, for example, Wilson 2013 among others). The issue of representation, especially of minorities within minorities, and especially within the institutional system, raises difficult practical and political questions which perhaps should be addressed within a wider inquiry into representation and voice in contemporary democracies. But if claims for the public recognition and accommodation of cultural and religious practices are not to be rejected out of hand, to what extent is it possible to ignore the institutional participation of representatives? How could a non-essentialist multiculturalism, or indeed

56 <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-bill-62-bouchard-taylor-1.4362278>; see also <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-face-covering-couillard-analysis-1.4369789>; <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/02/16/what-took-charles-taylor-so-long-to-reverse-his-position-on-quebecs-religious-restrictions-hbert.html>

non-essentialist interculturalism, take into account the multiplicity of voices and interests, and rapidly changing, and multiple, identifications, and respond to such claims?

It is perhaps telling that in pursuit of intercultural dialogue, the CoE's religious exchanges (2008b, discussed in Chapter 15, and see Jackson 2008) were largely group-based, involving representatives of the various faiths. Some critics have suggested that by encouraging such dialogues interculturalism treats the participants as representing precisely those 'a priori bounded groups' which intercultural critics of multiculturalism claim to abhor (Hocevar et al. 2009: 45). But in intercultural dialogue is it only individuals, *qua* individuals, who may talk to each other? Interculturalism is not necessarily devoid of collectivism or collective representation, nor can it be.

Dialogue Again: Expectation, Doubts and Uncertainties

'The main threats that humankind today is facing globally', said Willy Pfändtner,

'are environmental catastrophes caused by climate changes and other ecological mishaps. These are in turn the outcome of the very exploitive way of life that has come to dominate today's world ... My idea is that resources for realizing the desired transformation of our dominant way of life could be drawn from religion in its plurality. I suggest that a dynamic form of interreligious dialogue would be a necessary ingredient in this accomplishment' (2010: 66)

As previous chapters have indicated, in both Europe and North America, two of the principal contexts in which policies of interculturalism and multiculturalism have (in different ways) been advocated and enacted, there have been great expectations as to what such policies might achieve. For multiculturalists, a key aim is to redress the balance between minorities and majorities, and address long-standing grievances and inequalities – whether successfully or not is another matter. The aims, or at any rate the expectations of intercultural dialogue are much broader, as is indicated by the above quote from Willy Pfändtner. In Chapter 5 I cited a report to the European Parliament in which it was expected that interculturalism would 'significantly contribute to the improvement of democracy and the development of greater and deeper inclusivity and sense of belonging' (2015: 7), and tackle extremism and radicalisation. The Intercultural Policy Paradigm, says Ricard Zapata-Barrero, is the 'main driver to xenophobia reduction' (2017: 184); 'The solution to Islamophobia starts with dialogue', said a lecturer at Ohio State University⁵⁷, and many other examples of such ambitious objectives could be cited, as they were in Chapter 5.

Whether such high expectations of interculturalism, or specifically intercultural dialogue, can be met in practice is largely a matter for the case studies discussed in Parts II and III, but briefly, for interculturalists, much rests on people interacting and talking with each other, and recognising the 'advantage' of diversity, as in the CoE's Intercultural Cities project (discussed in Chapter 9), or in the long-established interfaith groups and networks, which exist in a number of cities in Britain and which emerged from within British multiculturalism (see Chapter 15). Of much older vintage are the international town twinning arrangements which have existed since the end of the Second World War (see *inter alia* Petiteville 1995). Such initiatives are increasingly common, but to what effect? Is it really the case, as is sometimes claimed, that the Intercultural Cities project has resulted in the reduction of xenophobia among their citizens (see, for example, Palomera and Aramburu 2012)?

In Chapter 1 I reported briefly my own experience of presenting, in a paper on ethnicity in Northern Ireland, some ideas about dialogue to a conference on 'Beyond Nationalism in the Expanded European Union: Solving Ethnic Conflicts at Local Community Level'⁵⁸, where participants had been exhorted to be practical and positive. As the prospectus said that organisers welcomed 'suggestions or

57 <http://abc6onyourside.com/news/local/osu-lecture-on-islamophobia-solutions-start-with-dialogue>.

58 See *inter alia*, <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/alt.politics.greens/JGnN9fkshnU>.

proposals of untried or innovative solutions, which will facilitate intergroup or ethnic conflict minimization', I focused on the idea of negotiation, and tried to sketch what an 'intercultural dialogue' might mean drawing *inter alia* on ideas from participatory development and from lessons learned from anti-racist interventions in the UK (see also Nagai-Rothe 2015). The paper advocated a set of general principles, including a presumption of tolerance, accompanied by mechanisms to assist in negotiating social and cultural boundaries (Grillo 2003b). I was sure that Parekh, Touraine and others were right to converge on 'intercultural' and 'dialogue'. Their ideas were, and are, highly attractive theoretically, but what I took from the Belfast paper was the immense difficulty of an enterprise which was apparently trying to operate at both macro (society-wide) and micro (individual and small group) levels. What might work for the latter had no hope when grossed up to the community at large. As Patrick Loobuyck, the focus on 'dialogue and interpersonal cultural encounters at the meso and micro level', characteristic of interculturalism, does not preclude macro-level (governmental) policy interventions (2016: 234).

Although most observers of interculturalism believe that on the whole dialogue is a good thing, there are also sceptics who question what it does and what it might achieve. Fern Elsdon-Baker (2013), for example, wonders whether it is always helpful or meaningful, and Marc Abélès goes so far as to suggest that intercultural contact may, in fact, 'actually reinforce national barriers instead of generating a common identity' (2000: 42). Less drastically, Joel Anderson and Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs (2010) doubt whether 'low-threshold' encounters achieve very much. Beyond that, there must be serious doubt as to whether dialogue is relevant to conditions prevailing in Northern Ireland during the 'Troubles' or in a place like Palestine. As Alison Phipps observes: 'concepts which have arisen in contexts of relative peace and stability in Europe are not suited to conditions of conflict and siege' (2014: 113). Critics of interculturalism are not just multiculturalists defending their own turf.

That said, and I will return to the question of the efficacy of intercultural dialogues in Parts II and III, if interculturalism means, to put it simply, people of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds meeting together and talking with each other, then it would seem relatively easy to accommodate it within a multicultural regime of the kind found in the UK; indeed, as we will see, this happens all the time. On the other hand, if interculturalism seeks to go further, making space for, or encouraging the formation of a multicultural/intercultural self, transforming the mind-sets of women, men and children, through education (for example), where this is not happening already through processes fostering transculturality, then this is another matter. That 'transcultural' version of interculturalism demands a great deal from those involved, as the superhuman qualities which Michael Barrett believes are required to develop 'intercultural competence' have illustrated (2013b). Moreover, although it would represent what would seem a desirable aim, if difficult to achieve, it is unlikely to find favour among those opponents of multiculturalism who back anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, pro-nationalist policies, and centre-right populist politicians who echo their views and seek their support, are unlikely to favour such an approach. As the British Prime Minister, Theresa May, put it, in a speech to the Conservative Party annual conference in the Autumn of 2016:

'Today, too many people in positions of power behave as though they have more in common with international elites than with the people down the road, the people they employ, the people they pass in the street. But if you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere. You don't understand what the very word "citizenship" means'.¹

No room here for cosmopolitans, *hommes des confins*, intercultural innovators, or intercultural selves.

Other critics, for example Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs (2010; see also Padilla et al 2015, Watt 2006), believe that a focus on inter-cultural dialogue is misdirected, and seek to shift the emphasis from culture to ethnicity, or more broadly the racism, discrimination, and inequality (economic and social) experienced by minorities. 'It would be unrealistic', says Kaur-Stubbs (2010: 40), 'to think that sharing popodams and pancakes will overcome the entrenched hostilities of deprived and poorly resourced communities'. Interculturalism, hard or soft, but especially perhaps soft intercultural

dialogue, may indeed deflect attention from such fundamental social and economic issues, as some interculturalists would accept (e.g. James 2009). It may also have a co-opting, or interpellatory role, à la Althusser, or even a disciplinary function (see Fadil forthcoming) providing a means through which to incorporate ‘Others’, getting them to exchange their ways for ‘ours’, and thus making them capable of ‘integration’. As Lähdesmäki and Wagener put it: ‘the idea of dialogue is easily transformed into an educational project whose main aim is to promote European cultural coherence based on knowledge, recognition, and appreciation of the so-called “common” European culture (2015: 24). In the eyes of the EU or CoE, for example, suggests Robert Aman, intercultural dialogue may be seen as a ‘resource to neutralize doctrines conflicting with “European values”’ (2012: 1018). In consequence:

‘With the objective phrased as to promote “knowledge” and “understanding”, intercultural dialogue is not restricted to being a communicative bridge between citizens and “immigrants” residing on the continent, but equally as a teaching machine of European culture to other regions.’ (p. 1019).

In that event, dialogue is not about mutual understanding, still less accommodating or negotiating, but about integrating, or seeking to persuade ‘Others’ to adjust their beliefs and practices to conform with those of the receiving society (see also Hardy and Hussain 2017, Ganesh and Zoller 2012).

A further criticism is that interculturalism itself is a product of the contemporary neo-liberal ecumene. Kathryne Mitchell, for instance, has an interesting take on how interculturalism positions the individual. Writing about multicultural education she suggests there has been a

‘subtle but intensifying move away from person-centred education for all, or the creation of the tolerant, “multicultural self”, towards a more individuated, mobile and highly tracked, skills-based education, or the creation of the “strategic cosmopolitan”’ (2003: 387).

On the one hand, the ‘multicultural self’, as a product of multicultural education (drawing on the legacy of John Dewey), was conceived as someone ‘able to work with and through difference, and conditioned to believe in the positive advantages of diversity in constructing and unifying the nation’. The ‘strategic cosmopolitan’, on the other hand, is ‘motivated not by ideals of national unity in diversity, but by understandings of global competitiveness, and the necessity to strategically adapt as an individual to rapidly shifting personal and national contexts.’ Her description of the multicultural self makes it sound close to what interculturalists might see as the ideal person (‘able to work with others to find sites of commonality, despite differences’, p. 392). Mitchell, however, proposes that what interculturalism actually fosters is the ‘strategic cosmopolitan’, an autonomous, individual agent, freed from cultural rootedness, but aware of ‘diversity advantage’, and exploiting it.

Katharina Bodirsky (2012) takes a similar position, arguing that in interculturalism, “‘culture” is an individual property and resource rather than a collective good’ (p. 6). Interculturalism, she adds, ‘recogniz[es] the right to individual cultural identity and practice (rather than a collective right to cultural community) limited by the (human) rights of others’ (p. 4). In consequence:

‘interculturalism is not so much an alternative to liberal multiculturalism as an alternative multiculturalism – a *neoliberal multiculturalism*. Its neoliberal tenor consists in the individualization of culture as a personal resource to be mobilized via channels of equality of opportunity, fitting well with the neoliberal dismantling of the welfare state the individualization of risk, and the political prioritization of competitiveness in the knowledge-economy’ (p. 10, emphasis added).

Outside the Bubble?

Yet, finally, while multiculturalism has, for better or worse, had a significant impact on the way diversity has been governed across Europe and North America, and indeed elsewhere, this is not something that interculturalism can as yet claim. To what extent is the idea of interculturalism really significant outside the bubble⁵⁹ of the EU Commission and CoE and their institutions (e.g. the European Parliament), or the small number of academics, principally policy-oriented political scientists, who write about such matters, or the coterie of city officials, who dutifully fill in the Intercultural Cities Index questionnaires (Wagner 2015, and Council of Europe 2015a: 3).

As Meer and Modood have noted (2012b), the term does not seem to leap from the lips of politicians in France, Germany or the UK, or dominate the media headlines. For example, Hansard records that between 2006-2016 there is NO record of the word ‘interculturalism’ appearing in spoken or written references in the House of Commons or Lords, and while ‘intercultural’ appears on 20 occasions it is mostly used in passing or in a relatively trivial context. Indeed, in the Casey Review of policy (2016), ‘intercultural’ occurs only once, in a reference to Ted Cante, while ‘integration’ abounds. More research is needed, but it seems that the only major British politician familiar with the term is, ironically, Nigel Farage, a leading figure in the centre-right United Kingdom Independence Party and a key advocate for Britain leaving the EU.⁶⁰ Even in those cities linked in the Intercultural Cities project (discussed in Chapter 9) it is unclear how far the idea is influential beyond the coterie of municipal leaders, or within small, local projects, perhaps of the kind funded by the Baring Foundation.

Such questions demand empirical investigation, and although the case studies in Parts II and III will not be able to provide definitive answers, they may at least offer some indications.

59 On the ‘bubble’ idea in another context see Apthorpe 2013.

60 E.g. as reported, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jan/14/nigel-farage-fgm-sharia-courts-interculturalism>.

PART II. INTERMISSION: LIVING INTERCULTURALLY - EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER 8. 2008: THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Celebration of diversity at park

‘Sights, smells and sounds from South Asia will take over Preston’s Avenham Park on Sunday, June 15. Thousands of people are expected to pack out the park for the colourful Mela festival, which celebrates Asian culture, arts and food and is now in its 11th year. The all-day event will include Bollywood dancing, live bhangra music from DCS, Chinese dragon performers, traditional Asian food and the chance to take part in activities such as henna painting, rangoli (sand painting) and drumming. Organisers arranged dozens of workshops in the run-up to the Mela, to get people from all cultural backgrounds in Preston involved in the preparations for the big day. It is all part of plans to mark the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, which celebrates interaction between different cultures, religions and ethnic groups. Dozens of people who learned Bollywood dancing at a series of sessions in the Gujarat Hindu Centre in South Meadow Lane will take to one of two stages on Sunday to show off their new skills’ (*Lancashire Evening Post*, June 12, 2008).

‘There needs to be more dialogue about intercultural dialogue’ (Council of Europe 2008a: 40)

Introduction

The EU has for some time had the practice of devoting each year to a particular theme or topic. Thus 1985 was the ‘European Year of Music’, 1996 the ‘European Year of Lifelong Learning’, and 2008, the ‘European Year of Intercultural Dialogue’.⁶¹ This chapter considers how it came about that the EU, as represented by the European Commission, devoted a year to that theme. Although the principal actor in this saga was the EU, a key role was also undertaken by the CoE, which had and has its own distinct (if overlapping) concern with interculturalism. Here I review what ‘intercultural dialogue’ meant to the EU and the CoE, why they thought it necessary to engage with it, what it was hoped to achieve, how aims and hopes were manifested (or not) in the various initiatives (‘actions’) that were funded or supported before, during and after the Year, and the immediate and longer term outcomes and achievements. The chapter also considers whether the end result was any more than ‘Words, Words, Words’.

There is a large academic and other literature on the EU and the CoE which directly or indirectly relates to the subject matter of this chapter. While noting its relevance where necessary and helpful (for example as part of the background and context), the chapter is not intended primarily as a contribution to the study of European institutions. My main concern is with intercultural dialogue and with what those institutions said and did about it, and where and how that fits into more general theoretical and empirical concerns about interculturalism.

A confession. Although, as the Introduction to this book has explained, my interest in intercultural dialogue is of long-standing, I did not begin reading and thinking about the European Year until 2016; until then I knew very little, if anything, about it. My researching the Year therefore happened to coincide with the UK’s debate and eventual referendum on membership of the EU (‘Brexit’). For all kinds of reasons, and not especially economic ones, I was and continue to be a firm ‘Remainer’, or ‘Remoaner’ as we are often called. Nonetheless, reading about the Year I began to see why, if they had come across it - it was never mentioned by anyone in the debate - ‘Brexiters’ might well have cited it as a prime illustration of their case for quitting the EU. Politically correct nonsense, they might have said, and a complete waste of taxpayer’s hard-earned money. I would not agree with that conclusion though admittedly the initiatives associated with the Year, if well-intentioned, hardly scratched the surface of the very difficult and important issues they were intended to address.

61 See list at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Years.

The Year: Background and Development

An Initiative

How and why did the EU, along with the CoE, get involved in intercultural dialogue? A proposal for an initiative, a Year devoted to that theme, was first made in 2004 by Ján Figel', a Slovak politician, then European Commissioner for Education, Training and Culture (2004-9), whose portfolio also included sport, youth, and relations with civil society. In a speech entitled 'Sharpening Our Vision', addressed to the 7th World Conference of the European Community Studies Association on *The European Union and Emerging World Orders: Perceptions and Strategies*, held in Brussels in December 2004, he drew attention to the significance of the openness and dialogue which he believed the conference had illustrated, and emphasised three main points that he believed had emerged from their deliberations: the importance of education, of multilingualism, and finally intercultural dialogue. The latter was 'the linchpin of fair, sustainable and peaceful world orders', he claimed, and affirming his belief that 'we should throw our political weight behind this insight', he proposed that 2008 should be the 'European Year of Intercultural Dialogue' (Figel' 2004).⁶²

Although the specific proposal for a Year dates from 2004, the idea of pursuing interculturality in a European context had a longer institutional history, both in the EU and in the CoE. There may have been earlier intimations of such a policy (perhaps in the 'Capitals of Culture' initiative from 1985 onwards), but a significant development was signalled by the Maastricht Treaty of 1992⁶³ which transformed the European Community into the EU, and which (controversially for some, notably in the UK) sought to foster 'ever closer union among the peoples of Europe', including 'facilitat[ing] the free movement of persons', one of the Community's founding principles. Specifically, the Treaty affirmed that the EU would 'contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore' (Article 128 of original Treaty). It would also support member states in the 'improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples; in the conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance; in non-commercial cultural exchanges; and in artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector' (*ibid.*) These general aims were later re-affirmed in the so-called Lisbon Strategy (2000) with its emphasis on the 'information society' and the 'knowledge economy', and hence on education, training and young people (Directorate General for Internal Policies 2010),

It was after 9/11, however, that the idea of 'intercultural dialogue' really came to the fore. In an issue of *Le Magazine* devoted to 'A Europe of tolerance and intercultural dialogue', Viviane Reding, Ján Figel's predecessor, argued that in the light of the attacks 'intercultural dialogue, exchange projects, meeting and working together, actions to promote tolerance, understanding and respect for others, and projects to combat racism and xenophobia' were now priorities for the European Commission (Reding 2002: 3). Consequently there would be 'new initiatives to reinforce dialogue' (see also Jackson 2011: 4). Indeed, in March 2002 the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture Jean Monnet Project convened a conference on *Intercultural Dialogue/Dialogue Interculturel* which addressed these issues in a regional context. 'After the dramatic events of 11 September', its Declaration said,

62 [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release SPEECH-04-503 en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-04-503_en.htm).

63 http://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europa.eu/files/docs/body/treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf.

‘the European Union is called upon to take up its moral and political responsibility, in close cooperation with its partners of the Mediterranean area. The governance of peace in the region and the respect for human rights are set within a shared responsibility. A policy of intercultural dialogue by the European Union needs to be inspired by a mobilising global vision, in constant search for coherence. The Mediterranean region must be an exemplary area of common values, rooted in a shared respect of human rights, tolerance, solidarity and mutual comprehension, aware of cultural diversity and the religious dimension. It is to become an area of free exchange of ideas, an area of peace and reconciliation after a long history of conflicts’ (European Commission 2002: 28).

The conference included sessions on ‘Democracy and Human Rights’, ‘Globalisation and Solidarity’, and ‘Inter-Religious Dialogue’ (see Chapter 15), and a speech by Nikolaus van der Pas, then head of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture, which extolled the EU’s contribution to intercultural dialogue.

For its part, the CoE had earlier - from the *First Summit of Heads of State and Government* in 1993- asserted the importance of cultural diversity in the European heritage,⁶⁴ and in 1995 the CoE’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (effective from 1998) called upon the signatories to

‘encourage a spirit of tolerance and *intercultural dialogue* and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons’ ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media’ (Article 6(1))⁶⁵, emphasis added).

A further significant step was the publication in 2000 (around the same time as Lisbon) of Jan Niessen’s report (*Diversity and Cohesion*) which ‘set[] as a basic principle that integration of immigrants and national minorities is one of the pillars of social cohesion’ (‘Introduction’, by Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the CoE, 2000: 10). The picture the report presented, and the terms and concepts which were explored (multiculturalism, cultural identities, diversity, integration, cohesion, all in the context of immigration and the settlement of new minorities) would have been very familiar to academics writing during that period, but it was necessary to draw their significance to the attention of the administrators and politicians to whom the document was addressed. Thus:

‘Europe has always been a continent of diversity. Diversity is a fact of life in Europe, not only between states but also within countries, regions and cities and among their populations. Globalisation continues to feed this diversity ... Cultural pluralism needs to be firmly based on the respect of differences, which implies equality, tolerance and non-discrimination. The assertion of cultural identities, shared values and a common history foster the sense of belonging to a community, be it a majority or minority community, a region, nation, state or continent. Acceptance of diversity and the interaction between cultures foster harmonious relations between people, enrich their lives and provides them with creativity to respond to new challenges. It is not the denial, but rather, the recognition of differences that keeps a community together’ (Niessen 2000: 11.)

‘Europe thrives on its diversity’, said Niessen (p. 16), and while recognising all manner of

64 See http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/archives/other_texts/2-vienna/declaration/declaration_vienna_summit_EN.asp, and <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/intercultural-dialogue>. A Council of Europe report (1991) on community and ethnic relations, which followed from a project launched in 1987, dealt principally with intercultural education, though it also remarked that ‘the undeniable reality of growing ethnic and cultural diversity [in Europe] has led in practice to the acceptance of the need for an “intercultural” approach in educational and cultural policy in particular’ (p. 14).

Luis Fuentes (2016) notes a concern with diversity in CoE documents from the early 1950s.

65 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/search-on-states/-/conventions/rms/090000168007cdac>.

challenges to be tackled (including the consequences of globalisation and continuing or returning xenophobia) his report is quite positive, or attempts to be positive, about the value of diversity and its recognition. Thus:

‘In democratic societies, a consensus is emerging that values cultural diversity and recognises the right to be different. Members of different cultures have their own traditions, heritages and views on the future. Cultural pluralism and *interculturalism* (the exchange and interaction between cultures) enrich life’ (p. 21, my emphasis).

In the light of this Niessen urged diversity training for managers, workers, and trade unions, and encouraged activities ‘aimed at promoting intercultural understanding and harmonious relations among a diverse workforce’ (p. 66). His report also included lengthy sections on ‘Intercultural dialogue and education’, on ‘Language and education’, and on ‘Religious diversity’. On the latter:

‘Measures are required to broaden knowledge and strengthen awareness of religious communities and religious pluralism. Schools and education systems should include education about religions in the curriculum. Teaching materials on religion across the curriculum should be true to the religion being portrayed. Public authorities should use all appropriate means to promote a positive and inclusive image of religious communities through policy statements, government public relations and media policy’ (p. 83).

Further, regarding migrant women, Niessen notes that their domestic arrangements or religious practices ‘may differ considerably from that of the majority. In many countries, these differences provoke debates on the limits of diversity’. The Islamic headscarf, for example, ‘is seen by some as oppression of women and by others as an expression of cultural diversity’. However, ‘much more dialogue is needed in order to understand the differences in family life between minorities and the majority before such differences are condemned as violations of human rights or the principles of a state’ (p. 85).

Although the report makes frequent use of ‘intercultural’ and ‘dialogue’, either alone or in conjunction, it does not attempt to define them or explore their deeper implications beyond asserting the value of ‘the exchange and interaction between cultures’. What this actually might involve – in theory and practice – is left to one side. Nonetheless, the need for it is emphasised, here and in later texts, because of three developments, each linked in one way or another to globalisation

First, there is increasing population movement across national borders within Europe generally, and specifically within the EU, arising from the policy of free movement of labour of EU nationals on the one hand, and the influx of immigrants and refugees from outside the EU on the other. Intercultural dialogue is seen as a way of meeting the challenges arising from the resultant encounters between those of different social, cultural and religious background, in a context where there is a fear of rising xenophobia exploited by populist nationalist parties. Secondly, there are the consequences of the enlargement of the EU itself, especially after the ending of the Cold War, when in a relatively short period the EU member states increased from twelve (in 1993), to fifteen in (1995), to twenty-five (2004), and currently (2017) twenty-eight, with some seven possible future candidates (perhaps minus the UK). Of the ten countries joining in 2004, seven were formerly part of the Soviet bloc, with very different social, cultural, and indeed religious histories. Thirdly, intercultural dialogue is seen as responding to the expansion of the EU’s overseas economic and political interests, as was made clear in initiatives proposed by the MEDEA⁶⁶ Institute which addressed the relationship between the EU member states and other countries (especially Arab/Muslim countries) within and across the Mediterranean. The concluding declaration of the *Intercultural Dialogue/Dialogue Interculturel* colloquium in March 2002, for example, stated that along with economic and diplomatic

66 On MEDEA see <http://www.medea.be/en/medea/objectives/>, and de Perini 2015.

co-operation, intercultural dialogue had an important role to play in maintaining peace and respecting human rights across the region (European Commission 2002: 28).

This then was the broad context in which Ján Figel's proposal for a Year of Intercultural Dialogue also emerged. There were, however, a number of other initiatives which fed the development of the proposal; intercultural dialogue was in the air, as in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)⁶⁷, cited earlier (see Chapters 1 and 5). A subsequent statement by the Council of the EU⁶⁸ on 'the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States' (2008) called upon member states to ratify the Convention which it described as 'a central element in the cultural relations of the Union and its Member States with third countries and one of the pillars of global governance' (p. 3). Similarly, the EU's so-called 'Agenda for Culture', which was concerned with culture in the artistic and related sense which, as noted in Chapter 1, I refer to as 'Culture', capitalised (see further below; also Näss 2010), proposed a programme for 2007-2013 which would

'go further in facilitating mutual understanding, stimulating creativity, and contributing to the mutual enrichment of our cultures. It will help thousands of cultural organisations to create and implement cultural and artistic projects improving the knowledge and dissemination of European cultural heritage, promoting cultural exchanges, artistic and literary creation, and literary translation' (European Commission 2007: 4)

Promoting intercultural dialogue ('one of the main instruments of peace and conflict prevention', p. 7) within the Cultural (creative) sphere would also fulfil the aims of the Lisbon strategy for economic growth and employment, a point underlined by Odile Quintin, then Director General of the European Commission's Directorate for Education and Culture (Quintin 2008: 6).

The CoE on Intercultural Dialogue

While the EU was developing its ideas on intercultural dialogue and planning the Year, the CoE undertook its own initiative. Following the *Diversity and Cohesion* report described above, the CoE's *Third Summit of Heads of State and Government*, held in Warsaw in 2005, 'explicitly endorsed intercultural dialogue – together with political and interreligious dialogue – as a means of ensuring that the diversity of European cultures becomes a source of mutual enrichment'.⁶⁹ 'We shall', it said,

'encourage intercultural and inter-faith dialogue, based on universal human rights, as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation and tolerance, as well as preventing conflicts and ensuring integration and the cohesion of society. The active involvement of civil society in this dialogue, in which both men and women should be able to participate on an equal basis, must be ensured' (Council of Europe 2005a: para III,6)

This was further endorsed in the Faro Declaration later that year (Council of Europe 2005b; see also Bunies 2013). Entitled 'Intercultural Dialogue: The Way Ahead', the Declaration *inter alia* urged the preparation of a 'White paper on integrated policies for the management of cultural diversity through intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention' (p. 5), to assist the CoE in implementing the intercultural dialogue strategy.

67 http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

68 [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42008X1221\(02\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42008X1221(02)). The Council of the European Union (https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/council-eu_en) is not the same as the Council of Europe (CoE).

69 http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Source/Consultation_document_EN.pdf; see also http://www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517_decl_varsovie_en.asp, para. 6, and http://www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517_plan_action_en.asp, para. 6.

The White Paper

The White Paper (Council of Europe 2008a) eventually appeared in 2008, by which time, of course, the EU's Year was already under way. Preparing the White Paper involved several interim activities, including a conference, held in San Marino, in April 2007,⁷⁰ which brought together 130 representatives of CoE member states, religious bodies and NGOs. Discussion focused on 'the implications of cultural and religious diversity in Europe for the strengthening of European co-operation based on shared values', and dealt principally with the role of religion in intercultural dialogue and the importance of dialogue with religious institutions. The final declaration contended that the Conference had been 'a milestone in the efforts made to promote, stimulate and develop intercultural dialogue in Europe, and in particular its religious dimension'. Representatives of the religious bodies and NGO organisations, said the Declaration,

'welcomed the interest shown by the Committee of Ministers of the CoE with a view to establishing its own open and transparent dialogue with the religious communities and civil society based on the Organisation's values. They expressed their interest in taking part in this exercise and their willingness to contribute through their debates to its success.'⁷¹

Whether such events are any more than talking shops ('dialogue about dialogue') is something to which I return later.

In January 2007 the CoE had in fact issued a consultation document (*Preparing the "White Paper on intercultural dialogue"*) (Council of Europe 2007; see also Bunies 2013) to which events such as the San Marino conference were in part a response. Setting out the broad context of increasing social and cultural diversity in an era of globalisation, the consultation posed a series of complex and difficult questions on which it sought opinions. They included, for example, 'How urgent are efforts to promote intercultural dialogue today? Why are they urgent?'; 'What can be done to give cultural diversity a more positive connotation than it has today? What should the response be to intolerant, racist and xenophobic tendencies in the public debate?'; 'Which is the most promising overall "vision" for living together in multicultural societies, what is the most suitable model for managing its diversity in a democratic way?'

The Consultation also broached the meaning of intercultural dialogue and what such dialogue was intended to achieve. It quoted a previous attempt at a definition by CoE cultural ministers at a conference in Opatija, Croatia in 2003:

'Intercultural dialogue: this term defines tools used to promote and protect the concept of cultural democracy, and encompasses the tangible and intangible elements likely to foster all forms of cultural diversity, manifesting themselves in multiple identities whether individual or collective, in transformations and in new forms of cultural expression. Intercultural dialogue must extend to every possible component of culture, without exception, whether these be cultural in the strict sense or political, economic, social, philosophical, or religious'.⁷²

Characterising this as a 'loose' definition, the consultation proposed as a 'preliminary formulation' (on which it sought opinions): 'an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other's world perception' (Para. 4(1)). The key elements would thus appear to be 'exchange' and 'understanding', with as objective 'to learn to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to

70 The conference was part of sequence following the Warsaw Summit which included meetings in Kazan and Nizhny Novgorod (both in 2006).

71 Quotations from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/sanmarino_EN.asp, paras. 1 and 7.

72 <http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Ministerial-Conferences/2003-Culture/declaration.asp>, Appendix. On the Opatija Declaration, see also Levey 2012, 2016.

develop a sense of community and belonging' (Para. 4(2)). As was noted in earlier chapters, a great deal was expected from such dialogue. It could be a 'tool for the prevention and resolution of conflicts through enhancing the respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law'(Para. 6.1), and furthermore:

'strengthen social cohesion, decrease inter-community and intra-community tensions, increase tolerance, overcome prejudices and stereotypes about other cultures, open social institutions to the needs of different cultures, and to increase the mutual influence of cultures upon each other ... increase[d] knowledge about "other" cultures, growing awareness of the cultural environment (including awareness of one's own culture), stronger social trust, a higher degree of respect for other cultures, the emergence of "transcultural" attitudes and values, and generally better intercultural skills'(Para 4.7).

There were a large number of responses to the consultation (Council of Europe 2007: 8-9), originally available on the CoE's Website. Many are of considerable interest, for example, that prepared by the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CSC/CCME 2007), but here I confine discussion to the eventual White Paper, launched in May 2008 with the subtitle *Living Together as Equals in Dignity*.

'The intercultural approach', said the White Paper, 'offers a forward-looking model for managing cultural diversity':

'It proposes a conception based on individual human dignity (embracing our common humanity and common destiny). If there is a European identity to be realised, it will be based on shared fundamental values, respect for common heritage and cultural diversity as well as respect for the equal dignity of every individual. Intercultural dialogue has an important role to play in this regard. It allows us to prevent ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divides. It enables us to move forward together, to deal with our different identities constructively and democratically on the basis of shared universal values' (2008a: 3).

Although the consultation had asked for views on how to define intercultural dialogue, the White Paper notes a 'marked reluctance' among respondents to do so, and a 'genuine uncertainty as to what intercultural dialogue meant in practice (pp. 9-10). It therefore returned to the original preliminary formulation, slightly modified: 'open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect' (p. 10). More significantly, however, the concept of 'intercultural' is now counter-posed to 'multicultural' (see further below and Chapters 1 and 2). 'One of the recurrent themes of the consultation was', it says, 'that old approaches to the management of cultural diversity were no longer adequate to societies in which the degree of that diversity (rather than its existence) was unprecedented and ever-growing' (p. 9) This stance it briefly summarises as the widespread view that "'multiculturalism", had been found inadequate'. 'Whilst driven by benign intentions', it argues,

'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 – and, in particular, women – within minority communities, perceived as if these were single collective actors. The cultural diversity of contemporary societies has to be acknowledged as an empirical fact. However, a recurrent theme of the consultation was that multiculturalism was a policy with which respondents no longer felt at ease.' (p. 19)

At the same time it found no appetite to return to old-style assimilationism.

The 'interculturalist paradigm' which emerged from the White Paper, was based, says Ulrich Bunies, on three 'pillars':

‘the unreserved recognition that all human beings must be able to effectively enjoy equal dignity; the vision of a cohesive society, offering all its members equality of life chances and grounded on a set of shared, culture-unspecific universal values (i.e. human rights, democracy and the rule of law); and the acknowledgement that everyone without exception has a responsibility for bringing about an intercultural society: individuals, civil society, religious communities, public authorities and all their institutions, the media, social partners, majorities and minorities’ (2013: 49; see also Wilson 2013).

Such arguments regarding the pros and cons of multiculturalism and assimilationism will have been very familiar to scholars across Europe who had been addressing such themes for many years, though there is little indication in the White Paper (and indeed in other similar texts) of the sources that have been consulted. The Appendix of ‘Selected Texts’ (pp. 52-60) lists only official documents and declarations. Extended discussion of any impact the academic literature had, or did not have, on EU or CoE policy in this field is largely beyond the scope of this chapter, but *inter alia*, it may be noted that in their critical account of the White Paper’s treatment of language, Méndez García and Byram have observed that ‘over 50 years’ work on language education in the Council of Europe is passed over in silence’ (2013: 135).

Be that as it may, the thrust of the White Paper is that the complex diversity represented by contemporary European societies requires an approach which is intercultural rather than multicultural, though such an approach encounters ‘many barriers’:

‘Some of these are the result of the difficulty in communicating in several languages. But others concern power and politics: discrimination, poverty and exploitation – experiences which often bear particularly heavily on persons belonging to disadvantaged and marginalised groups – are structural barriers to dialogue. In many European societies one also finds groups and political organisations preaching hatred of “the other”, “the foreigner” or certain religious identities. Racism, xenophobia, intolerance and all other forms of discrimination refuse the very idea of dialogue and represent a standing affront to it.’ (p. 21)

And many conditions need to be present for such dialogue to be fruitful: ‘intercultural competences’ need to be learned and spaces for dialogue created in a ‘political culture valuing diversity’, the ‘cornerstones’ of which are the ‘common values of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, pluralism, tolerance, non-discrimination and mutual respect’ (p. 25).

In an article entitled ‘Intercultural dialogue and human rights: A road map for living together as equals’, Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, a senior figure in the CoE (then Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage) described the lengthy process involved in preparing the White Paper, and drew attention to what had been learned from the consultation, namely that ‘the two traditional approaches to cultural diversity, namely assimilationism and multiculturalism, are inadequate for addressing cultural diversity’. Multiculturalism, she contended:

‘argued that the distinct ethos of minority communities should be politically recognised as being on a par with that of the “host” majority. But this also turned out to be problematic, as it unwittingly led to a sacrifice of the rights of individuals - notably women - within communities. It also tended inadvertently to reduce individuals to communal stereotypes, and became associated with ghettoisation and mutual incomprehension’ (Battaini-Dragoni 2008: 2).

Intercultural dialogue, on the other hand, took from assimilationism the idea of the universality of citizenship and the citizen’s equality while retaining multiculturalism’s ‘appreciation of the reality of cultural diversity and its potential for cultural enrichment’. ‘But ‘critically’, she added:

‘it shifts the focus from the relationship between the individual or community and the state to the necessity for dialogue across communal barriers. It is also marked by a culture of broad-mindedness, which recognises the fluidity of identities and the need for openness to change in a globalising context’ (ibid: 3).

Battaini-Dragoni’s article concluded with references to other CoE initiatives intended to pursue the strategy of intercultural dialogue including the *Intercultural Cities* project and *Exchanges on The Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue*, discussed in Chapters 9 and 15 respectively.

Memorandum of Understanding

It will have become apparent that through the 2000s the EU and the CoE were both pursuing the idea of intercultural dialogue in parallel and seemingly independently, without, it might appear, cross-referencing or cross-checking. In fact, discussions between the two bodies had taken place, and in May 2007 they signed a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’⁷³, ‘seeking to intensify co-operation and ensure co-ordination of action on issues of mutual interest’. Following the principles established in the Warsaw Summit, they would:

‘Develop their relationship in all areas of common interest, in particular the promotion and protection of pluralistic democracy, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, political and legal co-operation, social cohesion and cultural interchange’.

‘Areas of common interest’ included human rights and fundamental freedoms; rule of law; democracy and good governance; education, youth and promotion of human contacts; social cohesion; and intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity. Regarding the latter, Para. 33-5 of the Memorandum specified that the two would

‘Co-operate in order to develop intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity with a view to promoting respect for human rights and mutual understanding among cultures in Europe. This dialogue is an important element in the fight against all forms of discrimination, racism and xenophobia.’

The EU would join with the CoE in initiatives set in train by the Faro conference, while both would seek to promote the ratification of the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The wider implications of this Memorandum (and the politics behind it) are beyond the scope of this chapter; it is sufficient to note how the interests of the two institutions in intercultural dialogue converged at this point. But let me return to the EU and the Year.

73 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/international-relations/files/mou_2007_en.pdf; on the relationship between the EU and CoE and the Memorandum of Understanding see *inter alia* Bond 2008.

The Year

Promoting the Year

Ján Figel's original suggestion made in 2004 that the EU should devote one of its future Years to the theme of intercultural dialogue led in due course to a resolution proposed by the Commission and debated and amended by the European Parliament in December 2006. It would be tedious to go through all the various discussions and amendments and explanatory memoranda, and the following brief comments are based on the final version of the resolution published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* on 18 December, 2006.⁷⁴ This drew attention to various global factors of the kind outlined earlier (the effects of enlargement, migratory flows, globalisation and the 'increasing interactions between European citizens, and all those living in the EU, and the various cultures, languages, ethnic groups and religions in Europe and beyond', p. 44), and stressed the importance for the European project of

'provid[ing] the means for intercultural dialogue and dialogue between citizens to strengthen respect for cultural diversity and deal with the complex reality in our societies and the coexistence of different cultural identities and beliefs. Furthermore, it is important to highlight the contribution of different cultures to the Member States' heritage and way of life and to recognise that culture and intercultural dialogue are essential for learning to live together in harmony' (ibid.)

Article 2 (p. 46) went on to identify specific objectives including:

- 'raise the awareness of all those living in the EU, in particular young people, of the importance of engaging in intercultural dialogue in their daily life';
- 'foster the role of education as an important medium for teaching about diversity, increase the understanding of other cultures and developing skills and best social practices, and highlight the central role of the media in promoting the principle of equality and mutual understanding';
- 'promote all Community programmes and actions contributing to intercultural dialogue and ensure their continuity';
- 'contribute to exploring new approaches to intercultural dialogue involving cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders from different sectors'.

Identifying best practices was also important. All this would entail supporting activities, events and initiatives at European, national and local levels, together with studies which would assess the Year's impact. A total of €10 million was set aside for these purposes from which grants would be awarded mainly on a co-funding basis.

After his initial proposal, Ján Figel himself (among others) continued to be active in promoting the idea of such a Year. Thus at an EU Conference on *A Soul for Europe*, Berlin, November 2006⁷⁵, he set out two reasons why the EU should pursue intercultural dialogue:

74 DECISION No 1983/2006/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, of 18 December 2006, concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008).

75 <http://www.eu.dk/samling/20061/almdel/EUU/bilag/29/314197.pdf>, and <http://www.heraldofeurope.co.uk/upload/iblock/33e/33e8202b597abc6d9b768a53546b372b.pdf>.

‘Firstly, building Europe has always meant integrating histories, value systems, and world views. There is a strong sense in which our process of integration has always been a dialogue between cultures. The EU is traditionally committed to promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue around the world. The second reason why this is the time to focus on intercultural dialogue is that Europe’s cultural landscape has grown more diverse in the past few years as a consequence of its enlargements and of immigration’

The Year, he added, would seek to raise awareness among EU citizens and those living in the EU, ‘developing social and personal habits that will equip us for a more open and complex cultural environment’, in ways which would be ‘linked to a more political goal: *creating a sense of European citizenship*’ (emphasis added), and to relations with countries outside the EU.

He continued in this vein early in January 2008 in a speech in Brussels at a hearing organised by the European Peoples Party Group (EPP) on ‘Cultural Diversity, Religions and Dialogue’⁷⁶, placing support for the initiative in the context of the problems created by enlargement and by immigration, and by Europe becoming increasingly diversified. He conceived enlargement as involving a ‘Europeanization of the Union’; Europe ‘is not defined by market or business or by geography; but much more by values and cultures’, he said. Economics and trade were important to start with, but culture ‘was always very central for Europe’s project’. Religion, he added, ‘is very close and very central to cultural discussions because the faith, conviction is about human believes; it is about values and hierarchy of values in individual and in societal lives’. Thus intercultural and inter-religious dialogue were ‘closely linked’, and ‘churches and religious communities can help us affirm our message of peace and reconciliation among peoples and cultures. They have a large role to play throughout 2008 European Year’. Dialogue is also important because it is ‘a constitutive element of unity’.

‘In dialogue we have two or three or more people, but there is one dialogue. In dialogue we are listening, we are seeking for something common, so there is added value ... in dialogue we are paving the way for understanding that we are all part of a bigger community: locally, regionally, nationally, Europe-wide; but also globally, internationally – part of human family. It links us to the notion of mosaic: Every piece is different, but part of a bigger image. Europe – it is not as a melting pot; it is a mosaic. But we need more dialogue within this mosaic and around.

‘Diversity and unity’, he concluded, ‘is the best narrative for Europe in the 21st century’. In fact *Together in Diversity* was chosen as the slogan for the Year.

Organisation

The Year was actually launched in Ljubljana in January 2008 (Slovenia held the EU Presidency at the time) following a conference on ‘Intercultural Dialogue as the Fundamental Value of the EU’, at which the ubiquitous Ján Figel’ gave the opening address.⁷⁷ The Launch Statement⁷⁸ emphasised that the aim of the Year was to ‘raise the profile of intercultural dialogue, which is essential for creating respect for cultural diversity, improving coexistence in today’s diverse societies and encouraging active European citizenship’, as well as contributing to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy’s

76 Speech of Commissioner Mr [Ján Figel’](#), EPP-ED Hearing on Cultural Diversity, Religions and Dialogue, Brussels, 10 January 2008, formerly available at arc.eppgroup.eu/press/peve08/docs/080110speech_figel-en.doc. See also <http://www.eppgroup.eu/photo-gallery/Hearing-on-Cultural-Diversity-%28Brussels%2C-10/01/2008%29>.

77 http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Press_Releases/January/0108ELMD_slovesnost.html and http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Press_Releases/January/0701MK_Simoniti.html.

78 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:l29017>; see also <http://www.welcomeurope.com/news-europe/diversity-campaign-launch-of-european-year-of-intercultural-dialogue-2008-8184+8084.html#replierTexte>.

economic objectives.

The organisation of the Year was formally in the hands of the European Commission assisted by a committee which included representatives of the National Co-ordinating Bodies (NCBs), or equivalent, appointed by participating member states; in the UK the lead was officially taken by the government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport.⁷⁹ There were also fifteen international celebrities (principally artists, musicians and writers) appointed as 'European Ambassadors for Intercultural Dialogue'⁸⁰, along with some 100 national celebrities appointed as intercultural ambassadors by the member states. As Wikipedia comments, their ambassadorial roles were somewhat vaguely defined.⁸¹

There were a number of centrally organised or co-organised and co-funded events during the Year including opening and closing conferences in Ljubljana (January 2008) and Paris (November 2008), with an allocated budget for the two of €600,000. The Paris conference was a lavish affair:

'Over 600 participants from across Europe and beyond gather today in Paris to evaluate the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 in a closing conference entitled "New Perspectives for Intercultural Dialogue in Europe". With hundreds of activities and projects highlighted, promoted and disseminated during this Year, the communication campaign has raised awareness throughout Europe of the importance and benefits of intercultural dialogue. Building on this experience, the aim of the conference is to look to the future of Europe from the point of view of cultural diversity'.⁸²

There was also a series of 'Brussels Debates': the sixth, for example, held in conjunction with the European Youth Forum (EYF) was on 'Education - ready for the intercultural challenge?', again addressed by Figel'.⁸³ Other topics included immigration and integration, arts and culture in intercultural dialogue, inter-religious dialogue, active citizenship in the workplace, multilingualism, and the role of the media. The 2nd debate in the series on 'Negotiating differences. A responsibility of artists and cultural institutions?' (in April 2008)⁸⁴, touched on important ambiguities in the notion of 'culture', and any engagement with it, as the following report signalled:

'Photographer Ahmet Polat, and Jette Sandahl, Director of the City Museum Copenhagen, provided fascinating glimpses on their work and shared their thoughts on the pivotal role of the arts and culture in the context of increasingly diverse European societies. Their presentations were contrasted with the political viewpoints of Commissioner Ján Figel' and MEP Claire Gibault. The debate focused on the responsibility of artists and cultural institutions in challenging multiple, overlapping, fragmenting, dividing, hybridizing, merging, and fusing elements of identity, and explored how they can facilitate spaces - physical and mental - for intercultural encounter, dialogue and learning'.⁸⁵

Thus the Turkish photographer, Ahmet Polat, emphasised the artist's creative 'personal journey': 'The artist can of course help to explain other cultures, but only once the journey of self-exploration is well underway'. By contrast, Claire Gibault, French MEP, cited the example of Daniel Barenboim's East-

79 See https://purpose.com.pl/en/archive/mag-nr_47/interview/mag-european_year_of_intercultural_dialogue_.html, interviews with members of the Polish NCB who discuss their roles.

80 www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/2009_kss_manifestoforcreativity.en_.pdf.

81 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Year_of_Intercultural_Dialogue#Ambassadors

82 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-08-1718_en.htm.

83 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-08-1436_en.htm; <http://eu-un.europa.eu/culture-brussels-debates-to-shape-future-eu-strategy-for-intercultural-dialogue>.

84 <http://intercultural-europe.org/database/event/2nd-brussels-debate-european-year-intercultural-dialogue-negotiating-differences>.

85 http://intercultural-europe.org/event-types/debate?theme=p4ie_corolla.

West Divan Orchestra, uniting Israeli and Palestinian musicians, while Jette Sandahl, museum director, stressed the importance of cultural institutions ‘letting go of mono-cultural traditions and monopolies of interpretations’.⁸⁶

I return later to this debate on what intercultural dialogue means for the creative arts (‘Culture’, with a capital ‘C’), and those who work in them, versus what it means for ‘culture’ (in the anthropological sense).

Civil Society: Platform for Intercultural Europe (PIE)

A report (a so-called ‘Wrap-up Paper’⁸⁷) on the 2nd Brussels debate on ‘Negotiating differences’ was in fact prepared by the ‘Rainbow Platform’, or ‘Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue’ (PIE) whose terms of reference and mode of operation are discussed below.⁸⁸ But first it should be noted that at the same time as it was preparing for the Year, the EU Commission also published its ‘Agenda for Culture’ (‘European agenda for culture in a globalizing world’, European Commission 2007)⁸⁹, which set out a programme of action for the period 2007-13.

Arguing that the EU was an ‘unprecedented and successful social and cultural project’, the Agenda claimed that

‘[It] is, and must aspire to become even more, an example of a “soft power” founded on norms and values such as human dignity, solidarity, tolerance, freedom of expression, respect for diversity and intercultural dialogue, values which, provided they are upheld and promoted, can be of inspiration for the world of tomorrow’ (p. 3).

In setting out its Agenda, the document pointed to two meanings of the term culture:

“‘Culture’ is generally recognised as complex to define. It can refer to the fine arts, including a variety of works of art, cultural goods and services. “Culture” also has an anthropological meaning. It is the basis for a symbolic world of meanings, beliefs, values, traditions which are expressed in language, art, religion and myths. As such, it plays a fundamental role in human development and in the complex fabric of the identities and habits of individuals and communities’ (ibid.)

While the Agenda sought to develop a policy and programme for both aspects of culture, much of it was in fact concerned with Culture in the (narrow) artistic/literary sense, and its role in intercultural dialogue. To what extent it engaged with intercultural dialogue in the wider, anthropological sense is questionable. Thus the Programme would

‘go further in facilitating mutual understanding, stimulating creativity, and contributing to the mutual enrichment of our cultures. It will help thousands of cultural organisations to create and implement cultural and artistic projects improving the knowledge and dissemination of European cultural heritage, promoting cultural exchanges, artistic and literary creation, and literary translation. It will also support bodies active at European level in the field of culture and give recognition to major European cultural achievements through European prizes in architecture, cultural heritage and music as well as European Capitals of Culture’ (p. 4).

86 *inter alia* http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-08-217_en.htm.

87 <http://www.intercultural-europe.org/docs/brusselsdebatewrapuppaper.pdf> [No longer available]

88 PIE was one of three Platforms. The other two were Platform on Access to Culture (ACP), Platform on the Cultural & Creative Industries (CCIP), McDonald et al (2013b).

89 See also Culture Programme Guide, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture/programme/programme_guide_en.php.

A key section on *Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue* (p. 8) in fact opens with a quotation from Yehudi Menuhin ('It is art that can structure the personalities of young people with a view to open their minds, to instil the respect of others and the desire of peace') before stressing that a key objective of the Agenda/Programme is to foster 'the mobility of artists and professionals in the cultural field and the circulation of all artistic expressions beyond national borders' (p. 9). The Agenda also drew attention to the importance of developing relations between the EU's institutions and the 'cultural sector' and the 'cultural industries'. That sector, it contends,

'should continue organising itself as far as possible in order to permit the identification of representative interlocutors. The Commission welcomes the progressive structuring already taking place with the emergence of some representative organisations as well as some cooperation structures such as a *civil society platform* on intercultural dialogue.' (p. 11, emphasis added).

This reference to 'a civil society platform' needs explanation.

In preparing for the Year, the EU had identified an important role for civil society organisations (NGOs) in developing intercultural dialogue. Prior to the final proposal presented to the Parliament in December 2006, the EU had in August organised a consultation ('Call for Ideas') aimed principally at such organisations, which sought to locate events and initiatives suitable for support (and co-funding).⁹⁰ An ENAR (European Network Against Racism⁹¹) Factsheet (ENAR 2007) drew attention to this call since the Year 'presents an opportunity to engage with the debate on intercultural dialogue at the national and local levels, and provides a context in which local, regional and national civil society organisations can promote objectives of inclusion'. A number of organisations took advantage of this⁹², and in due course numerous projects were identified in the member states, including, for example, some 40 from Hungary, which focused on

'raising awareness through discussions, interviews and lectures e.g. via the radio and YouTube. There was also a series of events, such as the week-long "Naturally Youth" programme aimed at developing an understanding and cooperation between young people from all backgrounds through a range of activities.' (ECOTEC 2009b: 75)

Already in response to the announcement, in 2006, that there would be a Year devoted to intercultural dialogue, the European Cultural Foundation and the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage/Culture Action Europe had together set up a 'Platform for Intercultural Europe' (PIE) with as Director-General, Sabine Frank, previously the Deputy Secretary General of Culture Action Europe, to channel relations between the cultural sector and the EU (see *inter alia* Schwarz 2008). Its aims were in due course set out in what was called the *Rainbow Paper* (Frank ed. 2008), a policy document resulting from a 'participative process in which many organisations came together to shape the voice of European civil society in the field of Intercultural Dialogue' (p. 1); it was eventually presented in 2008 at the concluding conference of the Year. 'Hundreds of people have contributed to this paper', on-line and at numerous conferences and seminars, it said: 'It stands out as a participatory exercise and as a piece of collective thinking (and convivial compromise), rather than as an exercise based on academic research principles' (p. 3).

PIE's 'Mission' as set out in the *Rainbow Paper* (p. 3) included fostering 'a greater appreciation of diversity and the complexity of identities', 'working towards democratic inclusion and

90 <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/call-ideas-european-year-intercultural-dialogue-2008>; http://www.welcomeurope.com/europe-funding-opportunities/call-ideas-promoting-intercultural-dialogue-europe-1525+1425.html#tab=onglet_details.

91 <http://www.enar-eu.org>.

92 e.g. 'Reaction from the Higher Arts Education Sector on the Call for Ideas Intercultural Dialogue Year 2008', European League of Institutes of the Arts, <http://www.elia-artschools.org/userfiles/Image/customimages/products/42/Dialogue.pdf>.

greater equity', enhancing 'capacities for change within organisations', and 'standards and frameworks to tackle exclusion, inequalities and breaches of human rights related to cultural diversity'. In explaining PIE's approach, the *Paper* emphasised three principles - Dialogue, Competence, and Action - and defined intercultural dialogue as 'specific encounters, anchored in real space and time between *individuals and/or groups* with different ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, with the aim of exploring, testing and increasing understanding, awareness, empathy, and respect' (emphasis added), in order to foster a 'cooperative and willing environment for overcoming political and social tensions' (p. 4). 'Competence' referred to the skills needed to undertake such a dialogue, while 'Action' meant 'practical engagement': 'living, working and creating together' 'which is 'more effective than debates'. Intercultural dialogue (p. 5), which demands 'exchange and negotiation over values and actions', converts diversity from 'socio-cultural difference into active inter-group collaboration'. Intercultural dialogue rejects both 'everybody [in] their cultural niche' [i.e. multiculturalism], and assimilation.

The *Paper*, which went through several versions, saw this approach as relevant to culture in the broad anthropological sense, especially with respect to relations with Europe's indigenous minorities, and populations of migrant origin, and in situations where populations have engaged in conflict. Such situations, including those where 'the intersection of religion and culture becomes salient', demand intercultural dialogue 'as a way to mediate, and to facilitate reconciliation' (p. 6). Such dialogue must be pursued at all levels, 'from the local to the international'; it is 'equally relevant to governmental missions and personal encounters'. Civil society organisations would have a vital leadership role in this, bringing intercultural dialogue to bear on 'the fostering of peaceful coexistence and cooperation in the communities where we live and work' (p. 7), utilising the vectors of education, capacity building, and 'mobilising across boundaries' (p. 13). The *Paper* concluded by calling on the Commission to put resources into intercultural dialogue, and make a commitment to follow through the Year by developing guidelines and monitoring developments.

As noted above, the PIE developed the *Paper* through widespread consultation with civil society organisations, and its Activity Report for the year 2008 (in PIE Activity Reports 2009-14) recorded that the platform set out in the final version of the *Paper* had been endorsed by 226 organisations and 170 individuals. The successful outcome had led to the PIE being seen by the European Commission as a 'model' for developing a relationship between the EU and civil society, and by the time of the Report the PIE had become one of three 'Structured Dialogue partners'. 'Let us recall', the Report for 2008 said, 'that our platform was set up as an informal initiative with an initial timeframe of two years. It is now legally established as an international not-for-profit organisation under Belgian law and is set to transform the principle of informal participation to association membership!' (p. 5). Although six European foundations had contributed financial support for PIE's work, there were ongoing uncertainties about future funding, and it was hoping to apply to the EU's Culture Programme for a grant to cover operations (including its two members of staff and steering group expenses) in 2009. This bid was successful, though long-term funding uncertainties remained (Activity Report for 2009).

By 2009 endorsements for the Platform had been received from 350 organisations and 300 individuals, though what such endorsements meant in practice (other than adding a name to an on-line list) is difficult to say. Nonetheless, and bearing in mind the limited funds available (income for the year was €182,632), PIE undertook a number of initiatives, including six 'Regional Practice Exchanges', in Malmö, Vienna, Rome, London, Ljubljana, and Belfast. The first 'brought together professionals from artistic and cultural organisations from across the Nordic region' (Activity Report for 2009: 2), the second included representatives from civil rights and minority organisations as well as from the artistic sector. There were also four European Forums including one on 'The Role of the Arts in Intercultural Dialogue: A Perspective from and on the Arts' held in Brussels, and an on-line resource collection was created ('Panorama on Intercultural Dialogue'). In addition, PIE argued the case (to the EU's Cultural Affairs Committee) for setting up an OMC Working Group on intercultural dialogue. (On the OMC, 'Open Method of Coordination'; see Hadjisoteriou et al 2015: 218, and below).

Subsequent Activity Reports follow a similar pattern, recording a gradually increasing number of signatories/endorsements, arriving at 427 organisations and 395 individuals in 2012, but declining rapidly in 2013 as the organisation wound down; it ceased activities at the end of that year, and was finally dissolved in August 2014. (Its budget was either static or declining in real terms during its period of existence). Highlights from various years⁹³ included PIE's participation in numerous conferences organised by other institutions (e.g. in 2010 a CultureWatchEurope Conference, on 'Culture and the policies of change - for a fairer distribution of culture', and in 2011 an International Organisation for Migration seminar on the role of religious communities in integration, and a RELIGARE seminar on Religious Diversity and Secular Models in Europe, PIE Activity Report for 2011: 11). The PIE also organised its own seminars on the theme of intercultural dialogue, with subsequent reports and discussion papers, and further 'Practice Exchanges' (e.g. in London in 2010, on 'Interculturalism: Art and Policy', see below). There were regular Newsletters distributed to a mailing list of some 2,500 individuals, a Steering Committee⁹⁴ which met on a number of occasions, and Annual General Members' Assemblies (that in 2012 was attended by 29 members).

The PIE Activity Report for 2013 (dated March 2014) noted sadly that that year:

'ended in the knowledge that a chapter closes: Under the Creative Europe programme (2014-2021) support to Structured Dialogue Platforms, of which PIE was one of three, is no longer foreseen. The 2013 "Evaluation of the Open Method of Coordination and the Structured Dialogue as the Agenda for Culture's implementing tools at European Union level" [i.e. McDonald et al 2013a, 2013b] found a "lack of common understanding about ownership of the Structured Dialogue and how it should work in practice. ... Each Platform developed its own management structures and organizational arrangements leading to very different approaches."'

In conclusion, the Report recorded the hope that it would be possible to carry on PIE's work - under the current circumstances of economic austerity and resurgent xenophobia, arguing that its mission ('promoting intercultural dialogue as a means to enable the free, full and equal participation of Europe's diverse people', p. 25) was as relevant as ever it was, and 'the open, intercultural society needs strong defenders'. Nonetheless, PIE was obliged to shut up shop, dissolved by the General Assembly of Members in November 2014.⁹⁵

The evaluation of the PIE, and the OMC workgroups (McDonald et al 2013a, 2013b) in fact suggests that the PIE achieved greater success in fulfilling its aims than did other Platforms. Thus:

'The impact of the work of the Platforms at national level is comparatively low, beyond capacity building and network effects. There was a lack of opportunity for national members to feed into the work of the Platforms and there is a low visibility of their outputs at national level. The PIE is the exception here since its membership includes national organisations' (McDonald et al 2013a: vi).

93 See also <http://intercultural-europe.org/content/page/activity-fields> which lists the various fields in which PIE was active.

94 That for 2013 included Ahmed Ahkim (Travellers and Roma Mediation Centre in Wallonia), Tsveta Andrea (European Cultural Foundation), Angela Christofidou (Cyprus Centre of the International Theatre Institute), Rani Kazadi (Intercult), Guido Orlandini (The Intercultural Communication and Leadership School), Niels Rigot (Nordic Forum for Interculture, Danish Centre for the Arts and Interculture), Barite Sabatauskaite (European Network Against Racism and Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights).

95 <http://intercultural-europe.org/content/page/contact>. Sabine Frank is currently (August 2017) Head of 'Fair and Sustainable Economy' Programme at Shöpflin Stiftung, in Brussels, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sabine-b-frank-3b146b1b>.

Reportedly, some EU civil servants regarded the *Rainbow Paper* as authoritative and influential (e.g. in Hadjisoteriou et al 2015: 223), and according to McDonald et al it was ‘repeatedly mentioned as a significant and useful output by stakeholders’ (2013a: 66). ‘As another interviewee commented’, they add, ‘it did not necessarily have an important impact on policy, but it was a milestone’. The Practice Exchanges were also ‘very well received’ (ibid.)

The PIE leadership was certainly very active, putting together a wide-ranging programme, and building what appears to have been a flourishing network including numerous organisations across Europe. But apart from participating in PIE organised events (and PIE participating in the events organised by others) what did membership actually mean? Who joined, and why? The actual number of member organisations (as opposed to those that signed up to endorse the *Rainbow Paper*) was quite small. The 2011 Report, for instance, lists 14 European organisations, and 29 national, regional or local bodies. The former included the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL), the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), and the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Danish Centre for Arts & Interculture – CKI (Denmark), and CESPI International Problems Study Center (Italy). For three organisations which joined during 2013, the PIE Activity Report for that year (p. 5) gave their reasons as follows:

Iberoamerican Foundation for the Creative and Cultural Industries – FIBBIC: ‘We believe in the importance of intercultural work to create a better Europe and we believe in the importance of networking on this issue.’

Institute for Conflict Research: ‘The opportunity to engage with organisations throughout Europe working to same aims and objectives as ourselves. The desire to contribute to and learn from dialogue and practice based work with new partners and to advocate and lobby for European policy and legislative development in areas of mutual concern’.

Teatro dell’Argine: ‘As artists, as citizens, as Europeans, we feel that intercultural and intergenerational dialogue is a crucial issue for making Europe a place of real exchange, a city for a new expanded concept of citizenship, meaning rights, democracy, fruitful diversity, reciprocity, against all racism and xenophobia, to foster real (economic, cultural, social) development and cohesion’

All very pertinent and worthy, but what in practice emerged from membership and/or participation in PIE’s activities? Was it any more than a talking shop where the like-minded met the like-minded? What in fact did it do to foster intercultural dialogue?

Consider, for example, the Fourth Practice Exchange on ‘Interculturalism: Art and Policy’, which was co-organised in London in December 2010 with a local member organisation, *Border Crossings*:

‘Artists’ intercultural work with ethnic minorities was showcased and discussed by over 50 participants made up of theatre practitioners, art consultants, anti-discrimination activists and academics. The event revealed that although Britain has a shining scene of culturally diverse, independent arts organisations and many outstanding artists of non-British origins, equity in public funding distribution remains an issue and so does access to national cultural institutions. While “Interculturalism has introduced a critical taste of the Other” in Britain since the early 1980s, as keynote speaker Jatinder Verma⁹⁶ put it, the struggle for free, full and equal participation of all in cultural life irrespective of their colour, origin or beliefs carries on. Key protagonists of “ethnic minority arts” however face the challenge of sticking to this cause without suffocating in the “box” of expectation that they will represent or exclusively serve “their community” (PIE Activity Report for 2010: 10-11).

The conference also contended that ‘much good intercultural work of past decades is under threat from a new politics formulated by [the then Minister of Culture, Ed Vaizey]’. There were 46 participants of whom 12 responded to an evaluation questionnaire:

‘The overall comments were positive. The sessions were seen as informative, stimulating and even provocative, well facilitated, useful, with a good overview of various perspectives and of the UK situation. The issues addressed were seen as important and it was felt that a good balance was struck between artists and policy speakers. Some wished more time could have been devoted to reflection, discussion and round table sessions with practice exchange and concrete examples of pro-active work. A marked interest was expressed to get to know “European” colleagues better, share views, formulate needs, find solutions together, ways to reach them and translate them into policies.’

Such seminars and workshops certainly engaged with significant and difficult topics, and many of the ideas circulated by PIE were highly pertinent and challenging. But did they really lead anywhere? Did discussion of intercultural dialogue manage to go beyond interculturalism in the ‘weak’ or ‘low-threshold’ sense?

OMC Working Group

In its Annual Report for 2010, PIE recorded the November decision of the EU Culture Council to establish an intergovernmental working group on Intercultural Dialogue (‘something we had lobbied for since 2008’, p. 2), using the OMC (‘Open Method of Coordination’) mechanism.⁹⁷ The Agenda for Culture describes this mechanism as providing ‘an appropriate framework for cooperation in the field of culture between the Member States’

‘It is a non-binding, intergovernmental framework for policy exchange and concerted action suitable for a field such as this, where competence remains very much at Member State level. It consists of agreeing common objectives, regularly following up progress towards them and exchanging best practice and relevant data in order to foster mutual learning’ (European Commission 2007: 12).

PIE participated in many, if not all, of the OMC’s workgroup meetings, and published reports on progress. There were together eleven sessions spread over two Phases between March 2011 (first meeting in Phase I) and October 2013 (final meeting in Phase II). Sabine Frank recorded that at its first meeting the OMC:

96 On Jatinder Verma see <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2008/jan/10/theatre1>.

97 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_method_of_coordination for procedures governing the OMC mechanism.

‘set off to tackle the cultural access and participation of children, disabled people, the elderly, socio-economically disadvantaged people, etc. Probably only in 2012 will this group turn to the topics of intercultural dialogue and the cultural participation of migrants and ethnic minorities. Only then will the Platform for Intercultural Europe have a well-matched interlocutor in the EU Council’⁹⁸

Discussion of these initial topics in fact extended over six meetings and included identifying practices followed in member countries. Thus the 4th meeting heard from Birgitta Englin (representing *Riksteatern* in Sweden) on ‘how her institution has been engaging with immigrant communities in Sweden through theatre productions’.⁹⁹ At the same session, Monika Jeschko (*Wiener Konzerthaus*) ‘presented the initiative “Sing Along Blauli”, which revitalise the practice of singing in schools’.¹⁰⁰ There was also much discussion of a proposed Handbook for Practitioners. Sabine Frank on behalf of PIE, however, voiced objections on the grounds that the OMC should be directly addressing policy-makers rather than practitioners. In the event the OMC decided to produce a report (OMC 2012) rather than a handbook since ‘the examples are eclectic and do not draw a representative picture of the state of policies and practices across Europe’.¹⁰¹

By the end of the 6th session (July 2012) it seemed clear that discussions within the OMC had reached an impasse, and a new group of experts was appointed for a second phase with intercultural dialogue specifically as terms of reference (*Cultural Diversity, Intercultural Dialogue and Accessible and Inclusive Culture*). McDonald et al’s evaluation makes the point that the first Phase had revealed a number of weaknesses in the OMC method:

‘outputs that are too generalised, overdependency on the effectiveness of the chair, variations in the level of expertise of participants, weak (although improving) dissemination approaches and lack of effective mobilisation of research capacity for building a solid evidence-based approach’ (2013a: ii-iii).

Phase Two, however, showed improvement. ‘Emphasising the need to agree well-defined, specific topics as early as possible in the process’, it observed, and ‘define precisely the expected outputs, have provided clearer direction and helped to focus activity better’ (ibid.) The evaluation also noted that a ‘re-orientation away from making extensive recommendations towards more practical material (guides, handbooks, tools etc.)’ (p.37).

After a preparatory meeting in September 2012, the renewed OMC working group held a first session in December, tasked with identifying

‘policies and good practices in creating spaces in public arts and cultural institutions to facilitate exchanges among cultures and between social groups, in particular by highlighting the intercultural dimension of the heritage and by promoting artistic and cultural education and developing intercultural competences’.¹⁰²

Their output would include a ‘policies and good practice manual for public arts and cultural institutions’. The PIE, however, submitted a position paper (Frank ed. 2012) with an introduction by Sabine Frank which set out the changes taking place in European society and the urgent implications

98 http://intercultural-europe.org/event-types/expert-meeting?theme=p4ie_corolla.

99 <http://intercultural-europe.org/database/event/4th-omc-expert-group-meeting-accessible-inclusive-culture-phase-i>.

100 See <https://konzerthaus.at/en/news/entryid/175>.

101 <http://intercultural-europe.org/database/event/6th-omc-expert-group-meeting-accessible-inclusive-culture-phase-i>.

102 This was the remit of the OMC group as defined by the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, in [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:42010Y1202\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:42010Y1202(01)); see also <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Acu0007>.

for public arts and cultural institutions, and thence for public policy in that field. This *tour d'horizon* was accompanied by a reflective section ('Four Theses for an "Audit of Culture"') by Mark Terkessidis (2012) which sought to move the 'reference point' from 'the nation to the parapolis' in ways familiar to those who have worked in the post-national or transnational field. The city, he argued, 'has become a multi-faceted "parapolis"'.¹⁰³

'The word describes the ambiguous, more or less illegitimate "para"-version of the term polis. Moreover, the modern Greek adjective "para poli" is hidden in it, meaning "very much": One could thus speak of a place of the "very much", a place of abundance. This "parapolis" needs institutions, which give consideration to the multiplicity of cities' (pp. 5-6).¹⁰³

Terkessidis contended that this shift (like the changes described by Sabina Frank) had implications for policies towards migrants. Thus it 'no longer makes any sense to adhere to the ideas of integration, which were developed in the 1970s', but using a term such as 'postmigrant' to describe a European society is to 'acknowledge the multiplicity within it as a fact – and as a challenge and creative task' (p. 8). In conclusion, cultural institutions 'contributed to negotiating and defining the selfimage of society as bourgeois and national. Now they have to engage in the difficult process of negotiating the selfimage of the "parapolis" or the "intercultural city"' (p. 15).

Heady stuff, and it seems unlikely that the OMC members were quite ready for it. The final report (OMC 2014)¹⁰⁴ mentions Terkessidis's paper only once, with reference to the need to ensure that institutional staffing should reflect the diversity of society (p. 44), though his account may have influenced some of the report's thinking on the nature of culture (see especially Part 2, pp. 9-11, 'Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue – A Conceptual Framework', extracts from which are cited below ('all cultures are hybrid ... etc')).

The final OMC report (2014) is, nonetheless, in its own way a thoughtful document which emphasises the potential role of artistic and cultural institutions in combatting the rise of xenophobia at a time of financial crisis in Europe and beyond, and promoting social cohesion. That role is important 'because the issues at stake are not only social and economic, but also, and often above all, symbolic and cultural' (p. 5). European diversity, it adds, 'is a cultural reality, which should be taken into account and addressed at the individual and collective level'. The main focus is, however, on practicalities, how artistic and cultural institutions might respond to the challenges of diversity in the current conjuncture, and a large part of the report is concerned with evaluating best practice, with numerous examples. Thus, the *Chester Beatty Library Intercultural Education Programme*, in Dublin, is commended (pp. 55-6) for its 'intercultural museum programme, the aim of which is to create a balance of display in its exhibitions of Islamic, East Asian and European both in its Sacred Traditions and Arts of the Book galleries', aimed at local Islamic, East Asian and European communities. In addition, the Library has

103 See also Terkessidis 2011. His book *Interkultur* (2010) was reviewed at <http://transit.berkeley.edu/2012/dzierson>.

104 See http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/reports/201405-omc-diversity-dialogue_en.pdf, and http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/reports/201405-omc-diversity-dialogue-sum_en.pdf [Executive summary]; and <http://docplayer.net/6256243-Report-on-the-role-of-public-arts-and-cultural-institutions-in-the-promotion-of-cultural-diversity-work-plan-for-culture-european-agenda-for-culture.html>.

‘designed an online Intercultural Learning Zone for visitors to access intercultural learning resources, information about the CBL, etc ... Intercultural dialogue plays a key role in the Library’s mission and encourages visitors to compare, contrast and explore the historical, cultural, scientific and religious aspects of its collections ... through the Library’s exhibitions and programmes Irish people and international visitors can discover other cultures as represented in the Islamic, East Asian and European collections. New multi-ethnic communities can share cultural aspects of their heritage through the education and public programme’.

Although the principal concern of the report is with best practice, its introductory sections do provide an overview of both the challenges posed by diversity and of diversity’s benefits:

‘All cultures are hybrid, mixed, infused. This cultural diversity is a source of wealth and renewal in a society. Yet it is often seen as a source of problems for states that are based on the domination by one nation, and consider the expressions of national minorities or ethnic communities as illegitimate or threatening to their unity. Similarly, multinational states which are facing new cultural expressions related to migration also frequently consider cultural diversity as a threat’ (p. 10).

The recognition of cultural diversity (and its benefits) is one thing, but intercultural dialogue is something else, since ‘it aims to create a framework for relations between states, but also between organisations and between people’ (ibid.) The objective is to ‘create common goods, shared knowledge and spaces for exchange. It also allows us to define the terms of a controversial debate, and thus provide a public space for citizens to express their differences peacefully and openly’. As such it is a ‘support for democracy.’ Moreover,

‘Intercultural Dialogue has the possibility [to] combat the limits of the universalism of human rights that does not take into account cultural differences, and the limits of multiculturalism, which gives them a social and political recognition but at the same time creates risks of division. It opens up a third way which is based on the creation of public goods in complex contemporary societies, on the ability of societies to go beyond the recognition of diversity, and on the democratic will to address the issues under discussion’ (p. 11).

Follow-up: Subsequent Developments in the CoE and the EU

CoE: The Eminent Persons’ Report, 2011

In 2010, against the background of the White Paper and other initiatives, the CoE invited a group of ‘Eminent Persons’, chaired by former German foreign secretary, Joschka Fischer, to prepare a report on ‘the challenges arising from the resurgence of intolerance and discrimination in Europe’. The Group, which included both academics and politicians from across Europe, identified eight ‘specific risks to Council of Europe values’. These included rising intolerance of immigrants and other minorities, discrimination in employment and housing, parallel lives, Islamic extremism, and a clash between “religious freedom” and freedom of expression’. Regarding the latter, the Report concluded that the threat came from ‘the sensibilities of groups who demand that [freedom of expression] be curbed in the name of respect for their own religious beliefs or cherished symbols’, something which had ‘emerged as major issue in Europe with the Rushdie Affair, in 1989’ (Council of Europe Eminent Persons’ Report 2011: 25).

The Group’s proposed response to these challenges was grounded in seventeen principles ‘starting with the statement that “at a minimum, there needs to be agreement that the law must be obeyed, plus a shared understanding of what the law is and how it can be changed”’ (p.6) ‘No individual and no group can expect to be exempted from this obligation’, it continued, ‘on account of

his, her or its cultural particularity. And no individual should be treated as a member of a cultural or religious group that he or she does not freely choose to belong to'. Furthermore, on the equal rights of men and women: 'Under no circumstances can respect for group identity or religious belief be invoked to justify the exclusion of girls from any form of education which is available to boys, or the seclusion of adult women from normal interaction with society outside their home' (p. 33). Freedom of expression, it continued, 'lies at the heart of a free society, and is a fundamental human right':

'Devout believers in a religion can be deeply hurt, or feel that their identity or their community is being victimised, if the religion in question, its founder or its sacred symbols are subjected to public ridicule or vilification. Freedom of expression should therefore be exercised responsibly and with due consideration for such feelings, particularly in the mass media. But it is not the province of the law or the public authorities to enforce such consideration' (p. 36).

These and other principles – the way in which they are formulated clearly indicates their intended target - formed a 'kind of handbook for diversity which all policy makers, opinion leaders and civil society activists could memorise or keep close at hand' (p. 6).

Within the framework of these liberal democratic (CoE) values, the Group took a largely pragmatic line when spelling out their practical implications, placing the onus on various actors, notably educators, the media and civil society organisations, to take responsibility for implementing them, and for putting into effect the strategy of intercultural dialogue set out in the CoE's White Paper of 2008. Thus:

'We urge educators and education authorities in all member states to develop "intercultural competencies" as a core element of school curricula ... We invite the Council of Europe to establish pilot projects on intercultural dialogue with a limited number of primary and secondary schools and higher education institutions in member states, and to consider creating a [CoE] prize to be awarded to education institutions for their work in this field.' (p. 61).

Such initiatives should be regularly followed up and assessed, and 'Building upon the Exchanges on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue, the [CoE] and member states should also design a stable and recognised platform to improve their relations with high-level representatives of religions and nondenominational organisations' (p. 62; and see Chapter 15 in Part III below). The Group also proposed that the CoE produce a 'code of good practice on "living together in diversity and freedom in Europe"', based on their Report, and the earlier White Paper.

EU: The Ward Report

In late 2015, the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education accepted the Ward Report (2015) 'On the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values'. Named after the rapporteur, Julie Ward, Labour MEP for the NW of England, the Report was the outcome of a debate begun following terrorist attacks in France and Denmark.¹⁰⁵

After a the usual lengthy preamble ('having regard to ...' various previous legislation and resolutions), the Report (p. 5) refers to how intercultural dialogue was

105 2015/2139(INI); see [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil-mobile/fiche-procedure/2015/2139\(INI\)?lang=en](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil-mobile/fiche-procedure/2015/2139(INI)?lang=en); and http://www.juliewardmep.eu/ward_report_adopted5.

‘tentatively defined in different studies and conclusions during the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) as a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or world views; whereas among its aims are: to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices; to foster equality; and to enhance creative processes’

Briefly rehearsing the current challenges (‘globalisation, migration, religious and inter-cultural conflicts and rise of radicalism’) and the consequent need for dialogue, it argues that the EU should build on the work of the Year and ‘step up the exchange of good practices and promote a new structured dialogue with all stakeholders in intercultural and interfaith issues in the light of all recent and dramatic events’. These stakeholders included:

‘European and national politicians, local and regional authorities, churches, religious associations and communities and philosophical and non-confessional organisations, civil society organisations and platforms, sport, culture and education workers, national and European youth councils, academics and the media’ (p. 6).

As well as incorporating intercultural and interfaith dialogues in education ‘to address and promote mutual respect, integrity, ethical principles cultural diversity, social inclusion and cohesion, including through exchange and mobility programmes for all’ (p. 6), intercultural dialogue should be ‘integrated in a transversal way’ in all areas of EU activity.

Like many such documents it expects a great deal of intercultural dialogue (‘tool for inclusive democratic participation and empowerment of citizens, in particular in relation to common goods and public spaces; argues that as such, intercultural dialogue may significantly contribute to the improvement of democracy and the development of greater and deeper inclusivity and sense of belonging’, p. 7), not least in tackling extremism and radicalisation, and makes many recommendations in that vein. In January 2016 the Report was accepted by the European Parliament by 554 votes to 147, British Conservative and UKIP MEPs among those against.

Evaluations and Reflections

Evaluations

These are grand claims, similar to those made in the OMC Report, and later chapters in Part III will look at the reality of intercultural dialogue in different contexts and situation to see whether such expectations are ever met. But to keep with the topic of this chapter, what did the EU’s Year actually achieve?

Ján Figel’s own assessment of its contribution is understandably upbeat. In the Foreword to a glossy publication presenting ‘Highlights of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008’ (European Union 2009), he proposed that the event

‘successfully raised awareness of the benefits of the cultural diversity which characterises Europe and generated reflection and debate on themes including minorities and migration, the role of the media, education and science, as well as the contribution of different religions and beliefs to intercultural dialogue’

It provided an ‘excellent opportunity’, he added:

‘to explore synergies between organisations working in many different fields: national ministries, art foundations, educational bodies, religious and faith communities, museums, cultural groups, schools, migrant organisations, youth and sport clubs all came together to contribute.’

The brochure carries glowing reports on initiatives undertaken by the European Commission itself (e.g. the ‘Ambassadors’ of the Year, the Brussels Debates, an Intercultural Photo Competition etc). There are also positive accounts of Pan-European initiatives such as the Intercultural Cities Project (jointly with the CoE¹⁰⁶) in which ‘Participating cities across Europe were called upon to collect successful experiences and, through mentoring and good practice exchange, to inform and shape structures, policies and practices in other cities’, as well as on various initiatives undertaken by member states. The Intercultural Cities Project is discussed in Chapter 9.

The brochure also documents seven European-wide co-financed flagship projects including ‘DIVERSIDAD Building the Bridge Between European Urban Cultures’, and ‘*Tatapume* Intercultural Dialogue Radio Campaign’. The former ‘offered a platform for European artists from different urban cultures to meet, share their ideas, and to create a lasting bridge of exchange’ (p. 28):

‘Using the medium of hip hop, this project aimed to promote intercultural dialogue in relation to urban culture through artistic events and panels of discussion. Activities included a digital platform for exchanges of music, artistic workshops to create a European hip hop single to be produced in different languages, seminars, shows in Austria during the football Euro 2008 and a three-day event in Vienna about urban culture (exhibitions, concerts, dance shows...). Participating countries included Austria, France, Spain, the Netherlands and Germany’.¹⁰⁷

Tatapume (Greek for ‘Let’s talk’) was intended to ‘give the European public an understanding of the extensive intercultural dialogue European populations have engaged in throughout history’ (p. 36). For 12 months (February 2008 to January 2009) the project involved local radio stations in Austria, France, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia and Spain, each producing ten broadcasts which portrayed Europe’s migratory history ‘from a new perspective via a linguistic, philological approach’ (ibid.), with coverage of topics including identity, migration, cities, culture, food, commerce and finance, art, difficulties of intercultural dialogue, and European identity past and present.

The Brochure’s list of initiatives is indeed impressive, and the description of what they apparently achieved convincing; certainly programmes such as the ‘Football for Diversity’ games organised in the Parc Léopold in Brussels in September 2008 supported by the European Football Federation, UEFA (p. 26) would have been fun. But what did it all amount to? The EC’s Education and Culture department commissioned an evaluation of the Year from a British consultancy firm (ECOTEC) based in Birmingham. The review (ECOTEC 2009a and 2009b) identified four types of activity relating to the goals of the Year which it sought to evaluate: Awareness-raising of the intercultural dialogue (ICD) concept; Profile-raising of Community programmes that contribute to ICD; Best practice and innovation; Education and the media. It could only do this, however, within certain limits:

‘The cost effectiveness of individual co-funded projects could not be assessed, since this would require an assessment of the *quality of the outputs of these individual projects (which lay beyond the remit and resources of this evaluation)*’ (ECOTEC 2009a: 8, emphasis added).

Moreover,

106 See <http://www.coe.int/web/interculturalcities/about>.

107 <http://intercultural-europe.org/database/project/diversidad-promoting-dialogue-exchange-through-european-urban-culture>.

‘The extent to which the intervention logic of the Year was coherent with national policies is difficult to assess because of two main factors: firstly, the broad scope of ICD means that very few, if any, countries have specific, identifiable ICD policies per se; and secondly, even if a set of contributory or supporting policies were used instead (anti-discrimination or cultural policies for example), the evaluation had insufficient resources to conduct a detailed country-by-country review of these’ (2009a: 28-9.)

At the same time:

‘It is difficult to envisage circumstances where the rationale for ICD would have been incompatible with any specific national policy or set of policies. We therefore assume that existing national policies were at least noncontradictory, if not coherent, with respect to the EYID intervention logic and that where no such policies existed, the issue did not arise’ (p. 31)

It was also the case that many of the initiatives attached to the Year might have taken place anyway.

Among the various difficulties posed by an evaluation of the Year was confusion over the meaning of ‘culture’. While the Agenda for Culture (European Commission 2007) had, as described above, identified two senses in which the term was used ((a) and (c) below), in a fairly conventional fashion (see Grillo 2003a), ECOTEC (2009b: 12) listed four:

- (a) In the artistic sense (‘Culture’, as I call it);
- (b) in the sense of educated - ‘cultured’;
- (c) in the anthropological sense; and
- (d) ‘as a normative system that sets out rules for social behaviour and relationships’.

The latter sense it identified with, for example, ‘good manners’ etc , often associated with ‘traditional values and sometimes set against “permissiveness”’ (ibid.), but it might have argued that it could be extended to encompass a culture’s ‘core values’ such as the ‘European values’ associated with the idea of a ‘common European culture’ described by Shore (2000; and see further below).

So far as ‘intercultural’ is concerned, ECOTEC recognises that the third, anthropological, sense would seem the most pertinent, but that ‘Culture’ in the first sense (i.e. associated with the arts and creative ‘industries’, though not necessarily with ‘high’ Culture) had ‘a role to play as a medium for intercultural dialogue in that art is a manifestation of a particular cultural group or country’ ((2009b: 12.) In fact, if ever the EU or the CoE ventured onto the anthropological terrain of culture it did so from a very traditional perspective, usually viewing ‘culture’ as a static phenomenon attached to individuals as members of a collectivity of culture bearers. Indeed, as Hocevar et al have suggested, the EU and CoE’s concept of intercultural dialogue is seemingly based on the assumption of ‘a priori bounded groups’, whose members ‘share a “common background”’, and that those members are ‘automatically the carriers of uniform knowledge’ of the group’s culture and thus ‘distinguished from individuals of some other comparable groups’ (2009: 45; see also Grillo 2003a, Shore 1993, 2006).

A further, related problem is the apparent difficulty participants find in giving meaning to ‘intercultural dialogue’. A Eurobarometer survey (*Intercultural Dialogue in Europe, Summary*, Gallup Organisation/European Commission 2007), also discussed in Vidmar-Horvath 2012, recorded that Europeans:

‘attribute a variety of meanings to the expression “intercultural dialogue in Europe” most of these being closely related to the core concept, and positive. Among the meanings frequently expressed by respondents, one finds: “conversation”, “cooperation”, “exchange” and “mutual understanding” across all nations, religions and cultures’ (p. 4).

Nevertheless, alongside this largely common sense understanding, ‘a large minority (36%) could not attribute any particular meaning’ to the expression. As ECOTEC records (2009b: 14): ‘The term ICD is not well understood’. Did the Year change any of that? This is not something that ECOTEC apparently attempted to assess, and indeed it might have been premature to do so.

The UK’s Contribution

The Annexes of the ECOTEC Evaluation include detailed information on each member country, based on reports submitted by their NCBs (National Co-ordinating Bodies). Some of the reports (notably perhaps from the smaller countries), suggest considerable interest. Others indicate a more hands-off approach. The UK is a case in point. In preparation for this chapter I used the UK’s Freedom of Information Act to inquire of various ministries what they had done for the Year. Specifically I asked:

1. *What was the Department’s response to the proposals by the European Union for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008)?*
2. *What actions were undertaken or initiatives encouraged to implement the aims of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue before, during or after 2008?*

The Home Office and the Foreign Office replied that it was nothing to do with them, while the Dept. for Culture, Media and Sport answered as follows:

‘I can advise that the information you have requested is exempt from disclosure under section 21 (information available by other means) of the Act. [With regard to Question 1]. This information was made available when answered in a Parliamentary Question (PQ) by Gerry Sutcliffe, Parliamentary Under-Secretary in 2008. You can find the response [online]’

Hansard (HC Deb, 18 February 2008, c325W) in fact records the response to what looks like a ‘put-up’ question:

Jim Cunningham PPS (Mr Mike O’Brien, Minister of State), Department for Work and Pensions: ‘To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans he has to mark 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue’.

Gerry Sutcliffe Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) (Sport), holding answer:

‘The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, for which my Department is in the lead, provides an opportunity to highlight the UK’s achievements in encouraging dialogue and to make further progress. The launch event, hosted by the Slovenian EU presidency in Ljubljana on 6-7 January, was attended by an official from my Department and also by the British Council and other UK organisations. We have appointed EUCLID, the UK’s Cultural Contact Point for the EU Culture Programme, as the UK’s National Co-ordinating Body for the Year. We have asked EUCLID to draw up a programme of events. The major events planned so far are the UK launch event for the year in Manchester in early March and a conference in Liverpool on 1-3 May on “Intercultural Cities”. I am also very pleased that Liverpool’s project, “Intercultural City”, which forms part of Liverpool’s Capital of Culture programme, has been chosen by the European Commission as the representative UK national project for the year, and will receive funding from the Commission. This project will last throughout 2008. We want to encourage all organisations which are planning projects involving intercultural dialogue to apply to register them on the EUCLID website¹⁰⁸’.

In effect the Ministry outsourced the UK’s participation in the Year to EUCLID, a consultancy organisation which describes itself as ‘helping arts, heritage, culture & creative industries to access EU funding’. EUCLID in fact acted as the UK’s National Co-ordinating Body (NCB) for the Year, with Geoffrey Brown, Euclid’s Director, taking the leading role.¹⁰⁹ This approach might be compared with that of Slovenia whose NCB included representatives of numerous ministries and civil society organisations who prepared a ‘strategic document for the implementation of the Decision in Slovenia’ (Hocevar et al 2009: 31).

So far as Question 2 is concerned, the Ministry simply referred to pages 93-94 and 111-112 of the ECOTEC evaluation annexes (2009b) which listed various UK-based activities in connection with the Year. *inter alia* ECOTEC noted that the government department responsible ‘did not make any additional funding available so the priority was to ensure the EYID was recognised widely’ (2009b: 93). Nonetheless it observes that:

‘Some 108 other activities took place, around the UK including in particular: London and the South of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, NE England, the North west (Manchester and Liverpool), Yorkshire (Leeds and Bradford) and the West Midlands. Activity represented a very broad range including creative individuals, arts practitioners, social strategy experts, inter-faith and faith groups and arts and cultural organisations. The expression of ICD was showcased through music, drama, film, literature, religion, art, poetry, politics and the Internet’ (ibid.)

The *Celebration of diversity at park*, described at the beginning of this chapter, was one such event. More significant, perhaps, was the Liverpool conference on ‘Intercultural Cities’, mentioned as a show-case event by the Minister: Chapter 9 discusses that conference in the context of a broader account of the Intercultural Cities Programme. A report on the London Borough of Lewisham (Intercultural Cities Programme 2011a: 2), however, recorded that ‘the term “intercultural” has not been adopted by the national government in any of its policy guidelines, and the UK did not take an active role in promoting the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. As a consequence, the terminology is almost completely absent amongst UK local authorities also’.

108 <http://www.euclid.info>; see also <http://www.euclid.info/pastevents>.

109 <http://www.euclid.info/people>.

‘Words, Words, Words’?

‘Mental Health Europe is organising its annual conference on “Diversity in Mental Health and Wellbeing - An Opportunity for Intercultural Dialogue” on 7-9 August 2008 in Aalborg, Denmark. The Mental Health Europe Conference 2008 is inspired by the declaration of the European Commission to designate 2008 the “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue”. The conference will look at intercultural dialogue as a means to create and achieve mental health and mental well-being. It will focus on diversity in mental health and mental well-being. It will provide a platform for dialogue on the ways in which the various sources of diversity in Europe can be used as an opportunity for achieving better mental health and well-being for the whole population’(as reported in ENAR Weekly, May 2008).

Undoubtedly the Year produced much verbiage: ‘Words, Words, Words’, as Hamlet observed; and the White Paper called for more of it (‘more dialogue about intercultural dialogue’). There were hundreds of meetings (committees, seminars, workshops, conferences), a multitude of plans and reports, and a host of events arranged specifically to celebrate the Year. There were also many other events perhaps already planned which latched onto the Year, or were latched on to it. Thus the annual *Challenge of Change Project*, organised jointly by two local councils in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to bring the two communities together, took intercultural dialogue as its theme for 2008 and invited Terry Waite as its guest speaker (*Newry Democrat*, 17 September 2008).

But how many Europeans in fact noticed that 2008 was the Year of Intercultural Dialogue, let alone organised or participated in an activity to celebrate it? Take the case of the UK. ECOTEC (2009b: 93) records that some resources were devoted to publicity material for its contribution to the Year, including an information pack which was apparently widely distributed. In addition:

‘The Year was featured in a broad range of publications from national and regional newspapers to mainstream and specialist magazines. Some 248 press clippings were recorded¹¹⁰, which the NCB calculates translates to a total readership in excess of 15 million’ (ibid.)

The latter figure would seem highly optimistic. Indeed, a search of the Nexis newspaper database found 35 references to ‘European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, some of which were simply critical (‘THE European Commission has been accused of wasting millions of pounds of taxpayer’s money on “pointless” arts events despite the economic crisis’, *Daily Telegraph* 19 March 2010), or jokey (‘The Vienna Vegetable Orchestra is set to perform for the official handover from the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue to its 2009 successor. The orchestra will showcase its ingenuity and play on instruments made solely of vegetables’, *Times Educational Supplement*, 2 January 2009). Others merely reported events such as the *Celebration of diversity at park*, recorded at the head of this chapter.

It is possible that the UK’s response was not representative, and there is no doubt that the issues the Year sought to address were and are important. As Cris Shore and others have observed, from the early 1990s a key concern of the EU Commission was to achieve a greater engagement of the peoples of Europe with the European idea and with a European identity. The Commission, said Shore (1998: 12), firmly believed in a project which would ‘forge a new kind of European ... subjectivity, a distinctly “European” consciousness capable of transcending nationalism and mobilising Europe’s 370 million citizens towards a new image of themselves as “Europeans”’. This project addressed the need, as the Commissioners saw it, to construct a community rather than simply a market, tackle the problem of democratic deficit, define Europe’s boundaries and confront the problem of nationalism (Shore 1993: 784-6). Culture (or more usually ‘Culture’) had an important role in this. ‘The idea that there exists a common European culture’, said Shore (2000: 40), ‘which

110 Compared with 2,145 in Germany and 2,052 in Slovenia (ECOTEC 2009a: 73).

could be ‘developed to underpin the more technical, legal and economic aspects of the integration process, [came] to occupy a strategic place in the thinking of EU policy-makers and supporters’, and his detailed study (2000) documents the enthusiasm for European ‘core values’, ‘invariably located’, says Shore,

‘in the Graeco-Roman tradition, in Judaeo-Christian ethics, Renaissance humanism and individualism, Enlightenment rationalism and science, traditions of civil rights, democracy, the rule of law’ (Shore 2000: 35, 225; see also Shore 1997: 176, and Shore 2006).

Paul Morris, writing about later developments, cites the Preamble to the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon (‘Drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law’, European Union 2007: 10), and comments:

‘This serves to place the religious heritage of Europe alongside, and equal to, Europe’s cultural and humanist traditions, as the foundations of the core value cluster, the ‘ultimate good’ of the EU. “Religious” rather than “Christian” heritage further obscures the fact that Europe’s religious heritage is, in fact, overwhelmingly Christian.’ (2017: 153-4).

In the 1990s, then, as Shore and others document, the Commission was focused on forging a European identity. Whatever the attractions of this essentialist idea of Europe to those at the centre of things, it remained the case, however, that ‘most Europeans remain[ed] stubbornly wedded to their national identities’ (Shore 2000: 224), as subsequent events, including the 2016 Brexit campaign in the UK confirmed. To an extent, the slogan ‘Unity in Diversity’ deployed to characterise Europe, was a response to this (Delanty 2003, Shore 2006), but by the early 2000s, and indeed already in the 1990s, the sheer diversity of Europe (cultural, ethnic, religious) was posing significant challenges for such an idea and for Europe’s governance for all the many reasons set out in the endless discussions which in due course led to the decision to devote 2008 to Intercultural Dialogue. The title of Shore’s 2006 paper (“‘In uno plures” (?)’), including the question mark, neatly poses the dilemma: is the EU ‘one people or many’, and what should the relationship be between ‘Europe’ (sc. the EU) and its constituent peoples with their own cultures and heritages, i.e. between, as Shore puts it, ‘Europe conceived as a unified and singular cultural entity, and Europe conceived as a space of diversity, an amalgamation of many cultures, and by implication, of many peoples and interests’ (2006: 7)?

Intercultural dialogue, while responding to the needs of European unity (‘a constitutive element of unity’, as Ján Figel’ described it, see above), thus also emerged as one response to the challenges of a highly diverse, transnational, globalised, multicultural, but increasingly xenophobic Europe, and events since 2000 have only intensified those challenges. But actual experience of the Year underlined the great difficulties involved. Some of these revolved around ambiguities in key terms such as ‘culture’ and ‘[intercultural] dialogue’. Was the Year to do with culture in the broad anthropological sense, and if so how was the concept to be construed – as a set of static, bounded traditions and practices, conveyed by certain stereotypes, or as something much more dynamic and porous? If so, who can lay claim to it, or claim to represent it? Or was it confined to Culture in the narrower sense, referring to the creative and performative arts and what they produce? And should that encompass both ‘high’ Culture, and the Culture of the streets, as it were. In fact, for the most part it was Culture in this second, non-anthropological sense which prevailed, as it did in previous accounts of an essential European identity (see Shore 2006, quoting Schlesinger 1994, and Shore 2000 *passim*). It is significant, for example, that the UK handed its participation in the Year to EUCLID, and thus the ‘arts, heritage, culture & creative industries’, though Culture now included its more popular manifestations - hip hop along with opera - as in some of the Flagship projects described above.

There is nothing wrong with that; bringing artists (in the broad sense) together to discuss and compare their work and its possible contribution to the welfare of diverse societies is not something to

be sneered at as a waste of time and money. But when the Year strayed beyond that into the more difficult terrain of culture in the anthropological sense, it encountered serious problems. EU sources from time to time pay lip-service to the dynamic, anti-essentialist idea of culture that is nowadays commonplace in contemporary anthropology (e.g. Baumann 1999, Grillo 2003a), where cultures and communities are seen as constructed, dialectically from above and below, and in constant flux, and ‘culture’ seen as ‘an enactive, enunciatory site’, as Homi Bhabha puts it (1994: 178). This was the position hinted at in the report on the 2nd Brussels debate, in Terkessidis (2012), and in the OMC final Report (2014), cited above. More usually, however, what appears in EU documents and elsewhere is much more traditional, an essentialist conception of culture in which human actors are seen as bearers of a culture, located within a bounded world, which defines them and differentiates them from others (see also Morris 2017). As Shore notes, the idea of hybridity, which permeates academic theory, and to an extent popular cultural practice, would seem ‘anathema to official conceptions of European culture’ (2006: 19). In a previous publication (Grillo 2003a), I suggested that at the end of the 19th century academic and popular ideas of culture and cultures (at any rate popular political ideas), were much closer than they are now. Indeed, one might argue that contemporary popular culture is in practice more closely resembles contemporary academic theory than do the ideas of the powers-that-be.

If ‘culture’ posed problems, so did ‘dialogue’, for example in the religious exchanges sponsored by the CoE (to be discussed in Chapter 15). As noted above, for many Europeans the phrase ‘intercultural dialogue’ meant nothing at all, or very little beyond a sort of conversation. Moreover, a survey undertaken for the EU Commission by ERICArts (the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research)¹¹¹ found that ‘Intercultural Dialogue as a concept has multiple meanings and that there is no uniform approach to ICD which is employed across Europe’ (ERICArts 2008: 11). Indeed, it recommended that the EU:

‘Establish a clear concept/definition of intercultural dialogue. This is especially important for the future development of European, national, regional/local policies, strategies and funding programmes to promote intercultural dialogue. It will help avoid potential misinterpretations of their objectives and make it easier to evaluate their success’ (p. 14).

ERICArts, however, also recommended going beyond that, by developing strategies

‘which recognise intercultural dialogue as a process of interactive communication within and between cultures which aims to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation and the freedom and ability to make choices; to foster equality; and to enhance creative processes’ (p. 13).

Despite such difficulties with the concept, discussed in greater detail in other chapters, those at the centre of the EU and CoE had (and in 2016-17 continued to have) high expectations of intercultural dialogue, including, currently, its role in combatting extremism and radicalisation among young Muslims (e.g. Commissioner for Human Rights 2016: 9), in facilitating the integration of immigrants and asylum seekers¹¹², in promoting European values¹¹³, and in conflict resolution. One task allocated to it (or more broadly to ‘interculturalism’), beyond inviting the peoples of Europe to talk to one another, and find unity through their diversity, was to provide a more acceptable alternative to ‘multiculturalism’, or what is imagined as multiculturalism, with all its assumed faults. In fact, however, many of the events which took place under the rubric of intercultural dialogue represented little more than what happens, has happened, under regimes of more traditional multiculturalism. As Näss (2010) comments: ‘the EU’s view on diversity seems to be more about food and language than

111 <http://www.ericarts.org/web/index.php>.

112 http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework/intercultural-dialogue_en.htm.

113 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A8-2015-0373+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>.

conflicting morals and divergent interpretations of freedom of speech'. The *Celebration of diversity* event held in Preston, might seem to bear this out. The key is in the title 'celebration of diversity', meaning in that case the 'sights, smells and sounds from South Asia', at an event where 'dozens of people learned Bollywood dancing'. Once again, I do not intend to sneer at this; such events are and have been very valuable in their own way, helping to bring people into human contact with 'Others' (and 'other cultures'), but this is not intercultural dialogue in the sense discussed elsewhere in this book. That is, they do not involve serious, long-term attempts to work together, to understand the nature of the differences which matter, and negotiate a *modus vivendi*.

Despite these reservations I would not dismiss the Year as a pointless waste of money, as did the *Daily Telegraph*, and doubtless many others. So far as I can discover, there was no mention of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue, or indeed any other Year, in the UK's Brexit debate in 2016, though it might well have been dismissed as yet another EU folly. The absence of any mention may simply reflect its very low impact, and the level of importance attached to it. Nevertheless, what the Year (and similar events and activities) did by bringing together artists and others from across Europe in a series of common actions, was make a contribution, albeit a small one, to the long-term development of a European public sphere in which European citizens might begin to get to grips with each other's ways of thinking, and their different social and cultural practices, and seek common understandings and solution; in short become *European citizens*, as Ján Figel' and other Commissioners hoped all along (and see Shore 2000 etc). My own experience as an academic participating in various EU-funded projects, such as the IMISCOE network¹¹⁴ or the ERASMUS scheme perhaps bears this out. This is an ideal which patently not everyone shares, but it is, I would say, a noble one, no matter how far short the actual Year fell from it.

114 'International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion', <http://www.imiscoe.org>.

CHAPTER 9: INTERCULTURALISM WITHOUT DIALOGUE? THE INTERCULTURAL CITIES PROGRAMME

‘Faced with the continuous surge of diversity, the megacities of the West face the challenge of creating harmonious citizenry, while at the same time safeguarding the ethno-cultural rights of majority and minority groups’ (Elias 2017: 269).

Introduction

‘Little in our evolutionary history’, say Hardy and Hussain (2017: 65), ‘specifically prepared us to live in large societies, let alone super-diverse societies that have diversity within the diverse groups that comprise them’. I’m not sure that historians of ancient Rome, of Constantinople under the Ottomans, or indeed of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City) would entirely agree. Nonetheless, it is certain that many contemporary cities, if not actually superdiverse, experience ethnic, religious and cultural diversity and its governance as a problem. Interestingly, social and economic diversity - growing disparities of wealth and income – have not, in recent times, troubled city leaders to nearly the same degree.

With contemporary diverse (and superdiverse) cities as its focus, this chapter explores the way in which interculturalism has influenced policies and policy makers engaged with their governance. The chapter begins with a conference which took place in the British city, Liverpool, in 2008, a conference which - as Chapter 8 observed - was considered the UK’s representative national contribution to the EU’s Year of Intercultural Dialogue. That event also formed part of a CoE initiative concerned with Intercultural Cities – the Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme - the brainchild of a group of British scholars who had launched the idea some years previously. The chapter goes on to explain the background to the ICC programme and describe the theoretical or conceptual approach which underlies the initiative.

For contemporary interculturalists, much rests on the presumed value of people interacting and talking with each other, an idea that was also influential in the aftermath of the Second World War in the movement to ‘twin’ towns across national borders (*inter alia* Petiteville 1995). The same presumption has also influenced the interfaith groups and networks found in the UK and elsewhere, discussed in Chapter 15. Such initiatives are increasingly common, but what is their impact? Adherents make a number of claims for an intercultural approach to urban diversity, and in the third section of the chapter such claims are examined through a series of short case studies. A concluding section reflects on the outcome of these programmes and wonders, once again, whether they involve any more than ‘words, words, words’.

This is a complex, widely ramifying field which now involves a large number of urban-based intercultural programmes, primarily in Europe but also across the globe, though they are by no means all based on the same philosophy. This short survey therefore makes no claim to be a comprehensive review. It simply offers some reflections on what the field involves, and where it is leading.

A Conference

Among the various events celebrating the EU’s Year of Intercultural Dialogue in the UK was the Liverpool Intercultural City conference, which, as the Minister, Gerry Sutcliffe’s reply, cited in Chapter 8, indicated, had been selected as the representative national project, and for which UK’s National Co-ordinating Body managed to secure additional funding. Liverpool, along with Stavanger in Norway, had been chosen as an EU Capital of Culture for 2008¹¹⁵ and it was appropriate therefore

115 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Capital_of_Culture for the background to the Capital of Culture initiative and list of cities, 1985-2020. See also O’Brien 2011, Sykes 2011.

that it should be the site for a major conference organised by COMEDIA, a British think-tank, which had been working on the theme of Intercultural Cities since 2004.¹¹⁶

The conference itself was a major three-day affair with an impressive list of distinguished speakers including Saskia Sassen, Bhikhu Parekh, and Ash Amin. It would, said its prospectus,

‘Look at migration, diversity and urban life in a fresh way. The conference will not only provide an opportunity for International city leaders and experts to look at how different cultures can live together but how mixing can be turned to economic, social and cultural advantage. New thinking is needed on how diverse communities can co-operate in productive harmony instead of leading parallel or antagonistic lives. [It] will feature political leaders, policy makers and practitioners from major cities, including London, Madrid, Berlin, Lyon, Stuttgart, Rotterdam, Turin, Naples, Istanbul, Bremen, Marseilles, Gdansk, Leicester, Manchester and Liverpool who will be sharing their experiences and provide real examples of how *being intercultural* can bring social, cultural and economic advantages’¹¹⁷ (emphasis added).

There were some 250 delegates who also enjoyed the opportunity to ‘to look at how different cultures live together and how mixing can be turned to economic, social and cultural advantage’¹¹⁸, with site visits including Anfield, home of Liverpool Football Club. Some pictures and reflections by participants (and brief notes on interviews with speakers) are available online on the conference blog¹¹⁹, and there is a conference report or summary by Phil Wood, one of the organisers.¹²⁰

Wood’s summary (2008) provides a relatively detailed account of the keynote speeches, including those by Ash Amin and Bhikhu Parekh, both of which addressed the multiculturalism versus interculturalism debate. Parekh, for example, agreed that ‘whilst multi-culturalism has been a fairly successful policy, it certainly needs reviewing’:

‘It served well up to the 1990s but it took a slightly disturbing trend when it seemed to place minorities’ rights to express their distinctive identities above their responsibilities to share in a common society. In attempting to protect minorities from abuse and unfairness it had unwittingly placed some groups beyond criticism, giving legitimacy to some dubious practices in the process’ (p. 3.)

Amin, however, warned that

‘There was a danger that the language of interculturalism, taken unquestioned or out of context, might fuel morally dubious tendencies. We should be wary of over-reacting to the perceived excesses of multicultural identity politics by lurching back to a dominant moral community of the majority’ (*ibid.*)

I return below to these interventions, as well as to the reflections of two ‘Keynote Listeners’, as they were called, Ranjit Sondhi and Franco Bianchini.

116 For COMEDIA see <http://www.comedia.org.uk>; also <http://www.charleslandry.com>.

117 <https://interculturalcities.wordpress.com/tag/booking>.

118 <http://www.euclid.info/pastevents/>; and <https://interculturalcities.wordpress.com/2008/05/04/kensington-regeneration-tour>.

119 <https://interculturalcities.wordpress.com/category/conference>.

120 I am grateful to Phil Wood for providing me with a copy of his report.

Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC)

The ICC and the CoE

The Liverpool conference was rated a great success by the organisers, and certainly the Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme and network with which it was connected subsequently expanded considerably. While the 2008 conference included eleven ICC founder members, the network had (in September 2017) the adherence of some 120 participating cities.¹²¹ The present section outlines the role of the CoE in developing the ICC programme; that which follows explains the conceptual justification for the programme as outlined in the influential work of the British scholars who originated the idea.

In 2015, the CoE concluded that a policy of what was now called ‘intercultural integration’ represented a ‘novel approach to diversity management’ which would ‘remedy shortcomings of past policies and enable the realisation of the advantages of diversity’ (in Council of Europe 2015b). This conclusion was based on a number of previous reports including the CoE’s 2008 White Paper, the recommendations of the Eminent Persons’ Report of 2011 on the role of cities in diversity governance (see Chapter 8), the results of evaluations of the existing ICC programme (Council of Europe 2009, 2015a), and measures outlined in a *Practical Guide for Applying the Urban Model of Intercultural Integration* (Council of Europe 2013). The measures which the initial ICC programme had pioneered, included ‘promoting public discourse which emphasises shared values and strives to build a pluralistic and diverse urban identity; policies, institutions and services which are adapted to a diverse citizenry, intercultural competence of local officials and actors, and active participation of all in local governance’ (in Council of Europe 2015b). This approach was now commended to member states who were advised to ‘encourage within their means of competences the implementation of the urban model of intercultural integration at the local level and support the setting-up of city networks for the exchange of experience and learning in this respect’ (*ibid.*) The ICC initiative had indeed already been endorsed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (2009), which urged local authorities *inter alia* to ‘express explicitly their common commitment in favour of an intercultural policy approach, and avoid partisan and populist attempts to play with cultural and religious stereotypes, prejudices and fear’.

The actual origins of the ICC programme are explained in the *Practical Guide*, and on the ICC programme website.¹²² The programme itself began in 2008 as a joint CoE and EU pilot initiative, based on concepts suggested by the work of the scholar and activist, Charles Landry, and of a group of researchers who have been writing on what they called the ‘intercultural city’ extensively since the early 2000s (e.g. Bianchini and Bloomfield 2004, Wood, Landry and Bloomfield 2006a, 2006b, Wood and Landry 2008, Wood 2009.) Charles Landry, who has had a long-standing commitment to the study of urban life, and in particular the idea of the creative city, founded the COMEDIA network/think tank in 1978,¹²³ and the idea for the ICC programme was originally developed by COMEDIA.¹²⁴ Phil Wood, a key member of the team, is currently (December 2017) principal advisor to the CoE/EU Intercultural Cities programme.¹²⁵

One important focus for COMEDIA’s research was a project in fact entitled *The Intercultural City: Making the Most of Diversity*, jointly with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which contended that cultural diversity is a ‘source of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship’, and asked how this might be harnessed as a ‘positive force releasing new energy and resources for the development of cities’ (Wood, Landry, and Bloomfield 2006b: 7; see also Bianchini and Bloomfield 2004, Wood

121 See <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/participating-cities>.

122 <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/origins-of-the-intercultural-concept>.

123 <http://charleslandry.com>.

124 <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/origins-of-the-intercultural-concept>; see also www.philwood.eu, and Council of Europe (2009).

125 <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/icc-experts>.

2004, Wood et al 2005). Indeed, it was this project and its published results which in turn encouraged the CoE (and the European Commission) to engage with urban diversity, within the overriding theme of its governance.

There were originally eleven cities in the pilot programme, including Berlin, Lyon, Oslo, and Melitopol (in the Ukraine); another nine joined in 2011, and there are now, in 2017, 120 in the network. (See Table 14.1) Although the original members were all from Europe (including from the former Soviet bloc), currently the distribution is world-wide, albeit with a continuing very strong (Western) European presence. There are some surprising inclusions and omissions. Three countries (Italy, Portugal and Spain) make up 46% of the entire programme (54% if nearby Morocco is added), and there are a further 10 cities in countries in the Mediterranean or with a Mediterranean coastline. Cities in the that region thus constitute nearly 2/3rds of the total. There is nothing from the USA, Central-South America, Sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia. No Amsterdam, Brussels, or Madrid; Pompei(!?), but not Naples; the London Borough of Lewisham, but nowhere else in the UK. It would be an interesting study in itself to investigate how cities find their way onto the programme.

Table 14.1. Cities Participating in the ICC Programme, August 2017¹²⁶

Region	No	Comment
Asia	1	Hamamatsu (Japan)
Australasia	1	Ballarat (Australia)
Former Soviet bloc (Europe)	13	Six from Ukraine
Middle East	2	Bursa-Osmangazi (Turkey), Haifa (Israel)
North Africa	11	All in Morocco
North America	2	Mexico City, Montréal
Sub-Saharan Africa	0	-
Western Europe	90	Including Italy (26, with Pompei), Spain (17), Portugal (12), Germany (7), France (3, including Lyon). Only the London borough of Lewisham is included from the UK
Total	120	

There are also a number of other cities, not directly involved with the ICC programme, which have also sought to implement an intercultural policy through different schemes. For example, there are 35 cities linked via the CLIP Network, ‘Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants’ (Lüken-Klaßen and Heckmann 2010, CLIP 2010 etc).¹²⁷ The principles underlying the CLIP approach are to do with intergroup relations and integration policies, and thus somewhat different from those underlying the ICC programme. The work of CLIP and its relationship with the ICC programme deserve closer attention than can be accorded in this chapter. In addition, several cities in the UK have also pursued interculturalism through a project supported by the Baring Foundation (see below).

The conceptual approach advocated by the ICC programme draws on the work of the COMEDIA team (discussed more fully below), but briefly, for the purposes of the programme an ‘Intercultural City’ is defined as follows (as presented on the ICC website)¹²⁸:

126 <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/list-of-cities-by-country>.

127 <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/about-clip>, and <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/clip-european-network-of-cities-for-local-integration-policies-for-migrants>.

128 <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/what>.

- ‘Intercultural cities have a diverse population including people of different nationalities and origins, and with different languages or religions/beliefs’.
- ‘Most citizens regard diversity as a resource not a problem and accept that all cultures change as they encounter each other in the public arena’.
- ‘The city officials publicly advocate respect for diversity and a pluralistic city identity. The city actively combats prejudice and discrimination and ensures equal opportunities for all by adapting its governance structures, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population, without compromising the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law’.
- ‘In partnership with business, civil society and public service professionals, the intercultural city develops a range of policies and actions to encourage more mixing and interaction between diverse groups’.
- ‘The high level of trust and social cohesion help to prevent conflicts and violence, increase policy effectiveness and make the city attractive for people and investors alike’.

There is also a lavishly produced and persuasive brochure, *What is an Intercultural City?*, available online¹²⁹, which explains what such a city might achieve.

The Conceptual Background

As explained by Phil Wood, Charles Landry, and Jude Bloomfield in their booklet *Cultural Diversity in Britain: A Toolkit for Cross-cultural Co-operation* (2006a; see also Wood, Landry and Bloomfield 2006b, and Wood and Landry 2008 which cover the same ground), their concept of the intercultural city is based on the idea that ‘increased interaction between ethnic cultures will produce social and economic innovations that will drive the prosperity and quality of life of our cities’ (2006a: vii). There is, they add, what they call a ‘diversity advantage’ for cities, ‘which can be achieved through intercultural exchange and innovation’, but this requires ‘new skills and aptitudes on the part of professionals, such as cultural literacy and competence’.

While paying tribute to the historic importance of policies of multiculturalism, they also accept the criticism that those policies at the local level ‘encouraged the creation of culturally and spatially distinct communities, fronted by “community leaders”, and that difference became the very currency by which importance was judged and progress made’ (pp. 3-4). This proved problematic for younger members of such communities ‘who found it difficult to find a place that acknowledged or rewarded their new, often hybrid, senses of identity’ (p. 4). Their response is to emphasise the value of openness on the part of individuals and groups (‘more open a person is to the world around them and the more open a group is to other groups, the better’, p. 7), a prerequisite of interculturalism, and one of the ways it contrasts with some of the forms that multiculturalism has taken. Beyond that, however, interculturalism, in their view, is not just a ‘tool for communication’ but ‘a process of mutual learning and joint growth’ (p. 8), and this requires an ‘intercultural lens’ involving:

‘acquiring, not only a set of basic facts and concepts about “the other”, but also particular skills and competences that will enable one to interact functionally with anyone different from oneself regardless of their origins. This implies a different way of reading situations, signs, symbols, and of communicating, which we would describe as *intercultural literacy*’ (p. 8, emphasis added).

The intercultural approach, however, ‘goes beyond equal opportunities and respect for existing cultural differences to the pluralist transformation of public space, institutions and civic culture. It does not recognise cultural boundaries as fixed but in a state of flux and remaking’ (p. 9). The aim, they add, is to ‘facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of

¹²⁹ Obtained via <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/what>. Another brochure, *The Intercultural Cities Network: A Learning Community*, is available from <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/about>.

different backgrounds'. Intercultural should not, however, be treated as a 'monolithic creed', but as an 'interactive process', which demands that those so engaged are equipped through the education system with a variety of competences ('cultural', 'emotional', 'spiritual', 'linguistic', 'communicative', 'civic', 'creative', and 'sporting', p. 32). Contemporary societies, they conclude, demand a 'permanent state of innovation', for which intercultural exchanges are an important resource (p. 64): 'Cities that create a collective mindset to seek out new ideas, products, methods, markets, resources and alliances through the interaction of people with different cultural backgrounds will prosper'.

A crucial role in this is played by what they call 'intercultural innovators'. These are people who have 'crossed cultural boundaries drawing on elements from different cultures' (p. 46), and are:

'adept at seeing their own culture as either relative or composite, and at valuing the different ways of seeing and doing things in the other cultures. This openness to different cultures gives them a heightened propensity to select and absorb elements into their own cultural make-up, and produce new ways of thinking, seeing, imagining and creating'.

Typically they are rebels, 'anti-authority, a thorn in the flesh, a maverick and an outsider refusing to be pigeon-holed' (p. 50), and in a survey undertaken in several British cities, they identified three fields in which such innovators could be found: business entrepreneurship, the creative arts, and community development (pp. 47-8).

This approach (*inter alia* conceived as a 'secular humanist perspective' (Wood and Landry 2008: 9), is further developed in *The Intercultural City: Planning for Diversity Advantage* (Wood and Landry 2008), a wide-ranging book whose basic message (a powerful one, often persuasively conveyed) is that interaction between peoples of different backgrounds is a good thing, that intercultural exchanges have always taken place across the world and throughout history, often leading to influential adaptations and innovations; and that diversity itself confers advantages of economic and other kinds. In a lengthy chapter (over 100 pages) on 'Living Together Now: Modern Zones of Encounter', they examine what might be done, and indeed, as many of their examples show, has been done, working with an 'intercultural lens' in various contexts including housing, employment, education, public spaces such as parks and libraries, sport and art. Often the evidence they bring forward records institutional and/or popular interventions which effect small changes that make a difference (a 'million small victories', Wood and Landry 2008: 292), as in a chapter where they describe numerous examples of successful use of diverse work teams in businesses, and of successful ethnic minority enterprises.

Throughout the book, Wood and Landry assert their belief in 'the need for a firm resolve that the creep towards monocultural isolation is neither inevitable nor inexorable, and ... that interculturalism in our public life is not only a better alternative, but is something desirable ... and will actually add value to our urban communities and economies' (Wood and Landry 2008: 216). 'Adding value' is one important way of illustrating 'diversity advantage'. 'Money isn't everything', they say (Wood and Landry 2008: 219). 'but it means a lot to many and so, unless intercultural diversity can't [sic] add to the bottom line ... an awful lot of people aren't going to give it much credence'. The idea of 'diversity advantage' has been adopted widely in the literature of interculturalism, and in some hands it takes on the air of managerial speech, even accountants' talk, with some advocates questioning whether there is any advantage in religious, as opposed to linguistic, diversity. As Ash Amin put it in his contribution to the Liverpool Intercultural Cities Conference: 'We should beware of loose talk of "diversity advantage". This risks reducing the immigrant to a unit whose only perceived value is economic' (in Wood 2008: 3).

The conference at which Amin spoke included interventions by two distinguished 'Keynote Listeners' (see Wood 2008), who injected a note of cautious realism, if not skepticism, into the

proceedings. One of them, Ranjit Sondhi¹³⁰ (in Wood 2008: 6-9), inspired by what he had heard, issued a warning note to the interculturalists by recounting what he called the '10 Sins committed in pursuit of Interculturality'. These included: The Sin of Ignorance: 'To think that somehow interculturality has hitherto been absent from our world and therefore has to be created, or that it was lost and therefore had to be found'; the Sin of Shallowness: It is not 'about learning a few bongo rhythms, or how to tie a sari, or how to make samosas. It does not simply involve engaging in cultural tourism or cultural surfing but a much deeper engagement based on a critical social and self-analysis of the way individuals, groups and communities are structured. We need to move from condescension to complexity'; And the Sin of Intellectual Arrogance: 'To think that multi-culturalism is now outdated and obsolete and interculturalism is the new religion. In reality, interculturalism cannot claim to replace multiculturalism and neither are the two concepts mutually exclusive'.

Franco Bianchini¹³¹ (in Wood 2008: 9-11), then Reader in Cultural Planning and Policy at the University of Leicester and co-author with Jude Bloomfield of *Planning for the Intercultural City* (2004), also issued another kind of warning, regretting that the advances made by academics in the understanding of interculturality had not led to the idea being taken up more widely by politicians and policy makers. 'Those who champion intercultural cities', he concluded, 'will have in the next few years to engage in (to use Gramsci's term) a complex "battle of ideas"'. This was a 'difficult terrain, where even multicultural rights will be threatened, let alone the development of an intercultural approach'. 'The only way forward', he concluded, 'is the direct political engagement of those of us who believe in the idea of the intercultural city. Our strategy of influence, of external pressure on the political system is no longer enough.'

Notwithstanding Bianchini's skepticism about the impact of scholarly ideas on public policy, it is clear that the COMEDIA team's work on the intercultural city has indeed been highly influential within the CoE and EU. Indeed, numerous reports and evaluations have been upbeat about the ICC programme (e.g. Council of Europe 2009, 2015a, Wagner 2015), and Wood and Landry have been powerful advocates. In contemporary society, they claim, where 'sociability [is] under serious threat', and some peoples 'prefer avoidance to interaction', an intercultural lens can transform the situation through 'careful planning and skilled intervention'. 'The right combination of strategic focus and will', they say, 'alongside skill and attitude, can produce situations that are not only harmonious but creative and developmental' (in Wood and Landry 2008: 214-16).

Whether this is indeed so will be explored in the following case studies.

Interculturalism in the City: Case Studies

Lyon

In 1975-6, when I lived and researched there (see Chapter 12), Lyon was already a very diverse city with substantial communities who had come as migrant workers (mainly) or refugees from Southern Europe (Italy, Spain, Portugal) and North Africa (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco). There were also pockets of other minorities (for example Armenians), as well as the Pieds-Noirs, French, but 'Other', who had left North Africa on Algerian independence. Its diversity has not diminished in any way since that time, indeed, on the contrary. Aside from the population of immigrant background born and brought up in France (the children, indeed grandchildren of the immigrants of 1976), some 14% of those counted in the 2014 census were born outside France. Moreover, there are important ethnic differences within the communities of North African origin, between Arabic and Berber speakers, which are of long-standing and frequently conflictual, as the Algerian civil war of the 1990s revealed (see Silverstein 2004). In addition, while Islam was by no means absent from Lyon in 1975-6, it was not the salient (or divisive) force that it has subsequently become, and racism, along with a growing

130 <https://uk.linkedin.com/in/ranjit-sondhi-a7976839>.

131 <https://www.linkedin.com/in/franco-bianchini-612b0832/?ppe=1>.

inequality, has been a constant presence. Consequently, the governance of diversity in Lyon is beset with problems, with serious civil disturbances in the 1980s and 2000s, and it is no surprise to find it a prominent member of the ICC programme.

Joseph Downing whose research (2013, 2015) included a detailed study of Lyon (along with Paris and Marseille), refers to its 'Other' population as 'post-migrant'. Specifically regarding Lyon, he notes:

'In Lyon, the public culture policy of the city has been dominated by not providing recognition to post-migration communities in the city, in a vein similar to the Parisian region. For example, an investigation [Council of Europe 2008c] into its membership of the intercultural cities program and bid to hold the 2013 European capital of culture reached the conclusion that in Lyon cultural diversity remained a non-issue in public culture' (2013: 186-7).

Besides, some of the city's landmark cultural events had little minority involvement, and as the CoE team itself put it: 'it would be exaggerated to say that the urban policy explicitly embraces and promotes cultural diversity as a resource for the dynamism and growth of the city' (Council of Europe 2008c: 2) Nonetheless, whether or not stimulated by the CoE's comments on what was an unsuccessful bid, there were a number of initiatives in hand during the late 2000s in conjunction with a (revised) *Charte de Coopération Culturelle* which *inter alia* illustrated the pervasive ambiguities in the notion of 'culture' (see also Pascual et al 2009 on interculturalism and 'Cultural' policies, capital 'C').

Following CoE indications, the revised Charter linked the 22 largest cultural organisations in the city in a concerted programme designed to attract minorities. The ICC programme website currently (August 2017) cites four Lyon initiatives (Chapter 12 discusses some others), all described as 'good practice examples':

- *La Maison des Passages*: Creating a post-colonial and intercultural identity for Lyon.
- *Les Artpenteurs*: Encouraging multilingualism through poetry.
- *Association Tabadol*: Training professionals across all field to adopt intercultural and interfaith approaches.
- *Fabuleuses traversées*: Pupils sharing their history while reinforcing the feeling of belonging.

Of these, only the first (the most interesting for an anthropologist) is discussed by Downing.

The CoE summary¹³² says that the *Maison* is a multi-ethnic association concerned to document 'hidden histories' including France's colonial past and the Algerian war of independence. It therefore 'seeks to challenge collective memory and change it, making it more critical and inclusive'. At the same time, the association has 'adopted a non-ethnic, cultural approach, in the anthropological sense of finding what is shared but working through passages/pathways/routes which imply identity is not fixed but a meeting of differences – "a post-colonial métissage"'. Among other activities, it organises 'cultural events where people of different cultural backgrounds can meet and interact'.

The idea behind the 'hidden histories approach' is not unlike that which animates the Black History Month in the multicultural UK.¹³³ What, then, is the added intercultural value of *La Maison des Passages*? Commenting on the work of the association, Joseph Downing draws attention to an event in 2009 in which it 'focused on protesting against discrimination in the ... socially economically deprived Vaulx-en-Velin neighborhood [commune] of the city' (2013: 215; see Grillo 1985 on Vaulx-en-Velin). In fact, *La Maison des Passages* is in origin a building which represents a space occupied

132 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/la-maison-des-passages>.

133 <http://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk>.

over the years by a multiplicity of movements and organisations (‘associations, groupes et comités divers’¹³⁴) with values similar to those represented by the *Groupe Tiers Monde de Caluire*, described in Chapter 12, albeit with a more activist stance than evidenced by the latter. Thus, as well as a concern with migrants (or post-migrants) in Lyon itself, the two organisation share(d) a common interest in what in the 1970s was usually called the ‘Third World’, as the Caluire group’s title indicated. The contemporary *Maison des Passages* is, however, much more ambitious and multidisciplinary, with events including plays and films, and literary and theoretical philosophical discussions (e.g. on ‘Islam and Philosophy, June 2017). Beyond that, the association consciously positions itself in an intercultural perspective, with other events specifically addressing interculturalism ‘as a way of life’:

‘La Maison des Passages a choisi de mettre en valeur les dynamiques de la créolisation et des métissages pour contribuer à faire échec aux replis nationalistes, ethnicistes et identitaires. Elle est porteuse d’un projet culturel dont le fondement est l’interculturel qui, à notre sens, n’est pas une méthode mais un “art de vivre” comme le mentionne Abdelatif Chaouite. Cette dynamique est essentielle au développement des savoirs partagés, au respect du divers et à l’approfondissement des principes démocratiques. Chacun aujourd’hui, avec ses origines familiales, sociales, territoriales, avec les influences diverses qui le touchent, est amené à se construire une identité culturelle, dans une mosaïque complexe dont il maîtrise plus ou moins bien l’évolution, vagabondant entre le conflit et la création. Notre défi est de parvenir à créer et assumer une société à partir de ces conflits et qui se construit dans l’échange avec l’Autre, comme le dit magistralement Edouard Glissant :”Je peux changer en échangeant avec l’autre sans me perdre pourtant ni me dénaturer”.’¹³⁵

To what extent, however, do *La Maison des Passages* or other Lyon associations live up to their intercultural aspirations, or at any rate those of the ICC? One problem, as Downing (2015) notes, is that for the ICC ‘Lyon’ means the central city commune, thus excluding the suburban communes which house most of the minority (and poorer) communities (see Grillo 1985 on the similar distribution in the mid-1970s). Secondly, the kind of projects which the ICC directly or indirectly fosters are, like those, undertaken by *La Maison des Passages*, largely devoted to a middle-class, educated audience. For many people, a lecture and discussion on the work of that wonderful Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo (in March 2017) would not necessarily correspond directly to their needs and wants. Thirdly, as Downing explains, where post-migrant associations exist to cater for those needs they may find themselves co-opted by other, more dominant and influential bodies (see Chapter 12). Fourthly, given the historic stance towards the recognition of minorities in Republican France, it is in any case very difficult to get the state to take a positive view of diversity. The low-key commitment of local policymakers, says Downing, ‘does not necessarily translate into significant action’ (2015: 1564). These various factors, therefore, influence what Downing observes as a ‘large degree of apathy from cultural institutions in Lyon that significantly hampers the effectiveness of the [ICC programme] in engaging new minorities and thus represents another failure to meaningfully “democratize” culture in France’ (2015: 1558).

134 http://www.maisondespassages.org/presentation/historique?debut_articles=%4013.

135 <http://www.maisondespassages.org/presentation/le-projet-de-la-maison-des-passages>. Loose translation:

‘La Maison des Passages has chosen to highlight the dynamics of creolisation and mixity to help defeat the retreat to nationalism, ethnicity and [identity politics]. It is the exponent of a cultural project whose foundation is intercultural, which, in our opinion, is not a method but a “lifestyle” as mentioned by Abdelatif Chaouite. This dynamic is essential to the development of shared knowledge, respect for diversity and the deepening of democratic principles. Today various influences lead everyone to build a cultural identity on the basis of family, and social and territorial origins, in a complex mosaic whose development they manage more or less well, wandering between conflict and creativity. Our challenge is to succeed in creating a society based on these conflicts and built on an exchange with the Other, as Edward Glissant masterfully says: “I can change by exchanging with the Other without losing myself or my nature”’.

The Baring Foundation's Interculturalism Initiative

The Baring Foundation (which although engaged with interculturalism is not directly part of the ICC project) describes itself as an independent body

‘working to improve the quality of life of people experiencing disadvantage and discrimination. We aim to achieve this through making grants to voluntary and other civil society organisations and by adding value including through promoting knowledge and influencing others’.¹³⁶

In the mid-2000s, amid growing criticism of policies of multiculturalism, the Foundation began to focus on interculturalism. In a paper on *Interculturalism: Theory and Policy*, which it published, Malcolm James (2008) located the Foundation’s thinking within the work of certain influential (British) theorists including Bhikhu Parekh, Paul Gilroy, Avtar Brah, Amartya Sen, Miles Hewstone, as well as the COMEDIA team. Interculturalism, James argued, has to be set in its global context, and emphasises its stress on ‘un-fixed identities ... identity cannot be contained in boxes’ (p. 13), and that it requires ‘spaces for interaction and dialogue’ (p. 14.) In a later paper on *Interculturalism: Social Policy and Grassroots Work* (James 2009) he observed that much contemporary diversity policy is based on ‘fixed notions of ethnicity and geography’, and these ‘limit the possibility of facilitating intercultural relations through social policy because they restrict humans to the boundaries of neighbourhoods, skin colour and certain cultural practices’ (2009: 3). These assumptions ‘deny everything else that humans are – complex, contradictory, changing and socially structured’, and James urged policy makers to ‘see the world outside of the familiar “community cohesion” boxes’. Failure to do so would ‘continue to provide sustenance to xenophobia, racism and worsening intercultural relations’.

While the key elements of interculturalism included openness, dialogue, interaction and contact between peoples/minorities/majorities, as well as ‘meaningful dialogue’, James accepted the criticism that it had ignored structural issues such as racism and inequality. This is reflected in the definition advanced by the Foundation:

‘Interculturality is a dynamic process whereby people from different cultures interact to learn about and question their own and each other’s cultures. Over time this may lead to cultural change. It recognises the inequalities at work in society and the need to overcome these. It is a process which requires mutual respect and acknowledges human rights’ (in James 2008: 2).

To give substance to its interest in the intercultural approach, the Foundation funded a programme of Awards for Bridging Cultures (ABCs) managed by the Institute of Community Cohesion, aimed at schemes ‘run by community and voluntary organisations ... to bring to prominence ... projects displaying excellence and innovation in their intercultural work’ (James 2009: 3). The programme, which ran from 2008-10, was later described by Ted Cantle, the Institute’s founder, as ‘the only recognisable intercultural dialogue programme [in the UK]’ (Cantle 2013: 81.¹³⁷) In the first year there were 238 applications of which three secured awards (in different categories) and nine were ‘commended’ (James 2009: 7) The winners were:

- The London-based Shoreditch Trust’s Shoreditch Festival (International Village), encouraging local communities to share their culture through the arts;
- The Coventry-based FolesHillfields Vision Project, supporting people to build bridges between communities through global citizenship, leadership and storytelling projects;

¹³⁶ <http://baringfoundation.org.uk>.

¹³⁷ See also <http://tedcantle.co.uk/about-community-cohesion>.

- The Oldham-based Limeside and Clarkwell Linking Project, which encourages young and old people from two very different residential estates to meet and form friendships.

Detailed information available on the second of these projects¹³⁸ describes it as follows:

‘The FolesHillfields Vision Project works in Foleshill and Hillfields, two Coventry neighbourhoods blessed by diversity, struggling with disadvantage. These neighbourhoods (28,000 people, over 50% BME with over 47 languages spoken) are two of the highest ranking on government indices of poverty and deprivation. Racial tension and defensive separation are sometimes visible in overt difficulties, more often as “tolerant but not close” relations between communities, leaving those communities vulnerable to the spread of more divisive attitudes and behaviours at times of economic, social or political stress. Our constituted aims are to support people in these neighbourhoods, and surrounding areas, by building strong bridges between communities; to promote community involvement and social inclusion; and to advance local and international friendship, peace and co-operation.’

‘We have brought together Caribbean and African community members and leaders to learn about each other’s communities; set up a speak-out by local British Muslims, for international university students keen to understand Islamophobia in British society; got local Kenyans of “opposed” tribes together with each other, with Asian Kenyans and others, for a respectful and illuminating sharing of perspectives during the post-election violence this January; welcomed local white working class people into our diverse team; set up jamming and performances with local community musicians from East and West Africa, South and East Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, the West Indies and North Coventry. We work to tackle language inequalities without expensive interpretation services. We are experimenting with upfront volunteer translation into a great variety of languages during plenary parts of events - making linguistic diversity visible, giving non-native speakers to speak slower and more clearly. This has been particularly appreciated by many asylum seekers and refugees. We seek formal and informal feedback. The vast majority of participants in our programmes, projects and events return positive views, that they have enjoyed opportunities to meet and get to know people different from themselves that aren’t available elsewhere, and that getting to know people of other communities is both inspiring and relieving’

‘Much of what we do’, say the organisers, ‘involves encouraging people to really listen to each other. We have learned important things about reliably doing this well in intercultural settings.’ They add:

‘We bring local people of different communities together to interact, listen and develop understanding of their differences and commonalities within a global perspective. In a variety of ways that are always friendly, warm and welcoming, we support people, build their confidence, and encourage their active engagement and leadership in their families, communities and neighbourhoods.’

In his assessment of the programme, James (2009) found that while many of the applications looked to ‘build bridges’, they mostly sought to do so between ‘fixed cultural and geographic “communities”’ (p. 9), as the FolesHillfields Vision Project suggests, and failed to address the prevailing assumptions about fixedness, or question ‘the possibility that bridge building may serve to compound the belief in segregation on these terms’ (p. 7). ‘Creative, everyday spaces of interculturalism’ were also generally overlooked (p. 8), and while they often acknowledged the global context, many applications were ‘confined to the city and dependent on interpersonal contact’ (p. 9). Moreover, discrimination, institutional racism and structural inequalities were all too often neglected, with ‘culture’ (James put it in inverted commas) seen as primordial and all-explanatory (p. 11), the ‘root of social ills’:

138 <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/foleshillfields-vision-project?pdf=1>.

‘The message is clear: the problem is the wrong culture; the solution is the right culture (Britishness); and, the method to get from one to the other is community cohesion. This implies the fixing of certain “cultures” as problematic, the beautification of Britishness, and the individualisation of blame. All of this prevents a cross-cutting social analysis of “race”, class, gender, sexuality and age’ (p. 12).

There is, he concluded, a ‘treacherous bind’, in which ‘engagement with ethnic categories may be counterproductive to work which seeks greater social justice and better intercultural relations’ (p. 13). ‘If social policy makers wish to address human complexity’, he added, ‘and provide the frameworks for good human relations’, they should, ‘rather than continue to cement the inside of boxes, embrace culture in its widest possible sense, value anti-racism work, and, appreciate the spontaneous and creative forms of interculturalism that flourish in spite of “community cohesion”’ (p. 15; see also Elias 2017). James’s 2009 paper, in fact, amounted to a critique of the way in which interculturalism has been taken up, and the difficulty in going beyond the simplistic view that interculturalism involves getting people of different ‘cultures’ to talk to each other.

The Foundation also commissioned the Birmingham based NGO, brap, to undertake a review of its work and ‘examine what can be learnt about good practice from the award winners’ (brap 2012¹³⁹). brap offered its own definition of interculturalism (‘a hugely contested term’, p. 8) as

‘the recognition that culture is important and of equal value to all people. It recognises that forcing people to subscribe to one set of values can create tension between individuals and groups. It understands that human beings are multi-dimensional in nature and that cultural fusion has been, and will continue to be a by-product of human interaction. It requires negotiation to accommodate our expression of culture in the public domain, using the principles of human rights to shape shared entitlements.’ (brap 2012:5)

The ‘key elements of intercultural practice’, it adds (2012: 46 ff.), might involve: ‘weaken[ing] cultural boundaries, challenging pre-conceptions about identities’; ‘develop[ing] the skills necessary to live with and benefit from “diversity”’; ‘creat[ing] spaces “of” and “for” intercultural dialogue’. Examples include ‘multicultural feasts or cross-community football matches’ (p. 6). The report also identified the ‘key elements’ of ‘intercultural thinking’, and regarding the difference between intercultural, and multiculturalism, argued, perhaps controversially, that:

‘multiculturalism, in seeking to avoid the dominance or superiority of one culture over another, avoids discussion of culture. Interculturalism says that it is permissible – indeed important – to discuss the impact of “culture” on people’s ability to exercise their freedoms. Interculturalism does not suggest that one culture is better than another but it does recognise that culture – in addition to other factors, such as racism, structural inequality and discrimination – does influence social outcomes. An intercultural approach enables us to examine what it is about “culture” that should be discussed as a route to improving social conditions’ (p. 8, and elsewhere in the Report, see especially pp. 14-15).

Like James, brap admitted that ‘some activities may not have focused wholly on what our working definition of interculturalism suggests they should have done (such as “questioning” culture or recognising the need to overcome inequality and uphold human rights, for example)’ (p. 25). They nonetheless concluded there were lessons to be learned which would influence ‘effective and progressive intercultural thinking and practice’ in future. Despite the great difficulty in attaining the desired ends, for example breaking from conventional assumptions about communities and individuals, James’s papers and the brap report indicate, once again, the high expectations of what interculturalism might achieve.

139 Available at <http://baringfoundation.org.uk/publication/interculturalism-a-breakdown-of-thinking-and-practice-lessons-from-the-field>. See also <http://www.brap.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are>.

Lisbon

The ICC programme has published studies of many, though not all, the associated cities.¹⁴⁰ These studies involve a team of visiting experts who review the city's policies and practices (Wagner 2015), and on the basis of the findings the city is given a score on the ICC index which 'assesses cities' performance in relation to the intercultural integration model. The results of the Index help cities make evidence-based judgments about the impact and outcomes of their policies and resource investment'.¹⁴¹

In the case of Lisbon, which has also been the object of investigation by a separate team of sociologists (Padilla et al 2015), the report (Intercultural Cities Programme 2014a; see also Intercultural Cities Programme 2011b) gave the city an Index score which placed it 37th among the 59 cities which had been studied thus far. The extent of a city's 'commitment' to an intercultural approach is an important factor, and in the case of Lisbon the report noted that the city had 'adopted a number of initiatives' which demonstrated such a commitment. It also noted that the city had 'formally adopted a public statement as an Intercultural city. The local government has also designed an intercultural city strategy, being one of the pillars of the mayor's programme, and has developed an integration action plan to put it in practice' (p. 5).¹⁴² At the same time, the report suggested a number of ways through which that commitment could be enhanced. For example (pp. 21-2):

'Education: Lisbon might consider ameliorating its intercultural education approach by considering a public policy to increase ethnic/cultural mixing in schools and by encouraging schools to make stronger efforts to involve parents from ethnic minority/migrant background in school life';

'Neighbourhood: Lisbon may wish to know about other Intercultural Cities initiatives for increasing the diversity of residents within the neighbourhoods';

'Public services: Lisbon may wish to ameliorate the intercultural dimension of public services by laying down a targeted recruitment strategy to ensure that the ethnic background of public employees across silos reflects the composition of the city's population. Lisbon may also wish to extend services tailored to the needs of the city's inhabitants with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds'.

Besides this report (the tenor of which is discussed further below), the ICC programme also identified a number of initiatives which it assesses as representing good practice. These include (in 2016): (a) 'Safer Alta de Lisboa. A community-policing service based on intercultural principles'; (b) 'Lisbon's ethnic economy: Major study of minority ethnic business and implementation of recommendations'; (c) '*Todos* – Walk of Cultures: A nomadic intercultural festival which reintegrates neighbourhoods with the wider city'.¹⁴³ Regarding the first, the ICC programme says:

140 Available online via <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/participating-cities>.

141 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/index-results-per-city>.

142 See also <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/municipal-plan-for-integration-of-immigrants-in-lisbon>.

143 Details available via <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/lisbon>.

‘Since 2007, the Lisbon Municipal Police (LMP) has been developing a community policing strategy, seeking the maintenance of public tranquillity, the improvement of the quality of life, and good intercultural relations in the city. To this end, the participation of the LMP in community groups has been crucial, since it allows the reflection and definition of concerted intervention strategies with the population and local partners, engaging the community itself in the process of identifying their main security concerns and resolutions. This new model of policing has sought to recognise that when intercultural conflicts between different cultures arise, it is up to the responsibility of the city police in particular to maintain security and public tranquillity, with the police frequently playing a mediation role.’

The third initiative, the ‘Walk of Cultures’, is described as follows:

‘*Todos* (Everyone) is a festival which makes simultaneous impacts in a variety of policy arenas. It is an annual festival of world music and culture which combines international professionals with local performers. It is a peripatetic event being located in a particular neighbourhood of the city for three years before it moves on to another. This may be a quarter in which the city council wishes to focus its efforts, for example through the combination of urban renewal, employment and business development and migrant integration ... The organizers intended to discover new intercultural foci in the city of Lisbon, challenging the idea of ghettos and bringing people from diverse cultural backgrounds and age groups closer to each other. The programme of the Festival highlights the interculturality present in Lisbon and inter-religious dialogue is sub-theme associated to that idea. 2016’s edition ... included street performances, an itinerant photo exhibition, theatre, gastronomy, music, drawing, dance, visits, walks, and meetings, among many initiatives that foster another look on the city and its relation with other cultures.’

Observers of contemporary multicultural Britain might be forgiven for thinking that the ‘new model of policing’ or intercultural ‘theatre, gastronomy, music, drawing, dance’ etc sound decidedly familiar. That impression would be reinforced by a reading of a report by Beatriz Padilla and colleagues (2015) on a festival which took place in Sintra, a municipality within the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. In 2008 (i.e. during the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue), the municipality held an ‘Immigrants’ Day’, organised in conjunction with local associations. However,

‘non-immigrants were not expected to be involved as participants or audience. The celebration remained self-contained and was held in a closed public space, where participants could be “controlled” and external visibility could be minimized. Interculturality was a folkloristic mix of music, language and dance classes; yet, gastronomic expressions were prohibited due to rules pertaining to the youth house that hosted the event’ (p. 631).

Padilla et al contrasted this event with the ‘*Todos* - Walk of Cultures’ festival hosted in the year of study in the Lisbon neighbourhood of Mouraria which also involved the municipality and local associations. While immigrant communities were consulted, they were not involved in planning the festival. ‘*Todos*’, they say,

‘included a hectic schedule of cultural events, carried out in the streets and other social venues (i.e. a sports pavilion and cultural centres). The five-day programme encompassed music, a theatre piece, a photo exhibition of/with neighbours, puppets for children, ping-pong tables, fado performances, and more. Participants ranged from neighbours of all ages (autochthonous and immigrant) and residents from other neighbourhoods, to tourists and artists who enjoyed and consumed “culture”’ (p. 631).

In the Walk, ‘interculturality was understood as a path to promoting knowledge and dialogue

among autochthonous and immigrant cultures’ (p. 630). ‘Many of the activities planned for the festival’, they claim, ‘promoted interactions among neighbours. One example was the photo session and exhibition that invited the elderly to guide a neighbourhood tour telling the stories of the residents, autochthonous and immigrant, fostering a sense of belonging and community’ (p. 631). One official explained:

‘For me interculturality is not only about foreigners in Lisbon, it is about letting others know about Lisbon and Lisbon’s culture. ... the idea is to travel around the world without leaving Lisbon’ (*ibid.*)

The Huovinen Report (2017)

In June 2017, the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE discussed a report and recommendations prepared by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons on ‘Integration of refugees in times of critical pressure: learning from recent experience and examples of best practice’ (Huovinen 2017). This was a response to the crisis of 2015-17 in which member states were faced with large flows of migrants and asylum seekers from the Middle East (notably Syria) and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, thousands of whom were lost trying to cross the Mediterranean. The report noted that in many member countries there had been a widespread public response of ‘rejection and fear’, with in consequence unwillingness to provide a haven for refugees’. In other cases, however, there had been ‘enormous efforts to respond to the challenge, welcome the refugees and begin the process of integrating them into society’, and the Report sought to identify the best practice through which to engage the asylum seekers ‘in the daily economic, social and cultural life of host communities’. This, the Report contended, was ‘based on an understanding of the situation of the refugees and their cultural backgrounds, whilst also respecting the fundamental values and everyday lifestyles of host societies’ (Huovinen 2017: 1).

In developing this theme the Report made numerous references to the ICC programme and the lessons to be learned from it, including the role of civil society organisations (such as churches), the importance of providing suitable accommodation, along with adequate language training and training relevant to the labour market, as well as guaranteeing access to employment. At the same time, ‘Integration also means ensuring that asylum seekers and refugees understand and respect the basic cultural and constitutional values of the host country, including in areas such as respect for diversity and gender equality and appropriate behaviour in public places’ (p. 14).

Following publication of the Report (adopted by the Parliament on 28 June 2017¹⁴⁴), the recommendations were debated at a session organised by the ICC on ‘Urban policies for the inclusive integration of migrants’¹⁴⁵, addressed by Susanna Huovinen, Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni (Deputy Secretary General, Council of Europe), the mayor of Bergen and a city councillor from Milan (both cities are members of the ICC Programme). Without going into details of the session¹⁴⁶, or indeed the Report, it should be emphasised that the recommendations were presented as a development of the CoE’s commitment to interculturalism (as in the White Paper of 2008) and the experience of the ICC programme. As Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni put it, ‘inclusive integration ... designed to foster dialogue and co-operative action at all levels: local, regional, national’ provided the answer to the challenges posed by the influx of immigrants and asylum seekers, as the contributions from Bergen and Milan were intended to demonstrate.

Yet, when it comes down to specifics, to what extent do the recommendations (and policies

144 Resolution 2176 (2017), <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23966&lang=en>.

145 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/urban-policies-for-the-inclusive-integration-of-migrants?desktop=true>.

146 Texts and videos of speeches available via <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/urban-policies-for-the-inclusive-integration-of-migrants?desktop=true>.

followed in the two cities) actually differ in any substantial way from those which might be associated with a multicultural policy paradigm? In fact the speech by the representative from Milan did little more than set out the conventional institutional response needed for the integration of the incomers, along the lines of the Report's recommendations, emphasising the necessity and value of a positive and humanitarian response to asylum seekers ('condemning and punishing any form of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and violence against migrants') while promoting the integration of refugees as a 'public asset' worthy of investment and 'increasing efficiency and reducing the length of the processing of asylum applications' (as set out in Resolution 2176, paras. 6.3- 6.5). The contribution from Bergen included the following passage describing a programme which did little more than celebrate diversity in the usual fashion:

'Promoting a diverse cultural heritage can have an important role for community cohesion as well. In Bergen we have had great success with the artistic project *Fargespill* - in English we call it - Kaleidoscope. The project is in essential a celebration of the diversity in Bergen. *Fargespill* is an ensemble consisting of children and youth from all over the world. Most of them have come to Norway as refugees and immigrants. The shows that are made consists mainly from folksongs and folkdance these children and youth have brought with them from their respective countries and cultures, on their journey all the way to Norway. The results are truly amazing'.

Where the Report departs from what is often assumed to be the focus of multiculturalism (imagined multiculturalism) is in emphasising that migrant integration

'means neither assimilation – whereby newcomers adopt the host societies' culture, values and traditions in place of their own – nor a multi-culturalism of native-born and refugee or migrant communities living separate existences according to their original cultures, values and traditions' (p. 3).

At the same time, the Report emphasises, Canadian fashion, that 'Integration also means ensuring that asylum seekers and refugees understand and respect the basic cultural and constitutional values of the host country, including in areas such as respect for diversity and gender equality and appropriate behaviour in public places' (p. 14). Yet, as we have seen, the need to take cognisance of majority opinion is increasingly recognised by multiculturalists. Interestingly, there are only two very brief references to 'dialogue' in the Report, and neither the text of the speech by the Mayor of Bergen, nor the Milan PowerPoint presentation contains any mention of the word.

Intercultural City, Multicultural City?

Ideal and Practice

‘Is interculturalism just a new term for long standing issues? I’ve noticed, for example, that more than one speaker seems to use interculturalism interchangeably with “diversity” ... I share with Bikhu Parekh and Ash Amin a concern about taking interculturalism outside its political and national context. For me, I’d come to see interculturalism as a framework to get beyond the idea of cultures as fixed and immutable, with people locked in boxes or silos defined by their ethnic cultures. In this sense, interculturalism seemed to me to be about how cultures are continually shaped, reshaped and changed, new fusions are borne out of a dynamic process of interaction where people come to form a new sense of belonging around “place” while still being able to assert their own self-defined identity – as black woman, disabled person, Muslim young person. Some of today’s presentations however seem to take us back to notions of “them” and “us”, giving greater value to “host” cultures as somehow more pure and talked about “tribal cultures” clashing with dominant host cultures, which I found disturbing. To what extent this is raising a wider question of whether or not we can engage in intercultural dialogue across national boundaries where language and political contexts are so different is one of the issues that I think needs to be considered. At the very least I think there is a need for a common and shared language to enable effective and meaningful dialogue and debate to take place with people from across different nations.’¹⁴⁷

The above thoughtful reflections by Lorna Shaw, an observer of the Liverpool Intercultural Cities conference described earlier, along with the material in the case studies, pose a number of questions about interculturalism in the city some of which will be addressed in the following.

One concerns the disjunction between ideals and aspirations and what actually happens. Take, for example, the claim that interculturalism in the city is closely connected with, if it does not emerge from, the grass roots. In its work at the local level the focus is supposedly on local institutions, on neighbourhoods, and on third sector associations. Padilla et al’s research (2015), cited earlier, however, showed that in a city such as Lisbon, there is a strong a tendency for events to be organised from the top down, and under the close control of the municipality. The following prospectus for one of the ICC programmes signature annual gatherings is instructive:

‘MILESTONE EVENT. Urban policies for inclusive migrant integration and diversity advantage’. Lisbon, 28-29 November 2017. [Afternoon session] INCLUSIVE INTEGRATION POLICY LAB Towards a more effective governance of migrant integration (Mayors and Ministers) Objectives: engage in a dialogue to improve policy coordination and enable transfer of innovation in migrant and refugee integration between national, regional and local levels, based on the intercultural approach promoted by the Council of Europe. Participants: Mayors, Ministers, Members of Parliament. Languages: English and French Venue: Lisbon City Hall, Salão Nobre, Praça do Município’.¹⁴⁸

Scheduled speakers included Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni (again), along with mayors or other municipal representatives from Amadora, Barcelona, Berlin, Fuenlabrada, Ioannina, Lisbon, Mexico City, Oslo, Paris, Turin, plus government ministers from Greece and Ireland. There were numerous workshops, mainly led by Portuguese NGOs, which ‘National ICC coordinators and other city officials, NGOs, policy experts, academics, Lisbon residents, and journalists’ were invited to attend.

In fact, the ICC approach is surprisingly statist (thinking or ‘seeing like a state’, Scott 1998), while emphasising a local, bottom-up perspective (yet, ironically it has also been criticised, by some

147 <https://interculturalcities.wordpress.com/2008/05/02/my-reflections>.

148 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/join-the-intercultural-cities-2017-milestone-event>.

multiculturalists, for not being statist enough). A good illustration of a statist (and/or bureaucrat-managerial) orientation is the ICC Index (Wagner 2015). How, asks the *Intercultural City Index and Benchmarking Tool* (Intercultural Cities Programme, No Date) have the local authorities demonstrated their commitment to being an intercultural city? In applying its intercultural lens, it questions how intercultural are the education system, residential neighborhoods, public services, business and labour markets, cultural and civil life, public space? What happens about mediations and conflict resolution, language policy, relations with the media, welcoming new arrivals? There is a complex and detailed questionnaire, and when that has been filled in by municipal officials:

‘The data is verified and included into the Intercultural cities index database by BakBasel, a research institute in Switzerland ... Following this, the data is analysed by the Council of Europe and a report is prepared, including the results of the city in the different INDEX areas, recommendations and examples of good practice from other cities. Cities are advised to go through the INDEX review process regularly, the average frequency being every 2 years’ (p. 1).

In similar fashion, the CoE’s *Final Report Evaluation* of the ICC Programme (Council of Europe 2015a: 63) proposed that it should be ‘further align[ed] with good project management practices’:

‘Overall, the ICC Programme management has been exemplary. However, some weaknesses remain. Firstly, the Programme does not apply a results-based M&E system. Secondly, the Programme does not yet mainstream gender as requested by the Council of Europe’s Gender Equality Strategy 2014-17. Thirdly, risk management is not yet carried out in a formalized way. *Recommendation*: Apply good project management practices in results-based monitoring and evaluation, gender mainstreaming, and risk management. Incorporate a gender perspective into the policy advice given to cities in order to contribute to the promotion of gender equality. This can be done by mainstreaming gender in the Step by Step Guide and other tools and interactions with cities’

‘The main purpose’ of the ICC index, said the evaluation, is ‘the communication of where a city stands in relation to intercultural integration and where efforts should be focused in the future’ (Council of Europe 2015a: 64). As was noted in the case of Lisbon, a city’s response to the various questions (as supplied by its officials) leads to a comparative rating, and a report which recommends what a city might do to improve its intercultural standing. Thus, in the case of Mexico City, for example (Intercultural Cities Programme 2014b¹⁴⁹), among a list of 14 recommendation, it is suggested that the city might ‘consider ameliorating its intercultural education approach by encouraging schools to make stronger efforts to involve parents from ethnic minority/migrant background in school life’, and ‘ameliorate its intercultural public space by taking into account, on a regular basis, the population diversity in the design and management of new buildings or space’. It might also ‘ameliorate the intercultural dimension of its business and labour market by encouraging ethnic/cultural minorities businesses to move beyond localized economies to enter into the main stream and higher value added sectors, and by giving priority to companies with a diversity strategy in the municipality’s procurement of goods and services’.

The ICC approach, with its exhortation to ‘ameliorate’, may well come across as condescending and patronising, in a manner which echoes the once (infamous) remark of a British politician: ‘The Gentleman in Whitehall [sc. Strasbourg or Brussels] is usually right’. What is indeed striking are the cultural and moral, as well as bureaucratic, assumptions underlying the approach, with a city’s card marked according to how close its practices come to an ideal – supposedly universal - model of enlightened interculturalism, as conceived by the ICC programme, reflecting values which resonate with a highly educated, metropolitan, cosmopolitan elite.

149 See also <http://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/-/mexico-city-from-melting-pot-to-an-intercultural-and-welcoming-city>.

The recommendations, which a reading of several reports on ICC programme cities suggests are all very similar, would also seem to indicate a ‘one size fits all’ orientation, with the danger that the approach ignores or plays down the specific histories and circumstances of a particular city (see, for example, Heil 2014, comparing ‘practices of conviviality’ in Barcelona and in Casamance, Senegal). There are obviously major differences between the cities attached to the ICC programme in terms of their ethnic and religious composition, economic development, housing and educational policies, the nature of their national and local governance and so on. For example, in the case of Mexico City, ‘encouraging ethnic/cultural minorities businesses to move beyond localized economies’, as the Report recommends, betrays a lack of knowledge and understanding of the local, national and international circumstances and structural conditions within such businesses operate: ‘Poor Mexico; so far from God, so close to the United States’, as the saying attributed to the former Mexican dictator, Porfirio Diaz, once put it.

In that connection, much may depend on how long visiting experts spend in each city, and on each report, and how far they rely on the responses of the municipal officials who complete the questionnaires. Evidence suggests that reports are based on what in the international development industry are called ‘quick and dirty’ surveys. The *City of Lisbon Intercultural Profile* (Intercultural Cities Programme 2011b: 1), like other such profiles, resulted from a two day visit by a CoE inspection team of three experts.

In many cases it is also unclear how far any ‘commitment’ to interculturalism (which the reports document and measure) is influential beyond the coterie of municipal leaders and closely associated third sector associations, or perhaps within the small-scale, local projects of the kind funded by the Baring Foundation. In cities attached to the ICC programme, do such projects really result in the reduction of xenophobia among citizens at large, as is sometimes claimed, or at least anticipated? Wood and Landry optimistically conclude that evidence they surveyed suggested that ‘Most American cities now consider a constant replenishment of new foreign-born migrants as part of their economic and social lifeblood’ (2008: 286). Writing in 2017, one has to wonder whether that conclusion has stood the test of time. It is also significant that in countries such as Belgium, France, Italy, or Spain hostility to Islamic practices (wearing the face-veil or the ‘burkini’, for example, or opening a mosque) often stems from initiatives proposed by local governments and politicians; not all locals are sympathetic to the diversity benign aims of the ICC programme.

What’s in a Name?

A question posed by the case studies discussed earlier is the extent to which the actual projects initiated or encouraged by the ICC programme (including those which it cites for good practice), are substantially different from those which multiculturalism also encourages. What does *being intercultural* actually mean, and how does it differ from *being multicultural*, or indeed *transcultural*? (See Chapter 6 for a discussion of the concept of the ‘transcultural city’).

Take, for example, an initiative in Milan to create a *Forum della Città Mondo* (Milan World City Forum, MWCF), intended as an assembly bringing together representatives from c. 600 migrant and ethnic associations. Conceived within the framework of the city’s diversity policy, which Marzorati and Quassoli (2015) describe as an ‘integrationist approach labelled as “intercultural”’, the MWCF, they say, was thought of as a ‘space where to make possible the encounter and exchange between cultures’ (p. 20). The objective, as one city official put it, was to ‘try and see how in the Milanese context it was possible to translate the dialectic between the conservation of the origin culture and the willingness to modify it so to exchange, to engage in a dialogue which modify both the speakers involved’ (*ibid.*) In practice, this ideal was difficult to realise, because of problems related to internal cleavages in the associations on national/ethnic lines and between the older and more recent immigrants. There was, Marzorati and Quassoli add, an

‘ambivalence between a representative body for communities - though not formally organized on an ethno-national base - and a space of encounter for individuals. So, if on the one hand the idea is to overcome a simplistic division according to ethnic and national belonging, the fact that most of the associations are in fact nationally-based, brings the issue back in’ (p. 22).

Consequently, a project ‘which looks very ambitious on paper, shows an excess of naiveté: limits related to cleavages that cross cut the heterogeneous world of immigrant associations have been underestimated; moreover the project lack clear objectives and a proper planning.’ (p. 26.)

Although conceived within the framework of the ICC programme, the project could equally have been undertaken as a multicultural initiative (and been equally unsuccessful; see Però 2002 on a similar *Forum* in Bologna). In fact, apart from the name, would a Multicultural City Programme (an MCC) have produced a different project and a different outcome? Indeed, does the intercultural label represent any more than the rejection of a ‘toxic brand’? (See, for example, Alina Rzepnikowska’s account, 2016, of how similar diversity policies and initiatives are differently labelled in Manchester and Barcelona). It is perhaps significant that the ICC programme reports have surprisingly little to say about dialogue, intercultural dialogue, but are chiefly concerned with urging recognition of the (social, cultural, economic) value of diversity, and ensuring that minorities are treated equitably, aims of which any multiculturalist would approve.

The Milan World City Forum like some other ICC programme projects, or those supported by the Baring Foundation, also illustrate the difficulties faced by the ICC programme in seeking to escape the iron cage of ethnicity, the ‘tribal cultures’, as Lorna Shaw put it, and there are good reasons for this, both internal and external to the communities concerned. Attempts to transcend ethnicity (as in some of the events organised by *La Maison des Passages*) may in effect exclude an audience for which cosmopolitanism (the ‘intercultural person’, see Chapters 6 and 7) is a luxury or irrelevant to their lived experience. The desire for mixity is laudable, and interculturality or transculturality may well represent the long-term trajectory of diversity, but in the immediate term such projects may ignore the collective identities (minority or majority), to which people are willy-nilly committed, and side-line the claims for recognition on which they are based.

Towards the end of their book, Wood and Landry (2008: 304), set down various indicators of interculturalism including intermarriage, ‘cross-over networks’ and products, intercultural literacy programmes, ‘training and remuneration of bilingualism and multilingualism in the business environment’, and ‘buildings or public art in the city centre that draws on culturally diverse histories and traditions’. None of these would seem precluded by multiculturalism, as for instance practiced in Britain. To be fair, of course, the interculturalism advocated by Phil Wood and colleagues, or by the Baring Foundation, does try to go beyond that, and there are successes, perhaps in small-scale and local initiatives that bring people together (a ‘million small victories’). And one should not be unduly skeptical. As Susanne Wessendorf observes in her fieldwork in London, while ‘encounters in public and associational space do not necessarily enhance deeper intercultural understanding, the absence of such encounters can enhance prejudice [and] lead to entrenched negative attitudes against people who are perceived to stay away from participation in local life’ (2013: 410, 419). And that, perhaps, is the best one can expect.

PART III. ACTUALLY EXISTING INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUES: PRACTICE (AND SOME THEORY)

CHAPTER 10. DIALOGUES AT THE INTERCULTURAL FRONTIER

‘[A] major problem that confronted intercultural dialogue during the European colonial period in Africa is that it was inward looking. It looked entirely toward European political culture, particularly Western European political culture, as the sole route to successful intercultural dialogue’ (Arnone 2017: 309).

Introduction: Overview of Part III

To recap. It will be recalled that ‘interculturalism’ has been advocated by academics, policy-makers and practitioners in Europe and Canada as an alternative strategy for coping with ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in the light of what are often believed to be the failures of multiculturalism. Dialogue, ‘intercultural dialogue’, is generally considered to be an integral component of that alternative strategy. Part I addressed various, mainly theoretical, themes connected to that debate, assessing what was intended by the terms ‘intercultural’ and ‘dialogue’, what intercultural dialogue was expected to achieve, and whether such dialogue, or better perhaps *dialoguing*, is possible (in multiple senses), and if so under what conditions. It will also be recalled that the focus of this book is on intercultural dialogue as a social and *political* phenomenon, rather than a cognitive or communicative or linguistic one, and I am concerned primarily with such dialogues which are about social and cultural difference, including religious difference, and what to do about it.

Part II (Chapters 8 and 9) explored these issues in two lengthy case studies reviewing EU and CoE initiatives intended to promote intercultural dialogue in contemporary Europe. Part III continues this discussion through a number of longer and shorter case studies involving such dialogues in various contexts and situations. In brief, while recognising that intercultural dialogue may often be problematic, and sometimes, perhaps often, in practice impossible, my contention is that this is for social and political, rather than strictly linguistic or conceptual reasons.

As I noted in Chapter 1, dialogue between peoples of different cultures, is probably as old as humanity itself, an interesting idea to explore. The scope of Part III is, however, more modest, being largely, if not exclusively, concerned with intercultural dialoguing in contemporary Britain and present-day Europe. Aside from this Introduction and the concluding Chapter 17, there are seven chapters, each focusing on a certain site or situation, analysing what actually happened and with what result when the parties concerned engaged, or attempted to engage, in intercultural dialogue. Chapter 11 discusses ancient history, namely the *Coloquios of 1524*, which describes an encounter in the early colonising of Mexico where an intercultural dialogue took place. That dialogue was partly concerned with the needs of Catholic missionaries in the Americas who were seeking knowledge of other cultures, intercultural knowledge, for the purpose of aiding the process of conversion, though it also gave rise to a corpus of early anthropology (see Léon-Portilla 2002, 2005). Such dialogues, and such purposes, were not, of course, only a feature of Spanish colonialism, but pervaded that of France and Britain, too. Nor was it confined to the period of colonialism proper or to the colonies. The case discussed in Chapter 12 concerns a survey undertaken by amateur investigators (i.e. not professional social scientists) of the presence in the city of Lyon, France, in 1975-6 of migrant workers from the former French colonies of North Africa. In some respects it was a dialogue with an absent interlocuteur, but there were other ways in which through intermediaries of various kinds interested parties built up a picture of the lives of others in their midst and engaged in a kind of dialogue with them. Chapter 13 focuses on another post-colonial context, that of the British city of Birmingham in the 2000s, and its Sikh population. It concerns the so-called *Behzti* Affair, a controversy about a play which raised questions about how ‘dialogue’ and ‘negotiation’ are understood by different parties in an intercultural encounter. Chapter 14 is specifically concerned with the law (principally in the UK) as a site of intercultural encounter and dialogue, and reviews a number of cases, seeking to identify what happens in such encounters, and with what outcome. Chapter 15 considers intercultural dialogues taking place within interfaith institutions and networks in the UK, and in encounters promoting interreligious dialogue in Europe, while Chapter 16 specifically focuses on dialogues with Islam.

Intercultural Frontiers

Although the relationship between Muslims and others has particular significance for interculturalism, and underlines the need for dialogue, neither Part III, nor the book as a whole, is specifically concerned with that relationship, though several of the case studies will, I hope, shed light on it. What characterises all such dialogues, however, is that when those involved seek knowledge of, another culture, or construct narratives about it, or perhaps seek to negotiate with its representatives, they do so at an ‘intercultural frontier’ or ‘interface’. In employing such terms, I am consciously drawing on the work of those anthropologists and historians who have undertaken research on Mexico and Central America after the Conquest, investigating the relationship between the indigenous peoples, such as the Mexica (Aztec) and the Maya, and representatives of the colonising power, including, notably, the Christian missionaries.

One anthropologist who was highly influential in developing this approach was the late Dennis Tedlock, best known, perhaps, for his translation and commentary on *Popul Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life* (1985, 1996). Elsewhere, in discussing an account of a dialogue which took place in 1524 (the *Coloquios*, the subject of Chapter 11), Tedlock noted that while many post-conquest texts in Mesoamerica are read ‘only with an eye to ethnographic tidbits [or] for tidbits of church history’, in fact:

‘From a dialogical point of view, such documents as these are interesting not in spite of the fact that some Europeans got there first but precisely because of it. They show, from both sides and with moments of thunderbolt clarity, the *dialogical frontier* between European and Mesoamerican cultures during the colonial period’ (Tedlock 1983: 334, emphases added).

The frontier which Tedlock calls ‘dialogical’ I prefer to call ‘intercultural’, since it is at an intercultural frontier or interface that dialogue may (or may not) take place.

Developing Tedlock’s point, Louise Burkhart analysed another Mexican text, similar to the *Coloquios*, which she found ‘particularly interesting’ because its content reflected an ‘intermediate position, combining Christian material with information on indigenous religion’ (1988: 66). Such texts, she adds, are the ‘residue of a dynamic interaction between European and Nahua culture’ (Burkhart 1989: 185). At the intercultural frontier, Christianity was not a ‘coherent, internally consistent system but, rather, a hodgepodge of concepts – shreds of Christian orthodoxy and patches of Nahuatl meaning’ (Burkhart 1989: 187), her phrasing seemingly echoing Robert Lowie’s characterisation of culture in general (see Chapter 6). The process ultimately involved is not syncretism but a ‘blending’ in which ‘Nahua structures and functions imposed themselves upon Christian content’ (*ibid.*) One is reminded of what is called ‘interlegality’, the process through which new legal regimes emerge from the interaction between what are often, misleadingly, thought of as discrete legal systems or social entities (Hoekema 2009, Santos 2002, Twining 2000).

Such arguments are now widely accepted in contemporary anthropology where a dialogic perspective, often influenced by the writing of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), is frequently adopted and applied not least to the work of anthropologists themselves, their relationship with the representatives of other cultures with whom they collaborate, and the ethnographies which result. Dialogicality, it is claimed, is found not only in the social and cultural processes which anthropologists and others study, but in their own work, in the field, and what emerges from it. Thus Tedlock, writing about anthropology in Mesoamerica, argues that what he calls ethnohistorical research ‘can be reconstructed along the lines of an intercultural dialogue, rather than taking the form of an attempt to objectify the other’ (Tedlock 1983: 293). The anthropological dialogue, he suggests,

‘creates a world, or an understanding of the *differences between* two worlds, that exists between persons who were indeterminately far apart, in all sorts of different ways, when they started out on the conversation’ (Tedlock 1983: 323, his emphases).

Dialogues at intercultural frontiers do not of course involve only anthropologists, though anthropologists have written at great length about them, not least in respect of the intellectual and ethical problems posed by their own encounters with others, principally as these take place through the vehicle of fieldwork. Most (e.g. Rabinow, Ardener, Crapanzano) stress that such dialogues change those involved in them. Mary Douglas, for example, in her biography of Evans-Pritchard writes of

‘an attempt to interpret seen as a modest enquiry within a conversation. The enquiry brings with it answers that change the next questions which can be asked. The enquirer’s universe of knowledge itself is expansible’ (Douglas 1980: 88).

Comprehending others, says Ardener (1989: 160) ‘cannot be a kind of passive act leaving one or both sides unchanged’. Paul Rabinow, writing about the ‘dialectic process of fieldwork’ (1977: 39) says of his relationship with one informant:

‘with Ali there began to emerge a mutually constructed ground of experience and understanding, a realm of tenuous common sense which was constantly breaking down, being patched-up, and re-examined, first here, then there’

He later describes Ali as ‘self-reflexive’ (Rabinow 1977: 73), and adds that ‘one of the essential qualities of a good informant is the ability to explain even the simplest and (to him) most obvious things in a variety of ways’ (Rabinow 1977: 95).

A criticism of this perspective in the case of Rabinow might be that he operates within a conception or tradition of ‘the informant’ (more typical of anthropology in the United States than in Britain, at least in the past), in which anthropologist/informant are engaged in a more or less formal relationship wherein the latter is a research assistant, who is trained to ‘objectify their life-world’ for the former (Rabinow 1977: 119). Concerning his informant, Malik, for example, he drew up a contract, agreed on a price, and then: ‘We started to work on kinship that afternoon ... He became my chief informant in Sidi Lahcen, and we covered all the essential ethnographic ground together in many, many hours of work’ (Rabinow 1977: 104). This does not alter the fact that in the course of their relationship Malik changed: ‘He had to reformulate his own experiences in order to understand what I was driving at’ (Rabinow 1977: 118).

It might be objected that Rabinow’s portrayal of anthropological data as ‘doubly-mediated, first by our own presence and then by the second-order self-reflection we demand from our informants’ (Rabinow 1977: 119) might be true of certain kinds of relationship at certain kinds of dialogical frontiers, but certainly not of all. Indeed, there is sometimes, perhaps here, and certainly in the work of someone like Vincent Crapanzano (1980) an idealistic even romanticised notion of the ‘dialogue’ that takes place between anthropologist and informant. ‘My questions’, says Crapanzano,

‘produced what I read as a change of consciousness in [my informant Tuhami]. They produced a change of consciousness in me too. We were both jostled from our assumptions about the nature of the everyday world and ourselves and groped for common reference points within this limbo of interchange’ (Crapanzano 1980: 11).

The ‘ethnographic encounter’, he declares (1980: ix) ‘is always a complex negotiation in which the parties to the encounter acquiesce to a certain reality’. But when he refers to ‘negotiation’, it is as well to remember how one-sided this in fact is: Crapanzano wrote a book about his informant, Tuhami; Tuhami did not write a book about Crapanzano. Yet I wonder if Tuhami (despite his sad end) did not have the last laugh. What *was* the status of his narratives? How much was simply fantasy or a yarn he was spinning at the credulous Crapanzano’s expense? It is interesting to compare the dialogic approaches of Crapanzano, Rabinow and other late 20th century anthropologists with the extended narratives and ‘conversations’ that were produced by an earlier generation of anthropologists (e.g.

Smith 1954, Griaule 1965, or Shostak 1982) with their shadowy or indeed apparently non-existent interlocuteurs, ‘the European’.

Colonial Encounters

That said, and while recognising the potential significance of this for all kinds of intercultural dialogues, and not just those in which anthropologists engage, I should confess that I am more interested in a somewhat different line of inquiry, one which investigates the contexts in which intercultural dialogues occur, and the different ‘sites’ on which they take place, as well as what happens to the parties engaged in them. The colonial context, the colonial encounter, as Asad called it (ed 1973, represents one such historically important site of intercultural dialogue, one intercultural frontier, and to a large degree all of the case studies discussed in Part III, and other situations referred to in Parts I and II, are locatable within its shadow or that of the post-colonial aftermath.

The contemporary significance of what might be dismissed as ancient history, and the dialogical lessons to be learned from it, as in the story of what happened in Mexico in 1524 (in Chapter 11), is sometimes overlooked. The UNESCO volume edited by Fethi Mansouri (2017) has three contributions which demonstrate the value of an historical focus: Priyanka Upadhyaya’s (optimistic) account of intercultural dialogue on the Indian sub-continent, Hassan Nadhem’s study of a 16th century Iraqi poet who was fluent in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and Charles Arnone’s discussion of the Acholi people’s encounter with British colonialism in Northern Uganda in the first half of the 20th century. Of these it is the last which is perhaps most pertinent to the concerns of the present book. His assessment of that encounter implies that there was no meeting of minds, no intercultural dialogue, simply an imposition by the British of their cultural values and practices, which were in due course taken up in various ways by the Acholi people.

Although I mention those three studies to draw attention to the value of an historical perspective, rather to how they illustrate dialoguing in a colonial/post-colonial context, both Arnone’s and Upadhyaya’s chapters are in different ways relevant to it. This does not mean that the (Western) colonial/post-colonial context is the only one in which intercultural dialogues occur, as perhaps Nadhem’s contribution illustrates; his poet (Muhammad ibn Sulaimon Fuzzily al-Baghdadis) lived *inter alia* under the Ottomans. Nor is colonialism/post-colonialism the only factor in contemporary European contexts; globalisation, transnationalism (not necessarily unrelated), and neo-liberalism are also highly influential. Nonetheless, the case studies to be discussed in detail in Part III, and other examples which will be cited more briefly, have in common that in large part they have to be understood in the light of colonialism or its post-colonial legacy. This is not to say they are all influenced in the same way, or to the same extent, but there are more than family resemblances that need to be teased out.

It might be objected that to some extent this is because that is the context which I have deliberately chosen for investigation, not surprisingly given my long-standing interest in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies in post-colonial Africa, and in contemporary Europe. But, I would contend that this is precisely the context within which the arrival in Europe in recent decades of large numbers of migrants and refugees (largely from formerly colonised regions of the world, even if they are not alone) has to be understood. It is this post-colonial, globalised, transnational world which shapes both the sites within which intercultural dialogues, in Lyon or Birmingham, for example, take place, *and* the contemporary debate on interculturalism itself.

Sites of Intercultural Dialogue and Contestation

Falla: The boys, yes; it's part of my religion: if they are not [...] circumcised, they're not allowed to go inside a mosque, because they're not sacred; they're not [...] clean. With women, it's that I don't want them to do it.

Imma: It's not a question of religion. It's a question of [...] of the submission of the woman; as a punishment.

Falla: No, for me, just for Omar [referring to his younger child, and only boy] we're thinking of [...]

Imma: Well, you've been thinking of it; I've not been.

Falla: [half-joking] Well, we're going to have trouble there [...]!

While intercultural dialogues in Europe are situated within the shadow of colonialism and postcolonialism, they occur within a multiplicity of sites at micro, meso and macro levels. One such site is the family, especially families of 'mixed' cultural, ethnic and religious background. As Eleonore Kofman has observed, so-called 'mixed marriages' create intercultural social spaces (2004: 252). What this might involve may be seen in the snatch of dialogue (above) recorded by the Catalan anthropologist Dan Rodríguez-García (2008: 257; see also Rodríguez-García 2009) in the course of his study of families in Barcelona where Senegalese and Gambian (male) immigrants were living in mixed unions with (female) Spanish nationals. Rodríguez-García shows how cultural debates about cultural practices (including, as in the above extract, circumcision) may be observed within the conjugal relationship itself. Inter-marriage, involving the formation of transcultural and transnational families, constitutes a complex socio-cultural space, encompassing both the local and the global, in which social actors, rather than cultures as whole, fixed entities, are protagonists. Their responses are very diverse, and Rodríguez-García illustrates the dialogic aspect of family life as a negotiated intercultural order, as in the above extract in which Falla, an African from Senegambia, and Imma, his Spanish partner, work through what they might do about the ritual circumcision of their young son.

Although this is a highly specific, interpersonal exchange, its terms of reference are clearly defined by the much wider context of current concerns about diversity and how to navigate the genuine difficulties confronting those with different beliefs, values and practices who seek to live together. Of course, such couples are not doing this in isolation from what is being said nationally or internationally, for example in the media, or by politicians, religious leaders, social workers and so on, who pronounce one way or another about practices such as male circumcision. Condemnation, and indeed criminalisation, of female circumcision, female genital mutilation (FGM) is of course widely documented across Europe. Less well known is the movement against male circumcision (Muslim or Jewish) on grounds of children's rights. Whether or not this particular couple turned to those authorities, or indeed appealed to friends or relatives for advice, or were simply influenced one way or another by those debates, I do not know, though they might have been.

Although intercultural dialogues within families at this micro-level present thought-provoking material for current debates about interculturalism, they will not be explored as such in this book. Here the focus is on such dialogues taking place in other, more public sites or institutional settings, principally where knowledge and understanding of 'Other' cultures and what to do about them are at stake. What such dialogues (including those within families) have in common is that they occur on what have become 'sites of contestation'. This concept is similar to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'field', a social arena within which 'struggles or manoeuvres take place' (Jenkins 1992: 84). For the late Gill Seidel (1985: 44) it is a 'terrain, a dynamic linguistic and, above all, semantic space in which social meanings are produced or challenged'. Employing a multiplicity of competing narratives and tropes, actors articulating different social and cultural interests engage in a struggle over meaning, and crucially also about practice, and rights and duties (who may or should do what, where and when). But voices are unequal, and when it comes to representing alternative perspectives within the institutional system where policies are formulated and implemented, who has the power and authority

to speak and name is central.

Two such sites which are particularly important for Part III of this book (as indeed to some extent Part II), are the law courts and the legislatures, though they are not the only ones: regarding families of migrant origin, for example, debates concerning what their members should do about their beliefs and practices, may be observed across many sites and institutional settings, including, for instance, schools and social services. Nonetheless, the law, is one important site, where, as Samia Bano puts it, constructions of the other ‘takes shape’ (2008: 285; she is referring specifically to Muslim families). Some extended examples, including cases involving Sikh turbans and Hindu funeral practices in Britain, are discussed in Chapter 14. Other cases, discussed in Chapter 16, address issues around marriage and divorce where Islamic law and practice have been involved.

Legislatures in Europe and North America nowadays seem constantly engaged in debates and dialogues about other beliefs and practices, especially Muslim; for example in France concerning the *hijab*, the *burqa* or *niqab*, and most recent the ‘burkini’. In the UK, Canada, and certain states in the USA there have also been controversies about Shari’a, Islamic law and practice, as enshrined in the Qur’an and in the traditions associated with the sayings and acts of the Prophet Mohammed, and their various interpretations. In the UK this has focused on the role of what are called ‘Shari’a Councils’, unofficial bodies involving Muslim religious leaders which, among other things, make rulings on applications for religious divorce, often on the part of women, thus confirming their status as devout Muslims and enabling them to remarry. They have attracted much attention from the media and from academics, and have been the subject of discussion in Parliament, for example in debates about proposed legislation (see Chapter 16, and Grillo 2015a in greater detail).

Families, courts, and legislatures are not the only sites of interest, as the literature on intercultural cities (Chapter 9) shows. But they are important ones which among other things illustrate how controversies about diversity play out at different levels in contemporary multicultural societies. Questions of ‘representation’ within such sites are critical. ‘Representation’ is here used in two senses. First it refers to how what happens in minority families (for example), and how their members relate to each other, are perceived and conceptualised by themselves and by members of the majority society. This is particularly important when those ‘outsiders’ have institutional responsibilities as social workers, teachers, police and so on, since, secondly, representation also refers to the way in which those perceptions and conceptualisations are carried into the public arena. Whose representations become hegemonic and instrumental? Who has the power to define the situation of such families, and make that definition stick? How are different voices incorporated (if at all), and how is space made available for alternative perspectives (‘demotic’ counter-narratives, Baumann 1996) which challenge dominant ones? In this connection, the role of the media is highly significant, as is that of the many NGOs, minority and other, engaged in debates about legal aspects of Islam and the law, including, significantly, feminist, and human rights activists.

As the Preface to this book proposed, our current era seems to be characterised by multiple and reinforcing conflicts around cultural otherness, affecting many societies in a globalised world, and occurring on many sites. This contemporary ‘crisis of difference’ is not the same as a ‘Clash of Civilizations’, à la Huntington, though one fears that it is rapidly becoming one. Interculturalism’s focus on dialogue, intercultural dialogue, might best be interpreted as in part an optimistic and positive response to this crisis. To ascertain whether or not its expectations are realistic, whether such dialogues, when they occur in specific contexts and situations, achieve what is hoped for them, is the purpose of the case studies analysed in Part III.

CHAPTER 11. A COLONIAL DIALOGUE: THE COLOQUIOS OF 1524

‘[It is] inappropriate that this book be printed or disseminated in those parts, due to some causes for concern ... and be advised that you must not consent to absolutely any person writing about things that deal with the superstitions and ways of life that the Indians had in any language’ (Decree of Philip II of Spain, in 157, text in Léon-Portilla 2002: 210-11, see also Léon-Portilla 1963: 186, Duverger 1987: 47).

Introduction

Some years ago, when working on a book on ethnic and cultural pluralism (Grillo 1998), I came across (in Ricard 1966) what are called the *Coloquios*, or *Pláticas* (talks, chats, conversations, lectures) of 1524. At first reading they seemed an extraordinary and intriguing event. Later, I realised they were not quite what I thought they were, and posed far more problems than I naively supposed. Nonetheless, they have considerable pertinence to the theme of this book.

The *Coloquios* (sometimes called ‘dialogues’) were ‘discussions’ (in inverted commas) held in June of 1524 in the city of Mexico between those leaders and priests of the Mexica (Aztecs or Nahuas) who had survived the conquest of their empire and destruction of its capital, Tenochtitlan, three years earlier, and twelve, indeed THE twelve, as they are known, Franciscan friars who had been sent to conduct the conversion of the New World and who after a four month journey had arrived in the city a few weeks earlier. An account of this meeting was prepared some forty years later by Bernardino de Sahagún, a Franciscan who himself arrived in 1529 and who became one of the leading scholars of the Mexica language (Nahuatl); among much else he prepared a monumental historical and ethnographic account of the Mexica (*Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España*), now widely recognised (however problematically) as one of the most important sources on Pre-Colombian Mesoamerica, and a significant early anthropological text (Léon-Portilla 2002, 2005, Sahagún 1975, Schwaller ed. 2003).¹⁵⁰ Sahagún’s account of the 1524 meeting (full title *Coloquios y doctrina christiana con que los doce frailes de San Francisco, enviados por el papa Adriano VI y por el emperador Carlos V, convirtieron a los indios de la Nueva España*) was originally lost, possibly in 1577 when he was ordered by the Spanish king to send all his papers to Spain – see the Decree cited above - but resurfaced in 1924 when a defective copy was discovered in the Secret Archives of the Vatican.

What I naively hoped to find in the *Coloquios* was a description of two groups of people of very different social, cultural, religious and linguistic background, at a very early stage of the colonial encounter, and hitherto knowing next to nothing of each other, entering into a dialogue about their respective worldviews. When eventually I investigated further, read the text and dipped into the exegetical literature (extensively available in Spanish, French, German, English, and Nahuatl), I found (not surprisingly in retrospect) both much less, but also much more, than expected.

Originally the *Coloquios* consisted of two books of 30 and 21 chapters though all that remain are 14 chapters of Book One and a summary of the rest. The surviving chapters are in a Nahuatl and a Spanish version neither of which are direct translations of the other. It seems that the Spanish text was completed first and the Nahuatl is a translation which expands and develops certain points. The text thus gives a partial account of a meeting said to have taken place between Mexica chiefs and priests (called *satrapes* in the Spanish text) and the twelve Franciscans. In 1564 it was put together by Sahagún with the help of his Mexica assistants from ‘some notes and papers’ (‘papeles y memorias’) which Léon-Portilla (1963: 62) says were found and recorded by Sahagún at the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, in what is now a suburb of Mexico City.¹⁵¹ In a foreword to the reader (*Al*

150 Extracts from a copy known as the ‘Florentine Codex’ (in Spanish and Nahuatl, with many pictographs) may be viewed at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florentine_Codex.

151 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tlatelolco,_Mexico_City.

Prudente Lector) Sahagún recorded that previously there had been ‘no opportunity to put [the text] in order or to transcribe it into suitably polished Nahuatl’ (Léon-Portilla 1963: 190). Although some such meeting undoubtedly took place, there is serious disagreement about the status of the document that survived, and the manner of its composition. The following account which tries to navigate through the difficulties must therefore be treated with considerable caution.¹⁵²

The Report of the Meeting

The Conquistador Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of ‘New Spain’, as it was called, had a standing procedure when he arrived in a new community; he would summon the local leaders, explain his mission, say something about Christian doctrine, and offer them an alliance in exchange for their conversion (Duverger 1987). These encounters emphasised the close link between religion and power, something which would not have been news to the Mexica. Regarding the 1524 meeting, it is ‘hardly possible to doubt’, says Christian Duverger (1987: 40), that Cortés himself instigated and organised such an event over which he presided at least for the first of the several days during which it extended. José Klor de Alva, who observes that such religious debates, ‘to the extent that we can describe these tendentious discussions and dialogues’, took place ‘sporadically’ throughout the 16th century, depicts a ‘prototypical setting’, with the friars ‘sitting down with the interpreter(s) standing at their side’:

‘The Nahua leaders, both secular and religious, would be in *cucillas* (squatting close to the ground before them). With much and elaborate ritual, both sides must have struggled to simplify their thoughts in order to make themselves understood’ (1980: 53).

There were similar encounters between missionaries and natives in Japan and Brazil (Watts 1995; Léon-Portilla 2002), and the description calls to mind conferences convened to conclude ‘peace treaties’ between leaders of the Native American tribes and soldiers or officials from Washington. At such meetings, with their formal set speeches, the issue of translation and interpretation is/was crucial (see below).

Briefly, as reported in the *Coloquios*, a spokesman for the Twelve opened proceedings by explaining who they were, where they were from, and what they represented, setting out some initial points about the Christian God. At this point one of the Mexica chiefs, ‘with great courtesy and civility’ (Duverger 1987: 89), announced that they needed to talk things over with their priests who were the experts in these matters. When the priests subsequently learned what the chiefs had been told, they were ‘greatly disturbed’, ‘saddened’, and ‘frightened’ (Klor de Alva 1980: 112), but decided that the next day they would attend the meeting and make a spirited defence of their religion.

In a critical (and often cited) passage, the style of which Duverger (1987) describes as ‘laconic’ (it is certainly allusive and somewhat obscure), the Mexica representatives affirmed their wish to keep their faith. You have taken everything else, they say, but leave us our religion, otherwise you might as well kill us (translations in Klor de Alva 1980: 124-7, and Léon-Portilla 2002: 61-8). The Franciscans replied by going into greater detail about the nature of the Christian faith, the angels and devils and so on, but they also became more threatening: until now, they observed, the Mexica had had no opportunity to hear the word of God, ‘But now, if you do not desire to hear it, the precious breath, the precious word of God ... you will be in much danger. And God, Who has commenced your destruction, will conclude it, you will be completely lost’ (Klor de Alva 1980: 132).

Shortly afterwards the manuscript breaks off. This is a pity because the summary reports that there was an argument between the chiefs and the priests about an admission that the Mexica gods were insufficiently powerful to liberate them from the Spaniards (Duverger 1987: 107). This, the summary says, was followed by more theology on the part of the Twelve, leading eventually to the

152 This is a much-abbreviated version of a paper prepared some year ago but never published. It glosses over the complexities and controversies surrounding the *Coloquios*.

point where it is reported that the Mexica chiefs and priests ‘renounce their old gods and declare themselves servants of the lord’ ((Duverger 1987: 107). After congratulations and thanks and more theology, the Twelve warned that those who do not observe the holy writ will be subject to severe punishment, and ordered the chiefs and priests to bring them all their idols for destruction. That concluded the first and most interesting of the two books; the rest is catechism.

What Sort of Text is the *Coloquios*?

What to make of this? Notwithstanding the (severe) problems of the historicity of the document (Klor de Alva 1982), and its hybrid character, drawing on both Mexica and European templates, what can we glean from the text?

The *Coloquios* (which actually took place) constituted an iconic exchange in more ways than one. Duverger (1987) calls the meeting ‘a key moment’ in the evangelisation of New Spain, and summarises the official line that the encounter led the Mexica to forswear their faith and convert to Christianity (see also Morales Valerio 2001). According to the surviving text, the event consisted of a series of asymmetrical exchanges typical of much intercultural dialogue in a colonial context. There was a sequence of set speeches in which each party stated its perspective, without entering into serious direct discussion. It did not involve two sides learning about each other’s point of view, adjusting their position to reach a compromise or *modus vivendi*. ‘Un Diálogo de Sordos’, ‘Dialogue of the deaf’, Dehouve (2002) calls it, in which ‘Nahuas and Franciscans simply talk past one another’ (Maffie 2012: 4). As Todorov points out (1999: 239), ‘a dialogue is not the addition of two monologues’.

The *Coloquios* that we have is not of course, anything like a verbatim, Hansard-style account of what transpired, so much as a symbolic representation, written to authorise the Christian narrative of the colonial encounter. Ricard (like Duverger later) stressed this Christian perspective: ‘These *Pláticas* are nothing else than the first sermons preached by the Twelve to the chiefs and pagan priests of Mexico’ (1966: 85). Sahagún, says Browne (2000: 83), ‘under the pretense of preserving history intended the *Coloquios* – which depict the quick, successful conversion of a group of indigenous religious leaders – to serve as a model for subsequent conversions’. Nonetheless, the text has also been read as representing an alternative Mexica narrative. Thus, Miguel León-Portilla :

‘No testimony speaks so eloquently of the esteem in which the ancient Mexicans held their theological doctrines as the answer made by some surviving Nahuatl wise men in 1524 to an attack made by the first twelve missionary friars on the validity of the Indian religion and tradition ... the Nahuatl wise men are openly and freely discussing and defending their concepts in opposition to the Spanish friars’ (León-Portilla (1963: 62).

In responding to the attempted indoctrination and ‘condemnation of their ancient indigenous beliefs’, he adds, ‘One of the principal lords rose and “with every courtesy and civility” cautiously voiced his displeasure at the attack upon customs and beliefs’ (León-Portilla (1963: 18).

Klor de Alva, whose views on the *Coloquios* I find most convincing, quotes the noted Mexican scholar, Ángel María Garibay K, that ‘the work is literature, much more than history’; more Nahuatl poetics (Klor de Alva 1980: 53-4). It is also more akin to the dialogic form or genre, which was then fashionable in European universities for the presentation of philosophical and theological debates (Duverger 1987). There is also the tradition, found in Europe and elsewhere, of presenting in dramatic form historical or allegedly historical (‘mythical’) events, from the Iliad to Shakespeare and beyond: No one really worries if Henry V did or did not say ‘Once more unto the breach dear friends’. In similar vein, Burkhart (1988: 67) calls it an ‘idealization of an historical event’, or better perhaps a ‘fictionalised account of a real event’¹⁵³, like a modern ‘docu-drama’.

153 See <http://www.theartshelf.com/2017/01/20/full-casting-announced-for-donmar-warehouses-limehouse>.

In discussing the historicity of the *Coloquios*, Klor de Alva (1982) contends that although meant as a lesson in conversion, the text does record something of what actually occurred (see also Nicholson 1988). Although Sahagún was not himself an eyewitness, he was personally acquainted with almost all those Franciscans who did attend, and ‘learned from out of the mouths of those who arrived before I did everything that happened from the beginning’ (in Duverger 1987: 77.) Indeed, several were still alive at the time he wrote up the meeting. Léon-Portilla, like Sahagún himself, emphasises these connections:

‘The reconstruction of what very plausibly was said then was made possible for Bernardino by his consultation with other friars, as well as by availing himself of his own experiences with the Indians and, as he indicates, by having before him “old papers and notes” in which were preserved the memory of such encounters’ (2002: 60-1).

Besides, Sahagún seems to have been a meticulous and rigorous researcher. As Ricard puts it (1966: 88), ‘it is difficult to believe, given his known scruples as a historian, that he allowed himself to make important additions’. Moreover, the style and rhythm of speeches in the *Coloquios* suggest an oral origin, and furthermore there are features which are still characteristic of contemporary Mexican public discourse: highly rhetorical, elaborate use of metaphor and *difrasismo* (combining two concepts to signal a third), affectation of modesty and humility to honour the audience, reference to ancestors and the past etc (Duverger (1987, Klor de Alva 1980). ‘What we have’, Klor de Alva concludes, ‘is a written record based on an amalgamation of fragments from the pre- and post-Contact oral tradition [which] have been carefully joined to accommodate the propagandistic goals Sahagún had in mind’ (1980: 54).

Intercultural Knowledge: Translation, and Interpretation

In Chapter 4 I discussed at length the difficulties of interpretation and mutual understanding facing those engaged in intercultural dialogues. These are clearly illustrated in the present case involving two groups of people coming from such different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Under the circumstances how could there ever be anything resembling a meeting of minds? Thus, running through all discussions of the *Coloquios* and other similar encounters are questions of translation, including its practicalities in the initial period of contact. Take some of the practicalities first.

‘It is quite possible’, says Greenblatt (1991: 109), ‘that Cortés would have failed to conquer the Aztec empire [without] the services of the formidable Doña Marina’. When Cortés first landed in what was to become New Spain, he was fortunate to find a Spaniard (Jerónimo de Aguilar) who had been shipwrecked along the Yucatan coast. He had been saved and enslaved by the local population, and learned the local language, Mayan. To deal with the Mexica, however, Cortés needed a speaker of Nahuatl, and this person came in the shape of a Mexica noblewoman who had been sold to the Maya and learned their language. This was Doña Marina, also known as La Malinche.¹⁵⁴

She has had a mixed reception in history, ‘despised as an incarnation of the betrayal of indigenous values, of servile submission to European culture and power’ (Todorov 1999: 101). She became Cortés’s mistress and bore him a child, sometimes described as the first Mestizo. Until she learned Spanish, she acted as Cortés’s interpreter by translating from Nahuatl into Mayan which Aguilar then put into Castillian (Durán 1964). Cortés, says Greenblatt, became utterly dependent on her. He

‘understood next to nothing about the complex culture he had violently penetrated, and everything he could hope to learn, beyond the enigmatic and opaque visual evidence, had to be conveyed to him through Doña Marina’ (Greenblatt 1991: 145).

154 See *inter alia* <http://www.mexonline.com/history-lamalinche.htm>.

She was thus emblematic of the ‘vast process of cultural translation’ (*ibid.*) that the Conquest initiated. It is likely that she was present at the *Coloquios*. Sahagún says that when all the dignitaries were assembled Cortés delivered an address ‘through his interpreter’ (singular, in Duverger 1987: 73), though subsequently, the chiefs and the friars spoke through the medium of interpreters (plural). Little seems to be known about this corps of interpreters, though the number of Mexica able to speak Spanish, and Spaniards able to speak Nahuatl was steadily increasing, no more so than among the ranks of the friars themselves, of whom Sahagún himself was a prime example.

The technical and cultural problems faced by translators were and are numerous. There are major structural differences between Nahuatl and Spanish, whose grammars assemble meaning differently (see *inter alia* Klor de Alva 1989, Léon-Portilla 1974, and Clendinnen 1991). There is also the greater problem of semantic differences. Ricard (1966: 55), referring to the complications involved in translating into the native languages ‘notions that had never been expressed in them’, observes that there were two possible solutions: use European words or adopt or adapt native terms or paraphrases. The latter was, however, prone to creating confusion, as, for example, when ‘hell’ was glossed in Nahuatl as *mictlan*, one way of describing the place of the dead, which happened to be thought of as very cold (Gruzinski 1993: 185). James Lockhart, a leading expert on post-Conquest Nahuatl, describes the difficulty of rendering the Spanish term ‘nuestra señora’ (‘our lady’), for the Holy Mary, into Nahuatl (1992: 252). The term employed was *totlaçonantzin* (‘our precious mother’), but this suggested ‘setting up a mother goddess for humanity parallel to the father God (similarly called “our precious father”, *totlaçotatzin*, in some Nahuatl texts’ (*ibid.*) Sahagún himself objected to the simpler *tonantzin* (‘our mother’) as it connoted one of the Mexica female deities (see *inter alia* Madajczak 2011). Indeed, Gruzinski (1993) notes that Sahagún and other friars were concerned that the Virgin Mary was confused with a Mexica mother of gods, and were reluctant to recognise the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which developed in the 16th century and which subsequently became a symbol of Mexican Catholicism and national identity.

A further problem concerned the variety of registers in Nahuatl. The pre-conquest language had different registers for the speech of commoners and nobles. The latter, taken up by the Christian schools, became a literary language, what Klor de Alva (1989: 147) calls ‘missionary Nahuatl’. There was also a religious register, highly metaphorical and obscure (Gruzinski 1993; Klor de Alva 1989; see also Clendinnen 1991; Errington 2008: 38-41). Regarding the implications for interpreting and translating 16th century texts and intercultural dialogues, Lockhart (1993: 2-3) emphasises the need for two (parallel) versions: ‘a literal reproduction of the elements, and ... a rendering of the [intended] sense’. Indeed, this is what Sahagún himself provides in the *Coloquios* and in the *Historia* with parallel Spanish and Nahuatl texts. A study of the differences between the two, says Léon-Portilla (2002: 223), helps us understand ‘how Sahagún understood the natives’ testimonies and attempted to communicate in Spanish what was expressed in Nahuatl’.

Constructing the Coloquios and Other Texts

Regarding the *Coloquios*, the Spanish Foreword says that the ‘papeles y memorias’ were put into Nahuatl at the Colegio de Santa Cruz, with the assistance of indigenous pupils versed in Nahuatl, Latin and Spanish, the so-called ‘trilinguals’. While that is all we are told about their composition, much more is known about the methods Sahagún employed in composing the *Historia* (see *inter alia* Anderson and Dibble eds. 1975, Browne 2000, Edmonson ed. 1974, Léon-Portilla 2002, Lockhart 1993, etc), work on which was proceeding during the same period when the *Coloquios* were written up.

Sahagún began researching for the *Historia* in the town of Tepapulco where local notables were assembled and asked to find ‘capable and experienced persons’ to act as his informants (in Léon-Portilla 2002: 142) Several people offered their services, and with their help and that of a number of trilinguals from the Colegio de Santa Cruz, he collected data, working via pictographs whose stories

the informants narrated (Léon-Portilla 2002: 144). These testimonies formed the basis of what was later called the 'Primeros Memoriales', which he wrote up at Tlatelolco, making many amendments and additions (Léon-Portilla 2002: 165).

Sahagún himself says that the *Historia* went through three stages or 'sieves', in three locations:

'the first sieve through which my works were sifted was the people of Tepepulco; the second, the people of Tlatilulco; and the third, the people of Mexico [i.e. the city]. And in all these scrutinies, there were grammarians from the College' (Sahagún 1975: 55; see also Dibble 1975: 20).

Undoubtedly, says Lockhart (1993), Sahagún had overall control, but there was room for an indigenous input. Certainly, this is how it seemed at the time to one of his pupils:

'He wrote according to his interrogation of those who were elders in older times, those who preserved books of paintings, in accord to what was painted in them, those who in ancient times were elders. Thanks to them he spoke about all the things that happened in antiquity' (cited in Léon-Portilla 2002: 256).

Léon-Portilla himself insists on the ultimate authenticity of what came through the sieves. 'To place in doubt, or even more, to deny these testimonies', he contends, 'would be a gratuitous rejection of what Sahagún has stated about those who provided "this narrative, leaders of good judgment ... who can be certain to have told the whole truth"' (2002: 129)

There were, of course, at least two sorts of indigenous informant: the local notables and elders, and the 'trilinguals'. Both occupied what the British anthropologist, Max Gluckman (1949), referring to African village headmen in the colonial era, called an 'intercalary' position, betwixt and between the Spanish authorities and the 'natives'. Concerning the elders and their role as informants, there was a Mexica oral tradition of remembering and citing lengthy passages which had been cultivated in the pre-Conquest Aztec schools. The pictograph narratives (so-called codices) played an important part in this (Cummins 1995), providing mnemonics and prompts, with the 'burden of the narrative ... conveyed through a memorized oral text' (Lockhart 1993: 10; see also Klor de Alva 1989). Thus the books were 'made to speak' (Gruzinski 1993: 13), as with the 11th century Norman Bayeux tapestry.¹⁵⁵ Although there is no evidence of any pictographic record in the *Coloquios*, the opening of Chapter 4 provides an example of the way in which Nahuatl pictographic narrative conventions are mimicked: 'There it was told', says the text.

Nonetheless, as has been pointed out (e.g. Browne 2000, Grafton et al 1992), Sahagún presented the testimonies of his Mexica informants in ways very different from that of the traditional codices. Moreover, the 'sieves' involved more than the refining of information. Browne says of the *Historia* that Sahagún 'went to great lengths to force the diversity of Nahua culture into a preconceived and static medieval hierarchy of knowledge' (Browne 2000: 94), 'orchestrating' the text in terms of Medieval scholastic principles of organisation. As López Austin puts it (1974: 120), Sahagún's *Historia* 'began with the gods, continued with heaven and hell, went on to the lordships, and concluded with earthly things', a sequence quite different from anything Mexica might propose. Undoubtedly the texts of the *Historia* and the *Coloquios* were constructed and orchestrated, as all texts tend to be. They represent 'mediated knowledge' (Grafton et al 1992: 147), and mediation affects what are recorded as Mexica narratives. Nonetheless, while the Mexica 'did not speak the way Sahagún does', and while his voice 'steeps their[s] ... a presence both more diffuse and more massive', their voices are also present (Todorov 1999: 232), and this brings us to the trilinguals.

155 http://www.bayeuxmuseum.com/en/la_tapisserie_de_bayeux_en.html.

The Trilinguals

The trilingual assistants and scribes employed by Sahagún had studied at the Colegio de Santa Cruz, where he was one of the teachers. The Colegio, which had opened in January 1536 with 60 pupils (Duverger 1987, León-Portilla 2002), was an institute of higher learning, intended initially for sons of the former Mexica nobility, with a curriculum similar to that followed by Franciscan novices in Europe (Duverger 1987). Its products are characterised by Gruzinski as a

‘Christianized elite ... linked to the mendicant orders [who] provided the Church with the intellectual and linguistic means to penetrate the indigenous world more effectively by furnishing the knowledge that they had and supporting the conversion of the population by all means’ (1993: 60)

They were, he says, ‘privileged witnesses [who] managed to dominate two cultural spaces, Indian and Christian’ (p. 59). They transcribed (in Nahuatl) the Franciscan denunciation of the Mexica religion, but also the Mexica priests’ defence.

There has been much discussion of their precise role in textual construction. According to Burkhart (1989), while texts were credited to individual friars, in reality they were jointly authored by them and the trilinguals, who were mainly responsible for the Nahuatl translations. This leads again to the question of whose ‘voice’ appears in the texts, where and when? Klor de Alva argues that in major parts of the *Historia*, the Nahua voice is ‘clearly audible’ (Klor de Alva 1988: 46), albeit within limits. Sahagún controlled the collection and ordering of data, restricted the use of terms to those that ‘attest a European/Christian judgment and interpretation of the referent’, and employed assistants ‘already exposed to and partly assimilated into Euro-Christian culture’. Consequently, says Burkhart,

‘European “influence” in the colonial texts is not simply a screen or a veneer that can be easily peeled away. It is the *colonial* Indians who speak through these records, Indians who are in the process of adapting to the colonial environment, not simply by adding European traits to their own cultural repertoire but by reinterpreting those traits to make them consistent with preexisting cultural models’ (1989: 6, emphasis added).

Nevertheless, she also contends that

‘Indian influence permeates the doctrinal writings. Aside from Sahagún’s reliance on his native assistants, the very process of presenting Christian material in Nahuatl forced a recasting of Christian concepts according to Nahua categories’ (Burkhart 1988: 65)

Thus, ‘all the texts are ambivalent to varying degrees, interweaving native and imported voices so intricately that it can become very difficult to unravel them’ (Burkhart 1989: 23). Sahagún’s ‘dialogical fieldwork’ means ‘the narratives are thoroughly interpenetrated by different and at times opposing world views’ (Klor de Alva 1988: 50). And perhaps that is something which is often found in an intercultural dialogue.

Other Mindsets

What, then, emerges from this account? First, the text of the *Coloquios* ultimately presents an encounter between two peoples with very different conceptions of the world and our place in it, who try to explain what these are, and what they hope to achieve: conversion on the one hand, to be left with their gods on the other. But this is a zero-sum game, and the *rapport de force* meant that there could be only one outcome. Indeed, if the term ‘dialogue’ can be used to describe this encounter, it was very much a one-sided affair; it rapidly became a monologue in which the friars harangued the Mexica about the virtues of Christianity and the dangers of ignoring its message: a dialogue of the

deaf. Indeed, the purpose of such encounters was clearly evangelical, as was the text in which they were recorded (SilverMoon 2011: 172). This was also the purpose of the *Historia* of which Sahagún wrote:

‘I was compelled in holy obedience by my Major Prelate to write in the Mexican language whatever it seemed to me to be of use for the doctrine, culture, and preservation of Christianity among those natives of New Spain and for the aid of Ministers who catechize them’ (quoted in Léon-Portilla 2002: 132)

Nevertheless, the friars needed a clear understanding of the Mexica mindset, and knowledge of Mexica culture, for the purpose of engaging with their beliefs and practices, and finding suitable terms through which to translate Christian concepts. The *Coloquios* represented a first account of this; the *Historia* a later, fuller, more accurate one.

Yet, these were not simply texts recording an event through which Franciscans and others hoped to gain an understanding of what they were up against. In the writing, not least through the participation of the trilinguals, they became something else, a partial record of the Mexica’s own beliefs and values. Subsequently, although they were perceived (and welcomed) as recording the first conversions to Catholicism, the dominant religion of Mexico, they were also capable of an alternative interpretation. In the passages in the *Coloquios* where the Mexica sought to counter the arguments of the friars, or in the *Historia* where beliefs and practices are set out in detail, or in Chapter XII of the latter, which describes the Conquest from a Mexica perspective, such texts could be located within a post-colonial Mexican narrative of brave but ultimately futile attempts at resistance.

Secondly, incommensurability. With respect to the Mexica, Cecilia Klein (1995: 245) draws attention to the view (expressed by Greenblatt, 1991, among others), that ‘there can be no real epistemological interaction across cultures. One cannot ever know his “others”’. As Gruzinski puts it:

‘To claim to pass through the looking-glass, to grasp the Indians apart from the western European influence, is a perilous and often impracticable and illusory exercise; unless one accepts losing oneself in a maze of hypotheses that must ceaselessly be challenged’ (1993: 5.)

Extreme versions of this perspective, says Klein, have led to the conclusion that scholars are better off ‘spend[ing] their energies studying their own reflections in the mirrors of history’. On the contrary:

‘However cloudy the image may be destined to remain for us, it is possible to see something in the glass besides ourselves. Representations ... do not just refer to other representations; they can refer I part to other “realities” as well’ (1995: 246).

There are certainly major differences between the conceptual worlds of the Mexica and the Christian priests. Maffie (2012), for example, in an interesting account of what he calls the ‘linguistic ideologies’ revealed in the speeches in the *Coloquios*, contrasts the ‘truth-oriented’ philosophy of the Franciscans, with the ‘path-oriented’ philosophy of the Mexica. Such differences offer ample grounds for profound misunderstanding, and Maffie adopts Lockhart’s term ‘Double Mistaken Identity’ to characterise such confusion. This Lockhart himself defines as:

‘each side takes it that a given form or concept is essentially one already known to it, operating in much the same manner as in its own tradition, and hardly takes cognizance of the other side’s interpretation’ (1992: 445).

Yet it is possible to over-emphasise otherness. Studies which employ the idea of alterity, adds Lockhart (1992: 444), often assume that ‘groups facing each other are absorbed with this question [of

otherness] and that they generally view each other as radically distinct. Not so with the Nahuas and Spaniards'. Both Mexica and Spaniards had states and kings, priests and nobles, commoners and soldiers and merchants, and religion and witchcraft. Consequently, there were, for the Mexica, 'reasonably close analogues of the concepts structuring nearly all facets of European society and culture' (Lockhart 1993: 4), and 'each side was able to operate for centuries on an ultimately false but in practice workable presumption that the other side's analogous concepts were essentially identical with its own'. It was not that participants in the *Coloquios* did not understand each other's mindset, in fact in some respects they seem to have understood them, in general terms, all too well.

Moreover, the Mexica were used to dealing with other cultures and languages, albeit in a broadly similar (Mesoamerican) culture area, and many Castillian things did not appear so different to them that they could not use their own indigenous vocabulary, as, for example with parts of the body, (Lockhart 1992: 264). In other cases, says Lockhart, new terms were invented or old ones acquired new meaning. In a much-quoted passage from Book XII of Sahagún's *Historia*, concerning the Mexica's first sight of Spanish cavalry, their horses were initially assimilated to the familiar 'stags':

'The stags came forward, carrying soldiers on their backs. The soldiers wore cotton armor. They bore their leather shields and their iron spears in their hands, but their swords hung down from the necks of the stags. The animals wear many little bells. When they run, the bells make a loud clamor, ringing and reverberating. These animals snort and bellow. They sweat a great deal and the sweat pours from their bodies in streams', in Lockhart 1993 (ed.): 110).

Later the Spanish word for 'horse' was absorbed in Nahuatl. There were broader/deeper, conceptual similarities too:

'The language for basic categories like life and death, speed and slowness, truth and falsehood, happiness and sadness, or goodness and badness, varied hardly more between Nahuatl and Spanish than between any two European languages, and there was never any question but that the same terms would be applied in these spheres to the affairs of Spaniards as to those of the Nahuas or their neighbors' (Lockhart 1992: 264).

Yet there are hidden traps, as earlier discussion of the problems of translating Christian concepts has shown. Even if the Mexica had categories for goodness and badness (as indeed do most languages) the referents were surely very different. The linguistic terms map not the same cultural facts. Nonetheless, that scholars such as James Lockhart or Louise Burkhart can point to such difficulties, for example concerning the choice of the Nahuatl word *tlatlacolli* to translate Christian 'sin' (Burkhart 1989: 28 ff., quoted in Chapter 4; see also SilverMoon 2011: 178, and Burkhart 1989: 87 ff. on purity and danger), and explain how and why the mapping may mislead, and with what consequences, surely undermines any idea of 'strong' incommensurability, even as it underlines the difficulties facing those hoping to engage in intercultural dialogue, and the effort involved in interpretation and translation.

Concluding Remarks

What can be learned from this episode to be carried forward to later discussion? Leaving aside the status of the *Coloquios* as a document, it is clear that events such as that which it recorded are capable of multiple interpretations, at the time and subsequently, and then by later generations. That we can expect the meaning of a dialogue to be contested - what the different participants (and observers) make of it, what it is to be called, what they expect to get out of it, and how they evaluate eventual outcomes - is apparent in this case and others to be discussed in later chapters (e.g. Chapter 13).

Secondly, obvious here, because of the linguistic and cultural difference between the two parties, but also detectable in other cases, are the difficulties, albeit not the impossibility, of translating

key concepts especially those which give clues as the mindset of the interlocuteurs. Thirdly, there is the role of those in intercalary positions, such as the trilinguals, in mediating such translations. Finally, there is the simple fact that the *Coloquios* abundantly demonstrates the role of power relations in framing who speaks to whom, and what can be said and heard. All too often interculturalism seems to assume that dialogues are between equals, when the usual reality is that relationships are asymmetrical.

CHAPTER 12. MESSENGERS AND MEDIATORS

‘Faire connaître aux Caluirards qui sont les travailleurs immigrés ... pourquoi ils sont venus et quels sont leurs problèmes’ (Groupe Tiers Monde de Caluire 1975).

Introduction

In the Preface I indicated that this book explores three interconnected themes: ‘intercultural knowledge’, ‘intercultural dialogues’, and ‘intercultural negotiations’. The first part of the present chapter is mainly concerned with knowledge, or specifically what Georges Gurvitch (1971) called ‘social knowledge’, and what I call ‘intercultural knowledge’ in that it refers to the understanding that members of one social or cultural group have, or believe they have, of the beliefs and practices of another: how they acquire it, how they organise it, what they do with it.

The chapter describes a project (the *Enquête Caluire*) undertaken by members of a French voluntary association who produced a report on the lives of immigrant workers and their families in a suburb of the city of Lyon, France, in 1976. The report represented the way in which at the time neither French nor immigrants communicated readily and directly with each other, but dialogue, if it can be called that, required the services of a variety of intermediaries (the ‘messengers’ of the section’s title). It was thus also about dialogue, specifically indirect dialogue, with absent interlocuteurs.

While the events described must be understood in the context of relations between French and North African immigrants in Lyon in 1976, they also have implications for understanding intercultural dialoguing in other places and at different times. Indeed, there are many situations in contemporary Europe where someone, perhaps acting in a professional capacity, takes on the role of an intermediary or ‘messenger’ who conveys social and cultural information (‘knowledge’ or ‘understanding’) about one group to members of another, and perhaps vice versa. The second, shorter, part of the chapter thus carries the discussion forward by looking at the role of such intermediaries, including what are called ‘cultural mediators’, and the part they play in both direct and indirect intercultural dialogue, in more recent contexts including contemporary Italy.

Messengers

*The Enquête Caluire*¹⁵⁶

The worlds of others are in varying degrees opaque and unknown, or transparent and mapped, but for reasons other than mere curiosity or sociability, the members of one collectivity may wish or need to know about those worlds. Sometimes the mapping may be derived from personal contact, command of the language and so on. More casual acquaintance through migration or tourism is another source. In certain circumstances, close study may be involved, and anthropologists may have a hand in it. But characteristic of contemporary societies is that *apparent* familiarity with other worlds (what may be thought of as ‘knowledge’ about them) can be acquired without such contact, mediated, for example by films, TV, newspapers, magazines, books, and so on. Perhaps this would not matter except that such knowledge may be believed to justify a stance towards those in another world, or give competence to intervene in their affairs. While this fashion of acquiring knowledge of others may also be characteristic of parties on all sides, including those who are otherwise unequal in terms of power,

156 In the early 1980s I wrote an account of the *Enquête Caluire* for a seminar series at Queen’s University, Belfast, organised by Reg Byron and Milan Stuchlik, both now sadly no longer with us, on the theme of ‘Familiar and Unfamiliar Worlds in Complex Societies’. It was never published.

authority, status and wealth, the apparent knowledge or understanding that the powerful have of the world of less powerful others may have vastly different consequences.

Intercultural knowledge may be ‘constructed’ (à la Foucault) in terms of what counts as ‘knowledge’, and in how it is interpreted, i.e. placed within an explanatory or normative narrative. To say ‘constructed’ is not to pronounce on truth or falsity. What is known is constructed in the sense that it is said, authoritatively, to constitute an item of what we designate ‘knowledge’, is organised in a certain kind of way, and variously positioned within a framework of resemblances and dissimilarities, causes and effects. How, why and with what consequence are important questions.

A word of caution. The reader should be clear that the data discussed in this section derive from fieldwork I undertook in 1975-6, and refer to what was happening at a certain moment in time (over forty years ago); what is happening now, the kind of relationships involved, may be very different from what they were. For example, the *Enquête* made nothing of the fact that the subjects of the inquiry were followers of Islam; in the language of the day they were ‘immigrants’, ‘Maghrébins’, ‘North Africans’, or ‘Arabs’ (though some were Berber), with origins (for the most part) in the rural areas of the former French North African possessions. This is not to say that their religion was unimportant for the French or the immigrants themselves, but it was of considerably less salience than it became a decade or so later, or is now, when scarcely a day passes without religiosity being subject to intense scrutiny and policy intervention. Nonetheless, as with the events described in the *Coloquios* of 1524, the case study may provide material for reflection on the nature of intercultural dialogue in different contexts and epochs, and the difficulties those engaging in it are likely to encounter.

France 1976

As an anthropologist, I have for many years been studying the relationship between European societies as ‘host’ or ‘receiving’ societies, and those who have arrived as migrants or refugees, principally from Africa and Asia. Attempts to deal with their difference have been central to research in France (Grillo 1985), Italy (Grillo and Pratt eds. 2002), and the UK (Grillo 2015a), and more generally in an account of *Pluralism and the Politics of Difference* (Grillo 1998). In those contexts, I have had a special interest in how the ways of life of immigrants and refugees, and later generations of settled populations of immigrant background, are ‘represented’, in two senses: what is said about them, how they are perceived and conceived, and how what is said is taken up within the institutional system where policies are formulated and implemented, that is, how perceptions are represented in a political sense, and by whom.

This concern was especially important in my research in France, in the city of Lyon in 1975-6, which among other things investigated certain people who could operate at the interface between French and immigrants, and who might be said to ‘represent’ those immigrants in the senses defined. This was the subject of a chapter (in Grillo 1985) which described what I called ‘messengers’, go-betweens, professional and other purveyors of information and knowledge, whose work put them in a position where they had what was deemed to be privileged knowledge of immigrants and/or the societies of emigration. In the context of France (and Lyon) in the 1970s this meant of the North African countries of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, and those who came from them. *At that time* (and this must be stressed) such intermediaries were usually (though not always) French by origin, language and culture, who acted as conduits of knowledge about the lives of North Africans to the wider French society. Many French people (if they were interested in such things) garnered their knowledge of North African migrants in their midst indirectly through such intermediaries. The direct input of North Africans themselves into this process of knowledge construction was (again, at the time) limited in the extreme.

In the 1970s there were some four million foreigners in France, for the most part migrant workers and their families coming from former French colonies in North and West Africa, and from Southern Europe. Official figures for 1975 estimated the foreign population of the Rhône Department,

including the Lyon conurbation, at c. 184,000 (some thirteen per cent of the total), of whom over half were from North Africa. The majority of the latter were at the time men who worked in France (in the building industry or in factories) with families back home, but numbers of the latter were increasing rapidly, and by the mid-1970s many children were arriving and entering the school system. Within the Lyon conurbation (population c. 1.1 million) the foreign population was unevenly distributed between the constituent communes: in the southeast of the city foreigners made up some sixteen per cent of the population while in the north they constituted less than half that. Indeed, in the commune of Caluire, discussed below, they formed less than six per cent.

Very briefly, the situation of immigrants, principally those from North Africa, was viewed as 'problematic'. Their relationship to France and French society was routinely interpreted through a colonial, not to say 'racial' lens, which emphasised the 'tribal' origins of the migrants. They were often seen as coming from 'traditional' societies ('straight from the *bled*') with beliefs and practices regarding women and children which made it difficult - some would say impossible - for their families to fit into (integrate with) French society. Although most were Muslim, Islam was not then the issue which it subsequently became.

For reasons discussed elsewhere, the book in which I wrote up the Lyon study (*Ideologies and Institutions in Urban France: The Representation of Immigrants*, 1985) was less a 'community' study, of the kind then typical of anthropological research on minorities in the UK, with the lives of immigrant workers and their families seen from the inside, than a study of the French, their society and institutions, in so far as they related to immigrants. It was therefore in the first place about the French. That said, this account actually begins with a short speech made by an Algerian.

Intercultural Knowledge 1976

'The cultural problem is linked to the problem of immigration. People come here because they have to leave their countries to come here to work. The immigrant has a certain culture. He comes to France, to another ambience, to a different economic situation with strange forms of economic organisation and cultural organisation and ideological organisation. There are problems as a consequence of his being in a new situation - for example in the organisation of work. Industrial society has different customs to those found in underdeveloped countries.

A first problem is language, when he steps off the boat. There are effects on his own language, there is an impoverishment of his own language. He uses very common French words at work - *usine* for example. Outside work, in the streets, it's a life to which he's not accustomed. There is harassment by the police, the attitude of the people who stare at him. All these changes create certain problems.

So then he sends for his family. Over there [in North Africa] there is a highly-defined organisation of the family, of the traditional type. It is that type of family which comes here. We can contrast the family which we describe as traditional with the family which one describes as *évoluée*, what one calls the modern type. In Algeria the family has the opportunity to evolve in its natural milieu, but [here] they are parachuted into another milieu. The effect is to halt its evolution.

A traditional Algerian family coming here remains a traditional Algerian family in France, with very little opportunity to modernise. The organisation of the family is affected. The father has some elements of French vocabulary; the mother does not speak French. The children have much greater chance of contact with the society - they have their friends in the street, the TV, the school. Little by little a gap [*décalage*] is created between parents and children. The child is distanced from his parents. He enters French society much more than his parents. Thus there arise more and more acute conflicts which the parents try to resolve. They try to do this through the Arabic classes. These signify for the parents a means of recovering their children, of maintaining contact with the original milieu. From that moment there are conflicts. I apologise for making such a long speech.¹⁵⁷

The speaker was an Algerian student of psychology at one of the local universities. The occasion was a study group which met as part of the day's events connected with the annual conference of an organisation called ACFAL (*Association de Coopération Franco-Algérienne du Lyonnais*), a private association concerned primarily with language teaching, French to North Africans, and Arabic to French, but which was also a politically-oriented organisation with leftist tendencies. Some two dozen people participated in the study group of whom five were North African students, the rest French, for the most part teachers and social workers.

The study group, one of several taking place simultaneously following a larger combined meeting, was concerned with 'Cultural Identity', in fact mainly with language, and thence cultural values in the broader sense. Previously we had heard an account of an experimental class in modern literary Arabic recently started in one of the suburbs of Lyon aimed at North African children born and/or brought up in France. The above extract located what was said to be the demand for such courses in the context of the social and economic changes faced by Algerian families in France and in Algeria. It was followed by a discussion in which four of the five North Africans and most of the French participated. The latter contributed either questions (which generally came down to 'What do the parents think?' 'What do the children think?') or comments, including answers to those questions, based on their experience as teachers or social workers engaged with North Africans in Lyon.

This was a very serious and interesting discussion, but in the middle I had a reaction. What are we doing here? Who are these people anyway? What gives them the right to sit around discussing the needs of North African families? How many of them are members of such families living on some awful housing estate? What do these Algerian students know about all this? Where are the mothers, fathers, children themselves? This reaction was grossly unfair, but in fieldwork one has moods and they can be productive. In this case I realised that what I had observed at this meeting was in fact typical of many situations encountered throughout the research.

Let me oversimplify grossly and refer to two sets of people, each with their own familiar worlds, on the one hand, North African immigrants and their families, on the other the French. As I have explained elsewhere (Grillo 2008), although this representation of a dichotomy between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', or rather two groups of 'insiders', was largely correct at the time (though there were important exceptions, such as the students mentioned above, and increasingly so), it has much less contemporary pertinence when among immigrant and minority ethnic populations there are many who are both 'inside' and 'outside', and in a multiplicity of places in between. Nonetheless, it did have resonance in Britain or France in the 1960s or 1970s, where neither collectivity communicated readily and directly with the other, partly because of language. Very few French people spoke Arabic, again with some important exceptions, and in that period most North Africans spoke poor French, from the French point of view. It would, however, be far too simple to say that there was a 'communications problem' because over-riding all relations between the French and North African immigrants was a framework of race-class relationships that structured the communication that was possible and which actually occurred.

157 My translation, from fieldwork notes.

For various reasons, however, and for different reasons depending on who they were, some French women and men needed, or wished to acquire, knowledge about North African immigrants, about their world and world view, what they thought and felt. This was most obviously the case with those who worked with or for immigrants, directly or indirectly, in a professional or voluntary capacity, including those concerned, again directly or indirectly, professionally or voluntarily, in formulating policies to cope with the 'problems' of immigrants. Such knowledge was not only of an elementary factual kind e.g. that the average wage of an Algerian in the building industry was X francs per month, or that the average Algerian family had four children and lived in a two-roomed flat in a suburban housing estate. It also included knowledge of a vast range of social and cultural facts which were of the same order (not necessarily the same kind) as those which an anthropologist studying such families might expect to collect.

Beyond that, many people wanted some sense of how immigrant society worked, how it was enmeshed with French society, and how the latter impinged on it. That is, they required an analytical framework within which the social and cultural facts could be located and perhaps a theoretical framework which could provide explanations of a global kind for the observed ways of life, and in turn indicate what might be done to encounter or change them. All these constitute 'constructions' of immigrant society, and what is true of the French in regard to immigrants was also true of immigrants in regard to the French.

The Enquête

To say that direct communication between French and immigrants was rare is not to say that it was entirely absent. Indeed, the example of the students participating in the ACFAL debate showed otherwise. Nonetheless, direct communication of that kind was unusual and involved certain individuals and occasions. More typical perhaps was the following event (mentioned in passing in Grillo 1985: 245, 272).

I read in the local press that an exhibition was being held in the suburb of Caluire concerned with immigrants in the commune. Caluire is a middle-class area to the North of Lyon which had a relatively low percentage of immigrants in its population, though these were concentrated in two or three small areas. The object of the exhibition was: 'Faire connaître aux Caluirards qui sont les travailleurs immigrés ... pourquoi ils sont venus et quels sont leurs problèmes'¹⁵⁸, as the Bulletin of the organisation running the exhibition put it. This was the *Groupe Tiers Monde de Caluire*, a small association of concerned citizens, mainly teachers, engineers and other similar professional middle class people, who each year chose some theme connected with the Third World as a topic for discussion and action. In 1974, for example, they chose the drought in the Sahel. In 1975-6 the subject was immigrants.

The exhibition, held in a hall on Caluire high street, consisted of a poster and photographic display illustrating a variety of facts about immigrant life and the problems of housing, school, work and so on, together with a bookstall. In preparing for the exhibition members of the *Groupe* had undertaken a social survey of their area which had been typed up as a short monograph with illustrations (*Groupe Tiers Monde de Caluire* 1975); a copy was also on display. In effect the *Groupe* had undertaken fieldwork, and as a matter of interest retraced many of the steps I myself undertook when doing some work of my own in the commune. A brief analysis of their procedure is revealing.

A variety of sources were used to compile the report. They were, first, able to obtain copies of detailed unpublished census material compiled in 1975. Secondly, they had walked around the commune making observations in those areas where most of the immigrants lived, taking photos, but not so far as I know talking to any of the inhabitants. Thirdly, they had undertaken a series of

158 'To acquaint the residents of Caluire with who the immigrant workers are ... why they have come here, and what are their problems'.

interviews with a number of people whose jobs brought them into daily contact with immigrants. It is these people, every one of whom was French, who supplied the *Groupe* with the bulk of their information. They included the director of a hostel (*foyer*) for men living in France without their families; the director of a *Cité de Transit* housing immigrant families in theory on a temporary basis; members of the 'socio-educative' team located at the *Cité*; the headmistress of the local school which took children from the *Cité*; and a social assistant working in a neighbourhood of run-down tenements housing a large number of immigrants. Although typical in some ways, two of the informants were unusual in that the hostel was a small one run by a private Catholic organisation (*Notre Dame des Sans-Abri*¹⁵⁹) which also ran the *Cité de Transit*. The results of this fieldwork, incorporated in the report and the exhibition (which also drew attention to the national scene), were transmitted in the first instance to the population of Caluire, or at least those who attended the exhibition, and later to a wider public via a short article which appeared in the newspaper *Le Progrès de Lyon* (8 December 1975).

At every stage the *Enquête* involved a processing of information. The exhibition itself was manifestly a structured event, in terms of what such an institution means in suburban French society, and in the obvious sense that the elements of which it was composed (facts, statements, photos, posters, literature) were arranged to tell a story, organised thematically to convey a message designed to reach a certain audience: the French population of Caluire. At a previous stage, there was also the structuring of the report itself. Although the investigators recorded more or less what they had been told, their informants' remarks, whether reported in direct or indirect speech, were selected and arranged in such a way that a message was conveyed. Having myself interviewed three of their key informants at considerable length, I recognised their voices in the reported remarks.

The people to whom the *Groupe* talked, their informants, represented for its members and others like them the (French) people with the closest direct contact with immigrants. They were the sort of people frequently approached by interested parties precisely because of this. Each of these informants was in an institutional situation which placed them in a specific relationship with the immigrants whose way of life they were asked to describe. It also placed them in a certain relationship to the world at large because they were in a sense speaking as representatives of their organisation. Linked to this, they were each involved with different segments of the immigrant collectivity, and could only tell part of the story, the primary school teacher about young children and their parents, usually the mothers with whom they came into contact; the hostel director about his (male) residents and perhaps their jobs; the social assistant about families, mainly mothers and children, only secondarily the fathers. This might not matter if one is interested in what these informants said as teachers, social workers etc regarding the relations they had with immigrants. It does matter if their information is used to describe the problems of the immigrants themselves.

What such informants had to say would also be structured ideologically, perhaps in three ways: by the ideology of the organisation (certainly in the case of the *Notre Dame des Sans-Abri*); by the ideology of the profession (the view of the aims and purposes of, say, teaching or social work); and by the personal religious or political views of the individuals concerned. This is to say nothing of their background and life-experience. It is not irrelevant, for example, that the director of the *Cité de Transit* was a retired schoolmaster born and brought up as a child in Algeria, or that one of his principal assistants was the son of a Spanish *pied noir*.

Somewhere, behind it all, were the immigrants themselves, often invisible or without voice, whose own views were often a matter for speculation. For example, the *Group Tiers Monde* reported that many male immigrants without families seemed to prefer living in individual accommodation rather than a hostel. Why was this, they asked?

159 See <http://www.fndsa.org/qui-somme-nous>.

‘Est-ce le gout de la liberté et de l’isolement, est-ce l’absence de contraintes, est-ce pour des raisons d’économie ou pour manque de foyers d’accueil jusqu’à ces derniers temps, ou pour d’autres raisons ? Nous n’avons pas eu le temps d’éclaircir cette question’¹⁶⁰ (Groupe Tiers Monde de Caluire 1975).

Nonetheless, there were some immigrants who became part of, or perhaps inserted themselves within, the ‘information structuring chain’. They were people whose views were thought especially valuable or influential by teachers, social workers, or hostel directors, who in turn passed on what they had to say when acting as informants to someone else, for instance the *Groupe Tiers Monde de Caluire*. Such immigrants-as-informants, who were engaged in particular relationships in particular institutional contexts (social worker-client, teacher-pupil/parent, hostel director-resident), were not, so far as I know, approached directly by the *Groupe Tiers Monde*.

The *Enquête Caluire*, then, illustrated how a group of French people, desiring information on others, sought that information almost exclusively from French people who were in direct contact with those others. This was wholly typical of the way in which information and ideas about immigrant life were conveyed in Lyon in the mid-1970s. The innumerable working parties, commissions, councils and so on, which existed to discuss the problems of immigrant life, rarely had access to direct immigrant representation. Typically, the immigrant voice was transmitted indirectly through the medium of the kind of informants discussed above.

This was not always the case, and the immigrant-as-informant did sometimes enter the limelight, for example at the ACFAL meeting. But occasions when direct representation occurred tended to be special, involving certain institutions, and certain kinds of people, and were often highly structured. The students at ACFAL were, among other things, suited to their task because they were articulate in French. They spoke the same language, in all senses of the term, as their audience. Such spokespersons-as-informants translated their information into an idiom (leftish, social science jargon) which was that employed and enjoyed by their audience. That was their strength so far as ACFAL was concerned. At another ACFAL meeting a ‘genuine’ immigrant worker, who had been prominent in a small strike, was invited to speak. Although he could make himself well understood in French he was obliged, by the audience, to be an Arabic speaker whose remarks were then translated into quasi-Marxist jargon in French by a Tunisian postgraduate student of economics. If such competence at translation and coding on the part of students represented their strength, so far as ACFAL was concerned, it also indicated their weakness in relation to other institutions. What goes down well with *gauchistes* would not necessarily be acclaimed at the *Préfecture*, and vice versa.

Lyon Forty Years On

Well, that was then, and forty years or more later the world has moved on in many ways. As I indicated above, the simple opposition between two discrete and homogenous blocs, ‘French’ and ‘Immigrants’, no longer applies, just as John Gumperz’s contrast between ‘native’ and ‘Indian’ English, and his demonstration of the ways in which linguistic conventions affect any dialogue between their speakers, has been overtaken by subsequent developments. Nonetheless, there are continuities as well as differences.

Joseph Downing’s research in Lyon (2013, 2015) in many ways provides an interesting account of some of those changes, as well as of the continuities. Downing’s doctoral thesis was concerned with the recognition, or otherwise, of ‘post-migration communities’ in contemporary Marseille, Paris and Lyon. Downing argues that compared with Marseille, the latter two cities have, at

160 Translation: ‘Is it the desire for freedom and living on one’s own, is it the absence of restrictions, is it for reasons of economy or for lack, until recently, of reception centres, or for other reasons? We did not have time to clear up this question’.

least until recently, adhered to the standard French national, ‘republican’, policy of non-recognition of ethnic and cultural difference, though this has begun to change. In the case of Lyon, there have been a number of initiatives in the cultural field, especially on the part of third sector associations, which have sought to pursue a ‘policy-narrative based on recognition’ (2013: 211).

‘Cultural’, in this case means the creative arts, and especially music. One example is a project of the Centre des Musiques Traditionnelles Rhône-Alpes (CMTRA), based in the suburb of Villeurbanne, which seeks

‘through the ethnographic collection of evidence and the creation of musical sound archives to bring out music and cultural forms that may not otherwise be seen or heard in the public sphere, which may otherwise be confined to the private sphere of the family and religious services’ (Downing 2013: 211.)

In 2016, CMTRA became ‘l’Ethnopôle “Musiques, Territoires, Interculturalités”’, for the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. It is thus ‘conçu comme un espace intermédiaire permettant de tisser des voies communes de compréhension et d’action à partir de la multiplicité des manières de pratiquer et de raconter les traditions musicales’.¹⁶¹

This approach is illustrated by CMTRA’s ‘sound atlas’ (*Atlas sonore*), of the 8th Arrondissement, available on the Internet¹⁶². The sound atlas was put together over two years

‘accomplished over a two-year period by a team of researchers who lived in the area while they conducted the study. They employed anthropological ethnographic methods to document the stories, daily lives and music of musicians in the area, including meeting them in their houses and taking pictures of their houses for publication online. In total, the atlas showcases thirteen acts from Africa, South America, the Arab world and the Caribbean. Each act has its own page with biographical information, several tracks and their location on the map of their area to show where they are in the city’ (Downing 2015: 1568)

This project is different from the *Enquête Caluire* in that it is about ‘culture’, albeit in a narrow sense, but in many ways the intention is the same, to make the world of the (now) ‘post-migrants’ known to French society as a whole. At the same time, although both projects involved researchers acting as intermediaries, in the *Atlas sonore* they were, apparently, much more closely and directly involved with the communities, and specifically with the musicians than those participating in the *Enquête Caluire*. Unfortunately, it is unclear who the anonymous researchers actually engaged in the *Atlas sonore* were. The CMTRA website simply says:

‘Il anime un réseau composé d’associations, de chercheurs, d’enseignants et de professionnels de la culture, au service des pratiques artistiques amateurs et professionnelles, de la transmission et de la diffusion du spectacle vivant’.¹⁶³

As Downing argues, while according recognition to the musicians, and bringing them to the

161 Translation: ‘conceived as an intermediary space within which to weave common ways of understanding and action from the multiplicity of ways in which musical traditions are practiced and related’, https://www.cmtra.org/Nous_connaitre/Le_CA/5_Lethnopole_Musiques_territoires_interculturalites.html. On l’Ethnopôle see <http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Thematiques/Patrimoine-ethnologique/Patrimoine-ethnologique2/Ethnologues-en-region/Ethnopolyes>.

162 See: <http://www.cmtra.org/pedagogique/quartiers.php?action=consulter&id=4&rubrique=atlas>; and <http://www.musiquesdu8.fr>.

163 https://www.cmtra.org/Nous_connaitre/Lassociation/3_LE_CMTRA.html. The website also lists the members of CMTRA’s scientific committee, the majority of whom appear to be anthropologists. Translation: ‘[CMTRA] leads a network of associations, researchers, teachers and cultural professionals to assist amateur and professional artistic practice and the transmission and dissemination of live entertainment’.

attention of a wider public, they are still treated as ‘foreign’, their music classified as ‘world music’, rather than part and parcel of the Lyon milieu. An example of this is the group *Mouradia*, who play in restaurants and cafes a type of music which brings together many cultural influences from Europe and North Africa. Downing records that the group has in fact existed in Lyon since the 1960s, and their music has grown out of that experience, but ‘the sound atlas makes no attempt to explain this in any detail or to attach it in any way to the city of Lyon, even though it is being in Lyon that has changed the subject matter of Mouradia’s cultural production’ (2015: 1569). For CMTRA, their music is ‘Algerian’ and ‘foreign’.

Intermediaries

Both the *Atlas sonore* researchers and those involved in the *Enquête Caluire* are cultural and social messengers, engaging in dialogue with immigrants/post-migrants (directly in the one case, indirectly in the other), and conveying the results of that dialogue to a wider audience: the residents of Caluire, through the exhibition etc, and the population of Lyon through the Internet. Indeed, in the latter case the Atlas is freely available to the world at large. Nonetheless, in both cases it is their intermediary role which is the principal interest of this chapter. Such a role is further illustrated by the emerging profession of what are called ‘cultural’ or sometimes ‘intercultural’ *mediators*.

Intercultural Mediators

There is a scene in the Italian documentary *Fuocoammare* (2016¹⁶⁴), a film about migrants and asylum seekers rescued from boats crossing the Mediterranean from Africa, where a doctor is examining a pregnant woman and trying to convey, with difficulty, what he is doing. Not to worry, he says, ‘a *mediatore culturale* [cultural mediator] will be along in a minute’.

The existence of cultural or intercultural mediators (sometimes called ‘operators’¹⁶⁵) in countries such as Italy, illustrates another context in which the idea of interculturalism (and by implication intercultural dialogue) has been employed. These are terms used for professional employees (sometimes volunteers) who are tasked with working at the interface between Italian institutions, such as the health service, and the foreign/immigrant populations who use them. Their deployment is thought to ‘encourage foreign groups to access public facilities, especially those related to healthcare, social integration, education, justice and job assistance’ (Farini 2013: 1; see also Theodosiou and Aspioti 2016: 36 who quote the Italian Immigration Code which defines the mediator’s role along those lines). Mediators may be Italian and/or of immigrant background. Maurizio Ambrosini in fact points out that the two fields of skilled, professional work in which immigrants in Italy can find employment are health care (as nurses etc), and the ‘very specific and little regulated sector of so-called of “intercultural mediation”’ (2013: 188). A footnote adds: ‘as the employer is often public, immigrants cannot enter as officials, but they work with a variety of solutions that circumvent the law’ (*ibid.*)

Intercultural mediation, say Theodosiou and Aspioti, is a ‘bridging of cultures, meanings, silent languages, terms, collocations’, adding ‘interpretation and intercultural mediation are two facets of interpersonal communication necessary for the success of the latter’ (2016: 16). According to Federico Farini, they thus have a dual role: they ‘*interpret* and *coordinate* communication’ (his emphases), e.g. between doctor and patient. Hence,

‘interpreting may be understood as a form of mediation. The interpreter-mediator is the only participant in the interaction who is able to understand everything that the others in the conversation say. Therefore, s/he can define the context of the encounter, draw attention to the production of shared topics, and manage misunderstandings’ (Farini 2013: 3).

164 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire_at_Sea.

165 Theodosiou and Aspioti (2016: 27-8) list terms used in various European countries.

In that way, he continues, the mediator ‘builds intercultural communications, promoting the active participation of the people involved in the interaction, while at the same time gatekeeping, i.e. acting as a filter in the information flow’ (2013: 4).

One institution which employed cultural mediators was the ‘Family Planning Centre for Migrant Women and their Children’ in an Italian city in the Emilia-Romagna region described by Ruba Salih (2002, see also Salih 2003). As Salih notes, following initiatives in Bologna, Milan and Rome, the Centre was ‘conceived and created by local authorities to tackle the social and cultural marginalisation migrant women encountered in the host society’ (Salih 2002: 140), and thus address the ‘linguistic misunderstandings and cultural disadvantages’ (p. 143) such women faced when using the health services. While training courses would develop the ‘relational skills of the personnel working in the centres and their ability to understand and communicate with “other cultures”’ (p. 144), the proposal for the Centre also envisaged the insertion of specialist ‘intercultural mediators’, arguing that ‘Other experiences ... show the importance of this figure, at least in the first stage, especially for those ethnic groups linguistically and culturally *more distant from us*’ (*ibid.*, Salih’s emphasis). The mediator, commented Salih, ‘is often seen as a person who, by virtue of his or her deep knowledge of both cultural systems [of the host country and that of the immigrant] ... is supposed to forge and facilitate interaction between the two’ (2003: 148). Salih, who worked as a volunteer at the Centre, was skeptical about such projects which all too often created an institutional ghetto for migrant women.

Originally an ad hoc arrangement involving individuals, often of migrant background, assisting social workers and the like when engaging with clients from the mediator’s own cultural and linguistic background, cultural mediation in the 2000s developed into a full-blown professional occupation with its own training programmes. (Another Italian example is discussed by Cristiana Giordano 2014). Indeed, intercultural mediators are found across Europe, for example in Spain, Greece, Portugal and Poland, and there is now an international community of such mediators. ‘intercultural mediation’, say Arvanitis and Kameas, has become an ‘important factor of social integration in the areas such as the judicial system, the health and welfare service provision or in education’ (2014: x), and go on to stress the need for a professional approach to such interventions. This, they say, has been encouraged by the EU’s SONETOR project¹⁶⁶, which ‘became a tool to establish and sustain a European community of cultural mediators through its multi-lingual social networking platform’ (p. xi). Their edited book (Arvanitis and Kameas eds. 2014) itself emerged from a conference on ‘*Enhancing the Skills and Identity of Cultural Mediators in a Multicultural Europe*’, held in Greece in 2014.¹⁶⁷

Training for Intercultural Mediators and Communicators

As explained in previous chapters, engaging in intercultural dialogue, demands a high degree of competence, and thus training. This has been a long-standing issue. Back in the 1980s, for example, John Gumperz’s empirical research and theoretical work (described in Chapter 5, had a practical side which influenced training for multicultural industrial contexts in Britain and Australia (e.g. Jupp, Roberts, and Cook-Gumperz 1982, Roberts, Davies and Jupp 1992, Clyne 1994). Appropriate training left participants ‘much more aware of the complexity of communication in an interview and with a more open attitude towards how impressions are formed and judgments made’ (Roberts, Davies, and Jupp 1992: 170.)

In language reminiscent of Michael Barret’s account of dialogical competence (described in Chapter 5), Theodosiou and Aspioti aver that an intercultural mediator ‘has to have developed

166 See *inter alia* <http://www.sonetor-project.eu/news>.

167 See

https://www.academia.edu/11268422/Conference_Proceedings_of_the_International_Conference_Enhancing_Skills_and_Identity_of_Cultural_Mediators_in_a_Multicultural_Europe.

specific skills and competencies such as recognizing the body language, having basic knowledge of legal and procedural issues, having highly developed empathy and awareness, confidentiality and neutrality etc.’ (2016: 17). Specifically in Italy they must show they have ‘good communication skills, empathy, fairness, good knowledge of the Italian language, great knowledge of the culture of origin, great knowledge of Italian culture, experience in the field of immigration service’ (2016: 19). This obviously demands a high level of training, and Theodosiou and Aspioti summarise the various programmes available in several European countries. In Italy, for example, they include degree courses, as well as basic and advanced vocational courses: one such, from the *Università degli Studi dell’Insubria* (Como), can be consulted online.¹⁶⁸ The TIME project (Train Intercultural Mediators for a Multicultural Europe), with which Theodosiou and Aspioti are associated, documents training and employment practices for intercultural mediators across the EU.¹⁶⁹

Training is also an important issue for another professional field, that of ‘intercultural communication’, which was examined in depth by the Swedish anthropologist Tommy Dahlen in *Among the Interculturalists* (1997). This field, says Dahlen, includes a variety of institutions, including university departments, across the globe dedicated to intercultural communication and concerned with ‘diversity training, cross-cultural counselling, intercultural negotiation, intercultural communication training, cross-cultural sensitivity training’ (Dahlen 1997: 9). Dahlen traces its origins to the 1960s US civil rights movement and the experience of the Peace Corps. One of the principal organisations was in fact founded in 1968 as SITAR (named, in very 1960s fashion, after the Indian instrument, Dahlen 1997: 188). Subsequently (in 1974) it became SIETAR (Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research), and currently has a large international membership.¹⁷⁰

Dahlen’s study is principally concerned with intercultural consultants and trainers, and with ‘how culture and cultural differences are conceptualised and represented among the interculturalists’ (Dahlen 1997: 15, 21). In examining the prevailing view of culture among the trainers, Dahlen shows how they have taken on an anthropological perspective, but one largely drawn from the view of culture dominant in the discipline in the mid-20th century.¹⁷¹ Dahlen himself has some interesting observations on the dilemma in which this placed him in relation to the interculturalists and how, when his advice as a professional anthropologist was sought, he consciously tried to update the interculturalists’ understanding of culture (1997: 28-9, 157 ff.)

Interculturalists’ materials emphasise the need for training: ‘The text and the pictures carry the message of cultures being so different that coping with these differences can only be successful with the aid of professional expertise’ (Dahlen 1997: 20). The basic training structure incorporates lectures and practical exercises to build on and try to convey the essence of intercultural experience (Dahlen 1997: 83). The emphasis is on ‘experiential learning’, including simulations and role-playing, which are said to allow the participants to ‘experience situations which are similar or analogous those encountered in real life’ (Dahlen 1997: 84). The aims of some of this training can be concluded from Dahlen’s description of courses put on by one institute which sought to ‘convey an understanding of and sensitivity towards cultural differences’ (Dahlen 1997: 132). Thus in ‘Perspectives on Hispanic Communication’ the objectives are: ‘to recognize the variety of Hispanic peoples, to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity of Hispanic communication styles, and to explore ways to enhance cultural diversity and understanding’ (Dahlen 1997: 132). Insights which trainers urge participants to draw from this training include:

168 <http://www4.uninsubria.it/on-line/home/naviga-per-profilo/studente/scheda660.html>; see also https://www.icotea.it/eng/catalog-cultural_intercultural_mediator_course_1500_hours-p115087.html.

169 <http://www.mediation-time.eu/index.php?lang=en>. For an example of an intercultural mediation training programme in the UK, see <http://acert.org.uk/blog/2015/02/03/romed-in-uk/> (concerned specifically with Roma communities); see also <https://www.dur.ac.uk/cim>.

170 See <http://www.sietareu.org>, <http://sietar.co.uk/pages/> etc.

171 Not all intercultural communication or mediation is concerned with culture in an anthropological sense; Mörsch and Holland’s edited book entitled *Time for Cultural Mediation* (2014) is about the artistic sector, ‘Culture’ with a capital ‘C’.

‘Don’t make assumptions; be open-minded; listen through people’s cultural framework; be open with both heart and mind; show warmth, caring and understanding; learn to appreciate, not to compare; bring world peace through understanding’ (Dahlen 1997: 148).

Such ‘learning outcomes’ would not disgrace a course of conventional anthropology, but it is doubtful whether the rather superficial level achieved by such programmes can offer more than token insights. One is reminded of the advertising programme (in 2003-4) of a major British bank (HSBC) which illustrated through a series of vignettes (a British businessman dining with Chinese colleagues, a backpacker in Latin America) the variety of cultural differences of which the bank claimed to be aware and take into account in its dealings with other people. In a press release their head of marketing claimed:

‘This new campaign is about HSBC’s understanding of the impact of differences between cultures. We are not a “one-size fits all” organisation. We have always believed that in order to prosper we have to adapt to suit the environments in which we operate. Our customers know that wherever in the world they see the HSBC logo they can expect to receive a world-class service delivered with an ingrained knowledge of local customs. This applies as much to individuals and individual communities as it does to the countries and territories in which we operate’¹⁷²

Representations: Over and Undercoding

A great deal was happening at the ‘French’/‘Immigrant’ and other intercultural frontiers, with much information conveyed by ‘messengers’ and intermediaries engaged in a variety of tasks, including the transmission and translation of intercultural knowledge. That was the way the medium worked; what about the message?

How intercultural knowledge is constructed may be analysed in a number of ways. Here are two. First, ideology. The *Enquête Caluire* recorded the following remarks concerning women in the *Cité de Transit*:

‘Manque de motivation. Ces femmes immigrés vivent entre elles dans un milieu trop protégé, avec trop peu de contacts avec l’extérieur. Elles bénéficient d’un encadrement social qui peut prendre en charge les démarches que leur méconnaissance de la langue les empêche de faire. Les enfants et même les maris font les courses chez les commerçants ... Une responsable de l’animation pense que l’on pourrait peut-être lutter contre cette passivité en essayant d’établir un échange de savoir qui les motiverait davantage, tout en les valorisant vis à vis d’elles-mêmes: à l’occasion de ces cours, elles initieraient les autres à des techniques de poterie ou de tissage apprises dans leurs pays d’origine’¹⁷³ (Group Tiers Monde de Caluire 1975).

172 www.hsbc.com/hsbc/news_room/news/news-archive-2003?cp=/public/groupsite/news_room/2003_archive/en/hsbcs_new_brand_campaign_in_full_swing.jhtml [No longer available]. A copy might be located in <https://pt.scribd.com/document/49718520/Creativity-does-not-travel>, behind a paywall.

173 Translation: ‘Lack of motivation. These immigrant women live among themselves in an environment that is too protected, with too little contact with the outside world. They benefit from a social milieu in which others take charge of the tasks that their lack of knowledge of the language prevents them from doing. Children and even husbands do the shopping... One of the organisers thinks that one could perhaps combat this passivity by trying to establish an exchange of knowledge which would motivate them more, while giving them a sense of their own worth: they could introduce others on the course to techniques of pottery or weaving learned in their countries of origin ‘

A detailed analysis of this short excerpt would be highly instructive, not least regarding contemporary views of Muslim women in Britain or France, but briefly, there are two related themes: the isolation of the women, and their passivity resulting from a combination of social and cultural factors. The *responsable de l'animation* (a sort of social worker) whose views are reported interprets certain patterns of behaviour as misguided, if not morally reprehensible, posing a problem which requires a solution, in this case pottery classes. In the Lyon context, evaluative remarks of that kind were quite usual.

That aside, what can such statements tell us about the principles in terms of which intercultural knowledge is ordered? Compare, for example, the following remarks obtained in the course of a discussion with two French housing officials. The conversation, recorded in fieldwork, was about housing policy, and one of the officials suggested there were two policies: 'to establish housing for foreigners only, which leads to a ghetto; the other is to mix people up and attempt integration, which was the policy favoured. This led his colleague to reflect:

'The Latins, from the point of view of religion, customs, morals, language integrate better than the North Africans. The North Africans are the most difficult to assimilate ... They imagine themselves to be persecuted. There are not the same problems with Latins. There are problems with the relations between parents and children. The patriarchal authority of the father is breaking down. The children are a prey to delinquency.'

This provoked the response: 'I prefer to argue in terms of the urban context rather than nationality. Take, for example, the ZUP [housing project] at Vénissieux [a suburb of Lyon] where the context is dehumanised ... etc.' And more in this vein.

Now such remarks, and others reported earlier, manifestly reflect different orientations which are ideological in character, and in Lyon (in 1976) it was often such differences which on the surface seemed the most significant. In the context of French-immigrant relations prevailing at that period, it was often enough to identify two contrasting repertoires whose usage, in a rough kind of way, was identifiable with right and left in political terms. A statement such as 'I prefer to argue in terms of the urban context rather than nationality' could thus point to two ideological repertoires, and express a preference, even though at another level one could also identify a global (Republican) discourse, of which ideologies of left and right were sub-variants.

There is another way of looking at such representations, including those adopted by the intercultural communicators described by Dahlen. This concerns the nature of the coding involved. Many of the statements cited above, and in other case studies, could be analysed through the use of terms such as 'under' or 'overcoding', proposed by Umberto Eco. Eco uses 'undercoding' and 'overcoding' to contrast two ways of 'reading', grasping the meaning, of a text, including, as in the present case, empirical/ethnographic data. Undercoding is 'the operation by means of which in the absence of reliable pre-established rules, certain macroscopic portions of certain texts are provisionally assumed to be pertinent units of a code in formation' (1976: 135). Eco gives the example of a person attempting to understand a foreign language who gradually becomes aware that a certain range of phrases and gestures have something to do with 'friendship'. The data are reduced by a sort of 'rough coding', as he calls it, to a few working notions. Some of the statements cited above which purport to represent the subjective meaning of cultural events and practices for North African immigrants through that kind of reading, including, for example, rough stereotypes of 'North Africans' or 'Latins', or indeed of Muslim women. At the same time, they may also seek to make those rough readings more meaningful, for the speaker and her or his interlocuteur, through 'overcoding' them through an explicit or implicit ideological or other analytical lens.¹⁷⁴ Overcoding, which expands on the text, seems, Eco suggests, to accompany all ideological readings.

174 Umberto Eco's novel Foucault's Pendulum (1989) revolves around an instance of overcoding.

The concepts of overcoding/undercoding may be combined with Bernstein's concepts of 'elaborated' and 'restricted' (in Bernstein 1964 etc). These are highly controversial (see Grillo 1989), but have their uses if taken to refer to different styles or genres of discourse or modes of articulation. Consider, for example, two political slogans concerning immigrants widely used in 1976, representing respectively sentiments from Right and Left: 'Ils mangent notre pain', and 'Travailleurs français-immigrés, même patron, même combat'. Both are restricted undercodings emerging from (ideological) discourses which also give rise to elaborated overcoding. There is, it might seem, a time and a place for both kinds of statement, an aspect not pursued here.

'Bridging the Gap'

The *Groupe Tiers Monde de Caluire*, the researchers of the *Atlas sonore*, the intercultural mediators in Italy and elsewhere, the intercultural communicators described by Tommy Dahlen: to that list might be added expert witnesses who appear in courts or, for example, at tribunals adjudicating asylum claims (see Holden ed. 2011 and Holden 2011: 2, Grillo 2016, and Chapter 14, below) All of these are cultural translators, and whether or not they are themselves of immigrant/minority origin, they each act in intermediary and intercalary roles seeking to convey social and cultural information ('knowledge' or 'understanding') about one group to members of another, and sometimes vice versa, 'bridging the gap' between people of different cultural background, a metaphor that appears time and time again.

Acting as go-betweens in a dialogue implies the possession or acquisition of intercultural knowledge, i.e. about respective beliefs and practices, if it is to be meaningful. That knowledge may be acquired directly or indirectly, as in the *Enquête Caluire*, where it was mediated by informants whose views were influenced by their institutional position, the kind of relations they have with others, and their political, religious or social beliefs. The researchers of the *Atlas sonore*, on the other hand, had a much closer relationship with their informants, as do cultural mediators, e.g. when 'translating' between doctors and patients. But if the *Groupe Tiers Monde* had indeed engaged in direct dialogue with North African immigrants, with whom would they have conversed? As one of my own informants put it: 'Who are the immigrants who speak, when they speak?' (Grillo 1985: 257). Who would be the interlocuteurs (on both sides)? How representative would they be, and of whom? In the cases described in this chapter, certain people, because of their situation (e.g. the job that they do), or because of their origins and background (born and brought up in Morocco, say), were assumed, rightly or wrongly, to have privileged or authoritative information (knowledge) of another culture, confirming their suitability as cultural interlocuteurs and representatives.

Finally, as we saw in Chapter 4, what 'culture' means to those participating in these exchanges needs close examination. All too often it is roughly coded, conceived as a set of essentialised, static, beliefs and practices ('local customs'). Likewise, as in any intercultural dialogue, what is conveyed is structured or coded in various ways, e.g. ideologically. Cultural information is not a passive system of classification and philosophical reflection, but a narrative about its subject(s), intended to 'point a moral and adorn a tale', as Samuel Johnson put it (1749). How, when and where requires close attention, not least by the participants, who must reflect on how and why such knowledge becomes 'Knowledge' (with a capital 'K'), and consequently gives those in authority the right to speak and act.

CHAPTER 13. WHEN IS A DIALOGUE NOT A DIALOGUE? THE *BEHZTI* AFFAIR

‘If you had to write a theatrical pitch for what Birmingham has just witnessed over the play *Behzti*, you could do it in seven words: Play offends community, community protests, play cancelled. But that simple three act performance conceals a far more complex drama about how we all share the same space in a pluralistic society’ (Dominic Casciani 2004).

Introduction

The governance of multicultural societies demands acknowledgement of the diverse values attached to, or associated with, different cultures and ‘communities’, and decisions about what kind of difference, and how much, to recognise, formally and informally, in private and public spheres. Sometimes differences may appear incompatible, as when secular liberal values, by and large predominant in Western Europe, are confronted by claims for recognition of special privileges for the values and sensibilities of religion. Such claims may seem especially challenging when emanating from adherents of religions associated with non-European ‘Others’. How should multicultural societies respond (e.g. through legislation or dialogue and negotiation) to such challenges?

Since the Rushdie Affair of 1989, there have been numerous episodes in Britain and other European countries involving confrontation between artistic freedom and religious sensitivities, which relate to this general problem; what happened at the offices of the magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris in 2015 was a particularly horrendous example. Although popularly associated with Muslims, such confrontations are by no means only about Islam; adherents of other faiths, including Christianity, have objected to what they believed to be offensive representations of their beliefs and practices. The present chapter recounts the circumstances surrounding one such episode, the so-called *Behzti* Affair of December 2004, placing it in its wider (local, national, international) contexts, and seeking clues as to how to interpret what was apparently a confrontation between incompatible values (artistic licence and religious sensitivity), though here I am concerned principally with how the Affair illuminates the key themes of this book: intercultural knowledge, dialogue and negotiation.¹⁷⁵

A Play and its Aftermath

In December 2004, the Repertory Theatre in Birmingham, Britain’s second city, mounted a production of *Behzti* (‘Dishonour’ in Punjabi), by a British-born Sikh playwright, Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti.¹⁷⁶ *Behzti*, largely set in a Gurdwara (Sikh temple), deals with traumatic episodes in the lives of the characters culminating in the rape of the heroine, Min, by a Gurdwara elder, and his eventual murder by her mother. There were mixed reviews, though Bhatti subsequently won the Blackburn Prize (2005) for a female playwright who has created an outstanding work for the English-speaking theatre. Irrespective of its artistic merit, however, members of Birmingham’s Sikh community announced that aspects of the play were offensive to their faith. After talks between those involved in the production and local Sikh representatives, it was agreed that a leaflet explaining their grievance would be distributed to the audience. The representatives, however, felt this was insufficient, and when the play opened they organised peaceful demonstrations outside the theatre, attracting protesters from Birmingham and beyond. On the night of 18th December, despite a strong police presence, some demonstrators broke into the theatre which had to be evacuated. When it emerged that protests would continue, and that neither Sikh representatives nor police could guarantee the safety of the audience, the theatre

¹⁷⁵ A detailed account of the Affair was published as Grillo 2007a; see also Grillo 2007b.

¹⁷⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gurpreet_Kaur_Bhatti;

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/24/10-years-behzti-gurpreet-bhatti-birmingham-sikh-protest>.

management ‘very reluctantly’ terminated the production: ‘Sadly ... the violent protesters have won [but] the theatre vigorously defends its right to produce *Behzti* and other similar high-quality plays that deal with contemporary issues in a multi-cultural society’.¹⁷⁷

Although initial protests received little notice, the violence and subsequent cancellation were widely reported on radio and television, and on the Internet, and led to an outcry in the local, national and international media, with newspapers following the story for several days, with the debate continuing into 2005-6, and indeed beyond. What limits, if any, should be placed on freedom of speech and artistic licence? Should theatres be able to present any views irrespective of their offence? Should changes have been made to remove what some felt insulted religious sensitivities? Should demonstrators have resorted to violence? Should the production have been withdrawn in the face of it, or offered police protection? What did this say about British multiculturalism and interethnic relations?

Like the better-known Rushdie Affair, after which it is consciously named, the *Behzti* Affair is seemingly about the incommensurability and incompatibility of religious and secular values in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-faith society, the conflicting rights of freedom of speech and artistic licence and the protection of religious sensibilities, articulated through two sets of voices: the liberal, artistic establishment, and Sikh community representatives. In fact, the issues were not as clear-cut as this. Indeed, the Affair may not have been about, or not mainly about, the clash between religious sensitivities and liberal values at all; *Behzti*’s offence may have had as much to do with gender as religion. Besides juxtaposing terrible deeds and sacred symbols in ways which Sikh representatives claimed offensive, the play seemingly attacked (British) Sikh core values of masculinity and family, and presented a transgressive image of Sikh womanhood. Moreover, liberal defence of freedom of speech slipped into orientalist and colonialist representations of Sikhs/Asians as religious obscurantists. In a plethora of overlapping discourses arguments slithered between secular and religious rights, culture, gender, and ‘race’. Furthermore, in the eyes of some observers the Affair seemingly justified criticism of policies of multiculturalism, and gave credence to calls for its abandonment or replacement by a policy of interculturalism, and intercultural dialogue.

The co-existence in a multicultural society such as the UK of a multiplicity of different beliefs and values, of moral universes, which superficially at any rate seem incompatible, if not incommensurable, poses many problems for the governance of diversity, and dialogue would seem a necessary, if not sufficient condition for resolving them. Yet the difficulties of engaging in dialogue, and how these might be overcome, are not always appreciated. In the *Behzti* Affair, dialogue (of sorts) between the theatre and Sikh representatives failed, with misunderstandings all round concerning its purpose, and indeed what it should be called: a ‘negotiation’, as some Sikhs thought, a ‘consultation’, as the theatre management thought, or simply a ‘conversation’, as someone described it. Beyond that, the multiplicity of voices and positions taken by participants in the *Behzti* Affair further illustrates the difficulties of reconciling different ways of living in contemporary multicultural Britain.

Some Context: Sikhs in Britain

In recent censuses some four to five per cent of the UK population declared themselves ‘Asian’ or ‘Asian-British’. Although the first generation (now elderly) continues to be important, many have been born and brought up in Britain, rooted, if precariously, in British society. Residing, sometimes in small numbers, throughout the country, they are predominantly an urban population based in large and medium-sized cities in the London area, the Midlands and the North. In terms of religion Muslims are the most numerous, followed by Hindus and Sikhs. The latter are an ethnic-religious people who originated in Punjab (Western India), though many were ‘twice migrants’ (Bhachu 1985) who came to the UK via East Africa where they had moved during the colonial period. There are some 420,000

¹⁷⁷ Press statement reported in <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1479500/Violent-Sikh-demo-forces-theatre-to-cancel-play.html> and elsewhere.

Sikhs in Britain, of whom 30% live in the West Midlands metropolitan area, including Birmingham, rather more in London and its environs, especially the suburbs around Heathrow Airport, and in the satellite town of Slough where some 10% of the population is Sikh. They fared poorly during economic recessions, and in 2000 it was reported that compared with others they are

‘less likely to be economically active, more likely to be unemployed, less well represented in top status jobs (particularly professional), more dependent on self-employment to achieve high status employment, and less well paid’ (Brown 2000: 1058).

Sikhism itself is a ‘reform’ religion arising from conflict between Islam and Hinduism in South Asia. Though not as homogeneous a faith as is sometimes believed (Oberoi 1994, Ballard 1996, Takhar 2005), of central importance are the original holy men (gurus), and reading and reflection on Sikh scripture, the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Roger Ballard, writing about unity and disunity in the British Sikh population says of them:

‘More graphically than any other comparable group, the Sikhs, with their distinctive combination of beard and turban, are a classic example of a group whose members have used physical and cultural symbols to construct an ethnic identity around themselves. Not only does their appearance mark them off unmistakably from all their neighbours in their native Punjab, elsewhere in India and throughout their global diaspora, but the Sikhs themselves invariably represent their community as homogenous and particularly close-knit ... The adoption of the title Singh by all males and Kaur by all females sets them deliberately apart from all other communities, but also explicitly underlines an ideal of non-differentiation, while the beard and the turban have exactly the same effect’ (Ballard, 1994: 88).

Although devout Sikh men should grow their hair, wear a turban, and abstain from alcohol and meat, many in Britain in fact fail to follow all or some of those injunctions. Nonetheless, religious identification remains strong.¹⁷⁸

The religion is organised through temples whose community role has been described as follows:

‘Gurdwaras are the main centres for social and cultural activity as well as religious services within the Sikh community. In addition to religious services, many Gurdwaras also administer and financially support some of the following services: supplementary schools; basic skills training; arts and cultural provision; welfare services: advice and support; day centres for elderly; community kitchen; libraries; schools visits; liaison with media and wider communities; production of appropriate materials; hospitality to visiting dignitaries’ (Council for Sikh Gurdwaras 2001).

Numerous organisations claim to represent Sikh views nationally, including the Sikh Council UK, the British Sikh Consultative Forum, Sikh Human Rights Group, Sikh Federation, Sikh Federation (UK), and Sikh Agenda for the UK Government etc. Though its significance may be declining, caste, and the ‘constantly changing mosaic of sectarian divisions’ (Hall (2002: 158), still permeate the organisation of Gurdwaras, family life, and especially marriage (Ballard 1994, 2000, Helweg 1996, Kalsi 1992, Nesbitt 2000). Though caste does not emerge unambiguously in the *Behzti* Affair, some observers (e.g. Bassey 2005) point to the way in which members of the Jat farmers’ caste, whose families generally came directly from Punjab, predominate in the Sikh population in the Midlands and North and are important, historically, in the control of certain Gurdwaras.

178 The extensive literature on Sikhs in Britain includes Ballard and Ballard 1977, Ballard 1994, 2000, Baumann 1996, Bhachu 1985, Brown 2000, Hall 2002, 2004, Helweg 1986, Kalsi 1992, 1994, Modood 1997 passim, Nesbitt 2000, Singh and Tatla 2006, Tatla 1999, Tatla and Nesbitt eds. 1994, Weller 1997.

Post 9/11, Sikhs, like many Asians, felt insecure, fearful of being mistaken for terrorists: Nagarajah (2005) records the wearing of 'Don't freak, I'm a Sikh' T-shirts after the London bombings of July 2005. Sunny Hundal, editor of *Asians in Media*, commented (2004): 'Sikhs particularly, having been harassed after 9/11 for their turbans and beards, feel the UK needs to be educated more about their religion'. With increasing attention to Islam, Hindus and Sikhs sought to distance themselves from 'trouble-making Muslims'. Religious identification, and the concern to protect cultural traditions, fit with the way in which religion provides a major channel of representation and consultation in British cities under the rubric of 'faith communities', with 'faith' schools, councils, forums, and inter-faith networks, of the kind discussed in Chapter 15. Sarfraz Manzoor (2005b; see also 2005a) suggests that the new-found confidence of religious groups in voicing their grievances, and having channels through which to do so, is the 'price to be paid for multiculturalism'. Against this, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown (2005), among others, attacked unelected religious leaders to whom, she argues, successive governments have 'pandered', with the consequence that religious groups are 'over-powerful in the dialogues of the nation'.

Behzti: Offence and Defence

Although the 'Rep', a respected regional theatre proud of its role in a multi-ethnic city, had previously mounted a successful production of Bhatti's play *Behsharam* ('Shameless'), it was clear from the outset that there would be problems with *Behzti*. The Diocese of Birmingham's Director of Communications wrote that when he read the play he immediately felt it would cause offence, and 'made the playwright and the Rep aware of this and both sought to consult widely with the Sikh community prior to staging the play' (*Times Online* 2004). *Behzti's* offence and the consultations which took place while the play was in rehearsal are discussed below, but first, 'Sikh community' requires comment.

That Sikhs, in Birmingham or elsewhere constitute a collectivity with a single voice is a powerful idea projected by those claiming a leadership role, and accepted by many Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike. In the *Behzti* Affair, said Hanif Kureishi (2004), '*the Sikh community ... has shown itself to be philistine*', and a letter to the *Birmingham Evening Mail* (21 December 2004) argued that '*The Sikh community as a whole should be charged with hefty fines for the perpetrators along with the cost of the damage and clean up*' (emphases added in both quotations). In reality, caste, country of origin (Punjab, East Africa), sect, generation, and gender create multiple lines of fission; unity and solidarity are apparent only in crises, such as during as the Indian Government's attack on Sikh 'Khalistani' separatists at the holy site of the Golden Temple at Amritsar in 1984, or in the 1980s campaign to wear turbans at work and in school (De Lepervanche 1992, and see Chapter 14).

Prominent among the protesters against *Behzti* were the chairman of the Council of Sikh Gurdwaras in Birmingham (an experienced activist from the turban campaign), and Birmingham City councillors representing the Labour Party. They had the backing of several national Sikh organisations. In an article entitled 'Sikh leaders are not without blame for *Behzti* controversy', Sunny Hundal wrote:

'Not only are most of those who run Gurdwaras (and are by default labelled as "Sikh leaders") from the first generation, they're also overwhelmingly men ... Having grown up through the fight for civil rights, legal recognition of the turban and riots against the [right-wing British National Party], they harbour a very defensive attitude over their portrayal in the media' (2005a).

These 'elders' had three main objections to *Behzti*:

(i) *Use of hymns as background music.* A contributor to a BBC Website forum noted the scene where Min's 'screams are drowned out by the Ardas ... the prayer where Sikhs remember the atrocities against them ... To show this hideous act at the same time as the Ardas is very offensive'.¹⁷⁹

(ii) *Abuse of sacred symbols.* In an article in which she interviewed Sikh women, the religious writer Jo Ind (2004) referred to a scene where a turban is put on a shoe rack: 'that image is shocking to these women who take their shoes off every time they enter the Gurdwara. Shoes are associated with dirt, which is perceived as the opposite of holiness'.

(iii) *Setting in a temple.* Although Sikh representatives claimed that they were not opposed to the themes of the play ('we know that there are good and bad people from every background and religion', BBC News 2004b), they objected to the events being placed in a Gurdwara. 'Picture a place where you feel safe, secure, comforted and most importantly a place you are proud of', said a contributor to the BBC Website forum, 'now think of people entertaining themselves by seeing terrible things such as rape and violence happening here' (BBC News 2004c).

The play, it was argued, misrepresented the nature of a Gurdwara and misled audiences as to what happens there. Consequently, in discussions with the producer and writer, Sikh representatives called for the setting to be changed to a community centre. These objections were supported by leaders of religious and inter-faith groups, and backed by the *Daily Mail* which condemned the violence, but, in accordance with its antipathy towards secular liberalism,

'confess[ed] a scintilla of admiration for the willingness of Sikhs to protest at what they regard as a gross insult to their faith. At least here are a people who believe their religion is a vital force in sustaining honest, decent family life and are prepared to fight for it' (*Daily Mail* Comment 2004).

Although representatives only sought changes in the play's setting, they were pleased that 'common sense', as they put it, eventually prevailed, and the production abandoned. They were nonetheless disturbed by the violence, and distanced themselves from the 'militants' (specifically the Sikh Federation) described by the chair of the Birmingham Gurdwaras as 'jumping on the bandwagon' (*Times Online* 2004). The Federation supported the creation of an independent Sikh state, and its intervention showed how the Affair intersected with Sikh homeland politics. It also intersected with a resurgence of interest in protecting Sikh religious identity in multicultural Britain, exemplified by the 'Respect for Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji' campaign (Bassey 2005). It further reflected the dissatisfaction felt by some among the younger generation with an elderly, traditional leadership 'ambivalent or unresponsive to the challenges of British society ...incapable of addressing their concerns' (Gurharpal Singh 2004). There was a determination to respond to any victimisation of Sikhs or Sikhism: they had to 'take a stand' as one youth and community activist put it (in Bassey, 2005). Only when protests turned violent, some argued, did anyone listen (in *Dispatches* 2005).

Those against abandoning the play's production (predominantly, but not only, in the arts and media) centered their arguments around defence of the freedom of speech, artistic licence, opposition to the use of violence, and refusal to allow offence to religious susceptibilities to justify silence, at a time when the Government was considering legislation to outlaw religious hatred. Madeleine Bunting (2005) called them 'muscular liberals', who 'can no longer tolerate the intolerant [and] raise their standard on Enlightenment values, their universality, the supremacy of reason and a belief in progress'. A widely-circulated petition (there was also a counter-petition) concluded:

'It is a legitimate function of art to provoke debate and sometimes to express controversial

179 http://www.bbc.co.uk/birmingham/faith/2004/12/sikh_rep_protest.shtml [No longer available].

ideas. A genuinely free, pluralist society would celebrate this aspect of our culture. Those who use violent means to silence it must be vigorously opposed and challenged by all of us, whatever our faith, belief or opinions'.¹⁸⁰

The theatre management, it was said, had consulted with the Sikhs and listened to their views, but rightly refused to bend to their demands. An editorial in the *Independent* thundered:

'The threat of mob violence should not curtail the right of artistic expression ... Broadly secular societies, such as Britain, are not immune to the gathering storm of intolerance and zealotry that is buffeting the world'.¹⁸¹

There were numerous references to the Rushdie Affair, and Salman Rushdie himself asserted: 'In this country, it is the liberty of any artist to express their view of their own society and their own community' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 26 December 2004), and in his capacity as President of PEN, argued that in Britain there was an "anschluss" of liberal values in the face of resurgent religious demands ... It seems we need to fight the battle for the Enlightenment all over again' (Rushdie 2005).

The apocalyptic note of Rushdie's intervention ('The continuing collapse of liberal, democratic, secular and humanist principles in the face of the increasingly strident demands of organised religions is perhaps the most worrying aspect of life in contemporary Britain') was echoed by others: 'the Counter-Enlightenment surges on', claimed a letter to the *Independent* (22 December 2004); 'cultural terrorism', said another (*Birmingham Post* (1 January 2005). Similar sentiments were expressed by those who chose the *Behzti* Affair to restate an opposition to multiculturalism: 'Western ideals of the centrality of freedom of speech cannot and must not give way to the demands of any other culture or religion. This is where multiculturalism has to stop. ... Minority cultures cannot expect an equal part with the host culture in deciding [the] limits' (Marrin 2004). A stark picture was drawn by Christopher Orlet (2004) who imagined a day 'in the not-too-distant future' when 'every outspoken European critic of radical Islam or Sikhism will be dead or in hiding'. Multiculturalism, he continued, had created 'theocratic enclaves' and tolerated 'barbaric traditions'. How could the West deal with people from societies which had 'literally sat out the Enlightenment and ... 300 years of human progress', to whom concepts such as freedom of speech were 'not only foreign [but] inimical'?

On the surface, *Behzti*, like other affairs, was seemingly a consequence of the contemporary global resurgence of religious ideas, beliefs, practices, and institutions. Certainly, at some point the issues did involve conflict between religious and secular values, but *Behzti* was in no way a simple confrontation between freedom of speech and religious sensibilities, rationality and faith, good and evil as it was sometimes represented. Indeed, the idea that there were two sides is misleading; there were many different shades of opinion, though some struggled to be heard. Moreover, if some among the play's defenders or critics were convinced of the righteousness of their cause, others had great difficulty in finding their way through the moral maze the Affair presented. Among Sikhs, for example, there were many, especially among young professionals, who would sympathise with the following:

'I still defend the right of the play to be staged - but I think people should be honest about what it is and not try to paint it as some kind of gospel come to light up our lives - this premise might cause white liberal chests to swell with pride at their ability to "civilise the natives"' (Singh 2006).

180 Text in letter to the Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/arts/news/story/0,11711,1378818,00.html>.

181 www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/the-threat-of-mob-violence-should-not-curtail-the-right-of-artistic-expression-697104.html.

A Dialogue?

A striking feature of the Affair was the attempt by Rep and Sikh representatives to resolve their disagreement through dialogue, though they named it differently and had different expectations. Sikh representatives thought they were in ‘negotiations’ for weeks before the production opened: several had a background in the labour movement and had previously engaged in campaigns (e.g. over turbans; see Chapter 14) with negotiated outcomes. The Rep, however, preferred ‘consultation’, and playwright David Edgar (2005), characterised what occurred as ‘a conversation ... misinterpreted as a negotiation’. In the TV programme *Dispatches* (2005), which covered the disputes over *Behzti* and similar affairs, the Rep’s Executive Director explained:

‘Our approach to the community about consultation was not about shall we do the play, or shan’t we do the play, because it was clear from day one that we were doing it. It wasn’t about how would you like us to change the play because we made it clear also we would never change the play. What it was about was how we can work together to minimise any offence this might cause to some members of your community. And also equally importantly to us, how we can ensure that non-Sikhs coming to see the play don’t go away with the thought that this is what happens in a Gurdwara every day of the week, because clearly it doesn’t. It is a piece of fiction’.

He later elaborated (in Bassey, 2005):

‘For any new play ... there is a degree of consultation ... in that the play is normally workshopped and we invite people to come and listen to a reading of it and contribute to the development of it, whatever the play is. That’s part of the process of developing a new play. When a playwright says to us quite clearly this will cause offence to a particular section of the community, then yes we do think long and hard and in this case we did. We didn’t go directly to the members of the Sikh community; we actually went first of all to the Bishop of Birmingham’s Inter-Faith Committee, which is an organisation that we’ve had links with in the past. And we said to them quite upfront: “Look, we’ve programmed a play that we suspect will cause offence to some members of the Sikh community. We’d like you to have a look at it and let us know what’s the best way of approaching this in terms of talking to the communities in Birmingham”. And it was the secretary to the Inter-Faith Committee [actually adviser on interfaith relations to the Bishop of Birmingham] who then put us in touch with the two Sikh community leaders who we then started to talk with ... I remember vividly at the first meeting [the secretary started] by saying: “Let’s get this clear; *Behzti* has been commissioned; we’re not here to stop the play being produced; we’re not here to change the play”’.

Responding to Sikh objections, the Rep organised a reading for a Sikh city councillor and the chairman of the Birmingham Council of Sikh Gurdwaras. One of the actors commented:

‘There were people who seemed to think that ... nothing like this could ever happen in a building connected to Gurdwara. [It was] one of those wonderful patronising, liberal meetings where everyone’s walking on eggshells and saying “Of course we understand you, sir”, and all that kind of conversation was going on, and nobody was really tackling the issue except that it was quite clear that there was no room for discussion. They just said: “This is unacceptable. Change it.” ... I asked the director and the management ... whether their views would mean we would make changes to the play. They said “Not at all. We’re just doing it to inform them about the play, and to get their support for it, and to encourage people to come and see it”’ (in Bassey 2005).

Another actor recalled that some swearing and jokes were removed as late as the dress rehearsal, held in the presence of Sikh representatives. The Rep’s Artistic Director later concluded ‘I don’t know if as

a producer I would enter into a dialogue with a community like that again' (*Dispatches* 2005), while others questioned the need for *any* consultation: 'Should consultations be made with self-appointed leaders of particularly sensitive communities? Certainly not!' (Kotak 2004); "'Community leaders" have met with the play's producers and the police. Why? Why didn't they tell them to get lost? What's to negotiate?'" (Liddle 2004).

The consultation had apparently led representatives to believe they had a veto, and in retrospect, the Rep's Artistic Director, thought their 'biggest mistake' was 'talking to the Sikh community ... in a way that suggested the theatre was willing to discuss the content of the work' (quoted in Jury 2005). Sikh representatives, therefore, had a different understanding of what discussions were about, and what they might achieve, and were consequently disappointed:

'The management of the Rep, at a lower level, were good enough to consult with us when they became aware of the cause for concern within the Sikh community and consulted Sikh elders who showed their concerns. But it is sad that having consulted the community and hearing our concerns they still did nothing about it' (Chair, Council of Birmingham Sikh Gurdwaras, BBC News 2004a).¹⁸²

'Actually, my opinion was being a [Birmingham city] councillor they would listen to us. But I was surprised they didn't listen. They had a meeting, but they didn't understand, and they don't want to know. They just had a meeting and say "Oh, that's OK, we give you time, we discuss the matter with you, but we are sticking to our point, and we are going ahead with the drama"' (in Bassey 2005).

The councillor, representing a ward with a substantial Sikh electorate, felt he had been simply ignored, and Bassey argues that the 'consultation' inadvertently undermined his position. It seemed a 'tick-box exercise to only please the funders and cover their own back: there was never any intention to listen to nor implement the concerns raised'.¹⁸³

A dialogue constituted as a duologue between parties representing opposed interests inevitably ignores the many different voices engaged (as in this case) in both inter and intra-cultural debate. Hundal (2005b) makes the point that 'in the desire to be politically correct, British institutions end up listening only to highly vocal and organised religious groups' in the belief (reinforced by trends towards faith-based multiculturalism, see Chapter 15) that they are representative. 'For young British Asians who want to tell their own stories through theatre', he adds, 'it can mean facing an environment where censorship is imposed on them by their own community'. But any dialogue, inter- or intra-cultural, raises difficult questions about language and linguistic and cultural translation, about how the process is to be understood, about possible outcomes, about the who is to be involved, and has the right to represent what, to whom, when, and where.

Recognising why (some) Sikhs were offended was crucial. Many non-Sikhs had little or no knowledge of the religion, indeed any religion, and as good secularists little if any sympathy for it. Renteln (2004: 1590) refers to a 'tacit assumption' that adherents of a faith 'can easily discard their religious symbols', adding 'for those who are not a part of these traditions, there is no problem in stripping off the religious garb'. A letter-writer to the *Birmingham Post* (31 December 2004) drawing on '30 years in India and Pakistan' criticised the author and theatre management for a 'very western lack of awareness of the dangers of producing such a play in the setting of a Gurdwara', in view of the attack on the Golden Temple, and speculated why there was such 'incomprehension'. Jo Ind's interviews with local Sikh women (2004) also noted lack of knowledge. Despite the substantial literature on honour (*izzat*) among South Asians in Britain, popularly 'honour' is mostly associated with its defence, and implies violence against women. One of Ind's informants reflected on the play's

182 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/west_midlands/4104139.stm.

183 <http://sikhsangat.com/index.php?/topic/8502-protest-at-birmingham-repextory-against-anti-sik>.

title:

‘The word *Behzti* has connotations of gossip and slander. Just from the word itself I wouldn’t want to go because it’s against our religion to take part in dishonour or slander. It’s a very negative title for us, even before you hear it is set inside a Sikh place of worship’.

As Ind points out, ‘This is where a difference in cultural sensibilities begins to emerge. To the Western ear, the word “dishonour” does not strike right to the root of the being as it evidently does to a Sikh’. The very titles of Bhatti’s plays (‘Dishonour’, ‘Shameless’) were provocative.

Another Zero-Sum Game?

This scene from multicultural Britain has many ramifications. *inter alia* it is about how the Affair became a ‘site’ through which people articulated widely different interests and grievances often remotely connected with the event itself. In this respect, the Rushdie and like affairs are very similar. They apparently involve conflict between artistic licence and religious sensibilities, but religious sensibilities are only part of the story, and claims for freedom of speech sometimes segue into defending the Enlightenment against oriental obscurantist ‘Others’.

Enlightened liberals are startled to find conflict between religious and secular values re-asserting itself in Europe when all seemed settled. Now, however, the values with which European secularism conflicts tend to be associated with ‘Other’ cultures, whose relationship with Europe was in the past structured through colonialism, orientalism and racism: the ‘guests’, who may have powerful international and transnational links (as with Islam), are making inconvenient demands. The *Behzti* Affair is thus not just a ‘classic conflict between the artist’s right to freedom of expression and a community’s wish to have their faith treated with dignity’ (Branigan 2004). Nonetheless, although reducing the Affair to two opposed values oversimplifies, the seemingly incompatible claims of religious sensibility and artistic licence were indeed present. Certainly, Huntington and the like would interpret this as a ‘clash of cultures’, and argue that ‘Others’ should accept ‘our’ values, or leave. But if that is unacceptable, how are such value disagreements in multicultural societies to be resolved?

In this instance the dispute was ‘resolved’ by the forces (actual and symbolic) that participants could bring to bear. The idea of ‘peaceful co-existence’, *à la* Isaiah Berlin, taken from the Cold War, and the clash of values between West and East (the Soviet bloc), may work when parties are continents apart, each with their sphere of influence, or possibly in a system of pillarisation or ‘parallel lives’, but is harder to envisage in a mixed, multicultural city. Hence the need to work towards a *modus vivendi* through dialogue, as interculturalists would argue. But *Behzti* reveals the obstacles that such dialogues face. The Commission for Racial Equality (2004) proposed inviting faith groups and playwrights to discuss how the arts should deal with religious difference. The so-called ‘Summit’ did not in fact take place, and if participants had simply talked past each other, it might have been worse than nothing. There are ways of avoiding this, perhaps employing participatory methods, which might work under the right circumstances, with small groups and a will to find common ground. In *Behzti* there was room for manoeuvre: Sikh representatives were prepared to accept much of the play’s content provided that changes were made to the setting and use of symbols, and this is where dialogue was possible. But if people insist they are ‘in sole possession of the truth’ (Berlin, 2002: 345), there may seem little that can be done, and in the *Behzti* Affair consultation/negotiation/conversation led nowhere.

Affairs like *Behzti* are apparently zero-sum, and attempts to resolve the dilemma through dialogue failed, perhaps inevitably. The idealistic goal of a multiculturalism *à la* Parekh, where common ground is negotiated through intercultural dialogue, is extremely difficult to achieve, and *Behzti* illustrated some of the problems that have to be tackled.

CHAPTER 14. INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUES AND THE LAW

'Britain's most senior judge, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers, visited the London Muslim Centre yesterday to deliver a keynote speech on "Equality before the Law". In a wide ranging speech to a packed audience of lawyers, scholars, religious leaders and members of the public, Lord Phillips assured the British public that "any man or woman who appears before a judge in this country will receive equal treatment in the administration of the law". On the Shari'a law, he explained that there was "widespread misunderstanding" and "there is no reason why Shari'a principles, or any other religious code, should not be the basis for mediation or other forms of alternative dispute resolution [with the understanding] that any sanctions for a failure to comply with the agreed terms of mediation would be drawn from the Laws of England and Wales.'" (East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre Press Release, 4 July 2008).¹⁸⁴

Introduction

Chapters 11-13 have largely focused on a specific event in a defined social context (Mexico 1524, Lyon 1976, Birmingham 2004) where groups of actors were engaged directly or indirectly in an intercultural dialogue. This chapter deals more discursively with such dialogues in a particular kind of institutional setting, law courts dealing with civil and criminal cases in which the culture of the plaintiffs or defendants is in various ways at stake. I should also reiterate that my understanding of dialogue includes not only face-to-face, sit-down conversations, but also discussions, debates, arguments conducted indirectly and at a distance, for example through the media, or at different sites where speakers and writers are addressing, responding to, absent and perhaps unnamed or anonymous interlocuteurs.

Intercultural dialogues about cultural and religious difference and what to do about it may be found in almost any court of law in any part of the world. They are a global phenomenon, though whether to the same extent and of the same kind, and with similar outcomes everywhere, is a matter for extended empirical investigation. It would, for example, be interesting for an anthropologist to review some of the classic studies in legal anthropology, such as Max Gluckman's *The Judicial Process Among the Barotse* (1955), from this point of view. Such a task cannot be undertaken here. Instead, the chapter will look at four cases which appeared before the courts in the UK (England and Wales to be precise), with brief reference to other cases and jurisdictions. Although cases involving religious and cultural difference which appear before the courts in the UK and elsewhere in Europe and North America frequently concern Islam, the chapter deals mostly with other instances of difference, with Islam largely reserved for Chapter 16.

Judges and Experts

Legal cases obviously engage many actors: judges and juries, lawyers (solicitors and barristers in Britain), witnesses, expert and other, and not least the plaintiffs or defendants. Not all such actors, with their different perspectives and points of view, can be covered here. Instead, focus will be on two of these: judges, and expert witnesses.

Concerning judges, there is now a growing literature which reviews how they approach cases involving cultural difference, or how they might or should do so. One such is Anthony Connolly's *Cultural Difference on Trial: The Nature and Limits of Judicial Understanding* (2010), which despite its title is less helpful than it might seem. With very few exceptions Connolly hardly looks at any specific instances of culture in the courtroom, but is concerned with general and philosophical issues (against a distant empirical background of Australian and other indigenous land rights claims) around

184 <http://archive.eastlondonmosque.org.uk/archive/news/93>.

the (im)possibility of cross-cultural understanding on the part (in particular) of the judiciary. In doing so, Connolly rightly stands out against any suggestion of incommensurability, and seeks to establish the theoretical grounds on which ‘culturally different concepts’ can be ‘acquired’ by a judge (2010: 195). While this might be important philosophically, it tells us little about how judges actually approach issues of cultural difference, if or when they do so.

In England and Wales, the Judicial College (formerly Judicial Studies Board), which is concerned with the training of judges, in fact makes specific provision for ensuring that judges are aware of the importance of recognising cultural difference when relevant to the cases coming before them. The College, for example, provides guidelines in the form of an *Equal Treatment Benchbook* (2013/15 and earlier editions), the preparation of which originally involved academic experts, including anthropologists (Banton 1998, see also Kamil 2008, and Van Rossum 2010 on judicial training programmes in the Netherlands; Ricca and Sbriccoli 2015 discuss similar proposals for Italy). In some 240 detailed pages, the current edition of the *Benchbook* covers direct and indirect discrimination which may occur in the legal treatment of what the Equality Act 2010 identified as ‘protected characteristics’, including age, sex, disability, race and religion; controversially, there is pressure to add ‘caste’ to that list.¹⁸⁵ Some of the advice is mere common sense. Section 9, ‘Ethnicity, Inequality and Justice’, for instance, notes:

‘It is important to avoid stereotypes based on perceived characteristics associated with a particular ethnic group. Just because the majority of members of an ethnic group have certain characteristics or views does not mean all members of the group have those characteristics or views.’

This is basic and elementary. Other advice is more complex. For example, Section 10 (‘Discrimination on the Basis of Belief or Non-belief’), para. 10. 6 (‘Sincerity of belief’) notes:

‘Quite often in the hearing room context we will come across individuals who claim that a particular practice is essential to their faith. Whether it is or not may be too difficult to determine and *is not for us to decide*. What is within our jurisdiction is the question of credibility and we may in certain circumstances be required to determine whether a particular belief is genuinely held and the extent to which a particular individual is bound by what they say is essential to their religious practice. However, because the definition of religion is broad and protects beliefs and practices with which judges and others may be unfamiliar, judges should ordinarily assume that an individual’s request for religious accommodation is based on a sincerely-held religious belief’ (emphasis added).

This has a bearing on one of the cases discussed below.

In Western societies, the multiplicity of culturally differentiated and often conflicting norms, the superdiversity of moral universes (conceptions of the good life and how to live it), poses many challenges in the legal sphere, and this is where expert witnesses come into play, with anthropologists, among many others, drawn into situations where the civil or criminal law and culture are at issue. Various studies¹⁸⁶ have demonstrated the range of contexts where anthropologists have engaged with lawyers on the judicial field in Britain and elsewhere, including:

- Providing expert advice on accommodating ‘Other’ cultural practices.
- Responding to government consultations on proposed legislation affecting minorities.
- Asylum and immigration cases (especially where people from South Asia are concerned).
- Family law matters (marriage, divorce, custody of children, inheritance).

185 <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06862>.

186 E.g. Berti et al. 2015; Foblets and Renteln eds. 2009; Good 2007; Holden ed. 2011; Kandel 1992; La Fontaine 2009; Lawrance and Ruffer 2015; Grillo 2016.

- Commercial matters (e.g. unravelling the complex arrangements of Asian family businesses).
- Criminal cases, often involving domestic violence and abuse.
- Advising/training other disciplines in cultural awareness.

Many of these involve highly politicised sites of contestation, notably with respect to Muslim families, as may be observed in speeches by politicians and religious leaders, on Internet discussion groups, in academic papers, and in everyday conversations. They raise questions about meaning and practice, and crucially about rights and duties (who may or should do what, where and when). Expert witnesses therefore enter a contested terrain on which law and culture intersect and on which their principal roles are frequently those of cultural interpreter and cultural mediator.

A final introductory point. This account of culture in court covers some but by no means all of the issues relating to the three organising themes of knowledge, dialogue and negotiation. Concerning the latter, negotiation in a legal context may sometimes include so-called ‘plea-bargaining’, where prosecutors, defence lawyers and plaintiffs/defendants agree to resolve a case, for example by pleading guilty to a lesser charge to avoid a longer sentence. Such aspects of the judicial process, which may entail intercultural dialogue, are not covered here.

Sikhs and the Definition of a ‘Racial Group’

First, cases involving Sikhs. In Chapter 13 on the *Behzti* Affair it was noted that some of the Sikhs involved in dialogue with the Birmingham Rep had over 20 years earlier been active in pressing Sikh claims concerning the right of young boys to wear their traditional male headgear, the turban (*daastar*), when attending school; previously there had also been claims about wearing the turban in place of a hard hat at work, and in lieu of the compulsory helmet when riding a motor cycle. According to the Sikh religion, there are five things that adherents should always do (the five K’s), one of which is wearing hair uncut. The turban not only covers or gathers up the hair, but is also a powerful and sacred symbol, and considered compulsory. Claims that Sikh males should be allowed to wear their turban at all times have led to legal disputes in the UK, in Canada¹⁸⁷, and in France, in the light of the banning of religious headgear in schools (principally the Muslim hijab) in 2004.

The Sikh turban case in the UK, on which there is a substantial legal and academic commentary (e.g. Anon. 1983, Banton 1989, 1998, 2000, Singh and Tatla 2006: 130 ff.), arose out of debates in the 1970s about racial discrimination which led to the passing of the 1976 Race Relations Act. Shortly after the Act came into force, a Birmingham Sikh family (the Mandlas) approached what was then the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) to seek its help in establishing that when a school refused to permit their son to attend wearing a turban (which the family argued his culture and religion required him to do), and also required that he cut his hair, an offence had been committed under the 1976 Act. The court of first instance (Birmingham County Court), advised by independent experts, rejected this on the grounds that Sikhs were not a ‘racial group’ as defined by the Act. An appeal court agreed, the senior judge, Lord Denning, contending that while Sikhs are a

‘fine community upholding the highest standards, they are not a “racial group”. So it is not unlawful to discriminate against them. Even though the discrimination may be unfair or unreasonable, there is nothing unlawful in it’¹⁸⁸.

He explained:

187 <http://www.parli.ca/turbans-in-the-rcmp>.

188 In [1982] 3 All ER 1108; the text of the judgment is available at http://www.hrcr.org/safrica/equality/Mandla_DowellLee.htm. An outline of the case may be found at http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/National_Protest_by_UK_Sikhs.

‘The statute in section 3(1) contains a definition of a “racial group”. It means a “group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.” That definition is very carefully framed. Most interesting is that it does not include religion or politics or culture. You can discriminate for or against Roman Catholics as much as you like without being in breach of the law [...] But you must not discriminate against a man because of his colour or of his race or of his nationality, or of “his ethnic or national origins.”’

‘It is perfectly lawful’, he added, ‘to discriminate against groups of people to whom you object - so long as they are not a racial group’. His fellow judge, Lord Oliver, found it ‘ironic’ that Indarjit Singh (later Lord Singh of Wimbledon¹⁸⁹), who had been approached by the CRE to be an expert for the plaintiff, along with the anthropologist, Roger Ballard, had contended that the Sikh view of tolerance included ‘upholding the next person’s right to determine his own particular way of life.’

There followed a lengthy legal-cum-anthropological public debate about whether Sikhs did indeed constitute a racial or ethnic group, with the Sikhs themselves seeking support by writing to members of parliament and organising a demonstration in central London.¹⁹⁰ In 1983 the case went on appeal to what was then the UK’s highest court, the House of Lords, which in due course held in favour of the Sikh claim. In brief, the court ruled:

‘The term “ethnic” [in the 1976] Act was to be construed relatively widely in a broad cultural and historic sense. For a group to constitute an “ethnic group” ... it had to regard itself, and be regarded by others, as a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics, two of which were essential. First it had to have a long shared history, of which the group was conscious as distinguishing it from other groups, and the memory of which it kept alive, and second it had to have a cultural tradition of its own, including family and social customs and manners, often but not necessarily associated with religious observance’.¹⁹¹

The court also proposed that the following might be relevant: common origin or ancestry, language, literature, and religion, and ‘being a minority or being an oppressed or a dominant group within a larger community’. This landmark case extended the application of the discrimination legislation, beyond the somewhat narrow and increasingly outdated notion of ‘racial’ to encompass a group such as the Sikhs which, in the leading judge’s words were a ‘a distinctive and self-conscious community [and thus] a group defined by a reference to ethnic origins for the purpose of the 1976 Act’.

Later cases involving Sikhs included a young female student claiming, in 2008, the right to wear a *kara*, a distinctive bracelet required by Sikh tradition, despite her school’s regulation against wearing jewelry. The court, taking cognisance of anthropological and other evidence, found in the girl’s favour on the grounds that: ‘there would be a particular disadvantage or detriment if a pupil were forbidden from wearing an item when that person genuinely believed... that wearing was [exceptionally] important to her racial identity or religious belief’.¹⁹² As McCrudden (2011) points out, while *Mandla* was concerned with *ethnic* discrimination, the *kara* case was argued on *religious* grounds, an example of the shift from ‘race’ to ‘faith’ in British multicultural discourse between the 1980s and the 2000s, which eventually led to proposals to make religious hatred a crime in the Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006).

189 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indarjit_Singh. Lord Singh reflected on the implications of the *Mandla* judgement in the light of recent judgments in the European Court of Human Rights in his contribution to the BBC’s Thought for Day programme, 21 March 2017 (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04xkkq5>). I am indebted to Lord Singh for sharing his experience of this and other cases.

190 http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/National_Protest_by_UK_Sikhs.

191 In *Mandla v Dowell-Lee* [1983] 1 All ER 1062, http://www.hrcr.org/safrica/equality/Mandla_DowellLee.htm.

192 *R (on the application of Watkins-Singh) v Governing Body of Aberdare Girls’ High School* [2008] EWHC 1865 (Admin); see http://www.lcor.com/1315/?form_1155.replyids=1167.

In these cases, the dialogue between the Sikh claimants and their lawyers, on the one hand, and the state's lawyers and judges on the other, was not about determining the validity of Sikh beliefs and practices, but whether forbidding those practices would be discriminatory. Writing on the 25th anniversary of the judgement, Geoffrey Bindman QC, the lawyer who represented the CRE and the family, observed that while it was clear to the CRE that there was discrimination 'to persuade a court that Sikhs were a group with a common ethnic origin was going to be an uphill struggle', but this is what they did. This meant convincing the court to interpret the law by broadening the definition of 'racial group', in such a way that Sikh practices could be accommodated within it (Bindman 2008).

Open Air Cremation: Not a 'Theological Necessity'?

An important factor in the turban cases was the way in which Sikhs took their argument to parliament and onto the streets, i.e. (successfully) made it a matter of public concern. This happened also, though to a much more limited extent, in the following case.

*Ghai v Newcastle City Council*¹⁹³ concerned an application by a British Hindu (Davender Kumar Ghai), along with members of the Sikh community, to allow open-air cremations. The *New Law Journal* (15 May 2009)¹⁹⁴ summarised as follows:

'The claimant [Mr. Ghai] was an orthodox Hindu. He wished his body to be cremated on an open air pyre following his death, and he also wanted similar open air funerals for other Hindus. He approached the defendant local authority to facilitate those goals. The authority rejected his approach on the ground that open air funerals were unlawful under [the Cremation Act of 1902]'

Mr. Ghai's appeal against this decision was supported by various charitable and activist organisations in the UK and in India, and in an online campaign. He contended that the Act 'could not ... override his fundamental right to undertake an open air funeral pyre in accordance with his religious or cultural beliefs', notably under Article 9(1), of the *European Convention on Human Rights*, namely:

'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance'.¹⁹⁵

The case has many aspects, and the arguments put forward by the different parties, before the courts and in the public sphere (not least on television¹⁹⁶), are of considerable interest. For example, the claims made by Mr. Ghai and his supporters are not as widely espoused by Hindus and Sikhs in Britain as they suggested. Not all believe that open-air funeral pyres are necessary for a 'good death', and this provoked considerable discussion among the experts giving evidence on behalf of the various parties, who disputed whether cremation was a 'theological necessity', as one put it (Ballard 2008).

193 *Ghai v Newcastle City Council* [Rodrigues-Garcia] EWHC 978 (Admin) (08 May 2009), available via <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2009/978.html>. See also *Ghai, R. (on the application of) v Newcastle City Council & Ors* [2010] EWCA Civ 59 (10 February 2010), available via <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2010/59.html>. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations in this section are taken from these reports.

194 <https://www.newlawjournal.co.uk/content/law-reports-78>.

195 In www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf.

196 The former website of the Anglo-Asian Friendship Society included numerous media reports and extracts from TV news broadcasts. There was also a specially prepared documentary on the campaign: <http://www.anglo-asian.moonfruit.com> [No longer available]. The present website (<http://anglo-asian.org>) includes updates on subsequent developments; see also <http://www.thejournal.co.uk/north-east-analysis/analysis-news/newcastle-hindu-healer-reignites-fight-8580542>.

The judge who heard the case (Mr. Justice Cranston) prepared a very detailed report which drew on a variety of evidence, including that of the expert anthropological witnesses – *inter alia* he consulted the standard anthropological work on Hindu cremations (Parry 1994). In his report he came to a view about whether or not the practice of open-air cremation, which some Hindus and Sikhs were claiming as their right, could be permitted in a diverse society like the UK, taking into account the views of both the majority and minority populations, and government legislation on health and safety, pollution and so forth. His conclusions may be summarised as follows:

- (a) The relevant Act and Regulations did indeed prohibit the burning of human remains, other than in a crematorium;
- (b) Hindus and Sikhs dispute whether their religious beliefs necessitate an open-air pyre and associated ceremonial;
- (c) Nonetheless, ‘the claimant’s belief in open air funeral pyres is cogent and also central to his strand of orthodox Hinduism. It is beside the point that typically Hindus in this country do not share that belief’;
- (d) Consequently, the claimant did have a right to hold and ‘manifest his religious belief in open air funeral pyres’ under ECHR Article 9(1);
- (e) However, ‘the prohibition on open air funeral pyres [was] justified’ by reference to ECHR Article 9(2) on grounds including, as argued by the Secretary of State for Justice, that ‘others in the community would be upset and offended by them and would find it abhorrent that human remains were being burned in this way’.

Under Article 9(2) the ‘freedom to manifest one’s religion’ is ‘subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others’.

This was not the end of the story, however, as Mr. Ghai appealed against this verdict, and the higher court reversed the decision. The reasons given had little to do with whether or not Mr. Ghai’s beliefs were in accordance with the Hindu religion. Instead, the court sought ways in which Mr. Ghai’s wishes could be accommodated within the current law. Mr. Ghai’s lawyers conceded that ‘his religious belief does not in fact require him to be cremated, after his death, on a pyre in the open air [but] would be satisfied if the cremation process took place within a structure, provided that the cremation was by traditional fire, [and] and sunlight could shine directly on his body while it was being cremated.’ An example of a suitable type of structure was found to exist in Ceuta, in Spanish Morocco. The 1902 Act, however, specified that a crematorium was a certain kind of building, and whether or not the proposed structure satisfied the Act hinged in large part on the interpretation of the word ‘building’. After much deliberation, the appeal judges agreed that it would, and thus Mr. Ghai won through what some described as a typically British compromise.¹⁹⁷

The judges’ approach might suggest the irrelevance of expert anthropological evidence. No matter what experts said, Mr. Ghai was entitled to his interpretation of his beliefs; ‘not for us to decide’, as the *Equal Treatment Benchbook*, cited earlier, put it. This subjective, ‘Pirandellian’ interpretation of doctrine (*Così è (se vi pare) - Right You Are (If You Think So)*) recognises the right of someone to believe what they like, though it does not mean that she or he can actually practice what they believe. There is in fact a chain of decisions connecting a Hindu in England (Mr. Ghai), another Hindu in South Africa¹⁹⁸, a Jew in Canada¹⁹⁹, and a Jehovah’s Witness in the United States²⁰⁰, all accepting an individual’s subjective understanding of their religion. Although such decisions might

197 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/feb/11/the-art-of-compromise>.

198 MEC for Education, Kwazulu-Natal and others v Pillay, judgment available via <http://www.saflii.org/za/cases/ZACC/2007/21.html>.

199 Syndicat Northcrest v Amselem [2004] 2 S.C.R. 551, judgment available via <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/2161/index.do>.

200 Thomas v. Review Board of the Indiana Employment Security Division, 450 U.S. 707 (1981), judgment available via <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1980/79-952>.

indeed imply that there is no need of expert advice, another interpretation might be that acceptance of a 'subjective' approach reveals a turn towards a more flexible, postmodern, definition of culture of the kind which pervades contemporary anthropology. Indeed, in the South African case it appears that the judges were directly influenced by such views.²⁰¹ That aside, what emerges from this case is that the law gave the claimants and the judges room to manoeuvre, and through a dialogue of a kind to negotiate a mutually acceptable accommodation.

'L' and Her Mother²⁰²

The following case illustrates what amounted to an intercultural dialogue (direct and indirect) with an outcome which was perhaps the best that could be achieved under the circumstances. *inter alia*, it provides a small illustration of the way in which ethnicity, culture, class, institutional power, and different mind-sets come together in a setting such as a law court.

The case concerned a teenager ('L') who lived in the city of Leicester, having arrived with her family from Zimbabwe in 2002. In 2011, L was charged with the attempted murder of her mother. Briefly, one night the mother woke to find her daughter standing over her with a knife. When the police were called, L was found to be in a trance-like state. The court was subsequently told that she claimed that her dead grandmother had come to her in a dream and told her to attack her mother whom the grandmother held responsible for L's father's sudden death in Zimbabwe some years previously. (The implication was through witchcraft or sorcery).

Various expert witnesses (anthropologists and psychiatrists) who appeared for defence or prosecution offered different explanations: an anthropologist explained the cultural background of African beliefs in the supernatural; one psychiatrist argued for what was called L's 'psychological disorder of consciousness'; another contested this, saying that L had made it all up. Indeed, this was the prosecution's case, as this extract from the court proceedings shows.²⁰³ The prosecutor describes L as 'an accomplished liar', and says to her:

Prosecutor: 'You've lied to a series of people to avoid consequences.'

L: 'No.'

Prosecutor: 'You think and fervently hope to get away with attempting to murder your mother by lying to this court.'

L: 'No.'

Prosecutor: 'When you were prevented by her from carrying out your attack you were left in a situation to explain why you were trying to do it, or you were going to have to put on an act.'

L: 'No I didn't.'

Prosecutor: 'There was no dream, was there?'

L: 'Yes there was.'

Prosecutor: 'There was no loss of memory about what happened? You know exactly what happened?'

L: 'No. Don't get me wrong. I'd love to remember, but I don't.'

Prosecutor: 'You're lying to the jury.'

L (bursting into tears): 'No.'

201 In MEC for Education, Kwazulu-Natal and others v Pillay, at para. 54, judgment available via <http://www.saflii.org/za/cases/ZACC/2007/21.html>.

202 I thank Roger Ballard, Joost Fontein, Jean La Fontaine, Anthony Good, and Gordon Woodman for sharing their thoughts on this case. A detailed account is available in Fontein 2014.

203 <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/NEWS-4353-Mum+stabbing+teen+accomplished+liar/NEWS.aspx>.

As in all such cases, the issues are complex and widely-ramifying. One of these concerns the different mind-sets of lawyers, judges, experts and other professionals engaged in a legal context. William Twining (1973), has, for example, stressed the ethnocentricity of legal practitioners, compared with the cross-cultural, indeed cosmopolitan orientation of anthropologists. Roger Ballard's analysis (2010) of the unconscious or hidden assumptions of a cultural character which typically permeate the mind-set of lawyers and others versed in the Enlightenment tradition, suggests that these sometimes amount to what one might call an 'invincible ethnocentrism'. This is not always the case: another researcher found that lawyers in asylum cases were constantly aware of the dangers of ethnocentrism and of their own and others' cultural assumptions (Carver 2014). Both may be right; they may be observing lawyers in different contexts. Nonetheless, anthropological experts often experience considerable difficulty in persuading lawyers to accept the validity (and indeed relevance) of their evidence and the insights they might be able to give into the nature of cases such as L's. When anthropological reports are presented to a court their objectivity and scientific credentials may be routinely questioned. Indeed, in L's case one of the two anthropologists who had been consulted was precluded from entering the witness box, on the grounds that he had nothing of substance to offer (Fontein 2014).

To return to L. There was no question but that L had indeed attempted to attack her mother, and it should be clear that none of the expert witnesses, anthropologists included, themselves proposed a so-called 'cultural defence' (see *inter alia* Renteln 2004, Foblets and Renteln eds. 2009). What was at stake was the interpretation of the circumstances leading to the attack, what light they shed on L's motivation (*mens rea*) and state of mind, and whether anything in the background could persuade judge or jury to review the offence with which L was charged, and the punishment she might face. In the event, the jury found her guilty, not of attempted murder, but of the lesser crime of malicious wounding under the Offences Against the Person Act 1861. The judge then determined that, pending sentencing, she should be released on bail and 'allowed to stay in touch with her mother as long as another family member was present'.²⁰⁴ Subsequently, after reports from the probation service and another psychologist, L received a suspended prison sentence, and was discharged into the care of her mother.

In sentencing, the judge remarked:

'She believed spirits can enter the body and make you do things that otherwise you would not have done. Her beliefs could have made her think she was possessed by evil spirits at the time. [She] believes she was doing what the spirits told her to do which reduced her culpability significantly [But] since she knew what she was doing she should have fought against what she was told to do'.²⁰⁵

As Joost Fontein, one of the two anthropologists involved, has commented: 'the sentencing was very sympathetic to [L] and her mother. She was allowed home ... and she could begin to rebuild her life, her relationship with her family, and most of all with her mother' (2014: 98). Perhaps the anthropological intervention had more influence than initially seemed likely. Fontein himself observed:

204 <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-4405-Teen%20cleared%20of%20trance%20murder%20plot/news.aspx>.

205 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/8532833/Mercy-for-witchcraft-girl-told-to-stab-mother.html>.

‘Courtroom discussions did fall back on essentialized notions of culture that would make any anthropologist squirm. Yet the psychiatrists did engage, to some degree, with the anthropological evidence in their oral testimonies, which did seem to influence their courtroom discussions, if only in a small way. It also had an effect on the (ultimately flawed) defense case. In the end the anthropological evidence presented to the court may also have had efficacy in the judge’s deliberations, even if his statements did fudge something akin to the kind of cultural defense anthropologists are often at pains to avoid’ (*ibid.*)

Translating *Mahr*

Cases involving ‘Other’ cultures may not surprisingly involve confronting a Western court with concepts derived from a different legal systems. In that connection, consider the problems associated with interpreting the Islamic legal concept of *mahr*.

A perennial problem in divorces, Muslim or otherwise, is the financial settlement, and a particular concern when cases involving agreements under Islamic law come before a Western court is what to do about *mahr*, money or valuables set aside and due to a wife if her husband divorces her; if she institutes a divorce, then the money etc is forfeited. *Mahr*, the terms of which are set out in a marital agreement, has been variously interpreted (especially by non-Muslims) as ‘bride-price’, as a form of maintenance, as alimony, as a pre-nuptial agreement on the distribution of assets after marital breakdown, as a gift, or as matrimonial property. As Susan Rutten puts it (2011: 143):

‘Western legal systems are confronted with a legal concept unknown to them; on top of that, the legal concept is part of another bigger legal system in which it is interconnected. The legal concept is then singled out and transported into another system, in which another legal culture reigns and is another interconnected legal system. Within this different system one endeavours to fit the concept’.

In trying to fit *mahr* into another (English and Welsh) legal system, its specificity may be *Lost in Transplantation*, the title of an important study by Pascale Fournier (2010; see also Ricca and Sbriccoli 2015).

In the UK, the case of *Uddin v Choudhury* ([2009]) involved an appeal by the husband’s father (who represented himself) against a judgment by a county court that, following the couple’s religious divorce agreed by a Shari’a council (see Chapter 16), gifts made to the bride need not be returned, and she could retain the *mahr*. This judgment was contrary to the understanding under Islamic law that if a woman had herself instituted the divorce then she had no claim on the *mahr*. What the court did, in fact, do was by-pass the intricacies of Islamic legal understanding, and the implications of the Shari’a council’s decision, by treating the *mahr* agreement as a contract under English law. The anthropologist, John Bowen (2009), has a detailed analysis of the case, and of the evidence provided by an expert in Islamic law, and its interpretation. The legal commentator Eugene Volokh, observed of a similar judgment in a US court²⁰⁶ that it was,

‘a good example of what has long struck me as the right way of dealing with this problem: If possible, treat the agreements as normal agreements, without regard to their Islamic character, and then enforce them – or not – as normal agreements’.²⁰⁷

Irrespective of the rights or wrongs of this approach, it illustrates the kind of cross-cultural interpretation with which those participating in legal proceedings may have to engage.

206 Court Of Appeals of the State of Washington, No. 27616–3–III, In re Marriage of Obaidi and Qayoum.
207 volokh.com/2010/02/25/islamic-agreements-in-civil-courts-2.

Culture in Court

I would not claim that the above cases are in any way representative of what happens when minority cultures come before British courts, let alone courts in Europe, North America, or, for example, Australia. To show whether they are or not would require a much larger comparative study. Nonetheless, they are instructive.

First, all four involved intercultural dialogues in various forms. Indeed, many court cases entail such dialogues to a greater or lesser extent, including those where participants are of the same cultural background, though not necessarily of the same class or conversant with the same linguistic or discursive registers. In court, ‘ordinary’ language has to be translated into the specialist language of the law, where ordinary, everyday concepts may have different connotations, or be defined differently (‘ethnic group’), or special terms are used. For a layperson such as myself, what does *mens rea* actually signify? The legal process occurs on a dialogical frontier and entails multiple acts of translation and interpretation. The narratives of asylum-seekers, for example, must be converted into ‘legal-speak’ (Good 2011), or claimants’ and defendants’ halting and inconsistent accounts made ‘digestible’ for officialdom (Giordano 2014), or an appropriate place must be found for one culture’s legal or quasi-legal concepts within another’s legal framework.

Secondly, there is a multiplicity of actors directly or indirectly involved: claimants and defendants, police and prosecution services, solicitors and barristers, expert witnesses and consultants, social workers and cultural mediators, counsellors and councillors, judges and juries, many of whom appear in the narratives described above. All are engaged at some point in acts of translation and interpretation. A brief comment on two of these: judges and expert witnesses.

Concerning judges, I confess that what surprised me when I began to look at judicial processes involving minorities in the UK was the extent to which on the whole they seemed concerned to be sensitive towards cultural differences (see *inter alia* McLachlin 2003 on the Canadian judiciary). The following statements by senior judges (along with a reading of the *Equal Treatment Benchbook*) reinforced this:

- ‘We live in a very diverse society and the justice system has got to be able to cope with that diversity.’²⁰⁸
- ‘It is not for a judge to weigh one religion against another. All are entitled to equal respect, whether in times of peace or, as at present, amidst the clash of arms’.²⁰⁹
- ‘Tolerance involves respect for the different traditions, practices and attitudes of different groups. In turn, the court must pay appropriate regard to these differences’.²¹⁰
- ‘It is not the case that for a Muslim to lead his or her life in accordance with [Shari’a] principles will be in conflict with the requirements of the law in this country’.²¹¹

Beyond sensitivity is learning about differences, and seeking ways in which they might be interpreted, conceptually and linguistically, and possibly accommodated, within English law. One step in that direction was represented by a booklet by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, on ‘Jewish Family Life and Customs: A Practical Guide’. Designed to ‘help[] lawyers understand a range of sensitive issues in Judaism’, the booklet was launched by Lady Hale, President of the Supreme Court, in November 2017, at a meeting ‘attended by more than 100 people, including senior legal professionals, parliamentarians and communal figures’.²¹² Another example, cited by Judge Geoffrey Kamil,

208 Lord Chief Justice Woolf, www.ligali.org/newsletter/news_july2004.htm.

209 Judge James Munby in [2001] EWHC 556 (Fam).

210 Lady Justice Mary Arden in [2007] EWCA Civ 399.

211 Lord Chief Justice Nicholas Phillips (2008).

212 <https://www.bod.org.uk/supreme-court-president-lady-hale-launches-board-of-deputies-family-life-and-customs-booklet>.

concerned a fellow judge who consulted with ‘trusted advisors’ and local Imams on women witnesses or defendants veiling in court, and developed a ‘pragmatic solution which met with the approval of both male and female Muslim community leaders and was workable by the courts and the judiciary’ (2008: 12; see also Kyrou 2015 on Australian judges).

Some observers are less sanguine about judges’ willingness to seek such knowledge and understanding, and indeed there are many exceptions and limitations. But the way in which the judges in the first three cases responded to what was put to them (redefining how the law applied to Sikhs, reading texts on Hindu funerals, taking into account L’s Zimbabwean background) illustrate a positive aspect of the intercultural dialogues taking place in British courts. In the fourth case, that willingness is less clear, or at least it is unclear whether the judge (in the court of first instance) correctly interpreted the nature of Islamic law concerning marriage and *mahr*, as explained by an Islamic legal expert, and understood the implications for *Uddin v Choudhury*.

The role of expert witnesses, in fact, is to assist the court in acquiring (cultural) knowledge and understanding about a case, or at least point solicitors, barristers and judges (and thence juries) towards where they may seek enlightenment. They certainly played a part in the cases cited, advising claimant or defendants and their lawyers, and the court at large, even if they did not appear in the witness box. According to Lord Singh, it was the expert witnesses in the Mandla case who suggested a way of accommodating the Sikhs within the Race Relations Act. They also had a great deal to say for and against Mr. Ghai, even if in the end their advice was considered redundant. The evidence provided in L’s case probably encouraged the judge to take a sympathetic view of her plight, despite the fact that at least one observer responded that the outcome was a ‘licence for every other superstitious dimwit to take the law into their own hands and claim the “Devils Defence”’.²¹³

British anthropologists acting as expert witnesses are, however, often skeptical about the extent to which courts actually accept (or indeed understand) their culturally-grounded interpretations (Ballard 2010), and at times perhaps give lawyers and judges less credit than they deserve when attempting to engage in an intercultural dialogue. That said, the intercultural dialogue which brings together (anthropological) experts and lawyers and judges may encounter significant problems of mutual understanding. There is, for example, a profound contrast between the widely accepted, ‘common sense’ view of culture as an identifiable, undifferentiated, ‘collective’ attribute, reducing cultural information to ‘labels’ or ‘cultural clichés’ (Van Rossum 2007), and that which sees it as a more individualistic, subjective, contested personal construct (see also Ricca 2014). While some judges may be sympathetic to the latter, by and large the legal profession prefers what might be called a ‘black letter’ perspective, that culture (like the law?) is an established, agreed, set of principles and practices. While lawyers are content with this black letter view, and indeed may need it to make their client’s case, it poses a dilemma for the anthropologist who abjures cultural essentialism and is very uncomfortable when required to give a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer to a cultural question (Good 2008). As Fontein puts it: ‘courtroom discussions’, in L’s case, ‘fell] back on essentialized notions of culture that would make any anthropologist squirm’ (2014: 98).

On the one hand, then, in these intercultural dialogues there is a significant gap between a vernacular, common-sense, but essentialist conception of culture which dominates public discourse, and an intellectualised, postmodernist perspective (Grillo 2003a). But there is another, seemingly paradoxical disjunction between anthropologists who may wish to foreground minorities’ ‘collectivist’ values (e.g. extended families) against the contemporary emphasis on individuals and their rights, observable most acutely in cases involving women and children (see *inter alia* Van Rossum and van den Hoven 2016). Hidden within these intercultural dialogues are major disagreements about culture’s ontological status, both between lawyers and anthropologists, and, it must be admitted, sometimes between anthropologists themselves.

Finally, as in all legal cases, a crucial step is to locate the telling legal argument. In the cases

213 <http://saff.nfshost.com/mbulawa.htm>.

cited this meant *inter alia* finding a way in which cultural evidence could be translated so as to fit with English law and/or persuade judges to interpret the law to fit with the culture. Whether successful or not, this is what intercultural dialogue involved in each of the four cases discussed above.

CHAPTER 15. INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUES AND INTERFAITH NETWORKS

‘The term dialogue itself implies something more than “contact” or even “interaction”. Rather, it implies an exchange of views about specific issues or questions, through which, presumably, some sort of resolution or understanding is reached, not necessarily in a formal sense’ (ECOTEC 2009b: 4).

Introduction

*Arbitration Within Faith Communities*²¹⁴ from Jewish, Muslim, and Christian perspectives was the subject of an Interfaith Seminar, held in 2011 in the beautiful setting of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in the City of London. The seminar involved a panel including three representatives: from a Jewish Beth Din (David Frei), from the Church of England (Professor Mark Hill QC), and Maulana Arif Awan from the Muslim Arbitration Tribunal [in effect, a Shari’a council, see Chapter 16]. Each speaker explained the process of religious arbitration in their communities, and this was followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience which *inter alia* explored why people in other communities (such as Hindus and Sikhs) do not feel the need to bring disputes to their religious authorities (representatives of other faiths had been invited but did not attend). The meeting was preceded by a talk about the synagogue (opened in 1701), and the Sephardic community it serves, providing an opportunity to reflect on the history of that community and its long-standing relationship with Islam: Sephardic Jews had lived with and alongside Muslims in Iberia for centuries and subsequently within the Ottoman Empire. The audience, about 100 people of different faiths, but predominantly Jewish, was very attentive to the discussion and intervened with probing questions and comments. The keen interest in learning what Muslims were doing and why, and a desire to develop a dialogue between the faiths was fully apparent.

The event was one of numerous occasions in the UK in the years following 9/11 when individuals and groups representing different faiths met to discuss their similarities and differences, as well as the many issues they believed they face in common. Chapter 13 on the Behzti Affair discussed one example where an interfaith group (the Birmingham Inter-Faith Committee) intervened in a difficult situation involving one of their members, and Chapter 5 documented the views on dialogue of several interfaith organisations, including the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme and the Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, who made submissions to the *Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life* (CORAB 2015).

The present chapter extends the account of interculturalism by examining the role of dialogue in such institutions, principally with regard to what has been happening in the UK, though efforts to promote interreligious dialogue are not, of course, confined to Britain. Indeed interfaith dialogue has been attributed an important global role in the UN’s approach to cultural diversity. In 2012, for example, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 67/104 on ‘Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace’²¹⁵, which itself was based on a Report on ‘Intercultural and interreligious dialogue’ by the UN Secretary-General.²¹⁶ The Resolution *inter alia*

214 The following description is based on my field notes, but see <https://www.londonarbitrators.org/events/arbitration-within-faith-communities>.

215 Text available via <http://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/67>. See also Al-Nashif 2016.

216 Available via <http://undocs.org/A/67/283>.

‘Proclaim[ed] the period 2013–2022 the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, calls upon Member States to utilize this opportunity to enhance their activities relating to interreligious and intercultural dialogue, promoting tolerance and mutual understanding’.

Member states were also urged ‘to consider [such dialogue] as an important tool in efforts aimed at achieving peace and social stability and the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals’. Fethi Mansouri’s edited collection, *Interculturalism At The Crossroads* (2017), in fact arose out of UNESCO’s *UNITWIN Network on Inter-religious Dialogue and Inter-cultural Understanding*²¹⁷, and many of the contributions to the volume comment on UNESCO’s work in that field.

While conscious of the global dimension, the first section of the chapter explores developments in interfaith networks within the UK. That which follows concerns interreligious dialogue within the context of the CoE and EU, notably in connection with the CoE’s ‘Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education’ (Council of Europe 2008d)²¹⁸. The penultimate section focuses on interreligious dialogues in practice, and includes a brief account of the UK’s response to the CoE’s recommendation, as well as a case study of a CoE sponsored ‘Exchange on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue’. It also discusses the theory and practice of what has been called *diapraxis*.

Although, as the *Arbitration Within Faith Communities* seminar indicated, relations between Muslims on the one hand, and Christians and Jews on the other, are a pressing concern, the present chapter is by no means specifically about Islam; contemporary intercultural dialogues principally involving the beliefs and practices of adherents of that religion are discussed more fully in Chapter 16.

Interfaith Networks in the UK

A Faith-Based Multiculturalism?

Discussion of interfaith networks and interreligious dialogues in the UK must be set in the context of government policies for the governance of diversity, which in the late 1990s and early 2000s assigned an important role to ‘faith communities’ as channels for representation, consultation and dialogue. ‘Our major faith traditions’, said the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair (2001), ‘all of them more historic and deeply rooted than any political party or ideology, play a fundamental role in supporting and propagating values which bind us together as a nation’. Thus, despite a growing ‘backlash’, there emerged a faith-based multiculturalism, evident in the favouring of ‘faith schools’, and measures criminalising religious hatred.

This emphasis on faith was in accord with Blairite communitarian theories, but also, as Tariq Modood (2003) contends, reflected the increasing tendency for minorities to stress religious faith as a key element of public and private identity. In addition, both the Conservative government in the 1990s, and the subsequent Labour government, sought to establish channels of communication, principally with Muslim organisations and representatives. This was the background to the founding, in 1997, of the Muslim Council of Britain, whose chairman, Iqbal Sacranie, was subsequently knighted. After 9/11, there were attempts to co-opt such channels, among others, in government plans to confront extremism and radicalisation, especially among young people. Although these specific developments mainly concerned Muslims, other initiatives involved faith groups more generally, which were thought to play an important role in urban regeneration and social cohesion (Farnell et al 2003, Furbey and Macey 2005).

217 UNITWIN = the University Twinning and Networking Programme, see <https://unitwinidiuodotorg.wordpress.com/about-the-network>.

218 <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=1386911&Site=CM&direct=true>.

The shift towards faith was exemplified, and reinforced, by the encouragement of ‘faith schools’. There had long been a ‘voluntary-aided’ educational sector in the UK run by the Church of England, Catholics, Methodists and Jews, overseen by the state, and through the 1980s there were bids for a similar status for Muslim and Sikh schools. None were successful, despite the backing, on equity grounds, of the Commission for Racial Equality (1990), and the Runnymede Trust (1997), until the 1997 Labour government accepted the case. This policy change was not universally welcomed, with faith schools criticised on pedagogic grounds or because they were thought potentially divisive. The Christian commentator, Patrick Sookhdeo, further argued that Muslim schools ‘nurture values that are radically different from those of the prevailing society’ (2006). ‘A naive multiculturalism’, he added, ‘leads not to a mosaic of cultures living in harmony, but to one threatened by Islamic extremism’.²¹⁹ Secularists, too, such as the National Secular Society, opposed attaching any importance to religion, while others criticised the way policy and practice heightened the profile of faith leaders who were thus encouraged to pursue their own ends, as in the *Behzti* Affair (Singh 2004).

Alongside this debate about faith schools, which continue to be controversial, a proliferation of interfaith groups and networks emerged from the late 1980s onwards (Ahmed 2015; the CORAB report, 2015: 50, has a brief history of early initiatives). While some were little more than intercultural debating societies (the Cambridge Inter-Faith Group’s programme for 2006 included a discussion on ‘Who or what is God?’²²⁰), others such as the Birmingham Council of Faiths, which linked ten religious groups in the city, was active in civic affairs, alerting various parties to the problems posed by the play *Behzti* in 2004/5, and offering Sikhs their fraternal support (see Chapter 13). The East of England Faith Council, for example, which originally included representatives of nine faiths, participated in consultations regarding regional strategies for the economy, planning, and culture (Finneron and Dinham 2008), and was the nominating body for a ‘faiths’ seat on the East of England Regional Assembly. There were also opportunities for intervention beyond the local or regional level; in 2004, the (Sikh) chairman of Leicester Council of Faiths attended a meeting at 10 Downing Street, the British prime minister’s official residence, addressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, on ‘Belief, unbelief and religious education’.²²¹ Faith groups were also consulted on entry requirements for religious ministers, such as Imams, coming from abroad, and on religious hatred legislation (see *inter alia* Home Office 2004).

In many respects the heyday of government-supported interfaith initiatives was probably the mid-2000s (see CORAB 2015: 53). Finneron and Dinham record that at their time of writing one body, the South East England Faiths Forum, had ceased to be effective due to lack of money (2008: 6), and in 2013 the East of England Faith Council was wound up for similar reasons.²²² Although the principal national body, the Interfaith Network (IFN) which currently links some 200 local, regional and national interfaith bodies, still (in 2014-15) received ‘strategic funding’ from the Department for Communities and Local Government, the total income for the year was under £300,000 (Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom 2016: 36). Within the limits imposed by such resources, the IFN continued to promote interfaith dialogue, for the conduct of which it has developed a code of practice (*Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs*).²²³ Such dialogue, defined as the ‘respectful and open exchange of views with the intention of greater cooperation and understanding’²²⁴, is, it says, crucial where religious diversity is increasing: ‘It is through talking to one another that we begin to explore, understand and eventually act’.

219 Recent controversies over such schools (e.g. the so-called ‘Trojan Horse’ affair, are beyond the scope of this chapter.

220 <http://www.cam.net.uk/home/interfaith> [No longer available].

221 <http://www.leicestercounciloffaiths.org.uk/LCoFNewsArchive.htm> [No longer available], and <http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/1838/belief-unbelief-and-religious-education>.

222 <http://www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk>.

223 <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/building-good-relations-between-people-of-different-faiths-and-beliefs-code>.

224 <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/dialogue-between-people-of-different-faiths-and-beliefs>.

Interfaith Dialogues and the Law

Lawyers constitute another group closely engaged in such dialogues. For example, the Interfaith Legal Advisers Network, founded at Cardiff University's Centre of Law and Religion in 2007²²⁵, held a series of meetings between 2007-2011 comparing legal approaches to family law. One, in January 2009 at Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, for example dealt with religious courts and tribunals, 'their organization and structure and the enforcement of their decisions, including their recognition, review and examination by secular courts', notably in light of the 1996 Arbitration Act.²²⁶ The *Arbitration Within Faith Communities*, described earlier, was of course also concerned with a similar theme, as was a meeting organised by Anthony Gold Solicitors in June 2017, partly to celebrate *Eid ul Fitr*, the holiday marking the end of Ramadan. This was another 'Faith Seminar' on the 'the potential hardships facing Jewish and Muslim women going through a religious divorce', with speakers including a legal advisor to the London Beth Din, and a Muslim solicitor who talked about their respective family arbitration procedures. 'It was worth reflecting', said a report on the seminar, 'on how notable it was to see committed individuals in both the Jewish and Muslim faiths coming together to empathise with one another and look at ways to tackle issues that concern them both.'²²⁷

On a grander scale was a meeting with a large, mixed audience at the Temple Church, London, in June 2013 to launch a book on *Islam and English Law* (Griffith-Jones ed. 2013; see also Book Launch 2013), addressed, among others, by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, and by a prominent Muslim professor of law, Maleiha Malik. Both focused on the role of Shari'a councils, with the former Archbishop concluding that the councils needed to be more transparent and accountable, their practices 'exposed to the light'. Maleiha Malik, who had published a report for the British Academy on *Minority Legal Orders*, i.e. alternative systems of dispute resolution (2012), outlined an approach to accommodating 'Other' values which allowed individuals to be involved in the transformation of their own religious law. There were numerous interventions from the floor, including from a well-known critic of Shari'a, Baroness Caroline Cox, from two Muslim women associated with Shari'a councils in London and Birmingham, and from the Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Muslim Forum. In a concluding summary, the chair, a leading barrister, observed:

'The problems that we want to try to solve in our own minds and as a community, we have not yet begun to solve. There's a lot more work to be done. I hope everybody thinks that, at least, we've made a little bit of progress tonight in exchanging views and in clarifying ideas; and will join us in trying to continue that discussion and to work on the solution of those problems' (from transcript in Book Launch 2013: 23)

The CORAB report on *Living With Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good* (CORAB 2015), which included lawyers among others in its working party (Maleiha Malik was a member, as was Tariq Modood) had much to say along these lines in respect of interfaith relations, indeed the report has a whole chapter on 'Dialogue'. Participants in dialogue, it said,

'seek to understand each other, to discover the common ground underlying their differences, to resolve their differences when that is possible, and to learn to live with them when it is not. Dialogue brings people together in mutual engagement and helps to create a shared society and a climate of civility and trust' (p. 49).

Such dialogue, it continued, requires 'humility and a capacity for self-criticism', and cited in support one of the respondents to the commission's consultation paper that dialogue should be

225 www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/ilan.html.

226 <http://www.law.cf.ac.uk/clr/networks/ilan6.html>.

227 <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=902dcdb6-8e75-47de-802a-3f0497b09242>.

‘based on the understanding that no one, no party and no tradition has a monopoly on truth, but (perhaps paradoxically) this is not an excuse for relativism, since the truth will not be disclosed unless participants in dialogue passionately believe themselves to be right whilst holding open the possibility that they may be wrong’ (p. 50).

This approach ‘reflects the wider vision of society’ which CORAB was advocating, *vis.*

‘a society where the dignity of difference is appreciated and where people of all religions and beliefs feel equally valued, and equally able to contribute to the ongoing national story. Dialogue, as thus understood, is fundamental in every conversation on the religion and belief landscape – in the media, in schools and universities, in places where two or three people are gathered together, in the great inter- and intra-civilisational encounters between religion and belief in the modern globalised world’ (*ibid.*)

In response to CORAB’s recommendations, which included the proposal that ‘Relevant public bodies and voluntary organisations should promote opportunities for interreligious and inter-worldview encounter and dialogue’ (CORAB 2015: 8), a group of lawyers and academics, including Maleiha Malik and Robin Griffith-Jones, Master of Temple Church, with the support of Aina Khan, a Muslim solicitor specialising in family law, launched an ambitious initiative, ‘21st Century Britain: Moral Sources for the Civic Good’, to develop a ‘national conversation between leaders of faith communities and opinion leaders in other ethical traditions’. This, it hoped, would

‘create a shared understanding of the fundamental values underlying public life. It would take place at all levels and in all regions. The outcome might well be, within the tradition of Magna Carta and other such declarations of rights over the centuries, a statement of principles to guide the development and evaluation of policies relating to the common good’.²²⁸

To date (November 2017) it has organised a series of consultative events.

There are, in fact, numerous other groups in the UK which have taken forward the challenge of interfaith dialogue. *Salaam Shalom*, for example, seeks to bring together Muslims and Jews in the UK: ‘by enabling greater familiarity and understanding between people of different faiths and cultures’, it says, ‘fears and myths are dispelled, resulting in a more tolerant, socially cohesive society’.²²⁹ Other initiatives, such as the proposal by Omar Khanis (Director of the Runnymede Trust) and Edie Friedman (Executive Director of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality), seek to confront common problems such as racism, Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.²³⁰ Institutions such as the *Dialogue Society*²³¹ and *Faithful Dispute Resolution*²³² offer courses and training programmes focusing on dialogues and mediation, specifically with Islam; see also the ‘Belief in Mediation and Arbitration’ charity, BIMA, which ‘raises awareness of the need and value of dialogue between individuals or groups who may hold extremely different views or beliefs’.²³³

228 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/21st-century-britain-moral-sources-civic-good-aina-khan>.

229 www.salaamshalom.org.uk/aboutus/our-aims.

230 <https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/this-is-how-we-can-bring-each-other-together-1.56544>.

231 <http://www.dialoguesociety.org/courses/dialogue-in-islam-course.html>.

232 <http://www.bimagroup.org/49-events/172-fdr-course>.

233 <http://www.bimagroup.org>.

It is always difficult to know what actually, in practice, results from these and other initiatives, for example, whether or not the various projects undertaken by *Salaam Shalom*, such as Shared Spaces ('using the Arts to bring communities together'²³⁴) accomplish what they set out to do. How far, for instance, do they go beyond providing opportunities for followers of different faiths to discuss their beliefs, however important that is? I return to this question in a later section.

A European Perspective: The CoE and the EU

The CoE

Turning to Europe, Chapter 8 discussed a report prepared for the CoE by Jan Niessen, then Director of the Migration Policy Group on *Diversity and Cohesion, New Challenges for the Integration of Immigrants and Minorities* (Niessen 2000) which in many respects lay the ground for the CoE's influential *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* (2008). Niessen's report has many references to religion and religious identity, largely concerned with discrimination on the grounds of faith, alongside other forms of discrimination such as race, ethnicity, language, or gender. The report also insists on the equal right of all faiths to practice their religion. 'Where there is a religious presence in the public space', the report argues:

'All religions should have access to similar facilities. Publicly funded and publicly accessible institutions should reflect the cultural and religious plurality of the population through equality of opportunity and equality of access to resources, as for example, multi-religious chaplainries in prisons and hospitals. Health and social services in particular must be sensitive to the specific expectations of cultural and religious communities, especially relating to women's needs. Respect should be had to the outer manifestations of religion, such as dress, dietary requirements and food labelling' (Niessen 2000: 83).

Niessen was also concerned to stress the value of diversity and different forms of identity and emphasised the need to 'broaden knowledge and strengthen awareness of religious communities and religious pluralism'. Schools should therefore

'include education about religions in the curriculum. Teaching materials on religion across the curriculum should be true to the religion being portrayed. Public authorities should use all appropriate means to promote a positive and inclusive image of religious communities through policy statements, government public relations and media policy' (*ibid.*)

Beyond that, the report also emphasised the value of dialogue to 'improve mutual awareness, understanding and respect' (p. 84). Consequently, governments were

'encouraged to be accessible to dialogue with religious communities at local and national levels and in particular in such sectors as education, planning, health, social welfare, recreation, law and order, etc. A dialogue between governments and religious communities is a constructive forum in which to face the issues of the dependence of certain groups on foreign governments. Alternatives to such dependence might include tax concessions for charitable or religious activity and training on a par with treatment of established religions. Encouraging a dialogue with particular economic and professional sectors will improve understanding and awareness of religious concerns. This is especially urgent in relation to the mass media.'

Over the next five years, dialogue with, between, and about religions became a major CoE

234 <http://www.salaamshalom.org.uk/shared-spaces>.

concern, discussed at numerous meetings, and taken up in two initiatives in 2008: in the CoE's *White Paper*, and in *Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12 on the Dimension of Religions and Non-religious Convictions within Intercultural Education* (Council of Europe 2008d). While the White Paper stressed the long-standing engagement of the CoE with intercultural and interreligious dialogue - many of its reports, resolutions and debates on these topics are listed in its Appendix, and can also be found online²³⁵ - in fact, its comments did not take the discussion much beyond the ground set out by Niessen. Nonetheless, as well as encouraging dialogue between religious communities and public authorities, it placed the onus on those communities themselves to engage in dialogue in order to 'contribute to an increased understanding between different cultures' (2008a: 22). The CoE, it said,

'has frequently recognised interreligious dialogue, which is not directly within its remit, as a part of intercultural dialogue and encouraged religious communities to engage actively in promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law in a multicultural Europe. Interreligious dialogue can also contribute to a stronger consensus within society regarding the solutions to social problems. Furthermore, the Council of Europe sees the need for a dialogue within religious communities and philosophical convictions (intrareligious and intra-convictional dialogue), not least in order to allow public authorities to communicate with authorised representatives of religions and beliefs seeking recognition under national law' (2008a: 23-4)

Such dialogue would thus assist in 'promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation and tolerance, as well as preventing conflicts and ensuring integration and the cohesion of society' (Council of Europe 2008a: 8).

Following the White Paper, the CoE's *Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12* (Council of Europe 2008d) advised member states that intercultural education should ensure that that religious and 'non-religious convictions' are taken into account with the aim of 'strengthen[ing] human rights, democratic citizenship and participation, and [] the development of competences for intercultural dialogue' (in *Appendix to Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12*, para. 1). Such convictions, which are 'diverse and complex' (para. 3), and 'not monolithic', are, they contended, 'cultural facts within the larger field of social diversity' (para.2). In addressing such convictions, educators should take into account that 'the principle of the freedom of conscience and of thought includes the freedom to have a religion or not to have one, and the freedom to practice one's religion, to give it up or to change it if one so wishes' (para. 4). In addition, 'an interdisciplinary approach to education in religious, moral and civic values should be encouraged in order to develop sensitivity to human rights (including gender equality), peace, democratic citizenship, dialogue and solidarity' (*ibid.*) Knowledge of other religions and intercultural dialogue are, it said, 'an essential precondition for the development of tolerance and a culture of "living together", as well as for the recognition of our different identities on the basis of human rights'.

The EU

What emerges from this is the CoE's insistence on intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a means of endorsing its core values – including human rights, liberal democracy, the rule of law, and gender equality (see 2008a: 21) - and recognising the value of diversity within that framework. Thus interreligious dialogue almost always has an educational role in inculcating respect for 'European' values. Such sentiments were very much in accord with those formulated within the EU, and the European Commission (see *inter alia* Morris 2017). In 2002, in the context of the aftermath of 9/11, the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture Jean Monnet Project convened a conference on *Intercultural Dialogue/Dialogue Interculturel* which included a session on 'Interreligious Dialogue'. The report on that session concluded that all those who participated agreed that such dialogue was 'only conceivable to the extent that it was unequivocally based on a set of

235 Via <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&id=1386911&Site=CM&direct=true#RelatedDocuments>.

common values: respect for human dignity, liberty of conscience, and more generally human rights' (European Commission 2002: 32, my translation).

When Ján Figel', a leading proponent of the EU's Year of Intercultural Dialogue (see Chapter 8), spoke at a meeting on 'Cultural Diversity, Religions and Dialogue', organised by the European People's Party (EPP) group, he emphasised that religion was

'very close and very central to cultural discussions because the faith, conviction is about human believes; it is about values and hierarchy of values in individual and in societal lives. Therefore it is very important to understand that intercultural dialogue is closely linked to inter-religious dialogue' (Figel' 2008).²³⁶

Within the European Parliament, in fact, the centre-right EPP group has been particularly concerned with interreligious dialogue. Their Activity Report for 2011, for example, referred, *inter alia*, to 'helping the increasing numbers of Islamic communities relocating to Europe find their place in the scheme of European values. The continuous facilitation of this process is an unavoidable task of the EPP Group' (EPP Group Intercultural Dialogue and Religious Affairs (2012: 4). Other EPP activities for that year included a discussion in the Working Group on Intercultural Dialogue and Religious Affairs on 'Recent attacks on Christians in Muslim countries', and a meeting with leaders of the Muslim Council for Cooperation in Europe. The tenor of that meeting might be gauged from the following:

'László Tóké MEP [Vice President responsible for religious affairs] welcomed the guests with a passage from the Bible: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John chapter 4 verse 16). He informed them that on the basis of article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty the European Parliament had launched an institutional dialogue with representatives of both churches and philosophical, secular organisations. "This dialogue is currently in the stage of formation and we would be happy to hear your proposals too," said the Transylvanian, Romanian MEP, emphasising the religious-human basic values of evangelic love and respect towards human dignity. György Hölvényi, advisor for interreligious affairs in the European People's Group asked what concrete topics the dialogue should cover, as it is our common interest to realise a "civilisation of love" in Europe. In his answer, Mohamed Laroussi thanked for the opportunity of the meeting, and stressed that in relation to love and work Muslims undertake precisely the same commitments as Christians. He proposed dynamic cooperation with the institutes of Europe that relates to concrete questions that look to the future' (EPP Group Intercultural Dialogue and Religious Affairs 2012: 56).

Contrasting Approaches of the EU and CoE?

It has been suggested that, compared with the EU, the CoE has taken religion and inter-religious dialogue much more seriously. Agustín (2012) perhaps exaggerates when he says that religion was 'excluded' from the Year's agenda; it certainly seemed important for some members of the European Parliament whom he cites, and clearly it was significant for the EPP in the workshops described above. The theologian, Darrell Jackson²³⁷, however, contends that the EU's approach has been pragmatic and instrumentalist, and in principle secularist. This 'secular instrumentalisation of religion', he argues therefore 'tends to exacerbate the experience in which dialogue between secular and religious institutions remains a mutually incomprehensible dialogue' (2011: 6). 'It is commonly held', he adds,

236 arc.eppgroup.eu/press/peve08/docs/080110speech_figel-en.doc [No longer available]

237 <http://www.morlingcollege.com/faculty/rev-dr-darrell-jackson>.

‘that this latter approach is characteristic of the laïcist manner with which the EU addresses religion as an aspect of social policy. Muslim participants in the debates of the European Year resisted being cast as a “problem” within civil society and there remains a feeling that the EU is religiously illiterate’.

By contrast, he continues, ‘this is a mistake that the [CoE] has worked hard to overcome. It appears to recognise that cultural literacy requires religious literacy, even in the absence of religious establishment or commitment’. Moreover, in seeking to promote interreligious dialogue, the CoE has

‘fostered a relatively healthy and principle-directed approach to recognizing religious organizations and communities as appropriate civil society actors and has consistently referenced inter-religious dialogue in its policies of cultural diversity, co-operation, and exchange’ (2011: 4).

Nonetheless, Jackson contends, and as we have seen, both the EU and the CoE

‘assume the universality and thus incontestability of certain values: individual human rights and freedoms, democracy, free markets, and the rule of law. This becomes problematic where dialogue with partners as yet unconvinced by these values is a pre-requisite to conflict resolution. This is a widely understood principle of inter-religious dialogue where common values may be relatively few, or indeed where one partner might, under normal circumstances, seek to censure or restrict the activities of the other dialogue partner’ (2011: 5).

Jackson also notes, and attaches considerable weight to, criticisms made by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) in its submission to the CoE’s White Paper consultation (CSC/CCME 2007), which was, he suggests, ‘critical of the fact that the [CoE] adopts the posture of a neutral broker when encouraging dialogue between Europe’s religious communities’ (in Jackson 2011: 7):

‘[The] CEC argued that the Council’s avowedly secular identity is an ideological position that cannot be ignored or obscured. The EU and the Council state unambiguously that dialogue enriches dialogue participants through the encounter with diversity and “otherness”. That being so, it is incumbent upon them to take seriously this challenge from CEC and respond to religious dialogue partners in the same spirit of openness to institutional change and development that it urges upon participants in intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Secular ideologues are encouraged to seek a dialogue with the various religious traditions through which might emerge new and valuable post-Christendom resources for the vitality of civil society’ (*ibid.*)

A somewhat different critique of inter-religious dialogue was made by Jamal Malik (2006) in a briefing paper for the European Parliament, commissioned by the Committee on Culture and Education. Post 9/11, he argued, ‘religions, and more specifically “Islam”, have received renewed attention and greater curiosity, which has led well-meaning and peace-willing people to engage “the” Muslim community in a process of dialogue on Islam’ (p. iii). He criticised the implicit view that there is ‘one specific and distinct Islam with which it is possible to have a dialogue’, and calls for the recognition of Muslim heterogeneity. At the same time, he pointed out that:

‘Problems have to be addressed which do not seem to be related to religion in the first place, since the initial and general problems of minorities in Europe pertain to social and educational inequalities, the lack of language skills, racism/xenophobia, questions of integration/isolation/assimilation, the lack of representation and so forth. The patterns of dialogue must be developed constantly within the contexts of conflicts that stem out of socio-economic causes, rather than stiffening the increasingly confessionalised discourse, which further inhibits us in many ways to go beyond confessional boundaries.’

Besides, the situation of Muslims should not be treated as exceptional: the difficulties they face are also faced by many other minorities in Europe. Finally, there is as much a need for dialogue *within* as *between* religious and other groups.

‘The dialogue of cultures is difficult – not only because there are structural differences between various cultures, their aims and points of view – but also because it has to be conducted within each community first, and more often than not there are disputes about the form and aim of intercultural dialogue, if not resistance to the very idea of a dialogue. Therefore, an intrareligious/-class/-ethnic/-gender etc. dialogue has to be initiated, taking into account that religious comments/expressions are not always a sign of strong religiosity but instead point to a strong “inculturalisation” of Islam in various contexts’ (p. 2).

As with all such discussions of dialogue, it is important to ask what happens in practice; what, in fact, do these interfaith networks and encounters amount to? The next section is in three parts. The first considers the UK’s response to *Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12*. The second is a short case study of a CoE conference organised in April 2008, entitled an ‘Exchange on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue’. This was one of a series of such ‘Exchanges’, and the case study provides an opportunity to document some of difficulties which interreligious dialogues encounter.²³⁸ The third part explores the way in which some British faith groups have sought to put dialogue into practice, and goes on to examine one approach (*diapaxis*) through which such practice might be enhanced.

Interreligious Dialogues in Practice?

The UK’s Response to Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12

It is unclear how far the CoE’s Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12, in fact influenced member states. To investigate the (official) British response, I used the UK’s Freedom of Information process to ask the responsible department (in this case the Department for Children, Schools and Families until 2010, and thereafter the Department for Education), whether the Recommendation had been acted upon by the Departments concerned. What initiatives if any were undertaken? Had there been any assessments of the outcomes? There was a lengthy reply, which can be consulted in full online²³⁹, and is summarised in the following.

‘The Council’s recommendation’, commented the Department for Education, ‘is wide ranging’.

‘Rather than issuing a standalone response, England is following the principles and objectives of the agreement in its education policies. The [Department] supports the overall spirit of the recommendations through the policies and projects we deliver.’

In fact, what the response does is explain the range of measures already in place in the education system which required schools to provide a ‘broad and balanced education to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society’, and ‘promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs’. Measures included a ‘good quality religious education’, in which (after September 2016) pupils taking the GCSE qualification in Religious Studies

238 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cm/exchanges>.

239 https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/departments_response_to_recommen?nocache=incoming-999562#incoming-999562, 30 June 2017.

‘are required to study two religions in depth - as well as being aware of the diverse range of religious and non-religious beliefs represented in this country. This helps to prepare students for life in modern Britain by fostering an awareness of other faiths and beliefs and encouraging tolerance and mutual respect - key British values’.

In preparation for citizenship, pupils ‘should be taught about the diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding’. Concerning teacher training, the Department was ‘working to produce guidance and resources packs to help teachers lead knowledge-based debates on topics relating to extremism, fundamental British values and contemporary political and social issues’. In that connection, under the ‘PREVENT duty’,

‘schools and other institutions ... should make sure that staff have training that gives them the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas, which can be used to legitimise terrorism and are shared by terrorist groups ... The government is supporting schools to meet their obligations to protect pupils from radicalisation and promote fundamental British values, and to help them build pupils’ resilience to extremism so they can question information, weigh arguments, and make reasoned judgments’.

PREVENT is a (controversial) strategy initiated by the Labour Government in 2005 and subsequently revised on a number of occasions²⁴⁰, intended to combat extremism and the radicalisation, principally of young Muslims. Thus, in line with the contemporary critique of multiculturalism (see Chapter 1), the Department casts its response to the CoE Recommendations in terms of inculcating fundamental British values and countering terrorism. This is what interreligious dialogue seems to be about in the eyes of the government. This perspective, which also reflects that of the CoE and EU, offers a distinct contrast to that which emerges from the account of the interfaith networks described in an earlier section. It would seem, therefore, that there are two if not three models of what interreligious dialogue is intended to accomplish, a point I consider further in the conclusion to the chapter.

The CoE’s ‘Exchanges on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue’

In recent years the CoE has organised a number of ‘Exchanges on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue’, often, though not always, held in Strasbourg – that for 2014, for example, took place in Baku.²⁴¹ (A full list may be consulted online.²⁴²) These exchanges are described as ‘provid[ing] a platform for dialogue between public authorities, religious communities and organisations representing non-religious beliefs, and broader civil society on topics of particular importance to the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue’.²⁴³ That for 2016 was concerned with ‘The role of education in the prevention of radicalisation’²⁴⁴, with two sub-themes: ‘Education for democratic citizenship in the context of cultural and religious diversity’, and ‘Empowering women and the role of the family in countering radicalisation and violent extremism’. That for 2017 was devoted to ‘Migrants and refugees: challenges and opportunities - What role for religious and non-religious groups?’²⁴⁵

240 See *inter alia* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011>.

241 <http://en.apa.az/azerbaijan-culture/culture-policy/council-of-europe-exchange-on-religious-dimension-of-intercultural-dialogue-ends.html>.

242 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cm/exchanges>.

243 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/17-exchange-on-the-religious-dimension-of-intercultural-dialogue>.

244 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/2016-exchange-on-the-religious-dimension-of-intercultural-dialogue?desktop=true>.

245

https://search.coe.int/directorate_of_communications/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680761567.

The first of these Exchanges took place in Strasbourg in 2008. Described as an ‘important experiment’ which would ‘break new ground’²⁴⁶, it was the outcome of a series of previous CoE initiatives concerning religious education which included conferences in Malta (2004), Kazan (2006), and San Marino (2007). The latter produced a Declaration²⁴⁷ in which participants *inter alia*:

‘Reaffirmed their commitment to the shared values, which constitute the very foundation of the Council of Europe, namely universal, inalienable and indivisible human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Many among them noted that these values were rooted in Europe’s cultural, religious and humanist heritage. The participants also wished to underline their attachment to the development of more inclusive and cohesive societies in Europe’ (para. 4).

They further ‘expressed their conviction’

‘that it was necessary to promote intercultural dialogue and its religious dimension with all interested parties and highlighted the importance of cooperating with religious communities, together with public authorities and other social actors, to create favourable conditions for communities living together in Europe’ (para. 5).

The religious representatives furthermore welcomed the CoE’s initiative and a proposal for holding annual Exchanges - hence the Strasbourg conference.

The 2008 Exchange, which dealt with the ‘educational aspects of religious diversity’, involved some 100 religious leaders (Roman Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox Christians, Armenians, Jews, Muslims), along with representatives of NGOs and academic and other experts²⁴⁸ who discussed the role of religion in education and the teaching of religion in schools. Despite the hopes held out for the occasion it was, in certain important respects, a disappointment. A report prepared by one of the experts, Robert Jackson (Professor of Education at the University of Warwick²⁴⁹) noted:

‘It seemed clear (on the basis of conversations on the day, and in various evaluations of the meeting) that there was some lack of clarity in the minds of some participants in the Exchange of 8 April 2008 about their roles and about the purpose of the meeting. The fact that so many participants felt the need to read prepared statements positioning themselves and their organisations illustrated some uncertainty about the purpose of the meeting. I do not think this was at all due to any ambiguity in the papers provided for the meeting (which were very clear), but rather due to the novelty of the occasion, and uncertainty as to how to respond in an environment that may have been perceived by some as a formal political space’ (Jackson 2008).²⁵⁰

‘The religious bodies attending [CoE] meetings on education about religions should’, Jackson added, ‘recognise their role as being one of contributing to ideas about public policy, and not, for example, debating with [CoE] about its role or taking an opportunity to propagate particular religious ideas’. ‘Some participants’, he concluded, ‘may have misunderstood the context in which they were working, and may therefore have been cautious about entering into open dialogue’.

246 <https://rm.coe.int/16805d3a71>.

247 www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Source/sanmarinofinal_EN.doc.

248 List of participants at

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=SecCM/Inf\(2008\)10&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864&direct=true](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=SecCM/Inf(2008)10&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864&direct=true).

249 <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ces/research/wreru/aboutus/staff/rj>.

250 Some of the interventions by participants in the Exchange are available on line via

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=Exchange-08/04/2008&Language=lanEnglish&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864&direct=true>.

The impression of participants at events such as the Strasbourg ‘Exchange’ simply talking past each other is perhaps typical of many such attempts at intercultural dialogue (as illustrated elsewhere in this book). Nonetheless, and despite this, the CoE agreed to follow up the event with further Exchanges, notably in the light of increasing religious hostility (Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia) across Europe, and in the context of recommendations contained in the White Paper (Brasseur 2011).²⁵¹ As noted above, these Exchanges now take place annually, often with a focus on religion and education in public policy (Jackson 2016), and through that on religion’s ‘contribution to the respect of the universal values defended by the [CoE]’.²⁵²

Towards Diapraxis?

The earlier section on *Interfaith Networks in the UK* concluded by observing the difficulty of knowing what actually results from the activities of such networks, beyond the resolve to talk to one another. Do they, in fact, have any significant outcome? Do they amount to anything more than ‘low-threshold’ intercultural encounters (Anderson and Kaur-Stubbs 2010)? One London-based charity, the *City Circle*, run by a Muslim-majority management team, besides organising what it calls ‘a safe space for communities [Muslim and non-Muslim] to self-critically discuss and debate issues that concern them’ – its ‘Friday Talks’²⁵³ – does have what is apparently a wide-ranging outreach programme. There is a ‘Saturday School’, with about 100 pupils, which seeks to tackle ‘the low attainment levels achieved by students from low socioeconomic backgrounds’, with apparently good results.²⁵⁴ There is also a ‘Homeless’ project which

‘Aims to: Change the way society thinks and acts towards homeless people; Help people in short-term crisis by providing free food and clothing; Raise funding to support existing activities and support our partner charities and volunteer groups’.²⁵⁵

One example of an activity which involved both interreligious dialogue and interfaith practice was the *Interfaith Iftar*, breaking of the fast, organised in June 2017 to ‘bring Britons of all faiths, and none, together to celebrate Ramadan and our shared values’.²⁵⁶ The event was held at St James’s Church, Piccadilly, which itself hosts an annual ‘Winter Shelter’ in conjunction with other churches and the West London Synagogue.²⁵⁷ In 2016, the *City Circle* ‘was proud to have joined the team [in 2016] at St James’s in providing weekly support to our homeless guests. This has been a great collaboration and one we will continue into the future’. The *Iftar* included a panel on homelessness, with Christian, Jewish and Muslim representatives, and a keynote speech by Baroness Saeeda Warsi²⁵⁸, a former minister in the Coalition government.²⁵⁹ There followed a general discussion ‘on the importance of building strong interfaith communities’, prayers, and a meal breaking the fast. Sadly, the event coincided with terrorist attacks at London Bridge and Borough Market.

In an article in *Anthropology Today*, Jonathan Benthall (2012:1) called attention to the

251 See also

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=CM\(2008\)62&Language=lanFrench&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75&direct=true](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=CM(2008)62&Language=lanFrench&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75&direct=true);
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17881&lang=en>;
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=13129&lang=en>.

252 <http://en.apa.az/azerbaijan-culture/culture-policy/council-of-europe-exchange-on-religious-dimension-of-intercultural-dialogue-ends.html>.

253 <http://www.thecitycircle.com/projects>.

254 <http://www.thecitycircle.com/projects/825-saturday-school>.

255 <http://www.thecitycircle.com/projects/826-helping-the-homeless>.

256 <http://www.sjp.org.uk/news/-interfaith-iftar-bringing-communities-together-19-june-730pm>.

257 <http://www.sjp.org.uk/night-shelter.html>.

258 <https://sayeedawarsi.com>.

259 Report with video available at <http://aboutislam.net/muslim-issues/europe/uk-muslims-christians-interfaith-iftar-terrorists-strike-london>.

concept and practice of *diapraxis*. which he glossed as a ‘a mutually agreed practical project embarked on jointly by two parties to a conflict’, and which he argued should replace the idea of ‘dialogue’. The term itself is attributed to the Danish theologian, Lissi Rasmussen, and was discussed *inter alia* in the journal *Politorbis* (No. 52(2), 2011) to which Benthall also drew attention. In fact, for Rasmussen and those who have taken up her idea, *diapraxis*, rather than dispensing with dialogue, is interpreted as ‘dialogue through practice’, on the understanding that ‘Mutually agreed upon action carried out jointly by the involved actors is often more powerful than oral dialog’ (Mason and Sguaitamatti 2011:7). Although *diapraxis* was specifically advocated as a method for addressing conflict resolution and mediation (and Benthall takes that point on board), the idea is one which appeals as an approach to interethnic (and specifically as regards the subject of the present chapter) interreligious dialogues. As Lisa Rasmussen herself puts it: ‘*Diapraxis* ... means working together, having common experiences, having a common goal. It is much stronger than just talking together’ (Rasmussen 2011: 60). As I understand it, the emphasis is working together on a specific, practical, rather than intellectual project, ‘concrete joint activities’ (Bitter and von Blarer 2011: 87).

The *Politorbis* issue contains a number of case studies which illustrate the *diapraxis* approach, and its value can perhaps be seen in the kind of practical interfaith initiatives which the City Circle, among others, have undertaken, working together with others on homelessness in London. Interreligious dialogue which is both focused and practical would seem a profitable way forward.

Concluding Reflections

In this concluding section I will concentrate on two points, both of which concern differences in approach to interreligious dialogue.

First, a comparison of what the EU and CoE, on the one hand, and those involved with interfaith networks, on the other, say and do about interreligious dialogue reveals two models (or if you will schools of thought) concerning such dialogues and what is expected of them. For example, since 2002 there has been a series of international *Building Bridges Seminars*, mainly involving theologians and academics, chaired by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams (see *inter alia* Amos 2009, Pratt 2015, and Mosher and Marshall eds. 2016); ‘building bridges’ is a commonly used metaphor in the context of interreligious dialogue, as elsewhere (see the UNESCO Convention cited in Chapter 5, and other examples in Chapter 12). The purpose of the *Seminars* is to

‘[bring] together a range of internationally recognized Christian and Muslim scholars for intensive study. These annual seminars, each lasting three or four days, have explored many of the most significant themes in the interface between Islam and Christianity—among them, scripture; prophecy; the common good; justice and rights; human nature; interpretation; science and religion; tradition and modernity; prayer; death, resurrection, and human destiny; community; God’s creativity and human action; monotheism and its complexities; and divine and human power’.²⁶⁰

This suggests a dialogue which is open-ended and exploratory, comparing systems of belief and practice, perhaps seeking where possible to establish common ground on matters of faith, or at least to recognise and come to terms with differences where they exist. The exploratory nature of such an approach is illustrated in the various publications that emerged from the proceedings of the *Building Bridges Seminars*. Thus, from the 2014 meeting came *Sin, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation: Christian and Muslim Perspectives*, a book which ‘explore[s] the nature of human sin and divine forgiveness, topics that have often been a point of contention between Christians and Muslims’ (Mosher and Marshall eds. 2016).

A similar perspective informs a lecture entitled ‘Jews, Christians and Muslims Meet Around

260 <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/projects/the-building-bridges-seminar>.

their Scriptures: An Inter-faith Practice for the 21st Century', by Professor David Ford, Regius Professor of Divinity and Director of the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme (Ford 2011). In this, the Fourth Pope John Paul II Annual Lecture on Interreligious Understanding, Ford asked what are the aims of 'interreligious understanding'? His reply: 'It seeks wisdom in three ways: by going deeper into the faiths of others; deeper into one's own faith; and deeper into understanding the common good.' This deepening, he contended, required 'continual, long term engagement', for which he advocated the practice of 'Scriptural Reasoning', where 'Jews, Christians and Muslims meet together to read and discuss their scriptures'. This is very much in the spirit of another body, *The Elijah Interfaith Academy*²⁶¹, of which its founder, Rabbi Alon Goshen-Gottstein, notes:

'The creation of a forum that brought together world-class leaders and top-level scholars was significant for both sides. Religious leaders found themselves engaging at a level that, as many testified, they had not previously engaged. They did not need to defend or present their tradition. They were free to reflect in a free spirit that made room for selfcriticism. It was an experience that was both liberating and enriching' (Goschen-Gottstein 2017: 283).

Curiously, in this case, I am reminded of the *Capital* reading groups popular in the 1970s, but although the above examples are concerned with meetings involving church leaders and international scholars, the general approach is not untypical of interfaith networks and gathering of the kind described earlier, including, for example, the meeting on *Arbitration Within Faith Communities*, with which the chapter began.

By contrast, the purpose of the CoE Exchanges is defined as follows:

'To promote and strengthen the fundamental Council of Europe values - respect for human rights and furtherance of democracy and rule of law - in order to foster mutual respect and awareness, tolerance and mutual understanding within European society [and] to associate with this goal the representatives of the religions traditionally present in Europe, the representatives of non-religious convictions and the other players in civil society. The Exchange is founded on the participants' adherence and commitment to the fundamental values of the Council of Europe and on their willingness to enter into open and transparent dialogue'.²⁶²

That is, the approach either demands, in advance, a commitment on the part of participants to the CoE's (or EU's) fundamental values, or seeks to lead participants towards accepting those values, and adjusting their own beliefs and practices in accordance with them. Whether justified or not (and I refrain from commenting on that), this is interreligious dialogue construed as a political task, framed in terms of CoE's and EU's policies of diversity governance. The way in which the UK's Department for Education's interpretation of *Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12* led it onto the terrain of the PREVENT programme further underlines this. The British response, quoted above, interestingly referred to 'fundamental British values'.

Secondly, and thinking again about the *Building Bridges Seminars*, there is another kind of difference between such activities which principally involve high level meetings of a theological character, concerned with the comparative understanding of beliefs and rituals, and those where participants are seeking to work together, usually at a local level, on some practical project. This is not to say, that the theologians and academics seek to avoid worldly matters. The wider engagement of an institution such as the *Elijah Interfaith Academy*, however, is perhaps illustrated by the following:

261 <http://elijah-interfaith.org>.

262 At <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cm/exchanges>.

‘On June 14, 2017 many of the world’s most prominent religious leaders made a joint statement encouraging people everywhere to make friends across religions. Friendship and getting to know one another are the antidotes to negativity and divisions in society, enhancing understanding and unity. We invite you to download our toolkits for friendship and study. We pray that the message and example of unity, shown by these leaders, will contribute to bridging divisions by inspiring you and your friends to start new conversations with people of different faiths. Follow the example, spread the message.’²⁶³

Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus?

When interreligious dialogue is at a high level of theological or academic abstraction, as in *Building Bridges* or in the House of Lords debate in December 2016, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury (cited in Chapter 5)²⁶⁴, it is questionable whether it has much appeal outside of the circles which share such an interest, and how far it appeals to those who are not theologians or academics is also questionable. The synagogue meeting on *Arbitration Within Faith Communities* which had a more practical and specific goal was certainly of interest to the general audience which attended, and that is one way to go. More significant still are the groups which combine a certain degree of exploration of difficult ideas but with a primary focus on everyday practice, as does the City Circle. In short, *diapaxis* would seem to point the way.

Although the advent of the Coalition Government (2010), and the promotion of what the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, called ‘muscular liberalism’, meant that interfaith groups and networks had decreasing publicly-sanctioned traction in the UK, interfaith dialogues were not abandoned, but the problems facing such dialogues should not be underestimated (Mohammed 2015). This is an abiding issue for interculturalism which its advocates must address. The dialogues between Muslim and others (for example over Islamic marriage and divorce, discussed in Chapter 16) further illustrate some of the difficulties that are likely to be encountered.

263 <http://elijah-interfaith.org>; see also <https://www.youtube.com/MakeFriends>.

264 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2016-12-02/debates/37E807CF-3A7E-4060-B139-8A30257E770F/NationalLifeSharedValuesAndPublicPolicyPriorities>. The debate deserves detailed analysis which cannot be undertaken here.

CHAPTER 16. INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUES WITH ISLAM

‘There are a number of ideas and views around and everybody thinks they are an expert in Islam’ (Dr Amra Bone, in *Oral evidence to House of Commons Home Affairs Committee*, 1 November 2016).

Introduction

This penultimate chapter in part continues the discussion of interfaith encounters from Chapter 15, but as its title indicates it is as much concerned with *intercultural* (and indeed *intra-cultural*) as with specifically interreligious dialogues, that is dialogues about cultural beliefs and practices which are often, rightly or wrongly, associated with the followers of a particular faith, Islam. It does not attempt to cover all such beliefs and practices (for example, there is nothing about headscarves or face-veils, a subject which I have discussed elsewhere, Grillo and Shah 2013), instead it focuses on those concerned with marriage and divorce, and thence on debates about Shari’a and its recognition, and the so-called Shari’a councils, which have been the subject of proposed restrictive legislation and two major inquiries. The chapter is also mainly concerned with what is happening in the UK, drawing on, and where possible updating, material examined in greater depth in Grillo 2015a and other publications (e.g. Grillo 2010, 2011). Inevitably it scratches the surface of a wide-ranging and highly controversial topic; it has, for example, almost nothing to say (explicitly at any rate) about ‘Islamophobia’.

There is a spectrum of views about whether or not British society (or more precisely English and Welsh law) should or could accommodate ‘Other’ beliefs and practices. Concerning Islam, for instance, at one end of that spectrum are those who would, on various grounds, deny any public place for the legal and ethical norms entailed in Shari’a, contending, some of them, that if Muslims are to live in Britain they must abandon much of their faith. At the opposite end are those Muslims who would insist on nothing but Shari’a in its pristine form (according to their own interpretation). For example, Haitham al-Haddad, an Imam based in North London, when reflecting on the ‘Muslim Marriage Contract’ (see below) asserted:

‘Allah revealed this Shari’a and revealed this Islam to be the best of religions and to be the best of systems. And it is well confirmed by all the scholars that if anyone believes that this Shari’a or this system is not the best of systems then he is committing an act of *kufr* [denial of the truth of Islam]’.²⁶⁵

Thus stated, Islam would appear to have become a major site of contestation between very different beliefs, values and practices, a ‘Clash of Civilizations’, as Huntington would have it. Though undoubtedly there are Muslims and non-Muslims who see things this way, it is misleading to represent the contemporary situation solely as a confrontation between two ‘sides’, both seeing the worst in each other. Against this are the many Muslims and non-Muslims who find themselves somewhere in the middle of this spectrum, including those dedicated to bringing different faiths together, and ‘Building Bridges’, the title of an annual award offered by the Association of Muslim Social Scientists²⁶⁶, and as we saw in Chapter 15, a widely favoured metaphor.

As the discussion of interfaith groups and networks in Chapter 15 has shown, even when differences appear to be substantial, there are many followers of Islam on the one hand, and of Christianity or Judaism on the other, who are prepared to enter into dialogue, sometimes theological, sometimes academic, sometimes practical. The possibility of such conversations is central to the thinking of those whom I have described elsewhere as ‘critical friends’ of institutions such as the

265 www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGRA252Y9BU.

266 www.amssuk.com/awards.html.

Shari'a councils (see Grillo 2015a), and of Islam more generally. Again, as we saw in Chapters 14 and 15, many lawyers seem particularly sensitive to this. For instance, the need for dialogue was the rationale behind the 2008 Temple lecture series on *Islam in English Law*, which included the controversial intervention by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams (2008). The lectures were intended 'to articulate, understand and, if possible, to begin to bridge, at one crucial point, the apparent chasm between the two cultures' (Hockman 2013: 1). As such they were among many meetings and 'roundtable' discussions which in the late 2000s and after brought together Muslim and other religious and civil society associations, members of the legal profession, and academic lawyers to discuss differences between Muslim and English law and the possibilities for reconciling legal approaches to family matters, notably around marriage and divorce, the focus of the present chapter.

There are discussions and debates (both inter- and intra-cultural) which take place in face-to-face encounters, and some examples will be found in this chapter. But as was pointed out in Chapter 1, the idea of 'dialogue' encompasses much more than this. Exchanges about cultural beliefs and practices associated with Islam take place locally, nationally and globally, and in our contemporary societies participants in such debates may be responding to each other directly or indirectly, orally or in writing, even when not co-present in the same space.

Marriages Arranged and Forced

In the UK, the marriage and divorce practices of minority families, especially Muslim families with a background in South Asia, have come under increasing public scrutiny since the 1990s, notably in regard to arranged and forced marriages, and the gender relations these imply. The context for such scrutiny, which is by no means confined to the UK, was outlined earlier (see Chapter 1): the growth of minority families with continuing transnational ties to places of origin, some of whom may seek to maintain practices at odds with those of the societies in which they have settled and which are in conflict with international conventions of gender relations and human rights, and which in consequence have influenced the backlash against multiculturalism.

The normative cultural assumption in the UK (and much of contemporary Europe) is that marriage is a publicly recognised relationship, historically between a man and a woman, though that has changed, which has been freely entered into by the prospective partners. This was certainly not always so in Europe, and in living memory royal and aristocratic families continued to foster arranged partnerships. More widely distributed across the social spectrum, perhaps, are so-called 'shot-gun' marriages, where one partner, usually a young man, is obliged, reluctantly, to accept the consequences of his actions. Notwithstanding such examples, attention has in recent decades focused very largely on arranged and what are seen as forced marriages among minority populations of immigrant background, especially – in the UK – where families originated in South Asia. It is sometimes believed – at least by non-Muslims – that such marriages are justified by Islam, but it should be clear from the outset that Islam strictly opposes those marriages, and forced marriage is by no means confined to communities who happen to be Muslim. Nor is there any justification for the belief that forced marriages are part of a cultural complex encompassing 'honour killings, domestic violence ... and [female genital mutilation] ... built on ideas of honour and cultural, ethnic and religious superiority' (Brandon and Salam 2008: 1; see Korteweg and Yurdakul 2009). Undeniably, terrible things, including abuse and sexual violence, occur in Muslim families, as in others (Qureshi 2014), but notorious cases should not stand for the values and practices of such families in general.

In the UK, public concern about forced marriages came to the fore in the late 1990s and led to the then Labour government establishing a working group to examine the question (see Grillo 2011, 2015a). All of its members had a minority background, and given their prominence in public affairs they might be described as representing a minority 'establishment'. Their report, *A Choice by Right* (Home Office 2000), argued that there was a difference between 'arranged' and 'forced' marriages, and that although a multicultural society such as the UK 'must value and celebrate our diversity ... we

must not excuse practices that compromise or undermine the basic rights accorded to all people' (p. 10). Nonetheless, it contended, discussion of forced marriage should not be allowed to stigmatise British Asian communities, which, led by minority women's NGOs, were at the forefront of tackling forced marriage and domestic violence.

Subsequent measures to address the problem included the setting up of a Forced Marriage Protection Unit, based in the Home Office, and in 2006 a Private Members' Bill²⁶⁷, proposed by Lord Anthony Lester²⁶⁸, who had had a long-standing engagement with questions of 'race' relations and human rights (see, for example, Lester and Bindman 1972). The Bill, which sought to make forced marriage an offence for which the victim could seek redress through the civil courts, had numerous supporters from the voluntary sector, including Khatun Sapnara, a barrister and practicing Muslim, who helped shape the legislation and who was later created a judge.²⁶⁹ The Bill, which became the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007, drew on legal precedents, notably *Hirani v Hirani* [1983]²⁷⁰ to define 'force' as 'coerc[ing] by threats or other psychological means', though whether this included the emotional blackmail which might occur in any family ('I'll never be able to raise my head in public again!') remained contentious.

This did not end the matter, and there continued to be much discussion on all sides of the desirability or otherwise of going further by making forced marriage a criminal offence. This debate, and the extended dialogue between proponents and opponents, took place amid sensational media stories, confusion over numbers, and a multitude of reports, conferences, consultations and interventions by politicians and activists of every stripe. Internationally, there were similar interventions which put further pressure on governments and communities to confront the issue. (Strickland 2013 has an excellent summary of the parliamentary developments). Under pressure from the then Conservative opposition, the Labour Government affirmed that the possibility of criminalising forced marriages remained open, and among a raft of measures proposed raising the age at which people could enter Britain for marriage from 18 to 21.

Meanwhile, following a widely publicised inquest into the unlawful killing of a young Asian woman in which the coroner advised that the 'concept of an arranged marriage was "central" to the circumstances leading up to her death'²⁷¹, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee conducted an investigation (2008) which set forced marriage in the wider context of domestic violence, concluding that there was a case for criminalisation. In response to the Committee's report, the Department for Children, Schools and Families commissioned a survey 'to improve our understanding of the prevalence of forced marriage, and ... examine how services are currently responding to cases' (Kazimirski et al 2009: 11). The survey estimated that there were annually between 5,000–8,000 instances of actual or threatened forced marriage (in large part involving families with a South Asian, particularly Pakistani, background) which had come to the attention of police and social services. This estimate (which excluded hidden cases), though contested (one NGO, the *Southall Black Sisters*, thought numbers were exaggerated, creating a moral panic to justify immigration policies²⁷²) was subsequently widely reported, and treated as authoritative.

Matters took a further turn in 2010 with the advent of the Coalition Government. David Cameron, when leader of the opposition, had announced that a future Conservative government would consider making forced marriages illegal. Subsequently, in his speech (2011) criticising 'state multiculturalism', he referred to the 'failure to confront the horrors of forced marriage', and in a later

267 A proposal for legislation by an individual member of the House of Commons or House of Lords, not by the government, though it may eventually receive government support. Such proposals infrequently result in legislation.

268 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Lester,_Baron_Lester_of_Herne_Hill.

269 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khatun_Sapnara.

270 See *Hirani v Hirani* [1982] EWCA Civ J0505-2, [1983] 4 FLR 232.

271 www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/girl-who-feared-arranged-marriage-was-murdered-769724.html.

272 www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2011/oct/13/forced-marriage-law-supreme-court.

address on immigration denounced forced marriages ‘as a means of gaining entry to the UK’. This is the practice, he continued, ‘where some young British girls are bullied and threatened into marrying someone they don’t want to. I’ve got no time for those who say this is a culturally relative issue – frankly it is wrong, full stop, and we’ve got to stamp it out’.²⁷³ The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee also revisited the matter, taking evidence from witnesses described as survivors of forced marriage, and concluding:

‘It would send out a very clear and positive message to communities within the UK and internationally if it becomes a criminal act to force-or to participate in forcing-an individual to enter into marriage against their will’ (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee 2011: 7).

For the Government’s part it announced that there would now be a further public consultation on criminalisation, ‘working closely with those who provide support to women forced into marriage to make sure that such a step would not prevent or hinder them from reporting what has happened to them’.²⁷⁴ The consultation received some 300 written responses (many available online) which the government summarised as 54 per cent in favour of a new offence, 37 per cent against (Home Office 2012). Additionally, a large majority felt that existing sanctions were being employed ineffectively, and there was a need to do more about prevention and supporting and protecting victims. In fact, the government’s mind appeared to have been already made up. Noting that forced marriage was criminalised in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Malta and Norway (as well as Australia), it announced it had signed the CoE’s Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and would implement its terms by making forced marriage illegal (see also Commonwealth Secretariat 2014). This it did by inserting clauses in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing [‘ASBO’] Act (2014) which made it an offence (punishable by a fine or imprisonment), if someone:

‘Uses violence, threats or any other form of coercion for the purpose of causing another person to enter into a marriage, and believes, or ought reasonably to believe, that the conduct may cause the other person to enter into the marriage without free and full consent’.²⁷⁵

In the debate about criminalisation there were multiple exchanges between those for, against and in between, which *inter alia* involved discussing the meaning of marriage for the populations concerned, and how their practices did or did not conform with those recognised in English law and custom, and reflected ‘British values’. Among those engaged in these exchanges were academics whose findings helped shape the debate (among many others Gill 2011, Gill and Anitha (eds.) 2011, Gill, Strange, and Roberts 2014), and a multitude of NGOs working with minority communities. Among the most influential was the Derby-based NGO, *Karma Nirvana*, which in January 2014 celebrated its 21st anniversary with a reception at the House of Commons, hosted by the *All-Party Parliamentary Group on ‘Honour’ Based Abuse*; it was addressed *inter alia*, by Baroness Caroline Cox.²⁷⁶

The contribution of *Karma Nirvana*’s founder and long-standing activist against forced marriage and violence against women, Jasvinder Sanghera (recipient of a Pride of Britain award, and a CBE²⁷⁷) cannot be underestimated (see Sanghera 2007, 2012). She, along with another influential activist, Aneeta Prem²⁷⁸ of the *Freedom Charity*²⁷⁹ presented evidence to the House of Commons

273 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2011/apr/14/david-cameron-immigrants-learn-english>.

274 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-speech-on-immigration>.

275 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/contents/enacted>.

276 sigbi.org/bilston-and-district/programme-action-visit-to-the-house-of-commons.

277 www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/03/10/karma-nirvana-jasvinder-sanghera-forced-marriage_n_4930835.html.

278 uk.linkedin.com/in/aneetaprem.

279 www.freedomcharity.org.uk; <https://bibekjournal.wordpress.com/2012/03/29/aneeta-prem-forced-marriage-is-a-hidden-crime>.

Committee debating the criminalisation clauses of the ASBO Bill, explaining the work of their organisations, and answering questions about the motives for forced marriage²⁸⁰:

Aneeta Prem: The main reasons are around the family. It is about control. It is about money. It is about immigration and getting people to stay in the UK or come over. It is about having such a level of control over the young person that they lose their freedom. We are talking about young people who are born in the UK, and lose all the rights that you and I expect.

Jasvinder Sanghera: Controlling behaviour is one. Some family members operate a system of honour, and it is deemed dishonourable to take on western behaviour, such as being seen talking to the opposite sex, wanting an education, wearing make-up and anything to do with integration. Often, families see such behaviour as a cause of shame, and a forced marriage may be a means of dealing with that sort of behaviour.

Both strongly supported criminalisation and rejected the charge that it would drive the problem underground. Criminalisation would give the authorities greater powers and send out a very strong message.

Later the Committee interviewed Isabella Sankey and Katie Johnston of *Liberty*²⁸¹ who while agreeing that breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order (issued under the 2007 Act) should be a crime, had long-standing reservations about criminalisation.²⁸² They were given a rough ride. The Minister of State, Home Department (Jeremy Browne, Liberal Democrat), for example, commented: ‘Given that this issue has been discussed for 10 years, surely we could get on with introducing a criminal offence, unless Liberty has an aversion to criminalizing anything ever’, while Stephen Phillips MP (Conservative) stated he was:

‘concerned with the credibility of your lobbying on the Bill, because it seems to me that you are urging the Committee to take a course of action—namely, removing the criminalization of the very serious problem of forced marriage from the Bill—off the back of absolutely no evidence. It is just a position that Liberty has taken, and I would, of course, say that it is because you are just the awkward squad’.²⁸³

Isabella Sankey denied this and pointed to the evidence available in government consultations etc, adding that they were ‘asking the Government to do some further investigation by talking to those who know best—which is not you, me or any member of the Committee; it is the organizations that work with very vulnerable people—to try and find out the extent of the problem’. At this, Simon Danczuk MP (Labour) objected to the implication that members of the Committee lacked the necessary experience, and extracted an apology from Sankey who ended: ‘What we are merely asking for is that the range of people who have this direct experience are brought together to provide evidence in this way, and that it is not something that is done in a knee-jerk way by Government, without the proper evidence base’.

These various points were further rehearsed and debated in the media between those for and against criminalisation. Thus, BBC2’s *Newsnight* programme (June 2012) pitted Aneeta Prem against Khatun Sappara, then with the *Ashiana Network*.²⁸⁴ Prem argued that criminalisation would be an addition to existing legislation, give young people a better understanding of their rights and tackle child abuse and domestic violence. Sappara contended that it was surplus to requirements, have only

280 https://www.theyworkforyou.com/psc/2013-14/Anti-social_Behaviour,_Crime_and_Policing_Bill/03-0_2013-06-20a.3.0,

281 www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/index.php.

282 <https://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/sites/default/files/forced-marriage-consultation.pdf>.

283 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmpublic/antisocialbehaviour/130620/pm/130620s01.htm>.

284 <http://ashiana.org.uk>.

symbolic value, and do little practically except drive the issue underground. Similarly, on BBC Radio 4's *Sunday* programme (June 2012) Tehmina Kazi²⁸⁵ of the *British Muslims for Secular Democracy* debated with the academic, Aisha Gill. Kazi supported criminalisation as a bargaining chip for young people in danger of being coerced into marriage, arguing it would not deter people from coming forward. In Denmark criminalisation had increased reporting rates, and she could imagine young people threatening their parents that they would report them to the police. Besides, existing legislation did not cover emotional coercion. Gill accepted that forced marriage was a human rights violation and Islam and other religions agreed that people have a right to choose, but existing laws were sufficient. Victims could seek protection under the 2007 Act, and criminalisation would deter victims from coming forward to seek support and remedies. Aisha Gill, along with Khatun Sapnara, and Lord Anthony Lester were leading signatories of a petition sent to the Prime Minister opposing criminalisation.²⁸⁶

There are, in fact, many reasons why parents (and extended kin) seek to arrange and perhaps impose a marriage: developing or strengthening community ties or financial or economic commitments, here or in the country of origin (perhaps by facilitating someone's migration); maintaining endogamy; controlling or restricting sexual behaviour, and enforcing norms of propriety.; ideologies of honour, masculinity and femininity may also come into it. Such marriages are imbricated in complex sets of relations and circumstances involving property, debt, business deals, inheritance, religion, child custody, and sexual orientation, and how families are embedded in networks of inter- and intra-generational ties of mutual reciprocity, largely ordered within the priority given to ties of patrilineal descent. This is crucial for any understanding of marriage arrangements. In the British context, say Samad and Eade, the economic and social situation of minority families intensifies dependence on wider networks, within a tradition which prioritises the welfare of the collectivity and its good name, and this 'motivates men and women to regulate the behaviour of their children, in particular girls, and flagrant disregard of group norms can trigger processes that culminate in forced marriages' (2002: 109). Such arrangements might also reflect a propensity to withdraw into an enclave, protect families and maintain ethnic and religious boundaries in a hostile (often racist) environment.

While most respondents to the 2011–12 consultation rehearsed the standard arguments for/against criminalisation, Roger Ballard and Fauzia Shariff (2012), both anthropologists, sought to situate marriages in the context of such family dynamics. The great majority of forced marriages, they maintained, are marriages which have been 'exceedingly badly arranged by anxious and myopic parents, rather than ... instances of cruel and deliberate enforcement'. One source of anxiety is the fear that sons/daughters are 'running off the rails' in a context of 'intense concern about choice of marital partner and about extra/pre-marital pregnancies'. The traditional way of protecting daughters and themselves from disgrace was to arrange a marriage pre-puberty, 'cementing the relationship ... with a formal ceremony of engagement, which could then be upgraded to a fully-fledged marriage once she was old enough to take up her wifely duties'. Forced marriages thus occur in 'exceptional circumstances', when parents feel themselves to be 'at their wits end', and mistakenly believe that 'instant marriage to an alternative partner is the only available means of holding impending disaster at bay'. They might, for instance, take a young girl out of school for a holiday in South Asia where they would be married off. In such cases forced marriages may be described as arising from unrealistic attempts to arrange marriages designed to fulfil some social, cultural, religious or economic objective or fulfil what are perceived to be community (reciprocal) obligations, but which have then run into problems from the point of view of those doing the arranging (anxious and myopic parents).

Ballard and Sheriff's intervention was discussed in a *Times* editorial ('Unhappy Couples', 30 November 2013):

285 www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/tehminkaazi/forced-marriages-undermines-islam_b_1420033.html.

286 www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/letters-no-need-to-outlaw-forced-marriages-7622132.html.

‘Not before time the Government is intent on making forced marriage a criminal offence. It is facing strong headwinds from experts who fear that the new law will do more harm than good, but the experts miss the point. Forced marriage is a crime. No civilised country can pretend otherwise. To do so would be a betrayal of its victims, a betrayal of justice and a surrender to moral relativism at its most pernicious ... There is much wrong, however, with arguments based on the premise that forced marriages are inevitable and that the best Britain’s judiciary and social services can do is therefore to limit the damage that they do ... Making forced marriage a crime should not be controversial. Those who think it is are not helping those most likely to be its victims’.

It was also the subject of a piece by David Aaronovitch (‘Universalism versus relativism and apologism’, *Times*, December 5, 2013) in which he criticised

‘The contempt [Ballard and Sheriff] display towards the idea that there are or should be universal values [which] represents a strand of apologism that can also be seen in our universities today ... Can I make this any simpler? We criminalise forced marriage because, as a society, we believe it is wrong and we stand on the side of the victim. Now anthropologise us’.

As the debate evolved, it engaged a multiplicity of voices on all sides of the argument, by Muslims (for example, the Muslim Council of Britain and the Muslim Arbitration Tribunal), and non-Muslims, including other minority activists such as Jasvinder Sangheera, a Sikh. It was both an intra- and an inter-cultural dialogue which entailed face-to-face encounters (in television studios or House of Commons Committees) and dialoguing-at-a-distance, in the media or in academic journals. Likewise, it was multi-sited, locally, nationally, internationally, with events on one site influencing what happened on another. Finally, it was highly politicised, both in the sense that political parties were engaged, and in the sense that it involved a contestation between various narratives, interpretations and policy conclusions, and it mattered to whose voices the powers-that-be actually listened.

Registering Islamic Marriages

Another matter for debate and dialogue (both intra- and inter-cultural) has been whether Muslim couples should formally register their marriages with the civil authorities as well as undergoing a religious (Islamic) ceremony, a *nikah*. The *nikah* ceremony, which may take place in a mosque or indeed a private home, does not of itself create a legally valid marriage in the UK. This requires another, civil, ceremony, in a registered building, conducted by an authorised person. This is different from Christian and Jewish marriages but similar to those of Sikhs or Hindus. Since there is no ‘common law marriage’ in England, those who have not gone through a civil or recognised religious ceremony are simply cohabiting, whatever their faith or belief.²⁸⁷ A marriage solemnised through a *nikah* ceremony alone is ‘non-marriage’ from a legal point of view (Law Commission 2015). The partners therefore have little legal protection, and this may affect maintenance and pension rights, and rights to inheritance. Women in particular, Muslim or other, may thus suffer severe consequences on the break-up of a relationship, especially if confronted by a recalcitrant, obstinate or vengeful spouse.

It is thought that a significant percentage of Muslim couples religiously married in the UK have not legally registered their marriages; some estimates are as high as 80 per cent, others half that or less: Vishal Vora (2016: 133) assesses the evidence which implies a figure closer to a third; a survey of some 900 Muslim women undertaken for a Channel 4 documentary (*The Truth About Muslim Marriage*), broadcast in November 2017, however, came up with a figure of 60%.²⁸⁸ Even

287 See *inter alia* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42134722>, ‘Cohabiting couples warned of ‘common law marriage’ myths’.

288 <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-truth-about-muslim-marriage>; data from the survey, which used

30% is substantial, but in fact cohabiting without marriage is on the increase in the general population, and this usually elicits little public comment, albeit the decline of the institution may trouble religious leaders. The non-registration of Muslim marriages has, however, provoked considerable discussion, and this section looks at how that debate has progressed and the various ‘solutions’ that have been proposed.

In a talk in London in 2011, Aina Khan, a family law solicitor, reported that in her experience the proportion of couples not marrying civilly has increased in recent years. Reasons include ignorance on the part of women who believe, or are led to believe, that the *nikah* itself constitutes a civil marriage, or assume that their husband will undertake the registration. Husbands may, however, deliberately avoid registration, wishing to keep family-held assets out of the purview of the English law on community property. Nonetheless, many Muslims accept that it is desirable for those wanting to be married both religiously and civilly to be able to do so, and various legal measures to facilitate this were discussed in 2010-12 at roundtable meetings bringing together interested parties: Muslim and non-Muslim lawyers, representatives of Shari’a councils, and of Muslim and non-Muslim NGOs concerned with gender relations. Subsequently, the Ministry of Justice established a ‘Muslim Marriage Working Group’ to investigate the problems encountered by Muslim women, identify existing legal solutions, and draft future proposals.

Various possible solutions have been discussed at such meetings (see Grillo 2015a, and Vora 2016, Le Grice and Vora 2017 for overviews), at academic conferences which have focused on Muslim marriage²⁸⁹, in journal and newspaper articles, and in programmes such as Channel 4’s *The Truth About Muslim Marriage*. Under certain conditions, a *nikah* and civil marriage may be combined at the same time and in the same place, for example in a mosque, provided that the building has been registered for civil marriages, and the Imam or other person conducting the *nikah* has been granted the appropriate authority to register the marriage. A Muslim Parliament of Great Britain booklet (Maqsood 2005) had in fact demonstrated how to obtain the necessary authorisations and structure an appropriate ceremony. Relatively few mosques, perhaps between ten and twenty per cent, have followed that route (Law Commission 2015: 49). This may reflect a distrust of the official system, and/or a preference for adhering to (unofficial) customary practices – a *nikah* might be held at home, and conducted by anyone thought suitably versed in Islam. Since registration involves a declaration that a person is not otherwise married, the requirement to register a *nikah* as a civil marriage would also place anyone who might wish to marry polygamously in jeopardy as a potential bigamist.

Other ways of facilitating registration have been suggested including bringing into English law the system applying to religious marriages in Scotland, where under the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 a *nikah* might be recognised if the ceremony is conducted by a registered individual (‘celebrant’). In 2003, there had been a consultation about legislating along those lines, with registration ‘based on the celebrant (the person responsible for the solemnization of the marriage) rather than the building in which it takes place’, with that person ‘appointed by the religious groups to which they belong and notified to the Registrar General’ (Fairbairn 2015). The proposal was dropped; it was unclear what would constitute a ‘religious group’, and what training appointees would need. Some Imams indeed objected that the length of time needed for qualification (including a year ‘shadowing’ an existing registrar), is irksome and unnecessary. They are also concerned lest they be compelled to conduct marriages between same-sex couples. Vishal Vora, however, has suggested that while ‘not perfect’, it is a workable solution (2016: 141), and the Channel 4 programme seemed to go along with that.

Another proposal would recognise the *nikah* ceremony itself as solemnising a legally valid marriage, as happens in other jurisdictions, such as India (Shah 2013). Whether marriages concluded

a snowballing technique to gather respondents, are available at <http://truevisiontv.com/films/details/295/the-truth-about-muslim-marriage>.

²⁸⁹ E.g. ‘Unregistered Muslim Marriages: Regulations and Contestations’, De Montfort University, Leicester, April 2017; A number of academic studies have been published or are in the pipeline, e.g. Akhtar 2018 etc.

via ceremonies which do not conform to the procedures set out for solemnisation under the Marriage Act (1949) might have legal force has been considered in a number of cases before the courts²⁹⁰, but as matters stand a *nikah* is not accepted as constituting a legally recognisable marriage. There are, indeed, obstacles in the way of according recognition under English law to what would be a valid marriage under Islamic law. These include differences regarding the age of marriage, the possibility of polygamous marriage, and the requirement that the couple marrying be in attendance at the ceremony. It is also unclear whether under English law it would be necessary to insert wording in the *nikah* ceremony to deal with impediments of age, consanguinity, un-dissolved marriages etc, or whether these might be covered in a certificate acquired from the civil marriage registrar.

A further solution is to insist that any religious ceremony which constitutes a publicly recognised marriage should be compulsorily registered with the authorities. Neil Addison, a barrister and expert in discrimination law, has long argued that Section 75 of the 1949 Marriage Act in fact makes it an offence not to do so: ‘Unregistered wedding ceremonies’, he contends, are illegal, and ‘the Imams involved could face up to 5 years imprisonment but it is a crime the Police seem to simply ignore’.²⁹¹ Whether this interpretation is correct or not, I cannot say, but so far as I know there have to date been no prosecutions of that kind under the Act.

In November 2016, Baroness Caroline Cox, who has been active in seeking to legislate in matters relating to Muslim marriages (see below), proposed the following amendment to the Policing and Crime Bill then going through the House of Lords:

‘Registration of religious marriages (1) The celebrant of a religious marriage ceremony must— (a) take all reasonable steps to ensure that the marriage accords with the law relating to marriages in England and Wales; and (b) register the marriage as a legal marriage in accordance with the requirements of the Marriage Act 1949. (2) A person who fails to fulfil the requirements of subsection (1) commits an offence. (3) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable, on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years’.²⁹²

The proposal, which focuses on the celebrant, was she said, intended to ‘highlight serious concerns and to explore possible solutions’. It was in no way ‘an anti-Muslim or Islamophobic initiative’, she insisted, but was ‘motivated by deep concern for many women suffering in this country in ways which are utterly unacceptable’. In the event, although strongly supported by fellow members, the amendment was withdrawn – it had been put to raise awareness of the issue - but the following year Baroness Cox introduced a Private Members’ Bill, the Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill, ‘to make provision for all religious marriages to be solemnized on the authority of a superintendent registrar’, and ‘Any person who knowingly and wilfully purports to solemnize a marriage which may not be lawfully registered ... shall be guilty of felony and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years’.²⁹³ To date, the Bill has not gone beyond a formal initial presentation (the so-called ‘First Reading’). Indeed, neither her earlier amendment, nor the current Bill spell out the implications for the form and content of a *nikah* ceremony which the legislation might require.

Short of legislation, however, it seems widely agreed that all concerned (especially women) should appreciate the significance of not contracting a civilly recognised marriage and relying solely on a *nikah*. ‘Undoubtedly’, said Dawud Bone, a Muslim and Lecturer in Islamic Studies and Education, ‘we should be insisting that all marriages are registered by the State as this is the only way women and children can demand the protection implicit in the *nikah*’.²⁹⁴ This objective was addressed in a ‘Muslim Marriage Contract’, devised by the Muslim Institute (2008), which included a

290 E.g. [2010]: see <http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed99448>.

291 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2010/jul/08/religion-sharia-marriage-registration-islam>.

292 <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2016-11-16b.1436.0#g1475.1>.

293 Text of Bill available via <https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>.

294 http://emel.com/article?id=109&a_id=1995&c=93Dawud.

‘Certificate of Marriage’, setting out the rights of both parties under English and Islamic law. By following its guidelines and obtaining the certificate, the Institute argued, ‘Muslims married in Britain will be able to access the British courts regarding marital issues whilst at the same time enabling British courts to enforce the rights of parties to a Muslim marriage in accordance with the Shari’ah’. The Contract was, however, criticised by some Muslims as departing from fundamental principles, and it is unclear whether it has been widely adopted.

The Ministry of Justice Working Group, discussed earlier, had *inter alia* proposed engaging with Muslim community associations and their members via a series of regional ‘outreach’ meetings, to advertise the benefits of registration. Although the Government accepted their report, only one such meeting was organised. In January 2014, however, some of those previously involved in the Working Group launched an initiative, then called the ‘Muslim Marriages Project’ (MMP), at a meeting attended by ‘a large panel of opinion makers and influential public figures in the Muslim community’.²⁹⁵ They included Baroness Sayeeda Warsi (a Muslim and then Conservative Minister of State at the Foreign office, with responsibilities for Faith and Communities), Aina Khan, Lord Tariq Ahmad (Ministry of Justice), Stephen Hockman QC, and leading Imams and representatives of women’s groups. The community-led project would, said Aina Khan, seek to ‘promote the benefits of civil registration of religious marriages to Imams, and get them to commit registering their mosques to conduct marriages [and] encourage Muslim communities to adopt Islamic practices that better safeguard the interests of families and eliminate injustices arising from lack of legal rights’.

It was intended that the MMP would take on the ‘roadshows’ proposed by the Working Group, and indeed a number of these have been organised under the auspices of the ‘Register Our Marriage’ (ROM) campaign. One such was held in Bradford in March 2017, supported by the Muslim Women’s Council.²⁹⁶ Writing in the *Family Law* newsletter²⁹⁷ shortly before that event, a solicitor, Siddique Patel, said that the campaign incorporated ‘an ever expanding group of lawyers, academics, parliamentarians and other stakeholders’, and was also ‘lobbying for a change to the Marriage Act 1949 so that marriages of *all faiths* are automatically registered as legally married unless the couple consensually opt out’. Indeed, the ROM campaign includes in its Mission Statement ‘To require all religions to legally register their marriage ceremonies and to make our outdated English marriage law “Fit For Purpose” for our modern society’.²⁹⁸ Thus the campaign moved quite rapidly from exhortation to legislation, and perhaps something like Baroness Cox’s Bill.

Certainly the ROM campaign carries some weight in the public sphere. For example it had a major input into Channel 4’s documentary *The Truth About Muslim Marriage*. As these things go, this was by and large a well-informed and informative programme, giving a good account of some complex issues, which are as much debated among Muslims themselves, as between Muslims and others. The programme, in which the researcher and writer Myriam François, a Muslim convert²⁹⁹, had a leading role, was notable for the way it gave voice to many if not all strands of Muslim opinion, often contesting with each other, on the issue of marriage registration, and whether legislation to make registration compulsory would help. That said, whether the campaign (or Channel 4’s programme) has had, or will have, much effect on actual marriage practice is currently unclear.

295 www.prweb.com/releases/2014/01/prweb11483339.htm.

296

http://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/15149214.Conference_highlights_vulnerable_situation_for_those_in_unregistered_marriages. A brief extract from the proceedings was included in the Channel 4 programme *The Truth About Muslim Marriage*, <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-truth-about-muslim-marriage>.

297 http://www.familylaw.co.uk/news_and_comment/register-our-marriage-working-together-to-change-the-law#.WOtaEtmfCUI.

298 ‘BRIEFING by Aina Khan Solicitor Unregistered Religious Marriages in the UK updated 20 November 2017’. File downloaded from Register our Marriage (ROM) Facebook page, 21 November 2017; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/register.our.marriage/files>.

299 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myriam_Francois-Cerrah; see also

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/life/truth-britains-unmarried-muslim-wives-problem>. She prefers not to use the term ‘convert’.

Many of the issues raised in this discussion of Muslim marriage recognition were also addressed in a wide-ranging report by the Law Commission (2015), a ‘Scoping Exercise’, as it was called, on *Getting Married in Britain*, which concluded that ‘the law governing how and where couples marry is in dire need of reform’ (p. 95), and posed a number of questions for consideration by the Government. The latter responded that the present time was not ripe for such a review, but did not rule one out in the future.³⁰⁰ In fact, intercultural (and intra-cultural) dialogues concerning Muslim marriages are not new (nor are they confined to Britain). Nielsen (1999) records that in the mid-1980s there were seminars involving Muslim scholars and English legal practitioners identifying philosophical similarities and differences between English and Islamic law. By contrast, recent initiatives have fastened on a specific objective (enhancing the legal protection of married women) through practical means which are yet in accordance with Islamic principles. They have also attracted a wider range of participants, including Muslim lawyers and politicians, and representatives of various Muslim associations, with young Muslim women notably prominent. Nonetheless, while there are numerous interlocuteurs, Muslim and non-Muslim, concerned to explore and reconcile differences, it was apparent at the roundtable meetings in 2010-12 that discussions were not always able to retain the support and attendance of the generally elderly and conservative representatives of the mosques and Shari’a councils, sometimes lacking confidence in English, often suspicious of the motives of those involved, and skeptical about possible outcomes. Yet it is precisely this elderly leadership, among others, which ROM is seeking to persuade of the importance of registering a marriage.

The Controversy over Shari’a Councils

Like previous sections, this is also concerned with Muslim marriage and divorce, but in the context of the controversy over what are called Shari’a ‘councils’, sometimes referred to as ‘courts’. The history of that controversy in the UK up to 2014/15 was described in detail in Grillo 2015a. Here I briefly summarise those developments and bring the story up-to-date by referring to two inquiries instituted in 2016.

Shari’a councils, which are rarely found in other European countries (their functions may be taken on unofficially by individual Imams), began to appear in the UK in the late 1970s-early 1980s partly in response to social, cultural and demographic changes in the growing Muslim population, principally of South Asian origin, among whom issues around marriage and divorce were becoming increasingly important. Modelled after similar bodies found, for example, in Pakistan, the councils attracted little public or academic attention until the early 2000s, but from the mid-2000s there has been a plethora of studies, some highly controversial, showing that the councils, which are usually closely tied to mosques, are principally concerned with advising on Islamically appropriate practices around marriage, as well as offering guidance on the religious propriety of issues ranging from intravenous fertilisation to trading in shares.

A major task of the councils, indeed their *raison d’être*, is to rule on applications for a religious (not civil) divorce, principally on the part of women, to confirm their status as devout Muslims and enable them to remarry. By contrast with English courts which operate with an adversarial system, Shari’a councils seek to investigate and uncover the circumstances surrounding a marital dispute, and where possible mediate or foster reconciliation. Indeed, the reconciliation of disputing parties is a basic principle underlying the councils’ proceedings, even if this is not something that a woman who approaches the council in pursuit of a religious divorce necessarily wants (Bano 2007). As Maleiha Malik observes, women may find themselves “‘conciliated’ back into violent or coercive relationships’ (2008: 21). At the same time, the councils claim to avoid recommendations which might bring them into conflict with civil courts over such matters as the custody of children, even if the laws of the land ‘do not reflect our religious aspirations’ (in Shah-Kazemi 2001: 59).

300 <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/government-says-not-the-right-time-for-review-of-marriage-law>.

Controversies about their application of Shari'a principles in the UK came to a head in 2008 following a much debated and disputed intervention by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, on 'Civil and Religious Law in England' (Williams 2008), his contribution to the Temple lecture series, mentioned above. His scholarly discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of giving recognition to what he called 'supplementary jurisdictions', was widely (mis)interpreted as advocating Shari'a law for British Muslims. Subsequently, Baroness Cox sought several times between 2010 and 2017 to introduce a Private Members' Bill in the House of Lords which would restrict and indeed criminalise some of the procedures of such councils (details in Grillo 2015a). She was supported by a consortium which brought together organisations and opinions from across the political spectrum: Christians, the National Secular Society, the *Southall Black Sisters* (a radical feminist group), the United Kingdom Independence Party, the English Defence League, and centre-right think tanks. These are groups which would otherwise not be seen talking to each other, 'problematic allies', someone called them. (Something similar may be observed in campaigns to ban the face-veil in Belgium and France). Supporters also included Muslims who wished to have no truck with the councils, sharing the view that they breach gender equality and human rights legislation, discriminate against women and subject them to patriarchal authority. Recognition of Shari'a, some opponents contend, would be the thin end of the wedge of Islamism which threatens British values and heritage; in a secular society there should be only 'One Law for All' (the title of one of the anti-Shari'a campaign groups).

Besides detailed academic studies³⁰¹ and a substantial 'grey' literature produced by anti-Shari'a advocates, often incorporating in-house research, there has been extensive media coverage in newspapers and on television, often of the 'Now It Can Be Revealed' genre, emphasising the patriarchal character of the leadership (the 'judges'), and the plight of the women who plead their case before them. The councils also have their defenders, including 'critical friends', Muslim and non-Muslim, who understand why the councils are needed, but urge reform of some of their practices; there is also a more limited defensive literature published by council members themselves. On top of this, there have now been two major inquiries, instituted by the Home Office on the one hand, and the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee on the other, which are the subject of the following section.

Reports and Inquiries

After much deliberation, and in response to lobbying by the anti-Shari'a camp, the then Conservative Home Secretary, and subsequently Prime Minister, Theresa May, established a high level Panel,

'to explore whether, and to what extent, the application of Sharia law may be incompatible with the law in England and Wales, such as legislation around equality. The review will also examine the ways in which Sharia may be being misused, or exploited, in a way that may discriminate against certain groups, undermine shared values or cause social harms'.³⁰²

The Panel included Professor Mona Siddiqui (chair), Professor of Islamic and Interreligious Studies at the University of Edinburgh³⁰³, family law barristers Sam Momtaz QC³⁰⁴ and Anne Marie Hutchinson QC³⁰⁵, retired High Court judge Sir Mark Hedley³⁰⁶, and two religious advisers, Imam Sayed Ali Abbas Azwai and Imam Qard Aim (see further below). When the intention to hold an inquiry was first

301 E.g. Bano 2012a, 2012b, Bowen 2016, Douglas et al 2011, Keshavjee 2013, Malik 2012, Manca 2016, Shah-Kazemi 2001, Walker 2016, Zee 2016, and many others, e.g. Rehana Parveen's forthcoming doctoral thesis at the University of Birmingham. Also <https://kholahasan.wordpress.com/2017/11/29/shariah-in-britain>.

302 <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-05-26/HLWS23>.

303 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mona_Siddiqui.

304 <http://www.1gc.com/181/our-people/judicial-review-and-administrative-law/sam-momtaz-qc>.

305 [http://dawsoncornwell.com/en/the-team/partners/anne-marie-hutchinson-obe,-qc-\(hon\).html](http://dawsoncornwell.com/en/the-team/partners/anne-marie-hutchinson-obe,-qc-(hon).html).

306 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Hedley.

announced, the proposal received wide support, but was also criticised on several sides. The Muslim Council of Britain, for example, recorded that ‘Whilst we have no issue with the government investigating Sharia councils, we do wonder why Muslim institutions are being singled out for scrutiny only’.³⁰⁷ Others queried the way in which the review was seemingly associated with the government’s counter-extremism strategy.³⁰⁸ On the other hand, Theresa May’s observation, when eventually announcing the terms of reference and Panel membership, that ‘Many people in this country of different faiths follow religious codes and practices, and benefit from the guidance they offer’³⁰⁹, was strongly criticised and in some places interpreted as support for Shari’a law in the UK.

The Panel began its work in the summer of 2016 with a call for evidence, but this was rejected by some opponents of Shari’a who decided on a boycott. An *Open Letter to the Home Secretary*, signed by 200 ‘women’s human rights organisations and campaigners’, said that while they welcomed such an inquiry, its terms of reference and membership meant that the review was likely to be ‘seriously compromised’.³¹⁰ The government, they contended, had ‘constituted a panel more suited to a discussion of theology than one which serves the needs of victims and is capable of investigating the full range of harms caused by Sharia councils and tribunals, particularly for women’. There were particular objections to the two Muslim experts, alleged to be compromised by their participation in the web-based forum, *Imams Online*³¹¹, which it was claimed took ‘extremely problematic positions ... on a range of issues that should certainly concern the inquiry’.³¹² One scholar, Elham Manea, author of a book critical of the councils (*Women and Shari’a Law: The Impact of Legal Pluralism in the UK*, 2016), who had originally intended to give oral evidence, decided to withdraw, arguing that the Islamic scholars ‘are part of the system they are supposed to be investigating’. She was also concerned that the terms of reference ‘did not include ... the type of law being implemented and the role of Islamic extremism in the promotion of this parallel legal system’.³¹³

At present (December 2017) the Siddiqui Panel has not produced its report and recommendations, and it is best to defer further comment until it does. When Baroness Cox asked in the House of Lords in September 2017 about the delay, the responsible Minister replied that it was expected ‘in the coming months’.³¹⁴ Meanwhile, in June 2016, another inquiry had been set in train by the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, with broadly similar, if somewhat wider, terms of reference, including ‘how Sharia councils operate in practice, their work resolving family and divorce disputes and their relationship with the British legal system’.³¹⁵ Like the Siddiqui Panel, the Committee, consisting of Yvette Cooper MP, Labour (chair) and ten members from the major political parties, asked for written submissions, of which it received over forty, covering a wide range of opinions from across the pro/anti Shari’a spectrum; all are available online for detailed inspection.³¹⁶

The Committee also held a day of interviews (a video and transcript of the proceedings are online³¹⁷) with witnesses divided into three groups. A first session heard evidence from, among others, Shaista Ghar OBE, Chair of the Muslim Women’s Network UK, Maryam Namazie of the One Law

307 <http://www.mcb.org.uk/home-office-announcement-of-independent-investigation-into-sharia-law>.

308 <http://m.sputniknews.com/europe/20160527/1040372846/sharia-muslim-britain-government.html#ixzz49sHbiBx8>.

309 <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-05-26/HLWS23>.

310 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/pragna-patel-gita-sahgal/whitewashing-sharia-councils-in-uk>

311 <http://imamsonline.com>; see also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imams_Online.

312 See also <http://onelawforall.org.uk/imams-scholars-sharia>.

313 <http://europeandemocracy.eu/2016/07/statement-by-elham-manea>.

314 <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-09-05/HL1250>.

315 <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/160623-new-inquiry-sharia-councils>.

316 <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry6/publications>.

317 <http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/76b3f1e0-29be-498f-9325-62d15033c20f>.

for All campaign, and Elham Manea (see above). A second session heard from lawyers, including Islet Rawat, President of the Association of Muslim Lawyers, while the third included Dr Ahmad Al Dubaians, Chair of the UK Board of Sharia and two women members of Shari'a councils in Birmingham (Amra Bone) and London (Khola Hasan). The picture reproduced below, a screenshot from the recorded session available online, shows the Committee at work on the first session, with the witnesses in the foreground facing the members of the Committee arranged in a semi-circle.

Home Affairs Committee

Tuesday 1 November 2016 Meeting started at 2.20pm, ended 5.30pm



The proceedings of the Committee, like those of other parliamentary inquiries and debates, present an opportunity for an in-depth micro-level analysis of an intercultural dialogue in action, as the following brief extracts illustrate..

Extract 1

Q11. Nusrat Ghani MP (Conservative): If we do not deal with Sharia councils, will we end up with a parallel legal system? In a country like India there are already 70,000 women saying that they are being gender-discriminated, and we could end up in that position here.

Shaista Ghar: We need not to propel the myth of parallel legal systems. The word “legal” means “legally binding”, and when you go to a Sharia council, its decisions and opinions are not legally binding. It is a voluntary code that we go to and follow, and that women voluntarily go to. Some women may be forced to go there, but the vast majority of women want to get out of a religious and faith-based marriage themselves, unless you are saying that Muslim women do not have a Muslim marriage and do not believe in Islam. They are going to have a faith-based marriage. This is not about a parallel legal system ...

Maryam Namazie: I think that they are in fact parallel legal systems. They call themselves courts and judges.

Shaista gopher: They don't—the media do, you do.

Maryam Namazie: I'm sorry, if you don't mind, please don't interrupt. They do call themselves courts, and they do call themselves judges. That is what a parallel legal system means. It does not necessarily have to have the force of the law behind it, but they do imply that they are the law, and they do tell women that they are not proper Muslims if they do not abide by these rules. That is one of the things that Islamists do: they make it seem as if there is one Sharia law and that it is the Sharia law, and that people who do not abide by it are apostates and so on.

Extract 2

Q27. Naz Shah MP (Labour): [To Maryam Namazie]. I have two questions for you. The first is a yes/no question. You talk about a parallel legal system. Is any decision made by any Sharia council legally binding in this country, according to the law of this land—yes or no?

Maryam Namazie: It doesn't matter if it is legally binding or not.

Q28. Shah: I just asked for a yes or no answer.

Maryam Namazie: There is no yes or no, because—

Q29. Naz Shah: Yes there is: it is not legally binding.

Maryam Namazie: It doesn't matter if it is not legally binding, because for the women and especially the vulnerable women who go to them—

Q30. Naz Shah: So it is not a parallel legal system then, is it?

Maryam Namazie: It is, because it can be the most frightening thing to disobey the rule of God. When you go to a court of God, where they say that the rules are divine and that if you don't abide by these rules, you can go to hell and you are committing *zine* and apostasy, it makes it very dangerous and difficult.

Q31. Naz Shah: But Ms Namazie, according to your blog, which I read earlier, this isn't just about Sharia courts. If we were to look at implementing your view of the world, the majority of discrimination would be faced by the 33 million Christians of this country because you would have away with Christianity and any religious institutions—

Maryam Namazie: This is not about—

Naz Shah: But it is—

Maryam Namazie: No, the difference is—

Q32. Naz Shah: What you are saying is that you are denying everybody's religious view on life.

Extract 3

Q112. **Nusrat Ghani MP:** Can a woman initiate a triple *talaq*?

Dr Al Dubaian: I have to correct something because I have been hearing this—

Nusrat Ghani: Yes or no? A woman cannot initiate a triple *talaq*. She has to go through a process.

Dr Al Dubaians: She can ask for *talaq*.

Nusrat Ghani: She can initiate a triple *talaq*, equivalent to a man.

Khola Hasan: A man cannot initiate a triple *talaq*.

Nusrat Ghani: Well, men do.

Khola Hasan: But they can't—

Q113. **Nusrat Ghani:** But they do. A woman will have to go through a process that requires a few months, while a man can initiate a triple *talaq* if he wants to.

Dr Al Dubaian: A woman has the right to have it and she can get it. The process depends on the person who is dealing with it.

Q114. **Ghani:** It's not about her getting it. Does she have the right to do it?

Khola Hasan: All parties—

Nusrat Ghani: I am just trying to work out where the equality is. If men can go down a particular road for a number of types of divorces and a woman can only go down a narrower road for a number of divorces, there is gender discrimination.

Khola Hasan: I don't think you are listening. I made it very clear that there is no triple *talaq* in Islam. We go back to the Koran—

Nusrat Ghani: It's happening.

Khola Hasan: All sorts is happening.

These brisk exchanges (many others could equally well have been cited) illustrate a number of points. First, these particular extracts represent a dialogue which is in effect intra-cultural in that all those involved at this stage, including both Naz Shah MP and Nusrat Ghani MP, are of Muslim background, though Maryam Namazie describes herself as 'Ex-Muslim', and is closely involved with the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain, and each of the speakers is voicing a different understanding of the faith. Other than None of the other committee members were Muslim, and an analysis of their exchanges with witnesses – not undertaken here - would illustrate more straightforwardly the intercultural character of the dialogue. Secondly, the questions and answers address some very significant issues: whether Shari'a councils (or should they be called 'courts'?) constitute a parallel legal system; the significance of religious marriage for devout women; and more generally the right to adhere to a way of life guided by religious principles. They also raise questions of interpretation ('councils' or 'courts'?) and of evidence (whose evidence?) on which an interpretation might be based. See, for example, Extract 3, which is about one mode of Islamic divorce (*talaq*) and what it means in theory and practice. Finally, like the exchange between the MPs and the witnesses from Liberty described earlier, they make clear the power relations involved: 'Yes or no?' ask the MPs; 'I don't think you are listening', complains Khola Hasan.

The extracts also show the difficulties faced by those speaking against the current grain ('the awkward squad') in getting a word in, or their point across. Sometimes they may simply be reluctant to intervene. In the House of Lords debate on the Second Reading of Baroness Cox's Shari'a council Bill, for example, several members expressed surprise that no Muslim member of the House had indicated a wish to speak. Eventually, however, Baroness Pola Uddin (Labour) got to her feet to say that despite denials that the Bill was 'not rooted in hostility to any one religion, the perception outside this House is that this is another assault on Muslims ... We must not journey along a path that further marginalises those who seek our protection'.³¹⁸

What this underlines are the difficult issues that inter- and intra-dialogues encounter, and which the Home Affairs Committee was attempting to tackle. Like the Siddiqui Panel, however, the

318 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldhansrd/text/121019-0002.htm>.

Committee’s report had not appeared at the time of writing, and it is uncertain if it ever will since with the June 2017 general election all existing committees ceased to exist, and it is unclear whether its successor has plans to pursue the matter.

‘Building Bridges’?

While micro-analysis of events such as the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee proceedings may be very revealing of the dynamics of intercultural dialogue at an interpersonal level, it is also important to place the exchanges in their immediate local, and longer-term historical contexts, and consider how and why matters of Islamic family law and practice are of such concern in contemporary Britain, something I have discussed at length elsewhere (in Grillo 2015a; see also Chapters 1 and 7 above). But what else emerges from these brief case studies of intercultural dialogues between Muslims and others in Britain?

First, a prominent part is played by religious and political leaders, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury, with his intervention on Shari’a, the Home Secretary setting up working groups and review panels, or Baroness Cox and her Bills. Alongside these are various advocacy groups, especially those concerned with gender issues and human rights from a secular or religious perspective (Muslim and non-Muslim), to whose campaigns political and religious leaders are often responding. Lawyers, academic or practicing or both are also prominent in these controversies, as are social scientists with their many studies of Muslims in Britain. Then there are the representative Muslim associations, including the Shari’a councils, and last but not least the media. The multiplicity of voices and perspectives needs underlining. All are engaged directly or indirectly in a complex, multi-sided, multi-faceted intercultural encounter. The front cover of my book, *Muslim Families, Politics and the Law*, reproduced as Diagram 16.1, sought to illustrate this:

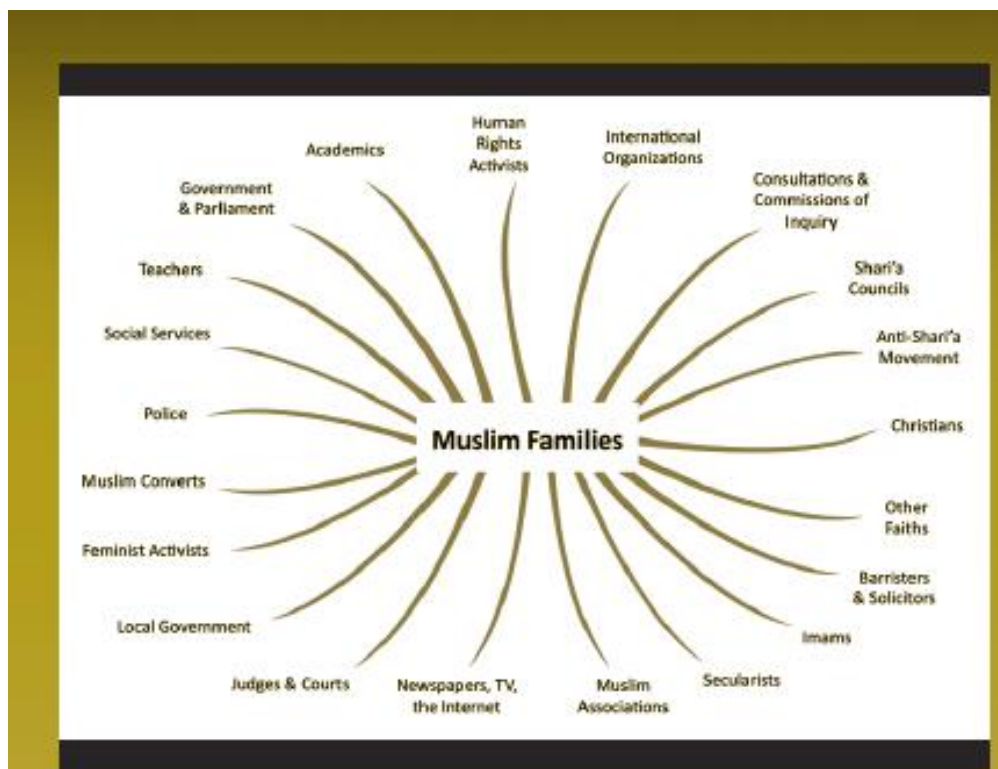


Diagram 16.1. Cover from *Muslim Families, Politics and the Law: A Legal Industry in Multicultural Britain* (Grillo 2015a)

Amidst this cacophony, Muslim families have become a site of dialogue and contestation

around intercultural understanding and intercultural knowledge, the latter, in this case, in two senses. On the one hand, there is contestation about what actually happens in Muslim marriages, or in the Shari'a councils, how they work, and women's (and men's) experience of them. On the other, there are also contested interpretations and misinterpretations of the theological-cum-philosophical justifications that underpin the beliefs and practices which such institutions embody. For example, the intricacies of the Islamic theory and practice of divorce (*talaq, khul* and other variants), or the emphasis on reconciliation as a fundamental objective wherever possible, are not always well understood. That there are different schools of law in Islam, or, more fundamentally, significant differences over the ontological status of Shari'a, add to the difficulties.

There is in fact a great deal of evidence available in both academic studies and the grey literature, regarding what happens in Muslim marriages, or in the proceedings of the Shari'a councils. The difficulty resides in deciding whose account carries weight; whose knowledge counts. All too often what determines the outcome, the weight to be accorded the evidence, and the conclusions to be drawn from it, is the relative strength of the groups engaged, and the resources that can be brought to bear. In the case of the Shari'a councils, for example, the anti-Shari'a lobby actively networked through the media and in Parliament to promote its own literature and in-house studies, and its interpretation of what that evidence says. The One Law for All campaign, for instance, successfully 'crowdfunded' a move to get Elham Manea's critical review of Shari'a councils 'into the hands of key MPs and Ministers'.³¹⁹ All too often, however, more sympathetic academic accounts, usually based on years of research, are ignored or side-lined. Consequently, defenders of the councils are almost always on the back foot, as was apparent in the interviews conducted by the Home Affairs Committee. This is obviously important if a review of the Shari'a councils, or similar bodies such as the Jewish Beth Din, is seeking to determine whether their doctrines and practices are deemed unacceptable or abhorrent by non-adherents (or indeed by some Muslims or Jews). It is even more important if the review is considering whether they actually cross a legal boundary, and thus fall foul of existing legislation, or whether legislation should be introduced to penalise them.

These are difficult issues and a tough agenda confronts those seeking to engage in meaningful dialogue, and 'build bridges'. It is not enough to rely on the good will which might or might not result from conversations in 'low-threshold' encounters (perhaps of the kind represented by the interfaith networks). Certainly, if those involved stick vehemently to their position and talk past each other, the prospects of meaningful dialogue would seem, to say the least, unlikely. It goes without saying that there has to be a willingness to give and take. At the present time, however, with respect to Islam, there have been calls for limits which in some cases are tantamount to demanding Muslims cease to be Muslim if they are to remain in Britain: 'I sometimes feel certain liberals don't mind you calling yourself Muslim as long as you don't actually do those things that make you Muslim', one informant told me. Islam(ism) is seen as an existential threat to be met with tough security measures and cutting back on policies (multiculturalism) thought to foster practices which run counter to, and menace, prevailing liberal-secular values. There is a danger that mindsets, on both sides, are becoming increasingly unyielding; a dire prospect for Britain as a multiethnic, multi-faith, multicultural society.

Despite this, there are still Muslims and non-Muslims who are indeed willing to address the difficult issues, and engage in fruitful exchanges involving negotiation and compromise. But what the chapter also shows is that, for better or worse, positively or negatively, intercultural dialogue of many different kinds, and at many different levels, is happening all the time – even in multicultural Britain.

319 <http://onelawforall.org.uk/sharia-councils-and-parallel-legal-systems-are-abusive-and-discriminatory-against-women>.

CHAPTER 17. SUMMING UP

‘Interculturalism should guarantee that multiculturalism does not crumble into merely a compilation of *Parallel-Gemeinschaften*; multiculturalism should guarantee that the idea of interculturalism does not end up with a society where diversity is gone’ (Loobuyck 2016: 237).

Overview

What does interculturalism mean in theory and in practice, and how does it differ from the theory and practice of multiculturalism? What constitutes an ‘intercultural dialogue’, and how does such dialogue fit into policies of interculturalism or multiculturalism? What problems do those seeking to engage in intercultural dialogue encounter, and how might they be overcome? These are questions this book has attempted to address, and this concluding chapter points to some (hesitant) conclusions.

It is in two parts. The first section focuses largely on dialogue and explores the lessons to be learned from the case studies outlined in Parts II and III. What do accounts of actual intercultural dialogues, dialoguing in practice, tell us? Leaving aside the often exaggerated expectations of what dialogues might achieve, which have been discussed in previous chapters, the observations in this section are grouped around five overlapping and interrelated themes :

- Contextualising Dialogues
- The Knowledge-Power Nexus
- Inter- and Intra-cultural Dialogues and Representation
- Translation and Interpretation
- Dialogues and Anti-dialogues

Since with one exception the cases are largely based on British or European experience, the scope for generalisation is limited. Nevertheless, it is hoped that they provide at least some indication of the issues likely to be significant in other contexts.

The second section very briefly rehearses the conclusions from the review, in Part I of the book, of the debate between multiculturalists and interculturalists, as advocates for two contrasting visions of diversity and the policies that go with them. It also comments on a third party in the debate, those who see diversity through the lens of transculturality, and suggests that all three visions help our understanding of what is happening nowadays in highly fragmented, (super)diverse societies. The chapter concludes with further reflections on the compatibility of multiculturalism and interculturalism as policy paradigms.

Lessons from Intercultural Dialogues

Contextualising Dialogue

Needless to say, all dialogues, intercultural or other, occur within a specific social, economic, cultural, religious, and political context. That context shapes the kind of dialogue that will take place, between whom, where and when, and influences, if not dictates, what the dialogue is about. Indeed it also explains why a dialogue is needed in the first place.

In each of the cases discussed in Part III, one significant factor is that the dialogues were in contexts formed in large part by the colonial and/or post-colonial encounter, and indeed by what might be called a ‘colonial mentality’. While colonialism as such is the immediate context of only one of the cases (the Mexica-Spanish *Coloquios*), its historic residue is in the background, if not the foreground, of each of the others. It is not the only factor – globalisation, transnationalism and

immigration certainly come into it, as do the economy and the legal system – but colonialism and its aftermath permeate each of the dialogues, as with the exhibition put on by the *Groupe Tiers Monde de Caluire* or the controversies about the play *Behzti*, or the Shari'a councils, or L's trial for attempted murder.

One consequence is that all the cases are about dialogues with the 'Other', in a context historically stemming from, and defined by a coloniser/colonised relationship. Indeed, this is a defining feature of interculturalism itself, and to a great extent its *raison d'être*. As Robert Aman puts it:

'The reasons for the growing emphasis on intercultural dialogue [in Europe] at this given moment seems to be that people from other parts of the world are now occupying a space inside the borders of the continent' (2012: 1017).

Relations between the 'West' and the 'Other' in the shadow of colonialism are at the heart of both interculturalism *and* multiculturalism, certainly in Europe, and their rationale stems from that; both multiculturalism and interculturalism became 'good to think' as a response to problems posed by that relationship.

One consequence is that intercultural dialogues in Britain (as in France, Germany, Scandinavia, and indeed many other places) almost inevitably focus on cultural and religious differences between peoples who have been historically seen as - indeed may well see themselves as - ethnically and 'racially' different. I emphasise 'racially' because perceptions of 'racial' difference are never far from characterising these dialogic encounters, and indeed shaping attitudes towards those participating in them.

A second (not unrelated) contextual factor shaping the form and content of intercultural dialogue – indeed its possibility - is the (changing) way in which the governance of diversity, as a response to the situation described by Aman, has been conceived and implemented. This impacts on the nature of the dialogue, including who may be defined as an appropriate participant, and what their role should be (Lähdesmäki and Wagener, 2015: 27). French 'Republicanism', with its current exaggerated stress on *laïcité*, suppression of ethnic difference, and preference for an a-cultural individualism, provides a specific context shaping whether, and if so how, intercultural dialogue might take place, and with whom – at least in theory; actual practice may be more pragmatic. Shifts in British policy regarding the principles and practices of multiculturalism since the 1960s (from 'race' to 'faith' etc, see Grillo 2010 and 2012, updated in Grillo 2015c) have had other effects. Latterly, of course, disillusionment with the way that multiculturalism, with its often imagined consequences – 'parallel lives' and so forth - has responded to contemporary diversity (to the presence of Others), has been a significant factor for those advocating an 'intercultural turn', in which the role of dialogue is foregrounded.

It should be emphasised that the 'turn' is a serious response to the (real) difficulties that Western societies have experienced – increasingly so in recent decades – in accommodating migrants and settled populations, mostly those from former colonies, with backgrounds in Other cultures and religions, who are now making loud and often unwelcome claims for the recognition of their difference. Reluctance to accord that recognition (which may be seen to be divisive) stems in part from the perception that 'their' values are at variance with, indeed incompatible with, 'ours', a perception which has had growing traction since the late 1980s and early 1990s, the time of the Rushdie Affair and debates about the headscarf in France. That perception has also been manifestly fed by developments in international relations with (radical) Islam since 9/11. Interculturalism with its stress on dialogue is intended to address that state of affairs.

The Knowledge-Power Nexus

Intercultural dialogues do not take place in a vacuum, but in what are highly contested social, cultural

and religious spaces; indeed, that is often why they are deemed necessary. A core message of the case studies is that dialoguing must always be understood as happening within a framework of existing social and political relations, especially power relations, even if one of the purposes of the dialogue may be to circumvent that framework. ‘Intercultural dialogue never occurs on a blank canvas where parties are equal’, say Hardy and Hussain (2017: 69). ‘The problematics of power’, as Ganesh and Holmes put it (2011: 84), thus loom large in any understanding of intercultural dialogues (see also Mansouri and Arber 2017; Stokke and Lybæk 2016).

The *Coloquios*, for example, represented an encounter between two peoples with very different conceptions of the world and their place in it, who tried to explain to each other what those were, and what they hoped to achieve: conversion on the one hand, to be left with their gods on the other. But this was in the context of the creation of ‘New Spain’ through force of arms, and the encounter rapidly became an occasion when the friars simply harangued the Mexica about the virtues of Christianity and the dangers of ignoring its message; recall that Robert Ricard entitled his 1966 book *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*. Dialogue should imply reciprocity (Keaten and Soukup 2009), but when controlled by the powers-that-be it becomes a monologue.

Intercultural dialogue, if understood as more than a mere passing encounter, also involves knowledge and understanding of the Other’s culture, and this demands evidence on which that might be based. Consequently, how, what, and why evidence is selected and deemed authoritative, and by whom, is decisive. There is, for example, a great deal of information available in academic studies, in the grey literature, and in testimonies by participants, regarding what happens in Muslim marriages, or in the proceedings of the Shari’a councils. The difficulty resides in deciding whose accounts carry weight, and what conclusions should be drawn from their evidence. All too often this is determined by the influence that one side in the dialogue can bring to bear, as with the anti-Shari’a lobby, with its greater political clout.

Who is deemed to have the power or authority to say what, to whom, and when, whose voices are included in, or excluded from, dialogue, and what space is made available for alternative perspectives or counter-narratives which challenge dominant ones, are clearly crucial questions. The inability of the anthropologist in L’s case to persuade the court that he had anything substantial to contribute indicates what may sometimes happen. The power manifested in the ability to define the task in which the parties in a dialogue are engaged – indeed whether it should be called a ‘dialogue’ - and what it should be about, was demonstrated in the *Behzti* Affair, where there was no agreement about the purpose of the meeting between the Sikh representatives and the theatre management, and the Affair was ‘resolved’ by the forces (actual and symbolic) that participants could muster. Of course, the failure to include or give adequate weight to all participants may have numerous causes. As recorded in Chapter 16, the roundtable meetings on marriage registration, for example, were not always able to retain the support and attendance of the generally elderly and conservative representatives of the mosques and Shari’a councils, who sometimes lacked confidence in English, were often suspicious of the motives of others involved, and skeptical about what dialogue might achieve.

In the literature on interculturalism, it often seems that dialogues are conceived as local, face-to-face encounters involving small groups of individual ‘representatives’ of the ‘cultures’ concerned. Such dialogues do indeed take place, and the case studies include many examples, such as interfaith meetings between Franciscan friars and Mexica priests or contemporary theologians, interviews with the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, and ‘roundtable’ gatherings to discuss Muslim marriages. In such micro-level encounters, power relations of an interpersonal character may be on display, though they manifestly also demonstrate and engage relations of ethnicity, gender, class or institutional status. Power may thus be revealed in the simple matter of who speaks first, who asks the questions, and what kind of questions they ask (‘Tell us, yes or no ...’, said the MP, and recall the haranguing of L by the prosecution), or in the layout of the room and arrangement of chairs where a meeting is held.

Dialogues are by no means only face-to-face, however. In contemporary societies they frequently take place at a distance. Such dialoguing-at-a-distance is a prominent feature in the controversies over Shari'a or Muslim marriage registration (as in Chapter 16) or the play *Behzti* (Chapter 13), and indeed in many other cases. It is on display in interventions by local or national religious and political leaders, in speech or in writing, in the reports of working groups and review panels, in leaflets and rallies by advocacy groups (to whose campaigns political and religious leaders were often responding), and in a multitude of pamphlets, academic studies, newspaper articles, TV news reports and documentaries, and comments on Facebook, Twitter and a plethora of websites. Such interventions engage, directly or indirectly, in a complex, multi-sided, multi-faceted intercultural dialogue in which the power to intercede is unequally distributed.

Inter- and Intra-cultural Dialogues and Representation

What is happening in such encounters often involves as much an intra- as it does an inter-cultural dialogue. A dialogue constituted as a duologue between parties representing opposed interests inevitably ignores the many different voices engaged on both 'sides'. 'Internal cultural debates', as Parkin (1978) calls them may be observed in most if not all the case studies described in Part III. Examples include the different views of the play *Behzti* expressed by the various parties in the dispute about the play (Sikhs and non-Sikhs), or about the nature of Shari'a and its applicability in Britain, or indeed among the Mexica priests and chiefs. And while the latter's counterparts on the other side may seem to have been of one opinion and voice, there were in fact significant differences among the Christian priests regarding indigenous peoples and their cultures, as perhaps the life and work of Bernadino de Sahagún illustrates. Such divisions were abundantly apparent 250 years later when the Jesuit Order was expelled from the Americas over its policy of creating safe spaces (the 'Reductions') for indigenous peoples.

What is the relationship between intra-cultural dialogues and what is happening at the intercultural interface; how does the one interact with, respond to, influence the other? To what extent does intercultural dialogue help those involved resolve their internal differences, or simply change their opinion? This would seem to go to the heart of the idea of interculturalism if that refers to people coming to terms with each other through dialogue. The case material presented in this book is, however, insufficient to allow me to address this issue, though I believe it to be an important one, which deserves further investigation.

In both direct and indirect dialogues questions of 'representation', in three senses, are critical: (a) how other cultures and their internal workings are conceptualised by those involved; (b) whose conceptualisations prevail and become hegemonic or instrumental in the public arena; and (c) whether and to what extent those participating are assumed representative of a particular culture or way of life. Regarding the latter, as Hocevar, Cukut and Istenič contend, despite assertions to the contrary - after all this is one of the principal interculturalist criticisms of multiculturalism - such dialogues may in fact assume that those participating are from 'a priori bounded groups' whose members 'share a "common background"', ethnic or linguistic, or that those who share such a background are 'automatically the carriers of uniform knowledge about the culture of this group, and are therefore already distinguished from individuals of some other comparable groups' (2009: 45). It is a moot question whether, and if so how, intercultural dialogues can escape that kind of essentialism.

Translation and Interpretation

If dialogues, inter- or intra-cultural, raise issues about who is to be involved, and who has the right to represent what, to whom, when, and where, they also raise difficult questions about language and linguistic and cultural translation, about how the process is to be understood, and how possible outcomes are to be interpreted. Such difficulties of knowledge and understanding occur on several levels. On the one hand, there is contestation about what actually happens in Muslim marriages, for

example, or in the Shari'a councils, how they work, and women's (and men's) experience of them. On the other, there are contested understandings of the ethical or other (e.g. theological) underpinnings of the beliefs and practices which such institutions embody. All this implies multiple acts of translation and interpretation, as, for example, happens in the courtroom, even when those involved are of the same, e.g. 'British', culture.

Although it is argued by some that cultural differences may be so profound, so incommensurable, that translation is impossible (see Chapter 4), I for one do not accept this, and indeed one might argue that at times otherness is over-emphasised. There were certainly major differences between the conceptual worlds of the Mexica and the Christian priests, for instance, but in some respects participants in the *Coloquios* grasped the other's point of view and what they wanted well enough. Nonetheless, while there are often sufficient similarities between (human) cultures, to make understanding possible, there are also hidden traps and 'false friends'. Apparently similar categories, for instance, may well map different cultural beliefs and practices, and careful analysis and patient deconstruction is required.

The need for such deconstruction is most obvious where participants in dialogue are native speakers of different languages and the cultural values they convey, with little understanding of the other's grammar, vocabulary etc. That need may, however, *seem* much reduced (if not non-existent) where participants are all competent speakers of the same language, as they were in the *Behzti* affair, or in the many dialogues in which British-born Muslims have participated. Nonetheless there may be difficulties of comprehension arising from lack of competence in the various (linguistic) registers that dialogues may entail (as in the courtroom), or from speaking the same language differently because of class or cultural background. More profoundly, speaking a language fluently may disguise profound cultural and conceptual differences, albeit articulated through the same grammar and vocabulary.

For those engaged in dialogue, evidence for cultural difference and its interpretation may also sometimes be mediated through a third party (e.g. expert witnesses, or the so-called 'intercultural mediators') whose views are influenced by their institutional situation, the kind of relations they have with others, and their political, religious or social beliefs. This further underlines the work that participants have to undertake, if the dialogue is to be more than a light-weight encounter. Judges, for example, may need to be sympathetic or sensitive to difference, but must also come to a view on what knowledge counts and how it is to be interpreted. Intercultural knowledge is hardly ever an unencumbered 'fact'. It is not a passive system of classification and philosophical reflection, but entails a comparative moral and political judgement.

Dialogues and Anti-Dialogues

There is dialogue and there is anti-dialogue, refusing dialogue or demanding such conditions as to make it difficult for some interlocuteurs to participate. For example, as Juan Luis Fuentes points out (2016: 383), the CoE's White Paper of 2008 insists that dialogue be grounded in its assumed universal values. Moreover, sometimes the standpoints adopted by participants may be such as to make meaningful dialogue unlikely, indeed in practice impossible, for example in encounters between those holding religious beliefs which are treated as statements of the one and only truth. In that event, interreligious dialogue might become, as Willy Pfändtner puts it, an exchange of 'positive and negative apologetics' (2010: 69).

The refusal of dialogue, or disbelief in its possibility, is found on both sides of the growing divide between Muslims and others. The Saudi and other Muslims discussed by Khaleel Mohammed (2015) see no point in dialogue with other religions, while Clive Kessler likewise views dialogue with Islam as futile (Kessler 2014, and critique by Joel Kahn, 2015); opponents of Sikh requests to make alterations to *Behzti* similarly rejected the idea that there should be a dialogue. Likewise, Richard Slade and Stephanie Steels' attempt to develop an interfaith 'Community Dialogue Project' in South Yorkshire (2016) encountered great reluctance on the part of local people hostile to Muslims (seen as

archetypical outsiders) to engage directly in an intercultural exchange. Consequently, their project was obliged to focus on an intra-cultural dialogue, in which participants were asked to reflect on their own views and perceptions.

As Michael Rabinder James puts it, a critical intercultural dialogue demands that participants ‘adopt an attitude of openness towards each other’s cultural perspectives; they must come to understand each other’s perspectives; and they must communicate under conditions which they mutually can accept as fair’ (1999: 590). ‘Only when these criteria are satisfied’, he adds, ‘can members of one culture criticize the practices of another’ (see also Amanuel Elias’s discussion of James, in Elias 2017: 261-2. This requires a public culture and civic consciousness conducive to dialogue (Gamble 2015). In a comment on one of his cases (*Suleiman v Juffali [2002]*), Judge Sir James Munby referred to what he claimed was the law’s ‘tolerant indulgence to religious and cultural diversity’. Sadly that ‘tolerant indulgence’ appears increasingly under threat in the face of an assertive religiosity (from Muslims and Christians), and an aggressive liberalism, deeply hostile to the cross-cultural sympathy that tolerance fosters. Confrontations of an apparently Manichaean character are out and about, and if the various parties involved stick vehemently to their position and talk past each other, or simply refuse dialogue, the prospects for meaningful interaction would seem, to say the least, grim.

Nonetheless, on the positive side, as Chapter 16 shows, there are those who occupy a middle ground where representatives of different cultures come together to ‘build bridges’, and participate in dialogues which confront difficult questions (for example about Muslim marriage registration), that are likely to involve uncomfortable negotiation and compromise. Whether the governance of diversity is described as multiculturalism or interculturalism, it is this middle ground which needs support. Yet to get beyond simply talking to one another and implement something like Bhikhu Parekh’s ‘dialogical multiculturalism’, within which such negotiation and compromise become possible, is a very demanding task which the cases discussed Part III, and the theoretical discussion in Part I, amply illustrate.

‘Multi’, ‘Inter’, ‘Trans’

Previous chapters of this book, notably Chapter 7 concluding and summarising Part I, have indicated my own position regarding the debate between multiculturalists and interculturalists. Although at times that debate is reminiscent of the squabble between the ‘big enders’ and the ‘little enders’, as described in Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, I have no doubt that the two sides do believe they see things very differently (how they envisage diversity and its governance), and that this has important consequences for public policy. At the risk of oversimplifying and caricaturing outrageously, and while recognising that neither multiculturalists nor interculturalists speak with one voice, and that there are weak and strong versions of both, the key features that advocates and critics emphasise may be briefly summarised as follows.

- *Multiculturalists* say their perspective stresses the collective rights and claims of minority groups, principally of migrant origin, and fights for their legitimate place in a diverse society, which has been historically denied by the predominant majority. Freedom from discrimination is of paramount importance, as is the ability to participate in society at large on equal terms. But so is freedom to hold beliefs and follow practices, ways of life, which are different from those espoused by the majority, and such ways of life should be accorded public recognition as legitimate.
- *Interculturalists* stress the dangers of minority separatism, self-exclusion, and ethnic specificity, and emphasise the importance of integration in societies governed by liberal, democratic, individualist, and secular values. *Multiculturalism’s* promotion of distinctive collectivities and collective rights and practices undermines the common ground essential for a cohesive society, and hinders minorities’ integration, with the danger that communities are

left to lead parallel lives, often under traditionalist, patriarchal leaders, in which women are placed in subordinate roles from which exit may be impossible. Where the beliefs and practices of such minorities are grounded in religion, secularism, too, is under threat. Against this background, *intercultural dialogue* is seen as a crucial mechanism for breaking down barriers, and a way of addressing and hopefully reconciling conflict between the historic claims of majority populations, and those of (immigrant) minorities.

- Besides, whereas *multiculturalism* (in Britain certainly) emerged as a policy for the governance of diversity in a society where there was a small number of minorities (e.g. African Caribbean, South Asian etc), it is now unable to cope with the superdiversity, that so-called ‘churning mass of languages, ethnicities and religions’, as Meer and Modood dub it (2012a: 186), one finds in contemporary cities like London, Paris, Amsterdam, or Brussels.
- *Multiculturalists* respond that *interculturalists* place too much emphasis on encounters at a micro-level, and ignore the macro-level, structural problems which need to be addressed. Nonetheless, *intercultural dialogues* are by no means avoided by *multiculturalists*, and in fact such dialogues take place all the time in a multicultural society such as Britain. Moreover, collective rights and claims, notably those based in religion, are increasingly salient under current conditions of globalisation and transnationalism; they cannot simply be ignored or side-lined. Further, pressures to integrate are likely to be interpreted as demands for assimilation and the abandonment of specific cultural and religious beliefs and practices and the submergence of minorities within majority culture.

As previously pointed out, however, in Chapter 2 and elsewhere in the book, although the literature on multiculturalism and interculturalism focuses principally on the contrast between those two ‘policy paradigms’, whether or not seen as incompatible, there is in fact a third perspective in play, *transculturality*, though whether ‘transculturalism’, as it is sometimes also called, could actually constitute a ‘policy paradigm’ is a moot point.

	-Cultural	-Ethnic	-National	-Culturalism
Multi	✓	✓	✓	✓
Inter	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trans	✓	✓	✓	?

From Table 2.1. Multi-, Inter-, Trans-

Again at the further risk of oversimplifying outrageously, its key characteristics would seem to be as follows:

- *Transculturality* abjures all identity essentialism. ‘Mixity’ or ‘hybridity’ is, in the long term, seen as displacing ethnic and cultural boundaries through intermarriage and other forms of cross-cutting relations, engaged in through individual choice, in contemporary ‘postmodern’, superdiverse societies. Present and future are envisaged not in any straightforward way as integration or assimilation (as in the traditional ‘melting pot’), but as a sort of ‘Brazil’, at any rate a ‘Brazil’ of the mind, Brazil as it is sometimes imagined to be, with everyone and everything converging through mixity – a mestizo world, in short. In this social, cultural, and physical ‘Brazilianisation’, there emerge new social and cultural forms, which demand a new type of person: the transcultural man or woman.

While *transculturality* has its own literature (see, for example, the references cited in Chapter 6), there is some overlap between a transcultural perspective and that of at least some interculturalists. Ted Cantle, for instance, when commenting on the complexity of contemporary identities which he believes to be ‘transitory and, at least partly, chosen’ (2013: 75), is much closer to a postmodern,

transculturalist stance than he might care to admit, if he were more familiar with the literature. For example, Michel Maffesoli and Charles Foulkes, in a paper which investigates what they call, somewhat misleadingly, 'neo-tribalism', contrast 'modern' and 'postmodern times.' In the former, there were 'individuals' who were defined by their 'function' within the political and economic order (in other words their class). In the contemporary world there has occurred a 'process of deindividuation.' Individuals are replaced by 'persons' ('polysemantic, polyphonic', Maffesoli 1988: 141), and collective solidarities based on function have given way to 'emotional communities' (p. 146.) This neo-tribalism 'refuses to be identified with specific political endeavours, does not conform to any single definite structure, and has its sole *raison d'être* the preoccupation with the collectively lived present' (p. 146.) They have in mind the 'spectacle [of] contemporary megalopolises' where there is a multiplicity of eclectic life styles and representations of self which change from year to year, and which generate mutual sympathies of an extremely fluid and fluctuating character. Adherents are continually 'zipping from one group to another' (p. 147).

While Maffesoli and Foulkes are preoccupied with the transformation of class identities, indeed their disappearance, transculturalists are similarly concerned with the transformation of ethnic and cultural identities. In either case, their visions of a multiplicity of transient collectivities, of a polyphony of voices in cities transformed by postindustrialism and superdiversity, may seem an attractive, albeit highly optimistic, picture of contemporary society and its trajectory, with all (class/ethnic) barriers gone, or at least going. But it is one, it could be argued, that it is underpinned by a 'neo-liberal' conception of society, in which ethnicity or class or indeed religion become a matter of a passing choice, of style or fashion, and in which all forms of collectivity and collective action are abjured; an unrooted a-cultural individualism, in other words. If this is where we are heading, it is not a prospect to be unreservedly welcomed.

Multiculturalism, interculturalism, and perhaps even transculturalism, are usually debated and contrasted in terms of their 'policy paradigms' and implications for the governance of diversity. Instead, as the previous paragraph suggests, each may be treated as entailing a vision of contemporary diversity, the form it takes, and where it is heading, rather than where it should be heading. Multicultural, intercultural, and transcultural perspectives each have such a vision, an anthropology as it were, on which policy paradigms are erected; Wolfgang Welsch (1999) offers a good guide to these different visions, though his account also has a prescriptive intention.

Once again there is a risk of oversimplification and caricature, but briefly the multicultural perspective might be typified as one in which society is seen as a multiplicity of minority collectivities, ethno-cultural, sometimes also religious and linguistic, blocs, co-existing within a society dominated by a similarly defined hegemonic majority. The transcultural perspective, as we have seen above, eschews such essentialist visions, rejecting the 'solitarist illusion', as Sen had it, and sees contemporary societies as highly differentiated and fragmented through processes of globalisation and transnationalism, with as a consequence the dissolution of cultural boundaries. All societies are now 'porous' (Taylor 1994) and their porosity has effects at both macro and micro levels. 'For most of us', says Welsch (1999: 198), 'multiple cultural connexions are decisive in terms of our cultural formation. We are cultural hybrids' (see also Ascari 2016). The intercultural perspective stands somewhere between the two, with some interculturalists closer to one or the other vision, and others seeking to have it both ways. Most interculturalists certainly do not see specific diversities disappearing, indeed they applaud diversity and its 'advantages'. They thus share with multiculturalists the sense that society consists of discrete blocs, living relatively distinct lives, but envisage that dialogue limits tension and potential conflict, enhances social cohesion.

In a curious way it could be said that in many contemporary societies these different visions are all equally pertinent. As was observed in Chapter 6, British society is highly heterogeneous and fragmented, with different things happening at the same time in different places, and at different times in the same place, and many trajectories are apparent. On the one hand there are sites within which one may find a multiplicity of voices, joking, playing, crossing, and engaging in dialogue through which new identities and relationships emerge. On the other, there are indeed (relatively) self-

enclosed worlds and ‘parallel lives’ (and what’s wrong with not being wholly ‘British’?) At the same time, research, for example, by Heath and Demireva ‘paint[s] a rather optimistic picture of ethnic minority integration in Britain’ (2014: 177), while there is also much day-to-day ‘conviviality’ in British multicultural cities (see Chapter 6). Similarly, the work of Chantal Tetreault (2015), Fareen Parvez (2017), Jean Beaman (2017), and in a different way John Bowen (2009), reveal the existence of these various configurations through the life trajectories of young people of North African background in France. Moreover, while some people may have a clear-cut vision of where they stand and where they are going, others will be sifting through alternatives, uncertain about what to do for the best, shifting from one vision to another as circumstances, personal and collective, change – victims of what might be called an ‘anthropological uncertainty principle’. And none of it means that dialogue, inter- or intra-cultural, is ever completely absent, as the case studies in Part III will confirm.

Compatibilities, Incompatibilities and Limits

One consequence of this multiplicity of trajectories would seem to be that, if they are all to be acknowledged and taken into account, no single policy paradigm is able to provide a guide to diversity governance. ‘How can you govern a country which has 246 varieties of cheese?’, Charles de Gaulle (1970) once complained. And one sympathises. But *should* they all be acknowledged? For instance, to what extent, if any, should recognition be accorded to the claims of minorities for the right to practice their culture, religion or language? That question – which is central to the debate between multiculturalists and interculturalists – goes over ground which has been well-trodden in the literature of political philosophy, and indeed in other parts of this book, and I cannot rehearse all the arguments here. Instead, I will reflect on just two points.

First, transculturality may be the coming thing, but there remain many people, among both minorities and majorities, who believe that among their identities (whether of ethnicity, class, religion, nationality or culture) one has central salience, determining who they are and what they must do. Essentialist or not, like it or not, many people, and not just religious fanatics, believe their way of life, their culture and/or religion, to be of fundamental importance in defining their identity and place in the world, and relations with others. Are they simply guilty of ‘false consciousness’?

The writer and commentator Kenan Malik, recently asked, plaintively, ‘How did the left radicalism of my Manchester youth give way to Islamism?’ (Malik 2017a; see also 2017b). He was referring not to himself, but comparing his generation, growing up in the 1970s, with that of young people in his home town of Manchester in the 2010s. Thus:

‘I felt real fury at a society that would not embrace me as an equal, legitimate citizen. But it was a very different kind of anger to that which many young Muslims feel now and the ways of expressing it were even more distinct. My fury towards Britain was not expressed through the prism of being “Muslim”. Partly this was because I was not religious. But partly, also, because few adopted “Muslim” as a public identity. We thought of ourselves as “Asian” or “black”, but these were political, not ethnic or cultural, labels. The institutions that shaped what are now called “Muslim communities” were not mosques, but secular and political organisations such as the Indian Workers’ Association and the Asian Youth Movements. The struggles of Asian communities were intimately bound up with wider working-class struggles’.³²⁰

Elsewhere (Grillo 2003a) I have tried to account for this shift from the politics of class to the politics of identity, but here will simply say that rightly or wrongly people really are concerned about ‘their’ culture or religion, and often enough their ideas are grounded in essentialism. Pace anthropologists

320 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/may/28/islamism-separation-other-peoples-even-muslims>. The article’s reference to ‘Asian Youth Movements’ is linked to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01dtkjb>.

and others who espouse alternative accounts, it might be argued that many people insist on an essentialist reading of culture, seeing in it something which represents them in some deep sense and that defines their 'real' selves. As Brumann puts it: 'it appears that people ... want bounded culture, and they often want it in precisely the bounded, reified, essentialized, and timeless fashion that most of us now reject' (Brumann 1999: S11). By 'us', he means 'us social scientists', among whom he might well have included the interculturalists. Whatever the reasons for this 'cultural anxiety', as I once called it – the impact of neo-liberal globalisation, transnationalism, modernity, 'uprooting', 'disembedding', and so on – the fact is that demands for cultural recognition are here and are unlikely to disappear. Think, for example, of the furore on all sides surrounding debates about what is called 'cultural appropriation'.

Both multiculturalists and to a large extent interculturalists would seem to acknowledge this, but, secondly, when it comes to matters of cultural and/or religious recognition and accommodation, neither would deny that there should be limits. Few people would tolerate forced marriage, grooming, or under-age sex, for example, though it is necessary to clarify what exactly is at issue, understand the underlying social and cultural dynamics, consider whether criminalisation is the answer, and avoid exceptionalising. This, surely, is where dialogue (inter- and intra-cultural) comes in, no matter the difficulties that such dialogues encounter (or the unrealistic expectations that many proponents have of it). In fact, British multiculturalism has over the last fifty years evolved as a 'negotiated order' characterised by accommodation through the difficult process of dialogue and negotiation in which the limits of what is or is not to be tolerated are under scrutiny, differences identified, and perhaps reconciled, with incremental change all that can be expected, leaving many issues yet to be resolved. Would interculturalists disagree with that?

As was pointed out in Chapter 2, multiculturalism ('actually existing multiculturalism') is not always what interculturalists think it is; nor is interculturalism what multiculturalists might think it is; and certainly 'actually existing interculturalism' often falls short of what interculturalists hope it is. My sense is that neither multiculturalists nor interculturalists have a unique command of the truth; both perspectives, in practice, find common ground, and both have much to offer, and in practice (if not always in theory) they are not incompatible. Hence, I concur with Patrick Loobuyck's summary (cited at the head of this chapter) when he concludes, pithily, that each has a role to play in the governance of diversity (see also Stokke and Lybæk 2016). That would seem to be very much in the spirit of Bhikhu Parekh's 'dialogical multiculturalism', as indeed of the kind of interculturalism advocated by the Bouchard-Taylor Report in Canada. Given the pressing need to find ways of addressing the crisis of difference in our contemporary societies, this is where multiculturalists and interculturalists would, I hope, converge.

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