Chapter 1

Introduction – Beyond Multiculturalism: Anthropology at the Intersections Between the Local, the National and the Global

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In an article written in 2004, titled *Beyond the Multicultural Ghetto*, Ali Hossaini expresses his uneasiness with multiculturalism by briefly describing his family origin. He was born, he says, in West Virginia to *American* parents. His father was originally from Iraq, and his father's mother came from Iran. Hossain's mother is from Ohio but his mother's mother was from a Slovakian mountain village, where her Serb father had migrated from Croatia. Hossain's father's family were Shi'a Muslims and her mother's were Baptists. His mother's sister married a Jew. Hossain describes himself as an American citizen and in the attempt to define his identity he refers to a dialogue from the film *The Deer Hunter*; having been asked about the Russian origin of his surname, the soldier in question replies that it is American. Hossain's article, raises fundamental questions on the meaning of being American and on the 'multicultural' nature of the US. It also reopens a long-forgotten window from which to look at the 'uniqueness' of cultures, leading to the need to revisit and unpack the meaning of multiculturalism itself.

With the aim of grappling with the complexity of the current debate on this problematic issue, this volume brings together revised and expanded versions of selected papers discussed at the XV International Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, held in Florence in 2003. This event stimulated in-depth and lively debate,[1] which continued through exchanges of correspondence involving scholars who had not participated in the Congress. One of them, Jerome Krase, has written a chapter that enhances the ethnographic and intellectual scope and strength of this collective effort, contributing substantially to the complexity of an anthropological analysis of 'multiculturalism'. As an integrated whole, this collection of essays offers empirically-based insights in what is reasonably identified as an increasingly complex, and comparably ambiguous, 'concept'. It encourages sobering reflection on the need to clarify key aspects of the concept of 'multiculturalism' and its varied intellectual uses in our study

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1   I would like to acknowledge the contribution given by Jonathan Parry, Alex Weingrod, Marietta Ortega Perrier and Freek Colombijin, who fully engaged in the discussions offering informed criticism and feedback.

of diversified societies. It also alerts us to worrying dangers engendered by its application as an undisputedly benign political principle.

Multiculturalism: A Category?

Multiculturalism has been passionately defended, criticized, defined and redefined. Those who support the project of multiculturalism do so in the name of equality and civil rights, stressing its positive value for a tolerant society and for the construction of social harmony. However, even among those who in principle advocate multiculturalism, criticism has been expressed of policies that continue to exoticize 'otherness' (see, for example, Grillo 1998). These critical supporters have identified such policies as mere 'tokenism'. Significantly, distinguishing between 'difference multiculturalism' and 'critical multiculturalism', Turner (1994) points out that the political goal of difference multiculturalism is a reductionist celebration of diversity (see also Grillo 1998), while the challenges posed by critical multiculturalism would provide the basis for a more vital and 'democratic common culture' (1994, p. 408). Stronger critics argue that multiculturalism is a basically divisive concept that ultimately favours one community over another, fuelling competition and conflict. In their view, it exacerbates ethnic differences, essentializing them and limiting the individual's scope for the definition of self-identity; they therefore identify multiculturalism as a radical form of political correctness that runs counter to the very liberal principles that its supporters advocate in its defence. Kymlicka (1996), a multiculturalist, raises a challenging point when he argues that multiculturalism (both as a concept and as a political project) is above all confusing as it draws on the ambiguity between 'multinationalism' and 'polyethnicity', which he associates respectively to the coexistence within a political unit of previously self-governing societies and to immigration. He also suggests (2001) that the minority rights claims of indigenous people are necessarily different from those of immigrants; consequently, different policies are needed to ensure justice.[2]

Here, it will be useful to remind the reader that different disciplinary approaches have influenced the direction of this debate, addressing different aspects of multiculturalism such as education, tolerance, liberal principles, individual freedom and choice, group identity, minority rights, preservation of cultural diversity and so on. Surprisingly, however, anthropologists have largely ignored the initial debate (but see Gupta and Ferguson 1992). At the same time, the anthropological tradition has virtually been ignored by the other disciplines engaged in such a debate.

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2   The collection of essays edited by Goldberg (1994) provides an articulated overview in this line. More recently, Tariq Modood (2007) has argued that, although multicultural recognition might have its limits, multiculturalism provides the basis for democratic citizenship and civic equality.

As Watson (2000) points out, a fundamental problem with the word multiculturalism is that different scholars (and policy-makers) appear to apply different meanings to it. Most important, it is increasingly recognized that this word often embraces a view of 'closed', self perpetuating cultures. In this sense, culture is treated as a 'thing', an object to be possessed and shared by a strictly defined group of people and which sets the group apart from other groups. Anthropological studies have demonstrated the methodological and theoretical weaknesses of such an interpretation of cultures, and have challenged the association of the distinctiveness of each culture with cultural closure.[3] They have also pointed out that cultural boundaries do not set cultures apart; instead they are permeable, thus promoting change.[4] Moreover, the notion of the closed uniqueness of cultures would appear basically to conflict with individual choice and with the freedom to define one's own identity, sometimes even leading to 'rejection' of one's inherited cultural identity (Gutmann 1994). Significantly, as Gross (1999) points out, modern democracies need to maintain the right balance between individual and collective spheres. According to him, central to a democratic multi-ethnic state is the direct association of individuals, not groups or corporations. In such a society, citizens carry at least two identities; universal and particular, the latter takes most often the form of ethnic identity. However, particular, ethnic identity can acquire a positive value only if it does not shadow the universal identity of the citizen who shares society's common norms and values. Later, I shall expand on issues of citizenship that are raised by the politics of multiculturalism and on the conflict between cultural identity and individual choice. For now, let me address the issue of the distinctiveness of cultures and the contribution of anthropology to an informed approach to multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism, or the Triumph of Relativism?

Nineteenth century anthropological definitions of culture have included morals, custom, law, arts, belief, knowledge and religion. Anthropologists have generally agreed that these characteristics are shared by all cultures, though they are expressed in different ways in different societies, and individuals' 'interpretations of culture' are not identical. This line of thought has led to the analytical distinction between people's actual behaviour and their abstract beliefs and values. From an anthropological point of view, culture has usually been identified as a set of rules, standards of behaviour and values (a sort of Weberian ideal-type) which are shared

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3   The anthropological literature on this issue is, of course, vast. As an example of the complexity of anthropological analysis of culture and ethnic boundaries, see Barth (1995).

4   In anthropology, this aspect has been masterfully addressed by Edmund Leach (1954) in his analysis the Katchin; in particular, Leach has shown how individual choices may bring about changes that promote the continuity of the social structure, rather than subversive structural changes.

and accepted as proper by the members of a society, or of a specific social group. Such rules and standards make the actions of the individual intelligible to the other members of that society or group of individuals.[5] Baumann (1999) argues that this view of culture as a catalogue of ideas and practices is an essentialist concept. He suggests that a processual concept should be added, whereby culture, as a constantly changing entity, only exists in the act of being performed. Referring to the anthropological tradition, Joppke and Lukes (1999) spell out the key distinction between culture (in the singular) as a 'context-transcending' product of symbol specialists and the social practices that take place within the collectivity. Quite significantly, they go on to say that, drawing on the historical notion of cultures in the plural, the anti-élitist and relativist approach of some anthropologists has provided the bedrock of multiculturalism.

Of course, reality is more complex than ideal-typical definitions would lead us to believe. The anthropological debate does indeed bring to light two interrelated questions that are of particular significance to the study of multiculturalism. One regards the 'equality' between cultures, leading to debates on the political recognition of minorities and their culture (Taylor 1994). The other relates to the cultural variations that exist in a given society, raising the issue of *cultural pluralism*. In an attempt to disentangle the complexity of this framework, it is now necessary to expand on the development of the anthropological concept of culture.

I shall start by bringing to mind the intellectual trajectory, in anthropology, from an evolutionist approach – according to which some cultures are inferior to others – to the position that all cultures are of equal value. Theorized in the late nineteenth century by Boas (1911), and further developed by his students (see, especially Benedict 1934), this egalitarian principle led many anthropologists to embrace *cultural relativism*. According to Marcus and Fisher (1986), cultural relativism was in part a response to Western ethnocentrism, against which many anthropologists reacted by investing themselves with the duty to salvage those cultural forms that they saw threatened by global Westernization.[6] More generally, such an approach brought about a self-destructive attack on anthropology's commitment to ethnographic fieldwork and analysis, whereby the possibility of objective knowledge was thoroughly dismissed and universalism was labelled as 'the ethnocentrism of the dominant group' (Joppke and Lukes 1999, p. 5).[7] It must be pointed out, however, that cultural relativism was initially elaborated as a

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5   To complicate the debate further, in the 1990s anthropologists began to question whether such a concept as society still had theoretical relevance (see, for example, Strathern et al. 1996). Needless to say, such a challenge to the concept of society implicitly denies relevance to the aforementioned definitions of culture.

6   Charles Taylor (1994) argues that multiculturalism has inherited such an anti-Western anti-colonial disposition (see also Sahlins 1993).

7   In a seminal work Gellner (1992) vigorously castigated such a post-modernist approach as a destabilizing turn. Ardner (1985) linked the decline of Modernism in social

methodological concept. According to Boas, being of equal value, cultures should be studied from a neutral point of view. He rejected the evolutionary classifications of cultures and their attendant ethnocentric value judgements. However well intentioned, the popularization of cultural relativism, especially after World War II, led to the erroneous association of 'cultural' relativism to 'moral' relativism. The implications of such a misconception are particularly relevant to the contemporary debate on multiculturalism.

The popularization of cultural relativism after World War II was somehow a reaction to such historical events as Nazism, and to colonialism, ethnocentrism and racism more generally. However, if, on the one hand, the intention of relativism was to avoid justification of humanitarian crimes (such as genocide), on the other hand, its underlying principle that people's behaviour should be understood in the context of a given cultural and social system raised fundamental ethical dilemmas which became particularly obvious when attempts were made to influence the UN's Declaration of Human Rights. There is indeed a fundamental flaw to moral relativism, tellingly encapsulated by the conundrum, should liberal democratic societies condone everything – including conquest, genocide, discrimination, denial of freedom and civil rights – because of their underlying cultural values, or should they fight such events on the basis of their liberal principles of tolerance, justice and civil rights?[8] It is precisely the combination of the aforementioned flaw and the correspondingly flawed ways in which a methodological 'tool' (that is, cultural relativism) for understanding cultural diversity is translated into policies that raises concerns about the contemporary political project of multiculturalism.

Echoing political criticism of cultural relativism,[9] the political commentator Matthew Parris addressed the potential dangers of multiculturalism in an article published in *Times Online* in January 2004. In his view, multiculturalism could lead to a disguised form of apartheid. He especially questioned the validity of *particularist* multiculturalism and its approach to the alleged preservation of cultural differences. Particularistic multiculturalism is represented by the idea of the 'melting pot' (the US are usually singled out as an example) and aims at recognizing the contribution of each culture, or subculture, to the whole culture of a country. This is different from *pluralist* multiculturalism, which encourages the preservation of cultural diversity within the context of overarching values; different cultures would thus interact peacefully, while maintaining their cultural diversity – Canada and Australia are usually cited as examples of such a 'cultural

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anthropology to the renewed debate on rationality that put an end to the optimistic faith in 'scientific' reason and technology that followed the Enlightenment.

8   Gellner (1995) noted that there is an inevitable paradox in the liberal tradition in so far as it embraces tolerance for diversity while elevating liberalism itself to the status of universal transcendental value. Bhikhu Parekh (1994) has argued that liberalism is intolerant of non-Western cultures.

9   See, in particular, Stocking's observation that, though cultural relativism aimed at attacking racialism, it can be seen as a sort of 'neo-racialism' (1982).

mosaic' (Ravitch 1990). According to Parris, particularistic multiculturalism could dangerously lead to the radicalization of cultural differences and the creation of cultural ghettoes, as opposed to encouraging true political recognition. Similarly, in April 2005, Trevor Phillips, the Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality raised controversy as he was widely reported saying that the term multiculturalism should be scrapped (*BBC News*); he further argued that tolerance for diversity has led to the further isolation of some communities and has identified multiculturalism as a reason for the lack of integration of some minority groups in British society. Moreover, many fundamental rights – civil, minority, ethnic and human, to name just a few – seem to clash under its umbrella; the protection of the rights of a specific group is received as a tyrannical dictate by others. Does this mean that after all multiculturalism is a disguised form of dictatorship; specifically, the dictatorship of relativism?

Multiculturalism and Substantive Citizenship

Multiculturalism is above all a descriptive concept. The expression 'multicultural society' was first applied in the 1950s to Switzerland, where cultural pluralism had been translated into policy.[10] Swiss cultural pluralism has been traditionally associated to the federation of different language-speaking Cantons (German, French and Italian) and their attendant cultural traditions, rather than to immigration. To this extent, Italy, perhaps more than France or Britain, could be regarded as traditionally a culturally pluralist country, where administrative districts like the province of Bolzano (South Tyrol) are granted a special statute in order to preserve linguistic diversity.[11] However, the Italian case also shows that the definition of linguistic minority is in itself contentious.

The contributions offered in this volume address from different ethnographic viewpoints the intellectual challenges that I have outlined. Drawing on historical and contemporary data on Albanian migrations in Italy, Prato's chapter examines a major limitation of multiculturalism, specifically the implication that culturally homogeneous minority groups, rigidly bound, co-exist in an equally homogeneous majority society. The Arbëresh case shows that not always linguistic minorities are culturally or socially homogeneous. In the past, their integration into Italian society was made possible by the host society's tolerance of diversity within the context of common shared values. Bringing to mind Pardo's analysis of the present situation involving native Italians and immigrants (Chapter 6), when discrimination occurred, the Arbëresh shared the same predicament with significant sections of

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10   At the time, a distinction was not clearly made between multiculturalism and cultural pluralism. I shall discuss this sociologically significant distinction in a later section.

11   On contemporary multicultural policies in Italy, see Pardo's chapter (see also Grillo and Pratt (eds) 2002).

the Italian autochthonous population. In contrast, recent legislation has stirred up a resurgence of ethnicity, which is fostering the creation of new social boundaries. The positive discrimination engendered by such legislation creates new forms of inequality, as it gives access to privileges (social, cultural, political and economic) to selected minorities. In line with the point made by Joppke and Lukes (1999), this ethnography shows that granting special rights or privileged treatment to minority groups not only may fuel inter-minority competition and resentment from members of the majority; more crucially, such course of action can seriously undermine the integrative function of citizenship.

In his study of the Naples situation, Pardo shows how the contradictions that emerge from these new forms of inequalities tend to be expediently glossed over in what he describes as a problematic economic and political environment. Pardo examines the interaction between native people and legal and illegal immigrants in the context of a substantially weak relationship between citizenship and governance. Stressing the need for further empirical research into the legitimacy and morality of governance and legislation, his ethnographic analysis brings out both the existing inequalities among native people and the impact of immigration on the tension between tolerance and toleration. Pardo's chapter shows how mutually beneficial and productive relationships between native people and immigrants develop in the absence of relevant conflict in terms of culture and value-systems, whereas the stances and actions of radicalized immigrant groups often engender conflict. Some immigrants' commitment to integration clearly emerges to be directly dependent on strategies that not only involve gaining formal employment but also, more crucially, a commitment to socializing with the native population and learning about and more generally getting on with their way of life. Significantly, Pardo shows that the failed integration of immigrants must be understood in a broader sociological framework that is marked by the failed full integration of a large proportion of the native population.

We should ask, therefore, whether multiculturalism (not only as a theory but, more crucially, as a political practice) does promote equality of opportunity. In other words, we should ask whether the protection of minorities or, more generally, of cultural diversity alone eliminate discrimination. Wieviorka argues that multiculturalism 'celebrates and seeks to protect cultural variety – for example, minority languages' (1998, p. 881) – but he also acknowledges that the cultural aspect cannot be separated from social and economic aspects. Crucially, taking into account the social, political and economic integration of all groups in any given society raises fundamental issues of substantive citizenship.[12]

Even in countries such as Canada, a traditionally 'multicultural' society, protection of cultural diversity no longer appears to guarantee equal opportunity,

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12 See Brubaker (1992) on the distinction between formal and substantive citizenship. As I argue elsewhere (2006), citizenship not only defines legal and social status but also the standard parameters for political identity and the requirements of duties and the expectations of rights.

especially regarding access to employment or promotion. Indeed, Canada makes a particularly enlightening case in the study of contemporary multiculturalism. There, multiculturalism was applied in the late 1960s to guarantee the 'peaceful' co-existence of the Francophone and Anglophone communities and, later, of these communities and the indigenous populations. Initially set up to deal with the French-speaking minority, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism soon realized that any Government Act could not ignore the grievances of indigenous people and of those Canadians of neither English or French descent (at the time, these were mainly immigrants from Western and Southern Europe). Thus, following the first Multicultural Act of 1971, Canada abandoned its vision of hyphenated bilingual and bicultural society, and was officially declared an unhyphenated multicultural society. At the same time, native ethnic groups successfully claimed economic privileges.[13] However, as Fong's chapter demonstrates, new immigrants, mainly from Eastern Europe and non-European countries, are finding it difficult to integrate in Canadian society. In a situation of strong urban economic competition, these new 'visible' immigrants face poverty, segregation, racial discrimination and exploitation even from their own ethnic groups. Fong suggests that the existing legislation is incapable of accommodating both the needs of the new immigrants and the needs of Canadian society as a whole. His discussion of contemporary urban Canada enlighteningly expands Wieviorka's description of Canada as a form of 'relatively integrated multiculturalism' (1998, p. 884), in so far as the cultural question appears to be currently separated from the economic question. According to Wieviorka, the active participation of minorities in the economic life of the country is a key aspect to their inclusion, leading to the recognition of their cultural differences and, possibly, to 'multicultural citizenship' à la Castles (1994), whereby a country's Constitution and its laws are accepted by all citizens alongside respect for cultural diversity, civic equality and economic cohesion. Castles sees multicultural citizenship as a 'state-building' project that guarantees civic equality of indigenous people *as well as* immigrants. In contrast, Kymlicka (1995) appears to restrict multicultural citizenship to territorial homeland minorities; non-territorial groups, which inevitably include immigrants, would have no place in such a multicultural vision.

While Canada is described as an example of relatively integrated multiculturalism, Wieviorka (1998) describes the US as an example of 'disintegrated multiculturalism'. Martin Luther King's campaign for civil rights is misleadingly presented as the trigger of multicultural policies in the US. Based on equal and individual citizenship, that campaign for civil rights advocated equality for all members of the US, regardless of race, religion or colour. However, Baumann (1999) points to two transformations of the underlying logic of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, both of which run counter to individual citizenship rights;

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13   As exemplified by the cases of Australia, India, China and many South American countries, the principle of establishing policies of economic support to or privileges for indigenous ethnic minorities has been applied in different ways in different countries. Very often, such policies are seen as unfair discrimination against the ethnic majority.

they are, the promotion of ethnic rights and the promotion of community rights for religious groups. Apart from excluding so-called non- or half-ethnic individuals and non-believers, these two transformations have brought about various forms of positive discrimination, whereby people are accorded rights solely because of their religion or ethnicity. Baumann argues that such positive discrimination has led to the separation of the ethnic communities from the state as a whole. These communities are consequently thought of as 'a social body with its own political rights' (Baumann 1999, p. 10). Consequently, they risk being seen as either problem groups or pampered minorities. Apart from leading to a new form of ghettoization reminiscent of Parris' point outlined earlier, this situation inevitably breeds resentment and suspicion between groups.

Marked by a mixture of affirmative action and recognition of and respect for any form of diversity, the US contemporary situation is complicated by the process of transnationalism.[14] Such a complication is explored in depth by Rubel and Rossman, focusing on the nature of transnational families and their integration in the host communities. In their chapter, they persuasively argue that the transnational family is a most significant aspect of diaspora populations; because of increasing globalization and migration for economic reasons, it has become much more important than it was in the past. Rubel and Rossman examine families that have experienced a diaspora and the various kinds of ties that migrants maintain with their kinsmen in the homeland. Among Tongans, Dominicans, Sikhs, Chinese, Pakistanis and Indians, the nature of the transnational family is found to vary in relation to the nature of the social structure characteristic of the homeland. Addressing a key issue in anthropology, Rubel and Rossman demonstrate that kinship structure plays an important role in determining the nature and degree of integration of these ethnic groups.

The impact of transnationalism is also addressed by Fong, who suggests that this form of migration, which implies that individuals or groups have chosen to live only partly in the host country, demands policies other than those inspired by the 'concept' of multiculturalism. Linking to Pardo's discussion, Fong shows that the ties established within the ethnic community raise significant issues on the practical, political and economic meaning of integration, on the contribution of migrants to the host country and on the opposition between individual identity and group identity.

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14   In the US, recognition of diversity materialized in the introduction of a multicultural curriculum in education, which generated a heated debate among academics, intellectuals and the media. Such a policy is now widely adopted in many Western countries, including Britain. However, even those who initially welcomed such an initiative have subsequently pointed out its limitations (Grillo 1998). In particular, it is noted that the emphasis on recognition of diversity has pushed forward a vaguely defined policy of 'differentiation' that de facto perpetuates institutionalized disadvantages. Moreover, such an emphasis has produced a dumbed-down culture (in the etymological sense of 'cultivating') in so far as it has attempted to appeal to the broadest possible audience. Of course, the broader the appeal the lower the common denominator.

Individualism and Group Identity in Multi-Ethnic Societies

Wiewiorka (1998) has argued that the individualism of modern society maintains a 'paradoxical relationship' with collective identities, particularly cultural identities. On the one hand, individuals wish to maintain a sense of belonging, of a collective identity and, most significantly, they do not want to be stigmatized for this. On the other hand, they also seek to achieve a degree of personal freedom and do not want to be restricted in their choices by some superimposed obligation. Burnier indirectly addresses this problematic in the discussion of her Brazilian ethnography, pointing out how focusing on oneself – or a few others who are regarded as similar – may lead to isolation and intolerance. Rather than focusing on indigenous rights,[15] Burnier offers a case study of a group of technicians with a working-class rural background and examines the ways in which they interact with the values and practices found in the urban world of late modernity. She investigates the extent to which these rural migrants remain faithful to the cultural tradition of their group of origin and describes how, faced with the rationality of late modernity and its emphasis on individualism and instrumental reasoning directed to productivity, they go through a cultural transition that bears significant consequences for the ways in which they represent themselves, the other and the world. Such a process leads to the formation of multiple identities that are frequently fragmented and contradictory. Other traditionally multi-ethnic societies, such as China, appear to present a different scenario.

Contemporary China makes an intriguing case of ethnic interaction and multi-ethnic policies. Gladney (1997) suggests that historically, and more forcefully following the Communist revolution, the Chinese state's policy has been characterized by a drive to 'educate' ethnic minorities to the superior culture of the dominant Han ethnic group. He goes on to say that such a policy of assimilation led to the myth of ethnic homogeneity, which encouraged ethnic minorities to pass themselves off as Han in order to claim superior status. Recently, however, the Chinese government has implemented policies of economic support for ethnic minorities; accordingly, people are redefining their ethnic identity in order to gain access to privileges and resources. Although Zhang Jijiao's chapter does not address directly the state's policies on ethnic minorities, it provides an interesting description of imbalanced competition among ethnic groups. Jijiao examines changing patterns of widespread migration from rural to urban areas. He focuses on stereotypes that the ethnic groups hold about each other and on the ways in which such stereotypes affect both the relations between the majority population and ethnic minorities and the relations between different ethnic minorities. However,

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15   It is worth noting that most studies of South American Countries have addressed local movements of indigenous people, linking such movements to historical processes of colonization (see, for example, Whitten 1996 and Ortega Perrier 2006). Whitten argues that the claims of these local groups have found a sympathetic international response thanks to their ability to link up with other indigenous groups worldwide.

Jijiao suggests that when ethnic conflict occurs, ethnic stereotypes provide only a partial explanation. He argues that the 'root of conflict' rests on the imbalance of power between different groups, especially in economic transactions. His main point is that in the contemporary reality of urban China universally-accepted rules of market competition have replaced cultural and religious elements in defining ethnic identity. The questions remain, of course, open as to what extent the Chinese government's new policies of distribution of resources are affecting such market competition and as to the ways in which 'multicultural' policies are applied, and received, at local government level.

It is obvious that the official endorsement of ethnic minorities cannot be taken as an endorsement of multiculturalism, for China, as other Asian countries that are culturally diverse, seems to be multicultural only in a descriptive sense. While Jijiao discusses China as a diverse and multicultural society, Chaudhuri suggests that distinct cultural patterns are maintained in urban India. Her chapter studies the residential patterns of ethnic communities, linking rural migration to urban growth and economic opportunities. She argues that in cities like Kolkata religious and linguistic background and geographical origin play a crucial role in the choice of residence. Patterns of spatial distribution promote in-group interaction rather than inter-ethnic exchanges, thus strengthening distinct socio-cultural traditions. Chaudhuri states that the persistence of traditional social cleavages such as caste, religion and language perpetuates community identity even when people interact in the work place or when they belong to the same political party. Parry (2000) notes that in India the roots of economic failure are political, at the same time pointing to 'the menace of the tyranny of the religious majority' (2000, p. 27). Moreover, when we contextualize 'community identity' in the pluralist self-image of Indian society, such social cleavages acquire a more analytically significant dimension. As Kapila (2008) says, pluralism, equity (rather than equality) and redistributive justice are key principles of India's Constitution. In a situation in which, as Parry indicates (2000), the state has not delivered the prosperity it promised, these principles rest upon a policy of positive discrimination that, though designed to integrate into the modern independent state groups that have experienced exploitation and discrimination, has in fact led to the classificatory definition of 'scheduled castes' and 'scheduled tribes'.

The Chinese and the Indian cases discussed in this volume would suggest that multi-ethnic interaction leads to the entrenchment of group identity, leaving little room for individual negotiation. Interestingly, in the Chinese case, the pursuit of economic interest is not linked to individual achievement; it is linked instead to the attempt to change the status of one's ethnic group in a situation of 'imbalanced competition', suggesting that communalism continues to prevail over individualism. Of course, the case made by traditionally multi-ethnic societies is significantly different from that made by societies that experience external migration. The case of young immigrants in Vienna studied by Mayer in her chapter, offers interesting stimuli for comparison. Mayer describes how young immigrants move between their families' 'back home' approach and the Viennese urban society, where they

feel they are economically and culturally marginalized. She examines their culture and the strategies developed by peer groups in their attempt to define their identity and find their place in the wider society. Group members support each other against what they see as repressive institutions; in particular, the school, the police and the welfare system, but also their own families and the culture that they represent. In the process of adjustment, they try to bring together aspects from different cultures and thus create a new way of life that includes a specific group structure and organization. Mayer suggests that the formation of peer groups, and peer-group identity, may constitute an emotional and intellectual resource for its members, but this can also become an obstacle to integration and access to mainstream society.

Vázquez and Rodríguez offer an alternative view on this issue of individual and collective identity from the standpoint that the concept of identity conveys a meaning of immutability and crystallization. They suggest the alternative concept of identity process as part of a critical reflection on the concept of multiculturalism as opposed to pluri-culturalism. Through a descriptive analysis of ethnographic material that combines ethno-linguistic and an historical anthropological approach, their chapter confutes the immutable view of ethnic identity, pointing to the significance of the dynamics of change in our understanding of cultural processes. They suggest that ethnic identity should be regarded as a 'provisional form' of identity which is adopted in a particular historical and social context and at a particular time in socio-ethnic relationships. More generally, they argue that, in a continuous process of change, 'identity must stand on its own contradictions'. In such a context, tradition itself is a process of re-elaboration of the past, through acculturation, migration, religious syncretism and linguistic and cultural interference. Identity is thus centred on the construction, reproduction and re-elaboration of the processes of symbolic interaction and cultural syncretism.

The ethnographies discussed so far should alert us to the fact that different historical, social, economic and political conditions demand different forms of coexistence of cultural and ethnic diversity. Of course, this would by no means justify advocating some unrestrained form of relativism, for I would suggest that peaceful coexistence itself is a fundamental moral principle that should guide policy within the broad framework that, imposition of law apart, for any policy to enjoy acceptance at the grassroots it must be and seen to enjoy legitimacy – including moral legitimacy (Pardo 2000). We have seen how, developed as a Western political project, multiculturalism raises fundamental questions on the tension between individualism and collectivism (Rubel and Rossman, Jijiao, Burnier), substantial citizenship (Pardo, Fong, Prato) and definition of identity (Vázquez and Rodríguez, Mayer, Chaudhuri, Krase). A key underlying issue would appear to be that the ways in which different societies are trying to put into practice the multiculturalist project resurrect old issues that have been addressed in past debates; in particular, the implicit aim of preserving cultures as if 'they were endangered species' (Gutmann 1994, p. x). It could be argued that, by doing so, not only does multiculturalism tend to deprive cultures of their vitality; it also tends to deprive individuals of their freedom of choice and negotiation of their identity. To put

it in a nutshell, the theoretical challenge raised by the aforementioned questions lies at the core of the debate on the project of multiculturalism and its practical applications. As I shall argue more fully in the following section, a key contention is that in order to deal with such a challenge our analysis must be both empirically grounded and unencumbered by political doctrine or intellectual preconception.

Multiculturalism as a Challenge to Individual Freedom

The project of multiculturalism poses serious challenges to liberal democracies, to their fundamental aim to protect the freedom and equality of individuals. Gutmann (1994) asks whether the demands of recognition by particular groups are illiberal demands, in so far as a collective identity is thus imposed upon the individual. She adds that it is worrying when respect for individual rights becomes respect for 'individuals as they identify with particular cultural groups' (1994, p. 9). Similarly, Tamir (1999) rejects in principle the notion of collective rights because it implies that rights are bestowed on groups, not on individuals who make up a group; therefore, in this line, collective rights constitute a threat to the individual rights of both the members and the non-members of a group.[16] Both arguments reinforce the view that liberal democracies cannot defend a particularist perspective; instead, the defence of diversity should draw upon universalistic values. Moreover, as Gutmann points out, not every aspect of cultural diversity is worthy of respect. She significantly refers to racism and anti-Semitism as obvious examples; should these particularistic perspectives be respected? Liberal democracies often tend to tolerate them. However, there is a difference between 'tolerating and respecting differences' (Gutmann 1994, pp. 22–23; see also Walzer 1997) or, broadly to paraphrase Pardo, between *tolerance* and *toleration*.[17]

The critical opposition between tolerance and toleration is graphically illustrated in this volume by detailed ethnographic examples that spell out how such an opposition is often strengthened by the activities of vociferous lobbies which, having organized themselves into political groups, become self-elected champions of immigrants' interests while, at the same time, fuelling contempt for the host country's culture and institutions. The remarks of one of Pardo's informants are revealing and worth quoting here. She accepts tolerance of diversity in the sense of respecting other people's viewpoints and beliefs. However, she also stresses that tolerance should be a two-way process. Instead, she is expected to respect the opinions, beliefs and way of life of people who are 'intolerant' of her beliefs

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16   The philosopher Brian Barry argues that we live under the control of the 'Politically Correct Thought Police' (2001, p. 271). However, staunch supporters of multiculturalism, such as Iris Young, welcome an even greater such control through the politicization of every aspect of life, including 'feelings and expressions of fantasy and desire' (1990, p. 152).

17   Walzer (1997) defines tolerance as the 'attitude' and toleration as the 'practice'. I agree with Pardo that the distinction is much deeper and far-reaching.

and way of life and, above all, of her 'hard-earned freedom as a woman and a citizen'. The approach of ordinary people acquires sociological significance in situations, like that studied by Pardo, that are marked by ideological intolerance of a significant part of the native population and instrumentally selective legislation. As Pardo points out, political choices that lack legitimacy make the coexistence of different cultures more difficult. He suggests that three processes are critical for such a coexistence: bridging the gap between citizenship and governance; drafting legislation that is and is seen to be legitimate; and encouraging suitable integration across the board.

    Given the shortcomings of the politics of multiculturalism, it would appear compelling to suggest that the coexistence of diversity might be possible in a context of 'cultural pluralism' based on tolerance, not toleration. The fundamental distinction between multiculturalism and cultural pluralism is addressed by Krase in his chapter. Krase powerfully alerts us to the distinction between assimilationism, multiculturalism and cultural pluralism. Through careful comparative analysis, he makes the convincing argument that these concepts should not be addressed simply in terms of theoretical elaborations; they should be examined in the context of the historical and ideological set up in which they develop.[18] While assimilationism and multiculturalism appear to be opposite ideologies, cultural pluralism falls somewhere in the middle, for it recognizes the positive values of diversity but it does so in conjunction with overarching common values that connect different groups. Bringing to bear the graphic insights offered by selected images, Krase argues that such middle ground can be better understood considering the distinction between 'authentic' and 'symbolic' ethnicity, whereby the former is significant in everyday life (it would apply, for example, to a member of a group), while the latter provides a source of psychological satisfaction. He gradually builds towards structuring a new approach to ethnic diversity. A combined reading of his argument, of that developed by Pardo and of the analytical insights brought out by the discussions of Fong, Prato and Rubel and Rossman makes it encouragingly less daunting to address the challenges posed by the ambiguity, confusion and risks that mar the project of multiculturalism.

Representations of Cultural Diversity

Multi-ethnic environments marked by cultural heterogeneity, once associated to such societies as the US, have now become commonplace across the world. Krase shows how contemporary cityscapes display the contradictions of the globalization of capital, in so far as immigrant/ethnic neighbourhoods reflect national and global systems. Distancing himself from the visual approach that

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    18   Walzer (1997) makes a similar point. He, however, develops his argument in support of the US form of multiculturalism, which, in his view, allows for pluralism of groups alongside pluralism of individuals.

employs images as 'decorations for words', he aims at demonstrating how the 'visual' is clearly connected to structural and cultural theorizations about society. Thus, in his discussion of how ethnic diversity is expressed in ethnic vernacular landscapes, Krase endeavours to understand how the meaning of urban space is changed through negotiations of identity. He convincingly argues that the meanings of space are changed by city dwellers, who are both products and producers of space.

From a different perspective, Surrenti focuses on 'management' of space as a way of selling the experience of otherness. Her chapter addresses multiculturalism in terms of consumption, linking it to a new idea of cosmopolitanism and to the creation of plural identities. Surrenti's approach offers an opportunity to ask whether cultural contact expressed in terms of tasting other peoples' food makes a society multicultural. This appears, instead, to be another form of the tokenism widely criticized by many advocates of multiculturalism. Significantly, the places of consumption described by Surrenti are built by native Florentines for the native population. From such a perspective multiculturalism seems to have become a self-serving, hypocritical fig leaf for the politically correct, in blatant disregard of true tolerance and integration.

Following Joppke and Lukes (1999), multiculturalism could be described as a new cultural production controlled by specialist managers that transcends reality. Such an abstract production is neither 'authentic' nor 'symbolic' expression of ethnic identity, in the sense described by Krase. Expanding Krase's analysis further, I would suggest that the significance of 'authentic' ethnicity in everyday life makes it possible for individuals from different ethnic groups to participate actively in the process of creating new cultural meanings that link the diversity of the local to the inclusiveness of the national. In other words, it allows understanding and respect of other cultures without destroying one's own culture, thus contributing to building a truly tolerant society.

Conclusion: Beyond Multiculturalism

The graded and diversified criticism of multiculturalism expressed by scholars is matched by that voiced by politicians of the Left and the Right. More importantly, 'ordinary' people have grown increasingly disillusioned with the ideals purported by the project of multiculturalism and with its applications. Moreover, even when sizeable sections of the wider society embrace the political correctness demanded by multiculturalism, very rarely does the underlying philosophical goodwill translate into policies that truly promote pluralism, the peaceful coexistence of diverse cultures and equal citizenship.

A common theme that emerges from the contributions offered in this volume is that the multicultural recognition of diversity appears to bring about an irreducible dilemma between individual and collective rights. In emphasizing group rights multiculturalism presents itself as a form of cultural determinism that curtails

citizens' freedom of choice. In particular, in bestowing rights to collectivities, the state also empowers them with the authority of restricting the individual freedom of their members. Thus, indirectly, multiculturalism limits the freedom of minority members, confining them to cultural, and sometimes geographical, ghettos, instead of providing them with equality of opportunity. This becomes particular evident when some cultural groups see individual freedom as a threat to their cultural identity and to the boundaries they have set up to protect it. By celebrating diversity in the form of group membership, multiculturalism does not break down cultural barriers; it reinforces both these barriers and the attendant cultural stereotypes, creating suspicion and hostility between minority groups and between them and members of the majority. As we have seen, hostility is further fuelled by the positive discrimination that grants privileges to selected minorities, thus creating new forms of inequality. This situation is found both in countries of immigration (such as the US, Canada and Western European countries) and in historically multi-ethnic and postcolonial countries (such as China, India and many South American countries).

Multicultural recognition is inherently limited in two other interrelated ways. First, it aims to protect diversity regardless of cultural practices. The anthropological debate on culture suggests that rather than focusing on culture as an abstract set of values we should focus on cultural practices. From this point of view, we should therefore ask which practices allow the conditions within which different ways of living can peacefully coexist, and where to draw the line between liberal rights and cultural practices that infringe on fundamental human rights. Second, multiculturalism wants to preserve minority cultures as if they were immutable, while at the same time demanding dramatic changes in the majority culture; that is, in a reversed form of imperialism, it demands that (especially Western) societies learn and respect other cultures while destroying their own. In other words, multicultural policies aim at promoting an allegedly democratic pluralist integration not on the basis of reciprocal respect and *tolerance*, but on the basis of *toleration*. In this regard, if we cared to look at historical examples, we might rediscover that it is precisely this kind of reciprocity that in many cases has made possible the coexistence of different cultures, and the integration of the 'others', in a given society. We may learn that cultural pluralism is not a new phenomenon. Of course societies change, and changes happen faster than politicians can regulate and legislate on. Contemporary demographic movement around the world is different too, both in terms of quality and quantity. Not only has travel become easier and more affordable for many, but new technologies also allow faster and constant communication between immigrants and their home country. Both factors have facilitated a new form of 'migration', transnationalism, whereby individuals chose to live only partly in the host country while they engage in the process of gaining double, and in many cases multiple, citizenship. It needs to be reiterated that, inevitably, this situation raises key issues of social, political and economic integration, not to mention the contribution of migrants to the host country. Contemporary policies of multiculturalism cannot therefore ignore the

significance of the links established at the intersection between the local, the national and the global.

In spite of protracted academic and political debate, a fundamental question remains unanswered. Does the political correctness demanded by multiculturalism really imply open-mindedness, or is it rather a disguised patronizing attitude that allows contemporary politicians and presumed do-gooders to by-pass the real dilemma of contemporary Western and non-Western societies; that is, not simply the more or less successful integration of minority groups but, more fundamentally, the increasing gap between citizenship and legitimate governance.

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