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The complementarity of multiculturalism and interculturalism: theory backed by Australian evidence

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ABSTRACT

The decline of multiculturalism as a public discourse has been caused by various socio-political factors – such as 9/11 and its aftermath and the growth in migration – and new pro- and anti-diversity isms have been offered instead. One such pro-diversity discourse is interculturalism. Whilst some of its advocates, especially in Quebec and Europe, have seen it as a replacement of multiculturalism, a closer examination shows a high degree of complementarity. We demonstrate this by a theoretical-normative unpacking of multiculturalism and of the claims of interculturalism, and by evidence that Australian publics see multiculturalism as supportive of interculturalism, perceived as a renewal of multiculturalism. We express the hope that the sometimes oppositional debate between these two isms may now move forward into a phase of complementarity.

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Introduction

The socio-culturally fluid, politically dynamic, and highly interconnected global environment we currently live in has narrowed the temporal–spatial distance within and between nation states, communities and individuals (Mansouri 2015). This new hyper-connectivity, created by the unprecedented technological advances of the twenty-first century, has increased and diversified the movement of people, ideas, and networks locally, nationally, internationally, transnationally and, in many, cases trans-locally (Kymlicka 2015; Vertovec 2007). Yet this increased mobility and inter-connectedness have, amongst various positives, also coincided with increased levels of regional

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conflicts, xenophobic episodes, and various other forms of social strife, some of which frame Muslims as the central post-immigration group associated with challenges to national security and social cohesion (Modood 2005; Kymlicka 2015; Mansouri 2015).

These three trends – increased mobility coinciding with more salient social cohesion and security concerns, resulting in what we might call sociological super-diversity and political anti-multiculturalism – have led to a pro-diversity line of critique of multiculturalism (MC) and an alternative policy approach referred to as interculturalism (IC) (Council of Europe 2008; UNESCO 2008). Arising in the policy field, this critique and alternative approach has been developed within academia (Wilson 2018) but perhaps in isolation from neo-liberal political currents that have pursued more explicitly an agenda that prioritizes the individual at the expense of ongoing group oppression and structural inequalities (Kymlicka 2015). We argue that the relationship between MC and IC, while quite intense in Western Europe (Meer and Modood 2012; Meer, Modood, and Zapata-Barrero 2016), need not be, and is not, universal. We present in detail the case of Australia, where IC is widely regarded as complementary to MC, as a way to revivify, not replace, MC.

Multiculturalism and interculturalism

There was a time when MC was regarded as *the* positive way to accept and institutionalize ethnic diversity. It was not necessarily universally endorsed but it was regarded as the future. From the late 1990s, and especially after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, MC began to be loudly criticized (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010). Some of the criticism has been intellectual but the most prominent has been political. Some of the latter wants to stop talking about “difference”, but one notable policy-oriented critique offers an alternative way of thinking about and governing diversity. We refer here to IC, which, in fact, has three different politico-geographically specific meanings. In each case, the meaning of IC is shaped by its character as a critique and possibly an alternative to the local understanding of MC. The oldest of the three is from Quebec, a branch of Quebecer exceptionalism and francophone nationalism, it emerged as a reaction to federal Canadian multiculturalism (Bouchard 2011; Taylor 2012). There is also the “interculturalidad” of Latin America, which rejects state MC as a feature of colonialism (Solano-Campos 2016; Avena Koenigsberger 2018). The most prominent and influential, at least in Anglophone discourse, is the one that originates from Western Europe, with the most notable political statements on IC being the White Paper of the Council of Europe (2008) and the world report produced by UNESCO (2008). It is this iteration that we discuss here, though it is fair to say that there has been some interaction between this concept and its Quebecer counterpart, especially in academia.

Yet, while Quebecer IC in many ways originated with political intellectuals and academics, European IC originated with NGOs, policy-practitioners and policymakers and was much more practical from the start (Wilson 2018; Mansouri 2017). However, in recent years a number of scholars have attempted to give European IC, both in terms of its critique of MC and at the level of its own principles, an intellectual form. This has led to at least three sets of direct MC–IC engagements and comparative evaluations (Meer, Modood, and Zapata-Barrero 2016; Antonsich 2016; and the Multiculturalism–Interculturalism symposium in *Comparative Migration Studies* 2017; for earlier discussions see also Kymlicka 2007 and Modood and Meer 2012).

The relationship between MC and its critics, especially in Western Europe, has gone through three phases. *Phase one* began with a general dissatisfaction with MC from many political and intellectual sources. Some of this came from the right, some from the left, some from critical theory scholars, and some from political theory scholars (Waldron 1991; Žižek 1997; Barry 2002; Beck 2011). Starting in the 1990s, it accelerated after 9/11, when so much of the debate about diversity, especially in Western Europe, came to focus on Muslims. In *phase one*, IC emerged both as a critique of MC and as a pro-diversity policy perspective.

Phase two roughly began about the middle of the 2000s, when interculturalist scholars, mainly sociologists, though also scholars from cultural studies, policy studies, migration studies and geography, emerged in significant numbers. We are here not just thinking of those who self-define as interculturalists, but also those who invoke related concepts and vocabularies around the cosmopolitan society (Beck 2002), conviviality (Gilroy 2004), super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) and everyday multiculturalism (Wise and Velayutham 2009). These new discourses about diversity have played a similar, albeit not identical, role to those of the self-identified IC proponents (Padilla, Azevedo, and Olmos-Alcaraz 2015; Sealy 2018). A feature of these intellectual positions, most pronounced in IC, is an insistence that the nature of cultural diversity in urban centres has changed in the new millennium and, as a consequence, the flaws of MC are more evident than ever before. In these studies on IC-related themes, there is usually a very brief prefatory critique of normative-theoretical MC (Wise and Velayutham 2009; Hudson, Phillips, and Ray 2009,) and, in the main, research within this rubric is not primarily theoretical but consists of empirical, often local or policy-oriented analysis. The overall engagement with MC was slight and mainly served the purpose of clearing the ground in order to announce a new research approach or a different policy orientation. Our point here is that in this *phase two* it was felt necessary to critique MC only to engage in and justify alternative empirical research agendas.

As the critiques started to become more developed, we gradually entered *phase three*, which is less than a decade old. This phase has seen more robust

attempts at engaging with political theory as a basis for the justification of IC. *Phase three* has signalled the possibility of a more nuanced intellectual exchange and dialogue as more elaborate analysis of the assumptions behind the two concepts were articulated. It is *phase three* that opens up the possibility of exploring possible complementary relations between the two concepts that this paper is undertaking.

Confining ourselves to texts in English, three particular scholars have emerged, across two continents, who offer a political theoretical justification for what was missing in *phase two*. These are Gerard Bouchard, from Quebec, where IC was developed as a pro-diversity position, grounded in an appreciation of the necessity of the majority culture for social stability, as a warrant for a form of “majority precedence” (Bouchard 2011; for a more nuanced and a less majoritarian statement, see Bouchard 2015). Ted Cante (2012) and Ricard Zapata-Barero (2015, 2016), based in Europe, engage with IC from an altogether different intellectual base. European IC does not work with concepts of majorities and minorities but focuses on individuals rather than group membership and sees national preservation and nation building not as a goal but as obstacles to “contact”, social mixing, plural identities and cosmopolitanism. This is actually a position that Bouchard associates with the very MC he rejects (Bouchard 2011), but we will not pursue that here (Modood 2014).

The purpose of this article is to move towards what we hope will be *phase four*. From a phase of oppositional engagement to one of potential complementarity. It assumes that in the multiculturalist articles cited above, a case has been made that IC is not an altogether new alternative paradigm, rather, it has a contribution to make, one that will expand the scope and value of MC. We hope to achieve this by doing two things. Firstly, by clarifying what we take to be the key concepts of political MC. Secondly, by referencing extensive Australian studies conducted over recent years by one of us (Mansouri, Lobo, and Johns 2015; Mansouri, Kenny, and Strong 2017), we show that the kind of IC that pro-diversity activists are calling for does not amount to a critique and rejection of MC, indeed it is compatible with and conditional upon a strong MC platform. Focusing on Australia, rather than Canada or Western Europe, has the advantage of looking at a country where IC and MC are rarely thought of as rival paradigms, but rather as two essential dimensions of the overall pro-diversity socio-political agenda.

Five key concepts of multiculturalism

The discussion of the five key concepts underpinning the MC agenda – difference, equality, ethno-religious groups, national identity and dialogue – aims to clarify the theoretical foundations underpinning MC as well as clarifying how these same concepts are engaged with (or not) within IC.

Difference

The first concept of MC is the idea of difference, which has two aspects. There is difference from the outside, the difference that is imposed on people, an ascribed, negative difference, such as the racism that says “we’re white, you’re black, and you are inferior”. A contemporary illustration is Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism (Modood 2019a). The second aspect of difference in MC is what we might call difference as experienced from the inside, the subjective or intersubjective difference that people feel about themselves and their sense of identity. Because we are not talking about personal and individual identities, this means some form of group identity. Building on Charles Taylor’s (1994) idea of recognition, multiculturalists have emphasized that while the sense of identity that people express will change – identities are fluid and of course not homogeneous – the idea of identity recognition is important in the multiculturalizing of citizenship and thus in the multiculturalizing of the countries of interest (Modood [2007] 2013, chp 3).

Equality

The second concept, which is related to the first, is the concept of equality which also has two aspects. The first aspect is non-discrimination, which is central to the liberal concept. MC does not displace this idea but adds to it the distinctive concept of equality as respect. This is the idea that equality does not require treating everybody by a uniform standard or that all policies should be applied in the same way to all groups.¹ Rather, it recognizes that groups can have differential needs that are important to them, possibly existentially important for their survival as a group and that equality requires the accommodation of these needs (Modood [2007] 2013, chp 3). Equality here means the respectful inclusion of “difference”, rather than offering minorities equality with a price tag of assimilation. This might take the form of bilingualism or it may take the form of religious community provision, for example, provision of *halal* and *kosher* food in schools and other public institutions. In our view, the IC of Bouchard, Cantle and Zapata-Barrero, is a potential retreat from respect and differential need toward something more like non-discrimination, and so represents a significant downgrading from MC in this regard.

Ethno-religious groups

The third concept, particularly developed in Western Europe, especially Britain, is the idea that ethno-religious groups, have to be included in MC (paralleling earlier developments around Catholics and Jews in Protestant-majority countries) (Modood [2007] 2013, 2019a). In the first wave of MC,

coming especially from Canada, religious identities and groups were not prominent. It was not that early multiculturalists were necessarily against these identities, although some may have been, these groups were simply neglected. Early multiculturalist political theorists assumed that the groups of multicultural interest were defined by language, ethnicity, indigeneity or migration.² In Western Europe this has been turned completely the other way around, so that now when people in Western Europe talk about MC, they are nearly always talking about religion and mostly about Muslims. Some of us have argued that this is progress, because these are the groups to whom equality has to be extended in our contemporary circumstances. But the interculturalist response has been to downgrade religion and religious identity in public life, treating it as a private matter that can be tolerated within some kind of restrictive secularism (Cantle 2011). Bouchard and Taylor (2008) advocate open secularism but its openness is only relative to a closed *laïcité*, and does not offer religious groups the kind of recognition available to, say, ethnolinguistic groups (Modood 2018b). IC, in this regard, walks away from the most significant multicultural challenge in Western Europe and elsewhere, including Australia, namely how to approach and manage claims around religion and religious identities.

National identity

The fourth concept is national identity. Multiculturalists such as Will Kymlicka (1995), Bhikhu Parekh (1994) and Charles Taylor (1994) have always talked about MC as something that transforms our national citizenship and national identity. National citizenship has been conceived as the vehicle for MC, but where does IC stand on that? Here, the three interculturalists mentioned above significantly differ. For Bouchard, everything is informed by the idea of Quebecan nationalism and self-determination, even taking that as far as the idea of a “majority precedence”, albeit not enshrined in law except in respect of the French language. His criticism of Canadian MC is that it drags the majority down to the level of the minority (Bouchard 2011). Although he interprets the concept of national identity in a non- or anti-multiculturalist way, there is no doubting his insistence that diversity must be thought of within a national identity frame (Modood 2014).

Cantle, on the other hand, goes in the opposite direction and says very little about the national, except that it is the problem, not the solution. Instead, Cantle, who entered the IC debate very much from an explicit policy perspective, focuses on the local and the global at the expense of the national. This is perhaps a reflection of much thinking in social science that has gone in this direction since the early 1990s, if not earlier. It seems to be engaged in a pincer movement on the national: a devaluation of the national by emphasizing the local and global (sometimes expressed as “glocal”; Robertson 1995).

This is not the position of the MC theorists discussed in this article (for a very recent elaboration of “multicultural nationalism”, see Modood 2019b).

Zapata-Barrero is perhaps closer to Cantle and has less to say about the global as he emphasizes the local, the city level in particular. We think this is positive, as long as we do not forget, that the local is always situated within the national. He does not seem to appreciate the importance of national laws, policies, campaigns and resource-allocation decisions made at a national level that affect the cities. For example, racial equality laws at the national level give people protection and inform relations in their workplaces and neighbourhoods, local government services and so on. Focusing the policy prism only on the local drains it of some of the most important considerations (CMS 2017). The local must be seen as additive to the national not as substitutive. We must not devalue the national either from the local side or the global side. It may be thought that this is simply the position of “the civic turn”, with its emphasis on national integration. However, the latter’s emphasis on subscription to values and citizenship tests is neither MC nor IC; it is neither multicultural nationality nor intercultural mixing, and so represents another, and less difference-friendly position. The point is worth noting here as most European governments have moved in this third direction; it is interesting that their anti-MC rhetoric has not been substituted by IC, disregarding their being signatories to the Council of Europe’s promotion of IC (Council of Europe 2008).

Dialogue

The last key concept is dialogue which has also been central to MC, thus it is difficult to sustain the claim of interculturalists that MC has always been about co-existence and mutual indifference, and that any suggestion to the contrary is part of “hasty revisionisms” (Cantle 2016, 140; Modood 2017b). Parekh explicitly makes intercultural dialogue central to his conception of MC; one of the key chapters of his most discussed book is entitled “Logic of Intercultural Evaluation” (Parekh [2000] 2006). Going even further back, his interventions in *The Satanic Verses* affair, in which he argued against a freedom-of-speech absolutism and argued that angry Muslims must be given a sympathetic hearing, are an exemplary multiculturalist plea for dialogue (Parekh 1989). Similarly, James Tully (1995) has continually emphasized that cooperation under conditions of deep diversity or “multiplicity” requires a “multilogue”. However, one aspect of the interculturalists’ argument is plausible and worth attending to. That is, multiculturalists like Parekh and Modood have very much focused on the macro, in particular the national as the macro, and therefore on the political.

The IC focus is on the micro. Interculturalists talk about neighbourhoods, schools, youth clubs, shopping malls, football clubs, and emphasize the

importance of contact and exchange. On the whole, they want the dialogue to be non-political and inclusive of all, including majoritarian groups. This is a worthy addition but not substitutive. Here, MC has something to gain. If we take out IC's dichotomizing logic, which always presents MC and IC as "either-or" rather than "both ... and ...", then we can value what IC adds to MC, even though its critique of MC may be at times ill-conceived and methodologically flawed (Modood 2017a, 2018a). As we have argued in regard to the national, so now in relation to the macro; an emphasis on micro politics and intercultural encounters are critically important perhaps now more than ever. But we must not think in either-or terms.

Again, while MC envisages a shift in the understanding and pursuit of equality and justice at a national level, and requires political mobilization, solidarity and struggle, often "against" mainstream society, IC places a premium on an attitudinal transformative capacity of individuals through relational engagement that includes members of majoritarian society. It posits that individuals are able to form reflexive analyses, can be critically aware of their cultural biases, and thus engage in respectful dialogue based on more than mere static binaries.

Having briefly presented some of the key concepts of MC and the potential of some aspects of European IC to positively complement MC rather than as flawed critiques of or a retreat from those concepts, let us now examine how in practice, MC and IC have interacted in the context of the Australian case study. We do so by presenting the historical emergence and development of MC as providing the requisite socio-political conditions for the later emergence of IC and its advocacy role in relation to the broader MC and diversity agenda.

Multiculturalism, interculturalism and the Australian counter-evidence

The case of Australia is a contrast to the dominant discourse in Europe and elsewhere. This empirical counter-evidence is reflected in the fact that the country has not experienced the same depth of ideological polarization and policy contestation over MC and IC as witnessed in Europe and elsewhere. Indeed, MC and IC have mainly been viewed as pro-diversity frameworks operating at different levels of public policy intervention. Furthermore, it is precisely the macro socio-political context created within multicultural Australia that has often been considered the necessary condition for meaningful intercultural interventions across different social fields (Halse et al. 2015; Mansouri and Elias 2017).

In Australia, like in the UK, race was an important factor in the inception and development of MC. Unlike the UK however, Australia is a settler colonial state and despite changes in Aboriginal policy from 1972 onwards, MC was a policy focused on recent migrants and their descendants to ensure their successful

settlement post migration. MC in Australia never engaged with the key issue of the country's settler-colonial legacy thus overlooking the claims for constitutional recognition and land rights of Indigenous people (for more see Cohen 2003). Indeed, the introduction of MC in the national political landscape followed the 1973 abolition of the White Australia Policy, a migration-restriction act aimed at non-White, particularly non-Anglo-Celtic, migrant communities, though from the mid-1940s other European nationals, including southern Europeans, had started to be admitted (Hage [1998] 2012; Anderson and Taylor 2005). The Australian government legislated for the first time to establish the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975, ensuring legal protection for migrants and minorities from discrimination, which in 1995 was strengthened further by the inclusion of racial hatred and vilification.

Unlike in Europe, successive studies in Australia (Markus 2018; Mansouri and Elias 2017) have shown consistently high levels of support for MC and diversity, even if many contradictions remain as obvious now as they ever have been. These relate in particular to acceptance of diversity on one hand whilst supporting harsh policies towards certain minority groups (Gaita 2011; Markus 2018). In short, although Australia's approach to MC has been comparatively successful, both in terms of migrant settlement and overall social harmony, with continuing public support for the policy, there remain certain challenges and contradictions that reveal ongoing tensions over certain racialized groups, in particular asylum seekers, African youth and Muslim Australians. This paves the way for a discussion on whether a recalibration of Australian MC is desirable, indeed possible, through a positive engagement with IC.

We offer Australia as a case study in which intercultural interventions have been introduced while MC continues to be embedded powerfully in the national psyche. The specificity of the Australian situation is not only explained in terms of the overall public acceptance of diversity and MC but is also linked to the successful co-existence of MC policy and specific IC strategies at different levels of governance and across intersecting sectors of political, social and cultural spheres. The study upon which our argument is based examines how the Australian public views MC and IC in the context of current national and international tensions as well as political debates around security and social cohesion. The research data captures some of these tensions as they relate to the two paradigms and aims to chart a possible way forward (Mansouri and Elias 2017) through what we have referred to as a *phase four*, where conceptual complementarity might be envisaged.³

Case study methods

The empirical evidence used in this paper comes from a larger study that included eight focus group discussions with fifty-seven stakeholders,

twenty-seven one-on-one interviews with community representatives and a national online survey with 1,004 respondents. The Australia-wide survey was implemented through Survey Sampling International, an online data service provider that recruits participants through online platforms. Data were collected during April–May 2017. Participants were selected from a large and diverse sampling pool with the risk of bias being minimized via a multi-stage randomization process. In addition to details on demographic characteristics, the survey comprised a total of thirteen attitudinal questions including two open-ended questions on participants' understanding of MC and IC. For each of these thirteen questions, a seven-point Likert scale option was provided, with "1" indicating strong disagreement and "7", strong agreement.

The overall figures reported in the study provide strong support for MC, with less than 14 per cent of respondents disagreeing with the statement that "Australia is a successful multicultural society" (see [Figure 1](#)). This reflects, in many ways, the arguments above about the paradoxes of MC in Australia, where, despite the salience of security agendas and the racialization of certain ethnic groups, overall public support for MC has remained very strong over the years. In this study, the focus was on whether IC, and specifically intercultural dialogue, is able to offer an additive component to MC, or whether it can be an independent replacement paradigm, as advocated by proponents of IC in Europe and elsewhere. In this regard, the study found that participants view IC as offering an additional dimension to the policy mix that might reinvigorate diversity management and race relations, thereby better promoting two-way cultural exchanges (see [Figure 2](#)). While participants remain strongly supportive and accepting of MC, [Figure 2](#) indicates that they see a role for IC as an additive rather than substitutive dimension in the overall diversity policy paradigm, even though they remain unclear as to its precise meaning. A large proportion (59 per cent) of participants indicate that they are not familiar with the concept, which is not unreasonable

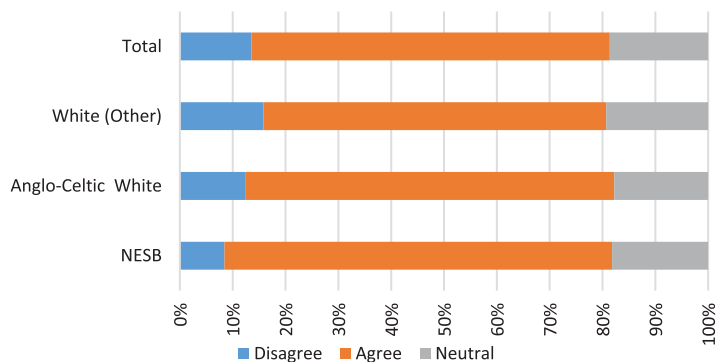


Figure 1. Views on Australia as a successful multicultural society.

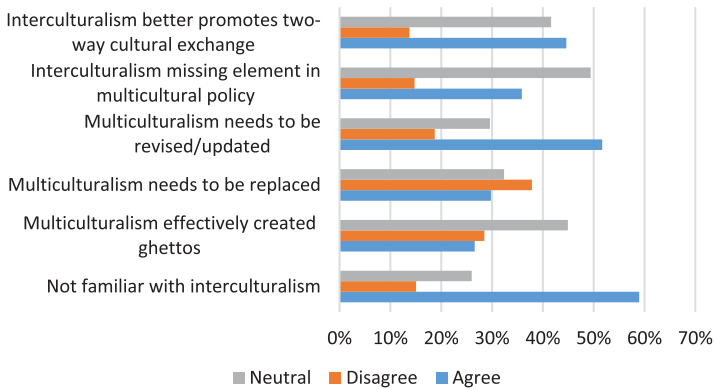


Figure 2. Views on multiculturalism and interculturalism as policy options.

given its lack of articulation in public discourse and official government policy in Australia.

These empirical findings speak to two fundamental points that go to the heart of this paper. Firstly, the study's findings reinforce the enduring relevance and the critical positive role of MC for all society, as perceived not only by migrants and their descendants but also by the Anglo-Celtic majority of Australians. This speaks against the often misguided notion circulating in Europe, particularly, that MC has become incapable of responding to the needs of contemporary society, characterized by super-diversity and hyper-connectivity. Secondly, and equally important, is the finding that a majority (over 52 per cent) of respondents indicate that despite its enduring relevance, there is a need to revise and update MC to overcome persisting challenges around social integration, racism and discrimination. Here, a substantial proportion of respondents seem to think that IC is better equipped to promote two-way cultural exchanges (45 per cent) and that it is indeed the missing element in the current MC approach to diversity governance (36 per cent). It is the combination of these findings and other related evidence from other studies (see Mansouri and Elias 2017 for more details) that pave the way for an emerging *phase four*, which articulates how the two concepts can engage in a common mission with distinct but related agendas for supporting a pro-diversity ethos. The suggested MC–IC complementarity is not only argued in terms of these public surveys and attitudinal data, but also through the qualitative data with practitioners and community representatives. Participants spoke about this complementarity, rather than a supposed oppositional relationship, indicating that:

For a lot of people, the two concepts are the same. I would say they are aspects of the same process. And I think that's how people sort of see them. (interview participant 43, male, aged 40, ethnic community representative)

And in some cases, this public support for complementarity was even more explicitly articulated:

I really see the two complementing each other rather than being different or opposing each other. (focus group participant, woman, aged 65)

The Australian counter-evidence on the MC–IC complementarity is also manifested within education initiatives and local governments policies where both concepts are deployed to pursue pro-diversity strategies and policies. More broadly, Australia has seen over the last two decades a growing interest in intercultural approaches to diversity management and race relations across many fields but most notably education, health, corporate leadership, media, local councils and ethnic communities councils (Halse et al. 2015; Levey 2017b). The concept of ethnic communities councils for example, which emerged during the early foundational phase of MC, comprised ethnic groups from different national and cultural backgrounds and therefore encouraged intercultural dialogue and meaningful exchange across cultures. As Levey argues (2017a, 123) the Australian experience does not support the argument that “multiculturalism stands in the way of ICD”.

Outlining phase four

We shall explore a little further how MC and IC are able to coexist across a number of societal and political fields, with IC requiring the supportive conditions of MC for its development and implementation. Using Australian evidence as an illustration, we discuss the implications at three levels for a possible *phase four* engagement, namely, the normative, the methodological and the political.

Normative implications

MC and IC, as concepts, have divergent origins, yet are increasingly engaged in the overlapping diversity and race relations agendas. Though IC does not seem to be explicitly concerned with issues of justice, there is an underlying understanding that the interpersonal cannot be pursued if the broader societal context is not conducive to inclusive notions of justice. In fact, through some of the micro-interventions at the local level, IC, at least in theory, would enable minorities to interact with majoritarian groups in ways that can disrupt and challenge unequal power relationships in societies. A good example is the introduction of intercultural understanding as a pedagogic competency in the Australian school curriculum, with its emphasis on key personal, interpersonal and social skills and cross-cultural capability (Halse et al. 2015). Interestingly, Halse et al. (2015, 3) found that the students with the most developed intercultural competencies are those who attended

schools with “a strong, explicit and well-established culture of racial, religious and cultural equality in all areas of its operations”. This demonstrates a connection between notions of justice, as prioritized by MC discourse, and the capacity to develop interpersonal and inter-group affinity, as pursued within IC. Together, this multi-dimensional pro-diversity strategy leads to what is now termed in the literature “deep equality” (Beaman 2017), reflecting the power of positive narratives about the everyday workings of diversity and intercultural relations. Ultimately, at this normative level, the conceptual complementarity reflects a situation where IC can act as a pedagogic and transformative tool for realizing MC’s grand narratives and ideals.

Methodological implications

Perhaps the most obvious methodological implication pertains to two critical areas of analysis, spatiality and individualization. Firstly, the spatial focus within IC is on the local and the micro politics of the local, distinguishing it from MC, which often probes at the macro level, in particular in relation to equality and national membership. In the Australian context, this can be seen in the way local governments initiate and operate intercultural initiatives to create opportunities for local residents to interact, intermingle and even deliberate over diversity issues, race relations and related issues pertaining to the local area. Indeed many local councils in Australia (e.g. Darebin City Council, City of Ballarat and Melton Council) have developed ambitious intercultural plans that specifically address the need to bring people together. These initiatives augment and strengthen their already existing suite of MC policies (Mansouri, Kenny, and Strong 2007). All of this is facilitated through a federal multicultural policy that has, discursively at least, maintained respect for diversity and support for migrant integration.

Secondly, and in relation to individualization, there is a need to acknowledge the new context of super-diversity, where identities are increasingly viewed as multi-dimensional, dynamic, fluid, and overlapping in how they relate to different cultural terrains locally, nationally and transnationally. Cultural identities are performed, not simply discursively ascribed. This is not peculiar to individualized identities, however, as groups themselves are internally diverse and change their identities over time, both through internal change and changes in the wider society. Hence we do not have to choose between a methodological individualism that emphasizes choice, fluidity and multiple identities and the opposed notion of groupism, which sees “difference” and “identity” as having a collective dimension. That is a false reductionism. Good social science and theory, no less than public discourse and policy, must encompass both ethnoreligious groups and the multiple identities of individuals; both sets of identities evolve and are dialectically related. Methodological and conceptual framings that pit one against the

other must be resisted intellectually and politically (we see some Australian “everyday multiculturalists” move in this direction, for example, Wise 2018). This is yet another illustration of how MC’s concern for macro struggles and IC’s emphasis on individual contact at the local level are best understood as complementary. IC here, far from replacing MC, has the potential to enrich it. Indeed, as the Australian case illustrates, there is wide-ranging empirical evidence that the existing positive multicultural foundations that are conducive to a pro-diversity and pro-justice agenda have allowed for an exploration and introduction of many successful intercultural interventions ranging from education to local governance, from urban planning to media and performing arts. These IC interventions have taken place in a national context of a strong public support for the wider multicultural agenda (Markus 2018).

Political implications

The third level of implication relates to the political notions of power and hegemony. Geoff Levey argues that one of the distinguishing features of the Bristol School of MC is the notion of struggle (Levey 2019, 206–207). This idea says that one must struggle in society against hegemonic structures to be able to change and reverse certain oppressive tendencies. While IC is often associated with a de-politicization or a demotion of minority politics, some interculturalists speak of “creative dissent” (e.g. Gonçalves and Majhanovich 2016) through deliberative dialogue, as opposed to an uncontested state of supposed “living in harmony” that entrenches oppression and discrimination. While a point of tension in the overall politics of both MC and IC relates to how these agendas and ideals are communicated in the public domain, our argument is that there is no intellectual basis for this divisive political rivalry between the two “isms”. All policy proposals should be geared towards allowing individuals to identify (or not) with a group membership in their own way and not consist of a singular imposed policy template (whether it be “difference” or “mainstreaming”, the prioritizing of religious identities or “political blackness”) on the complex diversity. Similarly, we do not need to choose between respecting individuals and accommodating groups (Modood [2007] 2013).

Conclusion

This article engages with the ongoing debate around MC and IC being conducted in the context of a so-called post-multicultural era that proclaims the death of MC and the emergence of IC as the main diversity policy paradigm (Zapata-Barrero 2017; Cantle 2016). Yet, we argue in this paper that aspects of this debate are ill conceived, often exaggerated and potentially dangerous in the broader context of a pro-diversity approach (De Waal

2018). Against this background and on the basis of theoretical and empirical analysis, this article calls for a new form of engagement between MC and IC, one that is guided by broad principles that highlight and reflect the primacy of situational specificity of political contexts, histories and geographies. This new engagement places importance on a discursive and policy “complementarity” between MC and IC rather than on a mutual ideological exclusion. To this end, there is a need to conceptualize IC within this *phase four* engagement as creating a crucial additive not substitutive dimension for MC, and as such becoming a serious interlocutor in the public diversity debate.

Both MC and IC are pro-diversity and pro-inclusion approaches that we conceptualize as operating at different political, personal and spatial levels. There is, therefore, a potentially very useful micro–macro policy and practice complementarity, where a spatial focus on localized encounters through IC (see *National identity* and *Dialogue* sections) can be pursued in the context of a supportive macro policy setting and national narratives often contained within MC. Similarly, while IC might seek a more pronounced emphasis on transformative change at the interpersonal level, these are unlikely to be achieved without the more macro level emphasis on justice and recognition that are the hallmarks of MC.

The Australian empirical evidence reported in this study, as well as the described IC initiatives, show that the calls to use IC as a substitute for MC is both intellectually and practically counter-productive. This paper argues that the contestation and outright rejection of either of these two pro-diversity approaches can be further exploited by xenophobic, anti-diversity and anti-migration parties, including right-wing politicians, tabloid media and a rising extremist white-supremacist camp. This latter group was exemplified most horrifically in the terrorist attacks against two Christchurch mosques in New Zealand on 15 March 2019, where at least fifty people were killed and another fifty injured. There is, therefore, an urgent need for an intellectual rapprochement between MC and IC, which we have referred to in this paper as *phase four* engagement. The intellectual foundations for this rapprochement lie in the fact MC and IC serve different but non-competing social inclusion purposes (Young 2000) so they can be complementary, where IC is *additive rather than substitutive* of MC.

We are aware, however, that this complementarity still raises a series of questions: is there a division of labour because of a division of territory/spatiality? Or is it that we think IC is doing at the micro what MC is doing at the macro? There is a possibility that MC and IC are attempting to do two different things, so this too requires exploration – a dialogue and mutual learning between MC and IC (Modood 2017a). There should not be the assumption that a macro and micro differentiation equates to the perfect complementarity, rather, there may be some tension between what is trying to be done at the micro and the macro, for example, in relation to

certain cultural and religious claims that can be articulated at once at individual and group levels. Finally, if we take seriously the tensions associated with a movement towards constructive synthesis, perhaps we need to ask ourselves: if MC is to take IC seriously, as an additive value at the micro level, in what way should MC be revised at a macro level to do full intellectual justice and complementarity to IC at a micro level?

Notes

1. We may also want to speak of social equality as well as liberal equality. The multiculturalist point would be the same, namely that just as the liberal concept of non-discrimination needs to be extended to include respect for difference, so similarly concepts of social equality are in need of the same extension.
2. In practice, religious groups were sometimes at the centre of multicultural accommodation and multicultural education. This is true, for example, of Sikhs in UK law (Modood 2019a, chp 2) as well as more broadly in Australia (Levey 2017a).
3. It seems that social psychological research may also support the idea of complementarity (Verkuyten et al. 2019, 12). But as the component features of “multiculturalism” that psychologists use as a basis for research derives not from theorists of multiculturalism but from critics (Verkuyten and Yogeeswaran 2019 and Verkuyten et al. 2019) it is not clear how relevant such research is to the discussion here.

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