Is There a Post-Multiculturalism?

William Bradley
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Today’s globalised world has witnessed astonishing political and economic growth in the regions of Asia and Africa. Such progress has been accompanied, however, with a high frequency of various types of conflicts and disputes. The Afrasian Research Centre aims to build on the achievements of its predecessor, the Afrasian Centre for Peace and Development Studies (ACPDS), by applying its great tradition of research towards Asia with the goal of building a new foundation for interdisciplinary research into multicultural societies in the fields of Immigration Studies, International Relations and Communication Theory. In addition, we seek to clarify the processes through which conflicts are resolved, reconciliation is achieved and multicultural societies are established. Building on the expertise and networks that have been accumulated in Ryukoku University in the past (listed below), we will organise research projects to tackle new and emerging issues in the age of globalisation. We aim to disseminate the results of our research internationally, through academic publications and engagement in public discourse.

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Introduction

For the past several years, a narrative about the end of multiculturalism has been prevalent in both academic discussions and the media, as well as in the social imaginaries, of many countries of Western Europe, North America, and Australia. These countries have the highest percentages of immigrants worldwide and are known for adopting multicultural policies, and include Canada and Australia, as well as the U.S. and European countries with many immigrants such as Britain, the Netherlands, and Germany.

In this paper, I will examine how this narrative or discourse about the end of multiculturalism (also referred to as post-multiculturalism) has become predominant and examine some of the suggestions for what comes after multiculturalism. In order to do so, I will have to leave aside much of the discussion of particular instances of actually existing multicultural societies and policies (subject to domestic conditions and issues of given countries), as well as the history of the development of the concept and policies, first in Canada and Australia, and later in other Western European countries and the U.S., in favor of a general discussion that will necessarily gloss over the fine detail of specific policy trajectories, problems, and innovations in given regions and countries. Even at the general level of theoretical variances, it should be stated at the outset that there is no single multiculturalism, but instead multiple strands, levels, and circumscriptions (as in, this is multiculturalism, but that is not). In the second half of the paper, I will explore several alternatives to what comes after multiculturalism, specifically interculturalism and cosmopolitanism. Finally, I will conclude with a brief section on how the discussion of the current state of and prospects for multiculturalism relates to education and research from the perspective of the field of comparative education.

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1 I put “after” in italics here to call attention to another possibility that there may be, in contradistinction, not an “after” but simply an accretion to older and existing ideas and theories.
1. The End of Multiculturalism

While definitional statements and critical reflections on what is multiculturalism continue to be written (Murphy 2012; also Modood 2007, recently re-published in a 2nd edition), some authors at least have decided that it is a thing of the past. Mishra (2012), in *What Was Multiculturalism?*, argues that multiculturalism has always been a policy of the past, in the sense that it could be viewed as a “structure of control” for managing minorities without changing the identities of the majoritarian (usually “white”) “unified selves of the ‘managers’” (2012, 37). Theoreticians and others who are aligned most closely with multicultural politics among the majority in any society assume a “marginalist perspective” to sympathize with the “others” in their society without having to share their alienation. In contrast, “a nation’s dominant community … is never part of the multicultural mosaic; everyone else is” (2012, 28-29). Mishra also suggests that the incommensurability of the universality of rights rubs up against the problems of what he and others refer to as the politics of redistribution. In other words, there is an inherent insoluble problem in terms of recognition versus the political and economic policies that can be promoted to enhance and facilitate justice. Either recognition is seen as sufficient in itself, in place of solving other pressing problems, or even worse, it leads to a backlash among the majority and other communities who do not feel they gain from such a form of politics.

These concerns were articulated in different, and politically opportunistic, ways within four months of each other at the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, when the prime ministers and the president of Europe’s three most powerful countries declared multiculturalism a failure. Angela Merkel stated that multiculturalism in Germany had “failed utterly,” David Cameron argued that in Britain “the doctrine of state multiculturalism” had failed to give “a vision of society,” and Nikolas Sarkozy said that France had been “too concerned with the identity of the person arriving and not enough with the identity of the country receiving” them. Such sentiments among politicians were not novel, as past prime ministers of Spain and Australia, Jose Aznar and John Howard, had also made similar comments. However, it is clear that they articulate a mainstream view in Europe (and beyond), that multiculturalism as a state policy (or set of policies) has run its course. That the attacks came from politicians known as conservative in their respective countries is also not surprising as the discourse on the failure of multiculturalism among conservatives has a long trajectory, intersecting with and growing out of seminal mediated “events” such as the Salman Rushdie fatwa backlash, beginning in 1989, and the Danish cartoon crisis of 2005. This does not even begin to account for the visceral hate-mongering and populist appeals to nationalism among the militant Right, “Eurabia-mongers,” in the phrase of Pankaj Mishra (2009). Melanie Phillips’ *Londonistan*, a scathing polemic against immigration in Britain, is a good example.

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2 See Gilroy (2012) for an extended analysis of the theme of “values” codifying majoritarian rule in Cameron’s speech.
Multiculturalism has become the driving force of British life, ruthlessly policed by a state-financed army of local and national bureaucracies enforcing a doctrine of state-mandated virtue to promote racial, ethnic, and cultural difference and stamp out majority values. Institutions have been instructed to teach themselves that they are intrinsically racist and to reprogram their minds in nonjudgmentalism (Phillips 2006, 61).

However, as numerous critiques have shown, multiculturalism has been under continuous attack not only from scholars and politicians who can be classified as conservative. It has been increasingly attacked by liberal and radical critics as well (Kundnani 2012; Murphy 2012). While such critiques are also not new (Nieto, 1995, identified a “backlash and a frontlash” against multiculturalism almost two decades ago), they have increased over time to the point that it is quite difficult to sustain an argument from any political perspective that multiculturalism is still a viable narrative for social harmony and peaceful co-existence in most parts of the world, notwithstanding despite the common phrase and title of a book by Glazer (1997), “We are all multiculturalists now.” It goes without saying that a comprehensive term such as multiculturalism has been diluted by the same tendencies that have acted on other terms such as modernity, globalization, community, and identity; as they are stretched to hold more meaning(s), they become so variegated as to nearly defy definition and description. While many have sought to outline the various versions of multiculturalism, from liberal to critical, a prime distinction needs to be made between multiculturalism as philosophy and policy (Murphy 2012, 4). Such philosophical variations are often encapsulated (not only, but at least conceptually and symbolically) by the use of an adjective to precede multiculturalism. Alongside the perhaps most well-known “liberal multiculturalism,” and the sardonic “multi-culti” (Hughes 1993), Vertovec (2010, 85) lists, among others, “difference multiculturalism,” “polycentric multiculturalism,” and “radical multiculturalism.”

Reducing philosophies to more concrete foci, Murphy (2012, 62) lists the following seven types of multicultural arguments: 1) liberal multiculturalism; 2) tolerationist multiculturalism; 3) the value of cultural diversity; 4) the politics of inclusion; 5) deliberative multiculturalism; 6) democratic multiculturalism; and 7) the politics of recognition. Many of these nuanced differences revolve around the “classic” liberal question of freedom versus the prevention of harm and address central political questions such as equality, accommodation of minorities, 

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3 Glazer (1997, 8) made the point that multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s was almost entirely focused on early adopters Canada and Australia, whereas by the mid-1990s, it included the U.S. (and Britain, Sweden and the Netherlands), as other countries that have been centrally involved in discussions of multicultural policies.

4 According to May and Sleeter (2010, 3), critical multiculturalism differs from the liberal varieties by systematically accounting for “structural inequalities, such as racism, institutionalized poverty and discrimination” in contrast to emphasizing liberal multiculturalism’s “politically muted discourses” of “culture and cultural recognition.”
and social cohesion (Murphy 2012, 7-9). Perhaps a single definition is impossible, but Vertovec (2010) lists the many areas of “institutional objectives” that have come to define multicultural policies.

These included providing opportunities for group representation to local and national government authorities; restructuring institutions towards pluralistic public service provision; putting in place measures to promote equality, respect, or tolerance, particularly among the dominant population towards minorities; and providing resources to support continuity of traditions and identities among immigrant groups (as opposed to assimilation) (Vertovec 2010, 84).

Many other typologies exist, but one more distinction is made by Kymlicka (2010), who argues that three patterns have emerged in Western democracies: 1) new forms of empowerment for indigenous peoples; 2) new forms of autonomy for sub-state national groups; and 3) new forms of citizenship for immigrants. Kymlicka, writing from a Canadian perspective, draws attention, for example, to the questions of Native Americans, Inuit, and Quebecois in the first two categories, noting that such groups exist in many other parts of the world (indigenous peoples in much of North and South America, Australia and New Zealand, and sub-state national groups in Spain, Belgium, and Britain, among others). However, this inclusion is not without controversy, as some suggest that moving beyond discussion of integration and inclusion of immigrants involves diluting the focus of multiculturalism (Joppke 2004). Similarly, Bouchard (2011, cited in Cantle 2011, 23) draws fine distinctions between the types of majorities and the types of minorities in given countries, contrasting in particular newer immigrant societies with those that have an older historically majority population (including many European countries). Mishra (2012, 53-54) goes as far as to argue that the gains made by indigenous and sub-state national groups have been much greater than those of immigrants under the rubric of multiculturalism, partly due to recognition of their “blood sacrifice” in the face of the historical hegemony of the dominant national group, as well as the international recognition they received from the U.N. and other organizations.

Many of the critiques of multiculturalism have asserted contradictions through conflations in multicultural theorizing. For example, Modood (2007, 119) points out five levels of what he refers to as “multi family resemblances,” that is, within multiculturalism there are differences that affect specific policies in specific spatial domains (place and time). These are: 1) differences between groups (as alluded to above, but this also can be extended to categories and groups of people such as gays and lesbians and people with disabilities); 2) the labeling is based on different types of attributes (such as race or religion); 3) not all groups act the same; 4) groups have different priorities; and 5) individuals within groups differ.
Others have noted problems in implementation, including for example that minorities suffer marginalization by being relegated to remediation by “multicultural” policy initiatives instead of being part of a more fundamental discussion of societal change (as noted above in Mishra’s discussion), or that there is a “misleading, tokenist and reifying view of communities as never-changing, socially bounded entities” (Vertovec 2010, 85).

The problem of culture is one that I address again below in proposing an anthropological focus that is necessary to move beyond the perceived impasse of multicultural theory and policy. However, it accounts for a substantial proportion of the critiques from academics, especially those considered to be progressives. Paul Gilroy’s Postcolonial Melancholia can be read as an extended discussion of the limitations of cultural multiculturalism, something that is easily transferred into a “market-driven pastiche of multiculturalism that is manipulated from above by commerce” (2005, 147). However, he is equally critical of the use by minorities (and majorities as well) of the cultural basis of identity as a “defensive measure… when they wrongly imagine that the hollow certainties of ‘race’ and ethnicity can provide a unique protection against various postmodern assaults on the coherence and integrity of the self” (2005, 6).

One of the strongest challenges to multiculturalism has come from defenders of women’s rights and feminists. While it may be tempting to reduce this argument to the perceived “problem” of minority Muslim women being hidden by veils, especially in Europe, it goes beyond this, in the form of a defense of immigrant women, who may suffer from lack of rights in their households and being controlled (and in some cases abused and killed) by male family members, fathers, brothers, and husbands. Phillips (2007, 2010) has written extensively on this topic, attempting to detach the “cultural” argument from critiques of multiculturalism. She argues that culture should not be used to either justify gender inequality or “demonize minority cultural groups” (2007, 2) as a whole. Phillips argues that “Instead of promoting a more defensible multiculturalism that addresses both the hierarchies of culture and the hierarchies of gender, the preoccupation with women’s rights often ends up justifying more restrictive immigration agendas and feeding stereotypes of minority groups. Real support for minority women remains a low priority” (2010, 3).

In another type of challenge to multicultural understanding, Muslim women, predominantly in France, seeking to wear the foulard (headscarves) have been the source of a “national drama” in which the motives of the women are seen to be purely religious, “ironically imprison[ing] them within the walls of patriarchal meaning from which they are trying to escape” (Benhabib 2008). The failings of multiculturalism as policy are thus used against immigrant groups in both a general sense (i.e., the theories and concepts have failed) and a

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5 This has mostly been a source of controversy in France, with the expulsion from school of three girls in 1989 and 23 girls in 1996; a similar case involving a teacher was litigated by the courts in Germany.
specific sense (see, we give them a chance but they don’t accept it and use it to join society). It comes as no surprise that even many immigrant groups have come to feel that multiculturalism does them no favors.

2. What Comes After Multiculturalism?

While there is common agreement that multiculturalism seems to be a finished project (though some would argue that there are counter examples in other parts of the world, including Japan), there is little agreement as to what should follow. As Kymlicka (2010, 97) puts it, “there is a surprising consensus that we are indeed in a post-multicultural era,” with near uniform disdain for the reductionism of multiculturalism to the “panoply of customs, traditions, music, and cuisine” (also known as the three Cs: customs, celebrations and cuisine, or the four Fs: folklore, food, fashion, and festivals). In the following sections, I review some of the more widely discussed alternatives: interculturalism and cosmopolitanism. Integration is also a notable alternative, but since this is arguably assimilation (for which multiculturalism was supposed to offer an improvement) in a new guise, I think it is not worth discussing at great length here, except possibly in a more general sense of the homogenization of globalizing culture, e.g., McDonaldization, or convergence of cultures.

The more conservative focus on overcoming cultural difference through reversion to already agreed upon societal norms too easily searches for a cohesion to multiculturalist policies, lumps them together as tested and failed, and “compels the corrective conditionalities of the post-multicultural era,” in Lentin and Titley’s (2012, 15) phrase. Such a position argues that it is not necessary, in fact it is impossible, to recognize equality of culture, and, besides, the recognition is always non-reciprocal (from the majority to the minority and not the other way, in this view) (Joppke 2004). This argument, in effect, conflates ideas advocated by some multicultural theories of epistemological anti-foundationalism with radical relativism, which is advocated by relatively few (Murphy 2012, 24). So what is it that follows multiculturalism, if a complete retreat to the state of affairs before the beginning of mass migration to Europe, Australia, and North America in the 1960s and 1970s is inconceivable? Before answering that question, I outline in the next section a few basic conditions of immigration in many multicultural societies in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

3. Multiculturalism on the Ground

Some scholars of multiculturalism, who now acknowledge the defensive role that multicultural theory must play in academic and popular discourses, simultaneously point out the irony of the widespread success of multicultural policies (Kymlicka 2010; Modood 2012;
Vertovec 2010). Thus, even as the leaders and mainstream media of many countries deem multicultural policies a failure, the policies, plans, implementation, and acceptance of multiculturalism in everyday life continues more or less as it did at its highpoint in the 1990s.

In a different way, multiculturalism has more traction because of the increased levels of diversity in many countries that have accepted immigrants. Vertovec (2010) has proposed the term “super-diversity” to describe twenty-first century immigration and ethnicities. Not only is immigration increasing, but the types of immigration and routes are changing and there is more frequent and short term movement, instead of permanent migration, which he claims leads to diasporic identification and transnationalism. In addition, families with multiple ethnicities, and individuals with multiple and hyphenated identities, are also increasing. While this gives more power to the notion that multiculturalism has “numbers,” it also challenges some facile assumptions about the culture in multiculturalism (as already referred to in some of the critiques above). Among those who have researched it extensively, there is disagreement on whether to “drop the M word” (Vertovec 2010), continue to use it while emphasizing the contexts in which it seems to work (Kymlicka 2010), continue to use it while sorting through its various complexities (Murphy 2012), or place it in a continuum of policies in local contexts, ranging from multicultural to cosmopolitan, and evaluate and continue to use them, or not, based on their effectiveness in the specific locales (Modood 2012). Before I examine cosmopolitanism, I first look in the next section at another proposed alternative, namely interculturalism.

4. Interculturalism

The push for the replacement of multiculturalism with interculturalism has come primarily from Quebec (but also in Europe to some extent), because of the dynamics of Canadian federalism and the drive first for independence and later for an “an open-ended, ongoing project of collectively defining the public culture” of Canada (Maxwell et al. 2012, 430). Basically, the argument made by intercultural advocates is that its emphasis lies more on the interactional aspect of relations that Quebec would like to foster with Anglophone Canada, rather than simply on acknowledgement and respect for diversity (Taylor 2012, 416). That is, interculturalism is more dialogical, as opposed to being organized as policy (or policies) from the top-down (or even bottom-up, one may presume).

However, its use is not just limited to Canada, and Meer and Modood’s (2012) exhaustive review of the critiques that it presents to multiculturalism (and their critique in turn), suggests that its advocates are committed to the centrality of communication, that it is more oriented toward a “synthesis” in society than a focus on groups, and that compared to multiculturalism

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7 Modood (2012, 19) estimates that in most of the largest cities in northwest Europe the population is 20-35 percent non-European; many cities in North America have large percentages of immigrant populations, with Toronto and Miami, for example, both around 50 percent.
it is less “illiberal and relativistic” and hence “more likely to lead to criticism of illiberal cultural practices” (177). Many of the responses to this lead article in a recent special journal issue share their skepticism that there is anything that much different about interculturalism aside from the name. Levey (2012) claims that both terms are “discursively fluid” and there is little to distinguish between various interpretations, noting at the same time however that a “soft claims” version may be more feasible than a “hard claims” version. This devolves to a matter of emphasis on mutually constituted dialogue, as discussed above.

Kymlicka uses the example of the 2008 “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue,” of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, to suggest that multiculturalism is now being offered as a “sacrificial lamb” to appease populist anti-immigrant political parties and their supporters. A more recent report, from 2011, also states explicitly that the Council of Europe sought “to avoid using this term [multiculturalism]” (cited in Cantle 2011, 16). In contrast, some of its strongest advocates argue that it is interculturalism’s ability to sidestep the protracted and irresolvable problems of multiculturalism's policies and politics, labeled as “identity politics,” that gives it hope for building understanding across differences that has long ago faded from the multicultural agenda. Interculturalism is a “dynamic” approach to identity beyond race, according to this argument: “Interculturalism is also about all types of ‘difference,’” whereas, multiculturalism was founded —and remained rooted— upon the outmoded concept of ‘race’ based on spurious notions of physical distinctiveness, or on other salient and contextualised differences, such as language or religion...” (Cantle 2011, 42)

Building on this approach, Cantle and other intercultural specialists offer training in “community cohesion” programs. While this critique from the center can be seen as another claim regarding the failure of multiculturalism, it is also clear that the most substantive argument given is that the majority of people (in Great Britain, at least) do not feel positively about multiculturalism and therefore need to be convinced by other means that programs and policies to support diversity are worth the time and money spent. Thus, while there is not a great difference between the two, interculturalism arguably offers a political strategy to retire the discredited terminology of multiculturalism, even if it retains the problem of “culturalism,” which is still not deconstructed and resolved in a satisfactory manner (Levey 2012, 223).

5. Cosmopolitanism

By far the biggest share of literature devoted to post-multiculturalism theorizing centers around the concept of cosmopolitanism. While I discuss a wide range of this material below, it is impossible in a paper of this length to fill in all the parameters and discuss the numerous problematics of the diverse theories of cosmopolitanism. As I will note at the conclusion of

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8 Cantle founded the Institute of Community Cohesion in 2005 and previously worked in city government politics, authoring a government report in 2001 after riots took place in Oldham, England, between Asians and Whites.
this section, there is a rising question as to whether cosmopolitanism should only be considered in relation to a progressive and liberal, or tolerant, political epistemology. Reactionary and extremist groups also have been able to organize transnationally by taking advantage of social networking tools and capabilities.

The history of cosmopolitanism has a long lineage that began in Greek philosophy, continuing on through Kantian ethics, and has now been revived in recent years (Hansen 2010; Held 2010; Rapport and Stade 2007). This had led more than one critic to call attention to the possible ethnocentrism of cosmopolitanism, referencing a phrase used in another context, “from Plato to NATO” (Gress 1998, cited in Nederveen Pieterse 2006, 1251). Kant is both held up as one who originated an anthropological science of humankind (Rapport and Stade 2007), but was also implicated in incipient racialist discourses of differences in mental capacities based on skin color (Gilroy 2005, 9).

Similar to how the previous discussion and critiques of multiculturalism focused on numerous domains and projects, cosmopolitanism can be anchored by three basic principles; they are the core concern on/for the whole of humanity (as opposed to delimitation at the local or national level), an entitlement to enter into the global community of discussion, and recognition of the right to participation in public deliberation (Held 2010, 15). Beyond that there are moral, political, and cultural cosmopolitanism, each with its own subset of foci. For example, Delanty (2006) proposes a critical cosmopolitanism that calls attention to self-problematization and pluralization (2006, 390) in an attempt to bridge ethical and cultural aspects. In other words, a focus on the world needs to also be able to trigger changes on the individual or local level. Various authors have also written descriptions of emancipatory cosmopolitanism (Nederveen Pieterse 2006), layered cosmopolitanism (Held 2010), cosmopolitanization (Beck 2006; Beck et al. 2013) and strategic cosmopolitanism (Mitchell 2003).

Highlighting what Nederveen Pieterse (2006, 1251-1252) has dubbed “the double life” of cosmopolitanism, which claims universality while springing from the “historical parochialism” of the West, caution is required when evaluating calls for a universal understanding. Reading Appiah’s (a Ghanian-born ethics professor at Princeton) account of cosmopolitanism (2006), one can’t help but wonder if attempts by “Western intellectuals” to reach out to the rest of the world are not inevitably bound up in re-inscribing the existing global hegemony of greater participation and flexibility for some (a majority of?) citizens of some (economically advanced?) countries while offering (only) a (marginal?) chance to the others of the world. Gilroy (2005) has critiqued this kind of cosmopolitanism as the imperial tendencies of the “civilized” world nagging at the rest of a “resentful and unappreciative world.” However, this tendency can be understood as going to even further extremes in the construction of a “new armored cosmopolitanism,” one that emerges in the “coalitional coming together of willing
national states oriented by the goal of enforcing a desiderata of peace, privatization, and market mechanisms on a global scale” (Gilroy 2005, 62-63).

In an analogous account of challenging Western political and sociological categories, Beck (2006) offers a detailed theorization, linked to his earlier work on risk society, of the need for a change in global conscience that will create more than a “banal” cosmopolitanism. His more recent work (Beck et al. 2013; Beck and Levy 2013) utilizes the terminology of “cosmopolitan communities of climate risk” to call attention to the work of human rights and climate research NGOs in creating “imagined communities,” often linked by internet and other media.

Central to understanding and evaluating such accounts is the insertion of situated experiential background, an anthropological account in short. Nederveen Pieterse (2006, 1254) comments that “cosmopolitanism as experience and action rather than general ethical standards… [means examining] history, diaspora histories, migrant experiences, grassroots transnational enterprise, multiethnicity.” Beck’s cosmopolitanism, despite its potential, is critiqued for being too dependent on subjectivity rather than objective differences that are structured by ethnicity, class, and gender, among other features. Some risk communities are under more political and economic stress than others. Hage (2012, 302), citing Bruno Latour’s critique of Beck, writes that such overgeneralized theorizing “[a]ssumes that the ‘cosmo’ part of cosmopolitanism is not an object of politics and as such forecloses the very possibility of a cosmo-politics… [in contrast] a conception of multiple realities opens up a possibility to perceive domination not only as the product of a struggle within a reality but also the struggle between realities.”

A comprehensive account of cosmopolitanism on multiple levels can be found in Held’s (2010) treatment of the subject from political, ethical, and institutional perspectives. Building on a conceptualization of the “unbundling” (Ruggie 1993, cited in Held 2010, 34) of complex political systems from direct control of national governments, he illustrates the multiplicity of actors involved in transnational political coordination, including NGOs, public agencies, and intergovernmental organizations and networks.

Perhaps one of the best measures of the use value of cosmopolitanism is whether it can genuinely foster solidarity beyond a local and national level, in a world so obviously in need of more global cooperation and shared understanding about the challenges facing humanity. Pensky (2007, 166) has written about intellectuals as world travelers, with their penchant for a “toxic admixture of idealism, self-righteous conviction, misplaced optimism, and a near complete incapacity for self-reflection.” He raises the question of whether “cool” cosmopolitanism is enough and, if not, whether “hot” (in terms of national and cultural belonging as a base for moving from the smaller and easily imaginable and defensible to the larger and more complex types of solidarity, as argued by, for example, Jurgen Habermas)
cosmopolitanism can avoid the elitism of the intellectual parodied above. Instead, he proposes a dialectic that avoids, hopefully, the limitations of both a mere “subjective bonding,” and a “functionalist account” of institutional dynamism.

Some argue, then, that it is necessary to include an account or emphasis of/on “everyday” cosmopolitanism, that which originates from the “bottom up” (Kurasawa 2004; Nava 2002). This is perhaps the clearest opening for both anthropology as a research method and educational tool for providing the vehicle for change and development of a wider cosmopolitan understanding in the world. I develop these ideas further in the following section. However, it is also important to note that a utopian recipe for building cosmopolitanism does not exist. Beck and Levy (2013, 23) argue that the “conflict-laden dialectic of cosmopolitanization enforces anti-cosmopolitanization –and vice versa.” Even more alarming than this potential battle of outcomes between positions for and against a global commons is the “reflexive transnationalization” of conservative and racist communities, such as those who communicated with and inspired Anders Breivik in Norway to carry out his attacks on multicultural youth groups (Andersson 2012). In this respect, it is considered necessary by some to hold on to local or non-global and “ethnic” understandings represented in, for example, ethnic studies in the U.S. (Davila 2012), a field which has been strongly committed to anti-racist understandings and education for decades. The challenge then is how to develop both at the same time, namely a rooted and non-elitist cosmopolitanism.

6. Toward an Anthrocospopolitics

Some of the most sustained critiques of both multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism have come from the discipline of anthropology (Hage 2012; Povinelli 2002). Part of the reason may be the historical mission of anthropologists to resist unifying culture in the name of abstract principles, and to stress the need for cultural relativism, albeit one that does not reduce the objects of study to simple targets in need of integration by projects of modernity.

In order to keep a critical perspective on the interface between multiculturalism as a theory and as a description of the super-diversity described above, and multiculturalism as a project that may still be pragmatic on the ground but is seen to be terminal, together with a cosmopolitanism which is idealist but is seen to offer a way toward channeling the necessity for a solidarity beyond borders, an attention to the details of everyday and localized identity formation is crucial. This can take place through the methodology of cosmopolitan anthropology (Rapport and Stade 2007) which investigates, without predisposition, the mixing and developing of creative identity building. Pries (2013) contrasts “substantial” spatial concepts (associated with more traditional types of stable identities) with “relational” spatial concepts in analyzing new forms of identity, such as global and transnational, arguing that it is the latter that are more compatible with the ideas of a global humanism. The Global
Citizens’ Initiative, described by Israel (2013), illustrates one recent networked attempt to create such a community of like-minded individuals linked by internet communications.

I would like to propose the term, “anthrocospomopolitics,” to account for the multiple dimensions of the challenges of incorporating the gains and understandings from multiculturalism, the ideals and principles of cosmopolitanism, the methodology of anthropology, and a political emphasis necessary to propel radical critique. Hage (2012) argues that the anthropological challenges of understanding dwelling in the world in a “completely different way” from the way we currently live there entails a paradox:

[t]hat we can be radically other than we what we are. It is paradoxical because in the very idea of ‘we can be’ other that what we are lies the idea that ‘we already are’ other than ourselves. Our otherness is always dwelling within us: there is always more to us than we think, so to speak (Hage 2012, 289).

In short, a politics based on the global identity-building of a common humanity is what I suggest by using the term “anthrocospomopolitics.” Whether use of this language can escape the simultaneous traps of liberal and imperial projects of power relations, elitist idealism, misplaced optimism, and a lack of reflexivity (as parodied above), are questions that remain to be examined through ethnographic research and theorizing through and in educational settings. According to Delanty (2006, 390), “without a learning process, that is an internal cognitive transformation, it makes little sense in calling something cosmopolitan.”

7. The Place of Education

Returning now to the problems of everyday life, it is critical to reflect on what the above discussion might have to say to particular sites of learning, teaching, and research. While I do not intend to privilege educational settings above many others (e.g., workplaces, families, voluntary associations), I have in mind the strong possibilities for development, transformation, and change that can take place through education (though more often than not, this isn’t the case).

In the face of the widespread cynicism of many people in the world regarding the current impasses in national politics, international relations, and power politics, is it possible to appeal to ideals of multicultural understanding by utilizing an anthropology of cosmopolitics? What would such a global study of human practice look like in the contexts of formal institutions of schooling and universities? In what ways could it be mobilized to create more ethically human structures of education and research? Drawing on Held’s (2010, 69) eight criteria of cosmopolitan action (or principles, in his phrasing), could we describe what implications this would have for a comparative and international education? At the least, does
it lead to more focus on “active agency” (principle 2) and “personal responsibility” (principle 3)? Is it connected to “building sustainability” (principle 8)?

Many teachers and academics have long been involved in this work, even if it was not specifically referred to as cosmopolitanism. Teaching in such fields as global studies, peace studies, anti-racism, environmental studies, and critical international relations, all have long histories that I will not try to link with here. However, it is also true that much of this teaching and learning takes place with less than a formalized theoretical background and explanation to students. While the challenges of theory can never be dismissed glibly (lest the counter charge of jargon be possible to sustain), it is also valuable for educators at many levels of schooling, including universities, to make explicit connections that will help sustain their work and build support for their efforts. Ho (2011) has presented one model of teaching through multiculturalism that attempts to understand the typologies of schools (private to public, and their ethnic compositions) in Sydney, Australia, as well as the interactions that develop everyday cosmopolitan understandings between children of different ethnic backgrounds. In this respect, she refers to schools as “micropublics.”

Looking more closely at the research methodologies and theories of comparative education, it is obvious that a sustained debate is taking place regarding models based on ideas derived from theories of world systems, world cultures, and world societies. While space limitations preclude an extended discussion here, I would point to work that challenges the assumed ability to read off large-scale global change and explain regional variation as a subset of the global (Schwinn 2012). One cannot posit a uniform globalization in this conceptualization, just as a uniform cosmopolitanism detached from a base (i.e., from below, anthropologically and dialectically) is plagued with contradictions. While it is clear that we may lose sight of the “cosmo” part of the equation by too much focus on local interactions (local meaning “particular people who have the possibility of interacting regularly in particular places;” Anderson-Levitt 2012, 442), we can also point out that, through culture instantiated in these local contexts, the larger meanings of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism become clearer and more substantive. As Mitchell (2003, 399) writes, “multiculturalism, as an educational philosophy, has begun to move to a more strategic form of utilizing culture for economic purposes, and away from a sense of individual fulfillment and the necessity of forming bonds of social and national cohesion... [and replaced by] individual patriotism and strategic entrepreneurialism.”

This is why a discussion and practice based on cosmopolitanism in education and research is more critical than ever in order to avoid a detached cosmopolitan class of individuals living among the well-off, in the rich (but also increasingly including BRICS and others) countries of the world, sardonic about the passing of multiculturalism. “Cosmopolitan governmentality” in education, as Sobe (2012) terms it, can move in many directions, allowing learning which opens the door to understanding varied relationships between self, other, and the world, or
instilling a deeper logic of self-oriented survivalism in a supposed post-racial sociality, which
through subterfuge and ambiguity allows for “emergent forms of raciology more consistent
with agentic, individuating, rights-based approaches to difference and diversity that
characterize neo-liberal dogma” (Gilroy 2012, 381).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have reviewed some of the claims as to why the world has entered a period of
post-multiculturalism. While evidence of the existing multiculturalism on the ground allows
us a certain comfort in assuming that gains accomplished through and in multicultural
understanding across many societies have continued, if only incrementally, into the present,
despite the periodic crises over headscarves, minarets, media provocations, “multiculturalism-has-failed” declarations, and backlash, nonetheless the façade of
multicultural policy-making seems to have reached a limit in terms of its acceptability under
the name of multiculturalism. As intimated above, the change in name to interculturalism or
cosmopolitanism may challenge understanding of the problems of living in one (local) world
from new perspectives, but it probably doesn’t mean the contradictions and disputes raised by
multicultural society will disappear, nor will the need to transcend them allow us to return to
a simple concept of multiculturalism and nothing more or less.

On the contrary, crises in understanding differences ascribed to overarching discrete cultures,
as well as global culture, are likely to be a signal of the vulnerability of the global political
order in which the rich and the poor “live virtually and actually in ever greater proximity in a
world of extreme and intimately lived inequality, deprived of strong legitimating discourses”

Multiculturalism in local contexts and cosmopolitanism from below are real possibilities in
places that we might not readily expect to find them. While this paper has discussed
multiculturalism at the macro level of the theoretical, and sought to take account of the
current globalized trends in understanding both its embeddedness in everyday lives and its
failure as a continued transcendental project, I would caution, as others have, that its own
successes have led it to be increasingly taken for granted, for both better and worse. Simply
to say that we now live in a post-multicultural world does little to help improve the conditions
of struggle for recognition and rights that continue where minorities seek to build their lives
in the face of resistance by majorities that are either unconcerned, or led to believe by politics
and media that multiculturalism has not contributed much of value to their societies, and has
as a result “failed.”

Optimism in the face of the daily assault on attempts to create a more just and less
hierarchical and balkanized global future, motivated by the greed of global elites utilizing
economic, political and social disorder to appeal for less government and regulation and more
privatization, is not called for; however, aspiring to a cosmopolitics that draws on understanding of the human condition, as patterned universally but experienced individually, locally, and contextually, can be a resource for creating a solidarity based on cosmopolitan post-multicultural education and is worth articulating and crafting as a vision. Struggle and critique on the one hand, and vision and policy-building on the other, are not, in the end, incompatible. However, the warnings of authors like Mishra (2012), who assert the need to consider multiculturalism as something that addressed the legacies of colonial and imperialist pasts, frame the challenge of creating transnational identities as resources against the anger and fear that also exist in discussion of globalizing outcomes as urgent work for educators and ordinary citizens alike. In this sense, a post-multiculturalism is not a rejection of multiculturalism as much as it is a recognition that renewed energies are needed to create a global understanding of diversity across multiple contexts and locales that can be an asset, and not simply a set of problems in need of better management.
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