

THE DEMANDINGNESS OF MULTICULTURALISM AND ITS FUTURE DISCOURSE

WHY ACCEPTING OTHER CULTURES IS OF HIGH NECESSITY, BUT
SIMULTANEOUSLY HIGHLY DEMANDING FOR CURRENT CITIZENS

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Abstract: In this paper, I argue that multiculturalism, although its political and public support is steadily decreasing, is still the most promising approach to handle contemporary migration challenges. However, to fulfil its full potential, I will firstly address the demandingness of multiculturalism for current citizens, and following on that, I will argue for a more two-sided approach of multiculturalism in which both newcomers and current citizens are involved. By going back to its original framework of equality and human rights, I believe that multiculturalism has the capacity to regain public support for allowing diversity in society. Within this renewed concept of multiculturalism, refugees do not have to be abandoned in camps or at sea, and current citizens are not left to fend for themselves in dealing with cultural differences.

Introduction

Contemporary liberal societies often operate on the idea that all citizens ought to be treated equally. This endeavour is mainly based on liberal egalitarianism, which has been emboldened by John Rawls's famous book *A Theory of Justice* (1971). In here, Rawls stated that a society ought to be equal by default and that all people need to receive equal opportunities, but that inequalities are allowed to arise as long as they are to the advantage of the least well-off in society (Gaus, Courtland and Schmitz 2018). Even though a certain level of inequality is approved of within this approach, the underlying idea is the same as for strict egalitarianism: equal respect for all persons (Lamont and Favor 2017). However, while stressing the importance of equality, in reality, this equality is often only considered from a basic social, political, cultural and economic perspective. This viewpoint tends to generalize the collective of citizens, ignoring the aspects that are not included in the category of being a citizen, such as religion, class, race and sex. Such a generalization might lead to a so called 'melting pot' society, in which minority groups are expected to fully assimilate into the dominant culture. Within such an approach, people are expected to leave their own cultural distinction and integrity behind, as they rather need to assimilate and thereby abandon their own values and heritage in order to blend in (Eagan 2015). Still, from most liberal perspectives, diversity is considered a fact rather than a value. Politics only differentiate in their idea of how (un)limited this diversity ought to be, ranging from not accepting any of the aspects of different cultures to unlimited toleration for various minorities and cultures (Baubock 2000). The latter type of approach leads us to the main subject of this paper: the concept of a multicultural society.

The successes and failures of multiculturalism

In contrast to a melting pot society, a multicultural society is a place where both marginalized groups as well as migrant groups are allowed to maintain their own cultural identity. More specifically, the term 'multicultural' tries to comprehend the level of (cultural) diversity within a certain society. Following on this, the general concept of multiculturalism aims to answer the question of "how to understand and respond to the challenges associated with cultural and religious diversity", and consists of the belief that the dominant political culture should acknowledge the strengths of a society's various cultures, races and ethnicities, and especially those of minority groups. At the same time, while allowing cultural differences, multiculturalism aims for the inclusion of the different views and convictions of all diverse members of a society. It is important to distinguish the latter from the goal of a 'melting pot' society, where politicians predominantly aim to *merge* the minorities into the *majority* of a state, rather than *adding* and *allowing* diverse cultures within the mainstream culture (Song 2016) (Eagan 2015).

From a political viewpoint, multiculturalism relates closely to 'identity politics'. This political approach aims to demarginalize minorities by recognizing their cultural identity, and while doing so, its objective does not only cover culture, but also includes language, ethnicity, nationality and other identity-related aspects. Whereas this has much in common with multiculturalism, the distinction between identity politics and multiculturalism is that the former focusses on shared identities, while the latter puts emphasis on a specifically shared culture. Yet, they both strive for the recognition of minorities and the abolishment of inequalities that may have been left over from the past (Eagan 2015). This makes them both strongly interconnected on an ethical level, but also from a historical perspective, which we can clearly see when we look at the first emergence of identity politics. Although the term 'identity' was quite rare before the 1950's, the end of World War II opened the door for identity politics and the related ideal of a multicultural society. After many years of aiming at a homogeneous and unitary nationhood, with Nazi Germany as the most infamous example, the world now turned against ideologies that promoted racially biased immigration and citizenship policies. This process started with the decolonization of many Western colonies around the world, and continued within Western societies with the struggle against racial discrimination and segregation in the period from 1955 to 1965. With the rise of social movements in the 1960's, emphasis was now put on the identities of various minorities - mostly race and gender-based. These movements were all based on the idea of equality for all races and peoples, and human rights and democratic beliefs were used as the methodological framework to provide the arguments for such equality. With this development, the groundwork of liberal-democratic citizenship was born, which entails a shift from vertical hierarchical relationships to horizontal relations between different groups. Rather than oppressing diversity and trying to force a generalized form of citizenship for all members of society, it was now widely accepted that minority groups could keep their own cultural and political background. Not long after, this development would lead to the idea of multiculturalism as a comprehensive umbrella term for the claims of a wide range of marginalized groups (Kymlicka 2012) (Song 2016) (Moran 2018). Despite the fact that famous philosopher Richard Rorty was quite critical towards identity politics, he stated that such progressive and leftist ideas had great success in decreasing anti-black, anti-woman and anti-homosexual sentiment (Rorty 1997).

Where in the first period of multiculturalism the main focus was for instance put on African Americans, LGBT people, women and other marginalized groups, it underwent a paradigm shift to the cultures and identities of migrants who were part of religious and ethnic minorities (Song 2016). Multiculturalism now turned into a debate about coping with

'migration-based ethnicity', which specifically focussed on the socio-economic marginalization of migrants. Within this debate, multiculturalism not only changed its focus, but often also took a different shape. For instance, in the Netherlands, the arrival of many migrant workers during the mid-1950's and 1960's led to an official national policy of multiculturalism in the early 1980's. Within this policy, multiculturalism was not used to put emphasis on integration and supporting marginalized migrant groups, but rather on assimilation and stimulating remigration. It was believed that it was impossible for Muslim migrants (who were the majority of these newcomers) to assimilate quickly, and as soon as the demand for foreign workers would decrease, the migrant workers were expected to go back to their home country. However, they did not return, and the Netherlands now had to deal with many different migrant groups who were not stimulated to integrate into Dutch society (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010). Around the 1990's, because of reasons such as this example from the Netherlands, the migration debate turned into what many have called 'the backlash of multiculturalism'. The Netherlands were not the only one having issues with migrant groups, and critique on multiculturalism in the context of migration was often based on three arguments. Firstly, old policies encompassed a limited number of 'clearly demarcated ethnic minorities', while the number of source countries of migrants was vastly growing. Thus, it was claimed that the policies were not matching with the wide range of migrant groups that were arriving in Europe. Secondly, it was often believed that emancipating minority migrant groups through their own institutions had only enforced their separation and segregation. Lastly, and related to the previous point, the multiculturalism policies that tried to tackle marginalization of migrants were considered not to have been successful.

Following the critique on multiculturalism, an alternative to such 'failed' multiculturalism was proposed in the form of civic integration, which brings us back to the concept of a melting pot society. Civic integration policies considered every migrant as an individual who needed to assimilate into society, instead of being treated as a member of a separate group within society. Part of this new approach included higher integration standards, as migrants now needed to integrate as quickly as possible by learning the language, making use of host-country facilities and adhering to other more demanding requirements to be allowed to stay (Joppke 2004).

Multiculturalism in contemporary times of massive migration

The previously described retreat from multiculturalism is currently being enforced by new massive migration waves that have arrived in Europe over the past few years. Where in the 1990's the 'fall' of multiculturalism was also influenced by fears that diversity had gone too far and was threatening the basic values of Western societies, current migration flows have given room for a significant growth of populist right-wing parties who continue to 'defend' traditional Western values. With this, they do not only argue for policies that force migrants to assimilate, but they even aim to prevent them from entering Western societies at all. Such extreme measures are often grounded in the assumption that multiculturalism would allow illiberal values to enter Western societies, as it is believed that many migrant groups would prefer their own fundamental values if they are not forced to integrate more thoroughly (Kymlicka 2012). It can therefore be argued that the failures of multiculturalism – whether they are to blame to multiculturalism per se or its incorrect interpretation – are now leading to a much more restrained approach of Western societies towards accepting migrants. As a result of this shift, an increasing number of refugees is now living in dreadful conditions in Greek, Italian and Turkish refugee camps, as they are not allowed to enter European states (Amnesty 2016). The same developments we can also see in other parts of the world, as for instance the United States continues with extending the wall that

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separates the US from its neighbouring country Mexico, preventing more and more migrants from entering, which leads to similar dehumanizing situations at the border (The Guardian 2018) (ABC News 2017). Is multiculturalism to blame for this new approach? Should we instead aim for a melting pot society that is closed for all of those who cannot adequately assimilate? Before going into the reasons why I think that the original idea of multiculturalism is not to blame for this and should *not* be abandoned, I will first consider some overarching moral reasons for accepting migrants, and specifically refugees, in the first place. After all, if all migrants would be stopped at the border, one would not need methods that could manage the arrival of many diverse groups of people.

Much of contemporary (political) philosophy claims that Western societies have a positive duty to provide care to those who are globally the least well-off, partly because of the way globalisation is connecting different societies all over the world. Hence, people who are facing situations of war, poverty and prosecution should be offered help, protection or shelter to increase their well-being. Following on this, it could be argued that the 22 million refugees and asylum seekers worldwide, who are often stateless, fleeing from deprivation and/or live in very bad circumstances (IOM 2018), are part of this group of least well-off people. When accepting this, Western societies would need to provide shelter for these people who are moving away from the misery in their home country. A strong case for this claim has been made by Joseph Carens, who used three fundamentally different philosophical perspectives – a Nozickian, a Rawlsian and a Utilitarian view - to show that it is unjust to restrict migration and close borders. Firstly, Carens argues that Robert Nozick's explicitly says that the land of a nation is not the collective property of its citizens, which would mean that the state does not have a legitimate reason to limit a state's property to its own citizens simply because they are born there. Secondly, if one would select the migration opportunities in an ideal society under Rawls's 'veil of ignorance', one would never choose for a society in which migration is limited. After all, when one would not know in which society one would be born, one would take the perspective of those who would be most disadvantaged by migration restrictions: the alien who wants to migrate. Lastly, while from an utilitarian perspective one might argue that migration should be limited to prevent the loss of economic utility of some citizens, the overall utility gain is still larger, as the economic gains of migration for other citizens and the migrants themselves should also be included in the calculation of maximum utility (Carens 1987).

It is important to highlight that my reference to Carens's arguments does not have the objective of arguing for completely open borders. However, it does give sufficient reasons to *at least* offer shelter for people fleeing from war, poverty and prosecution. In accepting this, receiving countries must adapt certain policies that can manage the integration processes for the arrival of migrants, as closing the borders is an invalid option from a moral perspective. We now have the choice of what sort of approach should be used, and looking at contemporary politics, it seems that multiculturalism is fading away as one of the options. Yet, even though multiculturalism is losing mass support from both politics and the public, it does not mean that the whole concept of multiculturalism has failed and should be ruled out as a serious solution to challenges of migration. As Will Kymlicka has argued, current critique on multiculturalism "simplifies ethnic differences" and "unjustly blames multiculturalism for global capitalism". Moreover, such critique ignores the original multiculturalist objectives which entailed much more "complex sources and political goals" - those we have already discovered earlier in this paper -, which mainly focussed on pure and fair equality among members of a society. These goals still carry the underlying liberal, human rights-focussed and democratic framework which multiculturalism was built on from the beginning. Simultaneously, the original idea of multiculturalism

continues to put strong emphasis on “building fairer and more inclusive democratic societies” and thereby fighting against previous unfair hierarchic relations that promoted exclusion. Where one might see multiculturalism as the allowance of specific cultural values that are deemed to be incompatible with liberal values, multiculturalism is much more about overcoming political and economic inequality. Moreover, and seen from a larger perspective, multiculturalism itself is a specific culture with its own language - “the language of human rights, civil-rights liberalism and democratic constitutionalism”, and precisely therefore it does the opposite of allowing illiberal values from minorities (Kymlicka 2012).

Not only Kymlicka continues to see a future for multiculturalism; other scholars and opinion makers also accept the potential that multiculturalism can offer to contemporary societies. Tariq Modood, professor of Sociology at the University of Bristol, has stated that multiculturalism is not only “most timely and necessary”, but also the best approach to match with the ideals of egalitarianism. He specifically stresses the urgency to continue with a multiculturalism approach in order to accommodate Muslims in Western countries, while still being sufficiently strong to provide social cohesion. There are many diverse groups in society, and instead of denying this fact and forcing civic integration, the aim should be to develop positive group identities. Moreover, while accepting diversity, there should also be a shared concept of citizenship that allows a “continual remaking of national identity”. Where many think that multiculturalism is only about emphasising separatism and difference, it rather is about “creating a new, ongoing ‘we’ out of all the little, medium-sized and large platoons” that exist within a state (Modood 2007) (Modood 2011). Something similar has been argued by political theorist Bhikhu Parekh, who argues against the segregation critique on multiculturalism by stating that the philosophy of multiculturalism is not about “putting people into ethnic boxes”, but rather an approach in which various cultures “borrow” bits of other cultures and then merge them together. For this, multiculturalism requires individuals to “open themselves up to the influence of others and engage in a reflective and sometimes life enhancing dialogue with others” (Parekh 2005). This brings us back to one of the earlier discussed definitions of multiculturalism, which states that multiculturalism aims for the inclusion of the different views and beliefs of the diverse members within a society (Eagan 2015).

Thus, while multiculturalism seem to be pushed away, there are strong arguments to bring new life to its philosophy of equality and strong commitment to human rights. However, even though there are strong ethical arguments to continue with the project of multiculturalism and its related pro-immigration view, I see a different issue that needs urgent attention if we want to keep multiculturalism alive. This challenge is found in an earlier mentioned requirement for multiculturalism: to make multiculturalism successful, individuals should be able to “open themselves up to the influence of others and engage in a reflective and sometimes life enhancing dialogue with others” (Parekh 2005). This ability leads us to the next part of this paper: intercultural skills.

Multiculturalism on an individual level: Intercultural Skills

In the first part of this paper I have discussed how multiculturalism has come into existence and how it has developed during the last decennia. I have also argued why we should not give up on its original idea and how it can still be a strong method to support diverse but equal societies. Following on this conclusion, multiculturalism can be used as an adequate tool to deal with the migration challenges of contemporary Western societies. However, so far, the analysis has mainly been focused on the macro level of politics, philosophy and sociology. Therefore, in the following

part of this paper, I will go deeper into the micro-level: how does multiculturalism work for individual citizens within a nation, and what does it require from them?

Already in 1962, American social psychologist Gardner asked the question if and how it is possible for an expert of one culture to communicate with persons from another culture. Gardner came up with a skillset that can still be seen as the basis for successful 'intercultural communication': stability, extroversion, integrity and socialisation in universal values (Gardner 1962). Before going deeper into more extensively developed frameworks of intercultural skills and how they can be used for effective communication between different cultures, I will first shortly consider the concept of communication in the general sense. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, communication is the "the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium" (Oxford Dictionary 2018). Within this exchange of information between two individuals, eight components are included: the sender, the message, the channel, the receiver, the response, the feedback, the environment and the (possible) noise. Without going into too much detail as most components can be considered self-evident, I will point out two components that are important to explain more deeply as they relate to what I will address later. Firstly, the receiver is – logically – the person who receives the message, but is also, more importantly, the component that gives meaning to the message by interpreting it in a certain way. Secondly, noise can be one of the biggest problems in communication. Noise can be the more obvious physical noise, but can also consist of psychological noise (the emotional state of the sender or receiver) or semantic noise (non-alignment of the language).

The eight components of communication are not all-inclusive, as there is one more important component that has significant influence on how messages are being send and received. *Culture* provides "a set of standards that govern how, when, what and even why we communicate". This relates to the more general definition of culture itself: "the rules for living and functioning in society", which differ per culture. Thus, one has to know and understand the rules to be able to function (and thus communicate) correctly within a certain society. These cultural rules are the framework of how one can give meaning to events, objects and people. While the rules of your own culture are relatively easily integrated into your own conscious and sub-conscious throughout the duration of your life, understanding and adjusting to the rules of different cultures is much more challenging (McDaniel, Samovar and Porter 2010). After all, if you do not know the rules of a certain card game, how can you interpret the cards of the game or use the cards to make progress in the game? Noise will soon interfere between you and the different game players. When transferring this example to intercultural exchange, questions like the following ones arise: how do you act in certain situations? What is appropriate or not appropriate to do? How do you effectively transfer the message you want the receiver to understand when cultural differences might cause noise? Without knowing the rules, this might be an impossible task. Thus, to handle such questions effectively, one would need to know the rules, or in other words, should have the accurate set of intercultural skills or competences. A recent, well-known model that tries to conceptualize such competences has been developed by Darla Deardorff. Based on her research, she claims that one would need to possess the following aspects for successful intercultural communication:

- Attitudes: respect, openness, curiosity and discovery
- Knowledge: cultural self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, deep cultural knowledge including understanding other world views and sociolinguistic awareness
- Skills: observation, listening, evaluating, analysing, interpreting, and relating

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When one would possess the ability to use all three aspects successfully, it would result in the following outcomes:

- Internal outcome (internal capabilities of the individual):
Flexibility, adaptability, an ethno-relative perspective and empathy
- External outcome (external capabilities of the individual):
The effective and appropriate behaviour and communication in intercultural situations (Deardorff 2006).

Comparable results were found in a literature study on the different approaches on intercultural communication, which pointed out four more generalized behavioural attitudes for successful intercultural communication: (I) being able to manage psychological stress, (II) being able to communicate effectively, (III) being able to take advantage of the interface between different cultures and the knowledge that comes from different cultural orientations and (IV) being able to manage change in a borderless environment (Pusch 2009). There are many more ideas of what effective intercultural communication requires, but especially Deardorff's model is considered a very clear and overarching model which includes many other studies.

Looking at the different frameworks of intercultural competence, we can conclude that the successful exchange of information between two or more individuals from different cultures does not only require solid communicational competences that reach further than 'regular' communication within the same culture, but also demands strong interpersonal and psychological competences. Another study on intercultural skills even concluded that successful intercultural communication requires more than 50 different skills (Spitzberg 2009). Following on this, it is not strange that many scholars and professionals consider it a fact that some individuals have a stronger ability than others to use such skillsets to communicate with other cultures (Rathje 2007). In fact, research has shown that *even* international students who lived in cultures very different from their own did not necessarily gain stronger intercultural skills. Although there is various research with different result outcomes, one factor seems to be very important for the development of intercultural competence: the duration to which students were exposed to another culture. For instance, a 2005 research paper found that students who participated in a 4-week study abroad experience did not significantly improve their level of intercultural sensitivity (Anderson, et al. 2005). A 2004 research study also found limited evidence that either a 7-week or a semester-long language program in Mexico by US students produced a gain in intercultural sensitivity (Portillo 2004). This is in line with research focussed on students' own perceptions, as they tend to rate their own cultural competences higher the more time they had spent abroad (Martin 1987). Consequently, research that focussed on students who stayed abroad for a longer time found clearer evidence of improved intercultural competence. For example, a different 2004 research paper showed that students participating in a semester-long programme abroad gained more intercultural sensitivity, and that students who did a year-long programme abroad showed even further development of intercultural competence (Engle and Engle 2004).

The abroad programmes on which these studies focussed on are part of a larger trend in education: the internationalisation of the curriculum. Globalisation is one of the main factors why universities put more and more emphasis on the development of international competence; partly through such programmes, and partly through stimulating and guiding the development of students' international skills at the universities themselves. The end-goal is to prepare students to be 'global citizens' in a globalized world (Leask 2015). This is the same course that many organisations have taken, where with the growth in global business, more attention is put on cross-cultural service

encounters (Sizoo, Iskat and Serrie 2005). In this sector as well, much research has been done on how employees can develop intercultural skills.

Thus, both in universities as in global organisations, many efforts are put in place to develop intercultural competences, and one thing has become clear from current research: it is not easy to do so, and it requires a lot of effort from the participant who is asked to develop their intercultural skills, even with training programmes, guidance and abroad experience. When we look back at the different frameworks that describe the many necessary conditions to be 'culturally competent', it makes sense that international students and professionals need to put a lot of effort and time into gaining sufficient intercultural competences. This leads me to the following part of this paper, where I will connect the micro level of intercultural skills with the challenges of multiculturalism.

The need for a two-sided approach of multiculturalism

Will Kymlicka argued that in an ideal situation, the macro- and micro level should work together to achieve a successful conception of citizenship. However, in the case of multiculturalism, a pressing question arises: *if* a multicultural state is accepted, *who* is responsible for such a multicultural state? A citizen might think that the state should adjust to match with the preferences of other cultures (i.e. creating new policies), but that she as a citizen does not have an obligation to become more intercultural herself (i.e. put effort in gaining more intercultural competence) (Kymlicka 2003). Yet, in many European states, it seems that the liberal and progressive political parties already have pushed through the ideal of a situation in which both the state as well as the citizen are comfortable in dealing with diversity. For instance, German Chancellor Angela Merkel started a far-fetched welcoming approach for refugees from the Middle-East and North-Africa with her "wir schaffen das", and other progressive European parties also offered large-scale reception for the people coming to Europe in search for a better future (BBC News 2018) (Connolly 2016).

Now, as I have shown earlier, there are strong ethical arguments for following such an approach. However, when considering Kymlicka's insistence on alignment between the micro- and macro level, it is much more difficult to justify the practical requirements from current citizens for such openness¹. After all, if Europe would follow Merkel's approach, European citizens would be forced to interact with migrants who most likely come from very different cultures. This would require a wide range of intercultural skills, but as we have seen earlier, obtaining such skills is a far from being an easy task. If it even remains challenging to gain intercultural skills for internationally orientated students and professionals who have the (financial) means to develop them, how could a politician ask a citizen who is not active in international curriculums or organisations to gain intercultural competence, and following on this, how can it be required from a citizen to accept the arrival of many new cultures which might be very difficult to deal with?

This is exactly the paradox that citizens face in contemporary liberal societies. On the one hand, from an ethical perspective, liberal states have strong obligations to open their borders for those who seek shelter from war, poverty and prosecution, and citizens can use such arguments to indeed accept Merkel's approach. On the other hand, citizens who are faced with the small to large differences between their own culture and the cultures of the newcomers, are - *despite* their possible agreement with the ethical arguments – more sceptical towards an approach that allows more newcomers arriving. While the progressive, leftist voters might see such an attitude as prove that the right-wing voters

¹ It is of course also very much challenging for newcomers; however, much literature has already been written about the challenges of integration. I will therefore not go into this in this paper.

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are racist and selfish by simply not wanting people to enter their communities - because migrants would steal jobs and take many social issues with them -, research shows that it rather is the "lacking familiarity and fear of conflict over values and culture" (Schneider 2008). Still, as shown before, many right-wing populist parties throughout Europe make use of such fears and scepticism, as they argue for closing borders and sending back people to their home countries, and with this political discourse they still gain more votes and influence (Mral and Wodak 2013). However, I have already mentioned the negative consequences of not accepting refugees at all, and concluding from that, such a discourse does not take human rights into account. And even if current right-wing/populist political parties do not object to immigration as a whole, they often fanatically argue for civic integration and 'shared citizenship'. While this discourse might still emphasize an inclusive national identity, it seems to favour assimilation over integration. As we have already seen in the beginning of this paper, this is also not a favourable approach of handling immigration, as it ignores the cultural heritage and strengths from the newcomers' own cultures.

Thus, from an ethical viewpoint, politics should argue against two extremes: (1) preventing immigration at all and (2) promoting a melting-pot society in which assimilation dominates. Both of these options cannot be justified from a liberal egalitarian perspective as it ignores the rights of the newcomers. However, multiculturalism in the shape it has taken from the 1980's onwards has also not been successful due to its lack of efforts to support integration of newcomers. As a result, some groups of newcomers did not integrate, nor assimilate, and thus became isolated from their new society, which consequently led to the backlash against multiculturalism. At the same time, during the ongoing 'refugee crisis', current citizens are often left to fend for themselves, as is clearly put forward by an NGO on the Greek island of Lesbos, where many refugees have arrived since the war in Syria started:

"Locals were overlooked. In neglecting their concerns, the seeds were sown for antipathy and intolerance towards refugees – sentiments exploited by an ascendant right and echoed across Europe by fear-mongering politicians. In the end what we saw on this island was an invasion of good intention [...] By only focusing on the refugees and not the local community who were just as much a part of the crisis, it created polarisation." (The Guardian 2018)

Therefore, a renewed approach of multiculturalism is needed. Not only does this approach need to focus on the interests of the newcomers by helping with their integration and accepting their culture, it should also focus on the needs and difficulties of *current* citizens. Instead of only managing immigration through macro-policies focussed on creating shelters for receiving refugees and financing integration projects, governments should simultaneously provide more opportunities for cultural exchange, cultural education in schools and integrational projects involving not only volunteers and NGO's, but also local people. Small NGO's such as the Dutch organisation Movement on the Ground or the Spanish association Open Cultural Center have already started such an approach, as they are trying to form small-scale inclusive communities with space for diversity that can lead to mutual advantages:

"On an island [Lesbos] with an unemployment rate of 25%, the Dutch group has employed ten locals, including teachers and sports coaches, who oversee computer classes, English classes and football training both for unaccompanied minors and the children of low-income locals" (The Guardian 2018).

Such an approach is also in line with current research, as it has been shown that more contact with migrants means more willingness to accept them (McLaren 2003). Consequently, more contact with new cultures can help to develop intercultural competence, and can thus create a snowball effect for both the integration *and* the acceptance of refugees. Hence, in this renewed approach of multiculturalism, the focus is on integration of the newcomers and simultaneously on supporting communication between the current citizens and the newcomers.

However, with this new approach to multiculturalism, challenges would still be present. For instance, some differences in core cultural values might be too crucial to overcome. One might have gained all the intercultural skills that were listed earlier, but one can still have fundamental issues with a niqab or a man not shaking a woman's hand. Yet, while such challenges need further investigation, I think it will already move the refugee debate substantially forward when more respect is shown for the demands, fears and doubts of current citizens and the underlying root causes. At the same time, at least *some* acceptance of such fundamental value differences might be achievable when the different groups possess a higher level of intercultural competence.

Another challenge is that *if* politics can be successful in arranging a more two-side approach of immigration and thus multiculturalism, there remains an important question posed by Kymlicka about the tension between interculturalism and tokenism (Kymlicka 2003). Which knowledge should one be seeking about other cultures: the more superficial different characteristics such as food, clothes and traditions, or the more fundamental cultural differences such as religion, world view or politics? Firstly, a possible answer can be found in the specific cultural competences described earlier, as desired outcomes of sufficient intercultural skills are more deepened internal and external interpersonal aspects. Because of this, people might be able to focus on both the superficial aspects as well as the fundamental issues that may separate cultures. Secondly, while early research on intercultural communication mainly focussed on student exchange or international aid programmes, more recent research is also aimed at migration issues (Rathje 2007). Such research can also help in finding answers to these challenges within the new approach to multiculturalism.

Conclusion

Although challenges remain, I have shown that it is of high urgency for national and international governments to work towards the renewed concept of multiculturalism that I have proposed in this paper. Within this approach, much attention should be given to both the newcomers as well as to the current citizens. When doing so, Western societies shall be able to regain public support for allowing diversity in society, and therefore do not have to abandon their principles regarding human rights by giving in to the fears of cultural differences. After all, when accepting diversity and thus refugees, newcomers do not have to be abandoned and possibly left to die, or forced to assimilate and let go of their own cultural background. I believe that only via this two-sided approach it is possible to fulfil the original ideals of multiculturalism, in which a truly shared concept of citizenship allows a "continual remaking of national identity" with a focus on "creating a new, ongoing 'we' out of all the little, medium-sized and large platoons" that exist within a state.

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