Problematizing the Conceptual Framework of Interculturalism and its Pedagogical Extension of Intercultural Education: Theoretical Perspectives and their Implications

Rina Manuela Contini [*] *and Cinzia Pica-Smith*[**]

Authors' information

[*] Department of Management & Business Administration, University of Chieti-Pescara, Italy.
[**] Department of Human Services and Rehabilitation Studies, Assumption College, Worcester, MA USA.

Contact authors' email addresses

[*] rm.contini@unich.it
[**] cpicasmith@assumption.edu

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Problematizing the Conceptual Framework of Interculturalism and its Pedagogical Extension of Intercultural Education: Theoretical Perspectives and their Implications

Rina Manuela Contini [*] *and Cinzia Pica-Smith*[**]

Abstract: A new intercultural framework for education is being developed as a pedagogical response to increasingly multi-ethnic societies in Europe. This framework has been gaining ground during the last decade within EU Institutions (Commission of the European Communities, European Commission, Council of Ministers, OECD, OSCE) and the Council of Europe Documents and replacing multiculturalism as the guiding framework. This shift has generated an ardent debate between multiculturalists and interculturalists. Indeed, there is much criticism of the interculturalist framework. This article positions itself within this current debate and offers a critical analysis of the conceptual mapping of interculturalism within which there are tensions, ambiguities, and often conflicting goals and strategies. In addition, this work highlights the problematic dynamics intrinsic in the theoretical framework of interculturalism as a political and philosophical framework as well as in its pedagogical manifestation in educational settings as intercultural education. We analyze this educational framework from a stance of sociology of education taking into account the institution of schooling as one that is contextualized in existing socio-political dynamics, narratives, and lived-realities.

[*] Department of Management & Business Administration, University of Chieti-Pescara, Italy. E-mail: rm.contini@unich.it

[**] Department of Human Services and Rehabilitation Studies, Assumption College, Worcester, MA, USA. E-mail: cpicasmith@assumption.edu

Back to the origins: multiculturalism as a political and philosophical approach

During the last decade, there has been an increasing shift toward interculturalism within EU Institutions such as the Commission of the European Communities, the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, OECD, and OSCE. In 2008, both the Council of Europe and UNESCO, which had historically been seen as standard-bearers for multiculturalism, declared the need to re-orient from multiculturalism to interculturalism. In both academic and public debates, one of the current trends is "to defend a new, innovative, realistic interculturalism against a tired, discredited, naïve multiculturalism" (Kymlicka, 2016, p. 158). This article positions itself within this salient debate between multiculturalists and interculturalists. In addition, we aim to go beyond the simple rhetoric of "unity in diversity" and its accompanying abstract platitudes to propose a critical analysis of the the "political rhetoric" that supports an intercultural theoretical framework. Moreover, we analyze and highlight interculturalism's intrinsic problematic dynamics from theoretical conceptualization to educational understanding and framework.

Before discussing interculturalism as a "response" to multiculturalism, we find it noteworthy to provide a contextualization of this new narrative. To do this, we begin with a discussion of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism affirmed itself as a political and philosophical approach in Western nations during the 1960s as these nations experienced both a rise of political movements by their historically marginalized and minoritized citizens as well as an increase in cultural diversity due to migration from previously-colonized nations (Parekh, 2016). Multiculturalism differentiated itself as an alternative to assimilationism and proposed the importance of affirming and valuing cultural diversity and the defense of historically marginalized groups (Taylor, 1994; Kymlicka, 1995, 2007). Moodod defines multiculturalism as "the recognition of group difference within the public sphere of laws, democratic discourses and the terms of a shared citizenship and national identity" (2007, p. 2). For Kymlicka (1995, 2007) the term "multiculturalism" points to a particular political approach to address culturally diverse societies in which the cultural practices of minority groups receive the same recognition and accommodation as those of the cultural practices of the dominant group. A multicultural approach demands a social commitment and respect for the

cultural needs of minority groups, which includes institutionalizing practices and policies that support minority groups in their continued practice of their cultural values and ways of being. Multiculturalism refutes the notion that cultural minority groups must abandon their beliefs, values, and cultural practices to assimilate themselves into the cultural practices of the dominant and majority group to be recognized.

The notion of "recognition" and representation is an important one so as to build a society in which minority groups are seen, understood, and valued on their own terms. Taylor (1994) recognizes the foundational role that the question of recognition assumes and proposes an analysis of the issue of recognition that stresses its legitimacy within the legal, political, ethical spheres of democratic liberalism. He connects recognition to issues of identity of individuals and groups as well as to the goals of multiculturalism. He contends that the demand for recognition is related to identity in the sense that "our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others" (Taylor, 1994, p. 25). Hence, he reinforces the role of institutional structures to recognize minority or non-dominant individuals and groups so that they make take up their rightful place in pluralistic societies without compromising or assimilating their authentic ways of being in order to participate in said society. Furthermore, he notes the detrimental consequences of institutional nonrecognition or misrecognition: "a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (Talylor, 1994, p. 25).

Hence, multiculturalists focus on the rights, needs, recognition and representations of minority groups within our increasingly demographically diverse societies. These foci are identified as important goals in and of themselves and within a larger process of integration into a newly re-imagined socially just and pluralistic society. From this orientation, then, without accentuating these needs, rights, and recognition, at the institutional level, we will not be reshaping our societies, but merely welcoming newcomers to assimilate into existing ones.

Interculturalism versus multiculturalism

Parekh (2016) asserts that because multiculturalism was born in reaction to aggressive assimilationism, it accents and coalesces on pro-minority and pro-diversity positions. According to the author (Parekh, 2016) the receiving society's response to cultural diversity should be guided by the three principles at the heart of liberal democracy: liberty, equality and unity. Minority groups, therefore, should not be subject to forced assimilation but free to choose their own ways of living within the host country and maintaining their cultural identities. Secondly, minority groups should expect equal treatment, respect for their cultural traditions, and be free of discrimination. Finally, the host society's stability and cohesion is connected to minority groups' integration and full participation.

Multiculturalism's focus on the legitimacy and rights of minority groups is at the root of the critiques of the framework, which has been blamed in academic, political, and public forums for everything from social fragmentation and "ghettoisation" of minority groups, to the cementing of social divisions, and even to the bold assumption that it leads some groups to terrorism. Because of this rhetoric, interculturalism has been gaining ground as an alternative to multiculturalism and is touted as a new way for countries to "deal" with "diversity dynamics". Throughout Europe interculturalism has become prominent as a distinct alternative (Cantle, 2012, p. 2), "a gain over multiculturalism" (Maxwell et al., 2012, p. 429), and a "lifeline" to deal with the perceived negative consequences of multiculturalism (Zapata-Barrero, 2016, 2011).

Interculturalists claim that their conceptual innovations are a focus on "cross-cultural dialogue", "diversity", and "social cohesion". They put forth that interculturalism is a system of policies for diversity based on the promotion of cross-cultural interaction between people of different cultures and national backgrounds towards the goal of dismantling stereotypes by disconfirming prejudices, and supporting a more positive perception of "the other" (Zapata-Barrero, 2015, 2014). Hence, interculturalism focuses on the individual and micro and meso level to promote integration. Within this shift of focus from the macro level, which multiculturalists focused upon, towards the individual and micro level that interculturalists focus upon, "diversity now appears more accepted in the political discourse than multiculturalism: it shifts the attention from the collective (ethnic group) to individuals; it creates links with other types of diversities; and it seems

more acceptable from a neoliberal point of view, also because it may be seen as a resource for organisations, marketing and service delivery (diversity management)" (Ambrosini, 2016, p. 2).

Interculturalism is proposed as an approach that favors cross-cultural interaction, which interculturalists believe was neglected by multiculturalists, who they state, focused their policies on the needs and rights of immigrants to the detriment of dialogue and interaction between new-comers and natives (Zapata-Barrero, 2015). This co-construction of community through dialogue and focus on prejudice reduction constitutes a new form of *"governmentality"* (a democratic "governance" of cultural diversity) and constitutes a policy to address ubiquitous concerns across European institutions related to supporting and maintaining "social cohesion".

One of the most important objections that multiculturalists put forth about the critiques of multiculturalism by interculturalists is that they have simplified and diminished the framework, which has been iterative over decades of research and scholarship and has become increasingly critical in its understanding of itself. Multiculturalists respond to the rhetorical aspects of the critiques of the model highlighting that social fragmentation and "ghettoisation" happen in a larger social context of inequities, inadequate access to education and the labour market, marginalization and physical segregation of immigrant communities, and more (Taylor, 2012). They point to the fact that blaming multiculturalism for parallel societies is a rhetorical ploy (Cameron, 2011) and point out that multiculturalism always understood itself in relation to immigrants "as a way of staking a claim to belonging and to membership in a larger society, and as a mode to contributing to it. It was a way of staking a claim to citizenship in a multicultural nation-state-in effect, a claim to multicultural nationhood" (Kymlicka, 2016, p. 170). Furthermore, we find the narrative that blames multiculturalism for social fragmentation also lacking in historical context as it largely ignores European nations' past as colonial powers and the impact of this history on current migration patterns and social dynamics between citizens and immigrants as dominant and marginalized people.

Moreover, multiculturalists point out that interculturalists ignore issues of power in their framework, and that this is a major oversight as focusing on intergroup relations alone at the micro and meso systems level does not change societies towards justice; rather, cross-cultural dialogue supports social cohesion and leaves social structures of inequities in place. Instead,

multiculturalists place great importance on the issue of power and systemic change versus individual change. As Parekh affirms, multiculturalists and interculturalists have differing starting points: "one is primarily concerned with social unity and stresses the centrality of the majority culture […] while the other is primarily concerned with justice to minorities and stresses their freedom to explore and express their identities, and is more hospitable to diversity" (Parekh, 2016, pp. 278-279). Meer and Modood (2016) weigh in and respond to the critiques of multiculturalism by questioning the notion that interculturalism is an alternative or a more advanced framework than multiculturalism and propose that interculturalism may represent, at best, a "critical friend" of multiculturalism (Meer & Modood, 2012). Modood defends multiculturalism as both a theory and a system of policies, while admitting the need to learn from some of the critiques posed by interculturalists such as, for example, the importance of intergroup contact (Cantle, 2015) and concepts such as "super-diversity" (Vertovec, 2007).

Kymlicka (2016) responds to this debate by stating that the differences between these theoretical paradigms is largely exaggerated and denounces the "largely ignorant rhetoric of anti-multiculturalism" reminding us that there are substantial similarities at the ground level between multicultural and intercultural policies towards prejudice reduction and the integration of immigrants into society. Kymlicka, concludes that the "interculturalism-as-a-remedy-for-failed-multiculturalism-trope" is not an objective account in social science, but, rather, a dangerous "new narrative", or a new myth that can be used for political motivation by xenophobes who refute both theoretical concepts. Furthemore, Meer e Modood (2016) criticize this new anti-multiculturalist narrative as historically erroneous and conceptually weak. Meer and Modood (2016) contend that the literture on "good interculturalism *vs* bad multiculturalism" is merely a rhetorical device and not a scientific debate. This new narrative against multiculturalism is not based on a systematic empirical comparison of the actual policy outcomes associated with the two approaches. Furthermore, defenders of interculturalism rarely make clear how their policy recommendations differ from those defended by multiculturalists. As a result, Meer and Modood (2016) argue, the "good interculturalism *vs* bad multiculturalism" literature is essentially rhetorical rather than analytical.

Governmentality: Interculturalism and Civic Integration

By focusing on the political and sociological developments impacting the promulgation of the paradigm of interculturalism, we shed light on the problematic aspects and ambiguities within the theoretical framework. We connect this theoretical framework to "governmentality" and highlight its political motivation as an institutional project to "manage diversity" and promote social cohesion in increasingly multiethnic societies.

In the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. Living Together as Equal in Dignity (Council of Europe, 2008), we note a push towards interculturalism as a substitute for multiculturalism. The tensions and multi-dimensionality of the framework are clearly notable in this document which proposes "equal dignity", "valuing diversity", and "intercultural dialogue" on the one hand, and the "promotion of social cohesion" on the other. These concepts are obviously at odds. We underscore that this social cohesion is promoted through a convergence on "common values" which can be understood as values of the Western liberal tradition. Therefore, the document accents the importance of the adoption of liberal Western cultural values and norms by immigrants in order to promote social cohesion. This, we believe, makes this framework more compatible with civic integration.

In this vein of promoting social cohesion, European countries have been moving towards policies of "civic requirements" (Goodman, 2010) towards "civic integration" (Joppke, 2007), which ask immigrants to adopt national values, learn the national language, demonstrate political loyalty (Antonsich, 2016) towards the goals of social cohesion. The policies of European countries from Netherland to Finland, Denmark, Germany, France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom increasingly converge on civic integration courses, language requirements, mandatory tests for new immigrants (Ambrosini, 2014), which as Joppke (2007, p. 16) notes can be understood as an example of "liberalism of power and disciplining" and has been largely written about in the literature on governmentality (Dean, 1999).

Therefore, we ask whether interculturalism is just a more theoretically sophisticated and ambiguous concept which serves a political agenda of social cohesion and order more than a framework for social change and the creation of a multiethnic just society in which immigrants have opportunities to engage fully in economic, social, cultural and political

participation while maintaining their cultural ways of knowing and being. We also ask whether civic integration and interculturalism pursue the same goals, one using the language of political science and the other using a language of sociology of education and pedagogy. Interculturalism, then, could be an educational tool towards civic integration, without the top down approach of overt civic integration strategies. Its more nuanced approach places an accent on intergroup and intercultural dialogue, which is used to integrate immigrants into a Western liberal tradition and framework more than to challenge the existing framework or to make room for a new one.

Intercultural Education in Europe: Multi-faceted and ambiguous theoretical Concepts and "Realities" of Implementation

Educational systems are identified as one of the main driving forces of interculturalism (EriCarts, 2008; Commission of the European Communities, 2008; European Council & Commission, 2008; European Commission, 2008; Nesse Network, 2008; Eurydice, 2004; 2009; Council of Europe, 2014). The Unesco Guidelines for Intercultural Education state: "Interculturality […] has been defined as the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures […] Education can make an important and meaningful contribution to sustainable and tolerant societies" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 8).

However, when analysing key European policy level documents and development in the field of intercultural education, we find the same ambiguities and problematic dynamics present in the theoretical conceptualization of interculturalism (as per our discussion above). The documents are dissonant as they propose conflicting directions: on the one hand, the importance given to cultural exchanges, openness towards diversity, and, on the other hand what Faas et al. (2014, p. 300) acknowledges as "the main emphasis of recent European level policies and directives is on fostering social cohesion through incorporating migrant students". The Document Final declaration: Building a more humane and inclusive Europe: Role of education policies (Council of Europe, 2007) highlighted that schools should include the teaching of diversity through its curricula. Subsequently, the White Paper on intercultural dialogue (Council of Europe, 2008) proposed two goals: first, "an open and respectful

exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect" and secondly, "to secure social cohesion and to prevent conflicts" (Council of Europe, 2008, p. 5). It is important to note that the two goals, stated above, are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they are more likely in conflict with one another as "social cohesion" denotes a transition to a shared value system while the "exchange of views" that is a part of the intercultural conceptualization will bring tension and debate to the intercultural dialogue. We stress that the objectives of "social cohesion" and prevention of conflicts are clearly political ones and part of the backlash political narrative on multiculturalism as socially divisive. Hence, it is this political narrative that is driving the pedagogical directive towards intercultural education. This may be understood as political rhetoric, which Kymlicka (2016, p. 159) asks us to ponder in relation to the question regarding the purpose of this rhetoric. The Green Paper "Migration and mobility: Challenges and opportunities for EU education systems" (Commission of the European Communities, 2008), resembled the Council of Europe's White Paper and joins together two opposing policies, one which can be considered a policy of "civic integration" and the other of multiculturalism. For example, the learning of the host language as a means of creating social cohesion is proposed as one of interculturalism, but it is rather one of assimilation. The promotion of the heritage language as a way of respecting diversity is also proposed and interculturalism but is more in line with a multiculturalist perspective.

In the end, all EU countries have considerable autonomy in the field of education (European Commission, 2008). Therefore, in real-life situations, policy development and implementation at the national level, as well as different manifestations of intercultural education are ever changing iterations and attempts (Barrett, 2012; Coulby & Zambeta, 2008; Allemann-Ghionda, 2008; Perry & Southwell, 2011; Faas et al., 2014). When intercultural discourses began to spread across the EU nations, some scholars argued that cultural diversity in education had helped transform nation-centred schooling approaches and curricula into more intercultural ones (Schissler & Soysal, 2005). Others, however, held that the EU "still adheres to some of the key components of the nationalist discourse it seeks to evade" (Hansen, 1998, p. 15), pointing to the ways in which EU education policies assumed the idea that a common pan-European "culture"

is inherent and inherited. For example, Faas (2011) who compared the geography, history and citizenship education curricula in Greece, Germany and England, argued that the relationship between European and multicultural values was rather different and dependent on the school subject. Whilst history was found to be ethnocentric in all three countries - albeit to varying degrees - Greek geography and citizenship curricula veered between ethnocentrism and Europeanism. In contrast, in England, prior to the most current populist and nationalist political re-orientation, macro-political notions of multicultural Britishness were reinforced in geography and citizenship education. Following national political trends, German curricula privileged national and European topics, but attempts were made to address diversity, particularly in geography.

Faas et al. (2014) analysed the dynamics influencing intercultural education in Europe, focusing the discussion on historical and contemporary European immigration policy developments in different European Countries. Northern European Countries have a longer history of migration. In these countries there has been a reformulation of multicultural migration policies towards civic integration (Joppke, 2007) and a "return to compliance and conformance to the institutions of the host society" (Ambrosini, 2014, p. 14; Prins & Slijper, 2002; Entzinger, 2003). In these contexts, most practices and projects are aimed at responding directly to the practical and everyday needs of migrants (languages, communication, inclusion) and rarely address the question of the definition of an "intercultural approach" in education. Southern-European Countries have had a more recent experience of the integration of immigrants in schools and society. Notably, for example, in Italy studies in the field of sociology of education focus on the meaning of "interculturalism" (Giovannini, Queirolo Palmas, 2002; Besozzi et al., 2009; Santerini, 2010; Colombo & Santagati, 2017; Cesareo, 2008, 2015). The educational policies geared towards intercultural education (Miur, 2007, 2014) are also a subject of research.

Like the larger conceptual framework of interculturalism in Europe, the educational component of interculturalism in the Italian educational system is multi-faceted and groups together divergent goals. These goals are 1. "the ability to recognize and appreciate diversity", 2. "the promotion of the convergence toward shared values" and 3. "to strive for social cohesion" (Miur, 2007, p. 9). In fact, Italian educational normatives have captured the European discourses on intercutlural education and have identified schools

as the best sites for the developement of intercultural competencies. *La Vita Italiana* identifies integration of immigrant youth as a primary pathway to an institutionalized intercultural school (Miur, 2007). Echoing European trajectories it centralizes the importance of intercultural education, which will require a challenging juggling of two diverse foci: on the one hand, the capacity to understand and appreciate differences, and on the other hand, a search for social cohesion towards a new way of conceptualizing citizenship, a citizenship that works for the pluralism reflected in the population as well as one that aims to converge on common values (Miur, 2007, p. 9). These two foci, we content, are not compatible. In the narrative below, we delineate the incompatibility of a respect and appreciation of diversity and the creation of "common" and "shared" values, which, we believe favor the majority and the Western liberal tradition and value system, effectively negating a system that affirms diversity, diversity of thoughts, values, ways of understanding the world.

Intercultural Education and Multicultural Education: Complementarity and Dissonance

In its ideal, then, intercultural education, with its focus on intergroup dialogue and cross-cultural exchange, should be open to all differences of racial and ethnic background, gender, socio-economic status, educational history. Intercultural education strategies purport to create opportunities for integration through reciprocal transformation of peoples of differing cultural backgrounds through dialogue.

Intercultural education is meant to be "education for diversity" and must develop on two complimentary dimensions. The first is aimed at supporting cognitive development towards the capacity to de-centralize one's own experience towards understanding a myriad point of views, ways of knowing, and ways of interpreting the world. It is meant to promote a sort of critical thinking and analytic skills that leave young people open to diversity. The second dimension of interculturalism is meant to support socio-emotional development. Through intergroup contact, dialogue, shared experiences, and cooperation, young people are expected to acquire cultural competence and a respect for diversity.

Strategies to implement in intercultural pedagogy are focused on relationship building both in school and in after-school settings (making

classroom spaces places of communication and dialogue, cooperation, collaborative learning practices so as to support everyone's participation in the construction of knowledge). Moreover, a focus on anti-discrimination and prejudice reduction is also proposed (anti-racist education is a focus as are strategies aimed at deconstructing antisemitism, islamophobia, ethnocentrism, etc.). Hence both socio-emotional and cognitive domains of development are meant to be addressed by the framework.

Intercultural education attempts to hold differing goals, then. On the one hand, it supports cultural exchange and dialogue to support students' multiple ways of knowing and understanding the world towards the goal of appreciating our diversity. On the other hand it aims to guide the dialogue towards "shared values" or a uniting ideology in the Western liberal tradition towards the goal of creating a civically integrated society and social cohesion. How then, can we hold multiple ways of knowing and being and a shared Western ideology at the same time? How is this illustrative of an appreciation for diversity? How is the goal of social cohesion (versus social justice for all citizens) not a goal more related to assimilation than creating societies build on cultural exchange? These may be an important question for interculturalists to answer.

Intercultural education, then, is meant be understood as a new educational philosophy and pedagogy towards a new citizenship education, a citizenship framework that is adapted towards pluralism and that includes an intercultural dimension whose goals are openness towards diversity, equality amongst students, and social cohesion. Of course, this framing of interculturalism seems to be ideal. Who could argue against the implementation of an educational philosophy meant to support youth's cognitive and social-emotional and cultural competence grounded in respect for diversity and prejudice reduction? Yet, while ideal, this framework understands what happens in the school and classroom as de-contextualized from the political realities of the marginalization of immigrants and the lack of political power they hold. How, then, does true reciprocal dialogue happen between a dominant group and one with little or no access to power? This question is best answered through multicultural education practices which stress the importance of an analysis of power. For example, as Zirkel (2008) notes, it is only when issues of race and power are addressed that the goals of improved intergroup relations can occur. Hence, we return to Parekh's (2016) affirmations regarding the differences between interculturalism and multiculturalism and note that

intercultural education places an emphasis on the majority culture and on social cohesion and not on social change or social justice for marginalized groups as is the focus of multiculturalism.

In fact, it is important to remember that just as the political and philosophical frameworks of multiculturalism and interculturalism have been erroneously pitted against one another, so have multicultural education and intercultural education. Just as interculturalism has been proposed as an answer to a "failed" multiculturalism, so has intercultural education been proposed as a better alternative than multicultural education. However, we contend that there are both significant differences as well as overlap between these two pedagogies. Finally, we note that many of the critiques that intercultural education proponents have offered to multicultural educators are based in inaccurate representations of multicultural education praxis and its goals.

Both multicultural and intercultural education proponents aim to address our increasing diversity and provide equitable education opportunities for marginalized children and families so that they may succeed academically and socially. In the U.S. context, multicultural education (Banks, 2004; Zirkel, 2008) aims at both increasing the educational achievements of students of color and improving intergroup relations. In the White Paper (Council of Europe, 2008) as well as in the Handbook on Integration for Policy Makers and Practitioners in 2007, intercultural education is understood as a system to ensure that immigrant children and their descendants have a better opportunity for success towards the goal of full participation in the social context of the host nation.

It is true that in a national context in which there are systems of structural inequities and oppression where people of differing racial/ethnic identities, immigration status, gender expression, sexual orientation, abilities, etc. do not hold cultural power as do members of the dominant groups, multicultural education has placed an emphasis on supporting these historically marginalized groups (Zirkel, 2008). As multicultural educators think deeply about social justice and education towards the goal of social change, this emphasis has been a necessary foundation of multicultural education. Hence, for multicultural educators, there can be no cross-cultural dialogue, for example, without great attention to examination and discussions of issues related to power, race and power, systems of privilege and systems of oppression.

James Banks (2004) widely used multicultural education model includes five components of multicultural education practice: 1. Content integration; 2. Knowledge Construction; 3. Prejudice Reduction; 4. Equity Pedagogy; and 5. Empowering School Cultures. One may note some overlap with intercultural education goals. For example, both frameworks call for the integration of diverse materials in the curriculum. Both frameworks educate towards critical thinking with a focus on de-centralizing the dominant discourse so that student may understand the role that different cultural frameworks have on their understanding and interpretation of the world through text or life experience. Both frameworks focus much attention on prejudice reduction.

The fundamental differences, then, relate to the critical examination of the role of power and dominance in the educational strategies proposed. As noted earlier, a multicultural educator would question any attempts to conduct intergroup dialogues in school that would not examine the questions of power and dominance. In this vein Barret (2013, p. 31) notes "any dialogue is inevitably affected by status differentials and power relations between the participants within the dialogue so it rarely takes place in a level playing field. Coupled with this concern, it is those individuals who occupy positions of power and privilege who tend to determine the implicit rules by which the dialogue occurs, and their decisions are typically based on their own cultural perspective".

Hence, goals of fostering "shared values" as intercultural educators propose, should be critically and skeptically analyzed in the context of this discussion to understand how "shared values" may be connected to "Western liberal values" and the ultimate goal of assimilation by diverse groups into our systems, values and social structures, which would be left largely unchanged. Finally, we hope to encourage sociologists of education and educators to critically evaluate the paradigms of interculturalism and intercultural education to understand their connections to both multiculturalism (towards goals of affirming social diversity) as well as their potential problematic resonance to assimilationism and civic integration (towards goals of social cohesion).

Conclusion

This paper ambitiously tackles an analysis of the theoretical paradigms of interculturalism and intercultural education pointing out the multi-faceted, ambiguous and sometimes discrepant goals it purports to support. Going beyond simple and unsubstantiated claims related to a "failed" multiculturalism, we delineated the debate between these theories and the political impetus and motivations to replace multiculturalism with interculturalism. We contend that interculturalism, while purporting to affirm diversity and support an increasingly diverse society, puts forth contradictory processes towards this goal, leading us to question the motivations towards the adoption of this framework. On the one hand, interculturalists affirm that cross-cultural exchange will increase our understanding and respect for diversity by bringing different peoples together in dialogue. However, the manner in which the dialogue is structured reflects the Western liberal tradition. Hence, this dialogue is meant to unfold as per the values of the majority or dominant culture and resembles a way to introduce immigrants into a system of civic integration rather than a new, pluralist conceptualization of society. As multiculturalists contend, dialogue is necessary but not sufficient to create social change. Dialogue, while necessary to interface, to reduce prejudice, to get to know one another, leaves systems of power intact. Hence, interculturalism may lead to prejudice reduction and the successful civic integration of newcomers, but will it create a new and diverse society?

And, how does inetercultural education fit within the larger paradigm of interculturalism? In this work, we connect intercultural education to the theoretical framework. We problematize the concept of interculturalism and its educational structure as it relates to civic integration. Finally, we highlight the similar generalities, abstractness, tensions, and ambiguities in the pedagogy of interculturalism and its theoretical foundation.

Problematizing the conceptual and practiced landscape of intercultural education and analyzing its construction, our work goes beyond the rhetorical discourse and highlights the need to reflect on the internal tensions within the conceptualization of interculturality as well as the need to flesh out and bolster the foundational concepts within the framework. This work is new in its attempt to connect the political, philosophical and sociology of education frameworks. Our work is intended to encourage further reflection on the dissonance and tensions within the conceptual

framing of interculturalism as well as those same dynamics in its pedagogical translation into education theory and practice. Furthermore, we encourage a fleshing out of the foundational ideas and philosophical principles toward the aim of creating a more robust conceptual framework. Finally, we hope to encourage empirical research, which understands this theoretical frame in its application in educational setting.

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