

REFUGEE, MIGRATION, DIASPORA

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Lecture40

Lecture 40: Introducing Multiculturalism

Thank you. Good morning and welcome back to the lecture series on Refugees, Migration, and Diaspora. So, today we are going to start our discussion on what multiculturalism is. We will discuss the policy of multiculturalism and how it has been implemented in different countries, what its suggestions are, and what its implications are as understood in different countries. So, multiculturalism is an idea that fosters the image of bringing people from different racial, ethnic, religious, and gender identities under the same roof, such that they can live together in harmony.

So, as we know, today's world is becoming smaller and smaller as an aftereffect of globalization. And we see that because of profession, business, as well as political unrest, people tend to travel from one part of the globe to another. So multiculturalism as a policy enables people to live together in harmony. That is the basic idea: that there is respect for difference.

There is visibility of all kinds of people and their practices. So a society can, you know, accommodate people with different kinds of habits. It could be food, clothing, or religious habits that can coexist peacefully under the same roof. That defines the basic premise of multiculturalism.

Introducing Multiculturalism

- Multiculturalism is an idea that fosters the image of bringing in people from different racial, ethnic, religious and gender identity under the same roof, wherein they can live together in harmony. The policy of multiculturalism emerged through the rejection of the 'assimilation policy'



MULTICULTURALISM
What is it?

- Assimilation, in contrast to Multiculturalism, is based on the principle image of a 'melting pot' that refers to the integration of different identities as a unified and single category.
- In "The Nature of Assimilation", Milton Gordon refers to the "processes and results of ethnic meetings in the modern world," that occurred due to a wide range of contexts – from colonial conquest, military occupation and the displacement of indigenous peoples, to a large-scale migration in search of better life







Now, in contrast to multiculturalism, we have the concept of assimilation, which is based on the principle of a melting pot. So, at the heart of assimilation, we have the principal image of a melting pot, which refers to the integration of different identities into a unified and single category. So, all different elements will not exist in their own right. Basically, they will all be melted and turned

into reduced, Americanized habits and practices. So, people coming from different backgrounds will not be recognized in terms of their own historical or cultural baggage that they carry. But According to the assimilation model, they will lose their specificities and will be melted down and unified into a single category, which is driven by or defined in terms of Euro-American values. So, assimilation is something that the non-Western part of the globe actually questions because it makes them lose their individuality and their specific cultural burdens that they want to carry with them.




So, in the nature of assimilation, critic Milton Gordon refers to the processes and results of ethnic meetings in the modern world that occur due to a wide range of contexts. So, there

are so many different factors that bring people from different backgrounds together and that actually make possible a situation such as assimilation or even multiculturalism. Such contexts include colonial conquest, military occupation, displacement of indigenous people, as well as migration in more normal times. In search of a better life. So, all these factors—military occupation, political unrest, colonial conquest, displacement of indigenous people, as well as migration of a certain section of society—are in search of

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2




Greener pastures—all these things enable or make it possible for people from different backgrounds to stay within the same geopolitical area under the same roof. And that's where multiculturalism as a policy gains its relevance. It is deemed something very important to maintain peace and harmony in a given society. So, Gordon identified seven variables or stages—or, in other words, sub-processes of a complex assimilation process—as a way of describing, in the American context, what happens to the sense of peoplehood of ethnic groups. In other words, what happens to the groups that are defined by race, religion, and national origin—or some combination of these

categories. So, we see that sociologists have defined assimilation—to quote Albany—as a multidimensional process of boundary reduction and brokering, which blurs or dissolves an ethnic distinction and the social and cultural differences and identities associated with it. So, it has—assimilation certainly has a bulldozing effect. It is bulldozing the differences, the ethnic distinctions, the historical and cultural backgrounds that specific social groups have come from. So, assimilation happens through—as the sociologists say—boundary reduction and brokering.

Introducing Multiculturalism

- Gordon identified seven 'variables' (or 'stages or subprocesses') of a complex 'assimilation process' as a way of describing, in the American context, what happens to the 'sense of peoplehood' of ethnic groups, that is, of "groups defined by race, religion, and national origin, or some combination of these categories"
- Sociologists have defined assimilation 'as a multidimensional process of boundary reduction and brokering, which blurs or dissolves an ethnic distinction and the social and cultural differences and identities associated with it' (Alba and Nee)
- In contrast to the model of the 'melting pot', the model of the 'salad bowl' was proposed to foster multicultural societies, giving rise to the heterogeneity of cultural practices
- In the 1960s, the vision of American 'pluralism' arose, which can be captured through the metaphor of the 'salad bowl'



You are brokering your own Western values to people who have come from dissimilar backgrounds, and you don't take into cognizance their boundaries anymore, their alternative possibilities, alternative points of view, or alternative worldviews that they come from. So, that is precisely what assimilation means. Now, this melting pot—as an image where everything is reduced to American values—has been criticized in the past. In contrast to the model of the melting pot, the model of the salad bowl was proposed to foster multicultural societies, thereby giving rise to the heterogeneity of cultural practices.

Right. So what we see in a salad bowl is that all the different ingredients retain their quality. They retain their color and flavor, and together they look more beautiful. So the heterogeneity in a salad bowl—we could say it's the unique selling point. It's the USP.

The best part is that one fruit or one vegetable doesn't lose its flavor in a bid to become something else. So, that is something celebrated, you know, as the basic principle of multiculturalism. In the 1960s, the vision of American pluralism arose, which can be captured through the metaphor of the salad bowl. Now, the Salad Bowl puts forth the idea that different ethnic groups can coexist in their separate identities, like the different ingredients present in a salad, as I was saying. So, they are bound together only by the dressing, and this dressing refers to the law and the market.

So, they work together, they live within the boundaries of the same nation, and they other than that, they have their own cultures to boast, they have their own practices and their own identity to uphold. So this is at the heart of the Salad Bowl model. This idea expresses the ideology of multiculturalism.

So, Salad Bowl basically is the principal ideology of multiculturalism in a way. So, it goes far beyond the demand that ethnic differences be acknowledged rather than disparaged. So,

basically the differences need to be celebrated, they need to be recognized, acknowledged and respected, and a difference does not really mean that two groups are in an oppositional relationship or in a rivalrous relationship. It is just that they recognize and respect their difference from each other.

Although multiculturalism as an idea was welcomed by many as a way of celebrating or fostering unity in diversity, many critics have not hesitated to even identify the problems and the loopholes and limitations present within this policy. So, multiculturalism has faced so many criticisms because many are of the opinion that instead of creating harmony among people, multiculturalism also has a tendency to give rise to ghettoization of people. In February 2011, David Cameron, the former Prime Minister of the UK, gave a speech arguing against state multiculturalism. So this is how Cameron goes, I quote, Underlying the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We have failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong.

We have even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values. Right. So Cameron actually articulates a rising backlash against multiculturalism in contemporary Europe, where the policy has been accused many a times of reinforcing divisions among different groups. So when divisions or differences are celebrated, you know, when ethnic and racial differences are celebrated, they can cause permanent divisions and, you know, ghettos that wall off one community from the other rather than enhancing their integration into a shared sense of nationhood. So the sense of nationhood, the national or nationalist sensibility is

is thwarted and somewhat jeopardized when we celebrate multiculturalism beyond a point. Canadian critic Reginald C poses the idea of interculturalism in lieu of multiculturalism. In the book *Mosaic Madness: Pluralism Without a Cause*, Bibby argues that multiculturalism is a divisive force that actually reduces national solidarity and unity. So, multiculturalism can thrive successfully at the expense of a dwindling sense of national unity. The practice of accommodating different religious and cultural groups needs to be based on the principle of interculturalism instead.

So, what Bibby proposes is interculturalism rather than multiculturalism, which is oriented toward reconciling ethnocultural diversity with the preservation of social harmony. So, interculturalism enables these different ethnic groups to also try to understand each other. There is a reconciliation of ethnocultural diversity, and social harmony is, in a way,

preserved. On the other hand, we have author and scholar Lynne Cheney, who says that while it is important to talk about world cultures, Cheney would rather want schools to put more emphasis on American history.

So, Cheney puts forward national history and patriotism over diversity and tolerance. And one can see that here she is advancing her agenda of steering the national curriculum clear of multiculturalism. So, some critics and authors do have this tendency of putting nationalism first—nationalism as the most prior and important agenda—even if it means multicultural values have to take a backseat. Samuel Huntington, renowned for his book *The Clash of Civilizations*, describes multiculturalism as an anti-Western ideology. He goes on to say that multiculturalism, when it is too visible in America,




Can actually hurt Western values and Western ideologies. According to Huntington, multiculturalism poses an attack on the identification of the United States with Western civilization at its heart or at its core. And it denies the existence of a common American culture in the process of promoting racial, ethnic, and other subnational cultural identities and groupings. Huntington further adds that multiculturalism, if left unopposed, could even lead to the end of the United States of America as we have known it. So America will change so much that it will change beyond recognition.

That is something that haunts, that kind of worries writers like Huntington. They want something, some essentialist threads to define America in its traditional terms. So when these essentialist threads are gone or they are, in a way, submerged by other values, what happens is that America becomes something besides itself. It changes beyond recognition. This is something that writers like Huntington apprehend.

Critics like Giovanni Sartori and James Caesar seek to substitute multiculturalism for the idea of pluralism. So, Sartori and Caesar believe that pluralism and multiculturalism are antithetical concepts that negate each other. They do not go hand in hand. Sartori says that contemporary multiculturalism separates, it is aggressive and intolerant.

Multiculturalism and its Limitations

- Critics like Giovanni Sartori and James Caesar seek to substitute multiculturalism for the idea of 'pluralism'. They believe that 'pluralism and multiculturalism are antithetical concepts that negate each other'. Sartori says that contemporary multiculturalism 'separates, it is aggressive and intolerant'. Sartori's comment hints at and echoes what Stanley Fish discusses in 'Boutique Multiculturalism'
- German Chancellor Angela Merkel explicitly stated that multiculturalism had 'utterly failed' in 2010, and in 2011, former British Prime Minister David Cameron criticized 'state multiculturalism,' arguing the need for another strategy for effectively working with the growing immigrant population
- The proclamation that multiculturalism is a failure in other nation-states was based on the need to decrease potential threats and establish a strong sense of national identity and citizenship



7

So Sartori's comment hints at and echoes what Stanley Fish discusses in boutique multiculturalism. This is something we will discuss more elaborately. So what is boutique multiculturalism, right? German Chancellor Angela Merkel explicitly stated that multiculturalism had utterly failed in 2010. And in 2011, former British Prime Minister David Cameron criticized state multiculturalism by arguing the need for another strategy to effectively work with the growing immigrant population.

So sometimes multicultural policies are deemed inadequate in tackling immigrant issues, the question of or the problem of migration, as the British or even different European governments would like to call it. So the proclamation that multiculturalism is a failure in other nation states was based on the need to decrease potential threats and establish a strong sense of national identity and citizenship. So basically, alongside multiculturalism, there has always been a desire on the part of the authority, on the part of the nation state, to harbor, to cultivate some sense of responsibility, some sense of national identity, national consciousness.

So, it has always been an onus on the part of the authority, on the part of the nation state, to foster, to nurture national identity, nationalist consciousness, and a sense of responsibility that is intrinsic to the concept of citizenship alongside multicultural values. So alongside, you know, celebrating differences and one's own ethnic or racial specificity, the nation state, the makers or the founding fathers of a nation state, the government has a tendency to always ensure that national identity, national consciousness, and a sense of


responsibility as a citizen are never put to question. They are never thwarted or disquieted in any way. So, the then Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Trudeau, during the 1960s and the 1970s, following the end of the Second World War, worked toward the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution and introduced multiculturalism as a way of countering the word biculturalism.

So, this shift from biculturalism to multiculturalism emphasizes a greater number of possibilities because when we talk about biculturalism, we are referring to the coexistence of two distinct cultures, and Canadian history tells us that these two cultures are the British colonial legacy and the French colonial legacy. So we have this two-city or two-state kind of binary. And this phase of the tiff between the British and the French cultures happens at the expense of invisibilizing everyone else who is also part and parcel of the Canadian identity, the Canadian citizenry. So when we talk of biculturalism, we are part of a binarism, a dualism where we render visibility only to the British legacy or the French legacy, and anyone else, any other visible minority, is rendered almost an invisible status.

So, this shift from biculturalism, which emphasizes the coexistence of two distinct cultures, towards multiculturalism, which promotes acceptance and integration of multiple cultures and those that have hitherto been invisibilized, was a significant policy change made by Trudeau in the history of Canada. This is happening post-Second World War. Since its inception in 1971, the multicultural policy in Canada has allowed the nation to become a global leader, demonstrating to other Western democracies how to effectively integrate immigrant and minority populations.

Multicultural Policy in Canada

- The then Prime Minister of Canada, **Pierre Trudeau**, during the 1960s to 1970s, after the end of World War II, worked toward the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution and introduced '**multi-culturalism**' to counter the word '**bi-culturalism**'. This shift from 'bi-culturalism', which emphasizes the coexistence of two distinct cultures, to 'multi-culturalism', which promotes the acceptance and integration of multiple cultures, was a significant policy change in the history of Canada
- Since its inception in 1971, the multicultural policy in Canada has allowed the nation to become a global leader, demonstrating to other Western democracies how to effectively integrate immigrant and minority populations. Canada's steadfast commitment to its multicultural ideologies is a source of pride for its citizens, even as other nations have questioned its success (Fomina 2006)
- Although other nation-states have denounced multiculturalism, Canada continues to declare it as a fundamental characteristic of its national identity



So Canada's steadfast commitment to its multicultural ideologies is a source of pride for its citizens, even though other nations have sometimes questioned its success in terms of implementation—how well, how successfully Canada implements its multicultural

policies, its multicultural values in day-to-day practice. Although other nation-states have denounced multiculturalism, Canada continues to declare it as a fundamental characteristic that defines its national identity. Canada embraced a multiculturalism policy on various political levels. In the new Canadian Constitution of 1982, Clause 27 states that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.

Furthermore, in 1988, as a way to strengthen the multicultural policy in Canada, Parliament passed the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. So, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act came in 1988, which was committed to four distinct areas. A, race relations and cross-cultural understanding. B, heritage, cultures, and languages.

C, community support and participation. And D, cross-governmental commitment. So, in achieving a post-colonial status followed by multiple immigration policies that offered a home, to refugees and migrants coming from diverse backgrounds and different nation-states, Canada has benefited from its multicultural policies. Now, Australia's history is marked by the phenomenon of migration, just like Canada.

Through migration, Australia has become one of the most important countries in the world, recognized for its culturally diverse society. However, simultaneously, one sees that the history of Australia as a settler colony is also steeped in violence and racism. So, according to Stephen Castles, I quote, 'In the colonial period, settlement was based on racism and genocide against the Aboriginal population, whereas colonies were integrated into the British Empire as suppliers of raw materials,' unquote. So, Australia's strict policies have resisted multiculturalism,



For a long period, we see that the policies in Australia were rather more stringent, not very open, and not very inclusive of multicultural policies. The immigration control through the Immigration Restrictions Act, passed in 1901, which is also popularly known as the White Australia Policy, was seen as a hindrance to accepting multicultural policies in Australia. So, we see that for a long time, Australia had the White Australia Policy, which prevented the official acceptance of multicultural policies in the country. The prevailing attitude toward migrant settlement until the early 20th century was based on the expectation of assimilation.

So, rather than multiculturalism, what we had in effect in Australian society was assimilation. Assimilation, just taking us back to the model of a melting pot, where it was expected that people from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds would ultimately lose

their specificity, their own history and culture, and become like the native white Australian population. That is the fact that migrants should shed their cultures, languages, and backgrounds, and rapidly become indistinguishable from the host Australian population. However, from the mid-1960s until 1973, when the White Australia Policy was removed, Australia recognized that many migrants, especially those whose first language was not English, experienced significant hardship during their settlement period in Australia.

Multicultural Policy in Australia

- The prevailing attitude to migrant settlement till early 20 century was based on the expectation of assimilation—that is, the fact that migrants should shed their cultures and languages and rapidly become indistinguishable from the host population
- However, from the mid-1960s until 1973, when the White Australia's policy was removed, Australia recognised that a large number of migrants, especially those whose first language was not English, experienced hardships as they settled in Australia and would be in need of inclusive policies to safeguard their rights
- In 1973, Australia adopted 'multiculturalism'. The various migrant groups started forming state and national organizations to maintain their cultures and promote the survival of their languages and heritages within the mainstream Institutions. Multicultural policies are formulated for the diaspora community to flourish

And there was a need for inclusive policies to safeguard the rights of immigrants from starkly different cultures and traditions. So, in 1973, Australia adopted multiculturalism. Thus, we see that assimilationist tendencies were slowly replaced by multiculturalism in the second half of the 20th century. Various migrant groups began forming state and national organizations to maintain their cultures and promote the survival of their languages and heritage within mainstream institutions. So, multicultural policies in this sense were formulated for diaspora communities to flourish, rather than bulldozing their differences or the knowledge systems they brought with them.

Multicultural policies are meant to encourage these other practices, these different diverse practices and habits. Now, Stanley Fish, in his essay 'Boutique Multiculturalism or Why Liberals Are Incapable of Thinking About Hate Speech,' which was published in Critical Inquiry, attempts to dismiss the new field with a wave of the hand, proclaiming that no one could possibly be a multiculturalist in any interesting and coherent sense. So, the opening line of the essay reads thus. I'll just read from the opening line. Multiculturalism comes in at least two versions.

Boutique multiculturalism and strong multiculturalism. Boutique multiculturalism is the multiculturalism of ethnic restaurants, weekend festivals, and high-profile flirtations with the other in the manner satirized by Tom Wolfe under the rubric of 'radical chic.' So,

boutique multiculturalism is characterized by its superficial or cosmetic relationship to the objects of its affection. Boutique multiculturalists admire or appreciate or enjoy or sympathize with or, at the very least, recognize the legitimacy of the traditions of cultures other than their own, but Boutique multiculturalists will always stop short of approving other cultures at a point where some value at their center generates an act that offends against the canons of civilized decency, as they have been either declared or assumed.

These are some of the opening lines from Fish's essay, 'Boutique Multiculturalism.' On the other hand, Fish says that strong multiculturalism—what is it? 'The politics of difference is what I mean by strong multiculturalism.' Strong multiculturalism values difference in and for itself rather than as a manifestation of something more basically constitutive. So, to quote at length from Fish again, 'Whereas the boutique multiculturalist will accord superficial respect to cultures other than his own, a strong multiculturalist will want to accord a deep respect to all cultures at their core, for he believes that each has the right to form its own identity and nourish its own sense of what is rational and humane.'


So, basically, here we see that Boutique Multiculturalism is multiculturalism that makes society work. Basically, the working nature of multiculturalism involves experimenting with new things, finding new things interesting, rather than truly respecting culture or delving deeper into another culture and truly respecting it for what it is. Boutique multiculturalism is a more cosmetic add-on. It is like superficially adding some aspects of other cultures, recognizing those aspects because it makes business work.

So, what is the rationale for a restaurant to work, or any kind of office to work in a multicultural space? It is more like a working solution—boutique multiculturalism—rather than respecting, developing a taste for another culture, or truly trying to understand another culture. Boutique multiculturalism is basically the working facet of multiculturalism, which is good for business. So, Fish further says that a different way to put this is to say that a boutique multiculturalist cannot take seriously the core values of the cultures.

Boutique Multiculturalism

but boutique multiculturalists will always stop short of approving other cultures at a point where some value at their center generates an act that offends against the canons of civilized decency as they have been either declared or assumed (Fish)

- **Strong Multiculturalism**, on the other hand, is based on tolerance. Fish says, 'the politics of difference is what I mean by strong multiculturalism'. Strong Multiculturalism values difference in and for itself, rather than as a manifestation of something more basically constitutive.
- "Whereas the boutique multiculturalist will accord a superficial respect to cultures other than his own...a strong multiculturalist will want to accord a deep respect to all cultures at their core, for he believes that each has the right to form its own identity and nourish its own sense of what is rational and humane" (Fish)



13

The reason they cannot is that they do not see those values as truly meaningful, but as overlays on a substratum of essential humanity, unquote. So, a boutique multiculturalist or a boutique multicultural individual does not see cultural practices for their virtues. They see them as different possibilities that are offshoots of a substratum, which is essentially human in nature. So, basically, at the skeleton of it, we are all essentially human, and whatever cultural habits we have inculcated from our own societies—from our native countries—are interesting.

They are good to know. But, you know, boutique multiculturalism does not really add value to these new knowledge systems. They don't really respect or disrespect seriously any of these cultural practices. For as long as, you know, business or human relationships are working, boutique multiculturalism finds it good and viable. So, at the core of multiculturalism, there are differences that mark us externally.

So, that is at the heart of multiculturalism. The fact, the recognition that there are differences that mark us externally—the differences that are defined as separate entities—are reflected through the means of language, clothing, religious practices, race, gender, class, to name a few. Hence, for the boutique multiculturalist, these differences are no more than what Milton would call in *Aeropagitica* 'moderate varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes' that are not vastly disproportional. So, boutique multiculturalism, rather than celebrating difference or respecting difference—you know, very specifically focusing on the 'difference' part of it—boutique multiculturalism, in a way, also looks at the commonality, the common thread of humanity that runs through all of us. These are, to quote Milton, 'brotherly dissimilitudes.'

So, even if two brothers are dissimilar, At the end of the day, they are brothers. There is something common running through all of them. So, this sameness, this kind of



commonality that also, you know, facilitates any kind of business, any kind of interface in the public domain, is something that boutique multiculturalism is more interested in. So, I would say that while strong multiculturalism has a more philosophical or scholarly or human rights approach—you know, the ethical approach—the boutique multiculturalist sees things more from the end of, or from the perspective of, a government official.

It could be a businessman or someone who is trading, who is, you know, has to coexist or cohabit with an individual from a vastly different background. So, basically, there is a commercial and pragmatic side to boutique multiculturalism, whereas strong multiculturalism is rooted more in the ethical and human rights aspects. So, in a multicultural society, we may dress differently, speak differently, worship or not worship differently, but underneath there is something that we all share or that constitutes our varied identities. So, to conclude, multiculturalism is an idea that is built on discarding

any form of homogeneity that effaces a person's specific identity and background. Multiculturalism is antithetical to any monolithic identity, especially in a diasporic space. It is an idea of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity. To quote David Cameron again, who says in the context of Britain's multiculturalism, it is important to build a stronger sense of national and local identity that holds the key to achieving true cohesion by allowing people to say, 'I'm a Muslim,' 'I'm a Hindu,' 'I'm a Christian,' but... 'I am a Londoner too.' So having those specific, you know, coordinates that connect us immediately to our native land, but at the same time also making the effort to identify oneself with the current space where one belongs, which is London.

Conclusion

- Multiculturalism is an idea that is built on discarding homogeneity and monolithic identity, especially in a diaspora. It is an idea of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity
- To quote David Cameron again, who says in the context of Britain's multiculturalism that it is important to build "a stronger sense of national and local identity that holds the key to achieve true cohesion 'by allowing people to say 'I am a Muslim, I am a Hindu, I am a Christian, but I am a Londoner... too' (BBC News)



The slide features a graphic on the left titled "World Day for Cultural Diversity" with a globe icon and an illustration of diverse people. On the right, there is a video thumbnail showing a woman in a red sari speaking. The slide is numbered 15 in the bottom right corner.

So although someone comes from a background or some training that makes one a Muslim, Hindu, or Christian, at the end of the day, someone living in London would also be a

Londoner and would identify as a Londoner. So with this, we come to the end of our lecture today. Let's meet with a new topic in our next lecture. Thank you.