

ABSTRACTS

John Crowley

Antiracism, Multiculturalism and the Dilemmas of Equality

What I wish to do is to consider, primarily from the perspective of political theory, the relations between two dimensions of equality relating respectively to recognition and respect (the classic concerns of multiculturalism) and to socio-economic inclusion. They are often opposed to each other, particularly in the context of quarrels between the "new" and "old" Lefts about the relation between identity- and class-based politics. Furthermore, they often observably clash in the terms and dynamics of practical political mobilisation. In line with many previous contributors to these debates, I am convinced that the supposed opposition or tension is largely bogus at the theoretical level (and probably also in practical terms, although this will not be the main subject of the paper). In order to sharpen and operationalize the relevant distinctions, I propose to focus on the connection between antiracism and multiculturalism as two competing, and superficially contradictory, ways of making sense of the dynamics of culture and identity within diverse or complex societies. In many countries, antiracism and multiculturalism have, despite their common concerns, been political opponents. Yet, once socio-economic dimensions of inequality are adequately incorporated into the theoretical analysis, the tension or opposition largely dissolves. It is true that antiracism in its various national guises has traditionally suffered from inadequate attention to the dynamics of culture and identity, which make it impossible to regard the victims of racism as necessarily forming a coherent social group. But while multiculturalism developed in response to, among other things, these inadequacies, it proves in turn inadequate in its lack of attention to the sociology of group formation in complex societies, and to the institutional processes by which categories become groups, and groups actors. From an institutional perspective that takes account of the characteristic features of the kinds of societies within which the democratic agenda of diversity arises, equality as a mode of social membership inherently fuses the concerns of the "old" and "new" Lefts.

Chantal Mouffe

Democratic Values, Human Rights and Pluralism

Among the questions proposed to us I will address the following one: "Can democratic values be shared across cultural and religious differences?" I will argue that the notion of democratic values needs to be pluralized and that one should not assume that there is only one single, rational way to envisage democracy, the Western way. I want to bring to the fore the dangerous consequences of such an approach and suggest that a pluralist perspective is better suited than an universalist one to envisage the conditions of a democratic world order.

Anne Phillips

The Uses and Abuses of "Culture"

It is increasingly recognised that cultural claims can come into conflict with principles of gender equality, and the literature on this has variously asserted gender equality as a non-negotiable principle, questioned the presumed universality of gender norms, and/or proposed ways of meeting the dual claims of gender and culture. This paper considers whether the deconstruction of "culture" (as, for example, falsely essentialising or homogenising) offers a way through the feminism/multiculturalism debates. It draws on material on the use of "cultural defence" in the English courts to explore the insights and possible limitations of the deconstruction of culture in addressing tensions between diversity and gender equality.

Sonja Puntsher-Riekman

Desperately Seeking Europe. European Constitutionalism between National Identities, Shared Values and Global Ambitions

Time and again crises have been the source of progress in European integration. However, the Iraqi crisis has unveiled a deeper divide in European Common Foreign and Security Policy than perhaps suspected. It is questionable whether the current constitutional Convention will be able to find a sustainable common definition of the Union's role in the international arena. In spite of the shared values enumerated in the draft texts of the future constitution, which the Union intends to respect at home and to promote abroad there seems to be little consensus about how to develop and implement related policies. Moreover, the draft constitution repeatedly balances European integration with the respect for national identities and interests. Thus, even after half a century of European polity formation it remains difficult to imagine the Union as a global player capable of asserting values such as "respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, practice of tolerance, justice and solidarity".

Olivier de Schutter

Reflexive Anti-discrimination Law

The paper attempts to present a view of anti-discrimination law, which would go beyond imposing on agents an obligation not to derogate from the conventional criteria in decision-making, by relying, in taking decisions, on their prejudices or stereotypes. This view of anti-discrimination law is *reflexive*, in that it questions not only whether our decisional procedures and criteria are in conformity with the requirement of neutrality (whether they do not take into account irrelevant criteria such as, e.g., race, sex, religion or belief, disability, or sexual orientation), but also whether the requirement of neutrality itself, which takes as baseline the existing environment and relies on notions such as "merit", "qualification", or "need", may not be questioned to ensure that differences are truly accommodated and, thus, that all segments of the population are considered for inclusion in the different spheres of life. The paradigm for such a concept of anti-discrimination law is the requirement of "reasonable accommodation" inaugurated in the field of non-discrimination based on religion, and now developed for the integration of persons with disabilities. The tool for such a concept of anti-discrimination law is affirmative action – justified, here, neither to compensate for past wrongs or to aid persons who do not meet the dominant standards because of the discriminatory practices they suffer, but as an epistemological tool: it is a lever to oblige us to question our "current", "usual", "normal" definitions of what is required from the individual wanting to benefit a scarce social good such as employment, education, or housing. Such an understanding of the function of anti-discrimination law transforms the requirement of equal treatment from a remedial perspective to a structural perspective (from remedying isolated instances of discrimination to transforming the context, which produces exclusion). It locates the problem of exclusion not in the individual who does not "fit" the existing standards, provided these standards may be justified as both objective and reasonable, but in these standards themselves, which take as given the environment on which their definition is based. And it sees the requirement of non-discrimination as an opportunity for the exercise of institutional imagination.

Leti Volpp

Moving Beyond "Feminism versus Multiculturalism"

This paper begins by examining the prevalent conception that feminism and multiculturalism are oppositional values. I demonstrate that the conception is premised upon a belief that immigrant culture is especially gender subordinating, and illustrate how this belief is constructed through a process of marking only certain behaviour as cultural. I discuss the theoretical bases for the oppositional placement of feminism and multiculturalism, and then turn to examine several of the detrimental consequences of this way of thinking. Saving women in Afghanistan from the Taliban is discussed as a focal point here. The paper then turns to the attempts of particular actors to address questions of culture, whose starting position is not mired in one side of the battle of feminism versus multiculturalism, but who embrace the idea that this is a false and unhelpful opposition with detrimental effects. These actors are U.S. based immigrant women working on the question of domestic violence in Asian communities who simultaneously navigate anti-racist and anti-sexist practices. I discuss two particular sites – the first, a think tank meeting of these advocates in which I participated; the second, the expert testimony given by one of these advocates at the trial of a Sikh woman accused of attempting parent-child suicide. The two sites illustrate two possible turns one might take in talking about culture and difference, after moving beyond the feminism versus multiculturalism debate, one of which appears to be a universalist turn, the second towards a politicised description of culture.

Melissa Williams

Diversifying Democratic Citizenship: Unpatriotic Reflections

Among the questions the conference organisers have set for us to consider, in this paper I reflect on the following: Can democratic values be shared across cultural and religious differences? More specifically, does shared democratic citizenship rest upon a *shared identity* among citizens, at least a shared civic identity grounded in mutual commitment to core democratic principles? Does cultural and religious pluralism challenge democratic societies' capacity to sustain the sense of shared civic identity that so many democratic theorists take as a precondition of stable democracy? A number of recent works on democratic citizenship have focused on the inculcation of a shared civic identity as a desideratum of democratic education. Yet there are good reasons to be deeply sceptical of such projects. A focus on citizenship as shared identity inevitably sets up a model of the virtuous citizen against which actual citizens should be judged. When such models of citizen identity are held up as the standard for judging actual citizens, we can reliably predict that members of cultural and religious minorities will be found to fall short. Moreover, the quest for an ideal of citizenship as shared identity has its roots in the project of nation-building that was so integral to the construction of the modern nation-state in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. If identity-based conceptions of citizenship cannot be disentangled from these historical roots, we must question how useful they are in an era when the model of the nation-state as the basis of political community is obsolescent. As an alternative to conceptions of citizenship-as-identity, I proffer a notion of "citizenship as shared fate," a conception of political community which is grounded in the bonds of actually existing relations of interdependence and tied to an account of legitimacy as reciprocal justification. This conception of citizenship draws upon western philosophical traditions of citizenship, both liberal and republican, but attempts to translate those traditions into *functional* terms: what are the human purposes served by the activities of citizenship, and what sorts of boundaries do those functions presuppose? The aspiration is a conception of citizenship that is sufficiently malleable to respond to the shifting boundaries of political affiliation and membership while holding fast to our traditions' institutional and philosophical achievements on behalf of democratic agency and legitimacy.

Because so much of the literature on civic identity has been rooted in discussions of democratic education, the final section of the paper explores the implications of the idea of "citizenship as shared fate" for education in pluralistic democracies.

SPEAKERS & DISCUSSANTS

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