The Baring Foundation

Interculturalism: social policy and grassroots work

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About the Baring Foundation

The Baring Foundation was set up in 1969 to give money to voluntary organisations. Our purpose is to improve the quality of life of people experiencing disadvantage and discrimination. Since then the Foudnation has given around £100 million in grants. Most funding is currently through three grant programmes: Strengthening the Voluntary Sector; Arts; and International Development.

From time to time the Foundation chooses to work on a Special Initiative outside our main grant programmes. This paper relates to one of these – interculturality. This takes the form of annual cash awards to voluntary sector grassroots work, managed by the Institute of Community Cohesion. The reflections on this work in this paper are those of the author.

About the Author

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Abstract

Based on an analysis of submissions to the Awards for Bridging Cultures and social policy, this paper discusses ideas of 'community', 'culture', 'contact', 'parallel lives', and particularly 'community cohesion'. Often uncritically used, and with potentially negative outcomes, this paper questions these terms and asks what they imply for interculturalism in the UK. Whilst acknowledging the importance of anti-racism initiatives and the persistence of everyday interculturalism, this paper stresses that most discussions on interculturalism are in fact regressive and based on fixed notions of ethnicity and geography. It argues that these fixed ideas limit the possibility of intercultural relations beyond the boundaries of neighbourhood, skin colour and certain cultural practices. These limitations deny human complexity and the ordinary processes and changes of life. In this way, they also prevent social policy responses to inequality and discrimination. Until policy makers open their eyes to the realities that people live and question the language that they use, oppressive and discriminatory ways of living will not be eradicated.

Discussions on interculturalism arose in the space left by the 'death' of multiculturalism and the limitations of community cohesion. These have been aided greatly by Baring Foundation which, since 2007, has both showcased grassroots interculturalism and brought to light theoretical work on the subject.

Commissioned by the Baring Foundation in 2008, 'Interculturalism: Theory and Policy' (James 2008) outlined a move away from models for post-colonial society based on sealed cultural groups (multiculturalism and community cohesion), towards a more multifaceted notion of interculturalism. This notion took into account the importance of global connections, the processes of life and living, and how interculturalism depends on certain locations and contexts.

The aim to showcase grassroots interculturality, resulted in the Awards for Bridging Cultures (ABCs) funded by the Baring Foundation and managed by the Institute of Community Cohesion. The Awards were aimed at schemes and projects, run by community and voluntary organisations. The purpose of the Awards was to bring to prominence a number of projects displaying excellence and innovation in their intercultural work[1].

This second paper builds on both of these. It uses the theoretical framework from the first paper to discuss the winning and commended submissions to the Awards, and uses the submissions to the Awards for Bridging Cultures to aid an analysis of current policy and public debates around interculturalism.

This paper discusses ideas of 'community', 'culture', 'contact', 'parallel lives', and 'community cohesion' all of which are central to public and policy debates on interculturalism. Often uncritically used, and with potentially negative outcomes, this paper questions these terms and asks what they imply for the UK.

The paper argues that these terms are often based on fixed notions of ethnicity and geography which limit the possibility of facilitating intercultural relations through social policy because they restrict humans to the boundaries of neighbourhoods, skin colour and certain cultural practices. These limitations deny everything else that

[1] See http://www.bridgingcultures.org.uk/ for more details.

humans are – complex, contradictory, changing and socially structured. Until policy makers address these concerns and realities, oppressive and discriminatory ways of living will not be eradicated.

The paper recommends that:

- public policy ceases to use the language of 'bridging', 'contact' and 'parallel lives' which are based on fixed ideas of geography and ethnicity. In place of these notions, lived experience, history, change and context be embraced;

- 'community cohesion' be challenged as an agenda not of the progressive policy (of the left or right) but as a regressive policy of assimilation which potentially justifies xenophobic attitudes, in national and local politics;

- policy makers take responsibility for structural inequalities rather than blaming individual 'cultures' and 'communities';

- anti-racist methodologies addressing histories of racism be supported; and,

- intercultural spaces that flourish in spite of interventions made in the name of 'community cohesion' be recognised, though not necessarily promoted.

This is a call for policy makers to see the world outside of the familiar 'community cohesion' boxes. Failure to address these concerns will continue to provide sustenance to xenophobia, racism and worsening intercultural relations.

The paper will proceed in the following way: the first section of the paper will update the policy context, in which this paper is written, and in which the first round of Awards for Bridging Cultures operated; the second section will discuss interculturalism as put forward by the winning and commended submissions. This will be done with reference to the framework presented in the first paper (James 2008). The third section will turn the discussion back to policy and ask what lessons can be learned from the submissions' presentation of intercultural work. The fourth section will conclude and the fifth section will present some policy recommendations.

The policy context

Discussions on interculturalism in the space vacated by the 'death of multiculturalism' and the failings of community cohesion. Multiculturalism was condemned as the idea that people should be encouraged to live in separate cultural communities. Community cohesion can be summarised as the idea that we should all conform to the same ideal of Britishness. Interculturalism was put forward to challenge multiculturalism and community cohesion by dealing with complexity beyond absolute sameness or difference. The first paper 'Interculturalism: Theory and Policy' (James 2008) provided a framework for this. This attended to global connections, structural inequalities and discrimination, non-fixed identities, and the kind of spaces that intercultural relations exist in.

This section discusses policy developments in the areas of social cohesion, citizenship, and migration, as they relate to interculturalism.

Responses to the attacks on the Twin Towers, the northern disturbances in 2001 and the subsequent London bombings in 2005 remodelled UK understandings of multicultural society. Ted Cantle's uncovered 'parallel lives' in northern England (Cantle 2001, p.9), multiculturalism as a model for multi-ethnic Britain was declared 'dead', and Trevor Philips's (BBC 2005) warned that we were 'sleep walking into segregation'. These analyses impacted on migration, citizenship and community cohesion policy. They added impetus to the assimilationist desire to embrace 'British values', and in so doing adopted the neo-liberal tendency to blame cultural communities and individuals, rather than structural conditions, for the country's failings.

The events of 2001 and 2005, respectively, drew two principle policy responses: the Cantle report (Cantle 2001); and, 'Our Shared Future' (Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007). The Cantle Report responded to the northern disturbances of 2001. It was lorded as new approach to race relations in the UK, moving beyond the separateness associated with 'multiculturalism', by balancing difference with interaction and commonality (2008). The Report drew attention to ethnically divided, geographic communities in which people led 'parallel lives'. In response to these 'parallel lives' the Report embraced a concept of 'community cohesion' which drew on 'contact theory'[2] and Putnam's social capital theory, from which the language of 'bridging' and 'bonding' was derived.

'Our Shared Future'(Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007) was greatly influenced by these earlier policy decisions. By promoting what 'binds' us rather than focusing on what 'divides' it reflected earlier concerns with 'parallel lives' and 'bridging'. In both reports, 'contact' between fixed groups remained a dominant model for promoting community cohesion.

The government's vision of 'community cohesion' is very much dependant on a subtext of authentic 'Britishness'. Although 'Britishness' and 'British values' are now a familiar part of the community cohesion lexicon, 'Britishness' as a theme is rooted in citizenship policy. The most recent contribution to this policy area was Lord Goldsmith's Review of Citizenship (Goldsmith 2008). The Review highlighted citizenship's legal and contractual role in maintaining a social contract commensurate with 'British values' (Goldsmith 2008, p.9). With regards to the later, the Review topically discussed "the position of new migrants and how they can best be engaged in a shared sense of belonging in the UK" (Goldsmith 2008, p. 3).

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[2] Contact theory and the work of Miles Hewstone is discussed in the earlier paper (James 2008).

Migration policy itself had already developed measures on citizenship testing, ceremonies and allegiance oaths (Home Office 2002) as way of ensuring the spread of 'British values' and the demise of un-British acts. More recent policy papers in this area (Home Office 2007; Home Office 2007) have responded with xenophobic legislation and surveillance to the self-perpetuated climate of fear following the July 2005 London bombings.

The New Labour project of managed migration, citizenship and community cohesion has finally been brought together in the Draft Immigration and Citizenship Bill (Home Office 2008)[3]. The Bill lays out tougher enforcement for those not 'playing by the rules', 'earned citizenship', increased surveillance, and a sustained focus on assimilationist approaches to cohesion, citizenship and 'British values'.

The Awards for Bridging Cultures were launched in this public and policy environment.

[3] Now in the form of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill 2009.

Interculturalism and the Awards for Bridging Cultures

A total of 238 projects applied to the Awards. There was one winner and three commended projects from each of the three categories: voluntary or community sector projects with an annual income of under £1 million; voluntary or community sector projects with an annual income of over £1 million; and public/private organisations supporting intercultural schemes ABCs brochure.

This section discusses interculturalism as put forward by the winning and commended submissions to the Awards for Bridging Cultures[4]. This is done with reference to the framework presented in the first paper (James 2008).

- Spaces of and for interculturalism

- UK interculturalism in a global context

- Un-fixed identities – from classification to process

- Structural inequalities and discrimination.

The submissions discussed in this section can be broadly divided into three groups.

- Community cohesion style submissions responded to perceived tensions by building good relations between fixed cultural communities. These submissions largely view 'culture' as synonymous with fixed ideas of ethnicity. They view interculturalism as dependent on ethnicity and geography, and put forward 'contact' models to bridge between problem 'cultures'.

- Anti-racism submissions engaged with the categories of 'race', how they are historically constructed and how they oppress people.

- A third model understood culture in a broad sense which encompassed the many different ways in which we are different, the same, live our lives and make meaning in the world. 'Culture' (as ethnicity) was not fundamental to these projects.

Spaces *of* and *for* interculturalism

The identification and promotion of interculturalism (spaces *for* interculturalism) can stifle its everyday existence (spaces *of* interculturalism). Through seemingly banal interactions, people live beyond the categories established for their lives, whether these be racial, gendered, national, linguistic, religious or otherwise. These are sites of creativity that arise spontaneously and convivially (James 2008, p.14).

Although it is often not the intention, doing intercultural work makes it possible that people and their everyday lives are subjected to categories. These categories, often determined by domestic and international policy, when applied to creative, spontaneous and everyday interculturalism, restrict the ways that people can interact. Rather than interact across cultural boundaries people are asked to assume them.

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[4] The submissions to the Awards for Bridging Cultures while based on real projects are also reflective of the Awards criteria that they responded to. At no stage does this paper suggest that the submissions and the projects are one and the same. This is not an evaluation of the Awards or the projects rather it is a critical discussion on public and policy debates relating to interculturalism, based on the submissions. For this reason, this paper does not include details of the award winning and commended projects and where possible maintains their anonymity.

Discussion of the submissions

Most submissions to the Awards for Bridging Cultures, put forward these restrictive spaces *for* interculturalism, though not necessarily to the exclusion of the more creative spaces *of* interculturalism.

Interculturalism was often set with reference to geographical markers – the city or town in which the projects worked. A small number also considered the county, or countryside. In most cases, however, project aims included a discussion of building good community relations, or building community cohesion, in urban areas. Projects saw themselves as constituent elements of an intercultural urban space. The city or town limits were the geographic extent of their intercultural work.

Geographical spaces such as the neighbourhood or city were simultaneously markers of 'cultural' spaces. Whereas intercultural spaces, as one submission pointed out, might be discussed in terms of "place, gender, race, history, nationality, sexual orientation, religious belief and ethnicity", and indeed much more than this, submissions tended to use 'culture' to mean only ethnicity and faith. Geographies for interculturalism were then discussed in terms of the ethnically or religiously diverse city, the recently diversified city, and the tale of the two neighbourhoods. All were examples of the different ways in which 'culture' (as ethnicity and faith) was mapped onto geography.

In the tale of two neighbourhoods model, complete cultural separation was believed to exist between two places, and it was believed that the inhabitants of these places lived out their experiences of complete separation. Submissions addressed separation through 'building bridges' between communities. However, most did not address the assumptions relating to the fixed categories they were employing, or the possibility that bridge building may serve to compound the belief in segregation on these terms.

Creative, everyday spaces *of* interculturalism were less evident in the submissions. Submissions that did show the everyday, creative nature of interculturalism operated not because of 'cultural' difference (e.g. the two neighbourhood model) but in response to other local issues. For these submissions, difference, in terms of ethnicity and geography, was not the defining framework by which they achieved the aims and ambitions of their work. Nonetheless, the spaces they provided were intercultural. These submissions took a wider view of culture which included practices, world views and structural locations. Viewed as broadly as this, each individual was perceived as culturally different from each other. The fact that they had more than one individual attended the project meant that they were doing intercultural work.

Even in submissions adhering to fixed ideas of ethnicity and geography, creative spaces were evident. When two people come together they inevitably learn something from the other and expand their horizons. Indeed, in many cases the submissions stated that through bringing different ethnic, faith and geographic communities together, they were working to break down barriers and build common understandings. However, by predicating their work on strict 'cultural' (ethnic and faith) and geographical difference they were in fact hampering rather than facilitating interculturalism. The creative spaces that were evident and the common understandings that did arise might better be attributed to the power of creativity to overcome fixity, rather than the community cohesion frameworks in which the projects ran.

Submissions outlined certain qualities necessary for intercultural spaces. These included humility, humour, sensitivity, trust and respect – all perhaps features of grassroots work. However, what was not clear from the submissions was whether these qualities were particularly salient to work 'between cultures', as opposed to other types of grassroots work. That is, it was unclear whether 'cultures' required certain kinds of

special mediation, the lack of which would result in conflict or tension. The problem, again, was the way that some submissions seemed to use the idea of culture as primordial, ethnicised and as requiring special attention.

UK interculturalism in a global context

UK interculturalism exists in a global context of international markets, communications and population movements. This global context had a history, which in the case of the UK, relates to past colonial and present imperialist ambitions, but also to solidarity across national boundaries. Given this, it is not possible to take an isolationist or wholly national view of interculturalism (James 2008, p.12-13).

Discussion of the submissions

Many submissions reflected upon the interconnections between their projects and the world: as a response to the movement of people (migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) to, and within, the newly diversified city; in the context of their responsibilities as 'global citizens'; through the media; and, in relation to the global historic processes of colonialism, imperialism and slavery.

However, while there was a perspective for the global context of their work, many projects were also confined to the city and dependent on interpersonal contact. For example, even though some projects addressed areas of work such as the public demonization of Muslims through discourses on terrorism, they did so detached from the global context of the 'war on terror'.

Media influence was also discussed as local and based on contact, while its global context was also acknowledged. Most submissions addressing the media discussed how their work responded to the media as a (potential) conduit for racist and racialising ideologies, especially around local elections.

Given this attention to the media it was interesting that projects did not engage with virtual spaces of communication.

Un-fixed identities – from classification to process

Human categorisation has a dehumanising affect on people and groups. Identity cannot be contained in boxes and fixed identities are often associated with abuses of power. Identity is both multifaceted and a process of continual change. If we cannot think about identity beyond a fixed shopping list of categories we will not be able to benefit from the everyday way that lives are formed and lived (James 2008, p.13). Rather than creating policy in response to people's lives we will continue to develop policy in response to caricatures.

Discussion of the submissions

Many of the submissions defined their intercultural work as 'bridging' fixed cultural and geographic 'communities'. This was particularly evident in the tale of two neighbourhoods model. Given the title 'Awards for Bridging Cultures', perhaps this use of language is unsurprising.

In many submissions, ethnic, religious and geographic boundaries were presented as self-evident. These submissions did not question the categories they used, or indeed ask why an intercultural framework was necessary for grassroots work. It was sufficient to state that cultural 'communities' existed and that bridging was required. In some cases, the identification of 'cultural' difference provided the justification for the

methods used to bring communities together. For example, when cultural difference was defined ethnically, through food, people were brought together by eating curry and fish and chips.

Some projects used a wider range of categories to discuss people's lives. They relied not just on categories of ethnicity and faith group but also on gender, nationality, sexuality, subculture, profession and hobbies. Although these were more complex understandings of culture and communities, they were nonetheless fixed. That is, they were not shown to be part of a process. This lack of attention to history and process was in spite of the fact that some projects did recognise, and resuscitate, shared histories and memories.

Submissions did often not acknowledge the way that engaging with, and recognising, fixed cultural communities, fixes cultural communities. That is, they did not acknowledge how projects that aim to give 'communities' visibility are also complicit in creating categories by which people live, are recognised and determined. For example, in some projects the role of cultural representatives was considered only to be a form of socially responsible advocacy and information sharing. It was not also considered to be a process of fixing, whereby the representative through the act of representation engages in the politics of fixing themselves, the 'community' and those outside the 'community'.

Structural inequalities and discrimination

Interculturalism demands that structural inequalities and unequal power relations be addressed so that all people can participate in society as humans of equal standing. This requires the redistribution of economic and political power and the eradication of all forms of discrimination (James 2008, p.13-14).

Discussion of the submissions

Racism was engaged with in a number of the submissions. Some submissions discussed the complexities of dealing with racism – as multifaceted, historic, complex, structural and personal. These submissions recognised that racism was about inferior treatment, violence and oppressive social order. They also recognised that racism was made and re-made. As made, rather than true, these submissions put forward the potential of their projects to unmake 'race', in the interest of a common humanity. They stated that there are no 'races' of humans, only one human race.

Anti-racism submissions showed that through unmaking racial categories it was possible to illuminate common interconnections, continuities and discontinuities that racial thinking denies. Importantly, these were not esoteric or theoretical projects, rather they engaged with the slipperiness and complexity of racism as found on the ground.

For some submissions, unmaking 'race' was more than changing one part of the racist/racial system. As one submission pointed out, while new legislation could replace old, the damage done through racism continued 'in the hearts and mind', and on the bodies of those affected. In this way, racism was seen as a multi-layered system for ordering human beings; a system that had intertwined and interdependent structural, psychological, social, economic and legal dimensions, all of which had histories.

Anti-racist submissions complicated the belief that society is post-race by showing that racism positions the racist and the victim of racism into categories and histories through which they live. They showed that these categories and their histories must be engaged with by the racist and racialised alike in order to challenge oppressive social orders and restore humanity to the racially objectified.

However, many submissions, rather than challenge racism, worked in what they saw as people's culturally bound realities. They confronted inter-community tensions through building positive relationships between segregated communities. The positive relationship model can be seen to reflect community cohesion paradigms which stress the need to 'build bridges' between 'parallel lives'. In the positive relations model, cultural categories were embraced and celebrated when they were positive, and myth-busted when they were negative. For example, the image of the Muslim-terrorist was rejected through embracing the good western Muslim. However, it was not considered that one is very much dependent on the other. In contemporary 'race' thinking the good Muslim is the necessary counterpart of the bad Muslim (Mamdani 2004).

Aside from reducing prejudice, the desired outcome of these kinds of projects was often intercultural friendship. 'Friendship' as an outcome requires some discussion. Friendship is complex, often fickle and is not necessarily the panacea post-racial interaction that some submissions presented it to be. Friendships can be the site of enlightening creative, subversive and radical forms of interaction. However, friendship conditioned by 'bridging' relies on a very deep ascription to separate ethnic and geographical communities. Friendship is not post-racial if it is dependent on the 'other' being different to you.

Submissions relying uncritically on models of fixed cultural communities overlooked discrimination and structural inequality. 'Culture' as primordial and all-defining explained away other social issues such as institutional racism, poverty and discrimination. Consequently, a cross-cutting social analysis of class, poverty, gender, sexuality and age was not forthcoming.

Conclusion on interculturalism and the submissions to the ABCs

The submissions as a whole present a range of approaches to intercultural work.

Many submissions used community cohesion models. These submissions viewed 'culture' as ethnicity. They viewed interculturalism as dependent on ethnicity and geography, and put forward 'contact' models to bridge between these problem groups. Other submissions addressed histories of racism by using anti-racist methodologies to engage with oppressive social categories. A third trend was to understand culture in its broadest possible sense to encompass the many different ways in which we are different, and the same, in how we live our lives. 'Culture' (as ethnicity) was not fundamental to these submissions.

These different approaches open up important discussions on the dilemmas faced when engaging with cultural categories. They also open up discussions on how engaging with 'culture' as ethnicity and geography has the effect of denying a more complex understanding of human life which takes discrimination, global practices and non-face-to-face contact into account.

Interculturalism and social policy

This section develops three themes of further enquiry. These themes highlight key areas of concern and interest for public policy associated with interculturalism.

The themes are:

- the substituting of ethnicity for 'culture' in social policy and intercultural work;

- the problems with models for interculturalism dependent on 'contact' and fixed geographies;

- and, the dilemmas faced when deciding whether to engage, or not, with cultural categories.

'Culture' problems

Culture is simultaneously all-defining and unobtainable. It has been presented as a problem (a source of tension and of 'parallel lives') and it has been presented as the solution (British culture and 'British values'). To get from one to the other, community cohesion, migration and citizenship policy have been tasked with the management of culture (Lewis 2007). This section asks questions of the way public policy uses the word 'culture' and the affect that this might have on intercultural relations.

'Culture' is often used to refer to ethnicity. For example, multicultural Britain as a pseudonym for multi-ethnic Britain. Although the use of 'culture' in community cohesion policy has been expanded to encompass faith, and other ways of life, it was, and still is, principally concerned with 'culture' as ethnicity.

'Culture' has different meaning for different communities. There has been a tendency to position Asian communities as over-cultured and black communities as under-cultured. 'Culture' more recently has been used in relation to white working-class communities previously defined in socio-economic terms. All of these cultural communities are placed against, and feed into, the presence of a dominant British culture.[5]

Community cohesion is predicated on the idea that cultural communities, when not British enough, are problematic and conflictive. These communities, we are told, must be assimilated. Since 2001, this version of 'culture' problems and solutions has become self-evident and all-explaining.

By defining 'culture' as the root of social ills, the government is required to manage it. 'Culture' is made responsible for violence, intolerance and joblessness – 'culture of violence' (Telegraph 2008), 'culture of intolerance' (The Times 2009), and the 'culture of no one works around here' (Guardian 2008). As 'culture' is deemed to be rooted in 'communities' and individuals, the government has limited responsibility for its problems. The onus has been firmly placed on individuals and 'communities' to own up to, and solve, their own malaise. They must show the good face of the 'community'. In this way, social and economic disadvantages become their responsibility and not the governments.

The message is clear: the problem is the wrong culture; the solution is the right culture (Britishness); and, the method to get from one to the other is community cohesion. This implies the fixing of certain 'cultures' as problematic, the beautification of

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[5] As such, these 'marginal' and 'non-British' cultures have become central to confirming Britishness.

Britishness, and the individualisation of blame. All of this prevents a cross-cutting social analysis of 'race', class, gender, sexuality and age.

Beyond cartography, beyond contact

'Culture' (as ethnicity) is geographically staked out. More accurately, it is cartographically delineated because what are implied are the boundaries of maps. City limits, wards and neighbourhoods are all fitted to ethnic or multi-ethnic boundaries. These cartographic boundaries are seen to be the limits of interpersonal relations. Interpersonal relations are seen to be the limits of interculturalism. The city or town becomes the extent of intercultural work.

'Culture' (as ethnicity) is also applied to smaller cartographies, as is evident in the two neighbourhoods model. The two neighbourhoods model supposes that people's lives are fundamentally orientated by an OS map and copy of Census ethnicity categories. It again writes the orders of 'culture' onto maps. Land boundaries become markers for 'cultural' inclusion and exclusion, and 'contact' or 'bridges' are required between them.

By applying these models, it becomes impossible to think about culture, and interculturalism, beyond maps. Nonetheless, people do live beyond cartography and contact. The cartography of maps is continually challenged through population movements, human solidarity, the global media, music, art, and virtual worlds. UK social policy is itself made in the global arena. People's lives in any location are globally inter-linked on many levels. People live beyond face-to-face contact. People make friends virtually and their lives are shaped by events and personal connections that they may never see. This is not to say that cartography and contact are unimportant, rather as a global phenomenon, intercultural space is much more than the contacts made over the fence.

The treacherous bind

Given the ways 'culture' is used as a substitute for ethnicity, and indeed the way that people see their lives as culturally and cartographically bound, it was hardly surprising that many submissions responded to cultural categories. However, their responses were discordant. Some disregarded fixed versions of 'culture', some challenged it, and some accepted it. Their various positions can be discussed with reference to the 'treacherous bind' (Gunaratnam 2003; Radhakrishnan 1996). Although this discussion is based on the submissions, the consequences and dilemmas of engaging with cultural categories is pressing for social policy.

The treacherous bind enables reflections on the problems associated with engaging with ethnic categories. The treacherous bind is a way of discussing how the use of ethnic categories, in policy and grassroots work, may deepen the divisions and social orders that they mark.[6] It highlights that the engagement with ethnic categories may be counterproductive to work which seeks greater social justice and better intercultural relations.

In the submissions, engagement with the treacherous bind was various. Submissions positing a community cohesion model did not pose the question. They did not engage with the potential dehumanisation implicit in keeping humans in boxes. 'Culture' (as ethnicity) was often presented as a mark of de facto difference, and submissions asked

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[6] Gilroy is mindful of this problem when he asserts that in his work he wishes not to engage with "race" or with racial conflicts or to make these categorizations more salient and self-evident but because he wishes to confront racisms (2004, p.9, 16), to move beyond "race" and in so doing disalientate racialised bodies and restore them to "proper human modes of being in the world" (Fanon cited in Gilroy 2004, p.45).

us to take 'culture' (as ethnicity) for granted without ever questioning why we should to do so, or why it was relevant to the work they were doing. Their intercultural work was uncritically presented as a bridge building project between fixed cultural communities.

Other submissions took a different approach, engaging in different ways with the treacherous bind. These submissions moved away from community cohesion models. Some saw intercultural relations as banal. Culture was evident in the different styles, ages, genders, interests, ethnicities, hobbies and friendship groups that people in the projects represented. These were coincidentally intercultural encounters. The project was a space of interculturalism by virtue of the fact that people were different, and those different people attended the project. These projects did not seek to determine the work they did based on preconceived ideas of 'culture' because 'culture' (as ethnicity) was not pivotal to achieving the aims and ambitions of the project. Their ambivalence to these dominant prescriptions of 'cultural' made their work radical and humanistic.

A second variety, did engage with these categories, but rather than uncritically accept them, they engaged them head on. In engaging with racial categories they set out to un-make them and to humanise racialised bodies. These anti-racist submissions challenged racism by engaging with its everyday effects, the pathologies of racial order, and the histories of racist thought. Through anti-racist methodologies, they were able to confront racism and resuscitate complex histories of interconnectedness and disconnection beyond the categories established for people's lives.

These three varieties were all labelled 'intercultural work' although their approaches couldn't be more different. The latter two varieties, through disregard and confrontation respectively, radically challenged the first. In their own ways, they deconstructed the fixed foundations of cultural communities, on which 'bridges' are built. They challenged the history and systems of racial thinking which are predicated on the idea of there being separate human 'races'. They deconstructed how 'race' (and its overlay 'culture') has been constructed and how these constructions have become dominant models for ordering humanity. The first variety did not pose the question. They used categories uncritically and failed to acknowledge the implications of doing so.

Conclusion

This paper has used the submissions to the Awards for Bridging to reflect on the interface between social policy and grassroots work associated with interculturalism. It has used the tensions and similarities between them to critically discuss 'community', 'culture', 'contact', 'parallel lives', 'community cohesion' and intercultural work.

When the discussions on intercultural dialogue started at the Baring Foundation, there was a strong sense that it was necessary to move beyond old baggage. Multiculturalism had been deemed 'dead' and community cohesion did not offer the theoretical or practical tools for engaging with the complex interactions that happen over time, between people and places. Interculturalism offered potential. It offered the potential to address complexity and challenge structural inequality.

Through a discussion of the winning and commended submissions to the Awards for Bridging Cultures this paper has highlighted the complexity inherent in spaces *of* interculturalism. It has discussed their global interconnections and challenged the foundations on which lives are ordered and oppressed. It has supported the appreciation of the everyday, and a commitment to anti-racism which humanises 'culture'. It has also posed necessary questions about the ways, and reasons why, we use concepts like 'community cohesion'.

The paper has challenged how grassroots work and government policy simultaneously accept and promote 'culture' as fixed and racialised while at the same time promoting a pure but unobtainable notion of 'British culture'. The paper has argued that where 'culture' (as ethnicity) is elided and marked geographically, complexity, history and context have been denied and social order maintained. To this extent it asked how useful, or damaging, social policy is when it does not relate to the world that we live in.

Social policy's fixation on 'culture' (as ethnicity), and a propensity to shift the blame from government to individuals and communities, public policy limits a social analysis of, and social action on, discrimination and disadvantage pertaining to 'race', gender, sexuality, age, poverty and racism. It's emphasis on 'contact' between fixed geographic 'communities', means it is unable to grasp how people's lives are made through population movements, through human solidarity, through the global media, by people they may never see. It denies a critical analysis of the relationship between community cohesion and the global war on terror. It denies the links between local xenophobia and the image of the global terrorist.

Restricting humanity and interculturalism to policies founded on 'parallel lives' is fundamentally damaging to human relations and to interculturalism as a radical and progressive project. Policy of this kind, which demands that we view people as cultural problems, at best does not relate to the world in which we live and at worst is a breeding ground for contemporary xenophobias.

If social policy makers wish to address human complexity and provide the frameworks for goods human relations they need to take all of this on board. Rather than continue to cement the inside of boxes, they should embrace culture in its widest possible sense, value anti-racism work, and, appreciate the spontaneous and creative forms of interculturalism that flourish in spite of 'community cohesion'.

Policy recommendations

This paper recommends:

- that community cohesion be acknowledged by government as a potential cause of division along ethnic and geographical lines, rather than a solution;

- that public policy cease to use the language of 'bridging' and 'parallel lives' which are based on fixed ideas of geography and ethnicity. It is recommended that in its place lived experience, history, change and context be embraced;

- that 'community cohesion' be publicly acknowledged as an agenda not of progressive social policy (of the left or right) but as an assimilationist and regressive trend which has contributed to rising xenophobia in local and national politics;

- that 'culture' be used more broadly in social policy to also allow for social analysis and social action around all forms of discrimination and disadvantage, and in particular 'race', gender, sexuality, poverty, age and class;

- that social policy expand the concept of 'contact' to take into account the global and virtual connections that we all have, and the global context in which face-to-face relations are structured;

- that government take responsibility for structural inequalities rather than shifting the blame to individuals, 'cultures' and 'communities';

- support for anti-racist methodologies that address histories of racism;

- recognition though not promotion of intercultural spaces that flourish in spite of interventions made in the name of 'community cohesion';

- that where intercultural or community cohesion projects are proposed, that these be considered against community development or youth work frameworks which do not stipulate group or individual identity as precursor to involvement.

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