

Travelling Concepts: Negotiating Diversity in Canada and Europe

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'Diversity,' denoting cultural and ethnic, but also socio-economic differentiation and increasingly stratification, has become a keyword in both the social sciences and cultural studies. In political theory and the social sciences in general, 'diversity' provides a framework in which to discuss issues of multiculturalism, migration, sub-state nationalism, indigenous people, and questions of citizenship and citizenship rights; equally important in cultural and literary studies, if with different foci and often with recourse to the related terminology of 'difference,' 'diversity' claims theoretical and analytical currency with regard to constructions of identity, the canon, and understandings of 'ethnic,' 'multicultural,' or 'post- colonial' literatures and cultures. Since the 1980s, both fields, the social sciences and cultural and literary studies, have been marked by significant shifts in what 'diversity' means, in which contexts, and to what effects.

The same is obvious for the way in which western democratic nations address changing demographics and increasing cultural diversity within their borders; in North America but also to a growing extent in Europe, concepts of homogenous nations have given way to an understanding of cultural diversity as a constitutive aspect of contemporary societies, and thus to policies that grant rights to ethnic and other cultural minorities *as* minorities. But, as Will Kymlicka notes in his recent *Multicultural Odysseys*, not only have individual nation states begun to replace earlier assimilationist or integrationist policies with multi-cultural approaches that seek to preserve and protect cultural difference; also, this shift has an increasingly international dimension on two levels, "the global diffusion of the *political discourse* of multiculturalism" and "the codification of multiculturalism in certain international *legal {or quasi-legal} norms*"¹ Whereas Kymlicka's book is concerned mainly with the second level of codification, this collection of essays presents an investigation of the transnational diffusion of the political discourse of diversity and multiculturalism. The contributions concentrate on a very specific context: the way in which concepts of diversity 'travel' between the disciplines; and across the Atlantic, more specifically, be-

¹ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys. Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3-4.

tween Canada and Europe. Also, in a second step, this collection is concerned with the ways in which these 'travels' have to be contextualized in changing public arenas as part of transnationalization and globalization processes, the structuring of these arenas by a multiplicity of actors, and the role of these publics as spaces in which concepts of identity and diversity are discussed and mutually recognized. In short, this collection builds on the assumption that concepts of diversity *travel* and that they are *negotiated* on various levels to be adaptable to the specific contexts in and between which they travel; the geographical frameworks this collection focuses on is provided by the exchange between *Canada and Europe*.

Travelling Concepts

'Concepts,' as cultural critic Mieke Bal has it, offer miniature theories;² they allow and force us to focus not only our attention but also our scholarly interest in the strong Habermasian sense of the term.³ They are "the sites of debate, awareness of difference, and tentative exchange," the basis for both meaningful agreement and, maybe even more importantly, disagreement.⁴ As such, concepts are not fixed; rather, "they travel - between disciplines, between individual scholars, between historical periods, and between geographically dispersed academic communities."⁵

With Bal and others, we adopt the metaphor of 'travel' in order to attempt and capture the ways in which concepts, that is, miniature theories, are adapted and adopted into different frameworks of analysis, and how they are transformed in this process. Firstly, these frameworks are disciplinary. While inter- and trans-disciplinarity have become central modes of exchange in theory, in practice there remains much to be desired in terms of cooperation between scholars in the social sciences and the humanities. This collection brings together established and younger scholars from political sciences, sociology, history, and literary and cultural studies in order to investigate 'diversity' - both as a concept for and an object of study in various disciplines; while some of the contributions sketch the actual journey of the concept in question as well as related ones (e.g. Hoerder, Urschel), others critically examine its currency and problems in specific contexts. These contexts go beyond the disciplines, but also cross borders of a dif-

2 Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities. A Rough Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 22.

3 Ibid. 12; see also Jürgen Habermas, *Erkenntnis und Interesse* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973).

4 Bal 13.

5 Ibid. 24.

ferent kind. So secondly, the different frameworks this collection seeks to highlight are also to be understood in geographical terms, encompassing on the one hand the Canadian context, on the other various European countries. These geographical contexts are doubly targeted: as contexts in which ‘diversity’ is a political, cultural, and social reality and is looked at as an object of investigation and study for scholars of various disciplines; and as contexts that shape the way in which scholars look at and construct their object of study, that is, as a concept to capture social and cultural processes of transformation, tension, and opportunity.

Negotiating Diversity

Therefore, we seek to capture the crucial political and cultural processes at the centre of this collection with the term ‘negotiation.’ ‘Negotiation’ stresses the aspect of dialogue and conversation, it can be understood as “a bargaining to reach an agreement” or even as an “intervention” (Webster’s dictionary) and appropriately denotes the processes of struggle not only about how to ‘deal’ with social and cultural diversity, but also over the very meaning of diversity and difference. Central to this struggle is what Charles Taylor has introduced as the concept of recognition, not just as a way of reaching an agreement about difference, but as an essential part of identity building. Taylor assumes that identity formation is possible only in and through social relations of recognition. As he puts it in his influential and controversial essay “The Politics of Recognition,”

our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the mis-recognitions of others, and so a person or a 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.⁶

Building on an often critical examination of Taylor’s concept of recognition as a way to negotiate identity and acknowledge difference, the arguments put forward in this anthology are not so much guided by the quest of the best way to accommodate cultural diversity in a particular society, but on the process of negoti-

6 Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 25-73. 25.

ation itself and how different contexts and changing public arenas affect these debates about diversity and culture.

In this context, 'culture' is understood not as encompassing specific essences but as "units of meaning and meaningful forms" as well as the practices that create, perpetuate, or question meaning;⁷ thus, cultures are always born out of interaction with others and are shaped by wider economic, political, social, and other forces. Human beings, as Bhikhu Parekh has it, are 'culturally embedded', and different cultures "define and constitute human beings and come to terms with the basic problems of human life in their own different ways."⁸ The understanding of culture as constant re/production and meaningful practices then suggests that "every culture is internally plural and differentiated,"⁹ and at the same time, membership allows for differing levels of attachment to a culture, for deep disagreement over what attachment entails, and for a cultural identity to be fluid and contested.¹⁰ So the respective concepts of 'culture' and 'cultural identity' are subject of constant inter- and intra-group negotiations and changes across time and place.

Following Parekh, we define diversity in the context of this collection as 'cultural differences.'¹¹ Nevertheless, in recent years cultural studies and critical race studies have put a strong emphasis on the ways in which cultural and ethnic categories intersect with other categories of identification as well as of marginalization, such as gender, sexuality, or class. So this collection is structured along the lines of cultural diversity as a central focus - not because we think these other categories unimportant but because we felt that a more comprehensive approach to the concept of 'diversity' would have gone far beyond the scope of one collection -, individual contributions indeed highlight intersectionality (Larissa Lai and Suzanne Gallant in particular, to some extent Andreas Krebs); they thus provide an idea of the potential ramifications and the questions that they pose to conceptualizing diversity, to diversity as a 'travelling' concept, and to the ways in which they impact political practice.

Taking the theories formulated by Charles Taylor, Will Kymlicka and Bhikhu Parekh as a framework, the essays in this collection investigate context-sensitive understandings of diversity while at the same time subjecting them to critical de- and reconstruction. A central term in this regard is 'multiculturalism' perceived as a concept that might vary from very generally referring to cultural

7 Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections. Culture, People, Places* (London: Routledge, 1996), 19.

8 Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism. Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 122.

9 Ibid. 338.

10 Ibid. 148.

11 Ibid. 3.

diversity or cultural embedded differences via ways of granting minority rights and giving some groups a 'special status' to a differentiated concept of citizenship. Kymlicka identifies three stages in the philosophical debate about minority rights. First, minority rights as a communitarian defence against the encroachment of liberalism, Kymlicka calls this the 'pre-1989 debate.'¹² Recent discussions regarding the role of culture and identity within liberalism lead to the second stage: whether people's interest in their culture and identity is sufficient to justify departing from the norm of ethno-cultural neutrality, by supplementing common individual rights within minority rights. The problem here is: liberal democracies did not and do not in fact abide by any norm of ethno-cultural neutrality and this results in a third stage, to a view of minority rights not as a deviation from ethno-cultural neutrality, but as a response to majoritarian nation-building.

A good example for this in the Canadian context is the situation of Quebec. Charles Taylor has developed his ideas on recognition primarily by looking at the underlying conflict between Quebec and the 'Rest of Canada' in part as a conflict between two concepts of liberalism - procedural and substantive liberalism (see Ingrid Makus' essay in this collection). In the procedural version of liberalism, the Canadian state is assumed to be neutral on substantive issues, individual rights are more important than collective goals and constitutionally embedded rules ensure that individuals are treated in a fair and equal way. Substantive liberalism on the other hand means that the state is willing and expected to take a stance on questions of a 'good life.' Some individual rights seem to be less important than others and it is within limits legitimate to infringe on those rights for the sake of the substantive ends in form of collective goals. According to Taylor, the substantive mode of liberalism is dominant in Quebec, whereas with the introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 Canada has moved clearly toward the procedural model of liberalism. Taylor suggests that the dilemma between the two modes of liberalism coexisting, may be resolved in a model of liberalism that is substantive as well as procedural, combining commitment to a particular conception of the good with the protection of minority rights.

Canada and Europe

Canada as a starting point for analysing ways of negotiating diversity seems self-evident not just because of the multicultural reality of Canada as an immigrant

¹² Kymlicka 2007, 27-28.

society, but because Canada was the first country that introduced an official policy of multiculturalism, a policy introduced by the federal government in 1971, which acknowledges that many 'ethnic' Canadians experience unequal access to resources and opportunities. It urges more recognition of the contributions of all Canadians, regardless of their ethnic background, the preservation of certain expressions of their ethnicity, and more equality in the treatment of all Canadians. Furthermore, as already indicated, there is a rich theoretical debate - mainly based on the works of Taylor and Kymlicka - that has emerged within Canada and that reflects on questions of multiculturalism and the democratic negotiations of difference. Taylor's "Politics of Recognition" as well as *Kymlicka's Liberalism, Community, and Culture*¹³ are mainly based on Canadian experiences and difficulties in dealing with multicultural realities in the Canadian society. Increasingly, the theoretical concepts and ideas that were developed against the background of the Canadian experiences have come to serve as a reference point in the debate on diversity in the European context with regard to the process of further European integration; the question of how to build a 'Union of Diversity';¹⁴ and the different experiences of countries in western and especially in eastern Europe with migration and ethnic-nationalist movements.

As a result of different historical settings and different patterns of migration in Europe and Canada, political awareness of diversity and approaches to the accommodation of cultural difference vary widely. The shifting meanings of 'multiculturalism' are instructive in this context: a government policy, a political ideology as well as an ideal of cultural pluralism,¹⁵ and a 'cover-all' term to designate the 'social reality' of an ethnically diverse society. Both in Canada and in Europe, the term can be and is deployed in all of these meanings.

In Canada, the term began circulating successfully as a result of the work done by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the 1960s, the ensuing politics of multiculturalism implemented by Pierre Trudeau in 1971, and the Multiculturalism Act in 1988; in Europe, at least with regard to its meaning as a government policy to accommodate cultural difference, the term gained momentum only in the late 1980s. As Will Kymlicka has argued, it was the end of the Cold War and the ensuing break-up of the multi-ethnic former Communist countries that put multiculturalism on the European agenda; and it did so not

13 Taylor 1994; Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

14 Peter Kraus, *A Union of Diversity. Language, Identity and Polity-Building in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

15 Linda Hutcheon, "Introduction," in *Other Solitudes. Canadian Multicultural Fictions*, eds. Linda Hutcheon and Marion Richmond (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), 1-16. 2.

only with regard to these nations in process of fundamental reorganization, but also within the context of western democracies, where until then established minority rights had primarily concerned national minorities (such as the Swedes in Finland) or indigenous populations (e.g. the Sami in Scandinavia or Greenlanders).¹⁶ The adoption of the term after 1989, central in the context of interest here, often happened with direct reference to Canadian experiences. Even then, however, compared to Canada, the term was used rather to describe the changed socio-cultural realities than as a comprehensive political strategy or societal model (see Melich in this collection).

Obviously, when comparing Canada and Europe, not only the time frame of successful circulation but also the constellations of cultural diversity and the ways in which this diversity is accommodated and recognized on different societal levels vary significantly. In Canadian multicultural policies, three major groupings and hence also dimensions of diversity are central for the debates: indigenous people, the so-called founding nations (francophones and anglophones), and immigrants.¹⁷ All three dimensions are part of state- and nation- building processes in Canada, and all three had important institutional consequences. Also, Canada (as the United States and Australia) has increasingly seen the emergence of critical multiculturalism, that is the charge against state- managed multiculturalism as reifying and exoticising as well as domesticating cultural difference.¹⁸ In the European context, e.g. in Germany and France, the issue of cultural diversity has come to focus on questions of religion¹⁹ mandatory language instruction, or debates about *Leitkultur* vs. 'cultural fragmentation.' However, a common denominator of these different contexts clearly is a multi-cultural reality, that is, societal set-ups constituted by culturally diverse groups and the need to have this diversity recognized - individually, collectively, and institutionally. In the past ten years or so, European nations have increasingly looked to Canada for potential models to accommodate diversity socially, politically, culturally, and philosophically. The 'travels' of the concept central to this collection, 'diversity,' have altered the concept - and these travels, so our assumption, are not monodirectional but embedded in contexts of by now multi-

16 See Kymlicka 2007, 173, 177.

17 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 22-24.

18 David Bennett, "Introduction," in *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity*, ed.

David Bennett (London: Routledge, 1998), 1-26. 4; in this collection, see e.g. the contributions by Suzanne Gallant, Larissa Lai, and Andreas Krebs.

19 For example as in questions regarding religious instruction at public schools in Germany or the 'scarf affairs', targeting the relationship between state and religion as well as between public and private spheres; see Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others. Aliens, Residents, and Citizens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 183-202.

centred constellations of exchange. It is this opening towards transnational frameworks that we seek to sketch through the structure of this collection.

Outline of the Book

Therefore, leading questions of *Negotiating Diversity* are: How do disciplinary, theoretical, political contexts shape concepts and how do they (have to) change when being translated into other frameworks, for instance from Canada to Europe? What underlying ideas of nation, identity, community, difference shape these formulations and transformations? How are these shifts reflected in categories, policies, and institutions? This collection is structured to increasingly open up the focus of these questions and thus to some extent follows the move that works such as Will Kymlicka's have undergone in recent years; starting from the Canadian context, it continues to a comparative Canadian-European framework and finally to transnational and potentially global constellations.

The first section of the book, "Negotiating Diversity in the Canadian Context," concentrates on how concepts of diversity are negotiated in multicultural Canada. The first sub-section, "Theoretical Concepts of Inclusion and Exclusion," targets the theoretical basis of Canadian multiculturalism and rests primarily on a critical engagement with the works of Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka. Pierre Anctil (University of Ottawa) in his opening essay, takes the human rights legislation in Canada as a starting point and defines it as a product of a long history of negotiation between the two founding communities of the Canadian state, from colonial traditions to changing immigration policies and the radical transformation since the 1960s. Anctil discusses the consequences of this transformation and of the ensuing new approaches on current definitions of multiculturalism and on how the issue of diversity is addressed in Canadian society more generally. Ingrid Makus (Brock University) looks at Charles Taylor's concept of 'recognition' as a way of negotiating diversity. Focussing on Taylor's distinction between procedural and substantive liberalism, Makus analyses the Supreme Court decision on Quebec secession (1998) and the recent recommendations and underlying consumptions of the Taylor-Bouchard-Report on minorities in Quebec in order to understand whether demands for recognition can be met, satisfied, or even addressed through procedural means such as constitutional issues. Suzanne Gallant's (Johns Hopkins University) essay then critically examines what she regards as the common basis of Charles Taylor's and Will Kymlicka's work. Both, so Gallant, share a framework in which diversity and difference are primarily viewed as problems to be solved and in which the categories of acceptable difference have become too static. In face of the density of con-

temporary culture and the hybridity of identities, argues Gallant, this normative assumption of society needs to be challenged in order to develop a decentred understanding of diversity and pluralism. Finally, following up on some of the issues raised by the previous contributions, Andreas Krebs (University of Ottawa) argues against the general assumption that the politics of multiculturalism in Canada constitute a clear break from colonial mentality. Analysing the concept of disgust as a culturally coded form of moral judgement without the need for conscious reflection, he argues that “the politics of recognition allows *diversity* a functional role in the body politic, but only after the stench of difference has been hosed off’. Recognition depends of predefined parameters of difference; ‘disgust’ here serves both as an illustration of a scripted encounter with the other and as an example for culturally coded affects.

The second subsection of this first part, “Diversity in Canadian Society and Literature,” looks more closely at manifestations of diversity in Canadian society and social and cultural debates. Simon Langlois (Laval University) in his essay focuses on the ways in which Quebec defines itself as a nation. Taking the fact of permanent social and cultural changes as a vantage point, Langlois discusses the necessary and constant ‘refoundation’ of the nation in Quebec as well as in Canada. Central dimensions of these refounding processes in Quebec, argues Langlois, are language and territory. Julie Spergel (University of Regensburg) takes the translation of Chava Rosenfarb’s *Tree of Life*, a novel about the Lodz ghetto, from Yiddish into English as the starting point for investigation of the relationship between diaspora, multiculturalism, and Canadian national literature. Sketching an analogy between Canadian multiculturalism and the book’s agenda, Spergel contends that *Tree of Life* “[mirrors] what should be the goal of Canadian literature” calls for an inclusion of the book as ‘Canadian,’ a reminder to see ‘CanLit’ as encompassing transnational stories as constitutive part of ‘Canadian identity,’ pushing multiculturalism to effectively embrace a concept of hybrid identities and border-crossing subject constructions. Tackling the issue of multiculturalism from a more critical angle, Larissa Lai in her contribution looks at the entry of Asian Canadian Studies and Asian Canadian literature into the academy; the constellation she investigates is one in which a term, that has historically served to marginalize and oppress a group thus marked is now being instrumental to empowerment. Lai’s critical assessment as both an academic and a writer runs along different axes: firstly, she looks at work done from within the academy, particularly with regard to the often-held view of the institutionalization of Asian Canadian Studies as a “protracted birth” in comparison to that of Asian American Studies; secondly, she relates this discussion to the activist and artistic work being done outside the academy, specifically in the early 1990s as a crucial historical moment for the emergence of Asian Canadian art, literature,

and academic studies, and the potential blurring or at least complication of boundaries between these fields. Lai grounds her discussion in a 'double location': a critical investigation of local and a terminological mobility across (national and institutional) borders.

The second section of the book, entitled "Travelling concepts: back and forth across the Atlantic," on the basis of the critical evaluations of Canadian multiculturalism provided in the first section foregrounds the exchange of concepts of cultural and societal diversity between Canada and European countries; in a second step, it analyses the ways in which concepts and ideas circulate between different regions and globally and how the public as an arena to negotiate diversity changes as a result of the processes of transnationalization. Part one in this section turns more directly to the comparison between Canada and Europe. Jiri Melich (University of Izmir) in his essay looks at different forms of multicultural policies in Canada and Europe. Starting with an investigation on the implementation of multicultural policies in Canada, Melich analyses the differences between Europeans and Canadians in coping with multicultural coexistence as a fact of life. This leads to interrelated questions of how much cultural diversity can be managed and how multicultural policies can contribute to a peaceful integration of national society. Robert Sata (Central European University) introduces the concept of 'multinational pluralism' to rethink multiculturalism as an approach to diversity and cultural difference. By looking for a liberal justification of multiculturalism, Sata's concept seeks to integrate multicultural and egalitarian liberalism. 'Multinational Pluralism' understood as an attempt to bring together nationalism with liberalism is according to Sata a combination of egalitarian liberalism and multicultural recognition. Allan Craigie (University of Edinburgh) directly compares two regions in Canada and the United Kingdom to argue that changed political opportunity structures in both Canada and the United Kingdom allow regions within the hegemonic community, such as Nova Scotia and the Northeast of England, to articulate regional demands in similar ways.

Dirk Hoerder (University of Arizona) in his opening essay of the last part of this collection, "Circulating Ideas in a Globalized and Transnational Context," looks at the function and role of migration and cultural interaction on the development of multicultural practices and policies in Canada, especially since the 1960s. He further traces the appropriations of Canadian approaches to migration studies in Europe and the way in which these approaches have been slowly integrated into a growing academic understanding of European societies shaped by migration and in which they have been changed by migration. The second contribution in this section, targets the 'travels' of a more specific category and their impact: Katrin Urschel (National University of Ireland) discusses the term 'Anglo-Celt' as a 'super-category' to designate a dominant ethnic groups in Canada.

Looking at both academic discussions and literary examples, Urschel traces the genealogy of the term across the Atlantic and highlights the ironies and contradictions of this ethnic concept and argues for its abandonment in order to more fruitfully investigate post-colonial relationships and multiculturalism within the Canadian context. Daniel Drache, finally, in the concluding chapter shifts the focus to the public and its role as a primary site of recognition and as a terrain of individual achievement. According to Drache the public is changing in multiple ways as a consequence of technological revolution and globalisation processes. The changing public, so Drache, is going more global, and with it more defiant. These changes go hand in hand with the development of the cosmopolitan citizen that “does not need to choose between the community and identity that they were born into and the communities of choice that they belong to outside the traditional boundaries of their states and societies.” The central question is in which way the changing public as an arena to negotiate difference will affect individuals and groups in their aspiration for recognition? According to Drache all these changes bring millions of marginalized people into the new public domain and this will ultimately change the modes and interactions for recognition.

The contributions in this volume offer an interdisciplinary discussion of the issues raised by multicultural realities in contemporary societies on both sides of the Atlantic and of the ways in which these issues are negotiated culturally, politically, socially, and theoretically. In so doing, they trace and think through the consequences of ‘travelling concepts’ of diversity, the question of what happens when different concepts of cultural diversity travel across disciplinary and country borders. It therefore seeks to build a foundation for further and deepened interdisciplinary discussion on methods, concepts and theories, a discussion that pays close attention to disciplinary ‘cultures’, as well as to specific European and Canadian contexts, - culturally, politically, socially, and philosophically.