

## Literature Review of ICD –related concepts

### Contact Theory

It could be argued that Contact Theory is one of the most important concepts underpinning Interculturalism. Initially this was developed by Allport in 1954<sup>1</sup>. The hypothesis was that by bringing together the members of different groups, getting them working towards common goals on an equal footing, will lead to intergroup prejudice being reduced. The important ideas to take from Contact Theory are common goals and individuals/groups being on an equal footing. The latter being particularly important because bringing together two groups in an unequal position of power will only serve to confirm those positions and reinforce prejudice.

More recently contact theory has been developed by Hewstone et al (2007)<sup>2</sup>. Hewstone argues that there is evidence that contact between groups does bring about positive (or at least less negative) attitudes, reduces prejudice and builds lasting friendships. The creation of intergroup friendships is seen as more important than simple cooperation. Hewstone maintains that the type of contact, and the conditions under which it occurs, are all important and if these are not optimal they can lead to an increase in prejudice. This points to a consideration of the process, and how that will be facilitated. This research was continued by Lownsborough, H. and Beunderman, J. (2007),<sup>3</sup> who explored the motivations for entering public spaces, and assessed their potential for interaction and the dimensions of public space involved.

Contact Theory supports the concept of Intercultural Community Bridge Building put forward by Law et al (2008)<sup>4</sup>. This concept is based on the premise that everyone, individually and as a nation, benefits from knowing, experiencing and working with other cultures. In doing this the focus is on what is held in common rather than any differences, and it is these commonalities that bind groups together.

The assumption that groups should be brought together is challenged by research from the Commission for Racial Equality (2006)<sup>5</sup>. This indicated that inter-ethnic interaction achieves the best results when interaction is the by-product of people coming together for another purpose besides a premeditated intercultural activity.

---

<sup>1</sup> Allport, G. W., (1954), *The Nature of Prejudice*, Addison Wesley, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

<sup>2</sup> Hewstone, M. Et al, (2007), *Prejudice, Intergroup Contact and Identity: do neighbourhoods matter?* in Wetherell, M., Lafleche, M., and Berkeley, R.(eds), *Identity, Ethnic Diversity and community cohesion*, Sage, London

<sup>3</sup> Lownsborough, H. and Beundemann, J. (2007), *Equally Spaced? Public Space and Interaction between Diverse Communities*, a Report for the Commission for Racial Equality, London

<sup>4</sup> Law, B. Haq, T. And Greavess, B. (2008), *Building Intercultural Bridges between Diverse Communities*, East Midlands Economic Network, Leicester.

<sup>5</sup> SMH(2006) *Promoting interaction between ethnic communities: a research project for the Commission for Racial Equality*, London.

## **Interactive Multiculturalism**

The importance of dialogue between individuals and communities is also emphasised by the work of Parekh (2006)<sup>6</sup> on interactive multiculturalism. The premise is that there is more to be gained from a culturally open and diverse way of life than there is for a culturally self-contained existence. Parekh goes on to assert that despite this, individuals and communities are entitled to a closed way of living and to demand otherwise is oppressive. There is a fine balance to be struck here where governments and policy makers are concerned. For example, what is the balance between national and individual/ group interests? The debate here is the national need for a shared understanding of liberty, human rights and equalities and perhaps a clearer link between individual/group rights and responsibilities. Parekh feels that progress will be made if the debate focuses on tangible, pragmatic issues, rather than the more abstract notions of integration and cohesion, which are nebulous and contestable.

## **Post-colonial Melancholia and Convivial Culture**

Gilroy (2004)<sup>7</sup> through his work on post-colonial melancholia and convivial culture has looked at the importance of unmaking racial differences to, among other things, restore “the vilified” to an “equal footing in humanity.” It can be argued that the process of categorisation helps bring a sense of order and place in the world, but Gilroy challenges these categories, and how and for whom they are made. As an example, he challenges why immigrant populations can be assigned negative properties such as “evil”, “alien” or “foe”, while “the invaded, seemingly homogenous national population is deemed virtuous.” He attributes this to Britain’s colonial past and imperial ambitions that have shaped national thinking and discrimination.

Gilroy also espouses a global, or cosmopolitan, rather than national approach to identity arguing that artificial, national barriers are becoming less relevant as social relations and technological advances bring people across the globe closer together. Despite this view, Gilroy acknowledges the successes of intercultural dialogue in the UK which he refers to as “convivial culture” where racial difference is not feared and race is essentially insignificant.

## **Diaspora Space and Identity**

Brah (1996)<sup>8</sup>, through her work on diaspora space and identity, has aided understanding of how and where identity and difference are made and remade. For Brah, the term “diaspora” means the dispersal of peoples across many physical borders. She contends that in doing this, diasporas also cross social, conceptual, and psychological borders. If this was depicted as a helix, then the point at which these borders overlap would be the diaspora space, a space that is continuously remaking and resituating.

---

<sup>6</sup> Parekh, B. (2006), Re-thinking Multiculturalism, in James, M., (2008), Interculturalism: Theory and Practice, Barings Foundation, London

<sup>7</sup> Gilroy, P. (2004), After Empire: melancholia or convivial culture, in James, M., (2008), Interculturalism: Theory and Practice, Barings Foundation, London

<sup>8</sup> Brah, A. (1996), Cartographies of Diaspora: contesting identities, in James, M., (2008), Interculturalism: Theory and Practice, Barings Foundation, London

Brah in this way seeks to change the notion of “us” and “them”, and so where immigration is concerned, the indigenous population for her is also part of this diaspora space. In this way, Brah shares Gilroy’s views on the constraints imposed by what she sees as the artificial classifications of individuals/groups. Her concern is that once categorised, the identity of an individual/group becomes fixed whereas she argues that identity is an ongoing process that can change with situations and experiences.

### **Identity and Freedom**

Continuing with this theme, Sen (2006)<sup>9</sup> through his work on identity and freedom, seeks to challenge the “appalling affects of the miniaturisation of people” caused by the way individuals and groups are categorised and classified. He argues that this affixes a label for life because it puts people into a box marked, for example, nationality, ethnicity, or religion. He also argues that this approach assigns people to communities, which then ignores affiliation to language, class, social relations, political affiliations and civil roles. He is critical of this “communitarianism” approach, because it can create extremism and stops the interaction that Interculturalism requires, through the continuance of inaccurate stereotypes and the value it places on community identity over individual identity<sup>10</sup>. By assigning categories in this way, individuals are denied the opportunity to interact with others as citizens rather than as representatives of a designated community.

Given that the classifications and categories are in a sense artificial constructs caused by, for example, geographical features, political expedience, and control, Sen argues that it is absurd to give these pre-eminence over notions of humanity. Further, he argues that this can be used to manipulate and cause prejudice for political ends. Sen argues for people to be able to choose the extent to which they want to be labelled and what those labels should be.

The approach seems idealistic and aspirational. The ability to overcome or change classifications and categories cannot be readily achieved by individuals deciding to opt-out because they will be going against longstanding historical, cultural, and ideological notions. To opt-out of one’s community in this way is likely to have consequences for an individual. However, over time with the build up of a critical mass, change could be affected and the process for this could be Interculturalism and Intercultural Dialogue.

### **Social Identity Theory**

Interculturalism also draws on the work of Tajfel and Turner and their development of Social Identity Theory in 1979. This was originally developed to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination, and therefore is likely to have been an influence on the work of Gilroy, Brah and Sen. The theory is based on the idea that a person has not one “*personal self*”, but instead “*several selves that correspond to widening circles of group membership*”.

---

<sup>9</sup> Sen, A., (2006), *Identity and Violence: the illusion of destiny*, in James, M., (2008), *Interculturalism: Theory and Practice*, Barings Foundation, London

<sup>10</sup> Sen, A. (1999), *Reason before Identity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford

*Different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel and act on the basis of his personal, family or national level of self*’ (Turner et al, 1987)<sup>11</sup>.

An individual also has multiple “social identities” which is the individual’s self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups (Hogg & Vaughan, (2002)<sup>12</sup>. The key point here is the individual’s self-perception, which to be accurate requires a high degree of self awareness based on accurate reflective analysis. In reality will be that many will lack accurate self-perception and awareness, and will still rely on some form of external classification or categorisation. It could also lead to individuals being manipulated in order to be part of a group, or as Tajfel and Turner identify, “in-group favouritism” when an in-group is central to their self-definition and a given comparison is meaningful or the outcome is contestable. This helps to explain why individuals act in the interests of their in-group rather than the wider community.

### **Group Dynamics**

Interculturalism and Intercultural dialogue can provide opportunities for individuals or groups to look beyond their in-group and change perceptions, actions, and enhance understanding of those outside of their in-group. However, bringing groups or individuals together will not necessarily lead to openness, dialogue and change without an understanding of the process of group dynamics involved.

Tuckman (1965)<sup>13</sup> described the four stages of group development namely *forming* (characterised by a desire to be accepted, avoid conflict and gather information), *storming* (individuals will only stay in the forming stage for so long and as the real issues start to be addressed then conflicts will break out. In order to contain or deal with this the group will look for rules and a structure, *norming* (following the conflicts the group settles to the task having a clearer idea of each others’ skills and experience. Individuals listen to each other, appreciate and support each other, and are prepared to change pre-conceived views: they feel they’re part of a cohesive, effective group), and *performing* (not all groups will reach this stage but those that do will trust and work together, and are comfortable and focused on achieving the task.)

Tuckman looked at the behaviour of small groups in a variety of environments and he recognised the distinct phases they go through, and suggested they need to experience all four stages before they achieve maximum effectiveness. He refined and developed the model in 1977<sup>14</sup> with the addition of a fifth stage that of *adjourning* (this is about completion and disengagement, both from the tasks and the group members. Individuals will be proud of having achieved much and glad to have been part of such an enjoyable group. They need to recognise what they’ve done, and consciously move on). Groups will need to be helped to move beyond the first two stages which requires skilful facilitation.

---

<sup>11</sup> Tajfel, H. and Turner, J. C. (1986), The social identity theory of inter-group behaviour, in S. Worchel and L. W. Austin (eds.), Psychology of Intergroup Relations. Chigago: Nelson-Hall

<sup>12</sup> Hogg, M.A. & Vaughan, G.M. (2002). Social Psychology (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. ) London: Prentice Hall.

<sup>13</sup> Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequences in small groups. Psychological Bulletin, 63, 384-399.

<sup>14</sup> Tuckman, B. W., & Jensen, M. A. C. (1977). Stages of small group development revisited. Group and Organizational Studies, 2, 419- 427.

It has been criticised for its simplicity but it still stands as a guide to group dynamics.

### **Conflict Theory**

Conflict Theory draws on the ideas of Marx, and is based on the idea that modern capitalist societies were controlled by a wealthy few (bourgeoisie) who controlled the means of production (factories, raw materials, equipment, and technology,) while everyone else (the proletariat) was reduced to the lot of being wage labourers. It can also be used to aid understanding of radical feminism (male domination of women), criminology, and forms of radicalisation, all of which involve coercion.

Conflict theorists do not claim to present any general theory of society but emphasise coercion rather than consensus as the cause of social order and that society is created and developed out of conflict.

Lockwood (1964)<sup>15</sup> argues that it is possible to distinguish between system integration, which refers to relationships between different parts of the social system, the economy, and political system; and social integration, which refers to norms and values. Structural functionalism tends to run both together and gives priority to social integration: if that persists then the assumption is that system integration is also present. Lockwood points out that social integration can exist without system integration. An economic crisis, for example, can indicate the existence of system conflict, but does not automatically lead to a breakdown in social integration.

### **Community Cohesion.**

#### **Three Definitions of Community Cohesion**

##### **Local Government Association (LGA)**

*‘A cohesive community is one where:*

- *There is common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;*
- *The diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued;*
- *Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and*

*Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.’* LGA (2002)

##### **Commission for Integration and Cohesion**

*‘The commission’s new definition of an integrated and cohesive community is that it has:*

- *a defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and groups to a future local or national vision*

---

<sup>15</sup> Lockwood, D. (1964)<sup>15</sup>, Social Integration and System Integration, in G. K. Zollschan and W. Hirsch (eds.), Explorations in Social Change.

- *a strong sense of an individual's local rights and responsibilities*
- *a strong sense that people with different backgrounds should experience similar life opportunities and access to services and treatment*
- *a strong sense of trust in institutions locally, and trust that they will act fairly when arbitrating between different interests and be subject to public scrutiny*
- *a strong recognition of the contribution of the newly arrived, and of those who have deep attachments to a particular place – focusing on what people have in common*
- *Positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, schools and other institutions.'* CIC (2007)

## **Communities and Local Government**

*“Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.*

*Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on three foundations:*

- *People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities*
- *People knowing their rights and responsibilities*
- *People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly*

*And three ways of living together:*

- *A shared future and sense of belonging*
- *A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity*
- *Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.'* (CLG, 2008)

The policy domain has arguably been the most productive in producing published documentation. This in itself can be organised into three phases. *First*, before and after the disturbances in Burnley, Oldham and Bradford in 2001 a range of interventions at a national and local level were generated. These included Ouseley (2001), Ritchie (2001) and Clarke (2001) as well as the Cattle Report (Home Office, 2001). The initial reports stemmed from inquiries into the various disturbances and established a set of common themes that have framed much of the debate on community cohesion during the last seven years. The focus was on fragmented communities divided on faith and ethnic lines living in poor towns and cities. The reports recommended to a lesser or greater extent improved interaction and contact between different groups together with the development of common values (Cattle, 2005).

The *second*, was a formalisation of community cohesion from 2002 onwards. By this the focus was on defining community cohesion, generating guidance to support local government and related agencies to implement strategies and assess their impact. Guidance issued on community cohesion emphasised the importance of ‘common values’ and cross community and cross disciplinary working (LGA, 2002). Moreover a Community Cohesion Unit was established in 2002 to co-ordinate national work and implement practice where necessary. This was supported by an independent panel of practitioners who helped to develop guidance

and best practice on cohesion. Its work concluded with a final report *The End of Parallel Lives* that stressed the importance of mainstreaming cohesion into local government services (Cantle, 2004). Much of this thinking was brought together by the Home Office publication *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* (2005). Building community cohesion was one of the four key themes alongside addressing inequality, promoting inclusiveness and taking out racism and extremism.

The *third*, and current phase, has concentrated on the importance of integration and identity (see Blunkett, 2004). Recently the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) published its findings that whilst supporting government policy also emphasised the importance of local integration measures. In addition the CIC urged a debate on the definition of community cohesion suggesting that that was too rigid a framework to make sense of local activities (CIC, 2007). In response, CLG has just announced a raft of new initiatives including importantly for this study a new definition of community cohesion and emphasising the importance of local cohesion initiatives (CLG, 2008). In short, the policy literature on community cohesion is rich in its breadth and demonstrates how themes have developed since 2001.

In contrast to the policy literature, academic publications are much more limited. On the whole they tend to be critical of the concept of community cohesion since the publication of the Cantle Report (Home Office, 2001). There are a number of concerns expressed in this literature about the concept and its application.

*First*, responses to the disturbances in Oldham, Bradford and Burnley in 2001, together with the negative debates on asylum and immigration, could be seen as counter-productive to the goals of shared identity and citizenship. In short, new and old migrants are less likely to feel any obligation to contribute to community cohesion (and thus engagement) when they are being identified as being part of the problem (Burnett, 2004).

*Second*, the search for common identity can also be viewed as problematic. Minority residents who have moved from traditional neighbourhoods to contiguous neighbourhoods in urban areas have to decide on a 'trade'. In reality they are not prepared to fully trade a clear minority identity for unclear notions of citizenship within an increasingly secular society. Access to shops, places of worship and family networks may remain important to these economically mobile residents.

*Third*, the changing nature of debates on 'race' has helped to shift the imperative to integration. As has been seen the agenda is driven by building shared norms, common identity and stable communities, expecting diverse groups to 'buy into' British institutions, organisations and processes (Kudnani, 2002).

*Fourth*, some academics have suggested that the demographic trend is not towards segregation but greater diversity. There is less segregation on 'race' and faith and not more as the government would lead us to believe (Simpson, 2004).

*Finally*, the community concept term is nebulous and has been shaped by government to implement an increasingly restrictive and nationalistic agenda (Worley, 2005; also Ratcliffe, forthcoming). In short, it could be argued that academic contributions have been united in their opposition to community cohesion. Many view it as a new model of forced assimilation and heralding a new and nationalistic policy and political agenda.

More generally, however, there are now numerous academic studies which appear to support many of the underlying principles of community cohesion.

*Firstly* and perhaps most notably, in respect of intergroup relations and contact theory (Hewstone 2006 and 2006a) which has clearly demonstrated that prejudice and intolerance can be reduced by direct contact and interaction.

*Secondly* and similarly, the academic work on peace and reconciliation has demonstrated that inter group relations can be re-built by going through painful processes of discussing and resolving differences.

*Thirdly*, the work on social capital (Putnam, 2000) demonstrates the importance of ‘bridging social capital’ and the impact of diversity upon its development (Putnam 2007). This leads on to the whole question of citizenship and the development of shared values where, fourthly, communitarian theories (Etzioni, 1995) have developed and a new emphasis upon shared identities (Sen, 2006).

*Fifthly*, there is now an emergence of academic led studies which focus on learning from practice, which appear to endorse the community cohesion approach (e.g. Harrison et al , 2005).