EURO-MULTICULTURALISM AND TOLERATION

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I. Introduction

Multiculturalism has for several decades been an unavoidable term in discussions about social developments in modern societies. The increasing diversity of all societies is an incontrovertible fact. This has led to extensive discussions about all the issues this raises – both in terms of new possibilities and opportunities, but mainly in terms of the problems, threats, risks and challenges posed by the increased presence of people of different backgrounds side by side in the same society. While this phenomenon is not new – the idea of a completely homogenous society is most probably a fiction which very few historical societies have ever realised or even approximated – it is generally accepted that diversity has recently increased due to globalisation and migration. This has occurred in a context with increased awareness, public scrutiny and politicisation of diversity. Simultaneously, the political human rights context now rules out traditional ways of ignoring or oppressing diversity and rather provides an arena for claims of accommodation, and a normative background of ideas providing support for such claims.

The term "multiculturalism" has since the 60s and 70s risen to prominence as a label for both *diversity* itself and for the social and political *responses* to it. But due to the high degree of politicisation of all issues having to do with diversity, the word "multiculturalism" is arguably often more a category of political practice than an analytical category with a clear theoretical meaning (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000) – to some, multiculturalism is simply a label for dangerous and subversive social tendencies to be avoided and combatted at all costs, to others multiculturalism signal a stand against xenophobia and an expression of a progressive attitude. The use of the term in academic discussions therefore requires careful consideration of what the underlying concepts really are and explicit definitions of how the term is used in particular cases. But once you engage in this sort of exercise, it becomes apparent that, even in academic and theoretical contexts, there are different understandings of multiculturalism at play and that some of these are often not well captured by generally accepted and reiterated definitions of multiculturalism.

In this paper I will show this with respect to the understanding of multiculturalism in a European context. My claim will be that the underlying concept of multiculturalism in many European discussions is different from that made prominent by the classic cases, e.g. in Canada, that have functioned as paradigm cases which the most prominent theories of multiculturalism have been tailored to fit and justify. Hence my proposal that we should be aware of the existence of what I propose to call "Euro-multiculturalism", which both denotes a) a different *object* of debates,

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i.e. the kind of diversity that multiculturalism is about, b) a different definition of what *counts* as multiculturalism policy responses to this diversity, and c) a different *normative background* explaining what is at stake in European multiculturalism controversies. Briefly, my suggestion is that Euro-multiculturalism is a) about mainly *immigrant religious minorities* rather than indigenous or national minorities defined in mainly cultural or linguistic terms; b) does not for the most part consist in special group-differentiated rights or forms of recognition going beyond established liberal rights, but rather is concerned with the *interpretation and application of standard liberal rights and rules* to cases involving this new diversity; and c) should be understood as premised on an underlying discussion about the *meaning* of liberalism rather than as a debate about normative commitments fundamentally different from liberalism. [1]

I will illustrate these points and provide some arguments for them. But most of this paper will consider some possible *objections* to my proposed understanding of Euro-multiculturalism, namely a) that it over-inclusive in the sense that it includes religion as a central category and thereby neglects important differences between religion and culture, and b) that it is under-inclusive in the sense that it collapses multiculturalism into standard liberal political theory and fails to explain what is distinctive about multiculturalism. Roughly my answer to these objections will be that they are premised on a specific understanding of multiculturalism that both misunderstands the internal logic of many classical forms of multiculturalism and fails to capture what goes under the name of multiculturalism in a European context.

Multiculturalism is about diversity and is highly politicised in the sense that the diversity in question generates much controversy and opposition. This combination makes salient the other concept in the title of the paper, namely *toleration*. There are many discussions of toleration and multiculturalism at the general conceptual level, where it is often argued that multiculturalism as a response to diversity is necessarily something else and more than "mere" toleration, since toleration is premised on a negative attitude to and only permits the presence of difference, whereas multiculturalism welcomes, recognises and accommodates diversity (Lægaard, 2013a). For present purposes I will not go much into this general debate at the conceptual level. I will rather lay out my idea of Euro-multiculturalism and rely on my characterisation of it to make evident that multiculturalism in this sense can involve issues of toleration. Furthermore I will use the concept of toleration as a prism though which to view understandings of multiculturalism. The idea is that the concept of toleration picks out a number of important aspects of how one can relate to diversity and provides a framework for distinguishing between different attitudes to diversity. Viewing Euro-multiculturalism through the prism of toleration therefore provides a way of identifying and explicating the peculiar ways in which Euro-multiculturalism is a different way of relating to diversity.

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[1] I originally introduced the idea of Euro-Multiculturalism in Lægaard (2012) as a label for a specific family of normative political views, which I assumed included a specific idea about the significance of context.

The paper proceeds as follows: First I lay out the concept of toleration and explains how I will use this as a framework for assessing the specificity of Euro-multiculturalism. Then I turn to the two respects in which Euro-multiculturalism differs from other understandings of multiculturalism, namely the kind of diversity it is concerned with and the types of responses to diversity that count as multicultural. Then I discuss the two noted objections to Euro-multiculturalism that target precisely these two aspects. In the conclusion I return to the link between toleration and multiculturalism and discuss how Euro-multiculturalism involves toleration.

II. Toleration and Multiculturalism

Toleration is routinely defined as a specific relationship between agents and patients of toleration where the following conditions hold: 1) there is some *difference* between the agent and the patient, e.g. in terms of religious belief, cultural practices or visible traits, 2) the agent has some sort of *objection* to the respects in which the patient differs from the agent, which disposes the agent to interfere with the patient in order to prohibit, suppress, exclude or eradicate what is found objectionable, 3) the agent has the *power* to interfere in this way, 4) the agent also has other reasons for nevertheless *accepting* the patient, and 5) the agent therefore does *not* interfere (McKinnon, 2006; Forst, 2012; Cohen, 2014).

This general concept can be cashed out in many different ways. The agent can be an individual, a group or an institution, as long as it is capable of action and of fulfilling the objection and acceptance conditions in a relevant way (Lægaard, 2013b).). The objection components can be understood in different ways – as affective dislike or as more reasoned disapproval (Horton, 1996), which can in turn either be based on particular conceptions of the good (ethical disapproval) or on moral grounds supposedly valid for everybody (moral disapproval) (Forst, 2012).

The link between toleration and multiculturalism initially has to do with the *difference condition* of toleration. Toleration requires the existence of some form of difference, and this is exactly what multiculturalism is about. But as soon as this has been stated, it is necessary to specify the understanding of multiculturalism – for what are the differences that multiculturalism is concerned with? Exactly which forms of diversity are we talking about, when we talk about multiculturalism? This is an important question in its own right, because it requires us to reflect on the understanding of multiculturalism and on what our use of the term refers to in particular cases. It might be thought that the answer is straightforward; since 'culture' is part of the word multiculturalism, it seems obvious that multiculturalism is about cultural differences. This is indeed (part of) many common definitions of multiculturalism. I will nevertheless argue that the answer to this question is not as straightforward as one might think, and that the answer is importantly different in contemporary European cases as compared with, say, the classic Canadian cases. The perspective provided by the concept of toleration is a good way of bringing this out, since toleration is not just about difference but about differences that are *objected* to. If the types of differences involved in multiculturalism are not the same in Euro-

multiculturalism as in other cases, the kind of toleration might also be different, since the kind of objection is likely to depend on the type of difference that the objection takes as its object.

So in the following I will focus on the understanding of multiculturalism in the European context and first ask what kind of difference and diversity Euro-multiculturalism is concerned with. But multiculturalism is of course not just a descriptive claim about the *fact* that societies are diverse; it is also a normative claim about how societies *should* respond to this diversity. Toleration is one possible response to diversity, but multiculturalism has often been understood as something "beyond" mere toleration (Lægaard, 2013a). So there might be a divergence between toleration and multiculturalism in terms of the types of action required in relation to difference. In this paper I will only touch on a particular corner of this debate, concerning what kinds of policy responses to diversity count as multicultural. I will again note a common understanding, namely that multiculturalism is about policies that go "beyond" toleration and ordinary liberal rights, and again I will argue that this answer is not entirely true – and that in the European context it is even further from the truth than it might be in other cases.

III. The Object of Euro-multiculturalism

A standard distinction in discussions about multiculturalism is between multiculturalism as a descriptive and a normative claim. The descriptive claim is that a given society is diverse in some sense, usually that there are groups with different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The normative claim is that this diversity should be accommodated, recognised and supported in various ways. As Koopmans (2013, 149) notes, most discussions of multiculturalism, at least in political philosophy, proceed quickly to discuss the normative sense of multiculturalism. But as Koopmans points out, the descriptive sense is quite important and should not be neglected, since the type of diversity in question is important for understanding the emergence and development of multiculturalism policies and the associated controversies. Koopmans makes this as an empirical and explanatory claim. In this paper I will argue that it also holds as a conceptual point. This is the case because multiculturalism, even in the normative sense, is about how we should respond to diversity – and the *type* of diversity therefore obviously makes an important difference for what the *appropriate* normative response is.

So what kind of diversity is multiculturalism about? The word of course suggests that multiculturalism is about culturally distinct groups. That is true to some extent, but even when it is true, it does not say much. Everything turns on the kinds of cultural differences that are taken to be relevant for multiculturalism. Roughly, it is fair to say that the classic multicultural cases in North America "culture" denotes features distinguishing groups in terms of 1) distinct *language*, and 2) specific *territory* (Meer and Modood, 2012, 179). These groups then fall in two main categories (cf. the classic typology in Kymlicka, 1995), namely a) indigenous peoples such as Inuit and American Indians, and b) national minorities like the Quebecois.

Against this standard understanding of the kind of diversity relevant to multiculturalism, Euro-multiculturalism is clearly different. Regarding the second criterion, namely the territorial nature of the groups in question, this is different in Europe. The groups in question are in general not territorially concentrated groups for the simple reason that they are due to immigration and are not indigenous. Of course, there are some indigenous peoples in Europe, such as the Sami in Northern Scandinavia, and many national minorities, such as the Catalans and Scots. But the latter are simply not discussed under the heading of multiculturalism; these cases are rather categorised and debated under the heading of nationalism and the questions at stake do not mainly concern cultural accommodations but self-determination and secession. Perhaps apart from the case of the Sami, and that of the Roma, which is arguably sui generis, all European debates about multiculturalism concern immigrant groups which have arrived after the Second World War, first due to recruitment of labour migrants, and after the oil crisis of the early seventies as refugees and through family reunifications. Most of these immigrants and their descendants are concentrated in urban areas, but the nature of the associated political problems and claims is not territorial.

Regarding the first criterion, that of language, most immigrants are of course linguistically distinct from the majority population of the European societies in which they live. And language is sometimes used as a practical criterion to delimit the groups in question. In Denmark the official label for immigrant groups discussed under the heading of multiculturalism in relation to the educational system is for instance "bi-lingual" – but this is arguably most often merely a proxy for underlying group differentiations in terms of ethnicity or religion, which are ruled out (e.g. due to non-discrimination rules prohibiting differential treatment based on ethnicity) or provide seemingly more relevant justifications for certain policies, e.g. requirements of compulsory dispersal of children with immigrant background across different school districts to avoid too large concentrations. Some of the multiculturalist policies under discussion in Europe, such as public support for mother tongue instruction in public schools, also concern language, but these are relatively marginal cases.

The predominant focus of Euro-multiculturalism is not on questions of language, but on culture in another sense, namely as traditions, e.g. forms of dress, supposed underlying values, e.g. views about gender roles and family, and practices, e.g. of Halal butchering. And these issues are increasingly framed as a matter of *religion*, either directly as religiously justified claims, or indirectly as associated with groups that are identified in religious terms, mainly as Muslims. In fact, in many European countries, multiculturalism is primarily a label for debates about integration of Muslims (Triandafyllidou, Modood and Zapata-Barrero, 2006, 1; Meer and Modood, 2012, 179; Triandafyllidou, Modood and Meer, 2012, 5-8, 12). So the kind of diversity that Euro-multiculturalism is about is mainly religiously defined.

This is merely an empirical observation of what the debates and issues that are labelled multicultural in Europe are about. As such one might be sceptical about my claim that Euro-multiculturalism is about religion. This might be thought to be a case of turning a rhetorical framing at the level of categories of practice into a theoretical claim, which fails to appreciate political actors' interests in describing issues in these

terms (Werbner, 2012, 202). But according to Koopmans, the mainly religious object of Euro-multiculturalism can be empirically confirmed. He cites data to show that most immigrant claims were made by non-Christian religious groups, the majority of which by Muslims, who can furthermore be shown to be by far the most likely group to make claims for multicultural rights (Koopmans, 2013, 151). And as already noted, many scholars of multiculturalism in Europe affirm the same general view that Euro-multiculturalism is mainly about religious diversity due to immigration, and in practice especially Muslims. But while this is a contingent empirical development, not in itself a conceptual necessity, it nevertheless becomes relevant to the concept of Euro-multiculturalism if we accept that the kind of diversity at stake is relevant to the normative responses to diversity, to which I now turn.

IV. What Counts as Multiculturalism?

Given that multiculturalism is a response to a certain kind of diversity, what does this response consist in and is Euro-multiculturalism in any way distinctive in this respect? One common understanding of multiculturalism is that a) it consists in adopting *group-differentiated policies*, e.g. in the form of group rights or recognition of collectives, and that b) multiculturalism therefore is *different from* or *moves beyond standard liberal principles*, which are assumed only to be concerned with individuals as equal citizens.

This standard understanding of multiculturalism (made prominent by Kymlicka, 1995) has also been invoked in a European context. Here, multiculturalism has for instance been said to denote a "communitarian form of organization of immigrant populations around a common nationality or religion (or both) and the accompanying demand for their specific voices in the public sphere" (Kastoryano, 2009, 5). It is probably true that this is indeed a widespread popular understanding of the word multiculturalism in Europe. And it is certainly this understanding that is often invoked as a justification for hostility to multiculturalism, be it from French republicans opposed to any form of communitarianism (as discussed in Laborde, 2008), or from liberals concerned with how group-differentiated policies might undermine liberal equality (e.g. Barry, 2001). Such debates proceed on the assumption that multiculturalism is a fundamental challenge to or departure from the established liberal (or republican) conception of equal citizenship (Triandafyllidou, Modood and Zapata-Barrero, 2006, 4-5).

Most avowed multiculturalists of course deny that multiculturalism is incompatible with equal citizenship – they rather argue that some form of group-differentiated rights or similar special measures going beyond the standard uniform set of individual rights and duties is necessary to actually treat all citizens equally, e.g. because members of minorities face special burdens due to the inevitable non-neutrality of even liberal states (Kymlicka, 1995; Modood, 2007). But even proponents of this normative compatibility between multiculturalism and liberalism still assume that what characterises multiculturalism as a *policy response* to diversity is that multiculturalism policies somehow "go beyond the protection of the basic civil and political rights guaranteed to all individuals in a liberal democratic state", such as

equal basic rights and non-discrimination measures (Banting and Kymlicka, 2013, 582; Koopmans, 2013, 151).

If one is interested in sketching the contours of Euro-multiculturalism, there are two problems with this standard understanding of what multiculturalism consists in. On the one hand, it is clear that there are very few (and, in a range of European countries, not any) European policies concerning immigrant religious minorities that really live up to this definition of multiculturalism. On the other hand it is simply not clear that multiculturalism necessarily is about group-differentiated policies that somehow go beyond standard liberal rights and principles. To illustrate these two points, consider Banting and Kymlicka's multiculturalism policy index, which is a prominent measure for the extent to which states have instituted multiculturalism at the policy level (Banting and Kymlicka, 2013). Even in the part of the MCP index concerned with immigrant minorities, most European states score significantly lower than the standard examples of multicultural states, Canada and Australia. This might most naturally be read as an indication that multiculturalism policies simply do not have any real foothold in Europe (apart from outliers such as Sweden or the UK).

But when one looks at the indicators that go into the construction of the MCP index, it becomes clear that the index includes a number of policies as indicators of multiculturalism that are not strictly speaking group-differentiated. Of the eight indicators for immigrant multiculturalism policies in the MCP index, the following three are not strictly speaking group-differentiated: (i) constitutional, legislative or parliamentary affirmation of multiculturalism, at the central and/or regional and municipal levels; (ii) the adoption of multiculturalism in school curriculum; (v) allowing of dual citizenship. Indicator (iv), "exemptions from dress codes, either by statute or by court cases", might be group-differentiated, but need not be, since such exemptions can be justified on the basis of standard liberal rights, e.g. to religious freedom. And indicator (vi), "the funding of ethnic group organizations to support cultural activities", might also be fulfilled due to a general rule of support for cultural associations or the like. So a country can score high on over half of the indicators for immigrant related MCPs without having adopted any group-differentiated policies in the sense usually assumed to characterise multiculturalism. Not only are most of the indicators for immigrant multiculturalism policies not group-differentiated, there is also no reason to think of them as necessary going beyond liberalism – there is for instance nothing in liberalism proscribing dual citizenship or support for cultural associations, and liberal principles might even be (and have been) used as justifications for exactly these kinds of policies.

My suggestion is that this shows that multiculturalism is not necessarily about group-differentiated policies going beyond liberalism in any strict sense and that the absence of such policies in many European states therefore is not a reason to reject the idea of Euro-multiculturalism. Since there furthermore is an extensive and highly charged debate about multiculturalism in Europe, there is to the contrary a reason to retain the idea of multiculturalism as a label for these debates. One might of course reject such a labelling as premised on a misunderstanding of what multiculturalism is about, but this would be begging the question if it appeals to a definition of multiculturalism as adoption of group-differentiated policies going beyond liberalism,

since my point exactly is that this is an understanding of multiculturalism which neither fits the European case nor many of the indicators in the MCP index.

Until now I have simply argued negatively that the standard assumption about what counts as multiculturalism does not hold water, but this leaves open the exact answer to the positive question about what policy responses to religious diversity characterise Euro-multiculturalism. Here I will simply suggest, but not argue to any length, that much of what goes on under the label of multiculturalism in Europe is really a continuous contestation over the meaning and implications of fairly standard liberal rights and principles. Since the object of Euro-multiculturalism is religious diversity due to immigration, the most prominent rights and principles at stake are core liberal rights such as freedom of religion, association and expression, and principles of non-discrimination. These are what is mainly at stake in most of the standard multiculturalism controversies in Europe, such as headscarf affairs, controversies over mosque building, funding for faith schools, halal butchering, limits on hate speech etc. None of these kinds of cases centrally involve new forms of group-differentiated rights; they rather concern the implications of already accepted and long established general rights such as freedom of religion or principles of equal treatment for new religious minorities, or they concern possible limits on such liberal rights of others, not because of the introduction of new group rights for minorities, but because the presence of new minorities raise the question whether already accepted forms of limitations of rights should carry new implications under new circumstances of religious diversity. So my suggestion is that Euro-multiculturalism, instead of being a debate about measures in some (less than clear) sense going "beyond" liberalism, is a debate about the meaning and interpretation of liberalism itself – it is not a *departure from* or *addition to* liberalism, but a rearrangement and rebalancing of concerns *within* liberalism.

Of course, not any way of striking the balance between the different concerns within liberalism can plausibly be characterised as a multicultural one; an extremely restrictive interpretation of freedom of religion that disproportionally burdens new religious minorities will for instance more naturally be seen as an anti-multiculturalist response to diversity. So my claim should be specified a bit more. First, we should distinguish between Euro-multiculturalism as a label for *controversies* and as a label for *policy responses*.

In the former sense, my suggestion is that it makes good sense to characterise controversies over, e.g., mosque building and halal butchering as multiculturalism controversies, because they are concerned with the political response to diversity. But this does not mean that the controversy is over whether new minority groups should be accorded special group-differentiated rights or forms of recognition not extended to other groups. My claim is rather that the European multiculturalism controversies are over the interpretation of liberal rights and principles. This is an important point, because a common objection to accommodation of minorities is exactly that it should be resisted because it would amount to introduction of problematic forms of group-differentiated rights that are a departure from liberal equality. My characterisation of Euro-multiculturalism allows us to say that these controversies are genuinely

multicultural but that this does not mean that what is at stake is group-differentiated rights.

In the latter sense, as a label for policy responses, Euro-multiculturalism denotes the ways of reinterpreting and applying standard liberal rights and principles to cases involving new religious minorities due to immigration that in fact interpret these and balance the involved concerns in ways that *accommodate* the minorities in question. So when it is decided that freedom of religion for Muslims actually justifies exemptions from humane slaughter regulations or for adjusting uniform requirements in ways permitting the wearing of headscarves, then this counts as a multicultural policy response even though there is no group-differentiated right involved, but only standard liberal rights of freedom of religion. My claim is that this way of understanding Euro-multiculturalism as a policy response actually conforms to Kymlicka's more general understanding of multiculturalism as ways of accommodating diversity (Banting and Kymlicka, 2013, 582) and that it better captures some of the indicators in the MCP index, e.g. many exemptions, which are ways of accommodating minorities that do not involve group-differentiated rights.

V. Objections

Until now I have sketched an idea of Euro-multiculturalism focused on religion rather than culture and not characterised as consisting in group-differentiated policies going beyond standard liberalism. But an obvious objection to this idea is that it simply collapses multiculturalism into standard liberal theory about religious diversity. In other words: is it multiculturalism at all if it is not concerned with culture or ethnicity, but only with religion, and if the response to religious diversity basically consists in interpreting standard liberal rights and principles in a way that to some extent accommodates religious minorities?

A first answer to this double objection is empirical, namely that these just happen to be the issues and policy responses that are debated under the heading of multiculturalism in Europe these days. One could of course say that this is then just a mistaken use of the word multiculturalism. But this first of all presupposes what is in question, namely what the "right" meaning of multiculturalism is. The question exactly is whether we should accept that multiculturalism means something partly different in a European context, and an affirmative answer to this question cannot simply be rejected by assuming a negative answer. Secondly, one point of political theory is to capture and engage with the actual political issues and debates that go on in our societies, so if these questions are debated under the heading of multiculturalism in Europe, this is at least one reason to accept this characterisation.

But these answers to the objection only go so far. While popular terminology should be considered, it should never be decisive. What we are interested in from political theory is exactly a deeper theoretical understanding of the debates and issues at stake, so if it turns out that there is no underlying theoretical rationale to be found, we should not stick with the multiculturalism characterisation. I have already given some reasons for considering the idea of Euro-multiculturalism as legitimate. Now I will directly address the two parts of the objection separately.

The first part of the objection is that multiculturalism cannot just be a label for responses to religious diversity. This objection takes the 'culture' in the word multiculturalism literally and resists any reduction of religion to culture or *vice versa*. There are two parts to this objection, namely a) that culture and religion are *different* kinds of social phenomena, and b) that multiculturalism is concerned with the *specific* problems raised by features of cultural phenomena. The upshot of such objections is that, since religion and culture are different, multiculturalism should only be understood as concerned with the latter, whereas the former rather should be dealt with by the "constitutional domain of religious pluralism" (Werbner, 2012, 204) or "secularism" (Wieviorka, 2012, 228). The question, of course, is why we should accept the assumed premises of this criticism, namely a) and b) above?

Regarding the distinction between culture and religion, some theorists simply appeal to standard definitions to establish the difference. Religion can for instance be said to necessarily involve appeals to *transcendental* beings, whereas culture is in some sense *immanent* (Werbner, 2012, 203). The difference can also be spelled further out, e.g. as consisting in the alleged fact that religion is characterised by people having certain *epistemic stances* (belief with a specific propositional content necessarily implying the possibility of doubt and scepticism) whereas culture rather is a conventional *material practice* (Werbner, 2012, 203-4), or religion might be held to be more categorical and *non-negotiable* for believers than culture, which is more *malleable* for its members (Werbner, 2012, 204).

Despite the easily recognisable form of these ways of distinguishing religion and culture, they are all problematic. The definition of religion in terms of belief in a transcendent being is for instance problematic outside the classical monotheistic religions, and the very conceptual distinction between transcendence and immanence might be held to be derived from these religions or at least to have a very different meaning within other world religions. So even at the abstract level, the invoked definitions do not seem to hold generally. Regarding the construction of the distinction on the basis of epistemic states of belief, this is also problematic as a general characterisation of religion since it fits some religions much better than others – it is arguably a version of the so-called protestantisation of religion. Finally, it simply seems empirically doubtful that religion is essentially unchanging and non-negotiable; this is at best a matter of degree, and there are innumerable examples of religion actually having changed rapidly and fundamentally – as only culture is supposed to do – and perhaps also of cultural traits persisting despite changes in the societal circumstances. So the first assumption underlying the objection, namely that culture and religion are fundamentally different, is in itself questionable.

But setting these problems aside, the real problem with the objection concerns the second assumption, namely that multiculturalism is concerned with the *specific* problems raised by features of cultural phenomena. Given that the distinction between religion and culture is not at all clear, the meaning of this second assumption already becomes unclear, for what are the specific features of culture that differentiates culture from religion? But rather than persisting in trying to find an answer to this question, we should step back and question the underlying assumption, namely that multiculturalism is concerned with culture *as such*. There is first of all no other

justification for this than the fact that "culture" is part of the *word* "multiculturalism". But even then, it simply does not follow that multiculturalism's concern with culture should be explicated in terms of the essential features of culture (whatever they are, if there indeed are any). If we look at what multiculturalists have in fact been concerned with, it has been the political and societal responses to the presence of cultural diversity and the consequences of established social norms and laws for cultural minorities. Multiculturalists are not ethnographers or anthropologists interested in achieving an understanding of culture *as such*; multiculturalism is rather concerned with the *reactions* to kinds of diversity that we just have happened to call cultural. So rather than focus on the word "culture", and assume that there must be one continuous social phenomenon at play underneath and throughout all the cases described by the word, which can be characterised by some essential features that might round a distinction between culture and religion, we should bracket these questions and look at multiculturalism from what might be called a *functional* perspective. Multiculturalism should not be understood as starting from an understanding of what culture is; multiculturalism should rather be understood in terms of a set of societal issues and controversies and as a set of policy responses to these.

A good example of this is offered by the way in which multiculturalism make groups central. Rather than starting from a definition of culture and then picking out the groups relevant to multiculturalism on the basis of this definition, what multiculturalists such as Will Kymlicka (1995), Tariq Modood (2007) and Anna Elisabetta Galeotti (2002) do is to take what I call a functional perspective. This starts out, not by stipulating a definition of culture, but by pointing out that multiculturalism is concerned with minority groups. What makes a group a minority is not in itself anything intrinsic about the group, but how the surrounding society responds to the members of this group. What matters here are just as much perceptions and representations as the actual cultural traits members of a group might share. And these perceptions and representations are relevant because they have consequences for how members of the group are treated, for which barriers and burdens they face. The reason for focusing on minorities in this functional sense is basically normative, namely that multiculturalism is fundamentally a matter of equal opportunities (Kymlicka), equal citizenship (Modood) or equal respect (Galeotti). So multiculturalism starts out with a normatively grounded concern with minority groups, and the relevant groups are delineated on this basis, not on the basis of some independent definition of culture. This is true even in Kymlicka's case, since he justifies the focus on so-called "societal cultures" in his theory on the basis that these provide the necessary "contexts of choice" for their members and are therefore crucial to equal opportunities. While outside perceptions and representations are crucial here, they of course indirectly affect how members of the groups in question can understand themselves relative to the rest of society. So "identity" becomes central to multiculturalism, both in the sense of externally ascribed identity and internally affirmed identity. But again the reason for this is not that identity matters in itself, but that it becomes relevant to the underlying normative aim of equality.

Once we see that this is the basis of much multiculturalism, and certainly of theories like those of Modood and Galeotti tailored to fit the European case, it

becomes clear that religious differences can play the same role for delimitation of the relevant minority groups as cultural traits have done in other cases. Religious differences can have a similar functional role as cultural differences, and have the same consequences for outside perceptions and internal identities. And in that case there is no reason to exclude religious diversity from the area of concern to multiculturalism (Modood & Meer, 2012, 238, 240).

The extent to which religious minorities actually require accommodation in order for equality in some relevant sense to be achieved is of course an open question; the answer to this question depends both on the exact conception of equality one endorses, and on the empirical circumstances, including the ways perceptions and representations affect the opportunities and identities of religious minorities in a given society. Some claims for accommodation on the part of religiously defined groups might be spurious or opportunistic, and others may be genuine but outweighed by more weighty normative considerations, e.g. the concern to separate politics and religion. But religious groups cannot be ruled out in advance as potential minorities in the sense relevant to multiculturalism, and their claims for accommodation have to be assessed on the basis of ideals of equality and the empirical facts just as those of other groups.

I now turn to the second objection, namely that my idea of Euro-multiculturalism collapses into standard liberal theory and fails to explain what is distinctive about multiculturalism. How is Euro-multiculturalism different from standard liberal theory of religious pluralism if it is not necessarily about implementing group-differentiated measures going beyond the rights and principles already established in standard liberal theories? The answer to the first objection given above provides the beginning of the answer to this second objection as well. As I have sketched it above, religion is a proper concern of multiculturalism because of multiculturalism's functional approach to diversity – it is not the intrinsic *type* of diversity that matters, but the relational *role* it plays.

Liberal theory is mainly concerned with articulating ideals of justice and equal citizenship and with defending rights and rules as necessary for such ideals to be fulfilled. Liberalism accordingly is a normative view about what justice requires. One way to understand at least many versions of multiculturalism is that they do not necessarily challenge the basic normative aims of liberalism, e.g. ideals of equal opportunities, equal citizenship and equal respect, but that they add some layers of empirical circumstances between the levels of fundamental aims and derived policies. The functional understanding of minorities sketched above is such a layer; it does not add any new normative aims or principles, but shows that already accepted (or so we assume) liberal aims require specific kinds of accommodation given certain empirical circumstances. These empirical circumstances consist partly of the contingent ways in which liberal principles have historically been implemented in a given society, partly of the perceptions and representations of new minorities noted above, which together might have the consequence that established rights and rules do not adequately treat members of minorities as equal citizens. In some classic cases it has been argued that the conjunction of liberal ideals and multicultural circumstances justify the adoption of group-differentiated policies that are not part of the standard repertoire of

liberalism. But these are still justified on the normative basis of liberal ideals of justice – what distinguishes multiculturalism is the addition of the empirical circumstances to the justification.

So classical multiculturalism is different from standard liberal theory, not necessarily or mainly in the normative core, but virtue of the attention to a particular type of empirical circumstances concerning minorities that affect how the normative aims can be achieved in a given context. My suggestion now simply is that the same is the case for Euro-multiculturalism. The only difference is that the policy measures that have been debated in relation to religious immigrant minorities in Europe are often not group-differentiated in the same way as those in the classical multiculturalism cases. The European debates about how to respond to diversity rather have proceeded within the set of standard liberal policy measures. This does not make Euro-multiculturalism collapse into standard liberal theory, for there are two differences: a) first of all, Euro-multiculturalism adds the extra empirical layer of circumstances to the normative aims of liberalism just in the same way as classical multiculturalism did, only this time the circumstances are European; b) the implications consist in adjustments and reinterpretations of how standard liberal rights such as freedom of religion and non-discrimination are understood. So Euro-multiculturalism is not simply a re-run of standard liberal theory of religious diversity, since it both adds new empirical facts to the underlying justifications and have different normative implications than liberalism have traditionally been thought to have in the societies in question.

VI. Conclusion

I have presented my idea of Euro-multiculturalism as a genuine form of multiculturalism which mere is focused on religious immigrant minorities rather than territorial cultural groups, and which concerns responses to this form of diversity that are not necessarily group-differentiated but rather consist in reinterpretations of standard liberal rights and principles as applied to new minority groups. In this concluding section I will consider a number of reasons why this understanding of Euro-multiculturalism is important and makes a difference for how we consider the controversies and issues at stake.

The first reason has to do with the *framing* of debates about multiculturalism, both in academic political philosophy and in ordinary political debates. The standard understanding of multiculturalism, which I have related my discussion to throughout the paper, is widely accepted in such debates, both by proponents and opponents of multiculturalism. This might seem like a good thing, for then people are at least agreeing on what they disagree about. One reason why my idea of Euro-multiculturalism is important is that, if my claims about the European controversies are more or less correct, then it is at least sometimes a mischaracterisation of the debates to rely on the standard understanding of multiculturalism. The standard understanding presupposes that we are discussing the extension of group-differentiated policies going beyond ordinary liberal rights and principles to culturally defined groups. If the discussion of the European cases proceed on this assumption,

we not only *misunderstand* what is at stake, namely the adjustment and extension of ordinary liberal rights and principles to new immigrant minorities, but opponents of the kinds of reinterpretations and accommodations that this might involve also gain an *unfair rhetorical advantage*, for they can then reject accommodation on the basis that it would amount to the introduction of problematic forms of group-differentiated rights that not only go beyond liberalism, but is in fact a departure from liberalism.

The second reason has to do with the link to toleration. If Euro-multiculturalism is concerned with mainly religious differences and is mainly about accommodation of religious immigrant minorities with respect to how ordinary liberal rights such as freedom of religion, association and expression and norms such as non-discrimination are understood and interpreted, then this reflects back on the objection component of toleration. If multiculturalism is not something outside liberalism but an interpretation of it, and if the groups which multiculturalism seeks to accommodate are conceived in basically liberal terms, i.e. as religious minorities, then this might have implications for what we might call the *grounds for objection*. As noted earlier, objections to difference might be of different kinds – some simple forms of dislike, some forms of disapproval, and these come in different forms depending on the basis for the negative assessment. The liberal interpretation of multiculturalism I propose suggests that the grounds for objection are at least sometimes *liberal*. While there surely are many forms of garden variety xenophobia and even racism underlying some hostility to Muslims, an important part of the objections by European majority populations to Muslim practices are based on liberal ideas about equality (e.g. of the sexes), freedom (e.g. to choose your own partner and form of love life), secularism (that religion and politics should be separated) etc. Here Euro-multiculturalism again differs from traditional multiculturalism concerned with culturally and particularly linguistically defined groups, for in such cases the grounds for objection are either entirely absent – in which case multiculturalism has nothing to do with toleration – or are simple forms of dislike of strange and foreign people who speak a different language and have a different skin colour. But if Euro-multiculturalism is not only about the reinterpretation of liberal rights and principles but also is premised on the acceptance of liberal political ideals, then it can be a genuine form of toleration, and one based on moral disapproval rather than mere affective dislike (contrary to Rainer Forst's "respect model of toleration" (2012), which understands the objection component as an ethical conception of the good rather than a moral principle of justice).

Finally, my proposed understanding of Euro-multiculturalism also both captures part of and provides an theoretically different take on the European trends that have been conceptualised as a "retreat from multiculturalism" towards "civic integrationism", where the latter according to Christian Joppke's is based on a strong assertive form of liberalism (Joppke, 2004; for discussion of the retreat of multiculturalism claim, see Banting and Kymlicka, 2013). The relevance of my idea of Euro-multiculturalism to this diagnosis and the debate about it is that the claim that civic integrationism is replacing multiculturalism is premised on a strong version of the standard understanding of multiculturalism, namely that multiculturalism consists in group-differentiated policies going beyond liberalism. But if my understanding of Euro-multiculturalism is right, this is not what multiculturalism in Europe is about. So

my idea of Euro-multiculturalism first of all changes the premises for the assessment of whether there indeed is a retreat from multiculturalism in Europe. Secondly, it challenges the assumption that multiculturalism and civic integrationism are somehow at odds with each other and that the introduction of the latter necessarily involves a move away from the former. And thirdly, it presents multiculturalism and civic integrationism as potentially based on the same normative foundation, namely liberal ideals.

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