INTRODUCTION

The Multicultural and Multiculturalism

The question of how European nations deal with racial and ethnic diversity has become inescapable in recent years. For some, the issue emerged in the fraught political climate of 9/11. For others, it surfaced with the establishment of the European Union (EU) and its efforts to define a collective identity. For still others, questions of difference and national belonging assumed special urgency with the succession of homegrown terrorist acts: the London bombings, the killings at *Charlie Hebdo*, the attacks at the Bataclan, the assaults in Brussels, and the rampages in Nice and at the Berlin Christmas market. Even before the most recent acts of violence, the leader of the EU's largest state, Angela Merkel, had pointedly declared the "failure" of multiculturalism in 2010. Meanwhile, the increasing strength of populist movements explicitly antagonistic to diversity—Germany's Patriotic Europeans against Islamicization of the West (PEGIDA), Austria's Freedom Party, Hungary's Jobbik, and Britain's United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), to name just a few—underscored growing anger toward migrant communities. In

2015, the issue resurfaced with particular force as a massive influx of refugees fleeing Syria, Iraq, and other parts of the Middle East and Africa renewed public debate about "foreigners" once again.

This question of how Europeans understand themselves in relation to different ethnic and racial groups is not actually new. Indeed, one might argue that there has *never* been a moment in which Europeans did not define themselves against some group perceived as "other." The very idea of "Europe" (and a distinctive European culture) emerged in the process of launching the Crusades against the infidel, "discovering" the New World, defending eastern territories against the Ottomans, and establishing trading posts and colonies in unfamiliar lands. In each case, Europeans became more self-conscious about who they were, and what distinguished them from the populations they encountered. But developments after the Second World War significantly altered this interaction. Instead of Europeans moving outward into the world as they had done for hundreds of years, people from around the world began to settle in Europe, filling the demand for labor created by wartime destruction. This reversal of migratory patterns shifted the process of European self-definition in a dramatic way. In the past, groups perceived as incompatible with European identity were usually located beyond European borders. But now they are firmly established within Europe itself.

There are, of course, important precedents for collective anxieties about internal "others." Jews, especially, occupied a fraught position for many centuries. They were relegated to ghettos. They were barred from certain professions. They were subjected to pogroms. In more extreme cases, they were expelled altogether. In 1935, the Third Reich promulgated the Nuremberg Laws, which progressively stripped German Jews of their social, economic, and legal rights. And

from there, a hyper-racialized German state pursued a "final solution" to rid Europe of its historic "enemy within." The most recent concerns about internal "others," by contrast, have been exacerbated by the free movement of people within the EU, escalating homegrown threats, and large waves of refugees. These conditions have made the problems associated with "foreigners" seem particularly pervasive and intractable.

Strikingly, during the mid-1990s when I first began a previous book on the topic of ethnic diversity in Germany, it was still possible to believe that the question of "multiculturalism" was peripheral to the central narratives of European history. As late as 2005, one of the most prominent historians of modern Europe could write a grand synthesis of the postwar period in which these issues were a minor subplot.[1] In retrospect, one might read this selective portrait as a deliberate ideological choice, an effacing of racial and ethnic "others" in relation to the very considerable demographic diversity clearly rooted in every major Western European country. The charged politics of the past decade, however, has made it increasingly difficult to wish these issues away. As it happens, 2005 was also the year of the 7/7 London bombings, carried out by British-born sons of Pakistani immigrants. After this tragedy, it was no longer possible to pretend that immigrants and ethnic diversity were irrelevant, or even external, to European history.

Yet even as Europeans have come to define multiculturalism as a central fault line in their society, history, and politics, the meaning of the word has remained difficult to pin down. In many cases, critics and heads of state talk past each other, using very different definitions of multiculturalism and the various "issues" and "problems" it is perceived to encompass. But the ambiguities are historical as well as definitional. For much of the 1960s and 1970s, nationality (and legal status)

served as the crucial marker of difference for newcomers, whereas in the 1980s culture began to assume this role. Today, by contrast, religion—and especially Islam—has become the key divider. To a surprising extent, however, these changes in the term have hardly registered; indeed, they have been largely unconscious. Despite decades of fraught debate, we do not really have common definitions or starting points for understanding the politics of multiculturalism in Europe.

What follows here is a series of specific frameworks for making sense of European multiculturalism. Above all, this book offers a critical history of the present, one that takes a comparative approach and insists on a longer temporal arc of half a century. It proceeds from the realization that since the 1950s at least, most Western European democracies have grappled with the question of what to do with ethnic, racial, and religious minorities within their borders. This shared history cuts across multiple immigrant groups—those who arrived as recruited guest workers, postcolonial settlers, and asylum seekers of various sorts. It includes people from the Caribbean, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Mali, Turkey, and the former Yugoslavia. It encompasses those who count themselves as Christian, Orthodox, Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh. And it involves every major country in Western Europe: from Great Britain, France, and Germany to the Benelux states and the Scandinavian nations.

As a way into this complex terrain, I examine the efforts of European leaders and policy officials to apprehend and manage these radical demographic transformations taking place on the ground. But I also trace the manifold ways Europeans debated diversity—and especially how the terms of these discourses changed over time. Rather than providing an exhaustive account of multiculturalism country by country, I bring together the three largest national cases—Great

Britain, France, and Germany—that shaped the broader contours of the European debate. At times, I include Switzerland and the Netherlands as useful foils for my primary stories. By virtue of my own research expertise, I am able to flesh out the British and German arguments through archival sources, whereas I rely more heavily on secondary literature to develop the French analysis. Despite these constraints, I believe the comparative approach is absolutely crucial to our understanding of European multiculturalism. Such a perspective allows us to grasp the clear differences in migration patterns, colonial legacies (or lack thereof), and conceptions of citizenship, but also the 1980s consolidation of political discourse across Europe that has been less visible within the framework of individual national history. One key question for the book is this: how do we make sense of each country's distinct historical contexts, ideologies, and policies for dealing with diversity, on the one hand, and the fact that these efforts largely converged into a European-wide discourse on multiculturalism, on the other? If these states initially approached the issue of immigrants from different starting points, that is, how did they end up in the same place?

Treating immigration as a longer postwar story enables us to see that the variegated patterns of response to newcomers have not just pushed in a linear direction. Instead, the trajectories of public debate and policy making indicate that European reactions to non-European migrants vacillated between different forms of openness and exclusion at different junctures. In the 1950s and 1960s, Western European nations typically welcomed those who arrived from their colonies, former colonies, and other foreign countries to help rebuild after the massive destruction of World War II. In this way, questions of immigration and ethnic diversity were always interwoven with the postwar economic boom that

drove a quarter century of prosperity and affluence. While governmental authorities in certain countries worried about the long-term effects of ethnic and racial difference on their societies, most suppressed such concerns by focusing instead on the immediate economic benefits of foreign manpower or by insisting that guest workers would eventually return home. For much of the 1960s and 1970s, Britain, France, and Germany pursued distinctly different approaches to dealing with their multicultural societies. It was only around 1980, in fact, that all three openly acknowledged the massive social consequences of immigration and ethnic diversity. At virtually the same moment, though, each country *also* began to pursue a new politics of national belonging that was at least partially framed in relation to non-European settlers. With growing intensity, British, French, and German political leaders identified immigrants as bearers of alien cultures that now rendered them "inassimilable" to the nation.

The 1989 furors over Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and the expulsion of French school girls for wearing headscarves marked a major watershed in this cycle because they helped knit together what had been distinct processes of national boundary drawing. Together, the Rushdie and headscarf affairs kindled serious doubts about coexistence with the multiethnic populations that had established themselves in Europe over the previous four decades. These events drew attention—for the first time—to Islam as the common cultural and religious tradition among many different immigrant groups across Europe, groups that had previously been understood as distinct. These included Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in Britain; Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans in France; Turks in Germany and the Netherlands. They also sparked skepticism about the "capacity" of Muslim immigrants to adapt to Western liberal values, a process supposedly undermined by religious fanaticism and the oppression

of Muslim women. A second key question for this book, then, is this: how precisely did the growing preoccupation with religion as the central marker of ethnic and racial difference dovetail with concerns about gender relations and sexuality?

Doubts about the compatibility of Islamic culture and the principles of liberal democracy continued to fester during the 1990s, spurred by the establishment of the EU (and resurgent questions about a specifically European identity), the collapse of the Cold War's bipolar system, and the triumph of neoliberal values that celebrated individual "freedoms" as core tenets of Western culture. Precisely because Islam was understood as antithetical to European freedoms, critics from across the political spectrum focused on Muslims as the crucial litmus test for the viability of multiculturalism. Even those on the left often explained the seemingly oppressive treatment faced by some Muslim women as the product of religion, identifying Islam itself as the major barrier to integration. They wondered whether it was possible for European societies to manage such differences, if tolerating Muslim cultural practices required them to turn a blind eye to what they perceived as gender discrimination. The attacks of 9/11 and subsequent acts of localized terrorism, in turn, crystallized these doubts into a conclusion that is now understood as simple common sense: the oft-stated pronouncement that European multiculturalism has "failed." But what exactly have the costs of this conclusion been? Why did multiple heads of state affirm it publicly in 2010? And how do we parse the myriad problems that the acceptance of "failure" seemed to target? The goal of this book is not to prescribe a specific form of multiculturalism that might serve as a cure-all for an enormously complicated politics. Rather, my hope is that the history I chronicle here may help us to become more self-conscious

about what multiculturalism is, has been, and might be in the future.

To that end, it seems useful to begin by clarifying when the term "multiculturalism" emerged, and how its meanings have changed over time. As numerous scholars have noted, "multiculturalism" is a notoriously slippery word.[2] Its definitions and meanings have proliferated exponentially since it came into common usage in the 1970s, first in the United States and then in much of Europe. Multiculturalism has been most commonly invoked in societies where different cultural communities live together: the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Yugoslavia, and, more recently, Britain, Germany, and France. But the term itself has become, according to one prominent critic, a "floating signifier" that connotes anything from touchy-feely celebrations of cultural differences to the political demand for minority rights, from gay and lesbian studies in the academy to public funding for community projects.[3]

It is important to note at the outset that the word was an American invention, one subsequently adopted in Britain and some of its former settler colonies such as Canada and Australia. The term first appeared as an adjective in the title of a 1941 American novel, *Lance: A Story about Multicultural Men*, written by scientist and author Edward F. Haskell. The book received a number of major reviews in the US press, including the *New York Herald Tribune*, *New York Times*, and *Saturday Review*. Many of these reviews featured efforts to use and flesh out the new word. One described the book as "concerned with people who are multicultural, who give their allegiance to no single nation or race or church, but to humanity at large."[4] Another summed up the novel as "a fervent sermon

against nationalism, national prejudice and behavior in favor of a 'multicultural' way of life."[5] Among these commentaries, the *New York Times* review stood out for attempting to clarify the word through the story itself. "Though English born," the critic explained, the protagonist "spent his childhood . . . on the Continent, believing himself to be . . . the son of a kindly old German." The experience led the boy to become "multicultural," a mind-set exemplified by "facilities in various languages and an appreciation of national cultures that is more than skin-deep."[6] In its initial articulations, then, the idea of the "multicultural" served as a somewhat vague conceptual foil for chauvinistic nationalism. It connoted a concern for humanity in its most expansive sense, as opposed to a subset of humanity bounded by race, nation, or religion. Significantly, the need to introduce this term came at a very specific historical conjuncture: the moment when the United States was being pushed to the brink of war by the territorial advances of Nazi Germany.

The first invocation of "multiculturalism" as a noun, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, did not come until 1957, when it was used in the journal *Hispania*. The word appeared in a report on the Modern Language Association's foreign language program in the United States. Edward A. Medina, New Mexico's director of elementary education and supervisor of Spanish, explained that his state is "a land . . . where good will, understanding and cooperation are not only desirable but essential. For here its Indians, its Americans of Spanish descent, and its 'Anglos' meet in daily contact. They must not only co-exist but contribute to each other's lives. The key to successful living here, as it is in Switzerland, is multilingualism, which can carry with it rich multiculturalism."[7] In this context, too, the word had a distinctly positive connotation, treating a diversity of languages and cultures as an opportunity for enrichment and engagement. It suggested

a particular strategy for dealing with diversity: namely, that the "successful" coexistence of multiple cultures is best promoted by persons of linguistic facility—and by implication, those open to a variety of experiences and ways of thinking. In its early formulations, then, multiculturalism required a cosmopolitan frame of mind.

But this attitude toward diversity did not appear out of nowhere. It actually resembled ideas articulated by the New York intellectual Randolph Bourne on the eve of the First World War. Employing the concept of cosmopolitanism (drawn from the Ancient Greeks) as a rebuttal to the xenophobia and jingoism then dominant in American public discourse, Bourne championed the United States' exceptional diversity.[8] He viewed the multiplicity of immigrant cultures as one of the country's greatest strengths and argued against the conventional zero-sum logic that saw any openness to difference as a dilution of Americanism. Indeed, it was precisely through reciprocal interaction across lines of class, religion, and ethnicity that he imagined American identity expanding.

Neither "multicultural" nor "multiculturalism" appeared in the national press again until 1962, when the *New York Times* reported on an experiment in Detroit's public schools. Teachers wanted to replace the "Dick and Jane" reading primers set in a "nice suburban home" with new books about "Negro" and "Caucasian" children who live in a large metropolitan area.[9] The article quoted extensively from the announcement made by the Detroit teachers' committee: "The pre-primers which are in general use in American schools have many strong points for middle- and upper-class white children. . . . However, if children learn to read best when they can identify with the environment, the characters and the situations presented in their readers, then current pre-primers do not offer the best starting point for children in

the great cities. These children need beginning reading materials that present family-life patterns resembling those found in multicultural areas."[10] In this context, the term "multicultural" served to describe places—especially major metropolitan locales—inhabited by people of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. The teachers drew attention to the fact that large segments of the American population resided in cosmopolitan urban communities, rather than the "all-white, antiseptic world" of the suburbs.[11] In their efforts to legitimize the life experiences of children in the "great cities," they echoed Bourne, who had valorized New York as a unique environment where the collision of different cultures and religions routinely forced individuals to broaden their self-understanding.

In 1964, the term surfaced again, this time in relation to Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan's landmark book, *Beyond the Melting Pot*. Glazer's section on American Jews, according to one commentator, convincingly demonstrated that "the image of 'the melting pot'" had been "dethroned in favor of the multicultural and multiethnic community of 'cultural pluralism.'"[12] Here, the "multicultural" community was explicitly linked to "cultural pluralism," a familiar concept often associated with the American philosopher Horace Kallen. A contemporary of Bourne, Kallen likewise extolled the diversity of US cultures and regarded differences across immigrant groups as a positive attribute. But where Bourne emphasized the transformative interactions forged between natives and immigrants—a process he believed would productively enrich both parties—Kallen stressed the autonomy of each group and envisioned the United States as a "federation" of enduring ethnic communities that would contribute to the national fabric without losing their particularity.[13] Following Kallen, the reviewer of *Beyond the Melting Pot* welcomed Glazer's report on the low rate of intermarriage between Jews and

other groups as a sign that the Jewish community was resisting the assimilationist demands of "Americanization." Multiculturalism, in other words, was now deployed as an antidote to the homogenizing overtones of the melting pot analogy.[14] It contained a kind of preservationist impulse, a desire to retain and pass down cultural differences as a bulwark against assimilation.

It should be clear at this point that there were already multiple inflections of the word "multiculturalism" in play. What they shared was a celebration—or at the very least, a basic acceptance—of diverse cultures within a single nation, a fundamental tolerance of heterogeneity rather than a defense of homogeneity. In this respect, the initial uses of multiculturalism operated within a broadly leftist intellectual tradition of arguing for the value of diversity in modern society. This tradition had been especially galvanized by the emergence of American nativism and xenophobia in the 1910s and the rise of fascism in Europe in the 1930s. Where these invocations of multiculturalism diverged was in their understanding how exactly different cultures should relate. While the cosmopolitan strand emphasized cultural mixing and the expansion of identities, the cultural pluralist strand stressed the integrity of groups and the need to maintain their distinctiveness. These earliest references to "multiculturalism" suggest, above all, that the word's meanings were not fixed, consistent, or even always coherent. Indeed, they were often loose and messy.

By the 1970s, the term began to be seen in a more explicitly political light, as activist groups adopted it to contest accepted narratives of American history and national belonging. In 1974, for instance, the National Education Association (NEA), an independent teachers' union, announced a "checklist for selecting and evaluating U.S. history textbooks." Among the criteria were recommendations that such text-

books "portray the multicultural character of our nation" and "present the sexual, racial, religious and ethnic groups in our society in such a way as to build positive images, with mutual understanding and respect."[15] As the *Baltimore Afro-American* explained, this checklist was part of a "multifaceted plan to influence publishers to produce textbooks and other instructional materials which reflect the pluralistic nature of American society."[16] At the most basic level, the NEA deployed the term "multicultural" to make a point similar to the one that had been made by the Detroit teachers a decade earlier: both highlighted the diverse makeup of the United States and sought to introduce textbooks that would represent that diversity. Yet the NEA guidelines went further, stressing a broad spectrum of groups and the importance of cultivating "mutual understanding and respect" among them. In the context of the changing civil rights movement, moreover, this demand to acknowledge the multiplicity of American society assumed bigger stakes.

During the civil rights struggle's early years, the goal had been to combat the segregationist color lines of Jim Crow by pursuing a more "integrationist" program in which all citizens would be valued and protected equally under the law. In the late 1960s, however, a younger generation of activists extended the movement's initial demands for democratic freedom and political rights to more autonomous forms of self-determination, race pride, and strategic essentialism (such as Black Power). In the process, the older calls for social equality paved the way for a major transformation in the educational mission and curricula of American public schools: from a model that sought to socialize children to white middle-class values to one that encouraged students to appreciate and preserve their own unique ethnic cultures and histories. This latter curricular impulse came to be defined as "multicultural."

As an effort to revise the national history curriculum, the NEA textbook guidelines quickly provoked a major backlash among conservative parents that began in West Virginia and spread across the country to Florida and Vermont. An eighty-seven-page study conducted by the NEA on the controversy characterized the West Virginia protests as posing "another threat to rights that have been newly won: the right of racial and ethnic minority groups to be included in the textbooks and the right of all students to learn that in the world and in this society, white is not always right, that white, middle-class values are not the only, nor even always the best values, and that the history of the United States is not one long, unblemished record of Christian benevolence and virtue."[17] This defense of multiculturalism made explicit a set of engagements that had previously only been implied. The concept now not only included the expectation that minority groups be "represented"—in textbooks, school curricula, and American history itself—but the belief that challenges to the structural dominance of "white, middle-class values" carried ideological and cultural authority. In this way, multiculturalism became an important weapon against antiblack and other forms of racism, but this new function tended to push the concept toward its more cultural pluralist, federalist inflection.

It is in the related context of bilingual education in the United States that we find the first reference to multiculturalism in a European publication. Writing for the Manchester *Guardian* in 1974, a British journalist detailed the effects of recent US legislation supporting bilingualism in American public schools: "Anyone brought up on the idea of the United States as the great melting pot, bound together by the English language, would find the number of shop signs in Spanish in parts of Texas, Miami and New York city faintly alarming. For anyone interested in education, the extent to which the country has moved towards multiculturalism in

the schools, since the passage of the Bilingual Education Act, 1967, seems to challenge any melting in the future."[18] Pressure from Mexican Americans in the southwest, explained the reporter, had spurred Congress to pass the bill and provide a hundred million dollars for bilingual programs in public schools. This campaign was part of the effort by ethnic minorities to "reassert their identity" and (as in the textbook controversy) demand respect, legitimacy, and support for minority cultures. He concluded,

> It would be easy to write off the whole bilingual endeavor as merely a passing product of the turbulent sixties. . . . I am not so sure. Without denying the world status of the English language, the process recognises that the United States will always contain more than the single Anglo culture, and that even a nation as powerful and self-sufficient as the United States must go further to meet the smaller language communities. And I suspect, too, that there is a message for Britain here: that local authorities outside Wales might think more seriously of offering a genuinely bilingual option at a few schools—in languages like Urdu, as well as French.[19]

In drawing lessons for British society from this account of American education, the journalist was making a series of pivotal choices. Arguing not only that bilingualism might be a useful educational policy in Britain, he went on to suggest that the American term attached to it—multiculturalism—might be productively applied to the UK context. It is worth noting that as early as 1966 British Home Secretary Roy Jenkins had already articulated crucial features of this concept in a speech to the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants, although he did not explicitly invoke the term.[20] Outlining the Labour government's stance on "race relations,"

Jenkins recommended the integration of recent arrivals from New Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean, Africa, and South Asia (as opposed to those from Old Commonwealth countries such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand who presumably had no problem fitting in). He proclaimed "integration" a national goal, defining it as the preferable option to assimilation. Where assimilation involved a "flattening out process," integration stressed "equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance."[21] In this statement, we can detect clear traces of a Kallenesque model of multiculturalism. Explicitly describing Britain as a diverse country, home to the Welsh (Jenkins himself was Welsh), Scots, Irish, Jews, and more recent arrivals, Jenkins endorsed providing "equal opportunity" and cultivating "mutual tolerance" as key strategies for dealing with the coexistence of multiple cultural groups.

Meanwhile, the American uses of multiculturalism were becoming increasingly politicized as they gained heightened visibility on the national stage. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, developments in US higher education radicalized the meanings and effects associated with the demand for multiculturalism, now firmly linked to curricular reform and contests over history and memory. Ethnic minority activists on university campuses, in particular, began to push for fundamental changes in the academy. In November 1968, the Black Student Union and a coalition of student associations known as the Third World Liberation Front organized a strike at San Francisco State University.[22] Students demanded equal access to public higher education, more diversity among the professoriate, and a new curriculum that would embrace the history and culture of all people, including minority groups. After a five-month walkout, they won a major concession from the university: the creation of a College of Ethnic Studies, the first in the United States. Similar events occurred the

following year at Berkeley, where the standoff with the university administration turned violent, leading Governor Ronald Reagan to call in the California National Guard to quash the strike. Faculty support of the strikers helped pave the way for the establishment of a separate ethnic studies department at Berkeley. As a by-product of these and subsequent struggles during the 1970s and 1980s, US institutions of higher learning gradually incorporated the values of a highly politicized multiculturalism into their curricula, hiring practices, and structure. In this way, education—and specifically, its role in sustaining the distinctive cultures of ethnic and racial groups—became the ground on which the increasingly contentious debates about multiculturalism were fought in the United States.

What's important for our purposes is that "multiculturalism" migrated across the Atlantic as a specifically "American" term, one with its politics already explicit. It first appeared as a topic in Britain during the early 1970s and was adapted as a model for British race relations policy in the 1980s. Only after the Rushdie affair in 1989 did multiculturalism also become an object of serious discussion in Germany and France. In adopting this term, Europeans imported not a fixed and finished understanding of diversity and its management at the level of policy, but rather a loose concept that contained both the cosmopolitan mixing imagined by Bourne and the preservationist arguments developed by Kallen. At the same time, the word came with the intensely politicized baggage of US movements for social justice, movements that sought to rewrite textbooks, revise school curricula, and fundamentally reimagine the nation's history. European critics routinely complained that multiculturalism was American, incoherent, and fraught with political overtones. Whatever its perceived deficiencies, however, the concept's arrival marked a critical new development in Europe, giving it an ideological

touchstone with which to explicitly engage questions of national diversity. Indeed, it was only in the process of debating multiculturalism that Europeans began to formulate the first affirmative arguments for social diversity as a core value and policy issue.

One of the central complaints sometimes lodged against multiculturalism is that it fosters superficial paeans to cultural diversity as opposed to inclusive visions for how to manage it. At this point, therefore, it might be useful to think more carefully about questions of language, labels, and categories. Especially helpful on this score is British sociologist Stuart Hall's important distinction between the adjective "multicultural" and the noun "multiculturalism," a distinction too often conflated in common parlance. Multicultural, according to Hall, describes an on-the-ground situation: "the social characteristics and problems of governance posed by any society in which different cultural communities live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining something of their 'original' identity."[23] Of necessity, multicultural societies exist in the plural, rather than in the singular. They most often arise through the movement of peoples who are responding to a wide variety of factors, including imperial conquest, labor shortage, unemployment, war, and famine. Multicultural societies are thus produced by a range of historical motors, whether economic, political, social, or several in combination. In each case, the particular interplay of diverse "cultural communities" creates its own unique effects and specific manifestations.

"Multiculturalism," by contrast, denotes "the strategies and policies adopted to manage and govern the problems of diversity and multiplicity which multi-cultural societies throw

up."[24] The noun, in other words, designates a programmatic statement or specific approach for dealing with multicultural societies. As such, it can be articulated in the guise of political philosophy, social ideal, or state policy. The term "multiculturalism" can be misleading, however, because it conjures a singular concept or thing. Most people do not refer to *multiculturalisms* in their conventional speech. In practice, though, there are innumerable models for managing cultural diversity—and many of them claim the label "multiculturalism."

What many critics describe as "conservative" multiculturalism, for instance, insists on assimilating minority cultures into that of the majority. "Liberal" multiculturalism, by contrast, emphasizes integrating immigrants through universal citizenship, but tolerates some forms of cultural difference as long as they remain in the private sphere. "Pluralist" multiculturalism supports and protects minority cultural groups and accords them differential rights. "Critical" multiculturalism stresses the power and privileges of the mainstream and seeks to develop modes of resistance against majority hegemony. "Commercial" or "corporate" multiculturalism celebrates diversity as a means of selling products and offers consumption as a way to resolve differences between groups.[25] If that were not enough, there is a "weak" version of multiculturalism and a "strong" one—the difference here determined by the relationship between the demand for assimilation and toleration of cultural particularities.[26] The list goes on and on. Indeed, multiculturalism has been inflected in so many ways—and enlisted to denote so many strategies and policies—that leading sociologists now argue for seven or eight distinct variants in common usage! What they all signify, however, is a political approach or social policy for regulating and managing cultural diversity.[27]

Given the sheer variety of multiculturalisms, it is not especially surprising that the concept has provoked an equally

various set of criticisms, each with its own specific target. Whereas conservatives attack multiculturalism as a threat to the cultural integrity of the nation, liberals decry multicultural policies for championing cultural differences of the group rather than protecting the neutrality of the state or primacy of the individual. Antiracists reject multiculturalism because it emphasizes culture and identity while neglecting structural problems such as lived disparities of income and access to social services. Meanwhile, some minority critics condemn multiculturalism for encouraging a Kallenesque preservation of differences that ultimately isolates ethnic communities. Multiculturalism is nothing if not a contested concept!

Precisely because multiculturalism can mean so many different things, though, the term has often also been used as a kind of shorthand for the broader debate about the problem of diversity, especially in the European context. Thus, when some people invoke multiculturalism, they are using the term in a third and more discursive sense: namely, to reference how societies talk about difference. But as we have seen, this generalized invocation tends to encompass both the ground-level fact of a multiethnic society and the specific strategies for managing it.

Such indeterminacy, in turn, has made it easy for critics to vilify the concept without being especially clear about what in particular they are condemning. This imprecision has meant that people who debate multiculturalism often talk past each other, employing the same term to designate radically different ideas, doctrines, or policies. And in today's heated political debates about immigrants and immigration, conservatives' use—indeed, their exploitation—of the ambiguity has had particularly pernicious effects. It is possible to slide quite seamlessly between a blanket rejection of cultural diversity in European society (the multicul-

tural) and a more specific critique of the strategies and policies for managing that diversity (multiculturalism). If we are to get to the bottom of the multicultural question, then, it behooves us to be as meticulous as possible in explicating the terms in play in any given debate.

At the same time, the very slipperiness of the word has led even the most thoughtful commentators to wonder about the concept's long-term liabilities. If multiculturalism contains so many meanings—some of them contradictory—does it continue to serve any constructive purpose? Might we be better off jettisoning this muddled word in favor of more precise language? This prospect, however, raises a different sort of question—namely, what would be lost if the term was actually discarded? For better or worse, the very ubiquity of the word marks an enormously valuable critical space in public discourse: it is the place where we acknowledge the lived reality of diverse societies and where we can move the discussion of diversity forward at the level of democratic politics.

Whether or not we want to wish away the messiness of multiculturalism, in other words, the basic fact of ethnic and cultural diversity in European cities, neighborhoods, and streets remains. Simply writing off multiculturalism as a "failed" experiment—or a project that has outlived its usefulness—does little to change conditions on the ground–except perhaps to create the impression of willful exclusion. One might argue, in fact, that the highly contested nature of the concept now serves a number of critical functions in democratic societies. Precisely because the term's meanings are *not* straightforward and settled, it has facilitated contentious debate about how to manage social diversity in the contexts of law and politics, education, and popular culture. In the wake of so many recent groundswells of xenophobia, isolationism, and violence, it may be that we need quite a bit

more discussion about diversity—not less. Indeed, it was precisely this capacity of multiculturalism to force attention on demographic realities and disrupt commonsense categories and assumptions that ultimately made it an indispensable category for critics like Stuart Hall.[28] What Hall recognized earlier than most of us is the fundamental value of multiculturalism's messiness. Without this concept, we are left with disavowal, a stance whose logical conclusions lead to mass deportation or apartheid.