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Nationality and Cultural Pluralism
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I

For the greater part of this century, nationalism has stood accused above all of engendering fearsome conflicts between states over territory and spheres of influence. Even while conceding the internal advantages of national unity, many liberals have thought that this was bought at an intolerable price in the slaughter and oppression of outsiders. But recently this assessment has changed. The experience of liberal states in the period following the Second World War suggests that, among these states at least, international disputes can be resolved non-violently without sacrificing national autonomy. The focus of attention has switched instead to the internal effects of nationality. Are national allegiances not secured at the cost of suppressing the more specific identities of individuals and groups within the boundaries of the nation-state? Does nationality not involve the imposition of a fixed identity deriving from the dominant group in a society on other groups whose own cultural values are thereby disparaged and undermined? The new charge is that nationalism is necessarily an illiberal force, where liberalism involves showing equal respect for the many different personal and group identities that would otherwise flourish in a modern plural society.

Responding to this charge involves asking what the principle of nationality implies for the internal politics of the state. If we value national allegiances and want them to continue to serve as the basis for political association, what stance should we adopt towards sub-national group identities, especially perhaps ethnic identities whose substance may be at odds with the national identity itself? The position I want to map out stands in contrast to two others which I shall sketch briefly to set the scene and explore in greater detail shortly. These are conservative nationalism and radical multiculturalism.

Conservative nationalism resolves the question decisively in favour of nationality. Our national identities are given to us by the past; they are (or at least ought to be) the collective identities that matter most to us; and it is essential to the stability of the state that these identities should be protected against subversion and transmitted to new generations of citizens. So although the state may have liberal features (if that is what our particular sense of national identity prescribes), individual liberty should cede to the demands of nationality in cases of conflict. Therefore, in considering issues such as the education of children or immigration, we should be guided not by the supposed basic rights of individuals but by the need to preserve a common national identity.

Radical multiculturalism, by contrast, regards the state as an arena in which many kinds of individual and group identity should be allowed to co-exist and flourish. The state should not merely tolerate but give equal recognition to each of these identities. No special weight should be given to national identities; indeed, such identities are somewhat suspect, in so far as they are likely to be the product of political manipulation, whereas identities stemming from gender, ethnicity, religious belief, and so forth are to be celebrated as authentic expressions of individual difference.

Neither of these positions is in my view adequate, but to see why we need to look in greater detail at the way in which cultural pluralism poses a problem for the principle of nationality. If we consider possible sources of personal identity apart from nationality, we should be struck by their number and variety. People may identify themselves by their occupation, their class, their locality, their gender, their sexual orientation, their hobbies, their membership of associations, their religion, their party allegiance, their ethnicity, and in other ways besides. Any one of these may become a primary source of identity. One person may think of herself as above all a woman, another as a bird-watcher, a third as a Muslim. In plural societies most are likely to have composite identities in which different affiliations come to the fore on different occasions. Some of these identities are chosen, some unchosen, but it will be to a considerable degree a matter of choice which aspects any particular person makes central to their conception of themselves.[1]

Why should there be conflicts between identities such as these and the idea of nationality? Unless one takes the view that nationality is the *only* legitimate source of collective identity – and even the conservative nationalist would recoil from saying this – there seems no reason why one should not acknowledge French or American identity alongside one's identity as a woman, a trade unionist, a Christian, and so forth. Discord will arise only where the national identity includes elements that are incompatible with these other allegiances. This will depend on what nationhood means in a particular case. If I belong to a nation whose self-definition includes Catholicism – being Catholic is what separates this people from its neighbours, say – and I decide to join a Protestant church, then inevitably there will be a clash between my religious and national identities. But at the other extreme, national identity might have no religious component, and the state might remain studiously neutral as between the various religious confessions of its citizens. As we shall see, it is harder to achieve such an outcome in practice than it might seem in theory. But let us at least begin by reminding ourselves that national identities are not all-embracing, but can co-exist peacefully with other commitments and loyalties in a person's conception of himself.

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[1] Though not in all circumstances, a point that I illustrated in Ch. 2 n. 52 with the example of Hannah Arendt's Jewishness.

The hardest cases are likely to be ethnic identities, and I shall focus on these in the discussion that follows. Why is this? Although I have argued (in Chapter 2) against the assimilation of ethnic and national identities, it is important to acknowledge what they have in common. Like nations, ethnic groups tend to think of themselves as extended families; indeed, the belief in common descent plays an even stronger role here than it does in most national identities. They share cultural and sometimes physical features which make assimilation to and from other groups difficult. There is also often a sense of a family home, a territory with which the group has a special relationship. Ethnicity is a pervasive phenomenon, in the sense that it is something that a person carries with her wherever she goes: you may be a fanatical bird-watcher at weekends, but this has no particular implications for the way in which you are treated in the weekday world, whereas if you are ethnically black in a white-dominated society, or ethnically Tamil in a society dominated by Sinhalese, this is likely to condition your experience in all spheres of life: in work, in leisure, in politics, and so forth. As a result, ethnic identities very often give rise to demands for political recognition. Unless the group you belong to has its identity confirmed in symbolic and other ways by the relevant state, you are likely to feel vulnerable and demeaned.[2] So although ethnicity is not an essentially political phenomenon in the way that nationality is, it is likely in practice to foster demands on the state, demands which may not be easily reconciled with the demands of nationality. To take a rather obvious example, in a society in which language divisions are markers of ethnicity, giving equal recognition to the languages spoken by different ethnic groups in the public sphere may conflict with the idea of a common public language as the expression of a common national identity. Language recognition, however, is often of great importance to ethnic groups, for both instrumental and symbolic reasons.[3] Fierce disputes, such as that currently raging in the United States over whether, in view of the substantial numbers of Spanish-speaking immigrants in some states, English should be entrenched as the primary language in education, workplaces and government, are to be expected when ethnicity and nationality collide in this way.

One response to this predicament might be to say that ethnicity *should* be treated as a private cultural phenomenon, on a par with other forms of personal identity such as those I listed above. Even if ethnic groups in practice are always liable to trespass across the boundary with nationality, they have no justification for doing so, and politically we should take no notice of their demands, attempting all the while to educate the members of ethnic groups into regarding their shared identity as a private matter. But this response overlooks the fact that national identities invariably contain some ethnic ingredients. Very often a nation has been formed from the ethnic group that is dominant in a particular territory, and bears the hallmarks of that group: language, religion, cultural identity. This has typically been the case with the nations of Europe. Other nations, created out of political necessity from *a melange* of ethnic groups, have felt the need to give themselves an ethnic coloration, as Smith explains:

> Even where a nation-to-be could boast no ethnic antecedents of importance and where any ethnic ties were shadowy or fabricated, the need to forge out of whatever cultural components were available a coherent mythology and symbolism of a community of history and culture became everywhere paramount as a condition of national survival and unity. Without some ethnic lineage the nation-to-be could fall apart.[4]

It is this ethnic ingredient in national identity that makes the relationship between ethnicity and nationality inherently problematic. Groups outside the ethnic core cannot be expected straightforwardly to embrace the national identity that is on offer, since this both creates internal strains and puts them at a practical disadvantage (if they speak the 'wrong' language or practise the 'wrong' religion). So, even if their ethnic identity is itself devoid of political elements, they are bound to seek to alter the national identity so as to make it more hospitable to their cultural traits. Thus, to bear a Muslim identity in Britain today is not inherently political, but it becomes so if British national identity and the practices that express it are seen as containing an Anglo-Saxon bias which discriminates against Muslims (and other ethnic minorities).[5]

So we cannot sidestep the problems of cultural pluralism by supposing that we can legitimately require all identities other than national ones to be 'privatized'. Or at least, in order to reach that conclusion, we need to have some argument to show why the political demands of ethnic groups should be dismissed in this way. An argument to this effect can be found in the writings of those I call conservative nationalists. This is a doctrine with a long pedigree, but I shall principally consider recent restatements by British conservatives, made in a context in which the reality of cultural pluralism can hardly be overlooked.

II

At the core of conservative nationalism stands the idea that national identity integrally involves allegiance to authority. To think of oneself as British is *ipso facto* to acknowledge the authority of institutions such as the monarchy which form the substance of national life. This view does not involve a crude identification of nation and state; indeed, the conservative nationalist's main charge against the liberal is that the latter overlooks the need for a pre-political source of unity to underpin the state. But he nation is conceived not merely in terms of horizontal ties to fellow-members,

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[2] See the exploration of this point in C. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition',* ed. A. Gutmann (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992).

[3] See D. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985), 219-24.

[4] A. D. Smith, *National Identity* (Harmondsworth, Penguin 1991), 42.

[5] Whether this perception is valid is another matter; see my discussion of British national identity in the following chapter.

past and present, who share whatever features are taken to constitute the common identity, but in terms of vertical ties to established institutions, which are regarded as authoritative. In an illuminating analogy, the nation is compared to the family, a human community which has built into it the unequal relation of authority between parent and child. The family requires of its junior members not merely loyalty but *piety,* and it is this that, on the conservative view, forms the proper disposition of the patriot. As Scruton puts it:

> Impiety is the refusal to recognize as legitimate a demand that does not arise from consent or choice. And we see that the behaviour of children towards their parents cannot be understood unless we admit this ability to recognize a bond that is 'transcendent', that exists, as it were 'objectively', outside the sphere of individual choice. It is this ability that is transferred by the citizen from hearth and home to place, people and country. The bond of society – as the conservative sees it – is just such a 'transcendent' bond, and it is inevitable that the citizen will be disposed to recognize its legitimacy, will be disposed, in other words, to bestow authority upon the existing order.[6]

Without this disposition of piety, conservative nationalists claim, a person cannot properly understand herself as forming part of an historic national community, and with this *deracinement* goes a loss of moral direction. As Casey expresses this thought,

> A man who lacks piety does not know, in the widest sense, how to behave and feel. To compile a random list of his failings: he would not know how to speak of the dead; he would not fully understand what constitutes insult; he would lack a sense of place; he would not see old age as 'venerable'. On a larger scale he might be unable to understand love of country. He would tend` to lack all attachment to traditions, customs, forms and manners. This suggests that he would lack attachment to all those ways in which men imprint their character and national identity upon economic arrangements.[7]

This view of nationality has a number of corollaries which bear directly on the problem of cultural pluralism. Since the state draws its own authority in part from the authority of the nation, it needs to give formal recognition to the institutions through which the latter is expressed. Scruton refers to this as *establishment*. The institutions in question need not be formally constituted as parts of the state, but they must be given a legal status. Thus, the national church should be an established church with special rights and duties. This immediately militates against the idea that the state should be neutral towards, or give equal recognition to, the many different cultural practices

that may arise in a plural society. It should not, for instance, confer the same status on the religious institutions of minority ethnic groups as it does on the national church, because to do so would be to weaken the authority of the national institutions.

Second, it is implicit in the conservative understanding of nationality that the beliefs and practices that compose it may need to be protected against the corrosive acids of criticism. For these are to have authority, but the authority in question is that of tradition, and tradition is notoriously vulnerable to rational criticism. Scruton refers to the importance of myths that 'constitute the great artifact whereby institutions enter the life of the state and absorb the life of the citizen'.[8] It is therefore a legitimate task of the state to ensure that national myths are preserved and, to the extent to which this conflicts with liberal commitments such as those to freedom of thought and expression, liberalism must be transcended. As Scruton says of 'communitarian' liberals, 'none of them is prepared to accept the real price of community: which is sanctity, intolerance, exclusion, and a sense that life's meaning depends upon obedience, and also on vigilance against the enemy'.[9] This remark seems to me to illuminate well the kind of community that conservative nationalists take the nation to be, and the political implications that follow.

Mention of exclusion leads to the third corollary: the conservative conception of nationality is bound to entail a discouraging if not prohibitive attitude towards would-be immigrants who do not already share the national culture. Conservative opposition to immigration is sometimes put down simply to racism, but a deeper ground is that, if you regard a common national identity as essential to political stability, and also think that national identity involves an allegiance to customary institutions and practices, you cannot help but regard an influx of people not imbued with a suitable reverence for these institutions and practices as destabilizing. Casey, for example, argues that both the West Indian and the Indian community in Britain embody values that are antipathetic to the British sense of nationality, and proposes the voluntary repatriation of substantial sections of these communities as the only feasible way of preserving nationhood.[10] To say that the national identity, and its institutional expressions, should change and adapt to welcome the newcomers is, in conservative eyes, to abandon the very feature of nationality that makes it so valuable, namely its authority over the present generation.

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[6] R. Scruton, *The Meaning of Conservatism* (Harmondswoith, Penguin, 1980), 32-3.
[7] J. Casey, 'Tradition and Authority', in M. Cowling (ed.), *Conservative Essays* (London, Cassell, 1978).

[8] Scruton, Meaning of Conservatism, 169.
[9] R. Scruton, 'In Defence of the Nation', in *The Philosopher on Dover Beach* (Manchester, Carcanet, 1990), 310.
[10] J. Casey, 'One Nation: the Politics of Race', *Salisbury Review*, 1 (1982), 23-8. West Indians are said to manifest 'an extraordinary resentment towards authority', to have 'a family structure which is markedly unlike our own', etc. Indians are conceded to be industrious and peaceable, but because of 'their *profound* difference of culture, they are most unlikely to wish to identify themselves with the traditions and loyalties of the host nation'.

What is wrong with this view? Notice to begin with that the modern conservative does not really regard national identity as authoritative in the way that he pretends to do. He is fully alive to the fact that national identities are in constant flux, and that the traditions he wishes to uphold may be of recent invention. So in counselling deference and piety towards these traditions, he cannot help being disingenuous: he is recommending to his readers that they should adopt attitudes that he does not himself share (for instance, to take a British example, that they should be entranced by royal ceremonies which the conservative intellectual himself may recognize as Victorian or Edwardian contrivances). The modern conservative is not in the position of, say, Burke, who seems really to have believed in the antiquity of the constitutional arrangements he wished to defend, and who could therefore appeal wholeheartedly to the authority of tradition to combat the rationalism of liberal reformers. His modern counterpart has to recommend an attitude of deference to 'traditions' which, by his own admission, cannot claim the authority that that label implies.

National identities are not cast in stone: as we saw in Chapter 2, they are above all 'imagined' identities, where the content of the imagining changes with time. So although at any moment there will be something substantial that we call our national identity, and we will acknowledge customs and institutions that correspond to this, there is no good reason to regard this as authoritative in the sense that excludes critical assessment. The alternative to piety is not 'the lonely heights of abstract choice [where] nothing comforts and nothing consoles', in Scruton's evocative phrase,[11] but common membership in a nation where the meaning of membership changes with time. Ideally, the process of change should consist in a collective conversation in which many voices can join. No voice has a privileged status: those who seek to defend traditional interpretations enter the conversation on an equal footing with those who want to propose changes. The conversation will usually be about specific issues: which language or languages should be given official status; which version of national history should be taught in schools; what changes, if any, should be made to the constitutional arrangements; and so forth. But behind these lie the wider questions: what kind of people are we? What do we believe? How do we want to conduct ourselves in future? In this perspective established institutions have no sanctity; they serve as a point of reference, but have authority only in the sense in which a cookery book has authority for an aspiring chef, namely that it lays out the existing principles of cuisine and provides a base from which experimentation and innovation are possible.

From this perspective – which, I have argued, the modern conservative cannot help but acknowledge, much as he may hanker after the certainties of the past[12] – liberal freedoms play a vital role in providing the conditions under which the conversation can continue. Without freedom of conscience and expression, one cannot explore different interpretations of national identity, something that takes place not only in political forums, but in the various associations that make up civil society. (Think of a street association deciding how to commemorate some national event such as a military victory or a coronation.) These discussions must proceed on the basis that no one should be penalized or excluded for expressing views that challenge the traditional understanding of national symbols and historic events. So, although I have yet to examine how far the principle of nationality lends support to or conflicts with liberalism in general, on this issue of basic freedoms there will certainly be convergence.

From the same perspective, the conservative nationalist's hostility to immigration can be dissipated. Why should immigrants pose a threat to national identity once it is recognized that that identity is always in flux, and is moulded by the various sub-cultures that exist within the national society? Immigration might pose a problem only in two circumstances. One occurs where the rate of immigration is so high that there is no time for a process of mutual adjustment to occur; consider recent Mexican immigration to California, where a large number of immigrants have arrived in a relatively short space of time. In such cases the education system and other such mechanisms of integration may be stretched beyond their capacity. The receiving community, recognizing the social problems that the immigration causes, may turn a cultural difference into a perceived cultural incompatibility and seek to deter further immigration (as some Californians have tried to do with Proposition 187, which would prevent illegal immigrants from receiving education, medical aid, and other forms of social security). One community feels threatened, the other feels demeaned, and there is no chance in the short term for cultural accommodation to take place.[13]

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[12] Indeed, this acknowledgement may be quite explicit, as in the following passage by Casey:

The best account of tradition in the twentieth century-that given by T. S. Eliot-sees it as something that is both impersonal and at the same time open to personal appropriation; as both something existing in its own right and yet as needing recreation in every age. This recreation, which is also the acquiring of an 'historical sense', involves the finding of a language that is the language of the present, and which at the same time re-establishes real relations with the past. Such a picture of tradition . . . assumes that the individual must in some sense subordinate himself to what is historical and impersonal, and yet must re-create his sense of the past in the light of creative possibilities in his own time . . . (Casey, 'Tradition and Authority', 98)

[13] Although I am addressing the issue in the light of the principle of nationality, the same point recurs in discussions of immigration from a liberal perspective. See e.g. the essays in B. Barry and R. E. Goodin (eds.), *Free Movement: Ethical Issues in the Transnational Migration of People and Money* (Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992).

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[11] Scruton, 'In Defence of the Nation', 326.

In the longer term, immigrant identity and national identity can adjust to one another, as they have with so many other ethnic groups in America, but in the meantime the political system has to resolve group conflicts without being able to rely on a shared sense of nationhood to create mutual trust. All of this points, however, not towards preventing immigration, but to limiting its rate according to the absorptive capacities of the society in question.

The other circumstance is where the immigrant group is strong and cohesive enough to constitute itself as an independent nation. This is not likely to arise unless the group in question has been expelled *en masse* from some other place. If the situation does occur, however, the receiving nation may have good reason to guard itself against being turned into a bi-national society, particularly where it foresees deep conflicts between the two peoples. Thus, the 'Palestinian Arabs had good grounds for resisting large-scale Jewish immigration into their territory in the 1930s and 1940s, given their own nationalist aspirations and the small likelihood that a viable binational state could be established in Palestine.[14] Once again, however, this suggests setting upper bounds to immigration, not a policy of preserving existing national identities by refusing to admit those who do not already share them.

The conservative nationalist moves from a valid premiss – that a well functioning state rests upon a pre-political sense of common nationality – to a false conclusion – that this sense of common nationality can be preserved only by protecting the present sense of national identity and the authority of the institutions that now express it. In contrast to this view, I have argued that nationality need not be (and as a matter of fact is not) authoritative in the way that the conservative supposes. That the national identities of, say, France and the United States have altered considerably over the last century does not imply that these countries now stand on the brink of dissolution. Because nationality does not require deference to established institutions or the myths that sustain them, it need not outlaw dissent or select as new members only those who already share the existing national identity. All it needs to ask of immigrants is a willingness to accept current political structures and to engage in dialogue with the host community so that a new common identity can be forged.[15]

So far, then, the principle of nationality is consistent with liberal political ideals. But can it travel all the way down the road to multiculturalism?

III

The terms 'multicultural' and 'multiculturalism' have no clear or fixed meaning.[16] They may be used simply to record the fact that all contemporary societies – or at least all contemporary liberal democracies – contain a plurality of distinct cultural groups, and that this cultural pluralism is going to persist for as far ahead as we can reasonably foresee. In this sense multiculturalism is something to be taken for granted which it makes little sense to oppose (or recommend) on grounds of principle. More commonly, however, multiculturalism implies some views about the *nature* of cultural differences and about how we should respond to them individually and politically. This means that there can be different versions of multiculturalism (and of the corresponding policies such as multicultural education), and the question is not whether one wants to be a multiculturalist at all but the kind of multiculturalist one wants to be.[17]

The version of multiculturalism that poses the most direct challenge to the principle of nationality is radical multiculturalism. Its core principle is the idea of respect for difference, where this means something more than toleration. A multicultural society must allow each of its members to define her identity for herself, by finding the group or groups to which she has the closest affinity, and must also allow each group to formulate its own authentic set of claims and demands, reflecting its particular circumstances. The state must respect and acknowledge these demands on an equal basis. It cannot hold up one model of the good life at the expense of

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[14] In saying this, I do not mean to deny that the Jewish settlers also had strong claims, given the reluctance of the Western states to offer them sanctuary from the persecution they were suffering in Germany and elsewhere. Their human rights have to be set against the legitimate national claims of the Palestinian Arabs.

[15] Cf. H. Van Gunsteren:

The prospective citizen must be capable and willing to be a member of this particular historical community, its past and future, its forms of life and institutions within which its members think and act. In a community that values autonomy and judgement, this is obviously not a requirement of pure conformity. But it is a requirement of knowledge of the language and the culture and of acknowledgement of those institutions that foster the reproduction of citizens who are capable of autonomous and responsible judgement. ('Admission to Citizenship', *Ethics,* 98 (1987-8), 736)

[16] Cf. J. Horton, 'Liberalism, Multiculturalism and Toleration', in J. Horton (ed.), *Liberalism, Multiculturalism and Toleration* (London, Macmillan, 1993). Horton notes that some commentators prefer 'pluralism' to 'multiculturalism' on the grounds that the latter suggests that each culture is homogeneous and separate from the rest. Parekh, however, makes precisely the opposite move, arguing that 'the term multicultural does not adequately express, and even seems to obscure, the kinds of differences that obtain between different communities in modern Britain', because it suggests that ethnic communities are merely groups of people who happen to have chosen to adopt the same culture; he believes that 'plural society' better signals the tenacious nature of communal divisions in societies like Britain (see B. Parekh, 'Britain and the Social Logic of Pluralism' in G. Andrews (ed.), *Citizenship* (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1991)). Both Horton and Parekh note the tendency to slide from descriptive to normative uses of 'multiculturalism'.

[17] I can, for instance, find very little to quarrel with in the 'liberal multiculturalism' defended by Joseph Raz. This 'affirms that in the circumstances of contemporary industrial or postindustrial societies, a political attitude of fostering and encouraging the prosperity, cultural and material, of cultural groups within a society, and respecting their identity is justified by considerations of freedom and human dignity' (J. Raz, 'Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective', *Dissent*, 41 (1994), 78).

others, nor may it base its policies on principles of justice that some groups but not others regard as legitimate. Thus, to illustrate radical multiculturalism through one of its expressions,

> Today most gay and lesbian advocates seek not merely civil rights, but the affirmation of gay men and lesbians as social groups with specific experiences and perspectives. Refusing to accept the dominant culture's definition of healthy sexuality and respectable family life and social practices, gay and lesbian movements have proudly created and displayed a distinctive self-definition and culture. For gay men and lesbians the analogue to racial integration is the typical liberal approach to sexuality, which tolerates any behavior as long as it is kept private. Gay pride asserts that sexual identity is a matter of culture and politics, and not merely 'behavior' to be tolerated or forbidden.[18]

More generally:

> Implicit in emancipatory movements asserting a positive sense of group difference is a different ideal of liberation, which might be called democratic cultural pluralism. . . . In this vision the good society does not eliminate or transcend group difference. Rather, there is equality among socially and culturally differentiated groups, who mutually respect one another and affirm one another in their differences.[19]

This requires an interpretation of politics which has variously been described as a 'politics of identity', a 'politics of difference', or a 'politics of recognition'.[20] Group identity, whether sexual, cultural, or ethnic, should not merely be expressed in private settings, but should be carried into the arenas of politics – that is, one should participate politically as a gay, a religious fundamentalist, or a black – and political institutions should operate in such a way as to respect these group differences. On the one hand, they must validate group identities by ensuring that the various groups are represented in politics *as* groups; on the other hand, they must ensure that the policies that emerge show equal respect for the values and cultural demands of each group – there should, if necessary, be subsidies for the activities that each group regards as central to its identity; educational materials must avoid discriminatory judgements which imply that one cultural norm might be superior to another; and so forth. Radical multiculturalism reaches far beyond mutual tolerance and the belief

that each person should have equal political opportunities regardless of sex, class, race, etc., to the view that the very purpose of politics is to affirm group difference.

It is not hard to see how someone taking up this perspective would be led to reject the principle of nationality. National identities will appear to impose an artificial homogeneity on a culturally plural society, and moreover they will be seen as serving to legitimate the norms of some cultural groups at the expense of others – the long-established at the expense of the newly arrived, the dominant ethnic groups at the expense of the minorities, the sexually 'normal' at the expense of the sexually 'deviant'. Thus Young, citing George Mosse, argues that nineteenth-century nationalism represented 'white male bourgeois unity and universality'.[21] Although this has been somewhat diluted in more recent understandings of nationhood, the idea of a homogeneous public identity standing over and above group differences serves to benefit dominant groups at the expense of those they dominate. As Young puts it, 'this norm of the homogeneous public is oppressive. Not only does it put unassimilated persons and groups at a severe disadvantage in the competition for scarce positions and resources, but it requires that persons transform their sense of identity in order to assimilate. Self-annihilation is an unreasonable and unjust requirement of citizenship.'[22]

Conversely, 'a just polity must embrace the ideal of a heterogeneous public. Group differences of gender, age and sexuality should not be ignored, but publicly acknowledged and accepted. Even more so should group differences of nation and ethnicity be accepted. In the twentieth century the ideal state is composed of a plurality of nations or cultural groups . . .'[23] And although Young favours participatory politics, this should not presuppose that there are shared principles of justice or of common good on which policies might be based. Rather,

> the repoliticization of political life does not require the creation of a unified public realm in which citizens leave behind their particular group affiliations, histories and needs to discuss a mythical 'common good'. In a society differentiated by social groups, occupations, political positions, differences of privilege and oppression, regions, and so on, the perception of anything like a common good can only be the outcome of public interaction that expresses rather than submerges particularities.[24]

I have quoted fairly extensively from Young's work lest readers should think that radical multiculturalism is merely a straw construction of my own. What is wrong with the multiculturalist critique of nationality?

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[18] I. M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990), 161.

[19] I. M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990), 163.

[20] For these descriptions see, respectively, W. E. Connolly, *Identity/Difference* (Ithaca NY, Cornell University Press, 1991); Young, *Justice;* Taylor, *Multiculturalism.*

[21] Young, *Justice,* 138.

[22] Ibid. 179.

[23] Ibid. 179-80.

[24] Ibid. 119.

To begin with, it relies upon a false contrast between the allegedly authentic group identities that a multicultural politics is supposed to express, and an artificially imposed common national identity. The group identities themselves are socially constructed, and may be foisted on individuals who are quite unwilling to accept them. Take the example I cited at the beginning, gay pride, or the belief that gay sexuality should be affirmed in public and political ways. This is an identity shared by many gay activists, but not by many other homosexuals and lesbians, who prefer to see their sexuality as a private matter, and not as an overriding public identity. Nor are there any grounds for saying that gay pride is an 'authentic' identity while private homosexuality is an identity imposed by the dominant culture; that is nothing more than an arbitrary assertion. Both are social constructions: both come about through some mixture of voluntary choice on the part of those who have them, outside pressures, power struggles, and so forth – the story will always be a messy one. Nor again can one say that one version of this sexual identity serves the interests of homosexuals better than another, because this too will depend upon a partisan account of interests which will be in dispute among both homosexuals and heterosexuals.[25]

The case is somewhat similar with ethnic and other group identities. As I indicated above, ethnic identities in particular tend to be pervasive, and usually a person has little choice about which ethnic group he belongs to – even if the identity is not one that he willingly embraces, others will treat him in ways that make it clear that they regard him as an Asian or a Catholic, etc. But such identities are by no means fixed, and groups adapt their self-conceptions to their surroundings. Very often the identity of one group is worked out in relation to other groups, and develops along with changes in the group's relative standing.[26] We can often see this process at work when political boundaries are redrawn: Horowitz cites the carving out of a separate Telugu-speaking state from the Indian state of Madras, divided mainly between Telugus and Tamils: 'When many other people in the territory were Tamils, it was vitally important whether one was a Tamil or a Telugu. But when virtually everyone is a Telugu, being Telugu is less important than being, say, Kamma or Reddi, Telangana or Coastal, Muslim or Hindu.'[27] In the smaller state, these subgroups came to define political identities. A similar process of ethnic redefinition is likely to occur when one section of an existing group advances economically while the other stagnates. Each subgroup may wish for different reasons to distinguish itself from the other, and small cultural differences may be amplified to create a new sense of ethnic identity for each. In thinking about ethnicity, we need to steer a mid-course between hyper--voluntarism – the notion that ethnic identities are simply chosen to suit each

momentary encounter with another person – and hyper-determinism – the idea that ethnic groups are the bearers of unchangeable identities from which no member or sub-group can escape.

What we must avoid, once again, is thinking of the ethnic identities that we wish to support as 'genuine' or 'authentic' in contrast to other identities which are 'manufactured' or 'imposed. These contrasts cannot survive a cool empirical look at the way in which collective identities of all kinds emerge and change over time. What we find, in all cases, is a complicated picture in which the ambitions and interests of particular subgroups jostle with cultural beliefs and values to create identities that are always impure when measured against the hypothetical standard of a group of people sitting down together to think out what it means to them to be Jewish or black. In this respect, national identities themselves are in no worse shape than ethnic and other sub-national identities. Indeed, they may be in better shape, in favourable cases, because they are shaped more deliberately by political discussion in the course of which, in democratic states, each smaller group can make its voice heard. Consider, for example, the evolution of Australian national identity over the last quarter-century: no one, I think, could seriously deny that the mosaic of cultural groups that now inhabit Australia have played their part in the quite self-conscious reformation of national identity that has taken place, a reformation that seems very likely to conclude with the severing of the remaining constitutional ties with the United Kingdom, which are taken to symbolize the old 'White Australian' identity. In cases like this, national identities are transformed in a way that is more open and democratic than is the case with the identities of the ethnic groups that contribute to them.

Radical multiculturalism, I am suggesting, wrongly celebrates sexual, ethnic, and other such identities at the expense of national identities: there is no obvious sense in which identities in the first group are 'better' or more 'genuine' than those in the second. It also fails to recognize the importance of secure national identities to minority groups themselves. This point emerges most vividly in the case of ethnically distinct immigrant groups. Such groups are not yet fully socially integrated with the established majority communities. Their personal, and to some extent their political, values may be quite sharply at odds with the values of the receiving society. Yet they want to be included on an equal footing, and to have their membership recognized by the majority, and one way to do this is to embrace their new national identity wholeheartedly. Harles, for example, has shown how immigrant groups in the United States typically espouse a form of American patriotism that is somewhat exaggerated and uncritical, provoked partly by the contrast between the freedoms and benefits of American society and the conditions they left behind, but also by a desire to affirm their commitment to their new country and to win acceptance from other Americans. Those escaping from authoritarian regimes do not find it easy to embrace the whole panoply of liberal and democratic values at once; what they can more easily do is to identify themselves *as Americans,* aided in this by the fact that this is as much a

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[25] It will depend, for example, on highly controversial claims about the nature of sexuality and the place it should occupy in human lives generally.

[26] See the general account in D. Horowitz, 'Ethnic Identity , in N. Glazer and D. P. Moynihan (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1975).

[27] Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 66.

symbolic and emotional identification as a commitment to certain principles. As Harles puts it:

> The possession of an unqualified patriotism gives time for the American creed to percolate into immigrant attitudes and behavior, gradually orienting them to the core beliefs defining American identity. And immigrants are usually willing communicants, eager to assume the full trappings of loyal Americans. Yet for them, patriotism precedes assimilation of the dominant political culture; the American political community is embraced before the valuational consensus that defines the community is internalized.[28]

In the American case, this process is aided by the fact that American national identity has ceased to have any marked ethnic content: ethnic groups naturally think of themselves as having hyphenated identities (Irish-American, Asian-American, etc.) which is possible only where the second term carries a meaning that transcends ethnic differences.[29] In European states, where national identities typically reflect to a much higher degree the culture of the dominant ethnic groups, it may be more difficult for incoming minorities to find a suitable focus for their loyalties even though the need and desire for such a focus remains. As Modood notes in the case of Britain:

> As a matter of fact the greatest psychological and political need for clarity about a common framework and national symbols comes from the minorities. For clarity about what makes us willingly bound into a single country relieves the pressure on minorities, especially new minorities whose presence within the country is not fully accepted, to have to conform in all areas of social life, or in arbitrarily chosen areas, in order to rebut the charge of disloyalty. It is the absence of comprehensively respected national symbols in Britain, comparable to the constitution and the flag in America, that allows politicians unsympathetic to minorities to demand that they demonstrate loyalty by doing x or y or z, like supporting the national cricket team in Norman Tebbit's famous example.[30]

This, however, is not an argument against national identities, but an argument for national identities that have a clear focus and are as far as possible independent of group-specific cultural values. It is not feasible to aim for complete cultural neutrality: a national language, for instance, is invariably to some extent the bearer of the culture of the people whose language it originally was. But in other areas national symbols and institutions can be detached from group-specific norms: in a society divided along religious lines, for example, they can be multi-faith or else purely secular in form.[31]

It might be claimed here that the value attached by minority ethnic groups to the chance to share in their country's national identity merely reflects the prejudice shown to their members by the majority. Because they feel that they are discriminated against and undervalued, they desperately try to assimilate to the norms of the dominant group even at the cost of weakening or abandoning their own cultural traditions. Remove the prejudice and ensure that each group is shown equal respect, and the wish to share in a common identity will evaporate.

This claim is wrong, I believe, both in respect of the minority groups and in respect of the majority; it fails to grasp the psychological needs that are met by a common sense of nationality. The minority groups want to feel at home in the society to which they or their forebears have moved. They want to feel attached to the place and part of its history, even if they also feel some attachment to their place of ethnic origin. So they need a story that they share with the majority, though a story that can be told in different ways and with different emphases by different groups. To see themselves only as bearers of a specific ethnic identity, let's say, would be to lose the chance to join a larger community whose traditions and practices have inevitably left their mark on the environment they inhabit. Their need is for a national identity which can be embraced, to use Walzer's phrase, 'as an addition to rather than a replacement for ethnic consciousness'.

It is not hard to find this argument endorsed explicitly by members of minority groups. Jonathan Sacks, now chief rabbi of Anglo-Jewry, has put it well:

> we each have to be bilingual. There is a first and public language of citizenship which we have to learn if we are to live together. And there is a variety of second languages

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[28] J. Harles, *Politics in the Lifeboat: Immigrants and the American Democratic Order* (Boulder, Colo., Westview Press, 1993), 100.

[29] The hospitable character of American identity has often been remarked upon. As Walzer puts it, 'American symbols and ceremonies are culturally anonymous, invented rather than inherited, voluntaristic in style, narrowly political in content: the flag, the Pledge, the Fourth, the Constitution' (M. Walzer, 'What Does it Mean to Be an "American"?' *Social Research,* 57 (1990), 602). This allows us to see 'American nationality as an addition to rather than a replacement for ethnic consciousness' (p. 611). See also P. Gleason, 'American Identity and Americanization', in S. Thernstrom (ed.), *The Harvard Encyclopaedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1980).

[30] T. Modood, 'Establishment, Multiculturalism and British Citizenship', *Political Quarterly*, 65 (1994), 64-5.

[31] Neither of these options is quite as straightforward as it may at first seem. To take the multi-faith option first, if national events such as state openings of parliament or commemorations of war dead are to have a religious content, the framework of some particular religion must be used, even though within that framework it may be possible to include, say, the reading of sacred texts from other religions. The secular option may be challenged on the ground that it does, in practice, privilege a secular world view, and for that reason alienate groups for whom the public recognition of religious beliefs is seen as essential. The second argument is developed in Modood, 'Establishment'.

which connect us to our local framework of relationships: to family and group and the traditions that underlie them. If we are to achieve integration without assimilation, it is important to give each of these languages its due.... The more plural a society we become, the more we need to reflect on what holds us together. If we have only our second language, the language of the group, we have no resource for understanding why none of our several aspirations can be met in full and why we must restrain ourselves to leave space for other groups.[32]

Sacks also emphasizes that the first language cannot simply be a language of abstract rights: it must be the language of the national culture, even if that language has mainly been shaped by the ethos of the dominant groups, for instance by Christianity in the British case.[33]

If radical multiculturalism overlooks the need and desire on the part of ethnic minorities to belong as full members to the national community, it also makes unrealistic demands upon members of the majority group. In the absence of a shared identity, they are being asked to extend equal respect and treatment to groups with whom they have nothing in common beyond the fact of cohabitation in the same political society. But why should these groups rather than others further afield be singled out for favourable treatment? Why should an immigrant Turk in Holland be provided with benefits that are not provided for Turks in Turkey? A common sense of nationality is needed to underpin the claim for equal respect: I respect the other person as a fellow-American or fellow-Briton, and this means someone who shares an identity and belongs to the same community. (I don't mean to deny that there are forms of respect that we owe to all human beings as such, but this is not the kind of recognition that advocates of radical multiculturalism have in mind when they demand equal recognition for all cultural groups *within* a political society.) The radical multiculturalist is relying on an appeal to the majority which makes sense only if a common identity is assumed, while at the same time arguing that minority groups should throw off an identity that is seen as 'oppressive' from the standpoint of group difference.

The dilemma becomes clearer still if we think about the politics of multiculturalism. Radical multiculturalists portray a society that is fragmented in many cross-cutting ways, but they aspire to a politics that redresses the injustices done to hitherto-oppressed groups. Since, however, the injustices will be group-specific, how will it be possible to build a majority coalition to remedy each of them? Given finite resources, why should gays support favourable treatment for Muslims, or Jews for blacks? Behind multiculturalist rhetoric, there seems to lie the assumption that to expose an injustice is already to have created a constituency willing to abolish it. Young writes: 'In a humanist emancipatory politics, if a group is subject to injustice, then all those interested in a just society should unite to combat the powers that

perpetuate the injustice. If many groups are subject to injustice, moreover, then they should unite to work for a just society.'[34] As exhortation this may sound fine, but who with any experience of politics could suppose either that there will be spontaneous agreement about what are injustices and what are not, or that groups will of their own accord fight to redress the injustices done to other groups? As I argued in the last chapter, if we believe in social justice and are concerned about winning democratic support for socially just policies, then we must pay attention to the conditions under which different groups will trust one another, so that I can support your just demand on this occasion knowing that you will support my just demand at some future moment. Trust requires solidarity not merely within groups but across them, and this in turn depends upon a common identification of the kind that nationality alone can provide.[35]

Radical multiculturalists want to affirm group difference at the expense of commonality, and they want to encourage deprived groups to develop their own organizations to express their demands in political arenas, but they do not think hard enough about how a politics of group difference is supposed to work. Much more rests on the majority's sense of fairness than multiculturalists appreciate, and that sense of fairness is liable to be contracted if groups issuing demands reject the identity by virtue of which they belong in the same community as the majority. Minority groups must in the end rely on appeals and arguments; m the nature of the case, they are rarely in a position to back up their assertions with serious threats.[36] So the instinct of the immigrant groups noted above, to want to be better Americans than the native-born Americans themselves, is essentially a sound one, and the multiculturalists are *faux amis* to the groups whose interests they seek to promote.

IV

We saw in the American case that the national identity that immigrant ethnic groups were keen to acquire had the fortunate feature that it was expressed in values and symbols that were accessible to all ethnic groups, so that in embracing an American identity no one is required to give up his or her pre-existing cultural identity.[37] It has

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[32] J. Sacks, *The Persistence of Faith* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), 66-7.

[33] For this reason, Sacks supports the continued establishment of the Church of England.

[34] Young, *Justice*, 167.

[35] For discussion of the decline of trust between ethnic groups as an effect of radical multiculturalism in contemporary America, see A. M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America* (New York, W. W. Norton, 1992).

[36] Radical spokesmen for ethnic minorities do sometimes threaten violence or other forms of disruption if their demands are ignored, but at least in the case of small and dispersed minorities these demands have little force. The case is rather different with geographically concentrated secessionist movements, who may well be able to support a terrorist wing. The Black Power movement in the USA may be a good case study in how far a dispersed ethnic group can use the threat of violence to advance its political goals.

[37] As noted in Ch. 2, n. 5, this claim cannot be extended without qualification to blacks and American Indians.

been suggested that multiculturalism and nationality might in general be reconciled by thinning national identities to the point where they cease to have any content that could compete with ethnic or other such cultural identities. Nationality would be defined in strictly political terms, as allegiance to a set of institutions and their underlying principles. Even in the American case, however, the relationship between ethnicity and nationality has been worked out over a long period of time in which the present inclusive meaning of American identity had to compete with narrower, ethnically loaded meanings – for instance with Anglo-Saxon conceptions for much of the nineteenth century.[38] In the process, America gathered a history and a culture which distinguished it from all other nations. The idea, then, that to be an American is *simply* to subscribe to a set of underlying values – liberty, rights, equal opportunities – is a misconception. As Gleason puts it,

> the abstract quality of the American ideology does not mean that American identity is without what might be called the grandfather effect. In the eight generations since independence, many series of grandfathers have revered the symbols of national loyalty, fought to uphold them, and thought of themselves as full-fledged Americans. Even for descendants of more recent immigrants, what Abraham Lincoln called the mystic chords of memory are intertwined with homes, and graveyards, in the new land, as well as with traditions from beyond the seas.[39]

The American example is a helpful one because it suggests how a common identity can evolve that is accessible to all cultural groups, an identity that is expressed partly through allegiance to a body of principles embedded in the Constitution, but also includes the more concrete ideas of common membership and shared history that are essential to nationality. Clearly, it cannot be taken literally as a model for other places: where a political community contains subcommunities with distinct identities that nest somewhat precariously within the national identity (the Canadian case, for instance), or where such a community embraces a single old nation with more recently arrived cultural minorities (the case in many West European states), the making or remaking of common nationality must proceed differently. What must happen in general is that existing ' national identities must be stripped of elements that are repugnant to the self-understanding of one or more component groups, while members of these groups must themselves be willing to embrace an inclusive nationality, and in the process to shed elements of *their* vales which are at odds with its principles.

In pursuit of the latter aim, states may legitimately take steps to ensure that the members of different ethnic groups are inducted into national traditions and ways of thinking. This applies particularly in the sphere of education. Whereas the radical multiculturalist is likely to regard education as a means whereby specific cultural identities can be handed down intact from one generation to the next, and therefore to favour educational separatism, or at least pluralism within schools, the principle of nationality implies that schools should be seen, *inter alia,* as places where a common national identity is reproduced and children prepared for democratic citizenship. In the case of recently arrived ethnic minorities whose sense of their national identity may be insecure, schools can act as a counterweight to the cultural environment of the family. It follows that schools should be public in character, places where members of different ethnic groups are thrown together and taught in common.[40] It follows too that there should be something like a national curriculum, a core body of material that all children should be expected to assimilate (though this can leave scope for teachers to emphasize different elements according to the cultural backgrounds of their charges, which is how national curricula seem to work in practice).

Here the French example may be instructive. Since the Revolution at least, French ideas of nationality and citizenship have been open and inclusive: anyone might become a French national who resided on French soil and displayed attachment to French values. But along with this in the nineteenth century went a deliberate policy of 'making Frenchmen' out of the various communities living on French soil.[41] The two main instruments were compulsory education in public schools and military service. The former was secular in character and patriotic in intent.

> The nation ... was at the heart of the intellectual and moral curriculum of the schools. History and geography, which had pride of place in the Republican school curriculum, made the nation a central cognitive and moral category, using new textbooks to render

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[38] See Gleason, 'American Identity and Americanization'.
[39] Ibid. 56.

[40] This is not meant to prescribe how schools should be organized and funded, but to make the point that, however they are constituted – whether as state schools in the traditional sense or in some other way – they should be culturally inclusive rather than sectarian in nature. Nor shall I try to establish how far ethnic and cultural mixing must be taken: see the discussion in M. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1983), ch. 8. Walzer concludes: 'It is not necessary that all schools be identical in social composition; it is necessary that different sorts of children encounter one another within them' (p. 223).
[41] The classic study is E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (London Chatto and Windus, 1979). An integral part of the process was the substitution of French for the various regional dialects and languages that were still in common use in large areas of rural France. In schools, unwilling pupils were forced to speak French (see Weber, *Peasants,* ch. 18). This may offend present-day multiculturalist sensibilities, but it is important to understand that France could not have been economically and politically integrated if the many local patois had not been superseded. These dialects were very often useless to their speakers beyond their own localities. Breton, for example, was not a unified language, but a collection of dialects whose speakers could barely if at all comprehend one another.

concrete, palpable, and emotionally resonant the previously distant and abstract notion of France, and to surround patriotic duty with a penumbra of dignity and grandeur.[42]

We might now think that this attempt was over-strenuous, but the basic logic is sound: if you want to extend full rights of citizenship to everyone who resides on French soil regardless of cultural background, and at the same time to have generous immigration laws, then you must take steps to ensure that the incoming groups are properly incorporated into French nationality.

What of cultural groups who claim that exposure to a common education system would destroy their own identity – that, rather than adding a national identity to an ethnic identity, say, the latter identity would be disrupted and their children culturally disabled? I think we are entitled to treat such claims with some scepticism when they are made on behalf of cultural groups rather than by their young members themselves. The latter are often eager to embrace the national system of education, not least because it provides them with the linguistic and cultural skills to get ahead economically. Thus, recent backtracking in the French education system from the nationalist ideal has not been particularly successful. Immigrants' children may now be taught in primary school in their 'language and culture of origin', but the children themselves may not welcome this: 'in Marseille, children of Maghrebin origin desert classes in classical Arabic, practice their Marseillaise slang and prefer Latin or German, in order to get into a good *lycée*'.[43] It might be argued that such children mistake their own interests, putting economic opportunity ahead of cultural solidarity, but it seems more likely that they feel no damaging conflict between an Arabic ethnic identity and a French national identity, and are seeking to hold on to the best elements of both.

The most difficult problems are likely to be posed by fundamentalist religious groups who claim that their cultural values can be transmitted only through a closed educational system, so that if their children are obliged to attend public schools they will invariably be alienated from their parents' religion. This was the claim made by Amish parents in the United States which resulted in the exemption of their children from mandatory high school attendance in the case of Wisconsin *v.* Yoder.[44] But why should public education oriented towards a common national identity have this effect? In the case of religious education, the options are presumably that state education should be purely secular – the traditional solution both in France and America – or that it should be multi-faith in character – the solution currently favoured in Britain. Thus, there is no question of fundamentalist children being

inducted into some opposing faith. The argument is rather that either option is likely to have the effect of inducing religious scepticism: in the multi-faith option, children brought up in the home to believe in the absolute truth of certain religious tenets will be confronted with the fact that different people reasonably adhere to different faiths; in the secular option, the argument is that, by keeping religion out of schools, by treating it as a private rather than public matter, one is effectively marginalizing it, discouraging children from taking it seriously. If you take the view that religious belief should permeate life in all its aspects, you are bound to reject the kind of segmentation that a system of national education in a multi-faith society necessarily implies.

I shall not consider here the issues this raises about individual rights and autonomy, but look at the problem from the perspective of nationality. Assume that the fundamentalists' claim is correct, that obligatory participation in public education will indeed have a corrosive effect on their community. How should we respond? We may feel that a community that can preserve itself only by isolating its members from the intellectually disturbing influences of the outside world is not worth safeguarding. Alternatively, we may feel that we should be tolerant, and that the principle of nationality is not seriously compromised by allowing to live within the borders of the state small pockets of people who do not share in the national identity, and are not in the full sense citizens. Consider, for example, the position of those orthodox Jews who live in Israel but do not recognize the legitimacy of the Israeli state. This is anomalous, certainly, but, in so far as such groups are self-contained and make as few demands as possible on the state, we may think that they should be left alone. It will depend on their size and number, and also on the likely effects of trying to integrate them into nationhood and citizenship.

What is clear is that religious fundamentalists and other such groups cannot have it both ways. They may choose to withdraw from citizenship and live, so to speak, as internal exiles within the state. Alternatively, they may assert their rights of citizenship along with their cultural identity, and make demands on the state on behalf of their group. But in the second case they must also recognize the obligations of membership, including the obligation to hand on a national identity to their children so that the latter can grow up to be loyal citizens. In this case fundamentalists can legitimately argue about the content of public education – they can complain if their children are taught in ways that unnecessarily bias them against their parents' faith – but they cannot claim the right to withdraw from it altogether.

V

So far I have been looking at the demands that nationality may make on the members of cultural minorities. But, as I emphasized earlier, we should also consider ways of making national identities more hospitable to the minorities. One way of doing this might be to recognize cultural groups by granting them special rights within the

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[42] R. Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1992), 107-8.

[43] R. Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1992), 149.

[44] The case has been widely discussed. For a brief description, see S. M. Davis and M. D. Schwartz, *Children's Rights and the Law* (Lexington, Mass., D. C. Heath, 1987), ch. 4.

nation-state, or to institute what is sometimes called multicultural citizenship. How far can such policies be justified?

Let me begin here by drawing a couple of distinctions. We need first of all to separate the claims of ethnic and other cultural groups in general from the more specific demands made by national minorities, groups within the existing state with a distinct sense of their national identity. It may well turn out that these two kind's of group require a quite different response on the part of the state.[45] At the end of the last chapter, I argued that the principle of nationality itself pointed towards special rights for national minorities, the precise form that these rights should take depending upon the case in hand. Here I am considering cultural groups that do not conceive of themselves in national terms, for instance territorially dispersed ethnic groups, always bearing in mind that the distinction is not watertight, and that groups may over time move from one category into the other.

Second, I want to distinguish between groups being given substantive rights to certain advantages – special freedoms, special forms of protection, additional resources, and so forth – and groups being given political rights, in the form, say, of a right to be consulted over certain issues, or a right to be represented in a parliament or other such decision-making body. Let me begin with the case for substantive rights.

Defenders of group rights often claim that the very same arguments I have deployed in defence of national self-determination count equally in defence of the rights of ethnic and other cultural groups. In particular, the nationalist case for protecting a common culture as a source of identity and a condition for personal choice can be extended to sub-national cultures, which may be equally essential to a person's sense of her own identity, and equally important in providing a rich array of options to choose between. In so far as group rights are needed to protect such cultures, there appears to be a solid case for granting them.[46]

But why should members of these groups need special rights over and above those general rights which, in a liberal society, allow them to pursue their cultural activities singly or in association? Why are freedom of expression, association, occupation, and the like not sufficient to allow minority cultures to flourish? One argument, running parallel to the case made on behalf of nationality in the last chapter, might be that cultures are to some extent public goods: individuals may be tempted to free-ride, enjoying the benefits of cultural membership without paying the costs involved in sustaining the institutions through which the culture is transmitted. If one tries to think of examples to bear out this argument, they tend to involve territorially based communities, and this may be significant. But suppose we could find a convincing case where the culture of a dispersed group was a public good in the sense sketched above: what would follow? Most people have a number of interests which give rise to public goods questions, and there is a difficult general issue about how to determine what justice requires in the provision of public goods where these interests diverge. One person wants access to areas of wilderness; another is interested in forms of art that require collective provision; a third belongs to a minority group whose culture is under threat. Clearly, some means must be found to weigh up these interests and decide what resources the state should allocate to each of these projects. Minorities should not be discriminated against merely because their cultural aspirations may be seen as eccentric by the majority, but is there any reason to give them more than equal consideration?

Defenders of group rights argue that minorities do have a special case. Kymlicka, for instance, argues that, because a person's cultural identity is given to them (by birth and upbringing), 'members of minority cultures can face inequalities which are the product of their circumstances or endowment, not their choices or ambitions'.[47] As I pointed out above; it is possible to exaggerate the extent to which ethnic and other such identities are fixed or 'primordial', but suppose for the sake of argument that we are dealing with an identity the core of which is not adaptable to changing circumstances: how far can its bearers justly claim compensation in the form of special rights? To claim that compensation is due whenever a person is worse off by virtue of having the identity that he or she has would lead to bizarre consequences. It is well known, for instance, that different group cultures tend to produce differential rates of success in business or working life, but it would be odd, to say the least, to claim extra remuneration because I was born a Catholic rather than a Protestant, or a Sinhalese rather than a Tamil, and therefore was not inducted as forcefully as I might have been into an ethic of work or 'getting ahead'; similarly if my ethnicity biases me against entering certain occupations or discourages me from marrying an eligible partner from outside my community. What members of minority groups can justly demand, it seems, is that their opportunities should not be restricted in ways that merely reflect the conventions or the convenience of the majority group: hence the justified claims by religious minorities that the law on working and shopping hours should be flexible enough to accommodate their Sabbaths and their festivals.

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[45] See the general argument to this effect in W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995).

[46] This argument is made in W. Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989), chs. 8-11, and in V. Van Dyke 'The Individual, the State and Ethnic Communities in Political Theory', *World Politics*, 29 (1976-7), 343-69. The premiss has been criticized by J. Waldron in 'Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative', *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform, 25* (1991-2), 751-93, who argues that a cosmopolitan cultural kaleidoscope may provide a perfectly good setting for individuals to choose their life-plans; and the entailment to group rights by C. Kukathas in 'Are There any Cultural Rights?' *Political Theory*, 20 (1992), 105-39, who appeals to the shifting character of ethnic identities and conflicts of interest within cultural groups to claim that group rights would merely entrench the existing power-holders within each group.

[47] Kymlicka, *Liberalism*, 190.

So far, then, we have found that respect for minority cultures requires nothing beyond equal treatment, though clearly 'equality' (always a slippery notion) must be interpreted in a way that is sensitive to cultural factors. (You do not treat Christians and Jews equally by prohibiting everyone from trading on a Sunday.) There is, however, one further argument that might back up the claim for group rights. This is the claim that cultures and their bearers cannot flourish in the absence of recognition; that is public acknowledgement of the value of the culture in question. From this perspective, the value of group rights is symbolic rather than substantial, but none the less important for that. They are a way of assuring a minority group that their culture and way of life is seen as no less valuable than the culture of the mainstream.

As a general thesis about cultural survival, this argument is almost certainly false. Minority cultures have survived for centuries under conditions in which they were merely tolerated by the majority, or even actively discriminated against; some cultures, it could reasonably be claimed, have actually been strengthened by their members' sense of being an embattled minority in a hostile society: think of Jewish minorities in Eastern Europe, or the French-speaking community in Canada. So the claim about recognition could hold good only in certain circumstances. What circumstances are these? Like Taylor, I think that the demand for the public recognition of cultural values is a distinctively modern phenomenon.[48] More specifically, it has two preconditions. First, the cultural group in question must already see itself as part of a larger community, so that it matters that your culture is recognized in public. (Otherwise the only people whose recognition would count for you would be those who already belong to your group.) Second, public recognition must be currently being given to some cultures but not to others. (If the state grants recognition to no cultural values, then it cannot be said that any one culture is being devalued.) Paradoxically, then, the search for recognition by minority communities testifies to the fact that they share a common national identity with the minority. Once again, the demand for group rights turns on closer inspection into a demand for equal treatment. (And, once again, equality will prove to be a slippery notion to apply; very often members of the majority are unaware that current public practices may be seen as endorsing some cultural values at the expense of others.)

I turn now to the question whether cultural minorities should be given special political rights: whether, for instance, a certain proportion of seats in a legislature should be reserved for members of each minority, or whether parties should be required to produce lists of candidates that are balanced according to ethnic or other relevant criteria. (Proposals like these assume that in the absence of such measures minority groups would not be adequately represented despite having formally equal opportunities to stand for office.) This question cannot be answered until we know what political rights are *for*: how we should understand the nature and purpose of political authority. Here I want to contrast the conception of politics implicit in the principle of nationality with the conception favoured by multiculturalists, which as I noted above has been variously described as the 'politics of identity', the 'politics of difference', or the 'politics of recognition'.

The principle of nationality points us towards a republican conception of citizenship and towards deliberative democracy as the best means of making political decisions. If a nation is to be self-determining, its members should aim as far as possible to achieve consensus about the policies they wish to pursue, and the only way to achieve this is through an open dialogue in which all points of view are represented. The institutions of politics should be structured in such a way as to maximize the chances for such an open dialogue. It would take us too far afield to consider the whole set of arrangements needed to support deliberative democracy, but let us consider the specific issue of minority representation.

Here two powerful considerations pull us in opposite directions. On the one hand, if political deliberation is to issue in genuine agreement that all sections of the community can recognize, then it is vitally important that the views of each group should be represented in the deliberating body. Not knowing what issues may arise for resolution, or how opinion is likely to divide on them, we cannot assume that one cultural group can adequately be represented by members of another. On the view I am defending, the public culture that constitutes a shared national identity is not set in aspic, but changes over time under the impact of ethnic and other group cultures. As concrete issues are decided, people's sense of what it means to belong to this political community gradually shifts. For this to happen in a democratic way, each cultural group must be in a position to make its voice heard, and that requires representation in legislatures and other such bodies. Lobbying behind closed doors is inadequate precisely because what is at stake is the gradual remaking of a *public* culture.

On the other hand, deliberative democracy aims at reaching *agreement* wherever possible, and that requires that each group should be willing to listen to others and moderate its demands where this is necessary to obtain a compromise. If a representative speaks for a group, his or her role is not simply to table a list of non-negotiable demands, but to use the resources of the common culture to find principles that place the claims of the group in a wider context – for instance, principles of equal treatment in the supply of public goods. To use Sacks's metaphor cited earlier, representatives must speak the first and public language of citizenship as well as the language of their group.[49] Now here it is important that they should not

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[48] As Taylor puts it, 'what has come with the modern age is not the need for recognition but the conditions in which the attempt to be recognized can fail. That is why the need is now acknowledged for the first time. In premodern times, people didn't speak of "identity" and "recognition" – not because people didn't have [what we call] identities, or because these didn't depend on recognition, but rather because these were then too unproblematic to be thematized as such' (*Multiculturalism*, 35).

[49] In D. Miller, 'Citizenship and Pluralism', *Political Studies* (forthcoming), I have argued at greater length that the republican conception of citizenship is better able to accommodate the

only be advocates for their group, but citizens who take part in deciding a wide range of issues, including some to which the group's particular interests are irrelevant. It is potentially dangerous, therefore, for representatives to be chosen simply to represent a particular ethnic group, for this immediately casts them in a narrow role, and discourages them from taking up the wider role of citizen; it may also put them under undue pressure from the constituency they have been elected to represent. The danger is of a narrow sectarianism. Sunstein puts this point well:

> From the republican point of view ... the most significant problems with proportional representation are that it threatens to ratify, perpetuate, and encourage an understanding of the political process as a self-interested struggle among 'interests' for scarce social resources, that it may discourage political actors from assuming and understanding the perspectives of others, and that it downplays the deliberative and transformative features of politics.[50]

Because of these conflicting considerations, I share Sunstein's view that formal minority group representation may be justifiable as a second-best solution, but it is not the ideal.[51] If there is a danger that the voices of ethnic or religious minorities might go unheard in the legislature, then some device to guarantee representation must be sought; but it would be far better if this outcome were achieved spontaneously through open selection procedures, so that each person knew that he or she had been elected to serve as a representative *citizen* over and above speaking for a geographical constituency and the claims of the cultural minorities to which he or she may belong.

This view of political representation stands in sharp contrast to the politics of identity favoured by radical multiculturalists, and I should like to end by recording my sharp disagreement with the latter view. The politics of identity sees politics as an arena in which group identities are publicly expressed and validated in the eyes of other groups. The main requirement of group representatives is *authenticity:* they should speak with the authentic voice of their group and not be co-opted into a homogenizing public discourse.

If authentic cultural expression is your aim, however, the political arena is a poor place to look. To begin with, the politics of identity raises in its most acute form the old question, 'How can one person represent another politically?' Cultural groups subdivide into subgroups – Jewish identity fractures into Orthodox, Liberal, and secular versions and so forth – and there is no reason to think that the process will stop before we get down to individuals: the only person who can really express my cultural identity is me. Schemes for group representation are much cruder than this – they single out some relatively objective factor such as skin colour or sex, which may not matter much if the point is to have a wide range of voices represented in political dialogue, but does matter a good deal if politics is supposed to express authentic group identities. The likely outcome of the politics of identity with minority representation schemes is that spokesmen are chosen whose version of group identity is not shared by many of those they claim to represent.

The second problem is that politics is a process geared towards the making of decisions, and therefore necessarily a matter of compromise between competing demands-competing principles as well as competing interests. If a group enters the political arena making demands which it claims authentically express its cultural identity, then when it is rebuffed, as it inevitably will be sooner or later, it will feel that its identity has been publicly demeaned. The stakes have been raised too high, and so when the group loses it feels that it has not merely lost a political argument, but has been judged all the way through, as it were. Thus, in the recent British debate about lowering the age of consent for male homosexuals below 21, many gay activists claimed that only a change to 16 (the age of consent for heterosexual sex) would show them equal respect – anything less would label them as second-class citizens. After strong arguments on both sides, the House of Commons voted to set the age of consent at 18 – a fairly predictable compromise. Inevitably, this was experienced as deeply wounding by those who had committed themselves to the activists' claim. Whatever substantive position one takes on the issue, it is surely misguided to hinge the whole of one's identity in this way on a political decision. The politics of identity, rather than including hitherto-excluded groups in the political community, tends to create political alienation among those who fail to get what they see as their essential demands accepted.

In general, then, the principle of nationality supports equal citizenship rather than a form of politics that is fragmented along group lines. I have attacked the idea of nationality as a collective identity that must be authoritatively imposed on dissenting minorities; but equally, I have attacked the suggestion that national identities should be allowed to evaporate, so that people are the bearers only of specific group identities. My claim is that in multicultural societies group and national identities should co-exist, the challenge being to develop forms of each that are consonant with one another. This idea of nationality is liberal in the sense that the freedoms and rights defended by liberals are valued here as the means whereby individuals can develop and express their ethnic and other group identities, while at the same time

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claims of minority groups than either the liberal or the libertarian conceptions that are currently its main rivals. In particular, I attempt to rebut I. M. Young's charge that republican citizenship involves the imposition of oppressive norms of impartiality on such groups.

[50] C. R. Sunstein, 'Beyond the Republican Revival', *Yale Law Journal*, 97 (1988), 1587.

[51] For a stronger republican position that is hostile to group representation, see C. Ward, 'The Limits of "Liberal Republicanism": Why Group-Based Remedies and Republican Citizenship Don't Mix', *Columbia Law Review*, 91 (1991), 581-60T. Ward amplifies the charge that proportional representation of minorities would lead to a rigid form of interest-group politics that is destructive of deliberative community, but she does not address the problem of how republicans can ensure that all sections of society are included in the deliberation.

taking part in an ongoing collective debate about what it means to be a member of this nation. It is also democratic in so far as it insists that everyone should take part in this debate on an equal footing, and sees the formal arenas of politics as the main (though not the only) place where the debate occurs. But the principle of nationality is resistant to special rights for groups, over and above what equal treatment requires, because of the fear that this will ossify group differences, and destroy the sense of common nationality on which democratic politics depends.

In: Miller, D. "Nationality and Pluralism". *On Nationality*. Oxford: Clarenden Press, 1995, pp. 119-154.