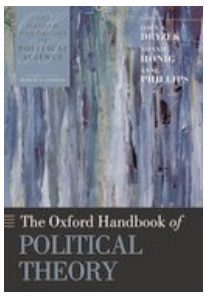

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CHAPTER

30 Multiculturalism and its Critics

Jeff Spinner-Halev

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Abstract

This article examines multiculturalism, focusing on the so-called ethnocultural groups which are often ethnic and national cultural groups or intergenerational communities that have some shared practices and history that members believe are constitutive of the group. It explains that liberalist multiculturalists tend to view respect for cultural groups in instrumental terms while non-liberals often argue that cultures deserve respect because they are intrinsically valuable. It suggests that the non-liberal respect argument and the identity argument avoids some ambiguities involved in liberal multiculturalism since they do not argue for group-differentiated rights because of autonomy or self-respect.

Keywords: multiculturalism, ethnocultural groups, intergenerational communities, shared practices, cultures, autonomy, self-respect

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Cultural groups and group rights had not been a focal point for political theory until the late 1980s. The rise of nationalism in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the attraction of communitarian thinking in the 1980s, the increased political activism of religious conservatives in the 1980s in the USA, and the increase in Muslim immigrants to Western Europe in the 1970s and afterwards, however, all brought about an enlarged interest in the role that groups play in theory and practice. Since then liberal and non-liberal theorists alike have become interested in a whole range of groups, arguing whether groups can or should have rights, or something weaker like recognition; and if so, what sorts of rights these groups should be granted. The term multiculturalism can mean many things, but in this chapter I will focus on what are called ethnocultural groups, which are often ethnic and national cultural groups—intergenerational communities that have some shared practices and history that members believe are constitutive of the group.

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1 Respect and Recognition

Liberal multiculturalists tend to view respect for cultural groups in instrumental terms—that is cultural groups are respected because doing so helps secure the liberal goal of individual autonomy. Non-liberals, by contrast, often argue that cultures deserve respect because they are intrinsically valuable. The liberal respect argument traces its pedigree back to John Rawls, who argued quite briefly that self-respect is a primary good in his lengthy *Theory of Justice* (Rawls 1971, §67). Liberal states, on Rawls's account, ought to secure the social basis of self-respect for their members. Liberal multiculturalists take up this argument, and argue that people's self-respect is bound up with the respect in which their cultural group is held. If a culture is not generally respected, then the dignity and self-respect of its members will also be threatened (Tamir 1993; Nielsen 1999; Kymlicka 1989, 1995; MacCormick 1991, 1996; Margalit and Raz 1990; Caney 1997; Taylor 1992; Raz 1994). If a person lacks self-respect, then she will not feel confident about pursuing her plans and projects. Self-respect on this account is a crucial underpinning to autonomy, since without it we are not apt to do much of anything with vigor or interest.

A related argument is that people need a secure culture, or a "cultural structure," for people to make meaningful choices (Kymlicka 1989, 1995; Raz 1994). It is "only by being socialized into a culture can one tap the options which gives shape and content to, individual freedom' (Raz 1994, 178). A dying culture will undermine people's self-respect and ability to make choices, and so it may need active state support to continue to exist. This is especially true for smaller cultures, which are typically in danger of losing their distinctive characteristics in the face of the larger majority. Since the majority culture often receives enough implicit and explicit cultural support from the state, multiculturalists usually focus their arguments on minority groups. The liberal argument for cultural support, it is worth emphasizing, is not because cultures themselves are valuable, but because of their support for individual self-respect and autonomy. Most supporters of cultural rights recognize that cultures change over time, and do not want cultural support to ossify cultures.

One objection to this liberal argument for multiculturalism is to admit that people need to be situated within a secure culture to live an autonomous life, but that says little about which culture (Waldron 1992). Since
p. 548 some cultures ↳ will be secure, even if others are not, why argue for state support for any culture? If a culture is dying, the solution may not be to buttress the vanishing culture, but to help its members join a different, more vibrant culture (Buchanan 1991). After all, people have changed cultures, or lived between or among two or more cultures, throughout history. In his study of Russians living in Latvia and Estonia after they became new states following the collapse of the Soviet Union, David Laitin found that some did have a loss of self-respect; in places where their citizenship was revoked they often felt humiliated (Laitin 1998). Yet these Russians adapted—they tried to learn the titular language of the new state to gain citizenship, and while it was difficult for many adults, their children were more successful in adapting. Laitin predicts that after a generation or two, the Russian-speaking population will probably successfully assimilate.[1]

Others contend that while the argument for cultural support is often couched in liberal language, many cultures are not liberal, leading to a contradiction in some versions of liberal multiculturalism. Will Kymlicka argues that strong group-based protections should not be secured at the price of violating rights fundamental to individual well-being. According to Kymlicka, the aim of multicultural citizenship and minority rights is to provide groups with external protections from outsiders; it does not aim to allow groups to restrict the rights and autonomy of their own members (Kymlicka 1995, ch. 3). This argument has led some observers to think that Kymlicka aims to liberalize non-liberal groups, but this is not the case. Kymlicka is unwilling to have the state ensure that national minority groups do not impose internal restrictions; Kymlicka merely says that these groups should not have internal restrictions, an idea he hopes they agree with. This leaves groups that receive rights the ability to do what they want, except in cases of systematic and gross human violations, like slavery or genocide, which Kymlicka argues are the same

grounds for intervention in states as well (Kymlicka 1995, 169–70). One critic has argued that it "is hard to see what work Kymlicka's liberal principles, emphasizing the importance of [individual] autonomy, are doing here," since in practice Kymlicka refuses to grant the liberal state the right to intervene in illiberal
p. 549 groups (Kukathas 2003, 185). Yet since Kymlicka grounds his theory in a ↳ liberal ideal of individual autonomy, one may ask why the state should not, on Kymlicka's own grounds, intervene in cultural groups to ensure that they uphold individual autonomy?

Kymlicka's argument is partly a response to feminist criticisms of multiculturalism. Susan Okin contends that cultures that do not respect some of their own members, particularly women, do not in turn deserve respect (Okin 1998, 2002). On this account, members of the cultures that do not support the liberal values of autonomy and gender equity will be better off if these cultures were "gradually to become extinct" or (perhaps even better) should change to reinforce the equality of women (Okin 1998, 2004). Ayelet Shachar also worries about patriarchal cultures, but is perhaps more sympathetic to granting them some kinds of protection than is Okin (Shachar 2001; see also Benhabib 2002, ch. 4; for a discussion of gender and multiculturalism in the Indian context, see Mahajan 1998, 2002).

While some criticize the liberal instrumental argument for cultural rights for too readily granting rights to cultures that may undermine individual rights, non-liberals argue that the instrumental argument's emphasis on individuals' rights will too readily withhold respect from cultures that deserve it. The non-liberal critics argue that the reigning theories of liberal multiculturalism are really arguments for homogeneity, since the idea that one will support cultural diversity as long as the cultures are liberal is a rather limited argument for diversity. They argue that liberal multiculturalism is narrow: since its base is in a liberal theory of autonomy, it does not give enough support to non-liberal cultures (Deveaux 2000; Tomasi 1995; Parekh 2000). These non-liberal multiculturalists argue for the intrinsic worth of culture. On this argument, cultures are worthy of respect not because they enable some other good to flourish, like individual autonomy, but because cultures are valuable in and of themselves. One prominent example given is indigenous peoples, who do not necessarily prize individual autonomy, yet on these critics' account are worthy cultures deserving of respect. Cultures are human creations and people's identity are interwoven within their cultures, making cultures intrinsically worthy of respect. Since we ought to respect people, we then ought to respect culture, since there is little more deeply human than culture. Both non-liberal and liberal cultures are worthy of respect on this argument. In addition, we should respect cultures—liberal and non-liberal alike—because their presence culturally enriches us all and because cultural diversity provides an important background in which people may reflect upon their own beliefs and practices.

p. 550 Respecting a culture, however, need not mean a blind acceptance or support of every cultural practice. When it comes to questionable practices, these multiculturalists oppose the state simply imposing its values on cultural minorities. Instead, they often recommend some form of deliberation and dialogue between the majority and minority (or among the minority members themselves, shielded from the majority) to discuss what may be seen as problematic practices, and to see if any kind of negotiated settlement is available that each side can agree upon (Deveaux 2000, 2003; Parekh 2000; Tully 1995).[2]

Similar to the non-liberal respect argument is the contention that people's identity is quite important to them, and so they have a right to preserve their "way of life and the traits that are central identity components" for their culture (Margalit and Halbertal 1994; other identity arguments include Margalit and Raz 1990; Gans 2003; Moore 2001, ch. 2; Tamir 1993, ch. 2; Eisenberg 2003, 2004). Because people's personality and way of life are so connected to their identity, people have a fundamental interest in maintaining their identity. "People who speak a particular language, for example, consider it important to preserve their language not because giving it up would mean giving up the use of language altogether, but because their culture is phrased in terms of the language, and they find particular linguistic treasures in it which they could not find in any other language" (Margalit and Halbertal 1994, 505). People's identity are partly constituted by the groups they are part of; since people's identity are part of who they are, and they

have an interest in preserving this identity in some way, then they have a justifiable interest in preserving their group.

Identity and culture are not the same, as Margaret Moore points out (Moore 2001, ch. 2). Still, the group identities that multiculturalists discuss have some cultural component, though they can rarely be completely defined by culture. Part of what constitutes an ethnocultural group is culture, but it also the view that those in the collective are bound together in various ways, perhaps because they have a shared history, or a shared fate, or simply because the members believe they belong together. The demand for more
p. 551 Québécois autonomy came as the Francophones became more like the ↳ Anglophones—they moved to the cities, especially Montreal, leaving Catholicism and the rural life behind them (Kymlicka 1995, 87–8). Québécois nationalism coincided with a dramatic *decrease* in cultural distinctiveness. The Protestants in Northern Ireland see their fate as tied to one another, and so identify with each other, although culturally they are little different from the Catholics (Moore 2001, 58). The Bosnians and Serbs see their fate as tied with members of their own group more than with each other, although their cultural differences are small. Cultural practice is surely part of ethnocultural group identity, but it is not the only component.

2 Boundaries and Equality

The non-liberal respect argument and the identity argument (which is put forward by both liberals and non-liberals) avoids some ambiguities involved in liberal multiculturalism, since they do not argue for group-differentiated rights because of autonomy or self-respect. Still, these arguments do little to satisfy feminist concerns, and are vulnerable to the response that identities can and do change over time. Identity may be important to people, but the next step—to then argue the state ought to support peoples' identities—is not necessarily obvious.

Both the liberal and non-liberal versions of multiculturalism are criticized for attempting to freeze the boundaries around cultural groups and nominating some of them (but not others) for special treatment. People are, after all, often members of several groups. Which ones ought to be respected? A political community that aims to give support to every group that contributes to people's self-respect will be supporting an impossible array of groups. Some of the self-respect theorists get around this problem by privileging national groups over others, but they rarely say why this is so. Surely some religious groups contribute to some people's self-respect; so too might neighborhoods, sports teams, or a variety of ethnic groups. Which groups require recognition is a "moveable feast" (Vincent 2002; see also Charney 2003; Levy 2000, ch. 3). One way around this criticism may be to follow the idea behind the term "encompassing group," coined by Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz. An encompassing group is one which "shapes to a large
p. 552 degree ↳ [the] tastes and opportunities" of members and "provides an anchor for their self-identification and the safety of effortless secure belonging" (Margalit and Raz 1990, 448). Encompassing groups are usually also competing groups—members of the group usually cannot belong to another encompassing group of the same type. One cannot usually be both Muslim and Jewish, for example (Margalit 1996, 177–8). While there may occasionally be some difficulty in identifying encompassing groups, it is usually the case that we can with little trouble figure out which groups shape much of people's identity.

Critics of multiculturalism also argue that cultures do not have clear boundaries. Cultures meld and mesh with one another; they are also "internally riven and contested" (Benhabib 2002, 16). Jeremy Waldron argues that people do of course need cultural meanings, but this hardly means that people need to live within a single cultural framework. On the contrary, our cultures are a mix of many different elements, taken freely from one another. Particularly in our globalized world, "we draw our allegiances from here, there and everywhere. Bits of cultures come into our lives from different sources" (Waldron 1992, 110). The problem with cultural rights arguments is that they try artificially to preserve cultures: "Cultures live and

grow, change and sometimes wither away; they amalgate with other cultures.... To preserve a culture is often to take a 'favored' snapshot version of it and insist that this version must persist at all costs" (Waldron 1992, 109–10). This criticism accuses the multiculturalists of wrongly assuming that we have attachments to specific cultures that can readily be identified and preserved. In our globalized world, people have myriad cultural attachments, and cultural boundaries themselves are fluid.

Yet this criticism of multiculturalism wrongly assumes that multicultural arguments automatically protect cultures from change. This depends on the sort of protection given. A distinction between what Geoff Levey calls personal cultural rights and corporate cultural rights helpfully shows that some cultural rights are not retained by groups, but by individuals (Levey 1997). Some cultural rights are held by individuals, which do not reify group boundaries, since the exercise of these rights is optional. The language laws in Finland that give Swedish-speaking Finns the right to speak Swedish in official settings where their population is over 8 percent in the relevant district does not require them to speak Swedish or bolster cultural boundaries. These are personal cultural rights that are held by individuals who may or may not choose to exercise them. Corporate cultural rights, like determining membership rules, are held by the group. It is not even clear that
p. 553 corporate ↳ cultural rights preserve cultures, although they might preserve certain identities. Insisting that French remain the primary language in Quebec, for example, does not prevent Québécois culture from changing in many ways (Carens 2000, ch. 4). While some may object that preserving French is somehow artificial, the Québécois can point out that nearly every state preserves the dominant language in various ways. Exempting Jewish ritual slaughtering from laws regulating animal slaughter is a corporate cultural right, but does not preserve Jewish culture as it currently stands, since individual Jews have the option of not buying kosher meat. Since cultural rights are sometimes bestowed upon groups, and sometimes on individuals, Will Kymlicka uses the term group-differentiated rights, a practice I will follow here (Kymlicka 1995, ch. 3).

Another criticism of multiculturalism comes from liberals who argue that traditional liberal solutions should be enough to satisfy multicultural demands. They suggest that the liberal model of religion and state can be followed with ethnocultural groups: just as the state should not favor one religion over another, but simply disentangle itself from all religions, and allow each to survive as best it can in the private sphere, the state should disentangle itself from culture and identity (Barry 2001, 65). The sanctity of the private sphere has a long and important history in liberal theory, and Barry argues that one can simply invoke its importance in the context of culture. Similarly, liberal equality can also be useful. If we want to correct the injustices of the past, or treat equally members of groups that were previously invisible in the public sphere, we do not need a new fancy theory of multiculturalism. What we need is simply to apply the idea of equality in new contexts (Barry 2001; Phillips 2004). On this argument, equality and multiculturalism are mutually supportive. There is considerable merit to this argument: if Christian schools in the UK receive government funding, then equality demands that Muslim schools that fulfill a similar set of requirements also receive funding. In some ways, then, the term multiculturalism simply alerts us to a new way of thinking about equality as liberal polities become more heterogeneous.

Yet equality and privacy, important though they are, need to be interpreted before we will know if they are antagonistic or hostile to multiculturalism. The privacy argument for one underplays the difficulties minority groups often have in keeping up their identities. Multiculturalists (liberal and non-liberal alike) argue that this theory of "benign neglect" does not work in the case of culture, since culture and language
p. 554 cannot be disentangled so ↳ readily from public life like religion can (Taylor 1992; Young 1990; Shachar 2001; Parekh 2000; Deveaux 2000; Kymlicka 1995). A state can distance itself from religion, but not from language. Government can avoid religion but not language; nor can it use an infinite number of languages in which to conduct business. It must instead usually settle on one or two; similarly, most state education systems use one or two languages. The linguistic groups that are not favored by the government are bound to have a hard time surviving. Since language and culture are so closely tied together, this means that the

state will inevitably favor some ethnocultural groups over others. Moreover, multiculturalists point out that state holidays often favor some groups over others: Christmas is a Christian holiday, for example, but is celebrated as a state holiday in many places. Benign neglect, some multiculturalists argue, does not produce neutrality, but favors some groups over others. Equality and fairness on this argument does not mean similarly ignoring all languages—rather, it may mean supporting minority languages (Patten 2003).

Similarly, the meaning of equality has to be defined in education before we know how it interacts with multiculturalism. Some multicultural educators, for example, argue that equality means respecting and catering to the different learning styles of different cultural groups. This is a flawed argument, filled with dangerous stereotyping of different groups, and with little empirical evidence to show that it works (Reich 2002, ch. 7). Does equality mean rewriting textbooks so all groups are represented? Or does the need for a common citizenship require that commonalities instead of differences be emphasized? So too the debate about education and religion is not readily resolvable in the language of equality before we define what we mean by equality: does equality mean that the demands of religious conservatives be accommodated in schools? Or does equality mean that their children learn the same liberal curriculum taught to other students (on this debate see Callan 1997; Gutmann 1995; Swaine 2003; Burtt 1994; Galston 2002; Macedo 2000; Spinner-Halev 2000; McDonough and Feinberg 2003)?

Another view of equality is to simply say that fair treatment of all ethnocultural groups is simply impossible and so should not be attempted (Kukathas 2003, 236–46). Chandran Kukathas also tries to undermine the benign neglect argument by arguing for a reduction in the size and importance of the government (Kukathas 2003, ch. 5). Kukathas envisions a political society with many different associations, who govern
p. 555 themselves as they see ↳ fit. As long as their members can formally leave, there is no role for the central government within them. These groups can educate and treat their members as they wish; they simply cannot bar members from leaving if that is what the members want to do. Groups will only exist as long as they receive support from their members; group cultures can change in response to their members' wishes; and the state does not favor any group over any other. Kukathas emphasizes how easily power is abused, which he argues means we should avoid putting too much power in the state's hand; a society with many associations will have power spread in many places, and so it will not be particularly dangerous. Yet many will find important parts of Kukathas's theory objectionable: Without any kind of mandated education his theory leaves children at the mercy of the group, which may refuse to give them the tools to leave; Kukathas's group-centered theory leaves no room for central governments to prevent injustice—Kukathas admits that under his theory groups will be allowed physically to abuse their members. It is noteworthy too that Kukathas's many examples of state power abuse come from non-liberal societies. These examples, however, are not necessarily a reason to reassess our views of contemporary liberalism, since liberals of all stripes worry about oppressive state power. That is why liberals argue for limited democratic government, separation of powers, and so on. Kukathas actually praises American democracy, with its checks and balances, and says we ought to recognize that "democratic states have generally been kinder and gentler rulers" (Kukathas 2003, 195).

If we accept the argument that some groups deserve state recognition and support, we still have to figure out which ones. Some theorists, like Iris Young, argue that *all* minority languages and cultures ought to be supported, in addition to the mainstream language (Young 1990). Yet it is hard to know how this might be done. Supporting all minority languages is hard to do in centers of immigration—cities like Toronto, New York, and Chicago have sixty or seventy linguistic groups within them. Supporting each is a logistical nightmare that probably could not even be done if tried. Young's arguments have also been criticized for underplaying the importance of a common public sphere and citizenship. Without some sense of unity, these critics argue, the democratic polity will not be able to pursue common goals. People in the state need to have some solidarity for democratic politics to lead to justice (Barry 2001; Miller 1995; Moore 2001).

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3 Which Groups? What Kind of Support?

What we are left with is the idea that states support some groups more than others, and that since group identity is important to many people, some people are unfairly denied this state support. But figuring out which groups ought to receive state support, and what kind of support they deserve, is not easy. There are many different kinds of groups, after all, and many ways to support them. They cannot all be supported, and those that can be supported cannot all be supported in the same way. One route is to argue that a general theory of multiculturalism cannot work, since the particulars of each case matter so much. Joe Carens argues for what he calls justice as evenhandedness, which embraces the particularities of each case, instead of searching for a way to abstract from them. Evenhandedness means a sensitive balancing of competing claims for recognition and support in matters of culture and identity. Lots of things matter in each case: history, numbers, the relative importance of the claims made by the claimants, and so on (Carens 2000). Yet without presenting a general theory, Carens does not supply us with guidelines on how to treat future cases, although he is right that context cannot be ignored, as I shall presently explain.

One general guideline to multiculturalism might be this: historically oppressed groups have a good claim to recognition, and perhaps to group rights as well. Instead of benign neglect, some groups have been treated malevolently. These groups were not merely ignored, but are or have been forcefully oppressed by the state. The strongest arguments for multiculturalism began by using the case of indigenous examples as their main example, although other oppressed groups are also used (Kymlicka 1989; Deveaux 2000; Parekh 2000; Williams 1998; Young 1990, 2000). It may be that the examples of oppressed groups convinced many people to be sympathetic to multiculturalism. Yet there are three pitfalls that need to be watched when using oppressed groups. The first is when oppressed groups are used as the main examples, which leads the reader to sympathize with the argument, but then the argument generalizes about all groups, oppressed or not. This is what Kymlicka does in his first book (Kymlicka 1989). The case for oppressed groups, however, is stronger than for the non-oppressed and arguments for each should be kept distinct from one another. The
p. 557 second problem is to define oppression so widely that most of the country's population is considered ↳ oppressed. For Iris Marion Young, for example, over 80 percent of the American population is oppressed.[3] We could narrow the category of oppressed groups, however, by insisting on the distinction between benign neglect and malevolent policies. Neglect may have some troublesome consequences, but it is not the same as being purposefully suppressed in various ways. The third problem is when we assume that all group oppression necessitates a group remedy. This is sometimes, but not always, the case. Economic oppression and discrimination can sometimes be readily alleviated simply through anti-discrimination laws or better labor conditions. A better enforcement of a liberal ideal of equality may obviate the need for group-differentiated policies in some cases.

If we can avoid these pitfalls, we will see that sometimes alleviating group oppression will mean a group remedy. If a group was torn asunder by the state, like many indigenous peoples were, its members may need special assistance to live decent lives. When critics of multiculturalism insist that group boundaries are opaque and the same rights belong to all people, they implicitly view the relationship between all citizens and the liberal democratic state in the same way: as an unmediated relationship between state and citizen. The citizen has certain rights, including the right to vote, and the state in turn has full authority over the citizen. This normal liberal model, however, does not anticipate the state marking out and oppressing a particular group. Part of the need for multiculturalism does not emerge in academic writing, but in the brutal group-oriented policies of the Western liberal democracies. When this happens, matters of justice cannot only be a matter of the state protecting individual rights and ensuring equality. Sometimes, the unmediated relationship between state and citizen needs to be questioned, with the group sometimes deserving to have or to retain some amount of autonomy. Complications arise when the group has internal oppressive practices, but the motivating argument here is that the justice of individual rights and equality

for all must be balanced against the injustice of a state imposing reform upon a group it oppresses (Herr 2004; Perez 2002; Spinner-Halev 2001).

Context does matter here, since what kind of recognition and rights that are deserved will often depend on the particularities of the case. Not every group should have or deserves rights. Numbers and cost may
p. 558 matter; so too ↳ might the severity of the oppression. My amendment to Carens's argument is this: context does not tell us which groups have the strongest case for rights and recognition, since we can in principle decide that oppressed groups have the strongest case. Yet context does tell us what kind of rights and recognition are reasonable and justifiable in particular cases.

A second general guideline is based on the criticism of the benign neglect argument and might be this: since states are not culturally neutral, they ought to accommodate the cultural practices of non-oppressed groups within the constraints established by a common liberal citizenship and where the cost is not prohibitive. This is what fairness requires. This is not an argument from self-respect or autonomy—immigrants and refugees show that people can change their context of choice readily enough—but an identity-based argument. Again, the principle helps to identify which groups are candidates for group-differentiated rights, but context matters, since certain groups will be accommodated more readily than others because it might be easier or less costly to do so.

The second guideline is vulnerable to the too-many-groups problem. One way around this difficulty is to divide national groups from immigrant or polyethnic groups, and argue that the former deserve more support than the latter (Kymlicka 1995; Gans 2003, ch. 2). National minorities are groups that have a historical relationship with a territorially contiguous piece of land, while polyethnic groups do not have a claim to a particular piece of land, and are usually more recent members of the polity. This division reduces the number of groups that receive a robust package of rights, which is both practical and reduces the worry about creating unity within the political community. The state might need to make some new accommodations as new immigrants with new practices arrive, and can perhaps give some financial support for some polyethnic celebrations, but doing so hardly threatens the state's cohesiveness. For example, a Sikh might want to wear his turban while becoming a Canadian Mounty, and thus eschew the traditional Mounty hat; or a Jew might want to join the American army but still wear his yarmulke. Multiculturalists argue that these new practices ought to be allowed and recognized. As long as they are not harmful, they pose no threat to the state nor do they undermine the state's solidarity, the multiculturalists argue. These examples show how new immigrants are eager to join their new state's institutions—what's more Canadian than becoming a Mounty?— but they do not want to do so at the price of complete assimilation.

Still, some want to know why immigrants or refugees do not have the same rights to language or culture as
p. 559 national minorities do. After all, if a secure ↳ cultural context is important for the self-respect and autonomy for national minorities, why is not the same true for immigrants? One answer is that immigrants voluntarily gave up the right to a secure cultural context when they moved. But this is not very convincing, since we have many rights (speech, free trial, and so on) that liberals do not think we can waive (Carens 2000, 80–1). Refugees certainly do not move voluntarily. Moreover, if immigrants do waive their cultural rights, why give them any kind of polyethnic rights (Carens 2000, 57; Gans 2003, 61)?[4]

Yet if we skip over the cultural context argument, we can simply say that the identity of national minorities can usually receive more protection than immigrants or refugees because they will often have the economies of scale that allow doing so without a large cost. This is a contingent argument, however, simply a rough way to decide which groups will receive more or strong group-differentiated rights. A dispersed or small national minority may have to be treated like an immigrant group when it comes to group-differentiated rights. Similarly, there are undoubtedly some groups that do not fit well into either category, but this simply means that we need to examine the particular case to see if a set of group-differentiated rights is appropriate. Separating national minorities from immigrants should be treated like a loose

guideline, not a hard and fast distinction. On this argument, a national minority like the Québécois is large and concentrated enough to support French-language schools, universities, government offices, and so on without tremendous cost. As long as the Québécois aspire to set up a liberal French-speaking society, it is hard to see how liberals can object to their doing so.

The many immigrant groups in Canada, fewer in number, more dispersed, and with fewer institutions than the Québécois, should (and in fact do) receive much less in the way of group-differentiated rights. Immigrants and refugees ought to receive less robust ways to protect their identity because the cost of doing so is often very high. It is also the case that if states were expected to pay for costly ways to support the identity of immigrants and refugees, they may close their doors to newcomers. The common citizenship test is also one that is best viewed in a particular context. Supplying bilingual instruction to sixty different language groups would be too costly and might undermine a common citizenship. An immigrant group that
p. 560 wants state ↳ protection for practices that include gender discrimination would fail the test of liberal citizenship.

Underlying these guidelines is an admission that group attachments, while not perhaps as a dominant a value as some multiculturalists argue, do deserve some respect; they can be dismissed, but should not be until there is good reason to do so. This all points to what multiculturalists have not done well enough, which is to explain people's attachments to groups. While critics readily dismiss these attachments as loose, perhaps weak, and certainly shifting, it appears to be the case that some people at least are strongly attached to a particular group. Multiculturalists are right to point out that group attachments need to be noticed, but why people are so closely attached to their groups is under-explained. This is perhaps because this is an empirical question that theorists are ill-equipped to answer. But questions abound: why do many immigrant groups—or their descendants—in the immigrant countries (Canada, the USA, New Zealand, Australia) manage to integrate into the larger society, while retaining only mostly symbolic attachments to their ancestral culture? Why have many indigenous peoples failed to integrate, but have found their confrontation with the West to leave them with such a bitter and enduring legacy? Why do some nations fight to unite with their co-nationals in one state, while others do not? What is the relationship between multiculturalism and globalization? The theoretical arguments between the multiculturalists and their critics are not over, but these questions suggest that many empirical matters, about group life, the contemporary state, and liberal democracy, remain unexplored. These questions, too, suggest that the multiculturalism debate would be enriched if scholars set their sights on non-Western countries, something that the multicultural literature—heavily focused on the USA, Canada, and Western Europe—has only just begun to do (Kymlicka and Opalski 2001; Carens 2000, ch. 9). Answers to these questions and expanding the debate beyond the West may yet, in turn, change the nature of the multicultural debate.

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Notes

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1 Laitin also looks at Ukraine and Kazakhstan, where the dynamics are different than in the Baltics. In Kazakhstan, the Russians are moving to Russia in large numbers, not because they are prevented from assimilating, but because they do not want to do so, partly because they view a Kazakhstan identity as lower in status than a Russian identity (unlike a Baltic identity), and partly because of the larger cultural distance between Kazakh and Russian culture.

2 Liberal deliberation theorists are less interested in compromise and more interested in establishing the right conditions and procedures for deliberation. Seyla Benhabib, for example, argues that deliberation must take place in the context of moral autonomy for the agents involved, along with the principles of equal respect and egalitarian reciprocity. These background conditions do not insist on any particular outcome, but nevertheless heavily influence it, since they make outcomes that endorse traditional hierarchy rather unlikely (Benhabib 2002).

3 Young's list of oppressed groups include old people, poor people, gay men, lesbians, Jewish Americans, Asian-Americans, Arab-Americans, Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, women, physically and mentally disabled people (Young 1990).

4 Chaim Gans argues that one possible way to save the polyethnic/national minority distinction is to argue that groups that have a homeland elsewhere—like the Chinese in Malaysia, Indians in Fiji, and so on—are only entitled to polyethnic rights since their nation already has more robust rights, albeit elsewhere (Gans 2003).