WILL KYMLICKA

LIBERAL THEORIES
OF MULTICULTURALISM

The last ten years has seen a remarkable upsurge in interest amongst political philosophers in the rights of ethnocultural groups within Western democracies. Joseph Raz's writings, particularly his article on Multiculturalism: *A Liberal Perspective*, have played an important role in this debate. My aim in this paper is to give a (very) condensed overview of the philosophical debate so far, and to suggest how Raz's theory fits into the larger debate.

1. The First Stage: Multiculturalism as Communitarianism

I think we can distinguish three broad positions in the debate over multiculturalism or minority rights1. The first position to emerge, and the one that dominated in the debate in the 1970s and 1980s, viewed multiculturalism as a form of, or application of, communitarianism. It was assumed that the debate over multiculturalism was therefore essentially equivalent to the debate between "liberals" and "commu-

---

[1] I will use the term "minority rights" and "multiculturalism" interchangeably, to refer to a wide range of public policies, legal rights and constitutional provisions that relate to the accommodation of ethnocultural minorities. Common examples of such policies and laws in Western democracies include language rights and self-government powers for national minorities, multicultural educational reforms and religious exemptions for immigrant groups, treaty rights and land claims for indigenous peoples. This is obviously a heterogeneous category, but the various measures have two important features in common: (*a*) they go beyond the familiar set of common civil and political rights of individual citizenship which are protected in all liberal democracies; (*b*) they are adopted with the intention of recognizing and accommodating the distinctive identities and needs of ethnocultural groups. For a helpful typology, see J. Levy, "Classifying Cultural Rights", in I. Shapiro-W. Kymlicka (eds.), *Ethnicity and Group Rights*, New York University Press, New York 1997, pp. 22-66. I should emphasize that many of the measures that I am describing as "minority rights" are not "rights" in Raz's technical sense.

nitarians" (or between "individualists" and "collectivists"). Confront-
ed with an unexplored topic like multiculturalism, it was natural, and
perhaps inevitable, that political theorists would look for analogies
with other, more familiar, topics, and the liberal-communitarian de-
bate seemed the most relevant and applicable.

The liberal-communitarian debate is an old and venerable one
within political philosophy, going back several centuries, so I won't
try to rehearse it in its entirety. But to dramatically oversimplify, one
strand of the debate revolves around the priority of individual free-
dom. Liberals insist that individuals should be free to decide on their
own conception of the good life, and applaud the liberation of indi-
viduals from any ascribed or inherited status. Liberal individualists
argue that the individual is morally prior to the community: the com-
munity matters only because it contributes to the well-being of the
individuals who compose it. If those individuals no longer find it
worthwhile to maintain existing cultural practices, then the commu-
nity has no independent interest in preserving those practices, and no
right to prevent individuals from modifying or rejecting them.

Communitarians dispute this conception of the "autonomous indi-
vidual". They view individuals as "embedded" in particular social
roles and relationships, rather than as agents capable of forming and
revising their own conception of the good life. Rather than viewing
group practices as the product of individual choices, they tend to
view individuals as the product of social practices. Moreover, they
often deny that the interests of communities can be reduced to the
interests of their individual members. Privileging individual autono-
my is therefore seen as destructive of communities. A healthy com-
munity maintains a balance between individual choice and protection
for the communal way of life, and seeks to limit the extent to which
the former can erode the latter.

In this first stage of the debate, the assumption was that one's
position on minority rights was dependent on, and derivative of,
one's position on the liberal-communitarian debate. That is, if one is
a liberal who cherishes individual autonomy, then one will oppose
minority rights as an unnecessary and dangerous departure from the
proper emphasis on the individual. Communitarians, by contrast,
view minority rights as an appropriate way of protecting communi-
ties from the eroding effects of individual autonomy, and of affirm-
ing the value of community. Ethnocultural minorities in particular
are worthy of such protection, partly because they are most at risk,
but also because they still have a communal way of life to be pro-

tected. Unlike the majority, ethnocultural minorities have not yet succumbed to liberal individualism, and so have maintained a coherent collective way of life.

This debate over the priority and reducibility of community interests to individual interests dominated the early literature on minority rights[2]. This interpretation of the debate was shared by both defenders and critics of minority rights. Both sides agreed that in order to evaluate minority rights we needed to first resolve these ontological and metaphysical questions about the relative priority of individuals and groups. Defenders of minority rights agreed that they were inconsistent with liberalism's commitment to moral individualism and individual autonomy, but argued that this just pointed out the inherent flaws of liberalism.

In short, defending minority rights involved endorsing the communitarian critique of liberalism, and viewing minority rights as defending cohesive and communally-minded minority groups against the encroachment of liberal individualism.

2. *The Second Stage: Multiculturalism Within a Liberal Framework*

Partly as a result of Raz's influential contributions, it has been increasingly recognized that this first stage represented an unhelpful way to conceptualize most minority rights claims in western democracies. Equating minority rights with communitarianism seemed sensible at the time, but assumptions about the «striking parallel between the communitarian attack of philosophical liberalism and the notion of collective rights» have been increasingly questioned[3].

There are two problems with this approach: first, it misinterprets the nature of ethnocultural minorities; and second, it misinterprets the nature of liberalism.

---

[2] For "communitarian" defenders of minority rights, see V. van Dyke, *The Individual, the State, and Ethnic Communities in Political Theory*, «World Politics», 29/3, 1977, pp. 343-69; R. Garet, *Communality and Existence: The Rights of Groups*, «Southern California Law Review», 56/5, 1983, pp. 1001-75; M. McDonald *Should Communities Have Rights? Reflections on Liberal Individualism*, «Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence», 4/2, 1991, pp. 217-37; D. Johnston, *Native Rights as Collective Rights: A Question of Group Self-Preservation*, «Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence», 2/1, 1989, pp. 19-34; A. Addis, *Individualism, Communitarianism and the Rights of Ethnic Minorities*, «Notre Dame Law Review», 67/3, 1992, pp. 615-76; D. Karmis, *Cultures autochtones et libéralisme au Canada: les vertus mediatrices du communautarisme libéral de Charles Taylor*, «Canadian Journal of Political Science», 26/1, 1993, pp. 69-96; F. Svensson, *Liberal Democracy and Group Rights: The Legacy of Individualism and its Impact on American Indian Tribes*, «Political Studies», 27/3, 1979, pp. 421-39. For "individualist" critics, see J. Narveson, *Collective Rights?*, «Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence», 4/2: 3, 1991, pp. 29-45.

[3] M. Galenkamp, *Individualism and Collectivism: the concept of collective rights*, Rotterdamse Filosofische Studies, Rotterdam 1993, pp. 20-25.

In reality, most ethnocultural groups within Western democracies do not want to be protected from the forces of modernity unleashed in liberal societies. On the contrary, they want to be full and equal participants in modern liberal societies. This is true of most immigrant groups, which seek inclusion and full participation in the mainstream of liberal-democratic societies, with access to its education, technology, literacy, mass communications, etc. It is equally true of most non-immigrant national minorities, like the Québécois, Flemish or Catalans[4]. Some of their members may seek to secede from a liberal democracy, but if they do, it is not in order to create an illiberal communitarian society, but rather to create their own modern liberal democratic society. The Québécois wish to create a "distinct society", but it is a modern, liberal society – with an urbanized, secular, pluralistic, industrialized, bureaucratized, consumerist mass culture.

Indeed, far from opposing liberal principles, public opinion polls show there are no statistical differences between national minorities and majorities in their adherence to liberal principles. And immigrants also quickly absorb the basic liberal-democratic consensus, even when they came from countries with little or no experience of liberal democracy[5].

As Raz rightly emphasizes, the commitment to individual autonomy is deep and wide in modern societies, crossing ethnic, linguistic and religious lines. To be sure, there are some important – and visible – exceptions to this rule. For example, there are a few ethnoreligious sects that voluntarily distance themselves from the larger world – the Hutterites, Amish, Hasidic Jews. And perhaps some of the more isolated or traditionalist indigenous communities fit this description as "communitarian" groups. The question of how liberal states should

---

[4] By "national minorities", I mean groups that formed complete and functioning societies on their historic homeland prior to being incorporated into a larger state. The incorporation of such national minorities has typically been involuntary, due to colonization, conquest, or the ceding of territory from one imperial power to another, but may also arise voluntarily, as a result of federation.

[5] On the political values of Canadian immigrants, see J. Frideres, "Edging into the Mainstream: Immigrant Adult and their Children", in S. Isajiw (ed.), *Comparative Perspectives on Interethnic Relations and Social Incorporation in Europe and North America*, Canadian Scholar's Press, Toronto 1997, pp. 537-62; for American immigrants, J. Harles, *Politics in the Lifeboat: Immigrants and the American Democratic Order*, Westview Press, Boulder 1993. On the convergence in political values between anglophones and francophones in Canada, see S. Dion, "Le Nationalisme dans la Convergence Culturelle", in R. Hudon-R. Pelletier (eds.), *L'Engagement Intellectuel: Melanges en l'honneur de Léon Dion*, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Sainte-Foy 1991. In fact, on many issues, national minorities tend to be more liberal than the majority. For example, Scots, Québécois and Catalans tend to be more liberal than their majority counterparts on issues regarding gay rights, gender equality or foreign aid. See W. Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, Citizenship*, chaps. 10-15, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001.

respond to such non-liberal groups is an important one, to which I will return.

But the overwhelming majority of debates about minority rights within Western democracies are not debates between a liberal majority and communitarian minorities, but debates amongst liberals about the meaning of liberalism. They are debates between individuals and groups who endorse the basic liberal-democratic consensus, but who disagree about the interpretation of these principles in multiethnic societies – in particular, they disagree about the proper role of language, nationality, and ethnic identities within liberal-democratic societies and institutions. Groups claiming minority rights insist that certain forms of public recognition for their language, practices and identities are not only consistent with basic liberal-democratic principles, including the importance of individual autonomy, but may indeed be required by them.

This leads to the second problem with the pre-1989 debate – namely, the assumption that liberal principles are inherently opposed to minority rights claims. We now know that things are much more complicated, particularly under modern conditions of ethnocultural pluralism. We have inherited a set of assumptions about what liberal principles require, but these assumptions first emerged in Eighteenth-century United States, or Nineteenth-century England, where there was very little ethnocultural heterogeneity. Virtually all citizens shared the same language, ethnic descent, national identity, and Christian faith. It is increasingly clear that we cannot rely on the interpretation of liberalism developed in those earlier times. We need to judge for ourselves what liberalism requires under our own conditions of ethnocultural pluralism.

This then has led to the second stage of the debate, in which the question becomes: what is the possible scope for minority rights *within* liberal theory? Framing the debate this way does not resolve the issues. On the contrary, the place of minority rights within liberal theory remains very controversial. But it changes the terms of the debate. The issue is no longer how to protect communitarian minorities from liberalism, but whether minorities that share basic liberal principles nonetheless need minority rights. If groups are indeed liberal, why do they want minority rights? Why aren't they satisfied with the traditional common rights of citizenship?

Raz's 1990 article on national self-determination (co-authored with Avishai Margalit) and his 1994 article on multiculturalism are paradigm examples of this new approach, and both played a pivotal step in mov-

ing the debate forward. Drawing on the account of autonomy developed in *The Morality of Freedom*, Raz insisted that the autonomy of individuals – their ability to make good choices amongst good lives – is intimately tied up with access to their culture, with the prosperity and flourishing of their culture, and with the respect accorded their culture by others. Other liberal writers like David Miller, Yael Tamir and Jeff Spinner and myself have developed and elaborated this theme[6].

The details of the argument vary, but each of us, in our own way, argues that there are compelling interests related to cultural membership and cultural identity, which are fully consistent with liberal principles of freedom and equality, and which justify adopting measures for «fostering and encouraging the prosperity, cultural and material, of cultural groups, and respecting their identity»[7]. We can call this the "liberal culturalist" position, and I think it has quickly become the dominant position amongst liberals working in this field[8].

Critics of liberal culturalism have raised many objections to this entire line of argument: some deny that we can intelligibly distinguish or individuate "cultures" or "cultural groups"; others deny that we can make sense of the claim that individuals are "members" of cultures; yet others say that even if can make sense of the claim that individuals are members of distinct cultures, we have no reason to assume that the wellbeing of the individual is tied in any way with the flourishing of the culture[9]. These are important objections that must be answered if liberal culturalism is to properly defended.

However, since I am sympathetic to Raz's line of argument, I will set these objections aside, and assume that there is indeed an impor-

---

[6]   Y. Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1993; J. Spinner, *The Boundaries of Citizenship: Race, Ethnicity and Nationality in the Liberal State*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1994; D. Miller, *On Nationality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1995; W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1995.

[7]   See J. Raz, *Multiculturalism*, «Ratio Juris», 11/3, 1998, p. 197. Even Charles Taylor's account of the «politics of recognition», which is often described as a "communitarian" position, can be seen as a form of "liberal culturalism", since he too argues that people demand recognition of their differences, not instead of individual freedom, but rather as a support and precondition for freedom. Cfr. C. Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition", in A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism and the «Politics of Recognition»*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1992, pp. 25-73. However, Taylor mixes this liberal argument for multiculturalism with another more communitarian argument about the intrinsic value of group survival, and his policy recommendations reflect this hybrid mixture of liberal and communitarian reasoning.

[8]   It is an interesting question why this liberal culturalist view – which is a clear departure from the dominant liberal view for several decades – has become so popular so quickly. For some speculations, see W. Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, chap. 2.

[9]   For a pithy statement of these points, see J. Waldron, "Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative" in W. Kymlicka (ed.), *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1995, pp. 93-121.

tant sense in which the wellbeing and autonomy of individuals is tied to their cultural membership. This still leaves some difficult issues even for those who accept the liberal culturalist position. The first relates to illiberal minorities. As I noted earlier, there is a small subset of minority groups within Western democracies which seek to suppress the autonomy of their members, and such illiberal groups would presumably use minority rights almost exclusively for this purpose. Second, there are illiberal strands in every culture, even the most liberal and democratic, and this raises the worry that some forms of minority rights could be misused, even within generally liberal-minded groups, to undermine, rather then support, individual autonomy. Indeed, many liberals have supposed that "group rights" are inherently a threat to individual rights. This raises two fundamental problems for any liberal theory of minority rights:

a) how should the state respond to the claims of groups which are illiberal? Should they be entitled to claim minority rights, or should these rights be restricted to groups that have embraced the liberal consensus? This is a question about the kinds of groups entitled to minority rights;

b) what sort of restrictions or conditions must be set on minority rights to ensure that they serve to supplement or strengthen individual rights and individual liberty, rather than restrict individual rights? This is a question about the kinds of rights that should be accorded to groups.

Any liberal theory must address these two questions, and of course Raz has done so. To oversimplify, he answers them as follows:

a) Illiberal groups have no claim to support: only groups that respect and enable the autonomy of their members deserve support. If illiberal groups desire support, they must abandon or neutralize their illiberal practices;

b) The key restriction on minority rights is that they must allow for a right of exit. Granting rights to (generally liberal) groups is not a threat to individual liberty so long as individuals have an effective right of exit (which includes knowledge of the options available in the larger society, and the general skills needed to succeed in it).

These two answers are controversial, even amongst "liberal culturalists" who are otherwise sympathetic to Raz's view. Regarding the first question, many liberal culturalists would be more generous to nonliberal groups, particularly if they are either ethnoreligious sects (like the Amish) or indigenous peoples (like the Inuit). In the case of groups like the Amish, some authors argue that religious to-

leration is a distinct liberal value which may sometimes conflict with, and take precedence over, autonomy[10]. In the case of groups like the Inuit, some authors argue that, as conquered or colonized peoples, indigenous groups have rights to self-government which predate the rise of the state established by colonizing settlers, and that the state therefore has not acquired the right to impose liberal norms on them[11]. While Raz implicitly assumes that states have the right to impose liberal norms on the indigenous peoples that they have colonized, he does not explicitly address the question of how or why this assertion of state authority over colonized peoples is legitimate [12].

Regarding the second question of restrictions on minority rights, virtually all liberal culturalists would agree that a right of exit is crucial to any liberal theory of minority rights. However, there remain disputes about the meaning and preconditions of such a right. Chandran Kukathas, for example, argues that it only requires a formal legal right of exit, and he therefore objects to Raz's requirement that the children of minority groups must learn a core curriculum, national language or set of general skills [13].

Okin, on the other hand, insists that a truly effective right of exit, particularly for women, requires not only formal rights and minimal education, but also active state intervention to eliminate sexist cultural practices and stereotypes which make it difficult or impossible for women to leave a community, even when they are oppressed within it[14]. She argues that Raz's account of a right of exit is therefore too weak.

Much more could be said about these two questions. I have quibbles with Raz's answers to these questions, but I will not pursue them here. Instead, I want to raise a more general concern about the frame-

---

[10]   J. Spinner, *The Boundaries of Citizenship: Race, Ethnicity and Nationality in the Liberal State*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1994; W. Galston, Two *Concepts of Liberalism*, «Ethics», 105/3, 1995, pp. 516-34. This is particularly likely to be the view of those who endorse a more "political" conception of liberalism, in Rawls's sense, rather than the more "comprehensive" conception that Raz adopts (and I share).

[11]   J. Tully, *Strange Multiplicity: Constitutionalism in an Age of Diversity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995. Note that neither of these arguments applies to the (non-religious) practices of voluntary immigrants. In such cases, most liberal culturalists agree with Raz that it is appropriate for the state to insist on respect for liberal norms. This would apply to many controversial issues regarding immigrant groups, such as female circumcision or forced arranged marriages.

[12]   J. Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1986, pp. 423-24.

[13]   C. Kukathas, *Cultural Toleration*, in I. Shapiro-W. Kymlicka (eds.) «Ethnicity and Group Rights: NOMOS», 39, NYU Press, New York 1997, pp. 69-104.

[14]   S. Okin, *Mistresses of their own Destiny? Group Rights, Gender, and Realistic Rights of Exit*, presented at the annual meeting of the "American Political Science Association", Sept. 1998.

work underlying this second stage of the debate, including Raz's contributions. To recap, in this second stage, the question of minority rights is reformulated as a question within liberal theory, and the aim is to show that some (but not all) minority rights claims actually enhance liberal values. In my opinion, this second stage reflects genuine progress. We now have a better understanding of the claims being made by ethnocultural groups, and of the normative issues they raise. We have moved beyond the sterile and misleading debate about individualism and collectivism.

However, I think this second stage also needs to be questioned. While it incorporates a more accurate understanding of the nature of most ethnocultural groups, and the demands they place on the liberal state, it misinterprets the nature of the liberal state, and the demands it places on minorities.

3. A Third Stage? Minority Rights as a Response to Nation-Building

Let me explain. The assumption – generally shared by both defenders and critics of minority rights, though not by Raz himself – is that the liberal state, in its normal operation, abides by a principle of ethnocultural neutrality. That is, the state is "neutral" with respect to the ethnocultural identities of its citizens, and indifferent to the ability of ethnocultural groups to reproduce themselves over time. On this view, liberal states treat culture in the same way as religion - i.e., as something which people should be free to pursue in their private lives, but which is not the concern of the state (so long as they respect the rights of others). Just as liberalism precludes the establishment of an official religion, so too there cannot be official cultures that have preferred status over other possible cultural allegiances[15].

Indeed, some theorists argue that this is precisely what distinguishes liberal "civic nations" from illiberal "ethnic nations"[16]. Ethnic nations take the reproduction of a particular ethnonational culture and identity as one of their most important goals. Civic nations, by contrast, are "neutral" with respect to the ethnocultural identities of their citizens, and define national membership purely in terms of adherence to certain principles of democracy and justice. For minorities to seek special rights, on this view, is a departure from the traditional

---

[15]   M. Walzer, "Comment", in A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism and the «Politics of Recognition»*, pp. 100-01.

[16]   M. Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux (eds.), New York 1993.

operation of the liberal state. Therefore, the burden of proof lies on anyone who would wish to endorse such minority rights.

This is the burden of proof which liberal culturalists try to meet with their account of the importance of cultural membership in securing individual autonomy and self-respect. Liberal culturalists try to show that minority rights supplement, rather than diminish, individual freedom and equality, and help to meet legitimate interests that would otherwise go unmet in a state that clung rigidly to ethnocultural neutrality.

The presumption in the second stage of the debate has been that advocates of minority rights must demonstrate compelling reasons to depart from the norm of ethnocultural neutrality. This is not the way Raz himself describes the issue – he has never accepted that liberal states are or can be ethnoculturally neutral – but even he seems to accept that the burden of proof falls on those who seek to deviate from "difference-blind" institutions or procedures[17].

I would argue, however, that the idea that liberal-democratic states (or "civic nations") are ethnoculturally neutral is manifestly false, both historically and conceptually. The religion model is altogether misleading as an account of the relationship between the liberal-democratic state and ethnocultural groups. Once we abandon this model, and adopt a more accurate conception of the liberal state, we will also have to rethink our theory of minority rights, and address a range of issues not present in Raz's theory.

Why is the ethnocultural neutrality model inaccurate? Consider the actual policies of the United States, which is often cited as the prototypically "neutral" state. Historically, decisions about the boundaries of state governments, and the timing of their admission into the federation, were deliberately made to ensure that anglophones would be a majority within each of the fifty states of the American federation. This helped establish the dominance of English throughout the territory of the United States. And the continuing dominance of English is ensured by several ongoing policies. For example, it is a legal requirement for children to learn the English language in schools; it is a legal requirement for immigrants (under the age of 50) to learn the English language to acquire American citizenship; and it is a de facto requirement for government employment that the applicant speak English.

---

[17] See his discussion of the "why multiculturalism?" question in J. Raz, *Multiculturalism*, cit., p. 200.

These decisions about the drawing of internal boundaries, the language of education and government employment, and the requirements of citizenship are profoundly important. They are not isolated exceptions to some norm of ethnocultural neutrality. On the contrary, they have shaped the very structure of the American state and of American society.

These policies have been pursued with the intention of promoting the integration of American citizens into what I call a "societal culture". By a societal culture, I mean a territorially-concentrated culture, centred on a shared language which is used in a wide range of societal institutions, in both public and private life (schools, media, law, economy, government, etc.). I call it a "societal" culture to emphasize that it involves a common language and social institutions, rather than common religious beliefs, family customs or personal lifestyles. Societal cultures within a modern liberal democracy are inevitably pluralistic, containing Christians as well as Muslims, Jews and atheists; heterosexuals as well as gays; urban professionals as well as rural farmers; conservatives as well as socialists. Such diversity is the inevitable result of the rights and freedoms guaranteed to liberal citizens – including freedom of conscience, association, speech, political dissent and rights to privacy – particularly when combined with an ethnically diverse population. This diversity, however, is balanced and constrained by linguistic and institutional cohesion; cohesion that has not emerged on its own, but rather is the result of deliberate state policies.

The American government has deliberately created and sustained such a societal culture: it has systematically promoted a common language, and a sense of common membership in, and equal access to, the social institutions operating in that language. It has encouraged citizens to view their life-chances as tied up with participation in common societal institutions that operate in the English language, and nurtured a national identity defined in part by this common membership in a societal culture. Nor is the Unites States unique in this respect. Promoting integration of citizens into a societal culture is part of a "nation-building" project that all liberal democracies have engaged in.

Obviously, the sense in which English-speaking Americans share a common "culture" is a very thin one, since it does not preclude differences in religion, personal values, family relationships or lifestyle choices. But it is far from trivial. On the contrary, as I discuss below, attempts to integrate people into such a common societal culture have often faced serious resistance. Although integration in this sense

leaves a great deal of room for both the public and private expression of individual and collective differences, some groups have nonetheless rejected the idea that they should integrate into a common societal culture, and view their life-chances as tied up with the societal institutions conducted in the majority's language.

So we need to replace the idea of an "ethnoculturally neutral" state with a new model of a liberal democratic state – what I call the "nation-building" model. To say that states are nation-building is not to say that governments can only promote one societal culture. It is possible for government policies to encourage the sustaining of two or more societal cultures within a single country – indeed, as I discuss below, this is precisely what characterizes multination states like Switzerland, Belgium, Spain or Canada.

However, historically, virtually all liberal democracies have, at one point or another, attempted to diffuse a single societal culture throughout all of its territory[18]. Nor should this be seen purely as a matter of cultural imperialism or ethnocentric prejudice. Nation-building serves a number of important liberal-democratic goals. For example, a modern economy requires a mobile, educated and literate workforce. Standardized public education in a common language has often been seen as essential if all citizens are to have equal opportunity to work in this modern economy. Also, participation in a common societal culture has often been seen as essential for generating the sort of solidarity required by a welfare state, since it promotes a sense of common national identity and membership. Moreover, a common language has been seen as essential to democracy – how can "the people" govern together if they cannot understand one another? In short, promoting integration into a common societal culture has been seen as essential to promoting social equality and political cohesion in modern states.

Indeed, one could argue that the only sort of liberal democracy that exists in the world has arisen through efforts to create liberalized societal cultures. Liberal reformers have generally, if implicitly, accepted that the relevant unit or context within which to pursue liberal principles of freedom and equality is societal cultures consolidated by state nation-building policies. In this sense, as Tamir puts it, «most liberals are liberal nationalists»[19].

---

[18]   To my knowledge, Switzerland is perhaps the only exception: it never made any serious attempt to pressure its French- and Italian-speaking minorities to integrate into the German majority. All of the other contemporary Western multination states have at one time or another made a concerted effort to assimilate their minorities, and only reluctantly gave up this ideal.

[19]   Y. Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, p.139.

Of course, nation-building can also be used to promote illiberal goals. As Margaret Canovan puts it, nationhood is like a «battery» which makes states run – the existence of a common national identity motivates and mobilizes citizens to act for common political goals – and these goals can be liberal or illiberal[20].

The «battery» of nationalism can be used to promote liberal goals (such as social justice, democratization, equality of opportunity, economic development) or illiberal goals (chauvinism, xenophobia, militarism, and unjust conquest). The fact that the «battery» of nationalism can be used for so many functions helps to explain why it has been so ubiquitous. Liberal reformers invoke nationhood to mobilize citizens behind projects of democratization and social justice (e.g., comprehensive health care or public schooling); illiberal authoritarians invoke nationhood to mobilize citizens behind attacks on alleged enemies of the nation, be they foreign countries or internal dissidents. This is why nation-building is just as common in authoritarian regimes in the West as in democracies. Consider Spain under Franco, or Greece or Latin America under the military dictators. Authoritarian regimes also need a «battery» to help achieve public objectives in complex modern societies. What distinguishes liberal from illiberal states is not the presence or absence of nation-building, but rather the ends to which nation-building is put, and the means used in pursuit of nation-building.

So states have engaged in this process of "nation-building"[21]. Decisions regarding official languages, core curriculum in education, and the requirements for acquiring citizenship, all have been made with the express intention of diffusing a particular societal culture throughout the territory of the state, and of promoting a national identity based on participation in that societal culture.

If this nation-building model provides a more accurate account of the nature of modern liberal democratic states than the ethnocultural neutrality model, how does this affect the issue of minority rights? I believe it gives us a very different perspective on the debate. In particular, it changes the burden of proof. As I noted earlier, during the second stage of the debate both advocates and critics of minority rights tended to assume that the onus was on advocates to show compelling reasons why states should deviate from ethnocultural neutrality. Once we recognize that states are not ethnoculturally neutral, but

---

[20]   M. Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham 1996.

[21]   For the ubiquity of this process, see E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford 1983; B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, New Left Books, London 1983.

rather engage in the promotion and diffusion of a dominant societal culture, then we must ask whether these nation-building policies create injustices for minorities. The burden of proof falls on the state to show that minority rights are not required to remedy or counteract injustices which arise from state nation-building.

This would be a new approach to the debate, which I am trying to develop in my own recent work. I cannot explore all of its implications, but let me give two examples of how this new model of the liberal state may affect the debate over minority rights. I will first try to develop this new model in my own terms (section 4), and then consider the extent to which this new model requires revising or expanding Raz's account (section 5).

4. *Two Examples*

How does nation-building affect minorities? As Charles Taylor notes, the process of nation-building inescapably privileges members of the majority culture:

> If a modern society has an "official" language, in the fullest sense of the term, that is, a state-sponsored, – inculcated and defined – language and culture, in which both economy and state function, then it is obviously an immense advantage to people if this language and culture are theirs. Speakers of other languages are at a distinct disadvantage[22].

This means that the members of minority cultures face a choice. If all public institutions are being run in another language, minorities face the danger of being marginalized from the major economic, academic, and political institutions of the society. Faced with this dilemma, minorities have (to oversimplify) three basic options:
I)   they can accept integration into the majority culture, although perhaps attempt to renegotiate the terms of integration;
II) they can seek the sorts of rights and powers of self-government needed to maintain their own societal culture – i.e., to create their own economic, political and educational institutions in their own language;
III) they can accept permanent marginalization.
We can find some ethnocultural groups that fit each of these categories (and other groups that are caught between them). For example,

---

[22]   C. Taylor, "Nationalism and Modernity", in J. McMahan-R. McKim (eds.), *The Ethics of Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1997, p. 34.

some immigrant groups choose permanent marginalization. This is true, for example, of the Hutterites in Canada, or the Amish in the United States. But the option of accepting marginalization is only likely to be attractive to ethnoreligious groups whose theology requires them to avoid all contact with the modern world. The Hutterites and Amish are unconcerned about their marginalization from universities or legislatures, since they view such "worldly" institutions as corrupt.

Virtually all other ethnocultural minorities, however, seek to participate in the modern world, and to do so, they must either integrate or seek the self-government needed to create and sustain their own modern institutions. Faced with this choice, ethnocultural groups have responded in different ways.

National Minorities: National minorities have typically responded to majority nation-building by engaging in their own competing nation-building. Indeed, they often use the same tools that the majority uses to promote this nation-building – e.g., control over the language and curriculum of schooling, the language of government employment, the requirements of immigration and naturalization, and the drawing of internal boundaries. We can see this clearly in the case of Québécois nationalism, which has largely been concerned with gaining and exercising these nation-building powers. The same is true of Flemish or Catalan nationalism. But it is also increasingly true of indigenous peoples in various parts of the world, who have adopted the language of "nationhood" and "nation-building"[23].

Intuitively, the adoption of such minority nation-building projects seems fair. If the majority can engage in legitimate nation-building, why not national minorities, particularly those which have been involuntarily incorporated into a larger state? To be sure, liberal principles set limits on *how* national groups, whether majority or minority, go about nation-building. Liberal principles preclude any attempts at ethnic cleansing, or stripping people of their citizenship, or the violation of human rights. These principles will also insist that any national group engaged in a project of nation-building must respect the right of other nations within its jurisdiction to protect and build their own national institutions. For example, the Québécois are entitled to assert national rights *vis-a-vis* the rest of Canada, but only if they respect the rights of Aboriginals within Quebec to assert national rights *vis-a-vis* the rest of Quebec.

---

[23]   G. Alfred, *Heeding the Voices of our Ancestors: Kahnawake Mohawk Politics and the Rise of Native Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Toronto 1995.

These limits are important, but they still leave significant room, I believe, for legitimate forms of minority nationalism. Moreover, these limits are likely to be similar for both majority and minority nations. All else being equal, national minorities should have the same tools of nation-building available to them as the majority nation, subject to the same liberal limitations.

What we need, in other words, is a consistent theory of permissible forms of nation-building within liberal democracies. I do not think that political theorists have yet developed such a theory. One of the many unfortunate side-effects of the dominance of the "ethnocultural neutrality" model of the liberal state is that liberal theorists have never explicitly confronted this question.

I do not have a fully developed theory about the permissible forms of nation-building[24]. My aim here is not to promote any particular theory of permissible nation-building, but simply to insist that this is the relevant question we need to address. That is, the question is not "have national minorities given us a compelling reason to abandon the norm of ethnocultural neutrality?", but rather "why should national minorities not have the same powers of nation-building as the majority?". This is the context within which minority nationalism must be evaluated – i.e., as a response to majority nation-building, using the same tools of nation-building. And the burden of proof surely rests on those who would deny to national minorities the powers of nation-building which the national majority takes for granted.

Immigrants: Historically, nation-building has not neither desirable nor feasible for immigrant groups. Instead, they have traditionally accepted the expectation that they will integrate into the larger societal culture. Indeed, few immigrant groups in any Western democracy have objected to the requirement that they must learn an official language as a condition of citizenship, or that their children must learn the official language in school. They have accepted the assumption that their life-chances, and even more the life-chances of their children, will be bound up with participation in mainstream institutions operating in the majority language.

However, this is not to say that immigrants do not suffer injustices as a result of nation-building policies. After all, the state is not neutral with respect to the language and culture of immigrants: it im-

---

[24]   I offer guidelines for distinguishing liberal and illiberal forms of nation-building in W. Kymlicka-M. Opalski *Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001.

poses a range of *de jure* and *de facto* requirements for immigrants to integrate in order to succeed. These requirements are often difficult and costly for immigrants to meet. Since immigrants cannot respond to this by adopting their own nation-building programs, but rather must attempt to integrate as best they can, it is only fair that the state minimize the costs involved in this state-demanded integration.

Put another way, immigrants can demand fairer terms of integration. If a country is going to pressure immigrants to integrate into common institutions operating in the majority language, then it must ensure that the terms of integration are fair. To my mind, this demand has two basic elements:

a) we need to recognize that integration does not occur overnight, but is a difficult and long-term process which operates inter-generationally. This means that special accommodations are often required for immigrants on a transitional basis. For example, certain services should be available in the immigrants' mother tongue, and support should be provided for those organizations and groups within immigrant communities which assist in the settlement and integration process;

b) we need to ensure that the common institutions into which immigrants are pressured to integrate provide the same degree of respect, recognition and accommodation of the identities and practices of immigrants as they traditionally have of the identities of the majority group.

This requires a systematic exploration of our social institutions to see whether their rules, structures and symbols disadvantage immigrants. For example, we need to examine dress-codes, public holidays, or even height and weight restrictions to see whether they are biased against certain immigrant groups. We also need to examine the portrayal of minorities in school curricula or the media to see if they are stereotypical, or fail to recognize the contributions of ethnocultural groups to national history or world culture. And so on. These measures are needed to ensure that liberal states are offering immigrants fair terms of integration[25].

Others may disagree with the fairness of some of these policies. The requirements of fairness are not obvious, particularly in the context of people who have chosen to enter a country, and political theorists have done little to illuminate the issue. Here again, the domi-

---

[25] W. Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada*, Oxford University Press, Toronto 1998, chap. 3.

nance of the "ethnocultural neutrality" model of the liberal state has blinded liberal theorists to the importance of the question. My aim here is not to promote a particular theory of fair terms of integration, but rather to insist that this is the relevant question we need to address. The question is not whether immigrants have given us a compelling reason to diverge from the norm of ethnocultural neutrality, but rather how can we ensure that state policies aimed at pressuring immigrants to integrate are fair?

I believe that we could extend this method to look at other types of ethnocultural groups that are neither national minorities nor immigrants, such as African-Americans, the Roma in Central Europe, or Russian settlers in the Baltics. In each case, I think it is possible – and indeed essential – to view their claims to minority rights as a response to perceived injustices that arise out of nation-building policies[26]. Each group's claims can be seen as specifying the injustices that majority nation-building has imposed on them, and as identifying the conditions under which majority nation-building would cease to be unjust.

If we combine these different demands into a larger conception of ethnocultural justice, we can say that majority nation-building in a liberal-democracy is legitimate under the following conditions:

a) nation-building is inclusive: i.e., no groups of long-term residents are permanently excluded from membership in the nation. Everyone living on the territory must be able to gain citizenship, and become an equal member of the nation if they wish to do so. This condition responds to and remedies the injustice which groups such as metics or racial caste have faced as a result of nation-building in many Western democracies;

b) the concept of national identity and integration must be pluralistic and tolerant: i.e., the sort of sociocultural integration which is required for membership in the nation should be understood in a "thin" sense, primarily involving institutional and linguistic integration, not the adoption of any particular set of customs, religious beliefs, or lifestyles. Integration into common institutions operating in a common language should still leave maximal room for the expression of individual and collective differences, both in public and private, and public institutions should be adapted to accommodate the identity and practices of ethnocultural minorities. This

---

[26]   I explore the claims of these other types of groups in W. Kymlicka-M. Opalski, *Can Liberal Pluralism be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*.

condition responds to and remedies the injustice that many immigrant groups have faced as a result of nation-building;

c) all national groups within a state, not just the majority nation, are allowed to engage in their own nation-building, to enable them to maintain themselves as distinct societal cultures. This condition responds to and remedies the injustice that many national minorities have faced as a result of nation-building.

These three conditions have rarely been met within Western democracies, but we can see a clear trend within most democracies towards greater acceptance of them. And I think that the major task facing any liberal theory of multiculturalism is to better understand these conditions of ethnocultural justice, by showing how particular minority rights claims are related to, and a response to, state nation-building policies.

5. *Raz on Nationalism and Nation-Building*

How does this relate to Raz's theory? At one level, I think that there is no inherent conflict between Raz's approach and the one that I have just sketched. Indeed, his account of appropriate multiculturalism policies for immigrant groups[27], and his account of the rights of national groups to self-determination, can easily be (re)described in the terms I have just outlined.

For examine, consider his list of multicultural policies which immigrant groups can rightly seek:

– While children should be educated to be familiar with the history and traditions of the dominant culture of the country, they should also be educated in the culture of their group, if their parents so desire;
– The customs and practices of different groups, within the limits of permissible toleration, should be recognized;
– The link between poverty, under-education and ethnicity should be dissolved;
– There should be generous public support for cultural institutions (museums, theatre etc.);
– Public space should accommodate all cultural groups.[28]

Each of these policies can be redescribed, I believe, as helping to ensure fairer terms of integration into the dominant societal culture of a new country.

---

[27] J. Raz, *Multiculturalism*.
[28] Ivi, pp. 198-99.

Similarly, Raz's account of the right of self-determination for national groups can be seen as a defense of the right of national minorities to engage in a range of nation-building policies so as to maintain their distinct societal cultures, with their own public institutions operating in their own language[29].

So most or all of what Raz says regarding the substantive rights of immigrants and national minorities is consistent with the sort of model I am advancing. His account can be seen as putting flesh on the skeletal framework that I have outlined; conversely, my framework can be seen as providing further support for his substantive claims about the legitimate claims of immigrants and national minorities.

However, at another level, Raz's account is in some tension with mine. For he insists that his conception of multiculturalism requires not only this or that substantive policy for this or that group, but also a complete revision in our very understanding of the nation-state. In particular, he argues that multiculturalism «calls on us to radically to reconceive society, changing its self-image», in two respects:

a) it requires that «we should learn to think of our societies as consisting not of a majority and minorities, but as constituted by a plurality of cultural groups»[30]. Indeed, he says that multiculturalism is *primarily* a matter of such a change in self-image, rather than of specific policies[31].

b) it also calls on us to «replace the ideology of nationalism», and «reject common nationality as the common bond on which political units must be based»[32].

It's important to note that my conception of minority rights does not involve either of these two claims, and in a certain sense rejects both. First, the whole point of my approach is precisely to emphasize the extent to which most liberal democratic societies *do* consist of a majority, which uses state power to engage in nation-building, and various minorities, who then have to decide how to respond to these nation-building policies. If there were no majority, and hence no majority nation-building, we could not think of minority rights as a response to the potential injustices of majority nation-building.

Indeed, I would argue that the major advances in thinking about multiculturalism and minority rights in the past decade have arisen

---

[29]   A. Margalit-J. Raz, *National Self-Determination*, «Journal of Philosophy», 87/9, 1990, pp. 439-61.

[30]   J. Raz, *Multiculturalism*, p. 197.

[31]   Ivi, p. 200.

[32]   Ivi, p. 196 and p. 202.

precisely out of an awareness of the pervasiveness and significance of majority/minority relations – i.e., an awareness of the benefits accrued by majorities in majoritarian, nation-building states, and the subsequent pressures and disadvantages faced by minorities. It is often the critics of multiculturalism, at least in the North American context, who say that we don't have a (privileged) majority and (disadvantaged) minorities, and therefore don't need multiculturalism policies.

Perhaps Raz would agree that contemporary societies can only be understood through the lens of majority/minority dynamics, but would insist that the point of multiculturalism would be to eliminate these dynamics. This then leads us to Raz's second claim: namely, that multiculturalism challenges nationalism, and the privileging of national identities as the locus of political community. I'm not sure what precisely Raz means by this, but one obvious interpretation would be to say that multiculturalism challenges the very legitimacy of state nation-building policies, and seeks to prevent majorities from using state power to promote the integration of citizens into common societal cultures.

If this is what Raz means (and I'm not sure it is), then I think it is problematic, both empirically and normatively. Empirically, I see no evidence that either immigrants or national minorities are challenging the basic legitimacy of nation-building policies, or the legitimacy of states trying to integrate citizens into societal cultures. It is obvious that national minorities are not challenging this, since the whole aim of minority nationalism is precisely to gain these nation-building powers for themselves, and to use these same powers to consolidate their own societal culture in their own region of the country. They are insisting that they live in multination states, in which two or more national groups are able to exercise nation-building powers on a regional basis. This insistence that they live in a multination state is, in one sense, a challenge to the traditional ideal of a (mono-national) "nation-state". But a multination state is not a *post*national state: it is still organized along national lines, and still asserts that national groups have the right to self-government – i.e., to form their own autonomous political communities within the larger state. It therefore accepts the legitimacy of nationalism as an ideology, and accepts that nations form a basic context of liberal political community[33].

---

[33] For evidence that the claims of national minorities are indeed driven by nationalism, see M. Keating-J. McGarry *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2001.

It might seem that the claims of immigrants are more of a challenge to the legitimacy of nation-building. But in fact the vast majority of immigrants also accept the validity of nation-building. For example, as I noted earlier, few immigrant groups in any Western democracy have objected to the requirement that they must learn an official language as a condition of citizenship, or that their children must learn the official language in school. They have accepted the assumption that their life-chances, and even more the life-chances of their children, will be bound up with participation in mainstream institutions operating in the majority language. What they are seeking is fair terms of integration into the dominant societal culture.

So far as I can tell, therefore, neither immigrants nor national minorities are challenging the centrality of national cultures and national identities to political life, or the legitimacy of using state power to consolidate these national cultures and identities.

I'm not sure whether Raz really disagrees with any of this. After all, he agrees that immigrants should learn a «common culture», in part through a «common education»[34] which includes knowledge of the basic skills required to have equal opportunity in the economy and to participate in mainstream political life. It is difficult to see what this could possibly mean other than the sort of linguistic and institutional integration into a common societal culture that has been the aim of traditional nation-building policies. How else could immigrants achieve economic equality of opportunity except by knowing the dominant language, and participating in integrated institutions of higher education conducted in the dominant language? Indeed, how would we measure equality of opportunity except by seeing whether immigrants are succeeding in such institutions? And how else can they participate in politics?

Given Raz's call for a common culture and a common education, and for equality of opportunity in economics and politics, it is quite possible that he endorses much if not all of what I have been calling "nation-building" policies. Perhaps we simply disagree about whether to use the terms "nationalism" and "nation-building". Perhaps he thinks that if liberal states allow national minorities to be self-governing, and allow immigrants to integrate rather than assimilate, then they have distanced themselves so far from traditional forms of nationalism that it is tantamount to «rejecting the ideology of nationalism».

---

[34] J. Raz, *Multiculturalism*, p. 202 and p. 203.

If this is his view, then our dispute is merely semantic. In my view, if liberal states accord rights of self-government to national groups, and pressure immigrants to integrate linguistically and institutionally into the societal culture of host nation, then liberal states are still very much imbued with the ideology of nationalism. To be sure, this is a distinctive form of nationalism: it is, in fact, a distinctively liberal form of nationalism. Indeed, one way to define liberal nationalism is precisely that it accepts the legitimacy of minority nationalism and of immigrant multiculturalism. But this is still nationalism, and it still involves nation-building, both by the state and by national minorities.

But our dispute may not be purely semantic. Perhaps I've put too much weight on Raz's brief references to «common culture» and «common education». Perhaps he only means by this that the state can require minimal levels of knowledge (e.g., of one's rights, or of mathematics) but not any sort of linguistic or institutional integration. Perhaps he really does think that it is impermissible for the state (or national minorities) to engage in nation-building, or to seek to integrate immigrants linguistically and institutionally into a societal culture. If so, then I think he is going far beyond the actual demands of most minorities in Western democracies. Moreover, I'm not sure what sorts of rights minorities would have in such a non-national or post-national state. Imagine that the liberal state rejected nation-building policies, and abandoned the goal of the linguistic or institutional integration of citizens. Would national minorities still have rights to self-determination? Would immigrants still have the right to inclusion and representation in public media or school curriculum? Or would it be enough to simply ensure that minorities have rights of non-discrimination in the distribution of public funds?

Raz insists that multiculturalism isn't simply a matter of non-discrimination, and I agree. But on my view, part of the reason why justice requires more than non-discrimination is that liberal states are nation-building states. For example, it is because states are nation-building that justice requires granting comparable nation-building powers to national minorities. If majorities never used state power to pressure national minorities into integrating into majority institutions, then national minorities wouldn't have the same need to control their own levers of state power. Whether national minorities need rights of regional self-government depends, in least in part, on the prior question of whether the majority is prone to using centralized power to promote nation-building.

Similarly, it is at least partly because states pressure immigrants to integrate linguistically and institutionally that immigrants have a right to respect and accommodation within the institutions that they are being pressured to integrate into. If majorities weren't pressuring immigrants to integrate into common public institutions in the dominant language – if, for example, immigrants didn't have to learn the dominant language to become citizens, or to have their professional qualifications recognized – then they would have a weaker claim to accommodation within majority institutions.

To be sure, both immigrants and national minorities would have certain claims to respect and accommodation even in such a non-national state. But it is likely, I believe, that in a world where majorities renounced their nation-building projects, minorities would also have to give up many of their claims to multiculturalism and minority rights. In my view, these are two sides of the same coin: the legitimacy of minority rights depends, at least in part, on the legitimacy of nation-building. I would defend a robust set of minority rights, not because nation-building is illegitimate, but precisely because it is legitimate. I believe it is legitimate for states to engage in robust forms of nation-building – nation-building is necessary to achieve liberal values of freedom and equality in complex modern societies – and just for that reason, we must also defend a robust set of minority rights, in order to remedy any inequalities which might arise as a result of (legitimate) nation-building policies.

Raz's claim that liberal multiculturalism involves «learning to think of our societies as consisting not of a majority and minorities, but as constituted by a plurality of cultural groups»[35] sounds attractive at first glance, but I think it is actually a more accurate description of preliberal and premodern societies than of liberal democracies. In the past, multiethnic empires were often content to simply let a plurality of groups alone, so long as they paid their taxes or tributes, obeyed the laws, and co-existed peacefully with other ethnic groups. No one group tried to use state power to consolidate or diffuse its language and culture as the societal culture for all citizens. Today, however, few states around the world are content with this sort of co-existence. They want groups to exhibit a stronger sense of identification or loyalty with the state, so that they will actively participate and cooperate in the projects of the state, be they militaristic wars, economic modernization, or social justice. And to gain the ac-

---

[35]   Ivi, p. 197.

tive support of citizens, states around the world have adopted nation-building programs which aim to turn co-subjects, bound only loosely to each other by certain common laws and taxes, into co-nationals, who share a strong bond in virtue of a common national identity and a common commitment to national projects.

I suspect that this historical shift from multiethnic empires to nation-building states was necessary for liberalization and democratization. The consolidation of liberal democracy required shifting from the earlier model of society as a loose plurality of cultural groups to a modern model of a nation-building state in which the majority attempts to diffuse its national language and culture throughout the state. And in my view, current demands for self-government by national minorities and for multiculturalism by immigrant groups do not represent a rejection of that basic shift, but rather an attempt to remedy the injustices which accompanied it. Far from rejecting or repudiating the legitimacy of nation-building, they are intended precisely to create the qualifications and conditions under which it is legitimate. As I said earlier, these conditions can be summarized as:

a) there are no groups of long-term residents which are permanently excluded from membership in the nation, such as metics or racial caste groups;

b) the sort of sociocultural integration which is required for membership in the nation should be understood in a "thin" sense, primarily involving institutional and linguistic integration, not the adoption of any particular set of customs, religious beliefs, or lifestyles;

c) national minorities are allowed to engage in their own nation-building, to enable them to maintain themselves as distinct societal cultures.

So far as I can tell, none of these claims repudiate the necessity or legitimacy of majority nation-building. Rather, they presuppose the historical shift away from the model of society as a loose plurality of groups towards a model of a nation-building state, and seek only to ensure that this shift is not unfair to minorities.

Perhaps Raz thinks that nation-building was not needed to secure democratization, mass participation and equality of opportunity. Or perhaps he thinks that while it was needed in the past, it is no longer necessary, and that we can give up nation-building without reverting to this older predemocratic model of the (mere) coexistence of a plurality of groups. Or perhaps he only rejects the term, rather than the substance, of nation-building. Clarifying these issues will help determine the extent to which Raz's theory differs from other emerging theories of liberal multiculturalism.