Democracy, Nationalism and Multiculturalism

Edited by

Ramón Máiz and Ferran Requejo

Routledge Innovations in Political Theory

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Addressing how democracies can deal with plurality, *Democracy, Nationalism and Multiculturalism* looks at the political accommodation of national plurality in liberal democracies and in the European Union at the turn of the century.

Democracy, Nationalism and Multiculturalism provides an up to date review of subnational and multicultural issues in Western multinational democracies. The book includes normative, institutional and comparative accounts of such key issues as:

- Politics and policies of accommodation
- Multiculturalism
- Recognition of group rights
- Federalist reforms and debates in Canada and European states
- The political construction of the European Union.

The volume builds bridges, and brings together, a number of debates that have often taken place separately. Its panel of international authorities examines this issue from a variety of perspectives, considering questions of citizenship, multiculturalism, immigration and equality. The contributors – many of whom have set the terms of this debate in international political science – include Bhikhu Parekh, Alain-G. Gagnon, Raffaele Iacovino, Philip Resnick, Ramón Máiz, Wayne Norman, Ferran Requejo, Will Kymlicka, Klaus-Jürgen Nagel and John Loughlin.

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Routledge Innovations in Political Theory

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Contents

Introduction

Ramón Máiz and Ferran Requejo

At the end of the 1970s, the conception of the state as a *nation*-state began to undergo a profound revision. This affected political theory, institutional policies and arrangements for the territorial division of power. A perception of the state as a monocultural and uninational entity, which gave rise to political centralism, a uniformist interpretation of federalism and assimilation policies for immigrants, underwent a number of important changes. One example of these was the experiments in *multinational federalism* that took place in Canada, Belgium and Spain. These facilitated the recognition of the pluralities of culture, language and identity of the different national minorities within these countries. After Canada took the first step in 1971, there followed an explosion of multiculturalist public policies. The scope and political orientation of these policies has been quite different in New Zealand, Australia, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. However, in all cases they have resulted in a greater tolerance and recognition for the cultures of immigrants and other ethnic, cultural and religious groups.

This political and theoretical evolution towards the normative implementation of national and cultural pluralism and alternative lifestyles in contemporary societies has brought about an extraordinary development in political theory. Following the framework described by W. Kymlicka, it is possible to identify three stages for this development (Kymlicka 2001). An initial stage, in the 1980s, centred on the liberalism/communitarianism debate and critiques of the work of Rawls by those who, faced with an individualistic citizenry and a theory of justice that established the latter's primacy over the ideas of the good, demanded the normative insertion of the individual into the collective as the possessor of a specific idea of the good life. In this initial phase, the defence of a series of minority rights implied the acceptance, albeit partially, of some of the communitarian theses through different formulations. Among these theses were the clash between authenticity (or identity) and autonomy, between a culturally interventionist state and one that was culturally neutral, between the community and society, the primacy of the ideas of the good over the idea of justice, and so on. The second stage, in the 1990s, saw the theoretical debate shift to within liberalism itself for reasons of plausibility and the obvious limits displayed by the criticisms of the

communitarians. Hence the new question: how is it possible to approach collective rights from the perspective of liberal theory? The response of Raz, Miller, Tully, Kymlicka or Tamir would bring to the fore a concept of culture conceived as a context of decision and autonomy for individuals. There followed a complex debate with regard to, for example, the infringement or the widening of individual liberties through the recognition of collective rights, or the legitimacy of establishing 'external protective measures' for cultural communities as opposed to the illegitimacy of imposing 'internal restrictions' on its members. A third stage, which began at the end of the 1990s, is characterized by greater theoretical attention being given to the legitimate and illegitimate processes of nation-building, by the need to adapt the concept of citizenship to modern plural societies and to think profoundly about the articulation of nationalist and multicultural demands with the requirements of the theory of democracy: the citizens as 'ethical agents' (Gutman 2003), the overlapping of democracy and nationalism (Máiz 2000; Requejo 2001), culture created by means of con-sensual practices and public deliberation (Parekh 2000; Valadez 2001), and so on. In this way, for example, with the aid of Habermas's theory of discursive ethics and the rules of universal respect and egalitarian reciprocity, one may proceed to introduce the dilemmas and conflicts of individuals and their differ-ing identities into the dialogue about the life world. Today, renewed, if not entirely new, attention is being paid to the dialogic and narrative structures different identities display, to discourse as a form of deliberation, centred on the negotiation of shared values that go beyond, and are not in opposition to, multicultural divisions (Benhabib 2002: 16).

However, a large number of authors (and policies) have questioned these institutional and theoretical developments for a wide range of reasons. Thus, it has been argued, for example, that the politicization of ethnicity might generate new divisions and conflicts (Glazer 1983); that multicultural policies may dissolve the links that bind a nation together (Ward 1991); that placing culture at the forefront of political theory means abandoning the central issue of equality (Barry 2001); that the federalization of political systems supplies national minorities with additional resources that will lead to an increase and radicalization of their demands (Mozaffar and Scarritt 2000), and so on.

One clear flaw in the first two stages of this prolonged normative discussion is its lack of connection with, on the one hand, the contribution of the social sciences and, on the other hand, the normative theory of democracy. This flaw has resulted in at least two negative effects for the form of political theory that we are concerned with here: (1) the acritical acceptance of an objectivist and substantialist conception of community; (2) the radical analytical split between the demands of two kinds of cultural pluralism movements: minority nations on the one hand, and ethnic groups on the other.

First, a number of the shortcomings of the political theory of liberal nationalism and of multiculturalism derive from a conception of nations and cultural com-munities as *pre-political* groups, the objective result of a series of contrasting social, demographic and ethnic 'facts'. Recent thinking, however, has revealed

that a large part of the first political theory of nationalism – both the part associated with majority nation-states and the part associated with stateless or minority nations – and multiculturalism were based on assumptions that are difficult to defend:

1. Looking inwards, cultures and nations were considered to be organic, integrated and homogeneous wholes, ignoring or playing down their internal diversity, the plurality of interpretations and competing projects as well as potential clashes between them.
2. Looking outwards, cultures and nations were understood to be discrete, distinct entities, underlining the difference that separates 'us' from 'them', what is 'ours' and what belongs to 'others', undervaluing characteristics shared by all.
3. Nations and cultures were considered to be – and still are, to a great extent – entities crystallized by history, like pre-ordained phenomena beyond any potential process of evolution, change or reformulation.
4. This meant, in turn, that belonging to a particular nation or culture inevitably led to passive socialization in its tradition, through the guidelines and standards provided by its historical heritage, to the exclusion of any free and creative participation by its members in its design.
5. This, over time, resulted in an isolationist and conservationist conception of culture, as if any form of debate, change, blending or incorporation would endanger its existence.
6. All this led to a perception of collective identities as exclusive, separate, dissociated realities which engendered a kind of *multicommunitarianism*, in accordance with an idealistic view of nations and communities all blooming together like little flowers, the former enclosed in their own state or in their project to create one, and the latter in their own particular life-styles.
7. Finally, this resulted in a conservative form of culturalism which left little room for linking demands for recognition of national and cultural pluralism with at least two basic dimensions which are closely related to democratic politics: citizens' equality and political deliberation.

In a very different way, however, contemporary social science, from a variety of constructivist perspectives ranging from Brubaker to Gurr via Laitin, has stressed the *complex process* of nations and cultures, which is as much the result of their plural and conflictive internal character as the inevitable relational dimension of contacts, historical experience and links with other communities. These dynamic aspects of the *political* character of nations and cultures are decisive from the normative perspective we are concerned with here as they direct our attention, along with the language of *recognition* and *authenticity* (Taylor 1992), to processes of nation-building, the internal plurality of cultures, the possibility of overlapping identities, and equal opportunities in the production of the culture itself (Seymour 1996; Norman 1999; Carens 2000; Benhabib 2002). This is therefore a significant revision as, among other things, it is difficult to give normative form to processes of

nation-building without previously having revised the conception of communities and nations as pre-ordained objective facts. In effect, if nations and cultural groups are the result of processes of political construction, it is necessary to add a complementary *democratic* dimension to the *liberal* dimension of the recognition of distinctness and collective guarantees and rights. This additional dimension should include public reasonableness, participation, inclusion and deliberation in the public sphere in order to tackle the normative conditions of the process. A liberal-democratic theory of nationhood and culture should not forget that belonging to a cultural or national community also includes active participation in the discussions that create it.

Second, the contributions of social science and the normative theory of democracy suggest that it would be advisable to reduce the at times excessively sharp separation, *based on principles*, between state and non-state nations on the one hand, and ethnic groups on the other. Here also, the use of a static and objectivist conception of collectives provokes a problematic generic split, which is based on such criteria as territorial concentration, the presence of a common language, demands for self-government, and so on. Such a distinction based on *principle* is rather a superficial interpretation of those groups with rights to self-government (nations) and those that do not possess these rights (ethnic groups). This distinction gives rise to at least two problems. The first is the circular nature of a kind of reasoning that introduces self-determination as a defining element for the very concept of nationhood, whether we are dealing with a majority or minority nation. This way infers, with no possibility of continuity, a right – to continue to exist as a sovereign state or to achieve this in the future – from a fact – namely a community generated by the presence of objective characteristics such as a language, culture, and so on. The second is the scant attention that is paid to the possibility of the evolution and construction of these groups, and their identities and demands. Empirical studies show that groups and nations should be regarded not as fixed, immutable entities but as a variety of distinctive, competing positions, adopted by different organizations, parties and movements that wish to be seen as representatives of the interests of the group (Laitin 1995; Brubaker 1996; Stavenhagen 1996; Gurr 2000). An incorrect use of the categories results in policies that fail to take into account the pluralism and evolution of the demands of groups and, most importantly, leaves members of minority nations within the state, internal minorities and groups within a minority nation, and immigrant minorities within majority or minority nations in the process of achieving self-government in a precarious situation (Tamir 1996: 82; Young 2000: 155; Benhabib 2002: 65).

The radical distinction at the beginning of the debate, which is the result of the use of 'multiculturalism' to reinforce state nationalism in countries such as Canada, is questionable from the normative standpoint of the contributions of the debate regarding liberal nationalism and multiculturalism. In effect, the distinction is primarily made by not questioning the nationalist position that the concept of nationhood totally dominates the entire classificatory logic used to distinguish between nations and ethnic groups (and the hierarchical position

of the first justifies the necessary 'integration' of immigrants). Second, by ignoring the fact that groups adjust their demands according to their perception of their chances of success and of the empirical evidence of the precarious nature and minimalism of the institutional demands of immigrant groups, it was concluded that group identities occupied an inferior normative position and it was assumed that they were destined to disappear through their progressive integration into the majority society. Furthermore, as the concept of state or non-state nationhood is performative – that is, it helps to create the very reality that it is expressing – many groups and communities tend increasingly to regard themselves as nations in order to strengthen their demands for self-government and cultural autonomy. For example, indigenous peoples of North America and Latin America refer to themselves as 'Indian nations'. From the First Nations of Canada to the Mapuche Nation of Chile via the Mayan Nations of Guatemala, the language of nationalism is all part of the same *political* effort of organization and mobilization, in order to bridge the gap between being seen as mere ethnic groups destined for acculturation and marginalization (Máiz 2001). This makes it impossible to criticize 'integration' policies that are applied to groups and communities that demand not only transitional rights to mitigate the effects of the acculturation of the first generation but also juridically guaranteed formulas for their permanent accommodation and recognition (Moore 2001: 106).

In an attempt to avoid the use of conceptual dichotomies based on objective principles, authors such as I. Young have proposed that the concept of nation should be replaced in the normative sphere by that of 'distinct people'. In effect, this is replacing a *substantial* (social) ontology with a *relational* (political) ontology in such a way that a group – and, by extension, its collective rights – is not defined by any putative essential character, but through its encounters, interaction and negotiation of identities with other groups (Young 2000: 161). This is a key aspect of the contemporary constructivist analysis of identities: the preferences (political demands), the specific distinctive characteristics and the collective identity of groups are generated simultaneously during the process itself. This shows both the complexity of social categories of 'belonging' as well as the sources of collective dignity and self-respect (Fearon 1999).

For all these reasons, it is necessary to bridge the gap between the arguments of unity and diversity or, in other words, reconcile those arguments that are derived from the building of a common culture – which in multinational states will itself require a political accommodation between the majority nation and the minority nations by means of, for example, federal formulas (Requejo 2005; Gagnon and Tully 2001) – with the arguments that are derived from the fair accommodation of the plurality of ways of life, which are characteristic of multiculturalism (Moore 2001: 178). In this way, the dimensions that are protective and related to recognition, of a *liberal* nature, will be articulated with the *democratic* dimensions of equality, deliberation and participation.

The chapters of this volume, which have been contributed by well-known specialists in the subject from a variety of countries, aim, precisely, to build bridges and bring together a number of debates that have often taken place separately: liberal nationalism, policies of multiculturalism and institutional models of accommodation inside (federalism) and outside the nation-state (the European Union).

The opening chapter, by Bhikhu Parekh, takes as its starting point that cultural diversity is not only an undeniable *fact* of modern life, but also a *value* that must be protected institutionally. The author analyses a number of misunderstandings that exist with regard to multicultural policies; misunderstandings that even today inspire many of the criticisms directed at multiculturalism. Parekh stresses that multiculturalism does not imply that cultures should regard themselves as being immutable, impervious to change, immune from all criticism, but as valuable for their own sake precisely because they are different. Furthermore, any culture should be open to normative evaluation in order for it to comply with requirements of public defensibility. Multiculturalism implies not isolation and self-absorption, but appreciation of diversity and *intercultural* dialogue. There is nothing in the normative principles of multiculturalism that makes it beholden to an impoverished and static conservationist point of view that sees cultures as museum pieces, but as 'living systems of meaning'. In short, in spite of some public policies that have made use of its name, modern normative multiculturalism emphasizes the value of cultural plurality, and it does so in a way that is a far remove from the objectivist and organizationist assumptions of communitarianism and fundamentalism. Multiculturalism is not, *cannot be*, 'multicommunitarianism'.

Similarly, Alain-G. Gagnon and Raffaele Iacovino provide necessary clarification regarding an issue that has given rise to numerous misunderstandings in European discussions on how to interpret the Canadian experience. The authors analyse the important differences between the 'multiculturalist' policies of Canada (and the United States) and the Québécois model of *interculturalism*. Their chapter clearly illustrates how the multiculturalist policies of Canada are in reality different from the normative principles of multiculturalism because, first, they stress the primacy of individual rights in the Charter of Rights and the individual's right to choose between French and English throughout the country. Second, these public policies are part of a wider policy of nation-building or, put another way, of reinforcement of a uninational state in Canada by achieving uniformity from coast to coast based on universal principles. In this way, Canadian multiculturalism situates all cultural groups, national minorities and ethnic groups in the same category. This prevents the recognition of plurinationality in a form of federalism that thus becomes unitarian and at the service of the dominant majority of the nation-state. In contrast, the *interculturalist* model of Quebec is closer to the normative core of multiculturalism due to the fact that it establishes a balance between the requirements of unity or, in other words, a common basis of identity, and the recognition of minority cultures. In practical terms, the French language is considered to be not only the basis for the identity of Quebec as a political community, but also as the common language of the political sphere of

an openly multiethnic nation. Second, recognition of cultural plurality is the result of political participation and not the conception of cultures as pre-existing or fixed realities. In this way, the French language does not constitute an organic or static cultural base, into which immigrants and cultural minorities must integrate, but is a vehicle through which to channel disagreements, negotiations, as well as the inevitable political conflict that transforms not only the identity of its minorities, but also the national identity of Quebec itself.

Philip Resnick's chapter tackles a two-fold dimension that is usually left out of the debate on political accommodation in multinational states: the relationship between minority and majority nationalisms, and the role played by recognition and *resentment* in relations between the two. Faced with the trend that encourages one to regard minority nations as authentic and natural communities, and majority nations as artificial and a mere by-product of the state itself, Resnick, using the experiences of countries such as Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom and Belgium, shows that one's identification with a state can be realized in the name of a national identity, in the same way as identification with a language or a culture. The author therefore proposes a shift of analytical focus and, regarding the preoccupation with claims for recognition, he suggests adding the fears and threats perceived by minority and majority nationalisms. For the former, these fears will be the product of the loss of their signs of cultural identity, while the latter will refer to the survival of the state from which they have drawn their identity over the centuries and the loss of a common citizenship. The consequences for the institutional accommodation of this multinational complexity are clear: the minority nationalisms will demand open and progressive formulas of self-government, while the majority nationalisms, on the other hand, will demand above all security and the closure of the institutional model. This, in turn, results in a necessary reformulation of federalism as an institutional tool for accommodation that leads to agreements of an asymmetrical nature, a multilateral form of negotiation, and an acceptance of the impossibility of closing the system. All this should result in a more dynamic perspective in the successive states of equilibrium generated by agreement through the interaction between the actors.

Before referring to the issue of the revision of the institutional models of federalism, which is addressed in the chapters by F. Requejo and W. Kymlicka, it is convenient to tackle a number of normative aspects of the processes of nation-building. This is the aim of the chapters by R. Máiz and W. Norman. First, Máiz carries out a critical revision of the debate on liberal nationalism and highlights some of its fundamental achievements in order to adapt the idea of nationhood to the requirements of the normative theory of democracy: the creation of a cultural concept of the nation, the abandonment of the ideology of shared values, and so on. Second, the author reveals, however, an important shortcoming of the debate: the continued existence of a *pre-political* concept of the nation as a fixed community, one that is established by means of criteria of objective belonging. The author also stresses the need to adopt a concept of the state that depends on the possible result of a plural and conflictive process of political construction that is never completely finished. This open, plural and constructive character of nations,

which the social sciences increasingly reiterate, has not acquired the normative status that it deserves, and this generates big problems for the theoretical discussion and the institutional design for accommodation. First, instead of the cultural concept of the nation as a homogeneous and immutable group, it should be understood as a *plural political community*, made up of majorities and minorities whose many voices must be listened to when the community is in the process of being created. In this way, and in accordance with the demands of the normative theory of democracy, the nation would thus be a public arena for participation, inclusion and deliberation. The consequences of this perspective are very clear: faced with institutional solutions of a consocional and confederal nature, a political concept of nationhood points to multinational federalism, with its specific and flexible asymmetrical solutions and multilateral spheres of recognition and participation for national minorities and majorities, as the most appropriate model for accommodation.

Wayne Norman's chapter deals with a key issue: the normative dimensions of the creation of national identities. First of all, he criticizes the language currently used in the debate on nationalisms. The metaphor of *nation-building* is wrong, in his opinion, because it presupposes a quantitative process of addiction with respect to the pre-existing hard core of immutable memories, values and symbols. This results in the loss of the multidimensional complexity of the processes of nation-building, of the different possible articulations of ethnic elements, of the plurality of discourses, values and symbols that each political project of the nation, which is the true process of *national-engineering*, usually implies. From this point onwards, the author conducts a much-needed discussion of the normatively defensible objectives of the processes of nation-building. In certain cases – for example, in historically oppressed national minorities – there are good, even *liberal*, reasons to build ethnic/national identities politically in order to gain the support and popular mobilization that makes it possible to achieve recognition. Normative theory should, in any case, furnish criteria and principles to evaluate the dangers of an illiberal articulation of these, seemingly legitimate, processes of nation-building. The fact that national identities cannot be modified at will by political leaders does not prevent them from being considered to be open and permanent processes of reconfiguration that take place within all national communities, nor does it cancel, therefore, the normative requirement that their orientation be liberal. Having said that, for liberals, the use of nationalist arguments in order to mobilize the citizenry has its limits, no matter how effective these arguments may turn out to be. In this sense, 'reconfiguring, desentimentalizing and remoralizing' national identity, even if, on the one hand, it weakens our/their effective rhetoric, is totally necessary to articulate the defence of national interests in defensible terms from a liberal-democratic point of view.

Multination federations is the subject of the chapters by F. Requejo and W. Kymlicka. Ferran Requejo analyses some of the elements of the revision of democratic legitimacy in multinational contexts. First, he examines the appropriateness of the categories 'post-national democracy' and 'constitutional

patriotism' as legitimatory bases in multinational societies. The conclusion is basically negative in both cases. This is due to the common tendency of those who defend these categories, such as J. Habermas, to present them as over-coming legitimations of a nationalist nature. This is something that the author believes is very different from the empirical democracies – whether they be uninational or multinational – and which tends to justify the status quo that favours majority and hegemonic nations. These two notions are more suitable for other multicultural phenomena, such as those associated with immigration, than for democracies that include national pluralism among their characteristics. Second, the author establishes the need to distinguish between uninational and multinational (or plurinational) federations when one is examining democratic legitimacy in case analysis. This is done with reference to the case of Germany (uninational) and Spain (multinational). The 'cooperative' evolution of German federalism displays a number of elements that dilute the federal principle of the division of powers and political responsibility in favour of other legitimizing principles (coordination, efficiency, and so on). This may have serious con-sequences, from a legitimatory perspective, if it occurs in federations in which partially competitive processes of nation-building coexist (multinational feder-ations). The author then proceeds to establish four possible future scenarios for the evolution of the Spanish 'Estado de las Autonomías' and defends the greater suitability of the model characterized by *plural federalism* in multinational contexts, which includes asymmetrical regulations as an institutional means of accommodating the national pluralism of the democratic state.

Will Kymlicka's chapter poses an initial question: what success have federal arrangements had in the accommodation of Western plurinational states? The achievements of these models have often been undervalued. However, if we view any of the relevant criteria from a liberal perspective – democracy, individual rights, peace and security, equality between groups, and so on – the results are undeniably positive. What is the reason, therefore, for the repeated undervaluation of multicultural federalism as a model for democratic accommodation? In the author's opinion, the answer lies in the use of inappropriate assessment criteria and, above all, in the requirement for the absence of secessionist mobilization. However, multinational federalism possesses, among other potentialities, that of reducing the probability of secession, as it provides a form of recognition based on self-government and shared government, which paves the way for the attainment of most of the demands of nationalist movements. But it does not exclude secession from the political agenda. The presence of nationalist parties with peaceful, democratic demands for secession is not considered to be a sign of the failure of the federal system and, moreover, their elimination from the political stage could only be achieved by means of illiberal and anti-democratic means. A more specific question raised by the author is: is this criterion applicable to the recently formed democracies of Eastern Europe? In Kymlicka's opinion, here too federalism would reduce the possibility of secession, but would not eliminate it from the political agenda. Besides, here federalism is also better able to accomplish its task of accommodation when democratic secessionist mobilization is permitted,