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The Retreat of Multiculturalism in the Liberal State

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Abstract

This paper discusses a recent retreat of multiculturalism in the liberal state. This retreat has

occurred both at the level of theory and practice. With the help of some recent liberal critiques of multiculturalism (by B.Barry, G.Sartori, and Y.Levy), the first part maps out some shortcomings of the notion of minority integration through cultural recognition, particularly with respect to immigrants. The second part discusses the practical retreat from official multiculturalism in some states that had been prominently committed to it, most notably Australia, the Netherlands, and Britain. Especially regarding Europe, it is argued that the retreat of multiculturalism is less the result of popular backlash than of inherent deficits and failures of multiculturalism policies and of a new assertiveness of the liberal state to impose liberal principles.

The Retreat of Multiculturalism in the Liberal State

Will Kymlicka (1999:113) has recently claimed that "multiculturalists have won the day" in making their case for a difference-conscious notion of justice and concomitant laws and policies in the liberal state. To which one liberal theorist dryly responded that "those who do not take this position tend not to write about it" (Barry, 2001:6). In fact, just when Kymlicka gave out his victory message, a number of recent works by liberal philosophers and political scientists have radically questioned the basic premises and assumptions of multiculturalism, refuting in particular the alliance between multiculturalism and liberalism that Kymlicka claims to have established. In his fulminant treatise Culture and Equality (2001), Brian Barry defends the old "strategy of privatization" for resolving cultural conflict, which once had given birth to liberalism itself. Privatization creates identical "choice sets" or rules of the game to people, within which they can follow their particular inclinations as they see fit. Exemption from these rules, the least controversial (because costless) form of multicultural accommodation, may be a matter of prudence but never of justice: "Usually...either the case for the law...is strong enough to rule out exemptions, or the case that can be made for exemptions is strong enough to suggest that there should be no law anyway" (ibid., 39). There is a categorical difference, slighted by many of multiculturalism's defenders, between directly denying equal opportunities to a group (say, forbidding Sikhs to ride motor-bikes), or offering identical opportunities that are then used or not as a result of one's (religious) beliefs. Given that no one is bound to eat meat, exempting certain religious groups from the rule of stunning animals before killing them (which, the evidence suggests, is the least painful and cruel to the animals) is really "accommodating the tastes of a subset of carnivores, not observing the demands of religious freedom" (ibid., 46).

If Barry recalls the virtues of liberalism's old private/public distinction, Giovanni Sartori, in his thinner but no less provocative treatise Pluralismo, Multiculturalismo, e Estranei (2000) shows that "pluralism" in the political realm--next to difference-blind laws and institutions the second of liberalism's historical inventions--is emphatically *not* multiculturalism. Pluralism requires voluntary group memberships, multiple affiliations in the context of cross-cutting cleavages, and "a reciprocal recognition" between conflict parties, all conditions that are

systematically denied by multicultural politics. Much like Barry, Sartori seeks to reinstate the discarded notions of universal citizenship and state neutrality: "(C)itizenship requires the postulate of neutrality...of the state vis a vis the cultural or ethnic identity of its demos" (Sartori, 2000:87).

Finally, Jacob Levy (2000) has argued that, if multiculturalism can at all be defended, then not as a hopeful "multiculturalism of rights" but only as a realistic "multiculturalism of fear". Recalling Judith Skhlar's notion of a "liberalism of fear", Levy suggests to take diversity as an inevitable fact of life, not as a goal to be furthered by means of state policy. Difference-conscious policies may still be the best way to deal with a culturally and ethnically diverse reality, but it depends on the circumstances. A program of recognizing difference as a matter of right, rather than meeting its claims pragmatically, would be overshooting and internally inconsistent.

With the help of these recent liberal critiques of multiculturalism, the first part of this paper further scrutinizes multiculturalism's central claim: that the integration of minorities (be they immigrants, territorial groups, or life-style groups) should proceed by means of "recognizing" the equal value of the "culture" that constitutes a minority as a distinct group. The second part moves from the theory to the practice of multiculturalism, discussing a retreat from official multiculturalism policies in some states that had been prominently committed to them: Australia, the Netherlands, and Britain.

Minority Integration through Cultural Recognition: A Critique

Since Charles Taylor's influential essay (1992), the model of minority integration through cultural recognition usually goes under the name of a "politics of recognition". There are several difficulties with it.

First, it is not clear why the *description* of a multi-cultural or -ethnic reality should result in the *prescription* that the state has to duplicate or even to further this reality in its laws and policies. In other words, it is not clear why the multicultural *society* should be mirrored in a multicultural *state*. In multicultural diction, this is presented as a logical sequitur. But it is really a non-sequitur. In fact, one could argue exactly the opposite, that a centrifugal society requires centripetal state policies to keep it together. One should at least consider that the liberal, difference-blind state with its universal citizenship, which is now found fault with, had exactly emerged as a peacemaker to a hyper-diverse society torn by religious wars in 17th century Europe. No convincing explanation has as yet been offered why *this* solution, call it the privatization of questions of the good life, no longer works.

A standard response to this is that the state cannot differentiate itself from ethnicity and nationality in the same way that it has once differentiated itself from religion, the event that gave rise to the doctrine of liberalism. Try as it might, the state has to have a public language, holidays, and certain particularisms that inevitably bear the mark of a majority group. For these impositions, multiculturalists claim, there has to be some form of compensation--exemptions or even proactive measures that affirm the equal value of the groups that do not see themselves in terms of these particularisms. To this one has to respond that the hard cultural conflicts will inevitably be religious conflicts; and to cope with these liberal states have already established distinct ways--be it in terms of giving minority religions the same public status that majority religions already enjoy (the German-English model), or in terms of driving *all* of them out of the

public sphere equally (the French-American model). Freedom of religion and creedal neutrality are principles that, in different ways, are respected and institutionalized in all liberal states. Non-christian religions have to be dealt with in just the same way as established religions; the liberal state cannot force the Hinduist or Islamist to give up their religion. Most other impositions are trivial--they don't violate a script and commands to be kept, but have the status of mere conventions that (as I will briefly show in the end) are increasingly thinning in liberal states.

Opting for the strategy of privatiziation is not to say that the liberal state should remain at all costs and in all respects difference-blind. A pragmatic case, though not a rights-based principled case can be made for the state *sometimes* taking cultural differences into account in its policies. In this more realistic, less sentimental scenario, cultural difference figures as an *is*-condition for state policy, but not as an *ought-to* to be furthered by it. Jacob Levy (2000) has called this a "multiculturalism of fear", which he contrasts with the dominant notion of a "multiculturalism of rights and recognition."

How does it look like? Levy discusses one of the notorious examples of hard, religiously based multicultural conflict: female circumcision. If a mild and sane form of this can be practiced in an American Medical Center (as it actually was debated--and rejected--in Seattle in 1996), this may be preferable to having the young Muslim girls subjected to a far more brutal and dangerous form of genital mutilation back home in Somalia. The liberal disapproval of this meant a "sacrifice of the real interests of real girls" (Levy, 2000:57), but approving it for pragmatic reasons is also less than "recognizing" it as a cultural practice that we deem as of equal value to our own cultural practices--we may still think that it is improper to cut women down there.

This indicates a second problem with the model of minority integration through cultural recognition: it is logically impossible to recognize all cultures as equal. This is because cultures have, as Brian Barry put it, "propositional content": they distinguish between true and false, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly. These judgments cannot all be simultaneously confirmed. We can at best tolerate other cultures, but their equal recognition is impossible. As one author described the "absurdity" of equal recognition: "People are allowed to believe in the worth of their own culture, including the beliefs and values that it embodies; yet they are also required to believe that others' cultures, embodying different and conflicting beliefs and values, are of no less worth. How can we expect people to embrace that absurdity?" (Peter Jones, quoted in Barry, 2001:271). Or as Giovanni Sartori put it: "To attribute 'equal value' to all cultures...destroys the very notion of value. If everything is of value, nothing is of value: the value loses its content" (2000:69).

One could even argue that the underlying idea is patronizing, and in this sense unmistakeably Western, because the notion of equal recognition must assume that *our* culture provides us with an external, universal standard to judge all other cultures in the world, namely as "equal". Through this necessary assumption the kind of universalism that is usually rejected in multiculturalist quarters slips back in. Even Charles Taylor, who brought up the whole idea of recognition in the context of minority accommodation, admitted that we must start with a presumption of equal value, which is less than the "peremptory demand for favorable judgments of worth" (Taylor 1992:71).

If it is logically impossible to accept all cultures as of equal worth, one also must have a second look at Italian Minister President Berlusconi's strongly despised remark after September 11 that the culture of the Occident was superior to that of the Islam in terms of individual rights

and liberties: "We must be aware of the superiority of our civilization, a system that has guaranteed well-being, respect for human rights and--in contrast with Islamic countries--respect for religious and political rights."[1] One may certainly question the political prudence of this remark, in this particular moment at that. However, only in the West would this be condemned in the strongest possible terms, as it immediately was,[2] because no non-Western culture, the Islamic included, would have an inch of a doubt that *its* culture and the priorities it sets are more worthy to be followed, and in this sense superior, to that of the West.

A third problem with the notion of minority integration through cultural recognition is the uni-laterality of recognition: the usual demand is for the state and majority society to "recognize" the minority group; no reciprocal act of recognition is expected from the latter. Interestingly, this is a curious reduction, even reversal of the classic notion of recognition, as elaborated in Hegel's *Phaenomenologie des Geistes*. For Hegel, recognition was the stake of a "struggle" between initially equal conflict parties and, in an inherently unstable and deficient form, was eventually forced by the winner ("master") upon the loser ("servant"). Instead of finding *Ersatz* recognition in identifying with the products of his labor, as in Hegel's scenario, the "loser" now asks for direct recognition from the "winner," in an act of reparation and restitution. This may well be psychologically naive, as the badge of inferiority is reaffirmed in the very attempt to get rid of it. If at all, this is perhaps an adequate demand for a domestic group that has been historically wronged, but hardly for voluntary immigrant groups. What is lost in the multicultural version of recognition is a sense that any accommodation between majority and immigrant minority must be bilateral and reciprocal: the minority must also respect the majority. This is because in the immigration context there is usually no legacy of historical injustice that might especially oblige the majority toward the minority. As Giovanni Sartori (2000:38) pointed out, inherent in the classic notion of tolerance is a sense of reciprocity: "(I)n being tolerant toward others, we expect them in turn to be tolerant toward us." One must suspect that if multiculturalism meets widespread disapproval across immigrant-receiving states, the unilateral direction of multicultural recognition is one reason for this. Muslims are to be given their public-law exemptions, but they are not asked to give anything in return--in fact, these exemptions are only used to withdraw from Western norms and institutions that are denounced as "decadent" and "corrupt."

Fourth, the focus on culture ignores other, perhaps more important sources of minority discrimination, most notably economic inequities. Such matters are slighted by Iris Marion Young (1990) as merely "distributional". What is said to be more important than the "allocation of material goods" are the "nondistributive" issues of "decisionmaking structure and procedures," "division of labor," and "culture" (p.22). With respect to culture, what is asked for is the "affirmation" of other ways of life. This is something more than formal equality of rights, which belongs to the trivial sphere of distribution. Instead, it means approval on demand, a state-engineered positive revaluation of a way of life that previously had been stigmatized and "oppressed." What Young asks for is nothing less than a "cultural revolution", without a concrete idea about how this may look like in terms of policies and institutions. From this maximalist perspective, even US-style "affirmative action," which is perhaps the strongest antidiscriminatory policy in any liberal state, is not enough. In fact, the equality-driven agenda of civil rights and nondiscrimination must be sharply kept apart from the difference-driven agenda of the multiculturalists. Affirmative action is about remedying a negatively evaluated difference, whereas multicultural recognition is about establishing and rendering permanent a positively evaluated difference. More specifically, affirmative action is found guilty of justifying the "myth of

merit", to dismantle which is the far more radical agenda of multiculturalism a la Young. Brian Barry sarcastically described the underlying destruction of professional standards as "Dodo's Dictum": "Everybody has won, and everyone must have prizes" (2001:95).

Fifth, even if there were no problems with the "culture" and "recognition" components of minority integration, it is unclear to which "groups" this model should apply. Most multiculturalism theories suffer from what David Laitin (1998) has called a "genteel" vision of politics, in which the "groupness" of groups is simply presupposed. This is sociologically naive. For many a "group" out there, there are competing leaders propagating competing visions of groupness. Or the claims of leaders may not concide with the views and wishes of the rank-and-file, among whom there are always "non-, ex-, trans- and antiidentifyers", as Steven Lukes put it (1997). As political actors multiculturalists are also engaged in creating the cultures that are then circularly asked to be "recognized" as pre-existing, a bit like "classes" were not the automatic result of cleavages "out there" but of political parties producing these cleavages (see Sartori 1969). This is no problem for mundane "redistribution", which at least fills the ordinary "group"-member's pockets. It certainly is a problem for the non-utilitarian politics of "identity" that multiculturalists trade in. Perhaps the whole demand for it is exaggerated by the activists and intellectuals who, to paraphrase Max Weber, live off more than for their cultures.

Even if the problem of the groupness of groups is resolved, which of the hundred-plus groups in the average immigrant-receiving society are to be "recognized"? Their quantity conflicts with the very logic of "recognition". Recognition is a particularistic relationship: only one group at a time can be recognized. This singling-out and "differencing" is the whole point of recognition. But with a large N, this becomes problematic. First, there is the practical problem of not enough time. Moreover, laws and policies would become rather unwieldy if each group is especially named and differentially treated in each of them. Secondly, and more profoundly, the whole exercise violates a sense that a "just" distribution of goods and resources (including now, pace the multiculturalists, the good of symbolic recognition) should be a matter that involves *all* groups and *all* individuals in a society (see Lukes 1997). Finally, the one-group-at-a-time logic of recognition feeds the resentment that an undue privilege is given to a particular group, and this outside the normal channels of majoritarian politics. Because "groups" are the actors, multicultural politics is inherently corporatist, behind-the-scenes politics. There is the assumption that certain issues are "owned" by the groups that have a stake in them. In Young's scenario, only "women" should be heard when "reproductive rights" are discussed or implemented, and so on. While this corporatist mode explains how many a "multicultural" claim has actually become realized in a liberal state, it is hardly something that has helped to legitimize them.

These are just some of the problems that arise if one conceives of minority integration in terms of cultural recognition. Let me concede that this model *has* a certain relevance for the very specific, small-N cases of groups that have been historically wronged, such as African-Americans, indigenous groups, and other territorially-based losers of nation-building. The problem is the overextension of this model to all sorts of immigrant and life-style groups. The piracy and diffusion of a model of politics invented by one group to all sorts of "groups" is, of course, a sociologically interesting phenomenon in its right, though this cannot be further pursued here.[3]

From Multiculturalism to Civic Integration

On the practical side, an interesting recent phenomenon is the retreat from official multiculturalism policies in the few states that had so far practiced them, and their replacement by centrist policies of civic integration, at least with respect to immigrants. A number of causes is responsible for this development, their relative weight differing across cases: (1) the unpopularity of official multiculturalism policies, (2) their inherent shortcomings and failures, and (3) a new assertiveness of the liberal state in imposing the liberal liberal minimum on its dissenters. As the following discussion of the cases of Australia, the Netherlands, and Britain will show, the first cause was especially at play in the downscaling of multiculturalism in Australia, while the second and third factors were more present an even further going retreat from multiculturalism in Europe.

In his government-commissioned defense of Canadian multiculturalism, Will Kymlicka (1998:16) admitted that the latter was "under attack today, more than ever", for the reasons that such programs are under attack everywhere, as feeding ethnic "separatism" and the "ghettoization" of minorities. More in passing, he suggested that things were better in Australia, because here the government had been keener at showing the "limits" of multiculturalism. Are things better in Australia?

A closer look suggests that not. Unsurprisingly, to the degree that Australian multiculturalism aimed at "cultural maintenance" and institutionalizing ethnic differences, it met with the same strong public disapproval that such programs meet everywhere (Betts, 1996:13; Hjerm, 2000:366). In response, repeated reformulations of multiculturalism have stressed that this was no property of ethnic minorities, especially of the activists that purported to speak for them, but an identity option for *all* Australians. This was not even a forced or new interpretation, because the notion of multiculturalism was born in the very moment that Australia's "old" identity as "white" and "British" had fallen into disrepute, in the early 1970s. To the degree that the "national" sense of multiculturalism was strengthened over the years, multiculturalism took on features that share the name but nothing of the content of the "politics of recognition" as elaborated by Taylor, Young, or Kymlicka. It is therefore disingenous to suggest that the existence of programs under the same name proves the practical relevance of the minority rights agenda proposed by the theorist.

A robust sense that multiculturalism was a matter for "all Australians" was already present in Australian multiculturalism's first codification in 1978, in the so-called Galbally Report, which otherwise became known for its focus on special migrant services and programs: "(T)e development of a multicultural society will benefit all Australians" (Galbally 1978:10). The nation-building function of multiculturalism was especially visible in a document entitled Multiculturalism for All Australians: Our Developing Nationhood, which was issued by the Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs in 1982.[4] Even White Australia was refashioned here as "our multicultural past": "Community concern prompted official action...to seek to avoid inter-group conflict by excluding migrant groups that might be the focus of...conflict" (ACPEA 1982:8). This was a rather friendly way of describing Asian exclusion in the context of the White Australia policy. And if today there were "clashes" between "core culture" and minority cultures, "the Council would envisage the rejection of the offending element of the inconsistent culture" (ibid., p.30). Given this robust sense of a "primary loyalty to Australia" (ibid., 25) in multiculturalism's early formulations, it is astonishing that later

formulations would all start on the premise that multiculturalism was still waiting to be liberated form the stranglehold of ethnic groups and to be turned into something for "all" Australians (OMA 1989; NMAC 1999).

In the sense of providing an identity option for an Anglo-Saxon settler society without an own founding myth, Australian multiculturalism was never officially repudiated. However, within this national umbrella, which was separate from the problem of minority accommodation, multiculturalism has still received subtly different interpretations, and one can observe that also with respect to its function of providing a national identity option it has been scaled back over the years. For its protagonists on the left, the nation was identical with multiculturalism: "(W)e must be multicultural to be national" (Castles et al., 1988:5). Or as the old champion of Australian multiculturalism, Al Grassby, phrased it negatively: "Take away multicultural Australia and you have nothing left" (in Betts, 1999:322). This equation of "multicultural" with "national" had two problems. First, Australia's predominantly British heritage disappeared in it, even though this was precisely the intent of the south-east European ethnics furthering the notion that "all persons living in Australia are 'ethnic'."[5] But more importantly, within this equation one could not formulate that this multiculturalism was in Australia and not elsewhere--the added value of "Australia" disappeared. In response to these two problems, a slightly different version of multiculturalism emerged outside the politial left and the ethnic activist circles, acording to which Australia was certainly "multicultural", but other things too. It was this weaker version that subsequently prevailed.

The downscaling of multiculturalism was kicked off by the government-commissioned Fitzgerald Report of 1988, which also laid the switches for Australia's current emphasis on recruiting highly-skilled immigrants (especially from White Australia's old *bete noire*, Asia). The bottom-line of the report was that public support for immigration depended on separating the latter from "multiculturalism", which was widely rejected for its association with ethnic activism. Authored by someone who was described by two sympathetic observers as an "ethnic Australian" (Birrell and Betts, 1988:266), the Fitzgerald Report reduced "multicultural" to one of several adjectives of Australia, like "democratic", all of which were peripheral to its identity: "Just as Australian is a democracy but has its own identity, so also is it multicultural, but nonetheless identifiably Australian. It is the Australian identity that matters most in Australia" (Fitzgerald 1988:10). What then constituted the "identifiably Australian" beyond these generic adjectives, which no immigration of whatever origins was allowed to put at risk? The answer may reflect the Irish and (thus anti-British) background of the report's author: "A society which is open, easy going and relaxed, dedicated more to the enjoyment of what life can offer than to fiercely competitive pursuit of what may be necessary to improve it" (ibid., p.5).

This downscaling responded to the logical necessity that an Australian core had to be defined separately from multiculturalism--otherwise Australia could not be distinguished, for instance, from Canada, in which a similar self-description took hold almost simultaneously,[6] and all talk of a "primary loyalty to Australia" that permeated Australian multiculturalism statements since the early 1980s had to remain hollow. The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia of 1989, the key government statement on multiculturalism for the coming ten years, chose a slightly different way to explicate what Australia was in addition to multiculturalism: a society of British heritage. "Our British heritage is extremely important to us. It helps to define us as Australian...It is a large part of what makes Australia attractive to immigrants and visitors..." (OMA 1989:50). This added value is again necessary for the possibility of "limits" to

multiculturalism, which the National Agenda defined--on its front page--as the obligation of an "overriding and unifying commitment to Australia". Issued shortly after the Fitzgerald Report, and an obvious attempt to placate the ethnic critics who had wanted a stronger affirmation of multiculturalism, the National Agenda still prolonged the same weakened version of a multiculturalism that did not exhaust what it means to be Australian.

The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia also added a new dimension that was seen as crucial in making multiculturalism policy acceptable to "all" Australians, yet that further weakened its value as a national-identity option: its "economic efficiency".[7] Initially, this meant to better integrate non-English-speaking newcomers into the workforce, for the sake of a more efficient use of "human resources". However, it became quickly reinterpreted and upgraded as the notion that a diverse workforce and its diversity-sensitive management could be an asset in a globalizing economy, and even be sellable abroad as "world best practice for the management of workplace diversity".[8] For this stands the concept of "productive diversity," which the Office of Multicultural Affairs has busily propagated since 1992. Two protagonists defined "productive diversity" as "stressing the positive market value of diversity rather than attempting to define and right wrongs, and dealing with diversity as a central management issue rather than as a kind of remedial action to incorporate marginalized groups" (Cope and Kalantzis, 2001:818). This utilitarian version of multiculturalism, in which all previous references to either national-identity option or minority integration are cut, is also the one that the current center-right coalition government of John Howard, who had earlier been known as a fierce critic of multiculturalism, has warmed up to. Its commissioned report Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century (NMAC 1999), for which characteristically a prominent businessman was put in charge,[9] still supports multiculturalism, yet first and foremost one that further "maximize(s) the dividends of our diversity" (ibid.).

With respect to its transformation into a corporate "diversity" agenda, in which all references to redressing past discrimination are eradicated, there are striking parallels between Australian and American multiculturalism (for the latter, see the excellent account by Oudghiri and Sabbagh 1999)--only that the latter never had the status of an official state policy, and thus was even more amenable to creative reinterpretation by the subsystems of society. There is no reason to be cynical about this, as this may be a more effective and socially accepted way of bringing in non-white people than outmoded notions of "groupness" and "cultural recognition".

In the few European societies that have pursued official multiculturalism policies the retreat from them has even been more pronounced. In contrast to the new settler states, where multiculturalism is lastingly entrenched as an identity option for society as a whole, European multiculturalisms have always been for immigrants only, so that there is less nostalgia here for sticking to policies and labels that are now widely perceived as having run their course. Consider recent developments in two previous paragons of European multiculturalism, the Netherlands and Britain.

Already in the mid-1990s, that is, before the meteoric rise of populist Pim Fortuyn and left-liberal commentator Paul Scheffer's widely noted article on the Dutch "multicultural tragedy", the Dutch government had abandoned its previous "ethnic minorities' policy", and turned to a policy of civic integration (see Entzinger 2002). There were several problems with the old minorities' policy. First, the vastly expanded number of source countries, as well as an internal diversification of migrant groups, made it difficult to maintain a policy that was based on singling out a limited number of clearly demarcated "ethnic minorities" for special treatment. Secondly,

the whole approach of "emancipating" these designated minorities as "groups" within their own parallel institutions had detrimental effects, fuelling their segregation and separation from mainstream society. Most importantly, the ethnic minorities' policy was incapable of remedying the most pressing problem among immigrants and their offspring, unemployment and economic marginalization. Under the shadow of official multiculturalism, an "ethnic underclass" had been allowed to emerge, consisting of "people who do not feel attached to Dutch culture and society and who are unwilling and unable to integrate" (Entzinger quoting and paraphrasing Paul Scheffer, 2002:78). The new "integration" policy replacing the "ethnic minorities' policy" since the mid-1990s focuses on the previously neglected socio-economic dimension of immigrant integration, taking the latter as "individuals" who had to be funneled into mainstream society, rather than kept separate as "groups" in parallel institutions. With respect to its central objective of furthering the socio-economic integration of migrants and their offspring, the new policy seems to be successful, as the migrant and minorities' unemployment rate has almost halfed in recent years, decreasing from 26 to 14 percent.[10]

A novelty within the Dutch "integration" policy is its obligatory nature, and to expect more of migrants in the process of integration. That immigrant integration has to be a "two-way street" has been a mantra for many years, but previously it had really meant that not just the immigrant, but the receiving society had to change. Now the connotation is the reverse. Consider this statement by the Dutch Minister for Urban and Integration Policy, Roger van Boxtel: "Members of ethnic minorities can be expected to do their utmost in order to acquire an independent position in our country as soon as possible. This requires them to opt for this society and to take responsibility for making use of the many facilities that our country offers to its new compatriots. Mastering the Dutch language is a crucial aspects of this" (quoted in Entzinger, 2002:74). The most visible expression of this is the Dutch Law on Civic Integration for Newcomers, which requires non-European newcomers to take 600 hours of language and civic-integration lessons. The Dutch model of mandatory civic integration courses has rapidly spread across Europe, including Finland, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, and Germany. "We should have been doing this since thirty years," said van Boxtel when invited by a German government that eventually adopted the Dutch approach in its new immigration law of 2002.[11]

As the Dutch commentator Paul Scheffer has noted, the turn from multiculturalism to civic integration reflects a seismic shift not just in the Netherlands, but in all European societies, "from the relativization to the affirmation of one's own culture."[12] While this is certainly not unrelated to the rise of new right-wing populist movements across Europe, their impact should not be exaggerated--the Dutch turn to civic integration had occurred *before* Pim Fortuyn's sudden appearance in national politics. Morever, the Fortuyn phenomenon shows that the distemper with multiculturalism is more complex than the tired label "right-wing populism" suggests. Rather, in this particular case it is a liberal distemper. Only when provoked by a prominent Dutch-Moroccan Imam's statement that homosexuality was a "disease", would Fortuyn retaliate that Islam was a "backward culture". And when asked whether he ever speaks to "backward" Muslims, Fortuyn responded: "Have I spoken to Muslims? I even go to bed with them."[13] This was "populism" of a peculiar kind. It was not permeated by nostalgia for the monoculture of old (gays were repressed by this too); instead, it asked for civic adjustments on the part of immigrants, which had been dodged under the reign of official multiculturalism.

A similar move from multiculturalism to civic integration has recently occurred in Europe's second paragon of multiculturalism, Britain. As in the Netherlands, it would be

disingenuous to claim that right-wing populism has been responsible for this, because Britain has always been marked by its very absence. Certainly, the combat of "fascism" and "Nazism" has been a staple of "anti-racist" mobilization since the 1980s, only at the ballot box their specimen could hardly be detected; this was simply a figment or "generalized belief" (N.Smelser) to keep the movement going.

Before it came tumbling down, the British multicultural orthodoxy was affirmed as late as 2000, in a report by the Runnymede Trust, The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain , chaired by Britain's grey "race relations" eminence, Bhikhu Parekh (now a Lord in Britain's Upper House). "Britishness", one can read there, "has systematic, largely unspoken, racial connotations" (p.38). Accordingly, there was a need to move toward a "multicultural post-nation", in which Britain would be a "community of communities". Because of the racial disfiguring of Britishness, the "liberal" model of integrating a diverse society was flawed; in this model there was a "single political culture in the public sphere" and diversity was relegated to the "private lives of individuals and communities." Instead, one had to move toward a "plural" model, in which the "recognition of cultural diversity" took its place of pride in the public sphere (p.48ff). One wonders: when Robin Cook, Britain's Foreign Minister under the first Blair government, declared that "chicken tikka masala" had replaced "fish'n chips" as the Britons' favourite dish, wasn't this a sign that the "plural" model had already arrived? The public/private dualism, as negatively invoked by the multiculturalists, has always been a strawman; the "liberal" reality of deracinated "citizens" never was, as it is always agents with interests and identities that people the public sphere. As if sensing that a reassertion of orthodox multiculturalism had the smell of yesteryear, Parekh et al. quickly withdrew a bit, pleading for a "synthesis" of the "liberal" and "plural" models, according to which "Britain is both a community of citizens and a community of communities" (p.47). That was a "question-begging formula," wrote The Economist, dodging that "in the matter of race relations a hard choice might need to be made between treating people as individuals or treating them as members of groups."[14]

In fact, Britain's most serious race riots in two decades, which occurred in the spring and early summer of 2001 in various north-English cities, elicted a markedly different response. Chaired by a seasoned urban councillor, Ted Cantle, and a group of politicians, social workers, and local government experts with impeccable "minority" credentials, the government-commissioned investigation into the origins of the riots, Community Cohesion (2001), drew a grim picture of Britain's multicultural reality: "Whilst the physical segregation of housing estates and inner city areas came as no surprise, the team was particularly struck by the depth of polarisation of our towns and cities...Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lieves. These lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges" (p.9). Moreover, the investigation deplored "the lack of an honest and robust debate, as people 'tiptoe around' the sensitive issues of race, religion and culture." Finally, rather than representing and pursuing the interests of their "communities", local minority councillors owed their selection "more to familial and other inappropriate connections," and they were mired in "politics from back home" and "sweetheart deals" (p.23). The "multi-ethnic Britain" depicted in this report was certainly one of "communities", yet one without a meta-"community" in the singular to tie them together.

Interestingly, twenty years earlier, after the Brixton riots of 1981, a Tory government

had prescribed more "positive action" and more multiculturalism as a way out of failing minority integration (see XXX). In 2001, a Labor government found it was time to move "beyond multiculturalism."[15] In its recommendations, the Cantle Report struck an entirely new chord: there had to be a "greater sense of citizenship" (p.10), "common elements of 'nationhood'" had to be agreed upon (p.19), the "use of the English language" had to be strengthened in the minority communities (ibid.), and overall "the non-white community (had) to develop a greater acceptance of, and engagement with, the principal national institutions (ibid.). At the same time, the report went out of its way to assure that this was not a flight into the pre-multicultural past: "(W)e are never going to turn the clock back to what was perceived to be a dominant or monoculturalist view of nationality" (p.18).

Britain's move "beyond multiculturalism" is rigorously pursued by Labour Home Secretary David Blunkett, who in his two years in office so far has broken about any taboo that had sealed Britain's etiquette-conscious race relations scene from the "honest and robust debate" asked for in the Cantle Report. "We have norms of acceptability and those who come into our home--for that is what it is--should accept those norms," he said at the eve of publishing the Cantle Report.[16] Certain minority practices, which so far no one had dared to comment upon, have become subjected to public scrutiny under Blunkett. The notorious example is arranged marriage, which to an alarming degree seems to be forced marriage. It is widespread practice in Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities for parents to import marriage partners for their sons or daughters from back home, also--one must presume--because a British visa is certain to yield a significant dowry. This practice is doubly problematic, as especially young women are often forced into such unions (see the government report, A Choice by Right 2000), and as the offspring of such unions are exposed to at least one parent completely unfamiliar with English language and (any Western) society, assuring the continuously renewed marginalization and segregation of minorities across immigrant generations. The number of such arranged marriages has more than doubled between 1996 and 2000, reaching 18.000 in 2000. Here was a real "multicultural" problem where "recognition" was not the cure but the disease, and which clashed with the liberal notion that marriage was "a choice by right" (ibid.). Never mincing his words, Home Secretary Blunkett went to the heart of the matter: "We also believe that there is a discussion to be had within those communities that continue the practice of arranged marriages as to whether more of these could be undertaken within the settled community here."[17] To what a minority activist predictably responded: "Telling established British communities whom they should or should not marry is quite abhorrent. This would send exactly the wrong signal to these predominantly Asian communities that they are not part of the British norm."[18] This response invokes itself a liberal norm, that the state should not intervene in an individual's marriage choice. In fact, arranged marriage puts the liberal state before the dilemma that it cannot do much about its own principles being violated, if it wants to honour its tenet of not intervening in the private sphere. In the new stress on civic integration, however, the liberal state is becoming more assertive about its liberal principles, and shows itself less willing to see them violated under the cloak of "multicultural" toleration.

The move "beyond multiculturalism" and toward civic integration is very visible in the government White Paper, Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain (2002), which lays out a new agenda for managing immigration and integrating immigrants. This document resembles in interesting ways the Australian Fitzgerald Report of 1988, in which an economically motivated opening up for new immigration was likewise

accompanied by a significant scaling-down of multicultural rhetoric. The message is clear: if the public is to tolerate new immigration, it has to be assured of its "sense of belonging and identity."[19] Moreover, the newcomers also have to "develop a sense of belonging, an identity and shared mutual understanding, which can be passed from one generation to another" (p.27). To assure this, the White Paper opens with a chapter on "citizenship and nationality", which lays out the new civic integration agenda. While bowing, as throughout the move "beyond multiculturalism", to the tenet that "our society is multi-cultural, and...shaped by its diverse peoples" (p.29), this is an attempt to upgrade British citizenship, which has traditionally been a rather thin concept devoid of "identitarian" implications. Concrete measures include the introduction of an oath to be sworn at American-style naturalization ceremonies, the toughening of the English language requirement when acquiring citizenship, and the introduction of compulsary "citizenship and democracy" education at English schools.

The turn to civic integration is perhaps most visible in Britain and the Netherlands, two of the three European societies (including Sweden) that had so far been most committed to official multiculturalism. But more than that, it is a European-wide phenomenon. Everywhere there is the same tendency to take "multiculturalism" as description of a diverse society rather than as prescription for state policy. Instead, the latter now takes more centrist, "civic" directions. Interestingly, while the obvious attempt is to commit and bind newcomers to the *particular* society that is receiving them, notionally accustomizing them with the "British" or "Dutch" values and ways of doing things, these are just different names for the universal creed of liberty and equality that marks *all* liberal societies--in this way, there is nothing particular "British" or "Dutch" about the principles that immigrants are to be committed to and socialized into. When forced to spell out what the "fundamental tenets" of British citizenship were, the recent White Paper could only say: "that we respect human rights and freedoms, uphold democratic values, observe laws faithfully and fulfill our duties and obligations." Similarly, in the "common elements of 'nationhood'" invoked in the Cantle Report there was nothing specifically British: "a more visible support for anti-discrimination measures, support for women's rights, a universal acceptance of the English language...and respect for both religious differences and secular views" (Community Cohesion 2001:19). Instead of being "British," this was the universal, nationally anonymous creed of the liberal state.

In Germany, the conservative opposition party, CDU, made the same experience when launching its ill-fated call for a "German Leitkultur" (dominant culture) that was to be respected by newcomers. While an exact parallel to the civic integration campaigns in the Netherlands and Britain, this concept had to be withdrawn, because in Germany any reference to "national" symbols and rhetoric is obviously still tainted by inevitably illiberal connotations. But when asked to spell out what the German Leitkultur was, its proponents could only come up with things that could have been constitutive of a British or Dutch Leitkultur as well: the norms of the constitution, the "European idea", equality of women, and German language (see YYY). The only national particularism in this is language, which however is also a functional exigency of any state qua state.

These examples show the narrow margin for asserting national particularisms in the recent turn to civic integration. More generally, liberal nation-states are marked by a thorough de-ethnicization, in which the various national labels are only different names for the same thing, the liberal creed of liberty and equality. The causes of this de-ethnicization, a prominent example of which are liberalized citizenship rules (see ZZZ), are beyond the scope of this chapter. But its

effect is to remove the case for programs of multicultural "recognition"--there is no imposition above the liberal minimum that would call for a compensatory act on part of the immigrant-receiving state. With the exception of language, the only impositions on newcomers are liberal impositions, and the new assertiveness with respect to "one's own culture" are local versions of the liberal state becoming more serious than in the "multicultural" past about the liberal minimum.

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Endnotes

1..... Associated Press, 27 September 2001.

2..... A EU delegate to the Mideast condemned this which we believe" (ibid.).

2..... An interesting sociological study of the piracy and diffusion of the "black" minority statement as "totally contradicting the values in which we believe" (ibid.).

3..... An interesting sociological study of the piracy and diffusion of the "black" minority stance to all sorts of ethnic immigrant groups in America is Skrentny (2002).

4..... The report was written by J.Zubrzycki, a Polish-origin academic and key figure in the early development of Australian multiculturalism.

5..... So one can read in Zubrzycki's Multiculturalism for all Australians (ACPEA 1982:2).

6..... If the Canadian government promoted its Multiculturalism Act with the notion that "Multiculturalism is being Canadian," this worked only with the subtext that to be multicultural is *not* to be (U.S.) American.

7..... "Economic efficiency" is listed as one of "three dimensions of multicultural policy" (joining the already previously present dimensins of "cultural identity" and "social justice"), and it is defined as: "the need to maintain, develop and utilize effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background" (OMA 1989).

8..... Such is the hope of the current government (A New Agenda for Multicultural Australia, 1999, p.25).

9..... Neville Roach, a chief executive officer of Fujitsu Australia.

10..... Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 10 May 2001, p.4.

11..... Ibid. The new German immigration law was declared unconstitutional on procedural grounds by the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* in December 2002, and will therefore not go into force.

12..... Paul Scheffer, "Das Scheitern eines Traums," Die Zeit 11 July 2002.

13..... Sasha Polakow-Suransky and Giuliana Chamedes, "Europe's New Crusade," The American Prospect, 26 August 2002.

14..... "Don't mention the B-word," The Economist 14 October 2000.

15..... "Connubial wrongs," The Economist 10 November 2001.

16..... Independent on Sunday, 9 December 2001, p.1.

17..... "At last, a debate that will penetrate the racial fog," Sunday Times, 10 February 2002.

18..... Financial Times, 8 February 2002, p.2.

19..... From the foreword by David Blunkett (Secure Borders, Safe Haven 2002).