Nationalism, Political Community and the Representation of Society

Or, Why Feeling at Home is not a Substitute for Public Space

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Abstract

Discussion of political and legal citizenship requires attention to social solidarity. Current approaches to citizenship, however, tend to proceed on abstract bases, neglecting this sociological dimension. This is partly because a tacit understanding of what constitutes a 'society' has been developed through implicit reliance on the idea of 'nation'. Issues of social belonging are addressed more directly in communitarian and multiculturalist discourses. Too often, however, different modes of solidarity and participation are confused. Scale is often neglected. The model of 'nation' again prefigures the ways in which membership and difference are constructed. The present paper suggests the value of maintaining a distinction among relational networks, cultural or legal categories, and discursive publics. The first constitute community in a sense quite different from either of the second and third. Categories, however, are increasingly prominent in large-scale social life. But the idea of the public is crucial to conceptualizing democratic participation.

Key words
■ citizenship ■ community ■ identity ■ nationalism ■ public space

In both social science and public discourse, our most basic understandings of what count as societies are shaped more than we usually care to admit by the modern era's distinctive rhetoric of nations and national identity. This 'discursive formation' (in Foucault's sense of the term) is implicated in the usage that constructs societies as bounded, integral, wholes with distinctive identities, cultures and institutions.[1] The tacit assumption of nationalist rhetoric reinforces

our acceptance of state-centered conventions of data-gathering that make nation-states the predominant units of comparative research – even when the topics are cultural or social psychological, not political-institutional. Charles Tilly has referred to the 'pernicious postulate' that societies are bounded and discrete, but his critique has hardly ended the usage, partly because it is so deeply embedded in the way we speak and think.[2] This is not an unmotivated error by social scientists; it is a participation, perhaps unwitting, in the nationalist rhetoric that pervades public life and contemporary culture. This rhetoric presents nations with a decontextualized autonomy that hampers academic understanding and has impacts on practical affairs.

This notion of society has a history and a rich meaning. A particularly salient root lies in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century discourses about political legitimacy and collective prosperity (joined in the notion of commonwealth). These brought forward arguments about the distinctiveness of 'the people' and of civil society as self-organizing entities with existence distinctive from particular rulers.[3] Arguing a case for legitimacy and rights ascending from the people rather than descending from God or inherited office, thinkers from Locke and Montesquieu through the Scottish moralists to Althusius and Gierke made a case for the priority of societies over political regimes. It was common, if not quite crucial, that 'society', in this usage, be represented as self-moving and whole. Put another way, society was rendered autonomous, made the 'text' against which all else was 'context'. It was but a short step to nationalism, with its treatment of nations as themselves individuals – beings capable of action and existence through history, autonomous and operating in the context of other independent beings of like kind, true Leibnizian monads.

Internally, nationalist rhetoric typically treated nations as categories of individuals, units of membership for persons equivalent in their common relation to the whole. The latter notion in turn strongly inflected the idea of citizenship. To be a citizen was to fit properly into such a categorical notion of the nation-state, and to be the equal of other citizens. This could, of course, be a radical notion – as during the French Revolution – and it should not be thought that nationalism is in any sense inherently conservative. It is as basic to the idea of revolutionary action as the action of an entire people (represented, of course, by a few and by distinctive cultural devices) as to the struggle for democratic citizenship rights against monarchs. Nationalism thus emerged alongside modern states as a discourse for understanding questions of legitimacy and more generally the 'match' between people and state.

From this account of nations as the basis for states we derive crucial features of our understanding of society. Various contributory streams to the discourse helped also to give rise to sociology itself. Sociology has always had contrary tendencies, to be sure, including a number of efforts to proceed, as it were, 'upwards' from directly interpersonal relations, refusing the macrosociological assumption of society as a whole. Notions of social system and institutions have a different provenance, of course, but still depend in most usages on nationalist rhetoric for their tacit assumptions of bounded, autonomous and decontextualizable units.

Similarly, the discourse of political community is deeply shaped by national-ism but has not included much critical examination of the implications of its nationalist inheritance.[4] We use terms like 'community', for example, as though there is no problem in making them refer simultaneously to local, face-to-face networks and whole nations conceived as categories of culturally similar persons.[5] We neglect, or at least fail adequately to explicate, the difference between social self-organization through movements, collective action and public discourse, on the one hand, and relatively impersonal processes operating mostly 'behind the backs' of social actors, on the other. In this way, we fail to make some of the important contributions we might to understanding citizenship and more gener-ally to grasping democracy as a social and cultural project.[6] Debates on nation-ality and citizenship need to problematize not only the contrast among territorial, civic and ethnic models, and the questions of how to understand immigrants, minorities and aboriginal populations, but also the very way in which a rhetoric of nations and nationalism shapes the representation of political community.

Membership in a society is an issue of social solidarity and cultural identity as well as legally constructed state citizenship. This is all the more important to recognize in an era shaped both by new cultural diversities and new challenges to the abilities of states to maintain sharp and socially effective borders. We need not leap to the conclusion that globalization is fatally weakening the nation-state to see the prominence of both solidarities and activities that cross borders and ways in which transnational organizations and links may work to empower subnational regions or other groupings.[7]

Discourse about citizenship is impoverished and sometimes confused, I want to contend, when multiple meanings of solidarity and identity are not addressed. A minimal notion of socially decontextualized, individual jural entitlement has increasingly been found wanting, e.g. by both feminist theorists and communi-tarians.[8] Several scholars have attempted to broaden the understanding of citizenship, but these otherwise valuable efforts are marred by lack of attention to distinctions among different modes of social belonging. Specifically, because of its centrality to democracy, I want to argue for the importance of keeping a conception of public space, a space of discourse but also the space within which jural entitlements can be enforced, distinct from both webs of interpersonal relationships and large scale categories of cultural identity. Citizenship in this sense is metaphorically located between the locally different and the nationally same. It is not a replacement for either, but it is potentially a protection against both — that is, against the demands of extremely dense and binding local networks (say, kin groups) and against calls for cultural conformity on a national scale.

In this article I shall develop this theme primarily with regard to the impli-cations of cultural diversity. It should be borne in mind, however, that this will be done against the background of the larger issues just evoked and especially the slippage in the notion of community between the local world of directly inter-personal relations and broad cultural identities like nationality. One important dimension of all these issues is the ways in which a rhetoric or discursive

formation rooted in the idea of nation shapes the relevant understandings of collective identity. Nationalism has helped to produce a way of conceiving of society that lends itself to specific approaches to citizenship. Both confusions and argumentative advantages for certain ways of thinking follow.

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A confusing tendency to intermingle different notions of social belonging has become prominent in communitarian rhetoric. The term community has come to be used in a misleading omnibus manner that obscures the distinctions among different kinds of groupings:

1 communities – relatively small groups that are not primarily constituted through formal political-legal institutions but through informal, directly interpersonal relationships;

2 categories based on the putative cultural similarity or jural equivalence of persons, and commonly comprised of large numbers of people with a low density of directly interpersonal ties; and

3 publics – quasi-groups constituted by mutual engagement in discourse aimed at determining the nature of social institutions including states.

The confusion is wider than communitarian theory, of course, as is the sentiment attached to the word community. The English language itself helps obscure the distinction among different senses of citizenship and nationality: jural status, cultural identity and civic participation. In French, by contrast, the distinction of citizenship as a republican idea from nationality and being the subject of a monarch is clearer.[9] Citizenship, by contrast to community or categorical nationality, is a specific mode of belonging directly dependent on public space. Among citizens, political participation is distinctively possible:

1 because the unit of membership is in fact a polity (and not simply a community or a nation);

2 because its collective affairs are to some considerable extent organized through public discourse; and

3 because citizens are empowered to enter effectively into that discourse.

The limits to the pure jural notion of citizenship become apparent when we consider the extent to which a democratic polity depends on social solidarity and a shared sense of belonging rather than merely on force, and when we ask what social or cultural conditions empower citizens.

The slippage among community, category and public is prominent not only in what we usually call communitarian writing, but in many arguments on behalf of minorities and other 'communities' marked by oppression or difference. It has been proposed, for example, that culturally or socially distinct subgroups within larger polities – say the Quebécois or aboriginal populations in Canada – be granted special constitutional status.[10] Arguments for such special statuses, and for group rights more generally, need to attend to different understandings of identity and belonging.

In particular, where such arguments are made on behalf of potentially autonomous and self-sustaining populations and their ways of life, they may portend a severing of the link between social solidarity and citizenship. Special statuses may, for example, encourage in-group solidarity at the expense of inter-group solidarity. This raises questions about whether a Durkheimian 'organic' solidarity based on recognition of interdependence is endangered by merely 'mechanical' jural linkages among fellow citizens living in parallel societies. Constitutional arrangements recognizing such special statuses might then be thought to require balance by attempts to encourage cross-cutting social ties.

Similarly, the notion of special status tends to enshrine a categorical notion of membership. This may be proposed on behalf of a community, perhaps one characterized by a 'traditional' way of life. But enactment inescapably transforms this by the logic of a jurally defined category, much as the rise of the national state transformed traditional polities in early modern Europe. Questions inevitably arise about the criteria of membership, since a binary in/out criterion is apt to be needed. More basically, individuals are presumed to be identified quite strongly by their membership in such a group. Whatever multiple, overlapping and shifting patterns of identity may obtain for the rest of the population would be inhibited or at risk within such special status categories. Moreover, the particular patterns of power relations that constitute a community and way of life would tend to be presumed into its new legal special statuses. It would seem incumbent on any grant of social status to minimize this. If a traditional community excludes women from public life, for example, ways should be sought in any grant of special status to provide legal resources for members seeking to overcome such disabilities.[11] This would presumably extend to changing the culture of the group with special status. This implies a large difficulty, though one perhaps not insurmountable for attempts to ground the grant of special status solely on the virtues of preserving a traditional way of life. The alternative, however, is for the state that grants such special status to treat each group to which it applies as essentially fixed and immutable. This would make the state as much an advocate of cultural ossification as of living tradition, and potentially the support of a particular inequitable power structure. After all, no cultural patterns simply 'continue'. Rather, they are reproduced in human action, and in every cultural context, the capacity for influence over such reproduction is unequally distributed and patterns of culture reflect, among other things, social power.

At the same time, individualist arguments against such claims about group rights often fall short of truly joining the issue in question. Many, for example, reduce the issue to a matter of individual particularities yielding different interests before the state. But all such individual particularities inherently produce categories of persons with similar particularities. Even if not previously joined as a subsidiary society, members of these may mobilize, and form social bonds and common culture. In an important American example, thus, it has been argued that deafness is a matter not simply of physical difference (let alone disability) but of culture, complete with an arguably separate language.[12] Where pre-existing

cultural commonalities and social bonds are at issue the individualist conception captures matters even less well.

In general, the rhetorics of culture and community are problematic ones by which to grasp political rights. Most basically, they encourage reification of the unity and uniformity of what are everywhere, in principle, and inevitably internally diverse entities, and of the politics of representation by which such internally diverse phenomena as cultures and social groups are made to appear as integral. The currently existing power structures involved in the representation of groups or ways of life as autonomous and distinct tend to be favored by formal recognition of the collective identities with which they are joined.

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Arguments for the public recognition of culturally diverse groupings often start by claiming those groupings to be 'natural' or 'essential', while presuming the broader public forums in which the claims are brought forward to be artificial or constructed. Multiculturalism thus commonly appears as an argument for diversity rooted in a claim to integral singularity, not unlike nationalism. The premise of many multiculturalist arguments is that people naturally feel at home in one culture that is either smaller than a nation-state or cuts across the boundaries of nation-states. This follows nationalism in privileging one sense of belonging, that of membership in a categorically distinct culture. There are, however, different senses of belonging and multiple modes of social solidarity.

We may feel at home with people whom we know personally, to whom we are committed in the networks of social relationships that make up community. It is a mistake to equate this with sharing largely similar cultural styles. The two may overlap, but cultural similarities are used to demarcate very large categories of people not knit by dense interpersonal relationships and represented (often falsely) as sharply bounded. Communities and categories are, then, distinct. Both differ sharply from solidarity forged through public discourse in which distinct individual or subgroup positions may be articulated and draw their meaning, motives and power from their embeddedness in the larger, but differentiated, whole. At the local and small-scale level, community, cultural categories and public discourse easily overlap. But on a larger scale, community in the sense of dense, multiplex networks of interpersonal relationships becomes impossible. We are left with similarities – a very different matter – or publics. The two are not opposites. Indeed, cultural similarity may grow out of public discourse and public discourse may be grounded in cultural similarity. But the analytic distinction is important.

We may feel at home in a certain public discourse, just as intellectuals inhabit particular arguments with a comfortable feeling of being at home, especially when returning from abroad. We are, in other words, comfortable with particular ways of expressing ourselves and with particular sorts of differences from others, as well as with sameness or identification with 'people like us'. We even enjoy, I would posit, particular ways of feeling different from others, and one of the unsettling things about entering new cultural contexts is that we lose some

of those familiar differentiations, not just familiar identifications. One who has always thought of himself as a left-wing outsider or cultural critic, for example, may be suddenly uncomfortable when traveling abroad. Not only is he apt to be seen by others as a representative of the dominant national culture with which he considers himself to be in some tension (and perhaps rightly so). There may be an unsettling loss of personal identity in discovering that the cultural cues that locate one's distinctive differences no longer operate.

Nonetheless, though they may overlap, the activity of engaging in a public discourse is distinct from the activity of finding commonality in pre-established cultural similarity.[13] Public discourse depends on articulating differences – crucially differences of opinion; potentially but not necessarily also differences of group identity.[14] 'Articulating' is a key word here. What we know as 'public' discourse is that in which ideas, opinions and identities are made clear and subjected to more or less open discussion – ideally, perhaps, to rational-critical discussion. It is an arena of debate and acknowledged attempts at persuasion. Public discourse in this sense is distinct from collective representations that invoke the common identity of the whole as a trump card against the internal differentiation of identities and interests.

Such public discourse is also one way in which culture is transmitted or reproduced, and indeed new culture may be made and identities created or changed in public interaction. People do not emerge fully formed from private life into the public sphere (as Habermas seems sometimes to imply). However, public discourse is distinct from much of what goes on in families, communities and other settings, especially face-to-face ones, in which we transact much of the business of our lives – fall in love, raise children, play sports, read poetry, listen to music. These latter settings are distinct by virtue of scale, but also – partly for reasons that scale facilitates – by virtue of the extent to which common understandings can be taken for granted and produced, tested, or altered unconsciously, or at least imperceptibly as a byproduct of other activities, without rational-critical codification or publicness. Above all, these arenas of familiarity are distinct from public settings by virtue of the (relative) absence of strangers. Publics, by contrast, are arenas in which people speak to each other at least in part as strangers. This need not mean that they have never met, but that they are not bound by dense webs of common understandings or shared social relations, that they have to establish rather than take for granted where they agree and disagree. While an element of 'publicness' may enter into familial or communal realms of familiarity – one may engage in a rational-critical debate about kinship and descent when inheritance is at stake – very much of it would radically disrupt daily life and undo what we mean by community or family.[15]

We need to be attentive, then, to three distinct modes of relating to each other and to culturally produced and encoded information: community, categories and publics. Too much communitarian and multiculturalist discourse (whatever its other merits) follows nationalist discourse in representing large-scale categories in which people are in fact quite different and are often strangers to each other on the model of small-scale familial or communal groupings. In arguing the case

for strengthening community, for example, Etzioni emphasizes 'affective attachment'. But affective attachment means something different when it is a bond between concrete persons and when it binds persons to large-scale cultural categories such as nations.[16] More generally, communitarian and multicultural discourses often coincide in presenting nations, cultures, peoples, genders, etc., as realms of familiarity and sameness, not as categories within which heterogeneous members have rights of participation. This is one reason why the category of public is only weakly developed in such discourse. It makes a great deal of difference, for example, whether one talks about a Black public sphere in which different ideas connected to race are critically debated among Black people, or a Black nationalism in which the identity of Black people with each other is more uncritically assumed.[17] What makes us feel at home may, in other words, not coincide precisely with what enables us to articulate and rationally-critically debate our differences of opinion.

Surprisingly often, multiculturalist visions celebrate out-group difference and deny the relevance of in-group difference. They describe the interplay of putatively discrete collective (and individual) identities. They offer suggestions about how people of different colors, religions, ethnicities, or sexual orientations might better live together within single societies. But they presume that these labels define meaningful social groupings, that the members of these groups accept the dominance of a single label over their identities, and that their identities are relatively settled. In other words, these simplistic multiculturalist visions share with monocultural visions the notion that the world can be divided neatly into categories within which individuals are largely similar by virtue of the identifying traits they share, and between which there are consistent and significant differences. The distinguishing claim of multiculturalists, then, becomes simply that people of different cultures can live together peaceably and to mutual benefit within the same country. It is a sort of domestic equivalent to the optimistic, cosmopolitan nationalism of the early nineteenth century 'Springtime of Peoples'.[18] Such a view does little to challenge or even to analyze critically the underlying notion of discrete and internally homogenous cultures that has been widespread, powerful and largely pernicious throughout the modern era. This is a vision of the world pioneered by nationalism, and reinforced by much in the broader current of modern individualism.

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As individualism posits discrete and integral personal identities, with unique biographical trajectories, so nationalism posits sharply bounded and internally unified nations with unique histories. One of the central paradoxes of modernity, indeed, is that this international rhetoric of national identity has become the preferred, nearly universal, mode of claiming autonomous local cultural identity. Countries claim their local distinctiveness or uniqueness, in other words, by claiming to be tokens of a more universal type: nations.

Nationalist discourse involves an attempt to constitute identities in sharp, categorical terms, to render boundaries clear and identities integral even while

the processes of capitalist expansion, slave trade, colonization, war, and the globalization of culture all have ensured the production of ever more multiplicities and overlaps of identities. It is fashionable to characterize modernity as involving standardization, routinization, and the elimination of differences. It is opposed thereby both to prior local heterogeneities, the differences of dialect and craft that distinguished European villages before industrialization and modern communications technologies, and to postmodern celebrations of differences. But modernity is more contradictory than this. For every spatially localized 'difference' that is eradicated by McDonald's or television there are increased confrontations with difference created by the juxtapositions of diverse cultures in media and cosmopolitan cities. New hybrid identities are created by international migrations, including the slave trade (which was just as integrally modern as the campaigns to abolish it and which are more often treated as modern by self-congratulatory Western thinkers). Peasant economies never were in all respects models of heterogeneity – consider the remarkably common routines of most peasant farmers and the remarkable diversity of occupations today. Nonetheless, though modernity brought new differentiations and new juxtapositions of people different from each other, dominant patterns of thought attempted to order difference by relying on categorizations of those presumed to be essentially the same. The phenomenon of 'double consciousness' that W.E.B. Du Bois analyzed in the situation of those who were both Negro and American was a resistance to this dominant pattern in the construction of identities.[19] It was an assertion that in the politics and experience of identity, 'both/and' is true at least as often as 'either/or'. But it was in more than one sense a minority voice.

However common, even ubiquitous, double consciousness really was, the prevailing rhetorics of identity, agency and citizenship sought singular, integral subjects. Thus lines were drawn on maps and populations understood – at least ideally – to fit as unambiguously as possible within them. Moreover, the loyalties and obligations of individuals to nations were commonly described as unmediated and direct. Traditional kinship systems reckoned identity in a series of nested groups from families outward to larger lineages and clans, often cross-cut by age-sets and other groupings.[20] Modern thought, by contrast, has understood individuals to be immediately members of a nation, as though nationality were inscribed in their very bodies. Nationalism launched a war on traditional intermediate associations. And ways of constituting local identities throughout the world, from China to India to Turkey to Spain, were all influenced by this discourse of individuals and nations. Even in the manifestly international culture of what Paul Gilroy has called 'the black Atlantic', produced by the slave trade and maintained by later migrations of people and cultural products, there was a tendency to construct black identities in essentialist terms:

> . . . original, folk, or local expressions of black culture have been identified as authentic and positively evaluated . . . while subsequent hemispheric or global manifestations of the same cultural forms have been dismissed as inauthentic and therefore lacking in cultural or aesthetic value precisely because of their distance (supposed or actual) from a readily identifiable point of origin.[21]

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Nowhere, however, was the formation of national unity really apolitical or entirely a matter of distant past history – not even in the countries that form paradigmatic Western cases of nations by implicit reference to which the claims of others are judged. The countries where republican and sometimes democratic constitutions took root – and the countries with the clearest acceptance in international forums – commonly have been ones where the history of unification itself could be kept at a distance. As Ernst Renan said of France,

> Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for [the principle of] nationality. Indeed, historical enquiry brings to light deeds of violence which took place at the origin of all political formations, even those whose consequences have been altogether beneficial. Unity is always effected by means of brutality . . .[22]

The consequences of the pursuit of national unity by strategies of both forgetting past brutalities and forging ahead with new ones included an implicit repression of differences within such identities and differences cross-cutting them. As Gilroy puts it, 'where racist, nationalist, or ethnically absolutist discourses orchestrate political relationships so that these identities appear to be mutually exclusive, occupying the space between them or trying to demonstrate their continuity has been viewed as a provocative and even oppositional act of political insubordination'.[23] The insubordination is resented and often repressed not only by established states and agents of institutionalized power, but by those who would organize social movements and popular struggles on behalf of oppressed or disadvantaged groups.

Nationalism was not the whole, but only the most important, part of the tacit consensus forged in the late nineteenth century as to what would count as politically appropriate identities. It played a central role in the development of 'essentialist' thinking that was also basic to the way class, race, gender, sexual orientation and other modalities of collective identities came to be constituted.[24] In all cases, the assumption has been widespread both in social theory and in more popular discourses that these cultural categories address really existing and discretely identifiable collections of people – and more surprisingly that it is possible to understand each category by focusing on its primary identifier rather than on the way it overlaps with, contests and/or reinforces others.

Put another way, as I suggested near the beginning, it has been the tacit assumption of modern social and cultural thought that people are normally members of one and only one nation, that they are members of one and only one race, one gender and one sexual orientation, and that each of these memberships describes neatly and concretely some aspect of their being. It has been assumed that people naturally live in one world at a time, that they inhabit one way of life, that they speak one language, and that they themselves, as individuals, are singular, integral beings. All these assumptions came clearly into focus in the late nineteenth century in ways closely linked to nationalism; all deeply shape contemporary multiculturalist discourse; and all seem problematic.

The underlying issues are hard to get at because social and cultural theory did not consistently study the constitution of nations, races, genders or other categories. Rather, a variety of putatively neutral terms – society, culture, subculture – were introduced. Their seeming neutrality obscured the extent to which they reflected the presumptions about categorical distinctiveness that were forged especially with sex, race, class and nation in mind. Social scientists came to a remarkable extent to take for granted the objects of their study – notably societies – without reflecting on the extent to which their view of what societies were had been produced largely on the foundation of nineteenth-century nationalist reasoning.

The nineteenth-century discourse of nationalism still shapes much of our vocabulary for thinking about these issues and identifying the subjects of democratic projects. From Bosnia to the South Bronx, the question of European unification to that of Canadian division, this mode of understanding identity and difference remains basic to contemporary politics and culture. Yet politicians – and for that matter some influential social theorists such as Jürgen Habermas – act often as if these questions are settled in advance, in some sort of prepolitical prehistory to our contemporary struggles. Habermas's recent proposals for a 'constitutional patriotism', for example, though honorable, are basically idealizations of the 'civic nationalism' model, with the same presumption of an underlying 'natural' nation always already there.[25] To such presumptions, sociologists respond with an idea of constructionism that makes any identity seem equally plausible, but this robs us of a grasp of why some of these identities have the power they do, and underestimates the importance of the enduring rhetoric within which struggles over identity are conducted. Post-structuralist celebrations of difference resist uniformity but too often abandon the search for explanation and the prospect of giving normative guidance. This leaves too much room for the violence of simple expression of will.

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Two tacit guiding assumptions of much modern thinking on matters of identity are that individuals ideally ought to achieve maximally integrated identities, and that to do so they need to inhabit self-consistent, unitary cultures or life-worlds. It is thought normal for people to live in one culture at a time, for example; to speak one language; to espouse one set of values; to adhere to one polity. But why? Not, I would suggest, on the basis of historical or comparative evidence. On the contrary, throughout history and still to a considerable extent around the world we find multilingualism common; we find people moved simultaneously by different visions of the world (not least, religion and science); we find people able to understand themselves as members of very differently organized collectivities at local and more inclusive levels, or at different times or stages of life. Think of the extent to which civilization has flourished in polyglot and more heterogeneous empires and in cosmopolitan trading cities. Consider the extent to which nationalist visions of internally uniform and sharply bounded cultural and political identities have had to be produced by

struggle against a richer, more diverse and more promiscuously cross-cutting play of differences and similarities.

Modernity, ironically, has brought the attempt to both 'clarify' and 'consolidate' identities, and the production of an enormously increased field of cultural differences. Conquests, extension of markets, migrations and expansions in the reach and ease of use of communications and transport technologies all played a role. So did new freedoms in cultural creativity and a new diversity in material occupations. The last several hundred years have been an era not of simple growth in sameness but of conflicting tendencies. The idea that people need 'naturally' to feel at home in a taken-for-granted and internally homogenous community contends with the creation of polities and cultural fields too large and differentiated to be organized as communities. Within such larger settings, it is not an adequate response to human differences to allow each person to find the group within which they feel at home. It is crucial to create public space within which people may engage each other in discourse – not just to make decisions, but to make culture and even to make and remake their own identities.[26]

Notes

1 See Calhoun (1997a) for a fuller argument that nationalism is, among other things, what Foucault (1970, 1977; see also Brennan, 1990) called a 'discursive formation', a way of speaking that shapes our consciousness, but also is problematic enough that it keeps generating more issues and questions, keeps propelling us into further talk, keeps producing debates over how to think about it.
2 Tilly (1984). See also the similar challenge from Mann (1986: 1–2).
3 Calhoun (1997b).
4 See Somers (1996a, 1996b) for a critical historical review of the 'Anglo-American discourse of citizenship,' touching on this theme but focusing on issues of the internal constitution of putative whole political communities.
5 See, e.g., Etzioni (1996).
6 Habermas (1980, 1984, 1996) is among the noteworthy exceptions. For a treatment of movements and civil society in a Habermasian vein, see Cohen and Arato (1992).
7 Albrow (1997).
8 See, for examples of the two different lines of critique, Young (1990); Benhabib (1996); Diquinsio and Young (1997); Elshtain (1997); Etzioni (1995, 1996); Sandel (1996); Selznick (1992).
9 At the same time, the republican notion of willed community and the Jacobin notion of the nation in action are extreme meeting points for ideas of nation and citizen. They challenge the view that the nation is always somehow prior to citizenship, a basis

for it, and remind us that nations are in part creatures of would-be citizens acting against kings and states (see Calhoun, 1997a). However, both tend to privilege a self-same whole over heterogeneous constituent and cross-cutting groupings.

10 Compare especially Kymlicka (1995; and forthcoming); also Gutmann (1996); Benhabib (1996).

11 Note the difference between legally empowering the members of such a group and seeking to legislate changes from outside. The same issue arises in relations across state boundaries, e.g. with regard to international efforts to promote human rights including the rights of women.

12 Dolnick (1993: 37–53).

13 Similar issues emerge with the attempt to ground citizenship (or political community) in a single notion of substantive common good. See Calhoun (1998). This leads many to suggest a purely procedural alternative. Habermas (1996) offers one famous version of this. Chantal Mouffe, more attentive to issues of identity, offers another: 'persons . . . might be engaged in many different purposive enterprises and with differing conceptions of the public good, but . . . accept submission to the rules prescribed by the *respubilca* in seeking their satisfactions and in performing their actions', 'Democratic Citizenship and the Political Community', in Mouffe (1992: 235). Whatever the other merits of procedural solutions, they push to the background rather than resolving the question of what counts as a political community and more basically what modes of social belonging are constitutive.

14 One of the key – but I think mistaken – arguments of Jürgen Habermas's classic *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989) is that the capacity for rational-critical discussion of differing opinions is based on suppression of group differences – notably class differences, but also by implication differences of cultural identities. See counter-arguments by Negt and Kluge (1994), Fraser (1989), various authors in Calhoun (1992a) and Calhoun (1992b).

15 Think of Garfinkel's famous breaching experiments and others in *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967). Garfinkel not only had students and other research subjects breach norms to see what would happen, but implicitly or explicitly tried to get people to make radically explicit their tacit understandings of the rules by which they conducted their lives. Among other things, this made everyday life impossible. See also Palme's (1982) evocation of what would happen to family life if we tried to use the 'rational-critical' methods of bureaucratic organizations to allocate tasks.

16 Etzioni (1996) clearly recognizes that community has elements of both networks and categories. He writes, thus, that 'community is defined by two characteristics: first, a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often criss-cross and reinforce one another (rather than merely one-on-one or chainlike individual relationships), and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity – in short, to a particular culture' (p.127). This is a definition that makes plausible sense on the scale of villages, but the two dimensions apply very differently to large populations and states.

17 See Diawara (1994); Paul Gilroy (1993).

18 See Friedrich Meinecke (1970); Micheline Ishay (1995).

19 Du Bois (1989 [1903]).

20 Most social and political theory has rooted the idea of tradition in reflections on feudal Europe – paradigmatically Weber's. More fully kinship-based, stateless and non-literate societies actually offer a much better model; see Calhoun (1997a: Ch. 2).

21 Gilroy (1993: 96).
22 Renan (1990: 11).
23 Gilroy (1993: 1).
24 See Calhoun (1995), esp. Ch. 8.
25 See 'Citizenship and National Identity: Some Reflections on the Future of Europe' (1992) and 'Struggles for Recognition in the Democratic Constitutional State', in Gutmann (1996).
26 Talk of being 'at home' should evoke Heidegger, and talk of 'public space' will I hope recall Arendt. The juxtaposition will suggest some of the crucial differences between their linked philosophies.

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