Understanding Multiculturalism

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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Arbeitspapier / working paper

gesis
Leibniz-Institut
für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der
Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

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UNDERSTANDING MULTICULTURALISM

InIIS-Arbeitspapier Nr. 14/99

Contents

I. Culture, identity, and conflict in the contemporary Western world: some current diagnoses

Among the permanent features of modern Western culture are worries about its fate, diagnoses of its deficiencies or crises. One important strand of cultural criticism (which has many variants) refers to problematic, shallow forms of homogenization, to a lack of internal coherence, to a one-sided "rationalization", to a loss of meanings or moral resources, to a lack of depth and vitality. Since cultural resources are seen as essential for both personal identity and social cohesion, this "deficiency thesis" is related to concerns about crises of personal identity and about a demise of "community", or about threats to the vitality of the "life-world".[1]

In recent years, diagnoses of contemporary culture have often taken a slightly different perspective. Now we find an emphasis on multiplicity, difference, pluralism. Sometimes a "deep" pluralism of complex or "thick" group cultures is suggested. This pluralism is often both evaluated positively and seen as threatened by homogenizing tendencies. This version keeps some links with the aforementioned "deficiency thesis". Group cultures are seen as still existing or resurrected repositories of meaning and sources of identity. But they are in danger of being marginalized and undermined by the forces of modernity (or capitalism, or statism, or other culprits), and therefore in need of special legal and political protection.

But cultural differences, or at least certain forms of difference and pluralism, are also seen as a problem - as a threat to social unity or political order, or at least as posing special problems of conflict resolution and integration.[2] So it now seems that the problem is not primarily a loss or lack of culture and community, but a proliferation of cultures and communities, possibly of the wrong sort, or with some problematic features.[3] Not lack of all conviction, but passionate intensity seems to be the trouble.

This view is often expressed in statements about "cultural conflict", "conflicts of identity" or "ethnic conflict". In these statements, cultural conflicts or identity conflicts appear as very special types of conflict, which seem particularly difficult to resolve. Allusions are to images of "religious war", referring to historical experiences in the West, or to clashes with "fundamentalist" movements in some parts of the contemporary world, or to images of violent "ethnic conflict" à la Bosnia or Rwanda. Conflicts of a similar type are seen as a threat to contemporary Western societies, resulting either from internal developments or from "imports", as it were, primarily by way of immigration. Most treatments of these problems by social scientists or political philosophers are much more nuanced and sober, of course. But

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[1] In Habermas' use of this term. See Habermas 1981.

[2] Concerns about homogenization and about incompatible differences can be combined, if problematic ways of affirming difference or particularity are seen as defensive reactions to equally problematic tendencies for uniformity or loss of meaning.

[3] To a certain degree, this diagnosis can be reconciled with the "deficiency thesis", of course, if we frame the problem like this: There is not enough shared or common culture, of the right type, or possibly not enough collective identity on the level of the whole society or polity, to accommodate all those cultural differences and multiple group identities, and to secure the resolution of conflicts and the maintenance of order and integration.

the suggestion remains that conflicts of culture and identity are of increasing importance and difficulty.

If we look at some of the formulations about culture, identity, and conflict, certain ambiguities and conceptual difficulties, as well as some empirical questions emerge.[4] What exactly *are* the "cultural" conflicts in question? Are they understood as conflicts about special, cultural issues or matters, or as conflicts where deep cultural differences or disagreements come into play, or as conflicts *between* "cultures" understood as groups or communities of a certain type? And what are "identity conflicts", or what exactly is the role of identity in these conflicts? And further: What exactly makes these types of conflict particularly problematic?

This essay will try to answer some of these questions, especially at the conceptual level. I will also cast a sceptical eye on some empirical assumptions, which seem to stand behind some of the more dramatic diagnoses. However, I will mainly point to relevant empirical questions, rather than examine the empirical evidence in any detail. The discussion should also be relevant for current normative discussions about multiculturalism and group rights, even if I am not primarily concerned with normative arguments. Many contributions to the normative debate start with the question how multicultural policies or group rights could be justified, and then refer back to empirical assumptions about groups, group interests and conflicts. Here, I propose to examine more closely the possible interests of certain types of groups and the character of the conflicts in which they are involved. In some respects at least, this should help to clarify the normative questions.

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[4]   Here are some typical formulations: Daniel Bell wrote in an article titled "The disunited states of America. Middle-class fears turn class war into culture wars": "What is troublesome is the politicization of social and cultural issues because, by their nature, they are non-negotiable and tend to polarize society" (Bell 1995). The German social theorist Helmut Dubiel in an article on "identity conflicts": "... auch in den Stammländern der Demokratie registrieren wir eine neue Unversöhnlichkeit. Mit dem ohnehin drastisch geschrumpften sozialstaatlichen Arsenal sind diese Konflikte zwischen Migranten und Einheimischen, Männern und Frauen, Alten und Jungen, Fundamentalisten und Modernisten nicht zu befrieden..." (Dubiel 1995). The political philosopher James Bohman: "If anything, newer forms of cultural diversity have now produced conflicts and disagreements so deep and troubling that even our standard liberal solutions, modeled on religious liberty and tolerance, no longer seem adequate or stable. To borrow a distinction from David Hume, many current disagreements are not merely conflicts of interest, but conflicts of principle" (Bohmann 1995). Or the careful statement by another prominent sociologist, in a paper on "Social Sciences and Social Problems - The Next Century": "... we may expect an increasing incidence of social problems and social conflicts along *cultural* lines. This is seen in the increase in conflict between the culture of modernity and traditional cultures in developing societies; in the greater exposure of world cultures to one another through the media and the international movement of persons; and in the 'neo-primordialism' of social groups and social movements which often generates cultural intolerance. We have seen evidence of this augmentation of culture in the late 20th century - the gradual displacement of class conflict by cultural (especially racial-ethnic) conflict in the west; the corresponding decline of class-based ... political parties... This new cultural dimension will prove to be troublesome to democratic governments, because political expression based on culturally-defined demands often assumes an uncompromising, either-or-character..." (Smelser 1996). See also the recent formulation by Claus Offe (1998), who distinguishes between "interest-based, ideology-based and identity-based" conflicts, which go over "resources, rights and recognition (or respect)", and who states that "identity conflict poses the most difficult type of conflict". Many other, and less sober, diagnoses could be added.

In the next section I will make some general remarks about the kinds of groups, the kinds of collective identities, and the kinds of cultural differences which might be involved in contemporary "cultural conflicts", so-called.

In an attempt to make sense of current diagnoses of cultural conflict, or identity conflict, I will then tell three stories about these conflicts and the group interests which are involved. They are named here the "culture war" story, the "endangered culture" story, and the "blood and belonging" story. These stories are meant to bring out, in a simplifying and partly exaggerating way, several *distinct* interpretations of cultural or identity conflict. These distinctions are sometimes neglected, or left implicit in the literature.

After this, I propose a somewhat more systematic conceptual framework for the description of groups, group identities and especially group interests, which could lead into conflicts, and which might be relevant for policy proposals. Finally I will briefly consider what may be so particularly problematic about these conflicts, or about certain policy proposals. Some alarms, at least, seem out of place.

II. Communal groups, collective identities, and cultural difference - some preliminary clarifications

I will leave aside some sorts of cultural pluralism or cultural difference which are, or could be lumped together und "multiculturalism". Neither cultural features tied to various occupational roles and corresponding social spheres (economy, science, education, the arts and so on), nor differences tied to income or more general class positions, nor differences of cultural "milieus" will be regarded here. For reasons of space or economy, I will also disregard the matter of cultural differences between whole societes (countries), or even between "civilizations" (in Huntington's sense).[5]

I take it that current debates about cultural differences and conflicts (or about "multiculturalism") mostly refer to differences between certain kinds of groups. Terminologies and definitions (minorities, ethnic groups and so on) differ. The following features define a broad class of groups which should include the most important cases. The criteria are somewhat vague. Possibly there are some cases to which most, but not all of the features apply, but which might be included anyway. With this description, I only want to point to a certain range of social phenomena. Therefore, precision is not necessary at this point. As for

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[5] The means, I neglect the important topics of national identity, the role of national (or majority) cultures, the differences between national cultures, and the problem of internal cultural differentiation for those national cultures. Not would I touch the vexed question what kind of cultural homogeneity and/or national identity might be necessary, or at least useful for the functioning of liberal democracies. The exclusion of these copies also has a more general ratoinale: It is one thing to ask what influence cultural differences have vor the relations between the respective cultures or cultural groups, and another thing to aks what influence different and *separate* cultures of certain social units (e.g. countries) have on the internal (social, political, economic) development of these social units. Only the first perspective is considered here.

terminology, I will use the term "communal groups" (Gurr 1993). I will confine my description to groups which exist in contemporary Western societies.

Communal groups. The groups in question are large groups: most of their members do not know most other members personally. This distinguishes these groups from families, friendship circles, small neighborhoods, many voluntary associations.

Communal groups are not organized around a small set of specific goals and do not have an encompassing formal organizational structure tied to those goals. The goals that they have are multiple and diffuse, the organizational structure is somewhat loose. This distinguishes them from business organizations, professional or occupational organizations, trade unions or other interest groups, political parties, sports clubs or other voluntary associations.

Communal groups are enduring or intergenerational groups. Membership in these groups is long-term for most individuals. Like many groups or organizations, they survive changes or gradual replacements of their membership. As intergenerational groups, they comprise members of different generations (or whole families). Concerning the group, this means it comprises members of all ages. Looking at individual members, membership is a life-long affair for most. For most or many members, membership is acquired by birth. Looking again at the group level and the longer term, one could say that a large part of the membership is made up by family lineages. However, this is how current members *see* their group and their membership. It does not necessarily imply that the group has actually existed over many generations. But at least the members expect it to continue after their individual lifetimes.

Communal groups have certain kinds of collective identity. Without these, they wouldn't be groups at all. What are collective identities?

Collective identity. First of all, "collective identity" should be understood as a *special part* of group culture, as a special class of cultural elements. In any given social unit we find stocks of symbols and meanings which make up the cultural repertoire of that unit. Among these symbols and meanings there are some which pertain in a special way to an understanding of the social unit itself - to its current state, its character, its problems, its achievements, its history, its future. The totality if these cultural elements makes up a collective identity. If we look at common descriptions of collective identities, we can identify certain elements of meaning which often play a part. The following is a list such meanings.

There are criteria for the identification of membership or the distinction between members and non-members. In many cases, especially in the case of modern states, there are of course institutionalized rules for the attainment of membership; collective interpretations relate to the interpretation and justification of those rules.

There are collective self-images: the ascription of characteristics or traits which are typical of the members or of the collectivity as a whole, generally linked with (mostly positive) evaluations. These often go together with collective ideals (which to collectivity aspires to and also may fail to live up to), with notions of collective interests and common problems,

and with ideas about collective duties or responsibilities. There may also be normative ideas about principles of social order and proper relationships between members of the collectivities (e.g. reciprocal rights and duties).

Within groups, there can also be feelings of special obligations, solidarity, commitment and trust towards other group members.

Often there are also notions of collective pride (pride in the achievements of the collectivity) and of honor or dignity. These may lead to a sense of violation if the group or certain members are treated with contempt or in other ways improperly by outsiders, or a sense of shame if members do not live up to the central standards of the group.

These collective self-images are often linked with contrasting images of other groups and with comparative evaluations as well as with definitions of the relations to other collectivities (as friendly or hostile and so on).

Finally, there is the important temporal or historical dimension, relating both to the past and to the future of the collectivity: Collective memories or interpretations of the past, possibly commitments to certain traditions and collective projects or collective responsibilities derived from the past (linking the past to the present and the future), hopes and aspirations for the future (not only for the personal future), possibly even a sense of a collective "mission".

Collective identity, as the notion is explicated here, is a descriptive term which does not imply much about the specific content or strength or degree of acceptance of collective representations. Collective identity exists wherever there are collectivities, where some of these cultural elements are present, and are shared by the members to some degree.[6] Not all of the elements that were mentioned above need to be present or be articulated. Members may also hold somewhat different versions of these collective representations, and disagree about some of them. Collective representations may be weakly developed and somewhat marginal for the members of the social unit, or they may be more central and more important for the members. Collective identities may have a narrow or "thin" character. This applies to those cases where a group or organization shares a small range of common interests or goals - which may nevertheless be quite important for the members - and were there is little historical depth and not much of a self-image beyond the narrow purpose and corresponding instrumental features of the unit. Alternatively, collective identities may be rich, complex, "thick", of considerable historical depth, with detailed conceptions of group character, strong elements of collective solidarity and so on.

In order to form a group, people must share at least some elements of collective identity: a sense of common membership, ways of attributing membership status, some understandings

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[6] It should be added that the symbolic meanings which make up a collective identity not only exist in the consciousness of members, but of course also in communications, symbolic practices, and other "external" symbols.

of common interest, some kind of solidarity. Otherwise they would form just a category, a statistical collection of people with similar features.[7]

In the case of *communal* groups, one further specification should probably be added (which was already implied by the feature "enduring" or "transgenerational group"): there should be a sense of continuity, of at least some historical depth and a future-oriented time horizon without a definite limit.

All other elements of collective identity should be regarded as variable, open to empirical determination. A communal group may have a rather thin sense of commonality, possibly as a reaction to imposed external definitions and perceived discrimination, based on shared grievances and some readiness to act in concert against those discriminations or disadvantages.[8] Or it may have a very complex identity, a rich store of historical memories and cherished traditions, and strong feelings of solidarity.

Variations in collective identity are important distinguishing features between communal groups. These are not the only important features, however. Among other important features, two further dimensions of groupness stand out. These are the *cultural distinctiveness* of the group, and its *social organization*.

Cultural distinctiveness is a relational attribute: How large, how important are the differences between the general cultural features of the group and those of its social environment? Are there deep differences in world-views, general beliefs and values and so on, which lead to incompatible demands and practices and hinder mutual understanding between members and non-members? Or are there at least distinct ways of life, webs of meanings and practices, which are unique to the group and set the life of the group in many areas (family and personal relations, voluntary associations, recreation, possibly work and so on) clearly apart from the social and cultural life of other groups? Of course there are important conceptual and measurement problems. One of them is the fact that most groups show considerable internal variation with respect to cultural features. The greater this internal variation, the more difficult it might be to determine cultural difference or dissimilarity in any determinate way.[9]

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[7] There are interesting intermediate cases, or cases where there are empirical questions about the degrees of collective identity. This applies e.g. to "milieus" or "life styles" which sociologists have tried to identify.

[8] Some kinds of communal group may even form as a reaction to perceived political opportunities, provided by group-differentiated rights or policies. See the case of American "pan-ethnic" categories, e.g. "Asians".

[9] Cultural distinctiveness (or cultural distance, i.e. the degree of cultural dissimilarity) exists in various forms, or could be conceptualized in different ways. One possible form is the difference between holistic, coherent world views (or "comprehensive doctrines", in Rawls's terms), e.g. between religious and secular world views (or between different religions.) Quite different from these are cultural differences or dissimilarities between the cultures of different social units (e.g. countries) which are *distributive* in character, which relate to *distributions of cultural traits*: Two countries may differ in their share of religions believers and non-believers (one important difference between the U.S. and Western European countries). Another form is the difference between cultural "agglomerates", as it were, which do not have much internal coherence (e.g. the "ideocultures" of two individuals, both with different habits, preferences, beliefs and so on, which do

Social organization refers to features like common organizations and associations, possibly political or legal institutions, educational institutions, mass media, density of networks, and geographical concentration or proximity.

It is important to note that there is a contingent relationship between these features, that some degree of independent empirical variation is possible.

Collective identity is only a special part of group culture, as was said already. There are many elements of a group culture which are not necessarily part of collective identity: stocks of knowledge, many values and norms with no specific relation to the life of a particular community, patterns of individual identity, elements of expressive or aesthetic culture: music, literature and so on, which do not carry meanings that relate specifically to the community. The composition of the whole cultural repertoire and its patterns of distribution among the membership make up the cultural profile, the peculiar cultural character of a group. But that does not necessarily make them part of its collective identity. They become elements of collective identity only insofar they are regarded as such by the members, insofar they are seen as expressing a specific cultural character of the group or as constituting a specific cultural heritage or tradition.

But collective identities do not necessarily refer to a very broad range of cultural features which are markedly distinct from the surrounding culture or cultures. The strength of collective identity is not dependent on the degree of cultural difference or dissimilarity between the group and its social environment. *Individuality* is not *dissimilarity*. Collective identity and cultural difference are not the same kind of phenomenon. Since collective identities are necessarily unique, because they refer to a particular collective, its features (cultural and otherwise), its situation, history and so on, they always provide *some* element of cultural dissimilarity, of course. But if we understand by cultural difference or dissimilarity something like different world views, value systems, beliefs and so on, then we find that marked differences in these attributes are not a necessary condition for a distinct collective identity. Members of different collectivities can become quite similar in overall cultural profile, in most beliefs, values, individual goals and life-plans and so on, without losing a distinct collective identity. Two groups with extremely similar cultural characteristics can nevertheless maintain quite strong collective identities. Group solidarity is not dependent on cultural difference. A collective memory, narratives about the history of the group make for collective

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not necessarily make up one coherent whole - similarly for the culture of different collectivities). These forms or notions of cultural difference or dissimilarity are often mixed up in the literature, as are the different explanatory roles which cultural differences play for the explanation of social interactions *between* social units, and for the respective internal development of those units. The role of "Asian values" or similar things for the economic develpment of certain countries cannot be dismissed merely by pointing to internal cultural differences within these countries (because they could still be different from other, e.g. Western countries with respect to the distributional patterns of different values and attitudes). And questions about the influence of national cultures on national economic, social and political development are quite different from questions about the role of cultural differences for relations or interactions between countries, or between distinct groups or milieus within one country.

identity, but is these cultural elements are not necessarily related to current cultural differences in other areas. (This is important for an understanding of our third story.)

So cultural assimilation of immigrant groups or minorities, or cultural convergence between other kinds of groups does not necessarily result in a weakening of collective identities. There may be other empirical interrelations, however. Strong group identities may lead to a high valuation, to a large subjective relevance of small cultural differences. We may assume, on the other hand, that the confrontation with cultural otherness, with very dissimilar cultural environments will strengthen collective identities.

With respect to social organization, we may safely assume that a strong organizational and institutional structure will help to develop or maintain both a complex group culture and a strong collective identity. It should be noted, however, that many communal groups only have a rather loose structure of this kind. Often there are more like large social networks of informal relations, which are mobilized occasionally by political or cultural leaders, organizations, or entrepreneurs, like social movements. Forms of collective identity can be maintained even if there is rather little common communal life and organization.[10]

It should be added that these features (collective identity, cultural distinctiveness, social organization) are not the only ones which are relevant, if we look for conditions of group conflict and collective mobilization of communal groups. Certainly, the socio-economic profile of a communal group and its location in the overall structure of stratification are very important. This refers to the distribution of income and occupation, educational achievement, political influence, and status.[11] Also, experiences of discrimination and hostility, and conflict *histories* which may have produced antagonism and distrust are very important. But for our more general discussion of cultural conflict, we need not consider these specific influences in more detail.

One could try to develop a typology of various sorts of communal groups on the basis of these attributes. Instead, I will only point to some very broad types of communal groups, which are usually distinguished in the literature.

One broad class of groups, which figures prominently in the literature, includes groups where a particular history or genesis is a primary focus of collective identity. (Therefore they are often labelled "ethnic" groups.) These are groups which look back to a longer common history as a distinct group and see themselves as incorporated, either voluntary or involuntary, into a modern state, while retaining some kind of collective identity with historical, cultural and political elements.[12] In some cases, they see themselves as part of a larger historical group, where the other parts are majority or minority populations of different

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[10] This case has been described as "symbolic ethnicity", with respect to communal groups of immigrant origin in the United States (Gans 1979).

[11] The group may show an internal profile of stratification in these dimensions which is largely similar to the profiles of other groups. Or it may be more homogenous, e.g. when its members are ranking lower, on average, in most dimensions, than the other members of the society.

[12] Their long common history is an element of their current collective identity. The veracity of these historical memories is not an issue here.

states. These are usually referred to as nationalities or national minorities, or as indigenous populations (or people), or sometimes as historical "regions" or regional movements.[13]

Also in this category are groups which evolved in the context of migrations into some established modern state-bounded society. Migration may have been more or less voluntary, or a result of expulsion, or even forcible transportation.[14] Another type, often overlapping with the foregoing, are certain religious communities with a strong collective identity and some continuous communal life (the Jewish diaspora, protestant sects in the U.S.).

In all these cases it is an open empirical question, of course, to what degree they show the features of communal groups, what kinds of collective identity exist and what degrees of cultural distinctiveness. It will be obvious, for example, that immigration does not invariably lead to the formation of communal groups, and that groups of immigrant origin can be of very variable strength and continuity. In other cases (like certain regions), we may be dealing more with temporal (possibly recurring) social and political movements, than with more permanent communal groups.

We may also consider occupational groups as possible examples of communal groups. In certain cases, occupation (or "class", in one sense of the term) may be the focus of a collective identity with a transgenerational perspective and a certain communal life. Farmers and fishermen are outstanding examples. Especially in the case of farmers, there is a peculiar economic organization (still mostly small family units, little differentiation between work and other parts of family life) which sustains some kind of common culture or way of life.[15] There are, or have been, also other occupations which develop special communal solidarities, a special ethos, and at least some kind of intergenerational continuity. Historically, workers in certain industries or regions are possible examples, eg. miners, but also professional soldiers or even policemen might be mentioned.[16] Empirically it is somewhat unclear, however, how much "groupness" still exists in these cases, how much identity, cohesion and transgenerational continuity can be found in these or other occupations.

Gender and sexual orientation are also sometimes mentioned as identities which are the focus of group formation, and talk of "difference" and "identity" are very popular with respect to these phenomena. Gender differences have been interpreted as differences of conflicting basic values, or even epistemologies, which might be compared to the first story. Or they have been described as different, but possibly complementary values, conceptions of life or personal identity, where the female version is not so much endangered as subdued, in need of liberation or stronger support. And there has been talk of women as a disadvantaged or

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[13] See Schneckener (1997) for an overview.

[14] Both forcible transportation and a history of slavery, or of official, legal discrimination constitute very special group characteristics and identities, of course.

[15] Farmers rarely seem to be mentioned in discussions about group differentiated rights. This is astonishing. If anywhere, there is a rather distinct and encompassing way of life here. And farming policies are a very important example of group differentiated policies in Western democracies.

[16] In these cases, special dangers of the job and a particular need for solidarity and trust may be involved, among other things.

oppressed group, fighting for the recognition of its identity. Now whether the perceptions of cultural differences are empirically adequate is very contested. Sure there are *some* (but probably very variable) cultural differences. But these seem to be distinct from genuine group differences. In the case of group differences we have *group* cultures which are a central part of the common, collective life of the group. With gender, we do not have much of such group life. Gender categories are for the most part not really groups, with a collective identity and a common life. Instead, gender differences are more like differences of roles, or of models of individual identity. In addition, these are very much relational roles, linked to the corresponding roles of the other gender. However, there are indeed groups which take gender as their focus of collective identity (e.g. feminist groups or movements). But these organize or mobilize only certain parts of the gender category. Similarly for movements of sexual minorities (e.g. homosexuals). Sexual orientation is another pattern of personal identity, which may become very important for the person in the case of minority orientations which are not generally accepted socially, or subject to discrimination or repression. This may lead to movements against discrimination. There are also subcultures with some kind of communal life, where a minority sexual orientation is a focus of collective identity. Because of their somewhat special characteristics, I will disregard these cases in the following discussion.

Now I will try to make sense of the notion of "cultural conflict" by giving three descriptions or stories, in which communal groups are involved in conflicts, in different ways.

III. The "culture war" story. Cultural differences and conflict

In this story, like in the following versions, we are looking at some society of the contemporary Western type, with a liberal-democratic constitutional system. The membership is divided in two groups, A and B. To simplify things, we assume throughout that the Bs (the members of group B) are in a minority (even if this is not a necessary or important feature in all of the following cases).

Now groups A and B are said to be involved in a cultural struggle, a deep cultural conflict. Observers alarmingly speak of a "clash of cultures", or a "culture war". What could they mean?

Let us first note that almost all conflicts are "cultural" in the sense that the parties have some differences or disagreements in beliefs, evaluations, interpretations of the situation and so on, and *not only* incompatible goals or demands. This is sometimes neglected by observers who see a basic difference between "value conflicts" and "conflicts of interests", where the latter appear to be conflicts about the distribution of goods or resources which are equally valued by the parties. But it is only in certain cases of distributional conflict that parties are unconcerned about the justification of their case, and coolly try to push aside opponents, or try to strike bargains in a morally neutral way, without any occasion for complaint,

accusation, or justification. In other cases (probably in most cases of collective conflict), opponents may be convinced, or make proclamations that they are in their right, that they are entitled to what they demand, or that what they demand is generally the right thing to do, or that they are somehow wronged by their respective opponents, that an injustice occurred, or something like that. These claims and convictions may come into play even if the immediate demands are quite narrow, e.g. aiming at some moderate redistribution of resources.

Let us also note that such differences and disagreements, as elements of conflict, are quite likely to emerge even in cases where there is a very large degree of cultural homogeneity and general consensus between parties. If complex belief systems are applied to specific and possibly new situations, there is always enough indeterminacy to make conflicting interpretations possible.[17] New problems and conflicts may also provoke a questioning of an established consensus and a revision of beliefs and convictions. In addition, some partiality of perspective and interpretation is likely in conflict situations.[18]

But certainly, our observes were not thinking of *these* kinds of disagreement when they talked about cultural conflicts or culture wars. One fact about the As and the Bs which they certainly had in mind was the following: A and B show deep and important cultural differences. They show large differences in their beliefs and values, leading to different prescriptions and practices, which are incompatible.

This alone, however, does not necessarily lead them into conflict. The As and Bs might just stick to their own beliefs and practices, and leave each other alone. Conflict exists if they try to impose those beliefs, values, prescriptions or practices on each other. To speak of conflict, instead of mere disagreement, one has also to suppose that they not just try to convince each other, to change their beliefs and convictions by some kind of argument or by some other unobtrusive means of persuasion. Instead, they must either aim at binding decisions, practical resolutions, changes of practice, or they must use other means, like sanctions or the threat of sanctions, to change either beliefs or practices. The sanctions might be legal and political ones, but also other, informal means, including moral condemnation or contempt, shaming, ridicule and the like.

So our "culture war" story unfolds. A and B have deeply different and divergent cultures, and try to impose certain elements of their culture (principles and norms of conduct, prescriptions or proscriptions, goals and so on), or certain demands backed by their culture on each other.[19] These conflicting cultural programs may involve whole conceptions of the social and political order, or certain central elements thereof. But the underlying deeper differences may also aggravate conflicts about seemingly smaller issues.

But here the story divides in two versions. Because the conflict situation can be of two kinds. In one situation, both A and B literally try to impose their cultural-political program on each

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[17] This can be easily seen in the case of legal systems and their application to singular cases and new problems.

[18] This one of these reasons, while the usual simple-minded and polemical opposition of "consensus" and "conflict" is misleading.

[19] They may even try to impose *beliefs* on each other, but this is a more complicated matter.

other, by making it binding for everybody, by making it the law of the land. In another situation, one the groups (say B) just wants to follow its own standards in certain areas of life, to regulate its own internal affairs, without trying to impose it on the other group (A), without making it obligatory for the whole society. However, A does not accept this demand of non-interference from B, but insists on imposing certain contested standards or norms on the members of B.

Now, to make a brief digression from our story, why should the As and Bs do so, and not leave each other alone? There are structural and cultural limits to this latter solution. The cultural limits consist in the conviction of the As or Bs that certain values, principles, or norms are so important that nobody, or at least nobody within the same polity may be allowed to disregard them. To give an example of the second version of the story: The As may hold certain principles of individual liberty and equality for evidently valid and inviolable. They think this implies equal rights of men and women in all areas of life. Being the majority, they put this into law. The Bs may hold to certain principles of male authority, and may disagree. The As will disapprove, and think about enforcing the law. However, the As, or the government which is predominantly influenced by the As, are generally reluctant to interfere in what could be described as affairs between consenting adults. They may tend to see the case in this light, and be a little lax about enforcement. The situation changes, however, if individual women of B start to protest against the custom. Not willing to accept exit or exclusion from B, they appeal to the As, or to the government, for support. Now the As feel compelled to interfere. For similar reasons, the As may show special concern if they feel that important interests of Bs children are at stake.

The structural limits of mutual non-interference are determined by relations of interdependence. These may consist in forms of cooperation and exchange, or all other kinds of interaction. Interdependence also exists where the activity of one group has harmful effects for the other, or where the groups compete for resources. In all these cases, some kind of common normative framework is necessary, which enables coordination, secures expectations, and provides norms and procedures for the prevention or resolution of conflict.[20]

It is, however, not always easy to determine in which areas of social life interdependence occurs in such a way that uniform regulations are necessary, and where there is enough separation or independence of activities to make mutual non-interference possible. One cause for difficulty is the fact that in contemporary societies, groups are always in a relation of interdependence or interaction in *some* areas, whereas in others, they may live separately.

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[20] It would be interesting to ask how these structural conditions have changed with the emergence of modern societies. It has been pointed out that these societies are characterized by wide-ranging interdependencies and chains of interaction. Therefore, they need certain kinds of cultural homogeneity or conformity, many common rules, tight discipline. What is sometimes overlooked, however, are certain forms of internal differentiation. Especially the differentiation between areas, where wide-ranging networks and chains of interaction between strangers are actually found (like the economy), on the one hand, and other areas (of private, or associational) life, where mainly like-minded people get together and where there is hardly a "structural" reason for them not to do whatever is on their minds. This gives lots of room for certain kinds of cultural variation and mutual non-interference.

This leads to many spill-over effects between these areas. It may also often be contested just how much uniformity is necessary to make smooth interaction and coordination possible. The As, for example, may think that it is not enough to have common rules of conduct, but that it is necessary to install certain attitudes and beliefs in all members of the polity, to make cooperation more secure. They may want to design language policies, educational policies and other measures with this in mind. The Bs may object. Finally, it will often be contested just what *counts* as interdependence or interference, e.g. what counts as harm done to the Bs from the As, or conversely.[21] This brings the cultural component back in. Obviously the line between cultural and structural limits of mutual non-interference is blurred in certain areas.

After these more theoretical considerations, let us recount our main story, in its two versions. In the first version, A and B have deep cultural differences, deeply divergent beliefs, values, goals, models of social order and interaction. Both A and B want to make some principles and rules of conduct, which derive from their respective cultures and which are incompatible, into the law of the land. They want to make them binding for the whole society and polity. This leads to deep disagreements and conflicts in certain issue areas or even with respect to more general principles of the legal and political order. In the second version, the As and Bs again have deeply different cultures. But now the Bs just want to realize some important principles, norms and practices within their own group, and demand non-interference by the As. But the As, or the government which is mostly controlled by them, will not have the Bs let their ways in certain matters, for one of the reasons indicated above.

What questions could be asked about the story? Of course, it only gave a very sketchy account. If more details were filled in, many more variations would emerge, as would some conceptual questions.[22] For instance, there will be a broad range of cultural differences and resulting political disagreements, from moderate or shallow to extreme or deep, and it might not be so easy to distinguish degrees of difference. Also, the relations between cultural difference (in the sense indicated above) and political disagreement and conflict might be complicated at times. Different comprehensive belief systems might not always, in all areas, lead to very different policy prescriptions. And most importantly, groups A and B might not be quite so homogenous internally as was presupposed by our story. These possible complications apart, the story seems to be coherent and intelligible.

So the most interesting question becomes: are there plausible empirical applications of this story, to real cases in contemporary Western societies? Very briefly: Classic cases that fit the description might be comprehensive and political ideologies. The most important example in Western (especially European) societies, after the demise of national socialism and fascism, was the conflict between marxist, or communist and various versions of liberal-democratic

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[21] This is well known from the debates about J.St. Mill's "harm principles", or from R. Dworkin's treatment of "external preferences".

[22] It should be noted, for instance, that there is a third general version of the story. Instead of aiming either at one set of rules which should be binding for everyone, or for different sets of rules for A and B, the As and Bs could devise three sets of rules: one for A, one for B, and one specifically regulating interactions between A and B, or between individual As and Bs. For our purposes, it is not necessary to examine the possibilities in more detail.

belief systems and political programs.[23] Interestingly, conflicts between these or other political ideologies are rarely described as "cultural" conflict. It is not clear if there are any particular reasons for this. But ideologies may be seen as very specific and rationally elaborated political belief systems, therefore not qualifying for the term "culture", where culture is imagined as something more comprehensive and diffuse, extending to other spheres than just the political.[24]

More recently, social scientists and commentators have debated whether new political cleavages and alignments are developing in Western societies, which are based on deeper differences of values and metaphysical (religious, or secular) world views. In the United States, for example, the "culture war" metaphor has been applied to an alleged division between cultural-political camps which adhere to comprehensive religious and secular, or conservative and progressive general world views, or more specifically to orthodox or "fundamentalist" religious movements with political aspirations (references). This particular version of the "culture war" thesis has been roundly criticized on empirical grounds, however, and other, more general variants of this "value conflict" thesis remain disputed. Apart from this, most of the diagnoses about "cultural conflict" which were mentioned at the beginning do not seem to have these, but other phenomena in mind. This appears from the fact that they usually refer to certain "groups" or "minority groups". This seems to mean something different from the broad camps or social milieus with very diffuse boundaries which the "value conflict" hypothesis refers to.

"Fundamentalist" religious groups or movements, however, may certainly qualify for groupness, and minority status. So they may be accepted as likely empirical references of the "cultural conflict" diagnoses. Are they the only candidates? Many observers, at least, seem to have a much broader range of groups in mind, when they talk about cultural conflict or identity conflict. So the question becomes, which groups, or which kinds of groups should be considered? And above all, to which of them do the "culture war" stories, as told above, really apply?

Before we consider this, we have first to ask about other possible meanings of "cultural conflict" or "identity conflict". This brings us to our second, and then to the third story.

IV. The "endangered cultures" story. Special support for cultural groups

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[23] If we discount ideologies of the contemporary radical right, a more diffuse and heterogeneous phenomenon.

[24] This particular political conflict between marxism and liberalism (for short) has sometimes been designated as a "structural" conflict, based on "class interest", not on culture. But this seems misleading, if only for the obvious importance of "ideas" in this case. As political ideologies, liberalism and marxism may have also been regarded as cut from the same cloth of cultural modernity, as just two different versions of enlightenment rationalism, therefore not really qualifying as two deeply different cultures. There may be a grain of truth in this, insofar only the theoretical elements are considered. But actually communist and socialist movements may have often been based on just such a more comprehensive world view and way of life, not merely on adherence to a specific political program, and to a scientific theory of society.

Again we are looking at a majority group, A, and particularly at a minority group, B. Observers describe B as a group with a distinct culture, quite different from A's culture. B's culture comprises systems of values and beliefs, common practices and customs, distinct ways of doing things in various walks of life (family and intimate relations, work, recreation, communal activities, artistic activities, and so on). B is said to have a peculiar "way of life" (Parekh 1994), different from A's "way of life". Presumably this means not only that the Bs do various things differently and have different beliefs and values, but also that all these things hang together in some way, make up something like a coherent whole. There seem to be certain common cultural threads running through their various customs, practices or beliefs. So the Bs cannot easily change or give up one piece of their culture without adapting the other pieces, or else without experiencing some sense of contradiction or incoherence. B is also said to be a "comprehensive", or "encompassing" group or community (Selznick 1992, 358; Margalit/Raz 1990). This means not only that its culture or way of life ranges over larger parts of individual and social life, as was said already. It means also that people largely grow up and are socialized or educated within the group and that their personalities, or, as some observers prefer to say, their identities are formed by that cultural environment.

However, there is no "cultural conflict" in the sense of the first story. The As are not trying to change B's ways, neither by political nor by other means. The government is not concerned about anything in B's way of life. The B's are considered to be good citizens, and the enjoy equal rights and liberties. Group B is not pursuing any very controversial political aims. The Bs accept the constitutional principles of the polity, obey the laws of the land, follow the rules of the political game. Of course they may have certain different political objectives, different interpretations of constitutional principles and so on. But this is in the range of general political disagreement, or controversy, or political competition.

Nevertheless, members of group B feel that the survival of their culture is endangered. So they demand special protection or support. To make a credible claim, members of group B (or speakers for group B) have to show what negative influences threaten their culture. This is important for normative reasons, with respect to attributions of responsibility, as well as for pragmatic reasons: can something be done about the problem? They also have to explain why a decline of their culture would violate important interests. And they have to specify their demands for protection or support. So speakers for B put forward a series of concerns or complaints. They describe several situations, of the following kinds.

Group A ignores group B, or its ways (its culture), is not interested, shows indifference. There are no signs of particular aversion. Members of A, if in contact with members of B, politely ignore B's group membership and do not want to be bothered with it. At most, the As show some mild, sometimes slightly astonished curiosity. Members of group B complain. They feel ignored in some important part of their life or identity. They want to get attention, acknowledgment, signs of respect for their culture from the As. Sometimes, the Bs feel that there is not just indifference. Members of group A let it show that they do not care much about the ways of group B, as a matter of opinion. They find B's culture somewhat alien, a little odd, perhaps a little distasteful. There may even be slight indications that group A finds its own ways somehow superior, more truly cultivated. Even so, the As are not intentionally

trying to change B's ways, to impose their own culture. They do not find this worth their while, or would even regard it as a hopeless task. Things may become worse, in certain situations. Members of group A insult or denigrate the culture of group B. There is ridicule, there are nasty jokes. B's members feel hurt by remarks and jokes about their group or about their culture, even if they are not directed at them individually. Some Bs at least see this as some kind of pressure to give up their culture, and become more like the As. The majority of the Bs wants to put up some kind of collective defense. They may just retaliate in kind, as it were, and declare themselves superior to the As and make jokes about *them*. But as a minority, they see some dangers for themselves in this kind of competition. So they ask for public protection.

Members of group A may also tend to avoid personal contact, sociability, marriage, friendship with members of group B, teach their children to avoid children of group B and so on. The Bs are very ambivalent about this. On the one hand, they may largely want to keep among themselves, too, and may want their children to marry within the group. On the other hand, they feel snubbed and rejected. The As want to keep among themselves for the wrong reasons. They want to keep the Bs out because they see them as inferior, not good enough for them. Again a few Bs accept the judgment and are tempted to hide their membership or defect from the group, to join the As. Other Bs are again thinking about ways to rub the As's noses in the dirt, or about other ways of purging their arrogance.

The younger Bs are doing less well in the educational system, on average, and the Bs are on the whole less successful in their occupational careers. The Bs explain this as an indication of, or a result of discrimination. The schools and universities are more oriented to the A's children and their cultural dispositions, than to B's children. The As which dominate the educational institutions hold low opinions about the average abilities of the Bs, which damages the self-confidence of the Bs and works in this and other ways as a self-fulfilling expectation. Members of group A are reluctant to give jobs to members of B, or to promote them. Either because they just dislike them because of their cultural characteristics and do not want them near, or because they think (rightly or wrongly) that members of B are *on average* less qualified for certain positions. Similarly, members of A are reluctant to rent apartments or houses to members of B, or to let them join some private, but publicly accessible associations (like sports clubs and so on). Prejudice in the sense of false and incorrigible *perceptions* of cultural characteristics of B may be involved, but not necessarily so.

Group A and group B have different languages, religions, and social rituals (e.g. historical commemorations, holidays and so on). The language of group A is the official language in the state. There are some public holidays with connections to the religion, or the rituals, or the history of group A. The Bs feel that their culture is disadvantaged by this. They also feel that their culture is not given enough attention in the educational system, in courses about literature and history, and in the public broadcasting media. There are also certain general provisions which for culturally neutral reasons prescribe or proscribe certain practices, which the Bs would like to maintain for cultural reasons. There are certain regulations for the

slaughtering of animals, for example, or certain dress codes in work environments or public institutions. The Bs again see this as a disadvantage for their culture.

In a final version, the Bs complain that their beliefs, cultural practices of group B are slowly dying out, because B's members increasingly adopt A's ways. Among the causes for this development are the following (at least as seen by many loyal members of B): Group A is richer and more numerous. B's children are required to go to public schools, where they are confronted with many cultural options, which confuses and distracts them. Bs children are also unduly impressed by the (in the eyes of children) more glamorous or entertaining lives of A's children, and the cheap thrills of A's culture. Group A, being richer and bigger, can support more radio and TV programs, more theater companies, more magazines and newspapers, more pop groups and more advertising campaigns. There is more variety, a larger pool of talent and innovation. For these or other reasons, B's cultural production is at a disadvantage, and looses support among B's members. And finally, many of B's cultural practices are somewhat dependent on neighborly relations, a certain residential density or separation. But now A's members are moving in everywhere. Possibly, the B-loyalists also maintain that their culture includes certain ways of work (e.g. running farms, or trapping wild animals), certain professional traditions, certain kinds of making a living. Because of economic competition, these are no longer sustainable. Many members of B sell their land or other property to outsiders, and many have to take jobs elsewhere, and have to adapt to working environments where they are not able to keep some of their own habits.

Now speakers for B claim that these treatments and relations give unfair disadvantages to their group culture, and to their interest in maintaining and developing their own culture and way of life. Therefore the Bs put forward certain policy proposals or demands, to rectify these situations. Among them are legal protections against insults and denigrations of their group, policies against discrimination in the educational system, in the labor market, the housing market and other areas. The Bs demand that their group culture be publicly acknowledged and honored, by public holidays, commemorations, or other public symbols or symbolic activities. They want certain language rights (education, use in public institutions) and demand more space for their culture in the educational curricula and in public broadcasting. They want exemptions from regulations which constrain some of their ritual practices. Pointing to the last mentioned situation, B's loyal members even demand their own schools with their own curriculum, subsidies or protected markets for their own mass media and other cultural productions, restrictions for the settlement of non-members in their own residential areas, and market protection and subsidies for economic activities. The Bs may even think it necessary to gain political control over important policy areas, to defend their interests. (references)

When pressed to explain a little more clearly why the impending demise of their group culture should be a public concern, speakers for B first give some reasons why preservation of their culture is important for the Bs. They first say that B's culture provides meanings for their lives. By this they mean that there are stocks of cultural meanings which they can use to make sense of themselves and their social relations, form self-conceptions and construct or remake their life-projects, cope with the difficulties of life and so on. There are cultural

values, patterns of relationships, formulas or scripts for conduct in typical life situations, and so on. We may call this the "cultural repertoire" argument.

They go on to argue that the members of B are influenced and formed by their culture from infancy on, and that they later develop their personalities or personal identities by using that cultural repertoire. Thereby they acquire habits, dispositions, routines, skills, competencies, and make personal investments in individual and collective life-projects. The can change these elements of their personality or identity, and possibly also their life-projects, only slowly, and at a cost, if at all. Most of these things function well for them only in the social and cultural context of the group. They cannot easily be transferred to other contexts. So if the Bs loose their cultural context, by leaving the group, or because the group culture dissolves, they are at a severe disadvantage. We could call this the "cultural investment" interest.

The Bs may also give this argument a more collective twist, as it were. Taking part in the collective cultural life of B, in their distinct rituals and cultural practices may be an important good in itself for many members, an important part of their lives, which they do not want to give up. We may call this the "cultural participation" interest.

Next, the Bs state that they wish to transmit their culture to their children, that they want their children to be educated and socialized so that they acquire the cultural repertoire of the group, are formed by it, learn how to use it. This is important for them because it forms a special bond between them and their children, a basis for close relations. If the children acquired some other culture, the parents would fear to become estranged from them, not being able to really understand them any more, and be understood and respected by them. We could call this the "generation gap" argument.

Finally, some speakers state that they are not just thinking of their own children or grandchildren. They want the group culture to be preserved and developed indefinitely, for other reasons than just commonality with their offspring. They see the group culture as some kind of heritage or trust that they want, or feel obliged, to preserve and develop, in order to pass it on to later generations. They claim that it provides an essential element of meaning to their life to take part in this transgenerational cultural endeavor and to make a contribution to it, however small. We may call this the "cultural trust" interest.

Now, after these accounts of their own interests, the Bs still have to argue why these interests should be protected by special legal or political measures, especially if this involves burdens or sacrifices for the As. Presumably, they could do this in various ways, especially by arguing from principles of equality. They could e.g. point out that, given their minority situation and other disadvantages for which they are not responsible, they have a much poorer chance of realizing their most important interests than the As.[25] Of course, the As may

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[25] Some clever members of B, with academic degrees, may also point out to the As that it might be pleasant for *them* to have a larger degree of cultural variety in their society, and to be able to look at some different way of life. Not all As may be convinced, however, especially if they do look at B's way of life and do not like, or appreciate it much.

disagree with the Bs about that. With this kind of disagreement, we would be back to a "cultural conflict" in the general sense, as described in the first story. But that would not necessarily be a very deep conflict, rooted e.g. in large differences of normative convictions between the As and the Bs. It might be a much more limited disagreement, e.g. about the interpretation of principles of equality, and their application to the problem at hand.

Now, what questions could be asked about this second story? We may first note that certain parts of the story could be read in other ways, or do not seem to entirely fit into the general frame of the story. This was meant to be a story about the preservation of distinct and comprehensive group cultures. But not all situations which were described above need have much to do with this kind of cultural difference, and not all interests involved need primarily be directed at the survival of such a distinct culture. If the As look down on the Bs, or dislike them, they may not do this because Bs culture is so different and is not appreciated as a whole by the As. The As may just dislike some particular, ephemeral feature of B. Or the Bs may have low status because they are concentrated in certain low-status occupations. Discrimination may also have other causes than some kind of negative appreciation of Bs culture, or some maladaptation of institutions and workplaces to Bs cultural features. More importantly, the Bs may be upset about experiences of contempt, insult or discrimination not primarily because they fear for the stability of their culture (although this may be *one* of their concerns, e.g. if they fear defection of their members). They will see this more immediately as violations of their integrity (as individuals, or as group members, or of the integrity of the group, if they think in these terms), and of their rights to fair and equal treatment. Consequently, demands for protection against insults or discrimination need not be grounded in an interest in cultural survival. It seems more likely that these demands will be justified by some principle of individual equality, or fairness, or some notions of dignity.

Other demands may also not primarily have to do with cultural survival as such, but with recognition of the worth of B's culture. The Bs may argue that it is important for their self-esteem that their culture be publicly recognized by certain symbolic acts (like public holidays or rituals). Or even, that the worth of their culture is generally acknowledged by the As. It is not so clear, however, how they would propose to enforce this. But maybe they have some hopes that this can be achieved through the educational system.

But this no very important objection to the story. One could just keep the topic of discrimination somewhat separately. More interesting problems lie with the descriptions of the interests which are involved, and with the initial description of B's culture. We may ask of the descriptions of these interests are plausible, and if they are plausibly linked to the existing of a distinct and encompassing culture. If there is no necessary link, they cannot justify policies of cultural preservation. If there *is* a necessary link, another problem emerges. What if B's culture, as it exists, does not fit the description in the first place?

Let us take the above mentioned interests in turn. There is a quite obvious answer to the "cultural reservoir" argument: Why not take A's cultural reservoir, or some other? Does the "cultural investment" argument provide an answer? People have a personal investment in their own culture, in the ways described. Certainly they would be disadvantaged if this

cultural context would be lost. But this is a slippery argument. Surely the B's cannot expect that their culture will not change. It probably keeps changing, and they keep adapting, even over their individual lifetimes. (Of course, the Bs, being somewhat conservative, may have an interest, or wish, that there be no change. But this is largely illusory, or could be pursued in earnest only with somewhat unpleasant and costly means.) But if there is to be change anyway, what does it matter for their investments if this change goes in one direction or another? Why should they object if the change goes in the direction of A's culture? At least if this does not happen too rapidly? If we look closer, we may also not that cultural change is quite uneven, more rapidly in some areas, more slowly in others. Does this produces contradictions, tensions, incoherence? Do the Bs suffer from this? Possibly, but not necessarily. The empirical evidence may point to a considerable capability of internal adaptation, to a loose coupling of cultural elements. This weakens arguments that the encompassing culture as a whole has to be protected and preserved, in order to avoid cultural trouble for the Bs.

These observations also affect the "generation gap" argument. If there is to be a generation gap anyway (as has to be expected), what does it matter in which direction the younger generation takes off? Again, change may be more rapid or more gradually, and group B might be able to influence this to a degree, given adequate means. But this provides no argument for a long-term preservation of B's distinct culture.

What about the "cultural participation" interest? This one is trickier. The Bs may have a vested interest to participate in *their* own culture, the culture of their group. But it is not so clear if the stress here lies on "culture", or on "group". If the Bs are mainly interested to maintain certain communal cultural activities or practices, it is more important to maintain group boundaries and group cohesion than to maintain a *distinct* culture. But they may also have an interest in, some kind of identification with a certain distinct character of their culture, and they may want it to develop in a certain direction, and not in others (not towards A's culture, for example). This neatly links with the "cultural trust" interest. Here, the Bs are equally interested that their culture keeps a certain distinct character, that a recognizably distinct cultural tradition be continued, but now they are also looking to the long term.

So the last two seem to be better candidates for genuine interests in cultural preservation. If they are to be starting points for normative arguments, it is of course relevant how important these interests really are for the Bs, and if there really is an encompassing and coherent culture to preserve. And even if this is the case, it might be asked, if the interest in question is compelling enough to demand special public support. Couldn't it be seen as some kind of expensive taste? One peculiarly expensive conception of the good among other possible ones (even for the Bs)? Why should it be subsidized? The Bs may retort that they do not demand *special*, but just *equal* protection. But there the debate becomes complicated, and as I said, the normative arguments will not be discussed here in detail.

About the second story, too, our last question will be: Are there plausible empirical cases? If we take our initial description of encompassing cultures or ways of life seriously, probably very little. Some aboriginal communities in settler societies (North America and Australia)

may come close, as may a few religious communities (like the Amish). Not surprisingly they are also the favorite examples of philosophers who talk about cultural rights. But even there, we will probably not find that cultures are quite as coherent as was suggested in our description. There will probably be quite a jumble of cultural elements, some cherished and more or less preserved (possibly on the basis of cultural participation and cultural trust interests), some changing quite rapidly. But if the "participation" and "cultural trust" interests are the only plausible ones anyway, we may have no need for truly encompassing and coherent cultures. All we need are *some* cultural traditions (religious or otherwise), which the group wants to preserve. If we look for further real-world cases where those interests may be involved, there are other candidates: the Jewish community or communities outside Israel, for instance, or certain national minority groups in Europe, or possibly some immigrant groups (most probably with a strong religious background). We will briefly come back to this empirical question later.

If we look at some of these cases, however, or some similar ones (like certain regional minorities or movements in Europe, or some "ethnic" communities of immigrant origin) we may begin to wonder. Is it really in interest in cultural preservation that keeps them going? Here we come to our next story.

V. The "blood and belonging" story. Identity politics

There is another story about a minority group B. It has some overlap with the last one, but is still significantly different. The Bs show a strong sense of belonging to the group, feelings of group solidarity, strong sentimental attachments to their group. They rally together to defend against perceived violations of vital interests and demands, not least against what they see as denigration or insult or violation of their collective integrity. They have pride in what they see as achievements of the group, and these may not just be cultural achievements, but very well also economic or technological ones, or military prowess, or other things. They see their bonds as rather profound or somehow natural, their membership as unchosen, their commitments to the group as unconditional. They see their community as continuing in time, as transgenerational, transcending their individual lifetimes. In particular, they refer to a common collective past, to memories of collective activities and achievements, or to past sufferings or defeats. And they look forward to a future for the group, beyond their individual lifetime. This transgenerational solidarity they often frame in terms of genealogy or descent. So they talk about their ancestors, and their future descendants. It is often not very clear how they understand this: whether they see some kind of kinship between group members, in a literal way, or if they see themselves connected to the history of the group through their own family lineage, through membership of their personal ancestors and descendants in the group.

Now, in this story, group B has some of the same complaints as group B had in our last story, and some of the same demands. They complain about being ignored, or not respected

enough by members of A. Their sense of dignity or honor is violated, because their group does not enjoy enough public recognition. There are no (or not enough) public holidays or other commemorations, no place names, no memorials celebrating achievements of the group, or mourning its sufferings. Possibly the feel harassed, or discriminated against in various ways. Politically, they do not feel that their influence, or representation is adequate. Economically, they may feel disadvantaged, because, say, their average is income is lower compared to A. Their may be various explanations for this (the Bs may stick to certain occupations or be stuck in them, or they may have recently settled as immigrants and may still in a process of adjustment, or the may suffer from past or present discrimination). In any case, and apart from the question of explanation, the Bs see this disadvantage as intolerable, as a blow to their collective pride or sense of equality. Fn: In a somewhat different scenario, the Bs actually may enjoy economic advantages over the As, and may claim to be unjustly exploited by them, because of redistributive measures applied by the state. The Bs also complain that their youth are defecting in growing numbers. They ascribe this (in part at least) lack of recognition or respect for their group. So many young people try to escape from a position of low status by giving up or hiding their affiliation with B.

So, similarly to the last story, the Bs demand their holidays, memorials and place names, their quota for jobs, political offices and parliamentary representation, possibly subsidies or market protections for the regions or occupations where they are heavily represented. They demand their own radio programs. And they want their own schools, or special classes or courses in public schools, to install loyalty and group pride in their offspring. Or at least they want the history of their group being taught in the school curriculum. And finally, if they are geographically concentrated, they may go further and demand certain forms of self-government, or even complete political independence and sovereignty.

What distinguishes this story form the earlier ones is that *cultural difference* does not play any essential or important role in it. Neither in the sense of the first story: there are no incompatible, comprehensive belief systems or deep disagreements about general norms and values, no conflicts about the principles of social and political order. Nor in the second sense, where a group wishes to save a distinct culture or way of life against forces of assimilation. In our story here, group B lives just like the members of A live. There is no comprehensive culture which is different from As culture, no shared and distinct way of life. Sure, there are *certain* cultural differences. Group B has some community rituals, celebrating community solidarity, certain culinary traditions. Also, the collective beliefs and representations which were mentioned above are all cultural elements which are unique features of the group: collective memories about a distinct group history, group solidarity, collective aspirations, collective grievances and demands. But that is not what is usually meant by a distinct, or different group culture, or a way of life. If you looked at the everyday lives of B's members, at occupational work, family life, voluntary associations, recreation, personal values and life-goals, political opinions on general constitutional principles or most policy matters and so on, you could not really tell them apart from the As. However, there might also be some differences which would help to distinguish the As from the Bs in some contexts, some kind of dialect or slang, some manners of dress or outer appearance. But there is a distinct impression that these features are not really valued as such, but are valued

as signs of group membership, as demarcations of group boundaries. Or there might be somewhat deeper differences, in that most members of A, and most members of B belong to different religious congregations. But this difference does not seem to be of much concern to them, as such. The Bs are not too much concerned about a possible decline of their religion (which they may share with many people elsewhere, if not with most members of A), or if there is a decline, they do not attribute it to their relations with A and their situation as a minority in the social and political system which they share with group A. Religious convictions and practices are largely private affairs. They become relevant only in a secondary manner, by reinforcing group solidarity and group boundaries between A and B, especially if there is tension and conflict. But these conflicts do not have anything to do with religion as such. On their marches, the As and Bs may carry religious banners, without having any religious thoughts.

There might be also the interesting case where the Bs do have their own language (not just a dialect). Now there is certainly a cultural difference. But still, having a different language does not imply that there are any further differences with respect to way of life, social behavior, norms, values, and so on. Sure, there might e.g. be certain differences in framing personal experiences or personal relationships, due to a certain vocabulary and repertoire of interpretations. But in general it might just not be the case that having a different language necessarily means having any profound differences of world view. But of course, with language comes at least a literary tradition, and possibly certain oral traditions of narratives, proverbs and so on. So if we have different languages, the story begins to resemble the "survival of group culture" version. But still, the cultural differences, the distinct cultural repertoires which are based on the distinct language might be small. And observers which look at various demands of B might gain the impression that the Bs are stressing the importance of language not *because* of the cultural differences which are linked to that language, but because they want to stress the distinctiveness of their group for somewhat different reasons - for the kind of reasons which were described in our third story. Maybe they are even trying to *revive* a language which is not longer spoken in their group. Or they more or less invent a new language, in order to stress their distinctiveness and strengthen the identity and solidarity of their group.[26]

So, in our third story, the Bs do not demand greater control over resources, larger political influence, or political autonomy and self-government in order to protect or save their culture. They just act on the basis of certain understandings of group solidarity and collective identity, from a sense of belonging, out of concern about the welfare and status of the group. None of this has to be based on cultural distinctiveness with respect to general values, world-views, or way of life. They want to govern themselves (to take their most extreme demands), instead of taking part in a common democratic order with the As, because they have a strong sense of commonality and identity and therefore see themselves as a permanent minority,

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[26] See Barry's telling remark on the case of Quebec nationalism: "... if the concern were exclusively for the integrity of French language and culture, an independent Quebec would not merely accept but welcome the loss of those areas occupied by anglophones and native Americans. Yet Quebec nationalists are unwilling to give up any territory..." (Barry 1998, 312).

permanently ruled by a majority, and they want to direct what they see as *their* own affairs as members of *their* group.

Are there any possible candidates in the real word which might fit the story? As to real examples, look to ethnic groups of immigrant origin in the United States. Or to the French-Canadians. Or to regional movements in Western Europe (e.g. the Bretons). Or look to Northern Ireland. The cases may not fit our third story exactly, but there are similarities.[27]

But even if we have plausible examples, couldn't there be doubts about the accuracy of the story? What questions could be asked about this version? Many observers (social scientists, historians) have looked at the story with suspicion. They have not only pointed out that the kind of group solidarity which is described in the story has often found very nasty expressions. Groups of this kind have been known to suppress internal difference and dissidence and to severely constrain the individual liberties of their members. They have also acted in aggressive and ruthless ways against outsiders.[28]

Apart from these observations (which might only apply to some, not all cases), there is a more systematic reason for these suspicions. Many social scientists see the phenomena of group identity and solidarity, which are described in the third story, as somehow anomalous, if they occur in modern societies. Roughly, they see these societies as dominated by the principles of individual choice and rational calculation of individual interests, or similar characteristics. Unchosen group solidarities obviously do not fit the picture. There are various ways to deal with this perceived anomaly. They could be seen as some kind of pathology, a regression from normal behavior to irrational behavior patterns. They could be explained as results of manipulation, where rationally acting, but ruthless elites or political and cultural entrepreneurs have invented some group-myth, and have talked gullible masses into these group fantasies, to gain some advantage. Or they could be explained as a veil for different group interests, where group members pursuing more mundane political and economic goals drape themselves, consciously or semi-consciously, in ethnic costumes. They may do this because it affords them greater chances of acceptance or legitimacy, under some circumstances, or because it gives an additional push to group cohesion, which is useful to overcome free-rider problems in collective action. All these re-interpretations could also applied to the second version of our story, of course.

Now some of these interpretations might be empirically true, in various cases. We may note, however, that a certain prejudice may be involved. It seems to be a mere prejudice, or an unwarranted theoretical generalization, to assume, that it is somehow more rational, or modern, to strive individually for money, political power, or status, or just fun, than to care about life in certain communities, their flourishing and continuance, and to wish that one's

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[27] There are more impressive examples in other regions of the world. What is the cultural difference between the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda? What where the cultural differences between Serbs and Croats? Sure, there were religious differences, but who noticed them? Of course, there were very different *historical memories*. And that's exactly the point. Which does not mean, of course, that we necessarily have here the causes of the war between these groups.

[28] Although our story refers to a minority group, many of the characteristics described might also apply to a majority, or a ruling minority in a non-democratic political system.

children might have the option to continue a similar communal life. This might just be an erroneous picture of modernity, or rationality. In any case, empirical observations should not be guided by such a preconception, and experiences or expressions of group solidarity should not be regarded as *principally* suspicious, not a priori as a manifestation of false consciousness or bad faith.

VI. Goals of communal groups and group differentiated policies

If we look back now at the three stories, and to the possible objections to each of them, it may become clear that much talk about cultural difference and identity, and of cultural or identity conflict, is somewhat imprecise, in need of conceptual clarification, and in need of empirical examination. Both conceptual clarification and empirical verification may be important for the normative evaluation of various claims which are made in the name of cultural difference and identity.

Obviously, the three stories represent something like ideal types, or stylized descriptions (and still there is some overlap between the three stories). In reality, we will probably find many cases, where features of the three stories are combined in various ways. Probably the stories were also not comprehensive, in the sense that there are other features of groups, group interests and group conflict which may be relevant in this context. Some of them were already indicated in the critical discussions of the three stories.

It should be useful to have a somewhat more comprehensive analytical scheme for the description of real cases. In this next section, I will try to make a step in the development of such a conceptual scheme.

If we look at communal groups, and to the possibilities of conflict, we may ask: What are the goals, or types of goals, which communal groups are likely to pursue within the larger society and especially in the political sphere? Here is a tentative list of such goals. This list is meant to include the major types of goals which could be expected from communal groups, on the basis of our general knowledge about them. Group goals are classified in a way which should bring out certain interesting differences between types of demands. I also look primarily at the more "benign" objectives, i.e. those that have some prima facie plausibility, and which could be publicly defended in a liberal-democratic framework.

The goals which will be considered are all "collective" in the sense that they are pursued by communal groups. Speakers for a group articulate corresponding demands, and the group pushes for these goals by some kind of collective action. However, if we look at these goals, we will note that some of them are collective in a stricter sense. There are also *genuine collective goals or purposes*. These are collective in the sense that they relate to the state of a collectivity. Members want the collectivity to have certain properties, or to be in certain states. They want e.g. to sustain a community with some kind of solidarity or other attributes.

They want to have a flourishing community. They want it to survive as a community, and so on. Or there are interested in certain collective practices and want to take part in them. These goals are still held and supported by individual members. But they relate in an essential way to their common life within the group. We could call them communal goals.

There are other goals which are not collective in this stricter sense. There are cases where we merely have *concurrent individual objectives*, where each member has the same objective (or where all have some largely overlapping or similar goals), which then may become the basis of common demands and actions. Every member wants to rise his individual income, to give one example, and they all may find that they can pursue this goal by acting together, by forming a coalition.[29] There are other cases of a more mixed character, where it is less clear if we might still speak of a coalition of individuals with concurring goals. Take a group, for example, which pursues a political program which is based on shared convictions. But is not necessary here to analyze such a case. For our purposes it is enough to see whether the political goals, which a group pursues, relate primarily to the state of the group, its situation, its internal life or not.[30]

Now let us look at our catalogue of group goals. There are seven types of goals in my list. Types three to six are communal goals, in the sense explained above, while the first three do not have this character. The seventh type, relating to political influence, is a genuinely mixed type.

1. *Distributional goals*: A communal group may just operate as a coalition for distributional goals, as an ordinary "interest group", in common parlance. In this case, "distributional goal" has a double meaning. The group pursues the aim to change the distribution of some goods or resources in the larger society. And the members essentially pursue this aim to gain a larger share of goods or resources, one by one. Members of some regional communal group, say, may act in concert to demand subsidies from the state, or to avoid paying too much taxes to the government which uses tax money to subsidize other regions. The goal of the

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[29] We know, of course, that under the premises of an individualistic "rational choice" model there still emerges a "problem of collective action".

[30] We could also use the more common language of "goods", to make roughly the same distinction. The usual distinctions between private and public goods are not sufficient here, however. Because many public goods, where individuals cannot easily be excluded from consumption, are nevertheless consumed individually, thereby presumably satisfying individual interests. And even in the case of some goods which have to be jointly consumed (or where joint production and consumption fall in one), it is not always clear that collective enjoyment is a goal in itself. (Think of climbing the Mt. Everest. You cannot do it alone. You have to arrive in a team. But all you may really care about is getting to the summit yourself.) But we may define a class of goods where collective enjoyment is essential. Waldron has called them "communal goods" (Waldron 1987, 309-13).
Being interested in this kind of goods corresponds to what I have called "genuine collective interests". I do not use the language of goods here, however, because it is so often linked with the understanding that conflicts over goods are mostly conflicts over their of distribution. This is not plausible where the goods in question are e.g. certain kinds, or qualities of social relations, a matter not of "having", but of "being" or "belonging" or "acting together". Of course we could talk about "the good" or "conceptions of the good" in these cases. But "the good" and "a good" seem to mean different things.

collective action is primarily a rise in individual incomes. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish this category from the following two, because distributional demands might be justified in terms of equality and non-discrimination. But often it is quite obvious that there exist some kinds of collective interest group bargaining in a polity, where principled convictions about justice and equality play a very minor role, and communal groups may be players in that kind of game.

2. *General political ("ideological") goals*: There may be more general political objectives, which derive from beliefs, values, normative principles and interpretations which are held by the members of some communal group. So the group may act like a political party or pressure group, to demand certain kinds of legislation in certain areas, where the effects are not specific to the group itself. From religious or other convictions, the group may object to a legalization of abortion, or may demand more public support for families. The group may even work for profounder, more radical constitutional or other political changes. There is some overlap with the first category and the following (third) category, because the political programs of the group might include general anti-discrimination measures or redistributional policies. It is very important, of course, how far-ranging the political goals of the group are and how deep the differences with other groups or political tendencies within the same polity. Large political differences might be based in differences of more comprehensive belief systems. (This would be the case of our first story, above.)[31]

3. *The goal of emancipation*: A third class of objectives relates to the liberation of group members from inequalities or disadvantages which they incur because they are treated, as members, in certain negative ways by nonmembers. For this, I use the classical term emancipation. Members of a communal group feel that they are being treated unjust, that they are discriminated against or otherwise held in subordinate or disadvantageous positions. They want to be emancipated in the sense that their group membership is not hold against them, is not a basis for unfair treatment. They want to be treated, by non-members and by the government, like everybody else. They want to have equal chances. Being "colored", they want a color-blind society (or at least a color-blind polity and economy). Being immigrants, they want equal rights and equal treatment with the majority population. In some cases, the demand for equal treatment may even be meant as a demand for the abolition of the group as such. To take historical examples: Slaves wanted to abolish slavery. Working class movements wanted to abolish class society, and thereby to abolish the working class. Today, some women maybe want to do away with separate gender groups (or categories), and opt for a generally gender-blind society (where gender only may count in intimate relations, and only, if the individuals want it to matter). Immigrants may want to melt into the

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[31] In terms of the distinction between concurrent individual goals and communal goals, this is a somewhat mixed case, as was mentioned already. It might be understood as the concurrent pursuit of identical political goals by the members of the group. But then it might also be important for the members that these are not just their individual convictions, but that their convictions and goals are shared within the group. The goals might also include genuine collective ones, but not on the level of the group, but on the level of the larger polity. Nevertheless, this category can be distinguished from other ones where goals are specifically related to the state of the group itself.

new society. In many of these cases, further social changes may be necessary than just official disregard of group membership and equal legal status. But some kind of individual equality is the goal. In all these cases, the group operates as a coalition in support of basically individual interests. Members have an interest in emancipation in common, and act collectively to realize this interest.

It may seem somewhat paradoxical, at first sight, that the groups in question have to fight, as groups, to neutralize their group membership in certain ways. This may have the effect of strengthening group boundaries. They may even demand certain temporary group differentiated policies (e.g. affirmative action policies) to support these goals. But the paradox may not be there, if the group does not really aim at its abolition, but only at equality in relevant areas of social life. This may very well go together with an interest in maintaining the group itself and in continuing its internal life.[32] Emancipatory, equality-enhancing policies might well be pursued in conjunction with policies supporting group life.

Since demands for emancipation may include demands for the redistribution of resources or life chances, they may be seen by critical observers (or adversaries) as just ordinary distributional goals (our first category). In order to classify such demands as emancipatory, a plausible case has to be made that they are suited to eliminate discrimination and foster individual equality. To make a convincing case can be a complicated affair. Special difficulties arise, for instance, if current disadvantages are explained as the lasting consequences of unfairness endured by earlier generations. Both the question of causation and the question of moral responsibility may be difficult to answer. Also, who should be regarded as disadvantaged, and who should benefit from anti-discrimination measures are sometimes troubling questions. Should all members of the group be included, even the ones who are quite well-off now? What if primarily the latter benefit?[33] These are partly normative questions. But these questions may also be relevant if we try to distinguish emancipatory goals from other objectives (e.g. merely distributional ones) in real cases. At least we have to decide if members of a group who argue for affirmative action or similar measures in the name of emancipation, are *sincere*. They may still err about relevant factual conditions (e.g. causation), and their claims may be rejected on good normative grounds by others. But they have to pursue their case in good faith. Of course there will often be mixed motives.[34]

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[32]   A certain paradoxical, unintended or counter-productive effect may occur, however, if group differentiated policies, like several kinds of affirmative action, which are designed to foster individual equality, create vested interests in groups who benefit from these measures, and lead to an extension of such policies beyond the designated aims.

[33]   One can argue, of course, that all members of the group benefit, too, if the best-off members benefit. Maybe because they gain role-models, or capable elites, or the general status of the group improves, and thereby the status of all individual members. It should also be noted that policies which aim to make life-chances of group members more equal compared to chances of non-members, will normally lead to higher inequality within the group, given a degree of structural inequality within the larger society. So it is beside the point to argue that the policy measures benefit some group members more than others. The question is if *chances* within the group become more equal, not *results*. It is possible, of course, that there exists a group elite which benefits disproportionately, so that chances within the group become more unequal.

[34]   In *this* case, unlike in some others which will be mentioned later, the question of sincerity seems not to be of great *practical* relevance. To decide of the claims are justified, one need only consider

Now we turn to *communal goals*, which relate to the conditions of the group as such. Members want the group to prosper, and to continue in existence for an indefinite time. There may be various expressions or variations of this general interest. Members may just want to maintain certain forms of communal life - common activities, networks of associations, certain kinds of group solidarity. They may want to preserve a stock of collective memories and historical narratives. They may wish to perpetuate a distinct cultural tradition, or to preserve certain cultural elements: language, arts and literature, religious beliefs and rituals, everyday practices, architecture. Even their interest in the economic prosperity of the group may sometimes seen as a communal interest, if they take pride in it somewhat independently of their own economic situation.

In individual cases, certain of these interests may prevail, or they may be combined. Note, however, that the interest in the preservation of a distinct and complex cultural tradition is just one possible collective interest among others. All these interests may be important elements of the conceptions of the good, which the members have formed in the context of group life and group relations. Participation in communal life, and common belonging to a solidary group may satisfy various social needs. For example, members may feel to play a small part, to make a small contribution to a larger collective project, to a collective life, which adds some sense to their individual endeavors and gives a perspectives that transcends the temporal limit of their individual life. Or their pride in achievements of the group may enhance their individual self-esteem, even in cases where there is no plausible link to their own contributions. Some of these deeper needs or interests were already indicated in our second or third story above.

From these deeper interests may follow certain collective objectives, which communal groups may pursue in the political sphere. They may seek protection against interference with their group life. They may demand resources and opportunities for the group. They may seek recognition and respect.

4. *Non-interference and protection*: A communal group may want protection from outside interference (by government agencies, or by private parties) with its internal life and its collective practices. These may include protection for public activities. Such protections are mostly provided by guarantees for general rights and liberties (freedom of religion, association, assembly, expression). Since such rights are generally affirmed in constitutional democracies, conflicts usually emerge in the two following ways. There may be disputes about their scope and interpretation, e.g. if they cover certain practices of communal groups, which otherwise may be deemed illegal, violating other constitutional principles or legal rules. Or communal groups feel that implementation is lacking, and special measures for their protection against outside interference are necessary. There might also be cases where certain general regulations have the side-effect of restricting certain group practices, which

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empirical propositions and normative arguments with respect to their merit. If the proponents honestly believe in the grounds of their claims, seems of secondary importance.

are important to their members. In these cases, there may be demands for exceptions (from certain safety-laws, dress codes, rules for slaughtering animals and so on). It is a critical issue, of course, if group practices, for which toleration and protection is sought, are very controversial, maybe even violating basic principles of the larger polity. This again refers back to our first story about cultural conflict or "culture wars".

5. *Resources and opportunities for group development*:
Groups may claim that the government should provide certain resources or opportunities which they need to develop their group life. These provisions may include general economic support or economic subsidies (including e.g. land use rights), which the groups regard as necessary for the preservation of its way of life. Or communal groups may demand specific support for communal activities: for all kinds of group associations, for educational or other cultural institutions and so on. They may demand public provisions for the use of their language in official institutions, and demand adequate representation in the mass media.

They may justify these demands for public support by arguments from equality. They may claim that they have to bear unjustified disadvantages compared to other groups, and especially, that governments policies in certain areas (language, education and so on) give unfair advantages to a majority group. They may also demand compensation for historical unjustices, e.g. by pointing out that they have been robbed or cheated with respect to certain collective property rights in the past.

With respect to this type of goals, dangers of misrepresentation arise again. Because these demands for support may be fueled more by mere distributional interests, than by interest in the collective welfare of the group. Of course, group demands may be examined in political debates. But in assessing these demands, one peculiar difficulty arises. For it may be relevant for a normative assessment if the members of the group have a genuine, and strong interest in group development, instead of a mere interest in personal enrichment. Especially if these demands are articulated by representatives of the group who stand to gain personally from cultural or other subsidies, the question of unacknowledged interests and the question, to what degree to majority of the group supports such demands, may arise.

6. *Recognition, respect, status*: It is sometimes said that minorities strive for recognition, or even have a right to recognition (Taylor 1992, Bauböck 1996). Often, the terms recognition and respect seem to be interchangeable. There are also arguments that certain kinds of recognition or respect have strong influence on personal identity, or are necessary conditions for the development of self-respect and self-esteem. It seems, however, that the terms recognition and respect have a range of different things in current usage. In this context, I will only look at some ways in which these notions could be applied to communal groups, or their

members. Is recognition, or respect, an independent communal goal? A goal, moreover, which can be pursued by political means?[35]

First, a demand for recognition of communal groups could mean that they are listened to, that their claims get attention, are taken seriously and are treated with equal concern and respect by authoritative institutions (legislatures, courts, governments). This is a procedural virtue, as it were. Members of communal groups should not only have equal political rights. They should also have a substantial chance to make their voices heard, and be listened to, even if they are minorities. In this way, they are acknowledged not only as equal citizens, but also as collective political actors.[36]

In a second, stronger sense, recognition may mean that some of the claims of communal groups, especially some of their communal goals are *accepted*, and that they are given special benefits, or special protection, or special rights, beyond the equal rights of all citizens. Communal groups may thereby gain some kind of official status, as it were.[37] But if we talk of recognition in this sense, do we say more than that the basic and legitimate demands or interests of communal groups should be recognized, i.e. accepted? Or conversely, we would say that important communal interests or goals have not been recognized. It does not seem to add anything to these statements if one says that a group demands recognition, or is not recognized. Maybe it is also implied that individual members of communal groups may not feel fully accepted, respected or recognized, if basic demands of their group are not granted. But this is a matter of moral psychology which would need further examination. Much seems to depend on what these demands are, and what the general situation of the group is. (After all, some groups may prosper without much political support.)

Thirdly, demands for respect or recognition may also be understood as requests for protection against denigration, insult, contempt, or other expressions of disrespect. Legal protections of this kind were already mentioned above, in connection with the goal of non-interference. But protections of groups against insult and denigration may be more than just a matter of non-interference, so we may well classify them separately.

There are certain problems with this kind of protection. Especially if not only insults against specific individuals, but also against whole groups, or their beliefs and cultural practices are made illegal. There loom collisions with the right to free speech, of course. There are also difficulties of enforcement. Humiliation and disrespect come in many variants, sometimes in fine shades and subtle expressions. Many cannot easily be treated by political or legal means. There are difficult problems of legal evidence, for instance.

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[35] Most explications of "respect" and "recognition" refer to individuals, not groups (or to groups only insofar as recognition within groups, between members is discussed). See, e.g., Darwall 1977, Honneth 1992.

[36] "What they want, as often as not, is simply recognition (of their class or nation, or colour or race) as an independent source of human activity, as an entity with a will of its own, intending to act in accordance with it (whether it is good or legitimate, or not), and not to be ruled, educated, guided, with however light a hand, as being not quite fully human, and therefore not quite fully free." (Berlin 1969, 156-57).

[37] Taylor (1992) seems to imply as much.

In a fourth way, recognition or respect can be understood as positive appraisal, as appreciation, esteem, praise, honor. But can there be political demands for this kind of recognition? Is it a matter of political decision making?

Yes, to a limited degree. If there are practices of public honor, appreciation, acknowledgment, referring to whole groups, communal groups may demand to be included. There may be public commemorations, for instance, or public holidays referring to historical events, with special significance for certain groups. Communal groups may ask that they be included in some way. The treatment of group histories and cultures in educational institutions (or museums) may, to a degree, also have the character of honoring those groups, or of teaching appreciation of their cultural achievements. Of course, this can be done improperly, so that questions about historical truth or aesthetic standards emerge. These difficult questions, much debated especially in the United States, need not detain us here.[38]

But the status of a communal group depends only to a very limited degree on these kinds of official, public recognition. Sometimes communal groups (or at least certain communal groups) are more or less clearly ranked in some kind of status hierarchy. Groups may compete for status in various ways. Group status is often linked to educational and occupational achievements of group members. But often other factors are at work also, which are difficult to analyze. In other cases, status hierarchies are more diffuse, less clearcut. Groups may have some leeway to look down upon each other, so that everybody feels slightly superior about everybody else. However that may be, it seems extremely difficult to influence these things by political or legal means. Even if something may be done be educational campaigns or other, indirect means. (The case of women, and the development of women's status may be instructive here.) Of course, if a group generally prospers, if it is successful in economic terms, is able maintain strong group loyalty, a vivid internal life, its status is likely to rise. Under these circumstances, it may also care less about outside recognition.

In any case it does not seem possible to *demand*, or even enforce positive appraisal of some group by outsiders. Esteem, praise, interest have to be given voluntarily, to be of any worth at all. One cannot be required to cherish or admire some culture, which one does not find interesting, or which one cannot help finding slightly odd. Also, attention and interest are limited, and there may be just too many groups and cultures.

What *can* be expected is avoidance of insult or humiliation, and avoidance of expressions of rejection and contempt. What may be expected, as a general standard of good conduct (but hardly as a legal prescription) is some kind of civil inattention, of polite indifference. Especially in settings where people meet for other reasons than mutual personal interest.

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[38] There may also be commemoration or remembrance of past injustices and sufferings for certain groups, as another form of recognition. Less as positive appraisal, than as some kind of confirmation of common membership, or common humanity. But this is a difficult phenomenon, which cannot be adequately discussed here.

There, most people do not want to be bothered by other peoples' group memberships and cultural identifications and so on. And they should not be asked to bother. But they may be asked to treat everybody just as a person in a certain role, and treat everybody equally, disregarding other identities and affiliations.

It is sometimes suggested that recognition in the sense of positive appraisal or esteem by other groups is a necessary condition for collective self-esteem and group pride, and further, that collective self-esteem is an essential precondition for the individual self-esteem of group members. These causal links are tenuous, however, and remain to be investigated. It seems doubtful that group pride is as dependent on outside recognition as is individual self-esteem. Many groups seem to think highly of themselves, whatever the neighbors may think about them. Much depends on the circumstances, of course, and this may not be true for all groups. In many cases, at least negative reactions from non-members will be harmful for somewhat weak or vulnerable groups. As to individual self-esteem and its links to group pride, much depends upon the importance of group membership for the individual, and upon the way his or her membership affects interactions with non-members. There are usually many sources of self-respect or self-esteem besides some group membership. But these are open empirical questions.

Now we come to a final goal of communal groups: political influence, or more precisely, institutional guarantees for political influence, or for autonomous political decision making. This goal is of somewhat special character. Because it may be sought both for instrumental reasons, and for independent reasons.

7. *Political influence, or autonomy*: Communal groups may demand greater political influence with respect to political decision making within the polity to which they belong. Such demands may be fulfilled mainly by election laws which give them better chances or even guarantees to elect their own representatives, or by special decision making or consultative bodies which comprise delegates of groups. Or they may seek certain rights of self-government. Given the largely territorial structure of contemporary political systems, this requires territorial concentration of the group. But not all self-government rights need be territorial. Communal groups may also have some kind of sovereignty about certain affairs of their members (e.g. family law, education), which are usually assigned to institutions of government. In these cases, membership in the group, not habitation in a certain area is decisive.[39]

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[39] In contemporary polities there is a broad, somewhat shady area between private associations and government institutions. So communal groups may run various kinds of semi-official organizations, like publicly financed and regulated educational institutions, welfare organizations and so on. This also means that there is a sliding transition from official non-interference to the granting of self-government rights. If the group has some kinds of private government and the government does not interfere with their activities, the group already has some minor form of political autonomy, in certain areas.

Self-government in certain areas or parts of the territory and special political representation at the central level can be combined, as in certain types of federalism, where the self-governing units are also represented as such in central decision making.

A communal group may seek such guarantees of political influence or such forms of political autonomy for largely instrumental reasons, as a means to foster other common, or communal goals or interests. In a way, all goals which were mentioned so far could fuel interest in or demand for greater political influence for the group. A communal group may seek institutionalized political influence to secure resources which are needed for group development. Or it may not trust the majority, e.g. with respect to secure protection against interference, and may seek special political means (e.g. certain kinds of political autonomy) to protect itself. A communal group may also seek a special political status as a sign of recognition, to enhance the status of the group.

The last example already leads to a somewhat different kind of interest in political influence or autonomy. A group may seek to govern itself, in certain areas at least, because it sees itself as a social entity which is both able to govern itself and wishes to do so out of some interest in liberty and independence. Group members may trust each other more than they trust non-members, they may see themselves as some kind of collective agent, and they want to develop their group capacities within some political framework which enables them to make binding decisions for themselves. These very roughly describes attitudes which sometimes seem to influence demands for political influence or self-government. Again, the question of justification is still open. Of course there may also be colliding interest of the group itself. It may just possibly fare better if it seeks to promote its interests within the larger polity and its given framework. Autonomy may have its costs. But there will be large differences between communal groups in this respect.

On the basis of this catalogue of group goals, we might now consider which kinds of policies or rights would be appropriate to fulfill these aspirations of communal groups. I cannot discuss the question here in more detail. In many cases, the relation between group goals and political measures is more or less obvious, or well known form the literature about "cultural rights" and group differentiated policies. Here I only want to note that there is no simple relationship between concurring individual interests and communal interests, on the one hand, and general rights or policies or group differentiated policies, on the other. That means, certain concurring individual interests, e.g. emancipation interests, may be served by group specific policies or rights, while many genuine collective (communal) interests are obviously secured by general individual rights (e.g. rights of expression, assembly, association). Whether these interests or demands can best be secured by general political rights, or general social and economic or other measures, or by group differentiated rights and policies, is a contingent affair and has to be determined in each case.

In some cases, it can be doubted if certain interests can be realized by legal and political measures at all. This is true, as mentioned, for certain demands for recognition. It might be true in other cases, too. Preservation and prosperity of communal groups and group cultures

are dependent upon many conditions (not least the engagement of group members). Some of these conditions are affected by more general social and cultural developments, which can be influenced only marginally by political measures.

VII. Troubles with group politics

At the beginning, certain somewhat alarmed diagnoses about "cultural conflicts" or "identity conflicts" were mentioned. We can understand them as statements about conflicts, in which the goals of communal groups, which were discussed above, are at stake. If we take this classification of group interests or demands and look at actual conflicts in contemporary Western societies, what do we find? How do these findings relate to the diagnoses about cultural conflict, and to the three stories which were told above? It is not possible to answer these questions here in any comprehensive way. I will only put forward some observations or hypotheses.

Deep cultural conflict, in the sense of the two versions of our first story, seems to be rare. General political goals of communal groups, or demands for non-interference, seem only in rare cases be based on deep cultural differences and disagreements. The diagnosis of deep conflict in this sense may apply to some religious movements, or political movements inspired by certain religious convictions (Protestant, Islamic, or Jewish). Among communal groups, certain Islamist tendencies come to mind. Not much is known, however, about the influence of these tendencies among Islamic communities in the West. But this influence does not appear to be strong. Immigrant communities with predominantly Islamic orientation generally do not pursue or support radical political goals. There are also very few cases where the internal practices of communal groups collide with the general political principles and basic norms of contemporary Western societies. At least cases of open conflict, where governments or courts try to impose liberal principles on recalcitrant groups, seem to be very rare.

Cases which have some similarity to our second story, where a group is struggling for the preservation of its encompassing culture or distinct way of life, also seem to be quite rare. Some aboriginal communities (primarily in North America) may be likely candidates. In such cases, special difficulties may arise, because some of the claims are based on historical considerations (historical injustices, which the groups have suffered, or historical treaties). These are difficult to assess. Also, acceptance of such claims may sometimes imply large sacrifices for other members of the society.

In most cases, we find communal groups which articulate a mixture of goals and demands from our list, and whose communal ties largely resemble our third story. Many immigrant communities seem to strive both for emancipation and for the preservation of some collective life within the group (for which they may demand protection and support). Often, economic or occupational disadvantages are very important, because they make immigrant groups

vulnerable also in other areas, e.g. with respect to matters of recognition. Regional groups or movements in the Western world also show a mixtures of motives or goals, which is often hard to analyze. Distributive goals may sometimes
have some impact. Equally or more important seem to be collective identities with a strong historical component, which fuel demands for political influence or autonomy.

It is not obvious why these demands should be "non-negotiable", or pose insurmountable difficulties for conflict resolution in liberal democracies, as some of the diagnoses about cultural conflict seem to assume. Why should this be so?

One reason for holding such a view might be the assumption that it is impossible to accommodate such group goals within a liberal constitutional system and its guiding theoretical principles. But this is questionable, both with respect to liberal political conceptions and with respect to the practices of liberal states.

The accommodation of group demands, and group differentiated policies are nothing new, but belong to the standard political repertoire of liberal democracies. And political theorists have demonstrated that it is possible to evaluate or justify many group demands (of the kinds which were listed above) in a broadly liberal framework. Of course there will be specific controversies. Some of them may involve difficult normative problems and disagreements.[40] There might be wider disagreements or uncertainties about the claims of communal groups than about many other political problems. Nevertheless, on the face of it is hard to see why liberal democracies and liberal political theories should not be able to cope with these problems.

Another argument for the special dangers of group politics points to a dynamic relationship between group demands and group differentiated rights and policies (Offe 1998). If the state grants benefits or opportunities to certain groups, this may generate two kinds of feedback. First, with respect to the designated group, it may (under certain conditions) strengthen the position of unrepresentative group elites, or create vested interests for some parts of the group membership. This may lead to an escalation of claims by the group. Second, opportunity structures or incentives may emerge for other groups, which may lead these to make similar claims. Normatively, this would be no problem the other groups had equally good grounds for their claims. But it is suspected that other groups would somehow invent grounds for their claims, by false analogies, or by misrepresenting their situation or their "true" interests. To give one example, groups may be tempted to present themselves victims of discrimination (possibly of past discrimination, which is hard to verify), in order to qualify for compensation.[41] This is an interesting point. But again, it depends on the circumstances, and the danger is not inevitable. it is greatest, for instance, where resources are given to a group for certain purposes, which could have also other uses or satisfy other interests. Other forms of group differentiated policies are much less tempting.

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[40]   One important example are the conflicts and controversies surrounding affirmative action policies, especially in the United States. This is largely a debate about different interpretations of liberal principles.

[41]   Again, affirmative action policies in the United States are the most popular example for this kind of effect.

A third argument may point to certain characteristics of communal groups, which may make them hard to deal with. The loose structure of communal groups makes it very hard to termini, what their members really want. Communal groups normally do not have formal structures for collective decision making. So they are often represented by organizations or speakers or activists, who may have their own special concerns, and may not always represent the opinions and demands of the membership. The more radical leaders, or the more radical parts of the membership may have the better chance to make themselves heard. Also, informal leaders, who have reached some compromise agreement e.g. with some government agency, may have difficulties to make this binding for the membership. There may be a premium on intransigence, under such circumstances.[42] As solidary groups who may feel a necessity to stand together against outside enemies, communal groups may also tend to shield radical minorities within the group, even if they disagree with their methods or even their aims.[43] Also, their transgenerational character may sometimes lead to an accumulation of grievances over longer period. Such grievances and resultant antagonisms may become a part of their cultural heritage and collective identity.[44]

But again, these are possibilities whose realization may depend on many empirical circumstances. As they stand, these reflections do not really justify the somewhat bleak depictions of "cultural conflict" and "identity conflict" which were quoted at the beginning.

VIII.   Quaestiones iuris and quaestiones facti in political theories

This paper should be understood as and admonition, and as an attempt to bring somewhat more sociological realism into both diagnoses of current social and cultural developments in the West, especially its "multicultural" aspects, and into normative discussions about cultural rights, or multicultural policies.

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[42] As Brian Barry has pointed out: "... religious and class conflict is a conflict of organizations. Ethnic conflict is a conflict of solidary groups. Whether these groups have an organizational embodiment is a contingent matter, but in any case they do not need organization to work up a riot or a pogrom so long as they have some way of recognizing who belongs to which group ... Ethnic groups may of course have leaders, but an ethnic group is not defined by the fact that it follows certain leaders. If the present leaders agree to something on behalf of their followers it is always open to some rival to denounce the terms as a sell-out and to seek to gather support for repudiating them." (Barry 1989, 131).

[43] Most of these suspicions could also be directed against social movements generally, by the way.

[44] I should note here a n important limitation of my discussion. When I talked about group conflict, I meant only those kinds of conflict where the parties pursue mo
re or less identifiable goals. More diffuse kinds of antagonism are not analyzed here. Terms like ethnic or racial conflict, xenophobia and so on often include phenomena like diffuse hostilities, frequent, but unorganized clashes between members of different groups, spontaneous violence and so on. These are not treated here (even if they are sometimes linked to more organized movements and conflicts) and would have to be analyzed separately.

Relations between normative claims and empirical facts, and more generally, between normative (moral and political) theories and statements of fact, or empirical social theories, would merit a much more detailed discussion. It is more or less trivial that normative principles must be applied, and often adapted to empirical circumstances. But the exact nature of the link is more problematic. In what way, or to what degree does empirical knowledge play a part in the design or justification of more general normative principles on the one hand, and in what ways does empirical information come into play in more specific application of principles? And what kind of empirical information can or should be used - facts, which are more or less uncontested public knowledge, knowledge based on personal reflection or introspection, or more complex (and possibly contested) knowledge, as descriptive information or causal theories? Here, I can only mention these topics, and give some further illustrations.[45]

One interesting example is the "test of viability", whom Raz mentions. He rightly says that the size and viability of cultural groups is relevant for the justification of "multicultural" political measures. In particular, there is "no point in trying to prop up by public action cultures which have lost their vitality..." (Raz 1998, 198; Raz 1994, 190). The criterion of "viability" is certainly a plausible one. But the task of actually distinguishing viable and non-viable cultures or communal groups may not be so easy, to say the least.

Another example is the adjudication of claims which are based on the assertion of historical facts and/or on certain causal connections. Claims which refer to old, and broken promises or treaties, or claims for the rectification or compensation of historical injustices need a convincing representation of historical developments - not always an easy enterprise either.

Even more difficult, at least in most cases, is the determination of complex causal relations. This is most visible in demands for policies of anti-discrimination (like affirmative action). For their moral justification, both with respect to the allocation of responsibility and to the appropriateness of proposed remedies, it is important to show in what ways, by which mechanisms and so on discrimination actually occurs (or has occurred in the past). If for instance a group of recent immigrants is discriminated against, cannot simply be determined by comparisons between their level of welfare or their status positions (in various relevant dimensions) with those of the resident population. That is because there are many possible alternative causes for certain disadvantages of such a group (like the unavoidable effects of changing from one set of economic, social and cultural circumstances to another, and so on) - causes which do not *necessarily* constitute an injustice done to the group.[46]

My last case will be the relevance of *actual intent* for the justification or adjudication of claims to multicultural rights or policies. If cultural groups demand public support for the preservation and development of their culture, it is quite crucial to determine if this interest is actually, and

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[45] A lot of very basic, and basically unproblematic, or uncontested, empirical assumptions about the human condition go of course into all normative theorizing, even at the most general level. But even at the more basic level of normative theorizing, certain debatable empirical presuppositions or assumptions come into play.

[46] Of course, these sorts of difficulty are well known from the field of *legal* adjudication. But they are relevant also for the moral justification of political claims.

sincerely held be relevant parts of the membership. If most members are not really so committed, public support will be in vain with respect to its stated goal. And there is always the possibility that support (e.g. in the form of material resources) is claimed for different, and hidden purposes. Should this be so, then the moral justification for such claims vanishes. Like in the case of the "test of viability", it might not be so easy to determine actual intent. Especially if we consider that different members of communal groups might have different interpretations of their collective interests. Demands which are made by elites or particularly committed subgroups might not really be representative of what the general membership thinks and feels to be in its interest. In the case of demands for public resources or other support for group development it is generally not possible to determine from the outside, as it were, what the legitimate interests of such a group are. This is so because members do not *have* to have in interest in the preservation of their group culture. For them, it may be equally legitimate to strive for assimilation into some other culture. Nobody can make this decision for them. But the process of forming and expressing their intent in this area is obviously difficult. And in many cases there are obvious incentives for the strategic misrepresentations of group interests. For it might be very tempting to parade mere distributional or similar interests as genuinely collective interests in cultural survival and flourishing.

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