

0 Chapter 20 – Belonging

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- 4 Belonging is a relation that an individual bears to society or to some more specific wider group such as family, community, caste, race, class, nation... As such, it has been frequently discussed along at least three different conceptual lines.
- 5 One has to do with how and in what sense belonging bestows 'identity'. The concept of identity has for some decades become central ever since the rise of identity politics, a form of politics that people are poised to mobilize themselves towards when they identify with a religion or a nationality or a caste or race – as a Muslim, as it might be, or a Quebecois, or a Dalit, or African-American...
- 6 Another line of discussion has to do with interpreting belonging in terms of feelings of solidarity or fraternity with others in the wider group.
- 7 A third has to do with the condition when belonging goes missing or is thwarted and difficult; often such a condition is discussed under the label 'alienation' and belonging, therefore, is equated with the unalienated life.

- 8 The first of these – belonging as identity – is a more or less descriptive issue, whereas the second and third – belonging as entailing supportive emotions of compassion and solidarity, and belonging as the unalienated life – tend to be seen in normative terms, as ideals or values that we should aspire to.
 - 9 There is a vast amount of literature on each of these ways of thinking about belonging but there will be no effort to summarize it here. Instead, the chapter will begin with an analytical elaboration of the theoretical issues at stake in these three aspects of belonging and then proceed with an extensive empirical report on how these questions of belonging have surfaced in different parts of the world. Though there is no effort to be globally comprehensive in this empirical reach, it will nevertheless briefly cover areas as far flung as Europe, North America, Latin America, the Middle East, and South Asia. In the course of this empirical survey and analysis the notion of belonging will be situated in a wide variety of contexts: race, caste, religion, tribe, indigeneity, ethnicity, nationality, class, and language...
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10 **1. Theoretical Issues: Belonging as Identity, Solidarity, and the Unalienated Life**

11 **1.1 Belonging as Identity**

- 12 Though the concept of belonging as identity has been the focus of interest since the rise of identity politics in the last several decades, its significance is more general than its manifestation in such a form of politics. For one thing, a great deal of what has come to be called ‘identity politics’ consists in movements with short term instrumental goals to gain one or other benefit for certain groups in society. As such, however necessary and important it may be, its links with the concept of identity can be temporary and relatively shallow. For another, identities need not by any means always give rise to identity politics. The most that can be said of the link between the concept of identity and identity politics is, as was said earlier: identities make one poised to be mobilized in identity politics.
- 13 It is useful at the outset to observe that belonging and identity have an objective and a subjective side. One may, for instance, belong to a family or nation by criteria that are relatively objective: birth to certain parents, for example, or possession of a certain passport. But frequently one may not subjectively care for this objective fact about

oneself. One may feel no subjective identification with one's family or country. If so, one has only an objective familial or national identity.

14 It is only when one endorses the objective fact about oneself that an objective identity is accompanied by subjective identity. Sometimes, though much less frequently, one may even imagine or declare oneself by choice to have a certain identity which has no substantial objective co-relative, as when some who had never even been to New York said in the aftermath of September 11th, 2001, "We are all New Yorkers now". But for the most part subjective identity consists in identifying with some feature that is also objectively present. That is why it is misleading to say that subjective identity is a matter of choice. It is usually a matter of endorsement of what is given to one, only rarely a matter of choosing one's identity *de novo*, as it were.

15 Biological criteria for identity are frequently considered objective or given to one, which does not mean that they do not leave one with a subjective choice about the matter since (increasingly) one's biology may be altered by one's own voluntary decision. And even when there is no radical intervention in the biology, some may, without denying the objective fact, be indifferent to and refuse to positively endorse the gender or the race that is biologically given to one.

16 Moreover, though for long, gender or racial identity were considered to be objective and based purely on biological considerations, in the past few decades, the very idea of a purely objective criterion of identity of this kind has been put into question and gender and race and a variety of other such forms of identity are thought to be 'socially constructed'. This does not necessarily mean at all that they are not objective. They may still be more on the objective than the subjective side of identity, especially if the process of social construction occurs independently of subjective endorsement and choices on the part of the individual agents. The entire question of social construction is a complex and interesting topic that cannot be pursued here in any detail, except to say that it complicates the notion of objective identity and to that extent qualifies the distinction between objective and subjective identity or belonging.

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17 Objective identities are much more interesting when they are social rather than biological, and in a way even more problematic; and this bears some detailed discussion. Perhaps the most classic and frequently discussed example of this is class identity. One familiar way of understanding class identity is owed to Marx, but how exactly to understand what Marx said about it is a matter of interpretation and dispute. An objectivist reading of Marx goes roughly like this:

one's class belonging or identity is not a matter of subjective identification but an objective given that derives from history, and history is to be understood by an objective account of it found in what has come to be called 'historical materialism' --though that is not an expression in Marx's own writing.[4] On this account, which class one belongs to has nothing to do with one's identifying with any given class. Whether or not one identifies with a given class, one belongs to it simply because of the objective unfolding of successive economic formations in history. Thus, for instance, proletarian identity is entirely a matter of specific forms of class employment ('working' class) in a certain economic formation (capitalism) in a certain period of history (modernity). One may have no commitment to that class, have no class consciousness or solidarity with other working people, pursuing only what Marx called 'bourgeois' aspirations – still, one's true identity or 'self' or consciousness is proletarian even if, in such cases, hidden from oneself by layers of ideology or false consciousness. It is the task of revolutionary social transformation to mobilize the proletariat to overcome this false consciousness and to realize their true 'selves', their proper or objective revolutionary class role in history.

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Such a view has given rise to much anxiety, especially in liberal thinkers like Isaiah Berlin who saw in such an ideal of emancipation or self-realization, a form of liberty – what he called 'positive' liberty – which he thought to be tyrannical because someone can be 'forced to be free' (to be someone other than what one subjectively views oneself to be) by a vanguard, armed with an objective theory of history.[5] Though in Berlin's case this was a cold warrior's anxiety, there is a deeper, more theoretically motivated, underlying worry about such objectivity which is that someone is being attributed a self or identity and belonging that he or she may explicitly disavow or – as is perhaps more often the case – may have no self-knowledge of. That is to say, nothing whatever in someone's behaviour reflects the identity being attributed, not even in one's unconsciously motivated behaviour (in this respect Marx – on this objectivist reading – is distinguishable from Freud, who at least insisted on unconscious behavioural manifestations of identity). The intuition against objectivism of this sort in the matter of identity is that to attribute a self or identity or belonging to someone when there is no behavioural sign of it nor any self-awareness of it (perhaps even disavowal of it) is to disregard the agency of the subjects, seeing them merely as reflections of an objectively conceived theory of history. The intuition in favour of the objectivist side arises most pressingly when subjects of a group are deeply oppressed and yet acquiescent in their oppression. The intuition is that such subjects are oppressed, despite their acquiescence in the oppression, oppressed by standards that

have nothing to do with the behavior, the awareness, the avowals of the subjects. This theme surfaces implicitly at various points in the empirical survey and most vividly in the section on caste in India.

19 One possible solution to the difficulty is this. Frequently, in history, populations that have been acquiescent in their oppression have transformed abruptly and in very large numbers and joined movements of social and political transformation and even revolution. This could, of course, be a change of mind on their part, a change from acquiescence to dissatisfaction and revolutionary consciousness. That is how the opponent of objectivism would insist on presenting it -one subjectivity being replaced by another. But both the abruptness and the large numbers to whom this sometimes happens suggests that a 'change of mind' is not a plausible explanation since changes of mind tend to emerge through deliberation or acculturation towards something new, processes that are both slow and proceed from small numbers of people to larger numbers via a variety of accumulated efforts at public education. A better explanation of the volatility and numerical strength of such transformations is to attribute *retrospectively*, a *latent* dissatisfaction in the population even when they were explicitly acquiescent in their behavior and avowals. This solution does not give up the link between agency and behavior. It simply does not require that the link be simultaneous. It may be thought that if there is this link to behaviour something of the 'objectivity' in the objectivist position is compromised. But it should not be seen as a wholesale cancellation of objectivity since objectivist positions that do not require even this minimal theoretical link with behavior and agency are, in any case, marred by an ulterior form of transcendence in the understanding of identity that seems irrelevant to the study of society and history. Again, these issues are exemplified in the discussion of caste in India in the regional survey below.

20 Turning from objective to subjective belonging and identity, it is worth noting that much of subjective belonging, when it is longstanding and deeply rooted, is unself-conscious and unarticulated. It is only people who undergo some sort of dislocation from their deep and longstanding roots who ask questions such as "Who am I?", "To which group, do I belong?" Of course, the dislocation that makes them raise these questions about identity or belonging, though it is often so, need not always be physical or geographical (as in migration) but can also occur when one is sedentary - as a result of unsettling (material and psychological and cultural) conditions owing to a variety of either external influences or a variety of internal transformations.

- 21 Often, subjective identifications are formed under conditions of defeat and feelings of powerlessness and helplessness. Thus, much of Muslim identity in the Middle East today has been formed under (explicitly articulated) anti-Western feelings of being subjugated by what is perceived as a long history of colonization that continues in revised forms to this day, despite decolonization. Islam, under such conditions, came to be seen as a source of autonomy and dignity by a demoralized population. But sometimes identities are formed through triumphalist feelings as well. Linda Colley^[6] describes how Scots came to endorse a British identity only when Britain became a great Empire; and much identification of American Jews with Israel occurred in the aftermath of Israel's smashing victory in 1967. So also, some Jihadi identifications with Islam formed through triumphalist feelings in the light of what were felt to be 'Mujahideen' victories after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- 22 Nationalism has played its role in the formation of identities. In Europe, many religious and other forms of identity were formed as a result of nation-building exercises after the Westphalian peace. Nationalism of this kind was based on a self-consciously majoritarian identity-formation – finding an external enemy within, despising and subjugating it, and claiming that the nation is 'ours' not 'theirs' (the Jews, the Irish, Protestants in Catholic majority countries, Catholics in Protestant majority countries...). Often this created self-conscious backlash minoritarian identities among these populations. (In fact, secularism, as a doctrine, was formulated to repair the damage of religious and civil strife done by conflicts among religious identities formed by these nation-building majoritarianisms and the minoritarian backlashes against them.) A familiar form of identity formation of majorities and minorities also grew out of colonial policies of 'divide and rule' in countries of the south, an importing of European nation-building ideas into the colonies. Many of these sources of identity and belonging and the mobilizations that they give rise to in the public and political sphere are traversed in the regional surveys of this chapter further below.
- 23 But quite apart from the sources that give rise to it, there is the prior theoretical question about what *is* subjective identity? How shall we characterize or define it?
- 24 There is a tendency in some social theorists who shun identity politics to confuse normative and descriptive questions and take a sceptical stance on the very idea of subjective identity, claiming that any given individual subject cannot be said to have any firm or clear singular identity because she identifies with far too many wider groups – her gender, her family, her profession, her religion, her nation, her class, her caste, her company of people with shared mutual interests... and so indefinitely on and on. But this skepticism,

though it may have a normative point in commending those who have an ecumenical and supple social outlook, cannot be a ground to dismiss the importance of notions of subjective identity, since for many subjects, descriptively speaking, one or other of these identifications will be far more important and loom much larger in certain contexts and, when that is so, they will be much more likely to mobilize themselves in public life and politics on the basis of that identity. Thus a Muslim may also be an Iranian, a father, a doctor,... but in certain contexts (such as those mentioned above), it is his Islamic values that he elevates above his nationalist, family, professional... values, and mobilizes himself on that basis and not others in public and political life. Such strongly felt singular identity, and the politics that is sometimes based on it, has been an undeniable descriptive fact in our social and political lives, however multiple one's identities may be – and ought to be.

25 But to say that subjective identity is not thus dismissible is not yet to define it. And defining it is no easy matter. We have said that subjective identity usually consists in *endorsing* certain facts about oneself – one's nationality, race, gender, caste, class... – and in doing so allowing oneself to be poised to be mobilized in public and political life on its basis. So the question is what sort of state of mind or commitment is this endorsement? At first sight the answer might be that these endorsements are simply one's valuing one's nationality, religion, etc. more strongly or intensely than other things one values. However, 'intensity' (with which one holds a value) is not exactly a theoretically tractable idea and even if it were, it is not sufficient to define subjective identity since one may have these intensely held values and find that they are not quite rational in oneself, even often wishing one didn't have them. If so, it would be perverse to define subjective identity in terms of it. Some further constraint must be added to the presence of these values to reveal identity in the subjective sense. It is tempting to think that the further constraint is simply a second-order attitude of valuing one's first order values. That would rule out the cases in which the first order values seem unwanted and alien to oneself. But this is insufficient too since our second-order states of approval and disapproval of one's first order states may also seem irrational or neurotic to one – as, for instance, when one thinks that one's second order disapproval of some first order value or disposition is too prim, too much of a super-ego phenomenon. And suggesting a step up to the third-order threatens to merely render an infinite regress. What other constraint might there be, then, that helps to characterize subjective identity?

26 One possible answer is to see these values as accompanied by a very specific sort of property, the property of viewing them as something one ought not to revise – as in the case of Ulysses and the sirens, whereby one ties oneself to the mast of these values so that even if

one were tempted by circumstances to cease to have those values or commitments, one would still be living by those values. This elaborates analytically the intuition that subjective identity consists in one's self-conception, how one conceives oneself to be. Such self-conceptions are often intuitively expressed in such remarks as: I wouldn't recognize myself if I betrayed my country (or my family, or class, etc), or even as in British schoolboy identity expressed by E.M.Forster, "I wouldn't recognize myself if I betrayed my friends." In other words, one views departures from these values as moral or political weakenings and, therefore, departures from one's identity. Values, held in this way, may properly be thought of as identity-imparting values. So, for instance the Iranian clergy in Iran might – in this Ulysses fashion – think of Islamic values in such a way that they are willing to entrench Islam in their society so that if they were to weaken in the face of what they conceive to be the pernicious siren-songs of modernity, they would still be living by Islamic values. This idea of subjective identity cannot be dismissed as a form of fanatical irrationality since even those with a liberal identity share this constraint on how they hold their values. This is evident in the fact that liberals elevate some of their values (such as freedom of speech) to fundamental rights, the point of which is precisely to prevent themselves from acting when they weaken in their resolve and wish to censor some odious viewpoint (neo-Nazism, say) that has surfaced in society. This echoes exactly the same structural constraint on how values are held as in the case of the Islamic clergy mentioned above. Such a constraint (of holding values in the Ulysses and the sirens form) captures how deeply one identifies with some point of view (Islam, Liberalism, etc) at any given time and may properly be thought to be a reflection of subjective identity (at that time). Much more can be said to elaborate this, but will not be pursued here.

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As said earlier, the notion of identity came into prominence with the rise of the identity politics of race, gender, caste, language... since the 1960s and 1970s and has been with us since in many parts of the world. (All of these are briefly surveyed in the summary regional studies that follow below.) A good deal of this was necessitated by the fact that standard universalist formulations of liberal ideals refused to acknowledge these particular identities, dismissing them as parochializing public life in one form or another. More interesting was their refusal by traditional Left politics which claimed that class identity was the more fundamental identity, not race or gender or linguistic identities and that a lofty focus on class struggles would usher out the other deprivations that each identity politics was seeking to usher out with more specific struggles of its own. There was undoubtedly something blinkered about this refusal too since it refused to recognize the extent to which disrespect can come from other sources than class distinctions. Even so, there is a sense in which it seems as if the category of class is more basic and one needs

to find a way of putting it without failing to recognize the point about the multiple sources of disrespect. A way to approach how it is more basic is to point out the following. Though substantial gains have certainly been made on the racial, gender, caste... fronts in the last many years as a result of identitarian struggles, these gains would never have been allowed if they deeply undermined the basic structure of the capitalist society and in particular if they jeopardized the key interests of corporations, which have such a sway on policy-makers nowadays. This is, of course, a speculation. But given the conspicuous power of vested interests, we can make the speculation with confidence. If so, there is no gainsaying the fundamental importance of class identity over others, and this speculative formulation is the right way to present it rather than a formulation that does not recognize the importance of other forms of identity. (Of course, one should also explore parallel speculations, for instance by speculating that if any gains have been made on the class front, they would not be allowed if it deeply undermined patriarchy. But, though it is certainly worth exploring, it is not perhaps as immediately obvious that one has as full a grip on what such a speculation would be based on.)

28 1.2 Belonging and Solidarity

- 29 Another aspect of belonging has been elaborated in terms of the notions of fraternity or feelings of brotherhood and sisterhood, in short feelings of solidarity within the members of a society. Solidarities often presuppose a common point of view and that is why it is an ideal that is very often found in struggles and movements towards an ideal. Thus, for instance, there is talk of 'working-class solidarity' where there is a common goal, a common perspective on what is to be done by all those within a group. But of course such a common purpose and point of view may be present in a society at large, not just in groups struggling for some idea or cause. When so, solidarity shades into what is called 'fraternity'.
- 30 If this point about a common point of view as making possible belonging as solidarity and fraternity is correct, then it is safe to say that when societies were relatively homogenous (if they ever were so), solidarity perhaps came more easily and without too much effort. But the hard question is what belonging as solidarity amounts to when there is widespread cultural heterogeneity. In the modern period, when societies – due to migration or conquest or due to internal fragmentation are inevitably comprised of multiple groups and points of view – solidarity is more of an achievement (and also more of an urgent necessity) since solidarity cannot be taken for granted across groups as it can be perhaps within a group. When there is plurality of religion, ethnicity, etc, there is bound to be at the very least difference and often even conflict in values and beliefs.

When this happens a whole range of issues arise about how cohesion, solidarity, fraternity, etc., are even so much as possible and what they would amount to if they were possible. What could solidarity mean across groups (rather than within them) when groups conflict deeply over beliefs and values?

- 31 There are three prominent doctrines that address the question of difference and disagreement over values and beliefs among groups.
- 32 The first and the most longstanding doctrine of modernity has been liberal universalism, whose lofty stance has been that when there is conflict of this kind between two sets of values, only one can be right (two contradictory positions cannot both be right) and so difference and disagreement are not occasions to shed one's universalist aspirations. Points of view that one disagrees with may be 'tolerated' (and liberalism elevates toleration into a primary virtue) but that is not a concession to their truth or rightness. Thus, despite its commitment to toleration of other points of view, its eventual ideal is group solidarity that comes from within a single point of view, the universally right one which transcends difference.[\[7\]](#)
- 33 A second doctrine, cultural relativism, recoils from this universalism and allows that different cultures and groups may claim truth, relative to their cultural points of view, denying that there is any way of assessing truth from an Archimedean position outside of these points of view. Solidarity across points of view is not a coherent ideal, they are only to be had within cultures and groups.[\[8\]](#)
- 34 A third position, pluralism, defines itself in partial opposition to both of these doctrines. Against the first it argues that toleration is the wrong ideal with which to address the question of difference. The very term 'toleration' suggests that one is putting up with something for which one might not have any respect. If toleration entails respect it is only of a very abstract kind – respect for a citizen's autonomy to hold whatever views she wishes, even if one does not specifically respect her for her views. Pluralism, by contrast, respects difference, not merely the autonomy of citizens to be different. And respect is a first step towards building solidarity across cultures. [\[9\]](#)
- 35 But it is pluralism's contrast with the other doctrine, cultural relativism, that pushes the ideal of solidarity deeper than merely showing respect for other cultures. This is where all the interest and complexities of the subject of solidarity lie. Relativism holds that there are values and beliefs that are true (or false) only relative to particular cultures and so such truth (or falsity) as they have does not speak at all to other cultures. They are incommensurate with the values and beliefs of other cultures. One culture may recognize that another culture holds certain beliefs, adheres to certain values, but

that recognition is purely detached and disengaged, it is merely an academic or ethnographic comprehension of another. There is no engagement of one culture by another. If so, how can there be any inter (rather than intra) group solidarity? At best, one can go to another culture and get converted by 'going native', a form of defection rather than transformation via influence or dialogue or persuasion. Thus solidarity conceived as the building of bridges across difference is ruled out. By contrast, pluralism, despite acknowledging genuine difference between the values of different cultures, does not consider values across cultures to be incommensurate in this way. That is to say, difference does not engender detachment and indifference; rather it leaves it completely open that one may learn from other cultures and seek to influence other cultures, in turn, through mutual engagement.

36 This distinctness from cultural relativism makes it clear that nothing in pluralism requires one to stamp every commitment of every culture as true or right simply because of the fact that it is avowed by a culture. Respect for cultures does not concede to them that automatic form of self-validation. One may certainly find some values of another culture (as indeed of one's own culture) to be wrong and indeed that is precisely why one, unlike as with relativism, often seeks to engage with that culture – seeking to change its mind and thereby overcome the disagreement over values and practices. So long as such engagement is done with the respect that defines the pluralist ideal, as expounded in its contrast with liberal toleration, pluralism may insist that differing cultures are commensurate and can find each other to be wrong without giving up on the pluralism. So a question then arises: what is it to show solidarity and engage with respect with a culture with which one disagrees and moreover, crucially, to do so with a more specific form of respect than merely the general and abstract form of respect that liberalism grants, the respect for all persons' autonomy and right to an opinion, however false? How is that more specific form of respect towards another to be shown while one is disagreeing with him or her and seeking to change her values and beliefs? This is the hard question. Hard because without a good answer to it, solidarity in the face of deep cultural disagreement and difference has not been clarified.

37 The specific form of respect that is the hallmark of pluralism bestows on such engagement with another culture with which one disagrees, a very specific quality. The engagement must take the form of attempting to persuade another culture by appealing to some grounds or reasons that are *internal to the commitments of the other culture*. That displays a respect for the other culture that goes beyond, that is more specific than, the respect that owes to the abstract recognition of all to have their opinions, however wrong. It respects their substantive moral and psychological economies rather

than merely their autonomy and seeks to reason with them *within the detail of their world-view*, taking its particular substantive values seriously and engaging with them so as to persuade it to change its mind or practice on the matter on which there is disagreement. Thus solidarity in the face of deep difference and disagreement – unlike solidarities that exist within a group with a common point of view – may necessarily take a rather abstract form. Within a shared point of view, solidarity may consist of routine forms of support and mutual understanding. But when there is no common point of view, when there are different and conflicting points of view the ideal of engaging with others from within their point of view is what solidarity amounts to. This is not easily recognizable as the traditional ways of thinking about fraternity and brotherhood with others that hold within homogeneously characterized societies.

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Is it even right to call this solidarity and belonging? There is no reason to deny that it is. People may find or form themselves to be a fraternity at all sorts of level – and empathy of this rarified kind (engagement with conflicting others from within their point of view) is one source of solidarity, a uniquely modern source, given the tensions, conflicts, and fragmentations of modern society. One way to see why it is still a form of fraternity might be elaborated in terms of the ideal of brotherhood that fraternity implies. As was said above, attitudes of both liberal toleration and (especially) cultural relativism yields no substantive engagement with other points of view. The first tolerates them without requiring substantive engagement, the latter thinks substantive engagement is not possible since moral and political truth is to be understood from within cultural points of view because it does not straddle different points of view. By contrast, the engagement that pluralism requires suggests a quite different outlook and one stark way to express the contrast between these outlooks that brings brotherhood to centre-stage might be this. Pluralism would have each group among plural groups saying to others, ‘You must be my brother’ and seeking to engage with others from within their points of view to overcome conflicts in moral and political values and beliefs. By contrast, the outlook of (especially) cultural relativism and (even) liberal toleration is better summed up as “You need never be my brother”. Toleration recoils from the slogan, “You must be my brother”. And that may give the impression that the slogan suggests intolerance. But that is not the point of the slogan. The point of the slogan is not to express coerciveness but to express the commitment to engaging with other points of view that conflict with one’s with the goal of learning from them or convincing them to transcend difference, and this form of engagement is an expression of a form of fraternity with all others, however different they may be. It is fraternity because it reflects the fact that one cares about others and that is why one seeks to share the moral and political truth, as one sees it, with them; and one does

so by entering their point of view and seeking to convince them from within it rather than simply by claiming a universality to one's point of view. (The regional survey section on Canada speaks to and conveys the importance of some of the possibilities of such engagement.)

39 It may be that in some societies, conflicts and tensions between conflicting groups can never be overcome while there are economic and political conditions that encourage conflict and division. Historically, in some colonized countries in which conflicting groups had emerged as a result of colonial policies of 'divide and rule' as mentioned above, nationalist struggles for independence from colonial rule sought to mobilize groups pluralistically, transcending these conflicts in an inclusive anti-imperialist struggle; but some decades after independence was gained, it has become increasingly clear that the neo-liberal political economies that many countries of the south have acquiesced in (acquiesced, that is, in a new and revised form of imperialism, despite decolonization), revive and perpetuate and intensify traditional religious, ethnic, and tribal conflicts among groups because of various mechanisms that make development policy ineffective or that even directly corrupt local politics for the interests of transnational corporations and international finance. To the extent that this is so, group conflict will only be marginally ameliorated by the solidarities of empathetic engagement outlined above. It will only be transcended if there are also effective struggles of a more fundamental kind against the prevailing institutions linked to the international economic system.

40 These interconnections between, on the one hand, the politics of pluralism and, on the other, the struggles of a more fundamental nature are very important to fully understand and explore, not merely theoretically but in political practice that aspires to a deeper eventual fraternity and solidarity among groups. They are essentially two different forms or modes of political activism – the first is dialogical and negotiative engagement, the second is resistance. The reason for this is obvious. Pluralist engagement of the sort outlined above is only possible among relative equal conflicting groups, whereas the struggle against neo-liberal economic forces is a struggle against a range of dominating tendencies and structures with which it makes no sense to speak of dialogue or negotiation. How two such diverse political efforts must be combined and pursued has no easy answer, though what is obvious is that the latter, the resistance form of political activism, unlike the former, is essentially a matter of mobilizing people in movements.

41 **1.3 Belonging as the Unalienated Life**

- 42 Though, as discussed above, belonging may have important relations to identity and to ideals of solidarity, it is, at its core, a notion that is most deeply of a piece with and inseparable from the ideal of an unalienated life. It is hard to conceive what a life of belonging would be, if it were also alienated. But what is it to be alienated and unalienated? Many different answers may be found in the vast theoretical treatment of the subject from Hegel, Marx and before, to Sartre, Arendt, and after.
- 43 One revealing (even if insufficient) clue about what is meant by alienation may be found in the fact that most social theorists who have written on the subject have claimed that alienation is a malaise of the modern period. However defective pre-modern societies (societies that we summarize with such omnibus labels as 'feudal') might have been, alienation does not seem to have been a defect that characterized them. For all the extraordinary oppression that serfs and slaves, and indeed women, suffered in an earlier period, they did not want for a sense of belonging in their social lives. That suggests that alienation has as its source, the fragmentation of individual lives that was generated by the capitalist political economies that emerged in the modern period. More recently it has emerged that the modern period has also generated a deep alienation of human subjects not only from each other but also from nature. The unalienated life of belonging, therefore, is an ideal regarding not just social belonging but of our belonging in nature as its inhabitants.
- 44 Though this linking of alienation with the rise of capital and the social (and other) relations it generates makes it clear that there are material sources to alienation, it must be remembered that alienation itself is an experiential phenomenon, something felt and experienced by individuals, a malaise whose symptoms, therefore, are to be found in the mentality of individuals. What are the features of such a mentality?
- 45 If pre-modern societies allowed for a sense of belonging as unalienatedness, whatever else they did not allow for, the question arises as to whether it is that sense of belonging that needs to be recovered in the modern period. This question cannot possibly get an affirmative answer, at least not without betraying a nostalgia for feudal societies. The reason for this is simple. The pre-modern sense of belonging or unalienatedness was crippled by the absence of two ideals that emerged only in the modern period, the ideals of liberty and equality. Belonging with a pervasive absence of liberty and equality is not an ideal worth recovering. And if belonging were to be recovered without deep unfreedoms and inequalities, the very meaning of the term 'belonging' would be transformed from its pre-modern meaning.

But now, if this is so, there is an interesting set of complexities that follow because of similar issues arising with the concepts expressing the ideals of liberty and equality that were introduced in Enlightenment modernity to correct these defects of the earlier period. It is a familiar curiosity, indeed a perversity, that as soon as the great ideals of liberty and liberty and equality were articulated it became increasingly clear that they could not be jointly implemented. This was for many reasons, two of the more familiar being that liberty became attached to two things that put it in irresolvable tension with equality. First, the possession of property bestowed upon its possessor a form of liberty that became enshrined in the law of the land as a right, and the inequalities that this gives rise to has been widely studied, most powerfully, of course, by Marx. And second, though this is less widely studied, liberty became associated with the notion of desert, the right of each individual to reap the rewards of her or his talent, thereby incentivizing talent in a competitive form and giving rise to inequalities in ways that are everywhere visible in our societies. So, liberty and equality, though they were formulated in the modern period to correct for the defects of pre-modern societies, were equally hobbled as ideals, by this deep internal tension with each other. It would follow, then, that if the notions of liberty and equality are to be made compatible, they cannot be the ideals as they have been elaborated by the accounts they were given in the political Enlightenment. Indeed if they were to be made compatible, they cannot mean what they are taken to mean by these standard accounts. This is just the situation with the ideal of the unalienated life, whose very meaning must change, as was said earlier, if it is to avoid the highly defective social surround within which it was embedded in pre-modernity. It is apparent from all this that all three ideal are inadequate: the ideal of the unalienated life of pre-modernity, and the ideals of liberty and equality in the modern period brought into correct the inadequacies of the feudal past. They, all three, need to be holistically transformed all at once in their meaning. How might this be done?

One way to do this might be to first remove liberty and equality from the centre-stage position they have been given in our time and replace them with the idea of belonging qua unalienated life as the most fundamental concept of the three, and then re-introduce liberty and inequality, from the backdoor as it were, with less centrality than they have had, merely now as necessary conditions for the more fundamental goal of achieving the unalienated life. So re-configured, the tension between liberty and equality may subside, but so also, if it now had liberty and equality as its necessary conditions, the life of belonging would no longer be the unalienated life of pre-modernity. If one stressed the work of the early Marx, this approximates Marx's understanding of what is needed since he stressed the unalienated life in his early work, and throughout his

life's work thought of liberty and equality as articulated by political liberalism to be 'bourgeois' notions, which in the form of tension we have observed above, they certainly are. The triangular and concerted reconfiguration of all three ideals just proposed would take the notions of liberty and equality some distance from the notions they were articulated as in the context of a capitalist society that Marx was criticizing, and moreover liberty and equality would be in the service of creating something of more fundamental importance, an unalienated society of belonging for all – more fundamental, that is, than the social engineering goals that ameliorations towards equality and liberty amount to in the present political framework of collective bargaining.

48 What, in particular, is meant by reconfiguring liberty and equality as merely necessary conditions for the more fundamental goal of belonging, so that they are not likely to be in tension with one another as they have hitherto been? As noted above, liberty gives rise to tensions with equality because it attaches to the possession of property and to talent. One would need to see how and why it is defined to do so, in order to understand how the reconfiguration might be pursued. For the sake of simplicity, let us focus on the grounds in liberal theory for the possession of property.

49 The justifications of the privatization of property from the commons in liberal doctrine are well captured in a famous argument known as 'the tragedy of commons', an argument that summarizes a centuries-long way of thinking about the rationality of privatized economic arrangements that are at the heart of the tensions between liberty and equality we have noted.^[10] The argument goes as follows: If there was to be no privatization of land there would instead have to be a collective cultivation of the commons. Such an arrangement is only possible if each individual commoner cooperates in its collective cultivation. But such cooperation is irrational. Why? Because cooperation requires each commoner to pay a certain cost (often restraint is a cost to pay since often over-cultivation is the problem). If each individual commoner pays the cost, of course everyone gains. But each individual commoner will have to consider that if he does not cooperate (i.e. does not pay the cost), the gains are immediate whereas the gains from cooperation are long-term, moreover the gains from non-cooperation are all for himself whereas the gains from paying the cost are spread over the whole group, and above all he is never sure that if he pays the cost others will do so too, so there is always the qualm that each has that he will pay the cost and others won't, which will be the worst possible outcome for him. So it is rational for each individual commoner to not cooperate. But if that happens the commons are doomed to destruction. Thus, the tragedy. So: privatization is a better bet.

- 50 A standard response to this argument is to say that it does not prove the rationality of privatization but rather proves that we need to detect, police, and punish non-cooperation. Nobody can be opposed to such an effort at solution to the problem – obviously we should try and police and punish non-cooperation when it happens. But the trouble is that, quite apart from the difficulty of detecting subtle forms of non-cooperation, the very same tragedy-style argument arises as to why it is rational to cooperate in a system of policing and punishment if we can get away with bribing or threatening those who administer the system or those – witnesses, for example – who cooperate with the running of it. This is in fact widespread in many societies, and in societies that congratulate themselves in having gotten rid of the culture of bribes and threats, the non-cooperation is frequently carried out more formally by loopholing the law.
- 51 The ideal of an unalienated life points the way to a more non-standard and simpler but deeper repudiation of the tragedy of the commons argument. It rejects the entire way of thinking that gives rise to the tragedy by pointing out that to even have the qualm and ask the question that leads to the tragedy of the commons – ‘What if I paid the cost and others did not?’ – is to be thoroughly alienated. In an unalienated society such a question does not arise in the mentality of the commoner. It is important to note here that to say this is not to say that it is morally wrong to have the qualm and raise that question? Rather, if one is unalienated, it is incoherent, a form of non-sense, to raise it. That is one central logical consequence of the unalienated life: it simply preempts the mentality that leads to the tragedy of the commons.
- 52 If we see unalienatedness this way, how does seeing liberty as a necessary condition for such an ideal of unalienatedness reconfigure the notion of liberty and make it more compatible with equality, thus transforming equality as well from the liberal notion of equality? To see individual liberty along lines that are of a piece with such a notion of belonging and unalienatedness, we have to first note that individual liberty is a matter of individual self-governance, and then point out that individual self-governance need not be conceived individualistically. Just to be clear, that does not make it a notion of collective liberty. Collective liberty may be an interesting notion on its own, but it is not of relevance here. The liberty involved here is felt and exercised by individuals just as alienation and its overcoming is felt and experienced in the mentality of individuals. The idea rather is to conceive of individual liberty in non-individualistic terms. This sounds paradoxical only because we have for too long conceived of liberty as determined by a mentality that underlies the privatization of property and the incentivization of talent, a mentality that lends itself to arguments for the tragedy of the commons. To see individual liberty instead as involving a mentality that is of a piece

with the ideal of an unalienated life, each individual when she governs herself (and thereby exercises her liberty) by making decisions about how to live and act, must see the world not just from her point of view but from a larger point of view, she must see the world from everyone's point of view. Consider the following analogy: when one drives a car on a road (as opposed to, say, when one walks on the road), one does not see the world from one's own bodily point of view, but from the point of view of something larger, the point of view of the whole car. The world (the road) makes certain demands on us when we drive and if we did not orient ourselves to the world from a larger perspective, the car's perspective, we would crash the car. The tragedy of the commons, thus, is like the tragedy of the car crash, the result of meeting the normative demands made on us by the world from the wrong perspective on the world. To exercise liberty from the reconfigured and right perspective (i.e., each one of us making the decisions that shape one's life and actions in one's self-governance from a larger point of view than one's own) silences the possibility of even raising the qualm and question that raises the tragedy of the commons. And if liberty is understood in this way, as a form of making the decisions that go into self-governance by looking at the world's normative demands from everyone's point of view, then equality would not be some further or external ideal with which liberty stands in trade-off relations, rather it would tend to be an internal outcome of the deliverances of liberty itself. And liberty can only be understood this way, if we see it as a necessary condition for the unalienated life, a society in which the qualm and question that is raised by the tragedy of the commons argument, is not so much as intelligible.

53 The very last point that has been italicized is of real significance. This ideal of an unalienated life does not at all amount to saying that one should be supportive and compassionate towards and concerned for others in the group. Those are all good things to be but not all good things are the same good thing, and the good thing that unalienatedness is, is quite different from these attitudes of sympathy and support. It is a more abstract ideal, one which disallows as unintelligible the entire mentality that renders liberty and equality to be in tension with one another. That is why the ideal of an unalienated life constitutes an entirely distinct notion of belonging from the ideal of solidarity or fraternity, which has to do with such feelings of brotherhood and support and compassion towards others.

54 The foregoing remarks elaborated how the notions of liberty, equality, and the unalienated life must be transformed all three in concert at once. It does not tell us how these triangulatedly transformed ideals are to be implemented. Marx, as we know, did not think that the unalienated ideal could be achieved except by

transcending capitalism. Others will no doubt have different ideas about what makes for their implementation. What is clear, even in our present non-ideal condition, is that each one of us goes in and out of alienation. Alienation is by no means ubiquitous. In many contexts, it does not occur to us to ask ‘What if I cooperated and others did not?’ Most often this is so when the contexts are decentralized – families, perhaps small communities. But in many other contexts, especially in contexts when our minds are distorted by orthodox ways of thinking about society, politics, political economy, we tend to think in deeply alienated ways. The large question, therefore, is how we may use the conceptual resources we possess and wield in the former contexts to criticize how we think in the latter contexts? Or to put it differently, the question is: how do we scale up the mentality we exhibit in the decentralized contexts to the larger contexts of modern social, political, and economic life and governance?

55 The argument has presented one central aspect of the mentality of alienation – as it surfaces in certain ways of understanding liberty, when it is individualistically conceived. The malaise of alienation is, however, a wider notion and can surface in many other forms than the way it does in the question and qualm that leads to the tragedy of the commons. The underlying claim has been that, whichever form of alienation we focus on, the overcoming of alienation in the ideal of an unalienated life, *is a more fundamental goal than the ideals of liberty and equality*. One way to bring this out is to point out that alienation affects everyone, both the well off and the badly off in an unequal society. A slogan that expresses this might be: No one is well off if someone is badly off. The slogan is not a normative claim about the need for equality so much as a descriptive claim about the effects of inequality: in a deeply unequal society, even those who are ‘well off’ are only seemingly so. Of course the symptoms of the malaise and mentality of alienation may be very different among the well off and the badly off. Thus, just to give one example, in unequal societies fear and anxiety pervade the lives of the ‘well-off’, leading them to reclude themselves from the world around them in the thoroughly artificial lives of gated communities; the alienation of ‘the badly off’ has been painstakingly elaborated by many theorists with Marx focusing mostly on the nature of the work of labouring people, but pointing out that even their lives away from work is deeply alienated, reduced to a form of leisure that is mostly rest and idle recreation, with no possibility of developing their creative urges.

56 This point about the greater centrality of the ideal of the unalienated life brings out some of the insufficiencies of notions of equality and liberty, if thought of wholly independently of a further ideal of an unalienated life. Vis-à-vis equality, the point, as elaborated above, has been that simply resting with equality without situating equality in the larger goal of an unalienated life would render the

achievement of equality a mere form of social engineering. Vis-à-vis liberty, the point as elaborated above, has been that an ideal of liberty conceived along non-individualistic lines that are tied to the ideal of an unalienated life, coheres far more with the ideal of equality than some of the standard ways of understanding liberty in the last few centuries of liberal thought and its practice in most of the societies we live in.

57 None of this is to deny that there are other notions of liberty and equality that have been developed in recent years, which also repudiate the standard ways of thinking about them, even if they do not do so by stressing as above the centrality of the unalienated life. Perhaps one way to bring out appeal of the latter's centrality is to say a little bit more by way of comparison about one or two of these alternative ideas of liberty and equality, which do not make it central.

58 Let us look at two alternative approaches to explore this: the capabilities approach to liberty or freedom and the luck egalitarian approach to equality, neither of which share the features of the notion of liberty discussed above – its tie to the incentivization of *talent*, in particular. (What stand these two accounts, especially the capabilities approach, take to the liberty that is tied to the possession of *property* is a complicated matter, which can't be discussed here.)

59 The capability approach is often said to yield a conception of liberty or freedom that has to do with each person's capacity to live a life and carry out functions and activities that they each have reason to value. This has no particular place for the notion of liberty that attaches to the incentivization of talent, since it makes no appeal to notions of desert and the right of each to reap the rewards of their talents. Rather what 'development' or what the state and political economy must seek to provide is the flowering of the capacity of each person, understood in terms of what each person has a reason to value. How does such a view of liberty relate to the one on offer in the analysis given above that is of a piece with the ideal of an unalienated life? There are two points of comparison worth making. First, suppose it is the case that freedom as capability, so understood, is by and large established in a given society. It may still be possible that what happens once it is established is that the world values the output of some persons' capabilities far more than others' and that get's harnessed in 'the market' to create deep inequalities. Presumably the answer will be, these inequalities, however deep, do not matter, so long as each person's capacities that they have reason to value are flowering. And, that is why it is *only* when we bring to view how fundamental the ideal of an unalienated life is and thereby bring to view the point that deep inequalities lead to a malaise that is shared by everyone (both those who are well off and those who are badly off), that we might see some of the limitations of the capability

view of freedom, even if we grant its superiority to views of liberty that are tied to the incentivization of talent. A second point is this. The capability approach asks states and the arrangements of a political economy to pursue a notion of development that increases the freedom *qua capability* of each person. But why should someone who is unmoved by such an ideal of freedom, and seeks no other ideal of liberty or freedom than the one that attaches to talent and desert, despite its tension with inequality, have any reason to sign on to such arrangements of the political economy? It is only when we point out that everyone is worse off in a society where these deep inequalities exist, that they might be moved by it. And only bringing in the centrality of the unalienated ideal allows one to point that out.

60

What, then, of the approach of luck egalitarianism? How does that relate to the dialectic set up earlier via the tension between a notion of liberty (which attaches to the possession of property and to the idea of desert and the incentivization of talent) and equality? The luck egalitarian approach can certainly point out that it has no place for the incentivization of talent and even if it has place for private property it has no place for *heritable* private property, since the point of luck egalitarianism is to give each person the same opportunities at the start, cancelling the luck of both talent and inheritance. Unlike as in the argument of this chapter, where a certain non-individualistic notion of individual *liberty* (that is of a piece with the idea of an unalienated life so as to make liberty cohere better with equality) is constructed to replace the individualistic notion of individual liberty (that attaches to property and the rewards of talent, thereby giving rise to tensions with the notion of equality), the luck egalitarianism approach seeks to construct a notion of *equality* that rules out the notion of liberty attaching to (heritable) property and to talent and its rewards. But there are striking difficulties with this latter approach. First, it takes for granted that if the inequalities of talent are somehow leveled, then all reward will go to effort alone rather than to the luck of one's talent. But it is not so clear, in general, that there can be any clean and radical separation of talent and effort since no talent is even so much as identifiable without a considerable amount of effort being exercised. And second, it is also not clear how the ideal of luck egalitarianism works inter-generationally since the *effort* of some parents' may lead to accumulation of privilege and income which *in their lifetime* can be used to give great advantages to their children's development, missing in the lives of children of other parents who make less effort and are less successful. Without actually having the state take children away from parents and bring them up with leveled opportunities, a grotesquely inhuman proposal (something only a philosopher would think of proposing, as Plato did), this does not seem like equality of even opportunity. For these reasons, among others, many political and economic theorists seek –

just as the argument presented in this section on belonging as the unalienated life does – equality of outcome rather than the equality of opportunity that luck egalitarianism posits.

- 61 So far the focus has been only on belonging in the *social* sense? What, then, about the possibilities for unalienated relations that we might have with the *natural world* we inhabit?
- 62 We have said that alienation is a matter of experience and mentality, even if this has its source in material and economic foundations.
- 63 A basic aspect of this mentality, noticed by thinkers as diverse as Rousseau, Marx, Gandhi, Sartre, and Arendt, is an increasing detachment of attitude --where detachment is opposed not to attachment so much as to engagement. In all their work, the general idea is that the social relations induced by the nature of capital puts people in detached or disengaged relations with one another, each fragmented in their individual lives. And we have tried in the extended discussion above to see in a general way how the ideal of an unalienated life might overcome this mentality of individualist fragmentation of our individual self-governance. As is well known, Marx made more detailed specifications of such a notion of detachment in the economic sphere, thus speaking of how the relations of production in capitalism made each labourer detached from his own work and the products of his work, and commodity production under capitalism even succeeding in making detached the commercial relations between human agents. What, then, is the specific form of detachment that holds of our alienated relations with nature, as these set in in the modern period?
- 64 We get a glimpse of such detachment when we ask the question: How is it that the concept of nature got transformed, in modernity, into the concept of natural resources? The process of detachment that the question asks of, seems to have had two conceptual steps. The first is to see nature exhaustively as what the natural sciences study, that is to say to deny that nature contains any properties that are not countenanced by the natural sciences. Natural sciences take a purely detached attitude towards nature, seeing it only as an object of explanation and prediction. They do not see in nature any properties that engage our practical (as opposed to theoretical) agency by making normative demands on us, properties such as values, for instance. This is a relatively recent transformation, perhaps no earlier than the 17th century. Much of this transformation came from the desacralization of nature in that period with the rise of modern science, and that is why Weber called it 'the disenchantment of the world'. With the loss of sacralized conceptions of nature, there remained no metaphysical or theological obstacle to taking from nature's bounty with impunity,

and that constitutes the second stage of the transformation of the idea of nature – the transformation of it to the idea of natural resources.

65 The chronic (and acute) environmental crisis we are now landed with has led to a lot of re-thinking on these matters and increasingly there seems to be a recognition of the wisdom in traditional indigenous cultures still active today in different parts of the world (Bolivia, for example), which claims that nature has rights that cannot be violated any more than the rights of human beings. This need not be a sacralized view of nature, it may simply be a secular form of enchantment, but if it is right, we cannot just view nature in a detached way as the object of explanation and prediction, nor just as a resource, we have to see it also as possessing value properties and this means that it possesses properties that natural science cannot study, that it is not the business of natural science to study. If the thought that forests and trees and rivers have rights and make normative demands of practical engagement and respect on us as value, in general, does, is startling today, that is only to be expected. It took us long centuries to come to believe and to create institutions for the idea that human beings possessed rights. What is clear is that we cannot wait for centuries to rebuild such unalienated relations with nature.

66 **2. Empirical Regional Survey**

67 **2.1 Canada: Belonging in deeply diverse federations**

68 There is an enormous amount of scholarship on belonging in the Canadian federation. The main lessons learned are the following.[\[11\]](#)

69 First, it is not possible to study individual examples of belonging in isolation from others or from the form of federalism that coordinates them, or fails to do so. The reason is that deeply diverse societies are composed of interdependent, criss-crossing and overlapping social relationships that constitute multiple forms of association, identification and belonging. There is not only a plurality of forms of association and belonging of various kinds. They also overlap and interact in complex ways. These associations include not only formal linguistic, legal, political and economic associations such as over 600 indigenous peoples or nations, the Quebec nation and majoritarian and minoritarian nationalisms, provinces, territories, municipalities, regions, linguistic and cultural minorities of various kinds and sizes,

both official and unofficial, corporations, cooperatives, unions, and political parties. They also include informal forms of belonging, such as eco-regions (place-based belonging), economic classes, persons with disabilities, persons of colour, racialized minorities, gender, sexual orientation, pan-indigenous decolonization networks, social movements, local-global networked associations, and so on. Studying this multiplicity of forms of belonging has brought into being a learning curve from the initial focus on big and powerful forms of belonging to the growing awareness of the depth and diversity of other, criss-crossing forms of belonging.

70

Second, to study the lived experience of belonging in this complex lifeworld is to study the interdependent and interactive relationships of power, knowledge, authority, and identity formation of members, both within overlapping associations and among them. Through participation in these multiple relationships that govern their conduct members come to have corresponding forms of self-formation and self-awareness (belonging or identity) of subject positions in their associations. These relational identities usually come along with stereotypical contrastive identities of members of other associations. These relationships govern members' conduct, individually and collectively, but, reciprocally, as agents, members contest and reform them. They are normalizing and normative. They are also 'federal'. That is, members of associations of belonging relate to other associations in diverse ways, relative to their diverse ways of belonging, just as in the cases of the larger and more formal federal relationships among diverse provinces, territories and Indigenous nations.

71

Third, a central concern has been to study the 'dynamics of interaction' within and over these relationships of cooperation and contestation both within and among overlapping communities of belonging. The dynamics of interaction include the many types and cycles of cooperation, contestation, reconciliation, cooperation and recontestation: for example, working together, grievance, dissent, protest, struggle, negotiation, conflict resolution or irresolution, implementation or non-implementation, review and beginning again. These are the agonistic and democratic activities of individual and collective subjects of these always imperfect relationships of governance through which they become free, active and responsible co-agents of the specific associations to which they belong and of the more general federal, coordinating associations to which they also belong; seeking to test them and, if necessary, negotiate their modification or transformation over generations as circumstances change and new injustices and social suffering come to light. They are carried out through the courts, parliaments, constitutional change, referenda, truth and reconciliation commissions, reasonable accommodation commissions, civil disobedience, boycotts, non-

cooperation, revolution, enacting alternative ways of living socially and ecologically, and, at the ground of it all, the everyday negotiation of the relationships in which human live and interact, and on which they interdepend. All these discursive and non-discursive (embodied) dynamics of interaction are referred to as 'dialogical'. The historical interactions between the two official language groups, French and English, have been of central importance in struggles over belonging. These struggles highlighted the inseparability of language from culture, nationality, and other forms of belonging, and thus brought to awareness struggles of minority and Indigenous language communities as deeper struggles for forms of cultural recognition and belonging.

72 Fourth, although research began with the powerful actors and high profile contests over perceived injustices to their senses of belonging, such as language and indigenous and non-indigenous nationalism, it soon expanded to the expression or repression of voices of the powerless who were either outside and unrecognized by these contests or silenced and subordinated within by actors who claimed to represent them. It became obvious that appropriate forms of dialogical mutual recognition and participation of 'all affected' by the perceived injustice at issue, not just the most vocal and well-organised, are essential for reasons of justice, stability and trust. Running roughshod over the less powerful, presuming agreement or feigning consultation in each stage of the contest creates further injustices: non-recognition and mis-recognition. These generate distrust, resentment, enmity and further conflict. Thus, the study of deep diversity includes 'intersectionality'.[\[12\]](#)

73 Fifth, among the 'all affected' by these human systems of social relationships of belonging are the ecosystems in which they are deeply embedded and to which they belong, yet which they are systematically destroying at an unprecedented rate. Therefore, it is no longer possible to study systems of social belonging without studying their positive and negative interrelations with the biotic communities to which they belong. This insight joins together social and ecological justice. Moreover, the deep diversity of ecosystems that has sustained life on earth for the last three billion years is similar in some respects to the diversity of human social systems. Thus, it may be possible to learn some lessons on how to design sustainable social systems of sustainable belonging by learning from how ecosystems sustain life on earth.[\[13\]](#)

74 Sixth, the conclusion researchers and the Supreme Court of Canada draw is that contests over the relationships between and among multiple, interacting and interdependent communities of belonging are a permanent feature of diverse societies. Accordingly, nonviolent dialogical practices of civic engagement of all affected need to be

built into the social relationships of free and democratic associations: that is, into the cycles of dissent, negotiation, implementation and openness to renewed dissent and negotiation. Since these practices are themselves systems of social relationships, they too should be open to contestation. Such practices of listening (*audi alteram partem*), engagement and negotiation have come into increasing use in the last decades and they are another focus of research. For example, practices of citizen participation and consultation, mediation practices, deliberative democracy, treaty negotiations between indigenous peoples and settlers, the representation of damaged and threatened ecosystems in negotiations over resource development, the duty to consult across the private and public spheres of contemporary societies, practices of transitional and transformative justice in pre- and post-conflict situations, and new practices of engagement beyond consultation. These are the demanding conditions under which any form of association and belonging can present itself as a 'we' and exercise their constituent powers acceptably and fairly in circumstances of interdependent diversity.

75 The oldest examples of the conditions of diverse belonging in Canada are treaty negotiations and treaty relationships among Indigenous peoples and non-indigenous people (the Crown) since the early seventeenth century. These Indigenous-settler relationships of negotiation of self-rule and shared rule, and shared land use – called treaty federalism - coordinate diverse peoples and their diverse ways of belonging over centuries.[\[14\]](#)

76 These treaty relationships of belonging differently among indigenous and non-indigenous peoples grow out of the much older indigenous peoples' understanding and practice of the way they belong to mother earth. They often say that the 'earth does not belong them (as private property); they belong to the living earth.' That is, all humans belong in and to cyclical gift-reciprocity relationships of interdependency with all living beings, human and non-human, and thus have reciprocal responsibilities to take care of the plants, animals, and biotic communities that sustain them. This kincentric way of being in the world with 'all our relatives' is strengthened by the clan system of belonging, in which each clan is related to an animal family (bear, raven, etc.). This contrasts with species-centrism of most non-indigenous forms of belonging. Moreover, clan belonging establishes relationships of kinship across tribal belonging because there are similar clans in every tribe. Sharing of overlapping uses of the same bioregions by several tribes with each other and the plants and animals also deepens the primacy of interdependent belonging and negotiation. These institutions contrast with the primacy of

exclusive independence and friend/enemy binary of many modern forms of belonging to nations, states, movements, and civilizations. [15]

77 Ever since non-indigenous peoples invaded North America, dispossessed indigenous peoples of their traditional territories, exterminated eighty percent of the population, and asserted that the earth belongs exclusively to them, indigenous peoples have resisted this genocide, struggled to sustain and regenerate their ways of belonging, and explained that the only legitimate way indigenous people could belong with them in North America is through consensual treaty-making and sharing use and care of the land. They, and indigenous peoples throughout the world, have won recognition of this in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and, to a lesser degree, in the Canadian courts. [16]

78 In summary, the relationships of power in these multiple associations of belonging is, when successful, exercised cooperatively and agonistically within associations and, federally, in co-operation and contestation with other interdependent associations of belonging. This follows from the premise of interdependency that run through all six conditions of the complex lifeworld. Indeed, the unilateral exercise of power by presumptively independent groups of belonging is the major cause or exacerbation of the injustice and distrust that give rise to struggles over non-recognition and mis-recognition in conditions of multiple belonging.

79 The long term remedy these lessons suggest is the cultivation of a culture of democratic cooperation and contestation of the conditions of belonging in any association, and of the relationships of interdependency that coordinate diverse forms of belonging among all affected partners. In so far as this complex form of democratic federalism enables the agency of members within communities of belonging and within federal associations that coordinate them, the members generate senses of belonging to both. Through participation in both associations members learn from each other that their ways of belonging must be always adjusted so that they are compatible with the ways of belonging of their interdependent relatives if they are to live in peace. They also learn that when this kind of mutual accommodation fails, as it often does, they have recourse to institutions of contestation and reform. [17]

80 **2.2 Middle East and Islam: Belonging and Global Islam**

81 Despite our use of idiomatic phrases like 'global citizen', is it really possible to possess a sense of belonging to the globe? Perhaps one way of imagining such an experience is to place the globe in its referential context. The world, for instance, continues in many ways

to remain a metaphysical category referring to another or other worlds of a quite different sort, as in the originally religious but now also profane use of words like worldly and otherworldly, to say nothing of this world and the next. And for its part the earth is a term that takes its meaning from the solar system of which it is a planet, though it may also partake of the world's metaphysical character in phrases like earthly existence or earthly remains. Both words are also routinely used as synonyms of globe, though they don't cover all its meanings even in a colloquial register.

- 82 Interesting about the globe is the fact that it appears to have no context, and is instead entirely self-referential in its popular as well as scholarly usage. Global issues such as overpopulation or climate change cannot be spoken about in galactic or otherworldly terms. Indeed the globe has the paradoxical role of naming vast spaces and populations at the same time as stressing their finitude. Surely this contradictory pairing of large and small is precisely what the archaeology of global issues so well illustrates, from worries about a nuclear holocaust during the Cold War to global warming in our own times, by way of overpopulation in the era of decolonization. On the one hand we call global any phenomenon too large to master in a conventional way, and on the other use the word to describe a shrinking habitat that makes escaping such phenomena impossible.
- 83 In keeping with its self-referential character or lack of context, the globe possesses a single true subject that is also its object. Whether it is mutually assured destruction or climate change, humanity represents the simultaneous agent and victim of all such global phenomena. An asteroid hitting the Earth belongs in another context altogether, constituting a planetary rather than global possibility, one that makes of humanity one species among others at risk. Perhaps the breakdown of national, ethnic and other forms of identity in certain parts of the Muslim world, as a result of political and economic circumstances, has made of Islam a privileged site for experiments in global belonging. While other communities and traditions might possess equally global visions, then, it is in Islam that these have been fully activated or translated into experience.
- 84 At first glance, of course, it seems odd to pair a self-referential and finite view of the globe with a religion for which transcendence of various kinds, including a deity, paradise and angels is so crucial. But we shall see that Islam's globalization, whether in its liberal, conservative or even militant form, is premised upon the attenuation of such transcendence, and the consequent effort of believers to take responsibility for Muslims as a global community, one that is in addition seen to represent the human race. This narrative, however, doesn't completely dominate even that modern entity called the

Muslim world, and is interrupted by other forms of belonging, of which the Arab Spring or Kurdish nationalism provide two important examples.

85 2.2.1 Islam made global

86 The origins of Islam as a global entity can be traced to 19th century European imperialism, which was characterized by a novel focus on territory and demography, one defined by cartographic and statistical practices that were evaluated from an international and comparative perspective. Older categories, like the ummah or Muslim community, and the dar al-Islam or domain of Islam, had been metaphysical and juridical rather than empirical in nature. They didn't refer to a global Muslim population on the one hand, or a globally defined Muslim territory on the other. Instead the ummah described Muslims as a theological and trans-historical rather than enumerable entity, one that might include those already dead and yet to be born. Similarly the dar al-Islam (and its contrary, the dar al-harb or domain of war) named a legal not a cartographic or even political jurisdiction. So clerics in British India, as elsewhere in European empires, were able in the first half of the 19th century to declare them part of the dar al-Islam, since Muslims were free to fulfill their obligations there.

87 By the end of the 19th century, however, such notions had taken on the empirical and so enumerable and measurable character of modern categories, with the word Islam itself losing its once common adverbial form as a kind of action to become a proper name for a set of beliefs and practices that also included novel and non-theological attributes such as population and territory. The emergence of the notion as much as reality of Pan-Islamism during this period provides a good example of this process. For the Ottoman claim to represent Muslims outside their own domains, initially as a regional and eventually a global community, was first made late in the 18th century following the Russo-Turkish treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji, in response to the right given the Romanovs to protect Christians in the Sultan's territories.

88 Unlike their Muslim predecessors European empires were scattered across the globe, and came to provide Muslims with new models of identity and belonging. In their effort to compete with the Ottomans, for example, the British made much of the fact that they ruled more Muslims than the Sultan did, and were so entitled to call themselves the 'greatest Mohammedan power', as viceroys, proconsuls and prime ministers routinely did. Important about this identification was that it defined both Islam in demographic and territorial as much as theological terms (which the British included under religious freedom). Just as Peter Wilson, in his recent book on the Holy Roman

Empire, argues that the rise of Islam gave Christendom a territorial designation, so did that of European empires allow Muslims to reconceive themselves as a globally dispersed people inhabiting a territory that came to be known as the Muslim world.

- 89 Like other colonized intellectuals, Muslim thinkers during this period sought to engage and even contest European ideas of their own universality, manifested as it was by their unprecedented power over the large parts of the world. And they frequently did so by claiming to represent these ideals better than the British or French themselves, whom they either urged to fulfill their self-proclaimed missions of civilization and freedom in the colonies, or dismissed by arguing that Muslims were more capable of such universality. The resonance of these apologetics continues to be heard in contemporary Muslim, and indeed Asian and African polemics more generally, which still take as their theme the alleged hypocrisy of European and now American claims to embody universal values.
- 90 The two great categories that such men struggled with were race and civilization, each of which had significant legal implications within European empires and even outside them, as illustrated by the 'standard of civilization' that was required for non-European powers to be treated as equals and included within the bounds of international law. While race was routinely if often rather disingenuously rejected by Muslim thinkers, who sought to argue that Islam was not discriminatory along these lines, civilization was a category they tended to engage with more intimately, by saying that Islamic history represented it more perfectly than Christian Europe. In either case, however, Islam was held up as being a truly universal religion because it supposedly repudiated the hierarchies of race and civilization (to which was added class in the 20th century) and staked its claim on humanity as a whole.
- 91 Beginning late in the 19th century, this argument continues being made today, and characterizes both liberal and conservative, indeed even militant Muslims, for all of whom Islam is the universal religion for mankind not simply because they think God says so in the Koran, but by reason of its being the one closest to nature. Whatever the pre-modern view of Islam as a natural religion, in other words, its conformity with the 'laws of nature' and so with rationality rather than superstition was what modern Muslims focused on. Itself an offshoot of European debates originating in the 17th century, such a focus on nature allowed Muslim reformers of various political and ideological hues to purge Islam of customs and practices they considered unnatural, artificial and decadent. They were also critical of regional cultures, which were seen as being too particularistic, and

tried to bring a truly universal Islam into being, one fit for humanity in the same way as the universal declarations of rights announced by states and international bodies would be.

92 **2.2.2 Mobilization and militancy**

93 While in the 19th and for much of the 20th centuries Muslim concerns with representing humanity remained theoretical, the Cold War suddenly gave this otherwise abstract category a novel materiality. If the human race had achieved an empirical reality by being enumerated and made subject to various forms of planning and development, it was the possibility of a nuclear apocalypse that lent it a new kind of retrospective and even posthumous truth. Bringing as it did the religious language of apocalypse back to secular life, the Cold War threat of mutually assured destruction allowed Muslim thinkers to imagine the ummah's extinction alongside that of the human race.

94 In fact the early 20th century theme of Islam's destruction by Western imperialism, common among colonized peoples from all religious persuasions, was updated to imagine the physical as much as political and psychological liquidation of the global Muslim community, which represented in this way the fate of the human race as a whole. After the Cold War, the atomic danger was supplemented if not replaced by that of climate change, and so it is no accident that Al-Qaeda's leaders, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri in particular, routinely mentioned both threats to humanity when condemning their enemies in both East and West. In this narrative the Muslim community represents both the global force of resistance to such dangers, as well as the first global victims of the states and companies that make them possible.

95 Al-Qaeda, of course, emerged at the end of the Cold War to occupy a new global arena that came into view after the collapse of its superpower conflict. With the globe no longer defined by the hemispheric division of East and West in ideological, political or economic terms, an opportunity arose to remake it in religious and other ways. Just as old-fashioned state sovereignty was being questioned in the 1990s, then, Al-Qaeda burst onto the scene with its networked form of militancy which neither required the state (indeed it was only capable of being organized and operating in so-called failed states) nor aspired to create one—despite its visions of a global caliphate. Crucial rather were global figures like the ummah or the West, neither of which possessed any institutional reality.

96 It was not only by way of jihad, however, that Islam became globalized after the Cold War. Indeed militancy was preceded by another form of mobilization whose first occurrence was in 1989, the

very year in which the bipolar global order came to an end. Starting with the Rushdie Affair, then, we have already seen three global mobilizations protesting some alleged insult to the Prophet. Each incident has taken place in Europe, allowing the demonstrations that ensued to invoke a narrative of conflict between East and West, Islam and Christendom that predates the Cold War. So while there might well be controversies and violence over blasphemy against Muhammad in other parts of the world, most of all in Pakistan but increasingly also Afghanistan, these never take on a global character and remain local or national events.

- 97 Interesting about the global protests over insults to the Prophet is the fact that they not only originate in the West, but perversely also make use of a liberal vocabulary in stating their demands. Thus what is called for are apologies, recognition and respect, which is to say invitations, however coercive, to build a new kind of relationship of civility between East and West. The language of jihad is absent from such mobilizations, which have in the past even interrupted and overshadowed Al-Qaeda's domination of Islam as a media spectacle without once referring to it. Even blasphemy, a category often deployed by Muhammad's passionate defenders, is taken from a Christian rather than Muslim theological tradition, and during the Rushdie Affair there were many who said that they only wanted Islam to enjoy the same legal protection that the (since abrogated) blasphemy laws provided the Church of England.
- 98 One reason why Muhammad, rather than, say, God, has come to play the role of victim in these great mobilizations has to do with his being gradually stripped of all transcendent or metaphysical character, as a super-human or miracle-working figure, beginning late in the 19th century. Having been made fully human, and thus the chief representative of Islam's faithfulness to nature, the Prophet, unlike God, has now become vulnerable enough to merit the protection of his followers, and at the same time to stand as a representative of a virtuous and victimized humanity. The great dramas of outrage over insults to Muhammad, of course, are also made possible by twenty-four hour satellite television coverage, with Muslim audiences around the world now able to see protests in different places occurring in real time and to mirror them without the need of any organization, political project or even common goals.
- 99 If television as a medium of collective viewing allowed the ummah to realize itself in a new if still only transient way, by waves of mobilization that arose only to decline into nothingness, the Internet made for an equally dispersed but highly individualized form of militant recruitment through the spectacle of martyrdom. The decisive shift here was from the older, and perversely liberal language of accommodation and equality, to the apocalyptic one of

elimination that entailed a war for Islam's very survival. By describing the same fantasy and experience of global connectedness as the Internet, therefore, Al-Qaeda addressed the simultaneous reality and unreality of entities like the Muslim community and humanity, both of which had indubitably come to exist in some sense, if only because their extinction could be contemplated, but which were not yet able to represent themselves.

100 Al-Qaeda dealt with the paradoxical existence and non-existence of such entities by claiming to represent the Muslim community and therefore humanity itself, each connected to the other by its alleged status as a global victim. By elevating individual acts of sacrifice, such as suicide bombing, into its media brand, Al-Qaeda sought not simply to mobilize otherwise abstract entities like the ummah, as protests over insults to the Prophet did, but also to represent humanity itself through the universality of death. Bin Laden and Zawahiri had always contrasted this negative and indeed nihilistic universality with what they saw as the West's unjust restriction of the right to life and security for its own citizens. Like Muslim reformers of the 19th century, then, militants were demanding the universalization of Western ideals; but unlike them went on to substitute the equality of death for the still unavailable one of life.

101 **2.2.3 From state to caliphate**

102 While the global phenomena we have been looking at are anti-statist in nature, there exists, of course, an equally important and older narrative of Muslim state-building as well. For our purposes the relationship between the two can be compared to that between anarchism and communism as distinct ways of representing the proletariat, itself the first truly global subject of politics and thus the savior or rather creator of humanity in Marx's view. Like Al-Qaeda's militants, anarchists in the past relied upon individualized acts of sacrifice and freedom to build transnational network, while the Islamists who preceded them chose to follow the communist example and proceed in a collective way by fortifying what promised to be a global revolution in one state after another.

103 The thinkers and founders of Islamic states have always drawn upon Marxist, and sometimes fascist, ideas of the ideological state, while dispensing with their focus on class or race. The first two Islamic republics, Pakistan and Iran, were both established during the Cold War, as part of a more general political fashion in what was then known as the Third World to establish ideological states, whose rather tenuous links with socialism were more often than not manifested in their controlled economies. Revolutionary Iran, for instance, invoked a famous Third World trope in claiming, like the Non-Aligned Movement, to represent a middle way between

Western capitalism and Eastern communism. And yet Islamist politics has also retained a certain anarchistic element in its deep distrust of the state form, inherited as this was from the colonial past and seen as the chief instrument of Western power. In this the Islamists joined figures like Gandhi who sought to foreground society and its self-governance rather than the modern state in their politics.

104 If Lenin, then, thought to conquer the state only to have it wither away once the dictatorship of the proletariat had performed its function, Islamists were similarly concerned with taking over the state only to roll it back from interfering in a supposedly autonomous society defined by the religious norms seen as being natural to it, and by extension to humanity. By following European Orientalists in criticizing the Muslim princes of the past for their allegedly decadent and un-Islamic ways, the Islamists deprived themselves of an inherited political language that they might have developed, as Europeans had done by translating monarchical into republican forms of sovereignty. Their focus on society, therefore, has had the curious consequence that Islamists, ostensibly dedicated to politicizing Islam, are led in fact to criticize the conventional and institutional forms that politics takes.

105 This suspicion of the state is characteristic of Sunni versions of Islamism more than of Shia, with Khomeini, for instance, subordinating Islamic law to the expediency of the nation-state. For the Sunnis this can only signal Iran's hypocrisy as an Islamic republic, since by recognizing state sovereignty it allows dictatorial or populist power to breach defenses that the sacred law is meant to have placed between Muslim society and the possibility of tyranny. In this view only God can lay claim to sovereignty, and so the law is meant to operate in a preventive and managerial rather than agentive way to protect society. It should be clear that such a vision can describe more than one political form, and if the Cold War's Islamists were its earliest interpreters, today the idea of a self-regulating Muslim society can also be found among neoliberal capitalists in countries like Turkey and Malaysia.

106 Perhaps the most violent heir to this form of thinking about the place of law in society is the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. ISIS takes such juridical logic to breaking point by trying to destroy every person and practice that cannot be defined or made visible in the vocabulary of divine law. Marked by a deep fear that heretics, atheists and unbelievers are either openly or surreptitiously laying claim to the transcendence and therefore sovereignty that properly belongs to God, the Islamic State is dedicated to rooting out and eliminating all such illicit acts and beliefs, if only by making inner life itself impossible in demanding the absolute transparency of all social relations. Breaking with the traditional Sunni emphasis on protecting

the privacy of domestic life, ISIS reworks totalitarian forms of surveillance to substitute a supposedly real society for the false one it has inherited. And in doing so it brutally seeks to create a second nature that can then be said govern itself through a sacred law that is based in the social rather than political realm, upheld as it is by clerics whose link to the state is tenuous and intermittent at best.

107 We can trace the genealogies of global Islam in militant cartographies. Al-Qaeda and more especially the Islamic State's maps, for example, are arranged in accordance with two criteria that bear no necessary relationship to each other. One of these is territory defined by its past Muslim ownership, thus including places like Spain or Sicily that do not have a significant Muslim population. And the other is demography, which allows for the inclusion of areas like the Rakhine state of Myanmar, which is home to the Rohingya minority, or Mindanao in the Philippines, inhabited by the Moro people, both considered victims of Buddhism, Catholicism or even the West seen to be supporting them. Despite the ideal of humanity's final conversion to Islam, these visions still presume a division of the globe into two or more political parts, and in this way place themselves in a context that includes both imperial and Cold War politics.

108 Interesting about this use by militants of the initially colonial categories of territory and demography, is the fact that they are kept distinct from one another. And while the rights of conquest might possess a theological justification, those of numbers only do so in potentially democratic terms. It also remains unclear whether these global cartographies are to be considered part of a single empire like the caliphate, or taken to constitute an alternative international order, thus demonstrating the variety of sometimes contending influences that go into making Islam global. Even ISIS, for instance, uses the name state or dawla for itself, as well as caliphate or khilafah, though the two are by no means equivalent. The state, after all, belongs in the common register of political entities, while the caliphate is part of another genealogy that allows ISIS to take the Ottoman Empire as its immediate predecessor.

109 Unlike these global geographies, however, the regional ones that define Pakistani terrorist groups like the Lashkar-e Tayyaba or Jamaat al-Dawa, invoke other kinds of genealogies. Taking India rather than the West as its great enemy, the Lashkar's map of a victorious future draws upon the cartography of British India as much as the history of Pakistani nationalism. So it imagines a subcontinent fragmented into Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Dravidian and even Dalit or Untouchable states. In addition to demanding the territory of Muslim princely states as they existed in colonial times, and whatever their present demographic composition, the Lashkar

also stakes claim to areas like Kashmir with a majority Muslim population. And in this way, of course, it deploys the same pair of divided criteria as ISIS.

110 Instead of claiming the much larger part of India that had once been ruled by the Muslim dynasty of the Mughals, however, the Lashkar takes as its model the cartography of the British raj, with its princely states and populations divided into religiously defined electorates. The immediate inspiration for this map seems to be those produced during the 1930s by Choudhry Rehmat Ali, who had coined the name Pakistan and sought to disperse the subcontinent into a mosaic of religious and ethnically defined nationalities, each with its own state, thus eliminating the prospect of Hindu majority rule. As with the Islamic State, therefore, the Lashkar appears to desire another kind of international order, and that, too, a curiously pluralistic one in which no one group can dominate the subcontinent.

111 **2.2.4 A global inheritance**

112 Drawing from rather different regional histories, militant narratives nevertheless share some of the criteria that define their global geographies. But they are not the only players in the field, and just as militant imaginaries rework colonial and other categories from the past, so too do their enemies and rivals in different ways. Indeed the emergence of a global arena deprived of political definition after the Cold War, has resulted in the reimagining or transformation of older and apparently defunct political forms. The so-called Arab Spring, for example, spread across the Middle East in much the same way as demonstrations against insults to Muhammad had done globally. Starting with a sacrificial act of protest in Tunisia, it provoked mobilizations mirroring each other by way of media reports, but without serious organizational links.

113 And yet these self-proclaimed revolutions also drew from another tradition, one defined by the capture of a state. Rather than referring to the Islamist model of revolution, however, whose only successful instance has been Iran, to say nothing of the communist or nationalist examples predating it, the Arab Spring's closest precedent in time as much as experience were the color revolutions of eastern Europe. In both cases, after all, we saw mobilizations without a political party to lead or even appropriate them—for even in Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood came to power hesitantly and without having led the revolution. Partly as a consequence, in both cases the overthrow of the government, when it was achieved, did not result in the making of a new kind of state—except perhaps in Tunisia. It is almost as if the protests were in some sense negative and even anti-political in nature, able to overturn the state but not replace it with one of another kind.

- 114 Can we see the many interesting rituals of mobilization in the Arab Spring, including the ceremonies of solidarity in Cairo's Tahrir Square or setting up of citizens' committees to clean its streets, a recrudescence of the older Islamist ideal of social self-governance which looked askance at the evil of statecraft and its politics? Or did the movement sweeping the region represent the first time in decades that the previously statist ideology of Arab nationalism achieved a popular reality—albeit without ever becoming a subject of debate in its own right? It is even possible to speculate, as one historian of the Fatimid Empire did, that these mobilizations invoked the heretical counter-caliphate set up by the Ismaili movement. For remarkable about the Arab Spring was the fact that it took hold in the very areas that defined and supported the Fatimid Empire, which is to say Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain.
- 115 Fantastic as this interpretation might appear, it signals the sheer variety of older narratives and geographies that have reappeared in new guises during and since the Middle Eastern revolutions. The Kurdish national struggle in Rojava, for example, which was made possible and also elevated to celebrity status by the civil wars in Iraq and Syria, has declared its faith in a novel form of self-critical nationalism that dedicates itself to humanity. Drawing once again upon anti-statist and even anarchist themes, the movement's imprisoned leader, Abdullah Ocalan, condemns the state form itself as oppressive and imperialist. He calls for the freedom and equality of women, seen as representing history's first colony, and derides the xenophobic and homogenizing tendencies of nationalism, together with the environmentally destructive capitalism that underlie them.
- 116 While these ideas, now being put into practice in the war against ISIS, may well come out of Ocalan's reading of Western theorists of the left, it should be clear that they draw upon themes of long provenance in the region and, indeed, in the Muslim or former Third World as well. But what does it mean to revive nationalism, or for that matter revolution and Arab unity, as empty or at least non-sovereign forms? Clearly they are far more than mere symbols, but to deploy the nation as a category, for instance, while condemning it on principle, is an extraordinary if not quite unprecedented act. Does it illustrate the difficulty of imagining a suitable politics for the new global arena, or simply the poverty of imagination on the left? To suggest that the old and the new exist in uneasy combinations at a time of transition may be true, but it has also become an analytical stereotype.
- 117 In one sense, of course, Kurdish nationalism bears some resemblance to its more settled and secure peers elsewhere. For economic forms of globalization have deprived nation-states in general of one of the foundations of old-fashioned sovereignty, leading to the increasing

importance of cultural and indeed religious forms of identity, of which the European Union alone provides us with several instances on both the right and left. In addition to that continent's xenophobic parties, after all, there also exist Scottish or Catalan movements for independence, which no longer imply the claim to traditional forms of sovereignty but instead rely upon the existence of the EU for their financial and security needs. While the Kurdish movement certainly does not incline towards a vast, European-style bureaucracy, its effort to hold together local and global modes of belonging are familiar to new national movements more generally.

118 What is crucial about the many rival groups and ideas that battle for space in the global arena is how much even the most violently opposed among them share. Whether it is Islamists, militants or new nationalists, all appear to have a deep suspicion of the state, a focus on the social and a questioning attitude towards sovereignty. The battle for this arena, in other words, isn't ideological so much as one about where to lay emphasis in a shared narrative. Despite the enormous and sometimes violent differences between such groups, then, their mutual struggles may well end up being about nuance rather than principle. From the ideological opposition of the Cold War, we seem to have moved into a situation where shared global narratives entail entirely divergent consequences.

119 **2.3 Caste, Community, and Belonging: The Indian Case**

120 The caste system is rooted in, and constitutes a further proliferation of, the four varna system of ancient India comprising the Brahmins (priestly class), the kshatriyas (warrior class), and the two classes of workers recruited largely from conquered tribes: the vaishyas (artisans and other producers), and the shudras (menial labourers). It is an arrangement of hierarchically organized endogamous groups, each consisting of persons belonging to a particular occupation that is carried on in a hereditary manner. It is also associated with abhorrent practices like "untouchability" and "unseeability", which presume that a person from the "upper castes" gets "polluted" just by touching or even setting eyes on someone from the "menial" castes. People from these "menial" castes were traditionally debarred from owning any land and even leaving the village. This was to ensure that an adequate supply of labour for the "upper caste" landowners was always available, in a situation where cultivable land existed outside the village premises and would have otherwise pulled labourers away to cultivate on their own.

121 Colonial rule introduced the formal idea of equality (equality before law) into this society of institutionalized social and economic inequality. But it also generated new forms of inequality in the material sense, via the destruction of domestic handicraft industry

by the import of metropolitan goods (“de-industrialization”) and the appropriation gratis of local commodities by the metropolis (using locally-raised tax revenue to pay for them, a process called the “drain of surplus”), which worsened the material conditions of the “lower” castes.

- 122 It is the anti-colonial struggle (which paralleled a struggle for social emancipation in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries and was affected by it) that led to the adoption of a Constitution, after independence, which supplemented formal equality before law, with democratic governance through elections based on universal adult suffrage, and affirmative action in the form of “reservations” for certain “scheduled castes” and “scheduled tribes” (dalits) in the legislatures and government institutions. “Reservations” were later extended to some other “backward” castes as well.
- 123 The experience of post-independent India, however, shows that constitutional measures meant to end caste oppression cannot do so, as long as the caste-system, i.e. the division of people into different caste-groups within a hierarchical order, remains. It is this hierarchical order itself that is oppressive. Even if through such measures, for argument’s sake, the caste-distribution of persons employed within each occupation becomes the same as that of the population as a whole, which is a necessary condition for ending caste oppression, given the enormously long history of the system and the ideology sustaining it, to which both its perpetrators and victims have subscribed in the past, such oppression will still continue in society. The ending of caste oppression in the economy in short will not put an end to it in society, What is required is an obliteration of caste identity itself, the very ‘annihilation of caste’, as Ambedkar had put it, in contrast with Gandhi’s belief that the caste-system could continue without hierarchy or caste-oppression through a breaking down of the occupational division of labour and everyone participating in all activities, i.e., through a satisfaction of the above-mentioned necessary condition. (Towards this end in his ashrams he used to insist on everyone sharing menial tasks like cleaning toilets).
- 124 This is relevant to our question of belonging. Everyone in society can have a sense of belonging to, or of being at home with, a particular group, a caste-group, and yet there can be oppression, rooted in continuing disrespect of one group towards another, even if social progress (our theme) has been made on the front of material equality among the groups. Such social progress remains poignantly incomplete.

- 125 Moreover, this oppression would exist whether or not the oppressed are (ideologically) conditioned into accepting it as a “normal” state of affairs. Such an acquiescence on their part might be accompanied by a sense of belonging within their caste; but this “belonging”, experienced by members of a particular caste, within an overall oppressive order in which this caste is located and in which they acquiesce, is not necessarily a laudable thing.
- 126 Some may argue that it is denying the agency of those who are supposedly being oppressed, if such oppression is being posited despite their own denial of it. But underlying their denial is often the nurturing of a latent grievance that at some point bursts into explicit articulation and thus retrospectively reveals itself. Taking the apparent acquiescence of the oppressed in an oppressive order at face value thus not only raises normative questions, but also amounts to giving credibility to a false impression. It follows that only that “belonging” counts as social progress which is objectively free of the wrong of caste oppression; such a “belonging” alone has the potential to endure.
- 127 To recapitulate, what is required is a transcendence of this oppressive order, both of these particular separate belongings, and of any overall sense of belonging to the order based on an ideology of inequality. What is required is the annihilation of caste. Not until then would “belonging” of a sort that would count as genuine social progress be possible.
- 128 Post-independence India has addressed the question of caste in various ways. There has been affirmative action in the form of “reservations” in government employment and government educational institutions. There has also emerged an “identity politics” of the oppressed castes in the electoral field, seeking, via the ‘one person one vote’ system, to use their numbers to put in power political parties that represent their material, social and cultural interests. Yet other strategies have been in the air, such as efforts to have a larger number of dalit capitalists, so that caste categories are dissociated from class categories, unlike at present. But these moves still belong to a universe of separate belongings. They must of course be supported, as part of the traverse towards a society without caste oppression, but they do not constitute the end of that traverse. They do not take us towards the annihilation of caste.
- 129 Even the elimination of the dissociation between the caste-distribution of the population and the caste-distribution in particular occupations will not, I have argued, end caste-oppression. But such an elimination, assumed for argument’s sake, will not even occur through the pursuit of pure identity politics or identity-based demands. This is because the existing distribution of social and

political power in society, which is in favour of the “upper castes”, will never allow such pure identity-based demands to be fulfilled. Even if they are conceded in a given conjuncture, efforts will be made to negate them in practice, or even to roll them back.

- 130 At present in India, for instance, “reservations” in favour of dalits and other “backward” castes are being sought to be undermined by two strategies: first, through a shrinking of the domain of the State sector where reservations exist, to conform ostensibly to the neo-liberal economic policies that the state itself has adopted; and second, through a demand for further extension of such “reservations” even to obviously non-“backward” caste-groups, such as Jats and Patels, with these groups resorting to their own brands of identity politics, which would necessarily attenuate the existing “reservations” for the genuinely oppressed castes. (One form of attenuation will be the additional introduction of “income criteria” and other such qualifications). This second strategy amounts to a pure caste-versus-caste struggle, or what we might call a pure clash of group “belongings”. Identity politics in short will not achieve a lessening of caste oppression at the economic level, let alone the elimination of caste.
- 131 What is required for the elimination of caste is the creation of a new “belonging” that transcends caste as a category altogether, a new belonging where both the oppressed castes and even members of other castes can find common ground, a higher community of belonging beyond caste. Breaking existing caste belongings through cultural phenomena such as inter-caste marriages, dropping of caste names, and the like, used to be considered an effective means towards this end; and they do have a role to play. But their effectiveness is limited. The higher belonging transcending caste can only be created through common struggles built on supra-caste solidarity.
- 132 The Marxist perception in India, influenced by the European experience, has traditionally been that the development of capitalism would bring in such supra-caste solidarity through class struggle. Capitalism in Europe had destroyed the “old community” that existed under feudalism (the involuntary “community” that derived from being born within a feudal society) and had absorbed those displaced through such destruction into its own work-force. These workers in turn had, starting with what Marx had called “combinations”, gone on to create a “new community”. A similar experience, Marxists have assumed, will get repeated in India.
- 133 This however is unlikely. Behind both the destruction of the old community and the formation of the new, under the aegis of capitalism in Europe, was a massive emigration of labour to the

temperate regions of European settlement. It is this which produced the requisite tightness in the labour market (i.e. kept down the relative size of the “reserve army of labour”) to create effective “combinations” among workers, and ensured that those displaced through the destruction of the old community were not forced, owing to the absence of employment opportunities outside, just to linger on in their old habitats as a pauperized mass. Such emigration is impossible today from countries like India. At the same time, labour absorption under capitalism is so meager that it even falls short of the sum of the natural increase of the work-force and those displaced from petty production through its unviability owing to capitalist penetration. The result is a growing unemployment that manifests itself not as open unemployment existing alongside workers who are “fully employed”, but rather as a proliferation of casual employment, intermittent employment, disguised unemployment, and the like. There is in short a shortage of “proper”, or what the ILO calls “decent”, employment. Because of this, a pauperized mass lingers on in the countryside, even as the mass of workers outside, i.e. under capitalism, is fragmented, with weak “combinations” and little solidarity.

134 This provides the condition for a flourishing of “identity politics” including caste identity politics. Capitalist commodity production tends to fragment the workers, to force them into competing against one another, as individuals and even as groups. This is the opposite of ‘combinations’ – fragmentation. “Combinations” serve precisely to overcome such fragmentation. But when “combinations” are difficult (due to chronic impermanence and informalization of employment), then fragmentation persists, and “identity politics” in the realm of the polity is the counterpart of such fragmentation. “Neo-liberal” capitalism in countries like India, no matter how rapidly the Gross Domestic Product grows under it, produces economic fragmentation among workers because of its incapacity to create adequate employment; it correspondingly also produces “identity politics” in the realm of the polity.

135 Such economic fragmentation, together with the fact that caste itself becomes a barrier to combinations among agricultural labourers in the countryside, as it used to be in the early years of the trade union movement in the cities too (prompting Ambedkar who led a dalit workers’ union to stipulate as a condition for cooperating with a Communist-led union that the workers of both unions should drink from the same water tap on the factory floor) makes working class solidarity as a means of transcending “caste-group belonging” difficult. The fact that the working class itself (both urban and rural workers) remains relatively small within a vast mass of petty producers, makes things more difficult. The supra-caste “community of belonging” therefore cannot simply be a working class-belonging.

- 136 Where then do we search for ‘supra-caste’ belonging that would count as genuine social progress? Perhaps the answer lies in the ideal of a “fraternity of equal citizens”. This is what the Indian Constitution promises, but its realization has been thwarted by the inadequate employment opportunities created for the mass of the people by the “spontaneous” working of neo-liberal capitalism. A mobilization of people in supra-caste struggles for the realization of a set of universal and justiciable economic rights, similar to the political rights that already exist within the Constitution, can provide a way of transcending caste belongings for a higher “community”, that of citizens. Such a struggle for universal economic rights transcends identity politics. It pushes caste into the background, though it does not entail, as I argue below, any withdrawal of the “affirmative action” strategy that already exists.
- 137 Among these rights one can list for immediate practical implementation a right to food, a right to employment, a right to State-provided free and quality healthcare, a right to State-provided free and quality education to all up to a certain level, and a right to adequate old-age pension and disability allowance.
- 138 The demand for such universal rights can bring together people belonging to different caste-groups and hence build up supra-caste solidarity. And since a universal right to employment will not per se overcome the concentration of “lower castes” in menial and lesser-paid occupations, the elimination of the disjunction between the caste distribution of the population and the caste distribution within particular occupations will still need to be addressed, for which affirmative action in the form of “reservations” will be still required. The demand for such universal rights therefore does not obviate the need for “reservations”; at the same time the achievement of such universal rights serves to reduce “upper caste” opposition to “reservations”. It achieves supra-caste solidarity, a condition for the annihilation of caste, in lieu of the caste-antagonism that identity politics, if exclusively pursued, generates.
- 139 There is an important related issue here. Caste divisions are not the only fault-lines in Indian society; what in India are labelled “communal” divisions, above all between Hindus and Muslims, have occupied centre-stage recently. The two issues are related: the vast bulk of the Muslims in the Indian sub-continent are converts from the “lower castes” and continue to remain wretched and excluded. Unlike the Hindu “lower castes” they do not enjoy the benefits of “reservations” (since caste does not formally exist among Muslims), because of which on certain social indicators like educational attainments, they have fallen even below the dalits, who were traditionally the most oppressed. In recent years some states have included reservations for certain purposes for “backward” Muslims

within the overall quota for the “backward” castes (the maximum quota for all categories taken together is legally stipulated through a Supreme Court ruling); but the Hindu Right’s persistent attempt to arouse anti-Muslim passions within the majority community has put a restraint even on such ameliorative measures. The strengthening of a notion of “citizenship” through enlarging the set of rights, by incorporating economic rights in addition to the political ones, provides a possible direction of advance.

- 140 The foregoing does not mean a substitution of class struggle by some form of a “citizens’ struggle”. What it suggests is that class struggle itself must be oriented towards ensuring for every citizen the right to a minimum standard of material and cultural life.
- 141 The question arises: are such rights feasible? The answer depends on what we take to be the constraints, i.e. what is assumed to be unchangeable in the given situation. If the entire ensemble of relationships that underlies the given situation is taken as a constraint and assumed to be unchangeable, then obviously the only feasible outcome is what exists. Any change therefore, towards a supra-caste and supra-(religious) community “belonging”, must take only some elements of the existing situation as constraints but not others. Whether the proposed rights are feasible depends on what elements we take as constraints.
- 142 An example will clarify the point. Implementing such rights will certainly require additional public expenditure. The enforcement of some rights will no doubt automatically facilitate the achievement of others, (e.g. implementing the right to education will increase employment of teachers, maintenance staff, and construction workers, which will make the right to employment that much easier to realize); but even so around 8 to 10 percent of the Gross Domestic Product will be needed for this purpose. Since India has one of the lowest tax-GDP ratios in the world, raising these resources should pose no objectively serious problem. But if it is argued that any such fiscal effort will affect “investors’ confidence” and hence be unfeasible within the current neo-liberal capitalist order, then the preservation of the existing order is being made a constraint.
- 143 This is illegitimate. The desired social system should be one that makes the institution of such rights possible (provided that the objective availability, i.e. the supra-system availability, of resources, permits it), rather than the institution of such rights being made secondary to the preservation of the economic arrangement that underlies the existing social system. No movement towards a new belonging is possible if we adopt the latter position.

144 One can go further. Neo-liberal capitalism which shuns State intervention except for improving “investors’ confidence”, imbues the system with a “spontaneity”, where its own immanent tendencies get full scope to work themselves out. These include a basic inequalizing tendency, which arises for reasons already discussed, namely, the non-diminution of the relative size of the labour reserves which keeps real wages at a subsistence level even as labour productivity increases, thus raising the share of the economic surplus, accruing to the propertied classes and their largely high-income service-providers, in total output. This inequalizing tendency, when superimposed on a pre-existing unequal socio-economic order entails a widening, both economically and socially, of caste and religious-communal inequalities. The move towards a wider “belonging” therefore must restrain this inequalizing tendency; it cannot take the neo-liberal capitalist order as a constraint upon its efforts. Doing so will not only thwart any wider “belonging”; it will be a panacea for acute and increasing social conflicts.

145 **2.4 The unfinished project of citizenship in Sri Lanka**

146 **2.4.1 Introductory Remarks**

147 The question of belonging and identity in Sri Lanka today is inevitably tied to the aftermath of a civil war.

148 The dominant position on how to usher in reconciliation in Sri Lanka after the end of the civil war in 2009 is founded on a faulty epistemology. The notion that each group inhabits some kind of culture and that the boundaries between these groups and the contours of their cultures—namely majority Sinhalese Buddhists (70 percent of the population) and minority (Sri Lanka and Indian) Tamil Hindus (12 percent) —are specifiable and easy to depict is deeply flawed (Bensahib 2004). Importantly, how most well-meaning policy makers think inequities among groups should be addressed—and diversity and pluralism furthered—is still influenced by this culturalist approach.

149 According to this flawed epistemology, people are seen as and expected to belong to a single primordial community and to behave accordingly. The solution to the sovereignty claim made by Tamil separatists and crushed by the state forces, remains, for believers in the distinctness of cultures, to divide the country on ethno-cultural lines, instituting a more or less advanced federal constitutional arrangement. We would like to suggest instead that turning to the political subject may prove to be salutary. If we follow Fanon’s dream of articulating a subject ‘who becomes a citizen by participating in

the formation of a people to come, a people that has not yet been imagined or invented' (E. F Isin 2012: 565) we may be able to complete the unfinished project of citizenship.

150 **2.4.2 False Integration**

151 Since reconciliation has been premised on a faulty reading of society as composed of clearly delimited authentic cultural communities, the importance of melange in society has been devalued. One can argue that the colonial taxonomical graft has in many ways inflected how attempts at reconciliation between conflicting parties have been shaped over the past thirty years. In its institutions and bureaucracies, traces of the colonial mold are still present (Wickramasinghe 2010). The urge to classify groups according to distinct cultural traits is at the center of the liberal state that has grown from the shards of the colonial state. The official status of cultural groups regulated by the national identity cards citizens carry with them, the forms they fill for state and non-state institutions to enter their children into schools, the religious instruction they receive in state schools, applications for scholarships, employment and bank loans. One of the conventions in today's state is the "impermissibility of fractions, or to put it the other way round, a mirage like integrity of the body." (Anderson 1998: 36)

152 **2.4.3 Communities in formation**

153 Before advocating a turn to a new form of citizenship and to fluid cultural forms of belonging one needs to highlight certain traits among the peoples of Sri Lanka that add credence to this approach. First of all the social formations called Sinhalese and Tamil are historically produced communities that are still in flux. The Sinhalese encompass all Sinhalese speaking people including Buddhists, Catholics and Christians. From the 15th century onwards migrants from Tamil or Malayalee speaking South India streamed into the coastal areas of the island, adopted the Sinhalese language, converted to Buddhism or later Christianity and became part and parcel of the Sinhalese community, forming the three intermediary caste groups in the maritime provinces. In contrast to the common perception that shapes school curricula and the public arena that Sinhalese people are direct descendants of the Aryan prince Vijaya, his lion grandfather and his rowdy companions, the reality of the mixity of the Sinhalese community in an island society, colonised for 400 years, is rarely claimed or lauded. A single culture as it is commonly understood still remains what makes you, and who you are in Sri Lanka. But reality is quite different; people are moving between cultures as Daniel Bass's (2016) fascinating account of the way more and more young Up country Tamils who live outside the plantations identify themselves not as Indian Tamils – a term that

refers to the people who worked on the plantations since the mid-19th century – but as Sri Lanka Tamils, a category that for census officials refers to Tamils whose family roots can be traced far back to the northern or eastern province. In a paradox of history the census, once an agent of fixity, is playing a role in destabilizing categories and promoting mobility. These playful subversions invite us to display some incredulity towards the claim that some scholars make over the importance of cultural recognition as the key to historical reconciliation.

154

155 Another complicating factor is that the distribution of communities varies from one region to another. While there are areas with a majority of over 80 percent (Tamil in the far north, or Sinhalese in the far south) there are also areas with approximately 25 percent minority populations and areas with approximately equal representation between groups – for example the plantation district of Nuwara Eliya and the Trincomalee and Amparai districts in the east. The state ten years ago denied the option of straddling many identities. But in everyday life and not only in border areas, anthropologists have shown that communities, men and women spoke and still speak two languages and continue to visit all places of worship, catholic churches, Buddhist temples and Hindu devales. The formation of cultural enclaves as a solution for the demands for justice by the Tamils of Sri Lanka is troubling, inadequate and insufficient. Since more than half of the Tamil speaking people live outside what would be devolved regions it is the Sri Lanka state in its entirety that needs drastic change. Autonomy for the other can only happen in a state that nurtures pride in cultural *mélange* and hybridity rather than in the fantasy of the purity and authenticity of cultures.

156 **2.4.4 Citizenship and the making of majoritarianism**

157 Citizenship is an unfinished and until now flawed project. Since 1948 the year Sri Lanka became independent, citizenship or 'being a citizen' has been experienced by the people of Sri Lanka in different ways. « Majorities are made, not born » posited Dru Gladney (1998). Indeed, by consolidating the majority community in the 21st century – as a political group and as a people unified by a common love for the land – the government of Mahinda Rajapaksa (2005-2015) was in fact finishing a project that had been initiated in the late 1920s. With the abolition of communal representation and the introduction of universal suffrage in 1931 the voice of the rural Sinhalese majority gained a new prominence. The next step in border drawing was initiated through the Citizenship and Franchise Acts, which were hurriedly passed by the new nation-state in 1948-49. These laws

altered the balance of power among the various communities and helped consolidate a majority within the polity. Two types of citizenship – citizenship by descent and citizenship by registration were devised while the status of citizenship became mandatory for the right of franchise. In both cases, documentary proof was required for applicants, a procedure that disqualified the majority of Indian Tamil workers, who were illiterate. Through these laws, a person who could not prove that she belonged to the new nation-state, was defined as an alien (Wickramasinghe 2014). The issue of statelessness for over 900 000 people was finally ‘resolved’ when in 1964 India and Sri Lanka signed a pact giving them citizenship to one or the other state.

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159 After 1956 the Sinhala language was made the official language (Sinhala Only Act 33 of 1956), and over the following decades, a growing perception of the state as bestowing public goods selectively began to emerge, breeding mistrust between ethnic communities. The changes introduced in the criteria for university admission known as ‘standardization’ giving weightage to the Sinhalese youth from underprivileged areas was read by its adversaries as an unfair form of affirmative action. This led to a permanent crisis in higher education. The failure of the state to guarantee social mobility through education and the unequal distribution of education entitlements were central issues in the Southern insurrections and the Tamil insurrection in the North and East in the 1970s. While issues of unemployment led the Sinhala rural educated youth to rebel in 1971, the early Tamil militancy was energized by the issue of standardization. As Cheran suggests, this explains the middle-class character of the early Tamil militancy in Jaffna which only in the late 1970s spread to less privileged social groups (Cheran 2009). The 1970s university admission schemes represent a crucial moment in the process of transformation of this core perspective on the state, which was no longer seen as a harbinger of social justice but as an impediment to some peoples’ very ‘capacity to aspire’, to borrow Arjun Appadurai’s words. For a generation of Tamil youth, the affirmative action schemes of the 1970s constituted irrevocable evidence of the partiality of the state vis-à-vis the majority Sinhalese. The 1970s crisis illuminates how the lack of public debate on issues of equality of opportunity can lead to distrust and misinterpretations that linger.

160

2.4.5 Civic nationalism ?

161

After the end of the civil war the state formulated a new politics of patriotism, that coupled state and nation. Sri Lanka, it was proclaimed would no longer have minorities. This statement in effect

redefined the idea of multicultural society embodied and endorsed in the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of 1987. In the new civic nation citizens/patriots would be ethnically undifferentiated, although promise was made that all religions and ethnic identities would be respected.

162

163 The idea of a civic nation is commendable but utopian. Any attempt to construct 'one people' involves marginalizing some. Furthermore all examples of civic nations – The United States and France are cases in point – have anchored their liberal principles in a particularistic legacy. Most liberal democratic political cultures reflect the norms, history, habits and prejudices of majority groups. They usually attempt to foster a political identity whose political content makes it compatible with a variety of practices and beliefs. Moreover the new patriotism enunciated has little in common with the postnational or constitutional patriotism that has been theorised as an alternative form of loyalty, compatible with universal values but distinct from and superior to nationalism. It has little in common even with a civic patriotism that recognizes the public sphere cannot be neutral (Canovan 2000). On the contrary, the vision of the victorious government merged the nation and state and promoted a love of country based on a particular reading of the history and foundation myth of the Sinhala people in which all other groups – those formally known as minorities – were present merely as shadows, not as constitutive elements of a common political culture.

164 **2.4.6 Nurturing a sense of belonging**

165 The new government voted in in 2015 inherits a state that instead of ushering in ethnic reconciliation, political equality and economic distribution, systematically and purposefully created conditions for a further sharpening of ethnic divides and a deeper marginalization of Sri Lankan Tamils, Muslims and Up-Country Tamils.

166 Turning towards the citizen is a possible way out of the impasse, but not as a disciplined citizen-patriot that Rajapaksa's ten years in power attempted to construct but as Tagore's citizen who has a responsibility to be disloyal to national and subnational prisons.

167

168 The challenge may be today to try to revitalise 'disloyal citizenship' as an alternative to multiculturalism and federal arrangements in a way that reaches further than legal rights and entitlements, within a state structure that recognises multiple identities through multiple acts of identification. This would mean acknowledging the limits of pluralism

and devising criteria to determine what is admissible and what is not. If non-Sinhalese are to identify with a superordinate identity that transcends their attachment to a group, to feel that they belong, the state needs to be sensitive to the ways in which certain expressions of 'banal nationalism' can easily alienate cultural minorities. Continuing to flag Sinhala Buddhist nationhood, a practice that started in the mid-1950s might not be the most judicious way for the state to win over members of other communities to the goal of civic patriotism. Inclusion alone is not enough, as all citizens enjoy rights according to the constitution. Economic rights alone are not enough.

169

170 The ideal of pluralism that was espoused to describe and order what was read as distinct cultures within a society also led to the production of differences and hierarchies.

171 A new citizen needs to be created whose sense of belonging would question the notion that she inhabits a single discrete culture. She would speak multiple languages, Sinhala, Tamil and English. In school instead of following instruction about her religion of birth she would learn about world religions; instead of learning a skewed national history she would learn about the interconnectedness of histories; she would then create state institutions where multiple identifications and melange are valued rather than tolerated. What is needed is to put into practice the ideal that people inhabit a complex world of meaning that does not correspond to a single, bounded, authentic and unchanging notion of culture.

172 **2.5 France and the United States**

173 Contrasted definitions of belonging are at the center of major tensions between ethno-racial groups across advanced industrial societies. Alternative logics of social segmentation are often at work, and they can be identified by focusing on categories through which members view one another as significant others who share fundamental moral worldviews and/or cultural traits. More specifically, it is possible to consider the symbolic boundaries that individuals trace when they are asked to describe the kinds of people they like and dislike, whom they feel inferior and superior to, and whom they are similar to and different from. In the process, differences that are at the center of individual maps of perception emerge, as well as the differences that are not salient in the way people discuss worth, status, and indirectly, community membership. The result is a comparative analysis of models of inclusion/exclusion that operate on the basis of different status cues, such as color, class, and immigrant status.

A comparison of institutionalized national “models” of social segmentation reveals contrasted patterns in France and the United States in particular. One can argue that the French model combines strong external boundaries and weak internal boundaries.^[18] For French workers in particular, “us” includes all the French, but with increasing frequency, “les français de souche” only, while a large portion viewing immigrants – and particularly Muslim immigrants – as unable to assimilate to a universalistic French culture. In the early nineties, the poor and blacks still included in the definition of the French “us,” as understandings of the social bond structuring French society downplayed internal divisions to emphasize humanitarianism, collective responsibility toward indigent fellow citizens, as well as a certain universalism qua republicanism. By the late 2000, under the influence of neoliberalism, the boundaries drawn toward the poor had become more rigid in France, as they did in large segments of Europe (Mijs et al 2016). Boundaries toward Muslims and Blacks had also rigidified (Lamont and Duvoux 2014). In contrast, in the early nineties, American workers already drew strong internal boundaries against the poor and African-Americans, largely on moral basis, i.e. in the name of work ethic and responsibility; they external boundaries were more mixed: immigrants who partake in the American dream were more easily made part of “us” than African-Americans, but strong boundaries were also present toward illegal immigrants. By 2010, after thirty years of neoliberalism, boundaries toward the poor have also become more acute, as manifested for instance in the fact that data from the American National Election Survey shows that many more college-educated blacks oppose government spending for the poor in 2012 than in 1980 (Hochschild and Weaver 2015: 1253) Although a culture of diversity has become more broadly diffused and institutionalized (Berrey 2016), discrimination toward African Americans is persistent and a strong boundary separating non-blacks and blacks remains a dominant feature of American society (Gans 1999). According to the 2000 General Social Survey, whites prefer a neighborhood that is more than half white and less than a third African American. For their part, on average, African Americans prefer a neighborhood that is a third African American and less than half white. Both groups prefer to live near in-group members, but African Americans prefer to live in more racially mixed neighborhoods than do whites (Bobo et al 2012).

Understanding patterns of boundary work is particularly urgent in a context of mounting neo-liberalism and xenophobia, which both entail a narrowing of bonds of solidarity. Both models involve exclusion, but boundaries are structured differently across cases. In particular, the relative decoupling of racism and blackness in the French case in the early nineties sheds light on the American case by putting it in perspective.

176 The “imagined communities” are not necessarily primarily framed in political terms: in France as in the United States, individuals use moral and cultural arguments about differences and similarities to define “people like us.” They refer to the struggles of their own daily lives, which are central to their own concept of self, and judge negatively others whom they perceive as not meeting basic moral standards (in terms of work ethic, sense of responsibility, perseverance, etc.) In the worldview of many of these workers, moral, racial, and class boundaries work hand in hand to provide them a space for self-worth and dignity.

177 **2.5.1 French Cultures of Solidarity**

178

179 In a Durkheimian vein, Jeffrey Alexander (1992, p. 291) argues that “members of national communities often believe that ‘the world,’ and this notably includes their own nation, is filled with people who either do not deserve freedom and communal support or are not capable of sustaining them (in part because they are immoral egoists). Members of national community do not want to ‘save’ such persons. They do not wish to include them, protect them, or offer them rights because they conceive them as being unworthy, amoral, and in some sense ‘uncivilized!’” In contemporary France, these unworthy people are primarily the growing number of Muslim immigrants originating from North Africa, as “Islam marks the frontier of what is foreign.” (Kastoryano 1996, p. 63).

180

Between 1960 and 1974, the majority of immigrants to France came from North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), and they arrived often under temporary permits directing them into the worst-paid, least-desirable jobs in manufacturing, mining, and public work. These immigrants were a visible minority who, after 1974, could establish their families in French soil. Their numbers grew rapidly. A sense of competition and the breakdown of traditional working class culture eventually translated into xenophobia and calls for repatriation of non-Europeans). This movement amplified and resulted in a major breakthrough when in the 1984 European parliamentary election, the Front National whose main program was to oppose immigration, received more than 11 percent of the vote. This party continues to lament the disappearance of the old white and culturally homogeneous France, one where neighborhoods were safe and truly French, where popular culture and collective identity coexisted in an organic way, undisturbed by the mores, smells, and bizarre clothing of non-European immigrants).

181 Today, many native French workers draw strong boundaries toward North Africans, and in doing so, they use three primary types of moral arguments: First they are viewed as lacking in work ethic and sense of responsibility, and as having access to a larger share of the collective wealth than they are entitled to. This is particularly unbearable to workers because it violates their sense of group positioning (Blumer 1958). Interestingly, whereas American workers condemn blacks for their lack of self-reliance, French workers are angry that immigrants are favored by a disloyal paternalist state, at a time when the quality of life and education in working class neighborhoods is perceived as being in steady decline.

182 Second, French workers draw boundaries against North Africans on the basis of their lack of civility: they spit in front of people, never apologize, are rude, and lack respect for others. They also have barbarous mores (e.g., they kill goats on their balconies at Ramadan.) They destroy French quality of life and show go back home.

183 The third and most fatal failing of North African immigrants is their inability or refusal to assimilate, which violates Republican ideals, and is perceived by workers as a major threat to their personal and national identity. Republican ideals include the Jacobean notions of equality, universalism, and national unity. These ideals negate particularism based on religion, locality, race, corporate membership, and birth. They also presume a voluntaristic or contractual approach to political participation: anyone can join in the polity as long as they assimilate and come to share a same political culture. That North Africans are perceived as refusing this contract (by resisting assimilation) invalidates their right to reside in France. In contrast, throughout French history, other immigrant groups have not been as intensely stigmatized, because they were perceived as assimilating quickly (through the army, unions, schools, or left-wing political parties), or as being there only temporarily (Noiriel 1988). This refusal to assimilate is particularly resented because being French is one of the most high status aspects of workers' identity, and because French political culture defines this republicanism as quintessentially French, and even as one of the most sacred contributions of the French nation to the world.

184 It is largely because they are Muslims that North African immigrants are construed by native French workers as either particularly resistant to assimilation, or as unable to assimilate. Indeed, as Muslims they are described as fundamentally other, and in some cases, as culturally incompatible with the French ("they don't respect women", "they don't believe in human rights, "

185 Their education is different"). Undoubtedly, this rejection is linked to the defense of a "true French culture" that is threatened not only from the inside by foreigners but also from the outside by Americanization. Moreover, colonial notions of France's "mission civilisatrice" and of French superiority remains present in the mind of many workers, especially when it comes to barbaric former African colonies. Elements of these available cultural repertoires are appropriated by French workers to reinforce boundaries against Muslims: differences in the degree of their religious involvement are downplayed, and even "beurs" (i.e., second generation children of immigrants) who have French citizenship are widely perceived to be immigrants.

186 The importance of immigrants in the boundaries that the French interviewees draw is particularly remarkable when compared with the place that these men give to alternative bases of community segmentation in their discourse on "the other," and particularly the place they give to racial others (mostly blacks) and to the poor. Their boundaries toward blacks have been historically weaker, although they have gained in importance in recent years. There is a decoupling between racism and blackness that is surprising from an American perspective. As French citizens, black Martiniquais and Guadeloupains are by right and de facto fully and equally included in the national collectivity, again on the basis of Republican ideals. A survey in the early nineties showed that when asked which category of immigrants poses the greatest difficulty for integration, 50 percent of the French respondents identified North Africans, far more than the 19 percent who pointed to Black Africans or the 15 percent who named Asians (Horowitz 1992, p. 19). Less recent survey data consistently provide evidence that negative feelings toward North-African immigrants are much stronger than negative feelings toward blacks, toward European immigrants, or toward other racial minorities (Lamont and Duvoux 2014).

187 A number of factors combine with the culture of Republicanism to create weak boundaries against blacks, as compared to North Africans: 1) Most North Africans are first or second generation immigrants. Blacks are more heterogeneous: while some are recent immigrants from Sub-Saharan African, those from the Dom-Toms have been French for several generations. This works against defining "us" in opposition to "blacks," and partly trump the low status of blacks as formerly colonized people. 2) Blacks living in France are more heterogeneous religiously than North Africans – for instance Senegalese are predominantly Muslims while the Congolese are Catholic (Tribalat 1995) – which also works against institutionalizing a clear distinction between "us" and "blacks." While North Africans include a small Jewish population, they are often presumed to be homogeneously Muslims; 3) Muslims are more

salient to French workers because they constitute a larger group than blacks (again, they make up almost five percent of the French population as compared to less than two percent for blacks). 4) The process of decolonization was much more peaceful in French Sub-Saharan Africa than in North Africa, which sustained less negative stereotypes of blacks than of North Africans; and 5) Historically, a sizable proportion of black African immigrants came to France to be educated. This population was of a more elite background and was more assimilated than many North African low-skilled workers. Their presence worked against negative views of blacks, at a time when low-skill black Africans had less easily access to French shores than their North African counterpart due to geographical distance.

188 The arrival of a rapidly increasing number of West African immigrants might be undoing of this relative dissociation between blackness and racism. In particular, the policy of family reunification that was put in place after 1974 brought in large number of African families, which made Muslim African migration more visible in part by focusing public attention on polygamy and traditional female genital mutilations (Barou 1996). Nevertheless, overall, the combined characteristics of blacks living in France work against a clear polarization between “Frenchness” and “blackness” in a manner unparalleled for North Africans. Racial “others,” such as Asians, have had a very successful assimilation. They contribute to the playing down of racial differences as a basis for internal differentiation within French society.

189 French workers also downplay the internal segmentation of their society by integrating among “people like us” individuals located in the lower echelons of society. But boundaries toward this group have become more salient in recent years. Republicanism, Christianity, and Socialism all provide elements of cultural repertoires that favor such weak internal boundaries toward the poor. French workers have historically put great emphasis on solidarity and this continues to shape how they understand their fate and the role of structural forces in explaining their plight. .

190 **2.5.2 Collectivity American Style**

191 In the mind of many American workers, social and cultural membership remain largely equated with being white and being at least lower middle or working class. They more often evaluate people on the basis of their “success” and more readily draw boundaries against individuals below themselves on the socioeconomic ladder, as compared to the French. They often resort to arguments having to do with work ethic and ambition in doing so, distinguish superior and inferior people: “some people out there I

think that could do better and don't try. There's nothing wrong if you don't want to become something, but don't blame somebody else for it."

192 There appears to a close association between moral and class boundaries in the United States. The literature has clearly documented the association between poverty and irresponsibility, laziness, and lack of self-sufficiency (e.g., Katz 1989), reveal similar constructs. Thus, after declaring proudly that he is a diehard Republican, a worker explained that being Republican means "Don't give anything for nothing. Incentive . . . Go get a job . . . (We should not) make it so easy to stay on unemployment, on welfare." These men are angry that they have to pay so much in taxes to support the poor who "don't work at all and get everything for free." They more often stress traditional aspects of morality (e.g., the Ten Commandments and the defense of traditional work ethic) than the French. When asked to choose, from a list, traits that they disliked most, half chose "lazy" in contrast to a fifth of their French counterparts.

193 When asked to whom they feel superior and inferior, the majority of American interviewees constantly and subtly shift from moral to racial boundaries, drawing both at once, and justify racist attitudes via moral arguments. The rhetoric they use to draw boundaries against blacks resembles that they use to reject the poor: they stress their alleged lack of work ethic and sense of responsibility. They also point to their inability to educate their children properly, particularly in moral matters and of lacking in self-sufficiency. A electronics technician summarizes the way many perceive the situation when he says: "It's this whole unemployment and welfare gig. What you see mostly on there is blacks. I see it from working with some of them and the conversations I hear . . . That's bull shit. It may be white thinking, but, hey, I feel it is true to a point . . ." This passage illustrates how for some American workers, class, racial, and moral boundaries work hand in such a way that the community of "people like us" is defined very narrowly and certainly excludes blacks who are largely constructed as living off working people.

194 That boundaries against the poor and blacks in the United States are so strong is undoubtedly related to the fact that these two groups are associated with one another (in contrast, in the French context, the long-term unemployed are mostly white French workers who are victim of economic restructuring.) Hence, in the United States, blackness and poverty trace the limits of social membership, and this trend is likely to become more accentuated as we move toward an opposition between all non-blacks and blacks (Gans 1999), and this, despite the centrality of egalitarianism in American political culture (Lipset 1979; Tocqueville 1945).

195 In this context, immigrants, and particularly immigrants who attempt to achieve the American dream, are easily made part of "us" (Lieberson 1980). These immigrants still hold a privileged place in the country's collective self-image in part because this country is first a country of immigrants. In the words of Michael Walzer (1992), the United States remains a "nation of nations" where external boundaries remain relatively weak. When describing their mental maps, few workers point to immigrants, and when they do, it is rarely to single out their moral failures. Some point to failure to assimilate, and are slighted by what they perceive to be a lack of desire to learn English among immigrants. However, they tend to be more concerned with the dangers this represent for the decline of the relative status of the nation, than for immigrants' moral character. National surveys also show that in the early eighties, the percentage of Americans who did not perceive immigrants as "basically good, honest people" was only around 20 percent, and the percentage who did not consider them as hardworking was only 18 percent (Lapniski, Peltola, Shaw, and Yang 1997, p. 367). Moreover, Espenshade and Belanger (1998)'s survey analyses reveal that if Americans have negative feelings toward immigrants, these are ambivalent and not strongly held. These boundaries have become more rigid over the last twenties years, propelling Donald Trump to a leading position in the race for the leadership of the Republican Party by 2016.

196 2.5.3 Conclusion

197 This brief sketch of the external and internal boundary patterns that prevail in France and the United States still begs qualification and raises a number of questions. However, in a nutshell, it does suggest the presence of somewhat contrasted models in which moral boundaries play a key role: in France, strong boundaries are erected toward Muslim immigrants whose culture is viewed as fundamentally incompatible with a universalistic French culture.. Simultaneously, boundaries against blacks and the poor have been downplayed in the name of French universalism and a view of morality that stresses solidarity, egalitarianism, and humanism and is influenced by Christianity, socialism, and republicanism. In contrast, in the United States, we continue to find strong moral boundaries drawn against the poor and African-Americans on the basis of responsibility and work ethics while legal immigrants who partake in the American dream are made part of the collective "us."

198 Analyzing how workers define worth and cultural membership is particularly pressing today, in our era of neo-liberalism. We know that national welfare systems reveal implicit rules about conceptions of merit and social citizenship that vary across societies. Yet, conceptions of moral communities and cultural membership that underlie policy choices remain under-examined. I described

conceptions of moral communities by focusing on the schemas of evaluation used by ordinary citizens. National social policies are more likely to be adopted if they resonate with conceptions of the boundaries of the community that citizens upheld. Moreover, boundary ideologies also have a powerful impact on the agenda of political parties and the electoral strategies they use. Hence we must study these conceptions if we are to make sense of some of the most important social and political changes that we are facing today, at a time when community boundaries appear to be narrowing and when principles of solidarity seem to apply to an increasingly small number of “people like us.”

199

2.6 Language and belonging in a post-national world? The case of Europe: The role of language in issues of belonging and identity

200

Being able to express ideas in language allows human beings to remember the past, organize the present and plan the future. Language permits individuals to negotiate with each other, cooperate and live in groups. This utility of language is thus its fundamental attribute. However, the fact that this human skill has developed as languages rather than language has added another very important function: the use of a language variety defines the parameters of a group; it includes as members all those who are speakers and excludes all those who cannot speak the language. Language thus plays a key role in the construction of political/social identity as communication takes place and social interaction cements relationships among all those who can understand each other. It seems to us that being able to communicate is a fundamental requirement in belonging and we agree with George Steiner (1975) that at best incomprehension produces ‘zones of silence’ and ‘cultural isolation’ while at worst it fosters the construction of those with whom we cannot communicate as ‘Other’ or ‘Enemy’.

201

The question of language difference has not always been of concern to rulers. Feudal suzerains, absolutist monarchs and emperors did not habitually require their subjects to speak one and the same language. As long as there were adequate bilinguals in the chains of command there was little pressure for linguistic unity. This changed radically as the world became a mosaic of nation-states and democracy began to spread. The ideal in nationalism is that people, language and territory are congruent and the state the home of a homogenous nation. This was, of course, rarely the case and a good deal of social engineering was required to harmonize populations. Language was a particular challenge, since belonging to a community of communication is different to many other forms of belonging. One cannot change language simply by an act of will; one cannot ‘convert’ to a language; language shift for individuals and communities comes only after a long (and usually hard) apprenticeship.

202 Achieving national communities of communication has not been unproblematic. It was always the language of a power group that was enshrined as national language and those with other cultural and linguistic heritages were constrained to converge or shift to this language variety. Since linguistic conformity was equated with loyalty, the system produced monolinguals as many accepted the national language as their sole medium for communication and identity needs. Those who maintained separate language communities (either through their own choice or through exclusion) became 'minorities', often to their detriment. The nation-state system divided the world linguistically as well as politically, producing a mosaic of national languages. Contact across language frontiers was accomplished by learning foreign languages.

203 We cannot claim that this world is now part of history; the nation-state is clearly still a very potent force in the world and a key focus of belonging. However, the flows, exchanges and networks of an increasingly globalizing world are challenging the strict division of populations into national groups whose main communication takes place within that group. There is greater contact as migration increases under the pressures of continuing global economic inequality and the extreme political insecurity in war zones and lawless states. There is greater contact as increasingly global structures of economic activity produce a highly mobile workforce on all continents. There is greater (virtual) contact as fact and opinion circulate on the internet, to which approximately a third of humanity has access. In all of these fast evolving aspects of globalization there is also a linguistic dimension. Who is talking to whom and in what language? How are new virtual communities of communication being constructed? Who is excluded? Who has access to knowledge? Who does not? For all of us concerned with belonging and solidarity language raises significant and complex issues. As it always has.

204 **2.6.1 Europe – the nation-state and after**

205 Europe was the continent on which the concept of the nation-state was first elaborated. As a mosaic of nation-states developed slowly in the modern era, an important component of national citizenship was competence in the national language. In some states knowledge of the national language is an objective criterion of belonging. Some constitutions demand it explicitly (e.g. Spanish). In other states the requirement is unwritten but universally accepted (e.g. UK).

206 Many different processes and activities combined to help the spread of national languages in Europe. There was overt, top-down policy: a single language variety was chosen, codified and standardized. It

became the medium in national education and in state institutions. Citizens were pressed to shift to show loyalty (particularly in times of war). Other developments had unplanned effects on language convergence: industrialization and urbanization provided melting pots where the national language was the lingua franca; the establishment of national frontiers cut the dialect continuum; the printing industry with its reluctance to cater for diversity and its desire for large markets produced texts for a national readership in the national language. National language acted as social glue. Individual citizens would never meet all their co-citizens, but, as Anderson (1983) observed, they felt they belonged to an 'imagined community' because in theory they could communicate with all members of the group.

207 The imagined community had, of course, good and bad effects. On the positive side, it was a factor in the development of the welfare state; tax and redistribution seemed more acceptable when the recipients came from the same community of communication. It was also integral to the democratic process; an imagined community helped build consensus and balance interest groups within the polity. On the negative side, a strong sense of national belonging was one element in the slide to total war; the world wars of the 20th century had their root in European nationalisms.

208 It was recognition of this that led to an ambitious project to create structures that would rein in dangerous ways of belonging. The European project started with the creation of the European Steel and Coal Community in 1952 which pooled control of the industries that are the motor of modern warfare. In 1958 the creation of the European Economic Community dismantled some aspects of national sovereignty in the commercial domain. The merging of member states' economic and political responsibilities continued with the Single European Act (1986) and the Treaty on European Union (1991), which introduced the idea of the single market with free movement of capital, goods, people and services and gave citizens of member states citizenship of the Union.

209 The European Union experiment has been successful in that it appears to have aided political stability during economic recession. It has promoted democracy within states in transition. It has ensured the rule of law and press freedoms. It encouraged new economic thinking in failing command economies. If dangerous nationalisms have not been eradicated they have been corralled. However, there has not been universal support for the ever closer union envisaged by the founding fathers. The clearest rejection of the vision has come

recently from the UK electorate which narrowly voted to leave the Union in June 2016, but there are pockets of resistance in most member states.

210

There are a multitude of reasons why populations or parts of populations have not transferred their allegiance wholesale from the national to the European level. First, nation-building was a very successful process and the elements that coalesced to make it so cannot be readily dismantled; national education, national media, national democracy, national welfare, etc. continue to produce profound feelings of national belonging. Second, there is a widespread feeling that the European Union is an elite project which bypasses the ordinary citizen and which in its leaning to neo-liberalism benefits big business more than workers. Third, many perceive a democratic deficit at the heart of the EU, because there is no forum for the democratic practice of debate.

211

At the heart of much of this third cause for negativity is the linguistic fragmentation of the EU. Citizens lack channels for debate across language boundaries. Europe-wide media lack profile and influence compared to national media. There is no regular political interaction among the different populations. But, although the lack of a European forum, the absence of a European demos both have a linguistic dimension, problems of communication are rarely discussed. The political class of the EU tends to play down the language issue and maintains strict respect for the nation-state language tradition; the legal equality of all the national languages of member states is a fundamental of the treaties. Perhaps this could not have been otherwise given the weight of the nation-state legacy, in which language is linked with sovereignty and hierarchy. Respect for national languages, however, means that no general community of communication is developing among European populations.

212

This, however, is not the case among elites, who transcend linguistic enclosure to run the institutions of the EU and profit from the single market. They participate in the networks and activities of the multilingual polity either by having constant access to quality translation and interpretation, through their own personal multilingualism or by using the current lingua franca. These channels are not easily available to ordinary citizens. Translation and interpretation are expensive services to purchase, knowledge of a number of prestige European national languages presupposes a high education level and, even functional knowledge of English, the current lingua franca, suggests more than basic level qualifications

and opportunities for travel and practice. In consequence the European community of communication, such as it exists, tends to be an elite phenomenon.

213 From a theoretical perspective it seems curious that the elites of the EU, who relinquished so much economic and political sovereignty to the European project, shied away from tackling the linguistic/communication issues inherent in polity building. In practice, it is easy to see why elite-led development of any kind of European community of communication was and is impossible. Top down language planning of the nation-state era is blocked by the very success of that earlier process.

214 **2.6.2 Language as system; language as dialogic creativity**

215 One aspect of the linguistic problems of the EU as a community is the respect for language as system. Each national language is standardized, its norms have been relatively stable over a long period and its speakers are held to be homogenous. A much used metaphor is 'nation as container' (Gellner 1983), which evokes the idea of speakers securely corralled within their community of communication. Thus, in cross border communication we have competing national standards.

216 The first national language to play the role of lingua franca in the EU was French. In the last decades it has become English and fluent mastery of standard English is the current passport to participation in European political, commercial, financial, scientific, educational domains. UK or US national standards are taught in education, are the norm for publication, are a prerequisite for elite employment and seem to be prized in lingua franca exchange. With native speaker standards as the model, most non-native speakers are constructed as having a linguistic deficit. But isn't it curious that citizens of the EU submit to nation-state norms, when they are using English as a lingua franca in what is in many ways a post-national situation? If Europeans need a medium of exchange does it have to be the full scale adoption of a national language? Why is there is an unthinking default to UK or US standard Englishes?

217 There is an alternative paradigm to the de Saussurean 'language as system' model. Wittgenstein and Bakhtin (among others) proposed that language is co-construction, a work constantly in progress. Wittgenstein suggests that a language user is an agent, someone who contributes to agreement on rules. These must be reasonably consistent within a community if the propositions made using them are to have meaning for members of the community, but it is the community of speakers that continuously adjudicates and constructs the system of rules. Agreement on use comes from within the group.

In Bakhtin's analysis, language is dialogic creativity where speakers (whose linguistic backgrounds are necessarily different even within the same community of communication) constantly accommodate in order to interact and co-create meaning. Such a perspective allows language users more fluidity and flexibility. It removes the straitjacket of the alien standard. Lexis can change as connotations develop and language users can feel free to simplify grammar and syntax to suit their purposes. In this view those who use the language own it and are not measured against national language standards.

218

The problem is complex. Europeans might hesitate to develop their own brand of English as a lingua franca because they are part of global networks as well. And the corporate executives of neo-liberal capitalism, the high ranking employees of international and supranational bodies, high profile figures in the spheres of sport, art and entertainment together with a globally mobile group with lesser power and influence (technical experts, middle management, scientists, educationalists, engineers, etc.) constitute a 'transnational ruling class' (Lauder 2015: 172) that lives, works and socializes in standard English. Of course, this global elite is not comprised solely of native English speakers. Many from other linguistic groups have learnt English as a necessary (if not sufficient) condition of becoming members. They acquire their standard English in international schools and in prestige universities. Qualifications in standard English (e.g. the British IELTS or the American TOEIC) are gatekeepers for access to education and employment. [19]

219

At the moment there is immense resistance to any linguistic leeway, as hostile reactions to the work of linguists [20] who document deviation from standard English in international settings demonstrate. Such hostility probably stems from the way that new practices undermine the inherited cultural capital of those whose first language has become the lingua franca of power and the acquired cultural capital of those who have learnt that lingua franca with much effort and investment. There is thus no impetus from elites to reduce the high bars to entry to their community of communication. Native speakers enjoy their advantage gained without effort, and non-native speakers seem to prize the distinction they have achieved (Bourdieu 1979).

220

There is also disdain for linguistic creativity in interaction across language borders. 'Globish' is dismissed as inferior and the resourcefulness evident in the current superdiversity of European cities (Vertovec 2007) is rejected as 'pidgin'. However, instances of exchange in settings of diversity reveal intensely creative linguistic behavior. Linguists [21] have recorded individuals who communicate without extensive knowledge of each other's languages, cooperate to

use the linguistic resources available, and adopt, adapt, blend and negotiate. We could argue that in such exchanges, we have useful models for dealing with the complex heteroglossia of global flows. However, such language dexterity is neither valued nor rewarded. On the contrary, European states increasingly require proof of high levels of competence in their national languages for those who apply for residence permits and citizenship. Those who have ambitions to remain in the European destinations in which they find themselves must acquire the standard language of the state.

221 So at all societal levels there is gatekeeping that ensures that standard language is the criterion for belonging. There is little appreciation of the utility of linguistic flexibility in heteroglossic settings, little understanding that those with skills derived from negotiating changing language environments are better adapted to a globalizing world than those who conceive language as rigid systems. Our present language ideologies allow little tolerance for the development of new language practices. Europeans in general are very ill at ease with linguistic fluidity and negotiation and exclude any new linguistic development as 'error'. We are not open to allowing the development of new languages to suit new human groupings and relationships.

222 **2.6.3 Conclusion**

223 So the question arises: does our modern love of linguistic normativity aid or hinder belonging? Certainly an agreed standard gives clarity to the linguistic aspect of entry into a group. It does, however, set the bar high.

We might be minimally hopeful that attitudes to national standards will change because of the new e-technologies. On past evidence we should expect alteration in language behavior. The technologies of communication (writing, printing, audio-visual) all played crucial roles in the way that communities of communication and languages developed. Now that e-technologies democratize authorship and permit multiple voices, there is likely to be change as digital literacies and multimodality permit and encourage new linguistic freedoms. Now that three billion human beings have access to the internet, we could surmise that a proportion are seeking to cross linguistic frontiers. And as they do so, will they continue to adhere to the strict system of national standards or will they increasingly negotiate meaning with the linguistic repertoires at their disposal. At an early stage of the process and with ever increasing numbers involved it is perhaps too early to predict exactly how practice will develop.

224 It seems very idealistic to suggest that linguistic belonging could arise from negotiated meaning rather than from acquisition of stable national languages. However, challenging prevailing attitudes to language could reduce the linguistic gatekeeping associated with global elite networks, could give value to linguistic repertoires that are effective but unrewarded, could start to dismantle the reign of the rigid standard, where so many operate in deficit mode. In Europe, an approach to communication that permits some negotiation and accommodation would allow Europeans to use English in a way that gives them ownership. In general, a less rigid adherence to the language ideology and practices of the nation-state might open up communication practices that allow for wider networks of belonging and greater solidarity.

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- 271 [6] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (Yale University Press, 1992)
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- 282 [17] For the research on which this analysis is based, see the many publications of *Groupe de recherche sur les sociétés plurinationales* GRSP, and *Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire sur la diversité et la démocratie*, CRIDAQ. Both are under the direction of Professor Alain-G. Gagnon at the Université de Québec à Montréal. For other representative studies, see: J. Borrows, *Freedom and Indigenous Constitutionalism* (Toronto: 2016), J. Webber, *The Canadian Constitution: A Contextual approach* (Bloomsbury: 2015), A. Eisenberg & W. Kymlicka, *Identity Politics in the Public Realm: Bringing Institutions back in* (Vancouver: 2011), J. Tully, *Democracy and Civic Freedom* (Cambridge: 2008).
- 283 [18] Based on an interview-based study of French and American workers conducted in the early 1990s (Lamont 2000), updated through and a detailed review of changing boundaries in France (Lamont and Duvoux 2014; also Fassin and Fassin 2006).
- 284 [19] This is classic hegemony – in Gramsci's (1971) sense
- 285 [20] E.g. J. Jenkins, B. Seidlhofer and A. Mauranen
- 286 [21] E.g. K. Arnaut, J. Blommaert, B. Rampton, M. Spotti, T. Milani, S. Leppanen. For a recent study see the 2014-2018 project on translanguaging in four UK cities, directed by A. Blackledge and A. Creese. <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/working-papers/index.aspx> (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/tlang/working-papers/index.aspx>)