Immigration, and Common Identities: A Social Cohesion-based Argument for Open Borders

BAYCAN-HERZOG, Esma

Abstract

What does social cohesion require in culturally diverse post-immigration societies? Immigration and social cohesion are believed to be incompatible in the public debate. In normative political philosophy, a similar line of argument claims that social cohesion–based on a common national identity–is incompatible with immigration. In so doing, its proponents justify restrictive border policies. In this chapter, I will critically engage with this argument by reconnecting the literature in social sciences with normative political philosophy. I will offer a conditional and pro-tanto argument that social cohesion in post-immigration societies justifies open and non-discriminatory border policies. My argument is conditional in two senses, first because it assumes social cohesion is based on a common identity, and second because it only applies to the societies with significant cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity that can be best described as post-immigration societies. My argument implies that liberal nationalists have a choice: they can either keep defending social cohesion in the traditional way, which means that it [...]

UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE

Corinna Mieth | Wolfram Cremer (eds.)

Migration, Stability and Solidarity

Inhalt

9

7. Immigration, and Common Identities: A Social Cohesion-based Argument for Open Borders Esma

Esma Baycan-Herzog

Abstract

What does social cohesion require in culturally diverse post-immigration societies? Immigration and social cohesion are believed to be incompatible in the public debate. In normative political philosophy, a similar line of argument claims that social cohesion–based on a common national identity–is incompatible with immigration. In so doing, its proponents justify restrictive border policies. In this chapter, I will critically engage with this argument by reconnecting the literature in social sciences with normative political philosophy. I will offer a *conditional* and *pro-tanto* argument that social cohesion in post-immigration societies justifies open and non-discriminatory border policies. My argument is conditional in two senses, first because it assumes social cohesion is based on a common identity, and second because it only applies to the societies with significant cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity that can be best described as post-immigration societies. My argument implies that liberal nationalists have a choice: they can either keep defending social cohesion in the traditional way, which means that it will come with open borders or they can abandon this view, thereby losing one of the strongest justifications for restrictive borders.

Keywords: ethics of immigration—welfare state policies—social cohesion—motivation—discrimination—state borders.

Introduction

According to Michael Blake, the increasing democratic deficit in liberal democratic states is due to an 'assault from a renewed brand of nationalism and authoritarianism'. He rightfully identifies the mainstream rhetoric at work in this deficit in the form of a humiliation: "[…] the virtuous inheritors of national community, are humiliated by unrighteous outsiders […]". Furthermore, Blake encourages scholarly engagement with the nationalist political agenda to remedy this democratic deficit. The populist rhetoric sometimes defines certain members of the society as 'true people', and

the rest are left out—immigrant and national alike. Even if a contingent of so-called outsiders are actually nationals, it is evident that the rhetoric that Blake identifies intimately links immigration and a democratic deficit. This is not surprising because in the last 15 years it has been close to impossible to see a day go by without debates about the ethical issues related to immigration coming to the fore. More often than not, this issue can determine the fall of governments *(the Belgian Government in 2019)*, the departure from supra-national institutions *(Brexit)*, and its defense or opposition thereto can make or break elections for political parties. Understanding this democratic deficit requires an engagement with nationalist political arguments regarding immigration that have significantly relied on the necessity of social cohesion.

In immigrant-receiving societies, a prominent line of argument in the public debate–a *democratic legend*–claims that immigration and social cohesion are incompatible. The liberal nationalist approach offers a defense of this line of argument in the normative political philosophy literature. It claims that: (1) Social cohesion is instrumentally valuable in the provision of the necessary support to Welfare state policies (Kymlicka and Banting 2006; Miller 1995, 2016b; Tamir 1995; Van Parijs 2004) and/or to liberal democratic institutions in particular (Rawls 2003); (2) citizens need to share a common (national) identity to maintain such a system. Yet, (3) given that immigration renders such a sharing very difficult, if not impossible, states are justified in implementing restrictive border policies to maintain social cohesion. I refer to this as the social cohesion argument (*henceforth SCA*). While the *SCA* has received a number of refutations in the literature (Mendoza 2016; Pevnick 2009; Wilcox 2004), no contribution has successfully offered a refutation that the proponents could accept on the basis of their own political and moral commitments, i.e. the common national identity.

This chapter will offer a normative assessment of the *SCA. Section I* will claim that, at the very best, it is discussable to assume that a common identity is able to generate social cohesion. Yet, in order to engage with nationalist arguments, *Sections II, III, IV and V* will make a concession not to challenge this assumption and will argue that even if we do depart from this assumption, this would, contrary to what has been argued, actually justify more inclusive migration policies. This is because the kind of common identity required to ground social cohesion is pluralistic in post-immigration societies and which might better be based on a 'superordinate identity' *bridging* cultural differences whenever it is absent, alongside the existing *bonding identities*. It is a limited argument for open borders because it is both *conditional* and *pro-tanto*. It is conditional upon a society being *al-*

ready a post-immigration society that has at least 5 % of foreign residents in its territory and is politically polarised about migration and multicultural-ism. It is also limited, in the sense that it is *a pro-tanto argument* for social cohesion. It does not compare social cohesion with some other value, such as freedom of association or democratic self-determination, and claims that it is more valuable than these latter. In this sense, scholars and citizens are free to decide to rank its value accordingly. Given its salience in the public debate, it seems that it is nevertheless significantly valuable, if some other values are deemed to be more important *all things considered*, then they could simply abandon social cohesion. What the argument tells us in this latter case is that *the SCA* no longer serves as a justification for restricting immigration. In other words, in any case, citizens and scholars are faced with the dilemma of whether or not to hold onto or release the *democratic legend*; if they opt for holding, it comes with open borders and if they re-lease, then one of the strongest justifications for restrictive borders is lost. The choice is up to the reader.

I. Social Cohesion in Science and Philosophy:

A number of disciplines focus on social cohesion, both philosophers as well as social scientists disagree on its relationship with immigration. This section will situate the *SCA* in the literature, critically assess its assumption that common national identity is necessary to generating social cohesion and will identify useful conceptual distinctions stemming from social sci-ences.

There is a conceptual difficulty related to social cohesion, namely that its definition or understanding remains very ambiguous in policy, social sciences, and in normative political philosophy. For example, according to the *Council of Europe,* social cohesion is "[…] the capacity of a soci-ety to ensure the well-being of all its members—minimizing disparities and avoiding marginalization—to manage differences and divisions; and ensure the means of achieving welfare for all members (2010, 2)". This suggests that social cohesion has to do with *a well-functioning society*, some-thing that could be observed and studied. It might be appealing to think that a socially cohesive society is also a harmonious and rather egalitarian place. Unfortunately, this raises more questions than it actually answers, such as: *What is social cohesion based on in a society? What kind of value does it actually have?*

Normative political philosophy provides answers to both questions. Different labels are used to refer to this phenomenon throughout the liter-

ature;[1] some use social trust (Mendoza 2016; Miller 2016b; Pevnick 2009), whereas others refer to it as social cohesion (De Schutter 2012). Moreover, there are competing arguments about the basis of social cohesion, such as shared institutions (Blake 2003); political and economic participation (Erez 2017; Wilcox 2004); sharing a common (national) identity (Canovan 2000; Miller 1995, 2016b; Orgad 2015; Tamir 1995); or sharing universal principles embedded in a constitution (Ferry 2014; Habermas 2001). This diversity implies that no matter what is chosen as a basis, e.g. shared institutions or common identity, that this basis should be able to generate a socially cohesive society. Some philosophers have argued for multiple options while prioritising one over others, instead of choosing only one basis. For example, liberal nationalists prioritise common (national) identity over the shared universal principles embedded in a constitution or state institutions in general, not because these latter do not play *any* role in generating social cohesion, but because they are not sufficiently 'thick' to generate it on their own–without the support that stems from sharing a common identity among citizens. An institutional structure that is supported by a common identity among citizens would be the best option for liberal nationalists, and their claims rely on research in social psychology to some extent. It is fair to say that the normative debate is inconclusive about how immigration influences social cohesion and what *should* generate social cohesion. Nonetheless, an agreement exists that social cohesion does not have an intrinsic value. According to the defenders of the *SCA*, it is *instrumentally* valuable to protecting some societal good that has an intrinsic value, such as the stability of state institutions (Rawls 2003) or welfare state policies (Kymlicka and Banting 2006; Miller 1995, 2016b; Tamir 1995; Van Parijs 2004). This overview emphasises that a good part of the debate depends on immigration's causal effects on either welfare state policies or liberal democratic institutions. Social scientists could provide more qualified answers than philosophers when it comes to causality.

Similar to the literature found in normative political theory, social sciences also use different labels to refer to similar phenomena, such as social cohesion, capital, and trust.[2] Results stemming from various disciplines remain inconclusive if we leave aside the question of whether or not

---

1 I will try to refer to these different labels under social cohesion throughout this work, but the reader should note that I use them interchangeably to some extent.

2 According to Holtug and Mason (2010, 409), qualitative research papers in social sciences preferred to speak of 'social cohesion' when referring stability, inter-group cooperation, and a common identity; quantitative researchers use it to speak of 'social capital' in reference to trust, networks, and reciprocity.

social scientists are actually writing about the same phenomenon at all. It has been studied in political economy (Carter and Poast 2017); sociology (Kesler and Bloemraad 2010; Meer and Tolsma 2014); migration studies (Koopmans 2010); and political science (Holtug & Mason, 2010; Holtug, 2016; Miller & Ali, 2014; Putnam, 2007). To give a stark example of research results, two articles that were released in the same year made completely opposed causal mechanistic claims about whether or not the incompatibility between immigration and social cohesion is the result of 'multiculturalist policies combined with large welfare state (Koopmans 2010)' or 'their absence (Kesler and Bloemraad 2010)'. Similarly, Meer and Tolsma (2014) studied around 90 research papers discussing whether or not sharing a common identity is necessary for supporting the welfare state to conclude that for every research project supporting the claim that diversity is detrimental to social cohesion, there is one providing evidence that there is no such incompatibility. In the end, as Miller and Ali (2014, 238) have confirmed "[...] there is no consensus among social scientists about the answer to this question […] the findings are inconclusive and often seemingly contradictory".

Results are ambiguous, but empirical sciences provide useful conceptual distinctions in terms of temporality, sorts of social cohesion and common identity. Robert Putnam's seminal article on social capital argues that there is *a short-term* incompatibility between immigration and social capital, whereas diversity would yield benefits for the receiving societies in *the long run* (Putnam 2007). What is interesting about Putnam's article is its refinement of the concept of social capital. According to him, there are two kinds of social capital: *'Bonding social capital'* corresponds to a type of trust that ties people who are *like* each other in some important way, whereas *'bridging social capital'* ties people who are *unlike* each other in some other way (Putnam 2007, 143). Nils Holtug (2016), in turn, offers a more refined analysis of the conception of common identity by suggesting the addition of a distinction between the *sharing* aspect and its *substance* in their effects on social cohesion. These successful contributions connect empirical and normative research (Holtug & Mason, 2010; Holtug, 2016), and challenge the proponents of a common identity-based social cohesion in particular, given that their analysis does not pay attention to these conceptual distinctions risking to conflate them. These conceptual refinements will be employed further below to conceptualise the kinds of common identity.

Paradoxically, despite the lack of empirical support, the *SCA* remains intact as an assumption in normative political philosophy. Unlike social sciences, where the subject is discussed in greater detail, it is rather rare to

see a normative political philosophy paper pay attention to the contextual complexity at stake when it is taken as a general assumption. In the end, how immigration influences social cohesion depends on many contextual elements, regarding both the receiving society (e.g., the federal or unitary state structure, its population density, economic development level, cultural aspects, its migration policy) and immigrants (e.g., cultural and educational background, the migration flow, professional and linguistic skills). For example, comparing the U.S. immigration policy of 1965 privileging the family reunification and the Canada's quota system, based on individual traits (e.g. educational background, language proficiency, work experience), Stephen Macedo (2011, 305) argues that the latter policy has a more desirable redistributive effect to the welfare state. Apart from these contextual elements, especially in terms of the support to the welfare state, social cohesion might not even be that much about sharing a common identity, but with the relative strength of different labour associations, social movements, unions or the strategic actions of left political coalitions who have contributed to its historical developments (Esping-Andersen 1985).[3]

All of these difficulties might suggest that *the SCA* does not merit further discussion. Paradoxically, though, it is a very salient position in the public political debate; if our aim is to meaningfully engage with it, as Michael Blake has suggested, then we have a good reason as scholars to take citizens legends and claims seriously. One might say that scholars owe them, in a sense, given the degree to which research is publicly funded. Another important reason is that *beliefs* in public debates, independent of their empirical accuracy, do have an effect on social cohesion. As such, the research in social psychology underpinning the argument becomes very important, as it studies these perceptions directly. To the extent that most majority nationals do not perceive immigrants as sharing a common national identity, this will have a negative causal effect on social cohesion even if in fact most 'immigrants' are citizens and they share a common identity with the receiving society (Banting *et al.* 2019; Holtug 2019, 89). It is a salient debate because most societies today are post-immigration societies. Even though we are living in a world in which migration and mobility rights are tightly regulated, societies are mostly culturally diverse and remain politically polarised regarding migration and multiculturalism (Kaergard 2010). A post-immigration society is a society that is far from *(i)* being culturally, ethnically, racially homogenous *(demographic aspect)* and *(ii)*

---

3 Here gratitude is due to Gottfried Schweiger for emphasising this point.

which lacks a principled agreement around how to react to this diversity *(political aspect)*. Demographically, Japan is an example of a pre-immigration society with its 2.6 million foreign residents corresponding to 2 % of its population (Mitsuru 2018), something very different from most European societies. One in six Belgian citizens in Flanders have a migration background (Stevens and Vergauwen 2014), whereas around one in four residents in Switzerland are deprived of Swiss nationality. In such a context, the kinds of arguments that are popular in public debates gain a different value.

The most salient version of the social cohesion argument in public political debate corresponds to the liberal nationalist version of incompatibility between immigration and social cohesion based on a common (national) identity in normative political philosophy. When it comes to the public political debate, it is a frequently repeated line of argument, a *'democratic legend* (Baycan 2020)'. It is a legend, because in the face of all of the previous reasons given, it seems to be popular but also likely to be wrong. In the remainder of this chapter, I will *assume* that it is true that social cohesion is based on a common national identity in order to challenge the conception of common identity as well as the border policies it justifies.

II. The Social Cohesion Argument:

The *SCA* asserts that:

(Premise 1) Social cohesion is instrumentally valuable, given that it provides the necessary support to Welfare state policies or to liberal democratic institutions;

(Premise 2) It can be maintained to the extent that citizens share a common (national) identity;

(Premise 3) Immigration threatens such a sharing (if not rendering it completely impossible);

(Conclusion) States are justified in implementing restrictive border policies to maintain social cohesion.

How does this argument work? In specific, what does it mean for common identity to provide the necessary means to support state policies and institutions? *(Premises 1 and 2)* One response stems from a rational choice theory claim about *predictability*: for citizens to act according to what is *right*, (or what justice requires), rather than what is *good* for them (their personal interests), they need to know that others will follow their example if comply. In John Rawls' terms, the conception of justice needs to be sufficiently stable, in "[…] engender[ing] in human beings the requisite

desire to act upon it (Rawls 1999, 398)". It is a problem of motivation for citizens to do what justice requires, and so far, such a rational choice-related motivation is explained through '*predictability* (Holtug 2019, 85)' that a common national identity offers. While it can take multiple forms[4], according to the defenders of *the SCA*, a common national identity is the solution, because it functions as a 'trust generating feature (Erez 2017)'. This is why, to someone like David Miller (1995) claims that without a common national identity providing the necessary stability through mutual identification–i.e. the *nationality principle*–many things of societal value would disappear. Another response highlights '*sympathy* (Holtug 2019, 82)' that the trust generated by identity is required to motivate nationals to contribute to the social justice schemes, *even when it exceeds the limit of Rawlsian reciprocity* (Miller 1995, 72; Tamir 1995, 96). Supporting those welfare state policies that redistribute the wealth through the means "[...] of institutionalized transfers from the lucky, in particular the rich, to the unlucky, in particular the poor (Van Parijs 2004, 375)", one should be motivated even when the poor happen to be a permanently handicapped member, from whom no reciprocity could be reasonably expected. The underpinnings of both *sympathy* and *predictability* accounts originate in the research in social psychology on inter-group relations that will be later explained. Many liberal nationalists have stiffly resisted a more demanding idea of justice with respect to the two qualities of stability and realism, such as global redistributive justice, given the lack of an equivalent identity of a cosmopolitan scope (Miller 2008, 376).

It is not surprising that immigration is easily taken as a threat to social cohesion, given the assumption that common national identity functions in generating trust *(Premise 3)*. The *conclusion* then follows that restrictive border policies are justified. Indeed, this line of argument would hold if the society in question is a pre-immigration society, like Japan, or if our world were mostly composed of pre-immigration societies. By contrast, our world–*for many different reasons* other than migration[5]–is far more

---

4 Erez (2017) offers an overview of various motivation arguments: the Rawlsian statist motivation argument, the liberal nationalist, post-nationalist and civic republican versions of the motivation argument, challenging cosmopolitanism.

5 The post-immigration diversity is part of a larger issue that has to do with the lack of 'one-to-one correspondence between national cultures and political communities (De Schutter 2012, 177)'. Our world is diverse in various ways: "Individuals in this world are very often not monocultural (or monolingual): their identity may be derived from nations larger (or smaller) than linguistically and territorially distinct nations (such as from the Canadian nation instead of from the Quebec nation,

complex than this argument assumes. With regard to immigration, the world we live in is peculiarly composed of post-immigration societies, in which "[…] the boundaries of national communities and the borders of the state are rarely congruent (Erez 2017, 261)". One might now understand why certain philosophers have argued that preserving the common identity would not justify immigration restrictions in the circumstances of post-immigration diversity (Brock 2020; Stilz 2019). As Jonathan Seglow (2005, 321) put it: "[…] if a society's character is multicultural, then preserving it would hardly license restrictions on immigration from those states where constituent cultures originate".

While I find this response inspiring, I think that it is not sufficient to refuting the *SCA*, at least *if the aim is to convince liberal nationalists on their own terms*. Liberal nationalists could easily argue that such a response conflates two different questions of admission to the *territory* and admission to the *membership*. The proponents of the *SCA* have prominently argued that states are justified in excluding potential immigrants within a certain moral limit, whereas immigrants should be integrated and permitted to become full members once they are within the territory (after some time) (Miller, 2016a; Walzer, 2008, 2014; Wellman, 2008). In other words, the exclusion of potential immigrants and the integration of the existing ones are *separate* matters; to that end, unless the critiques are able to explain why exactly these two steps need to be treated in relation to each other in normative terms, then the fact of post-immigration diversity should not *in and of itself* matter to social cohesion.

The issue of the consistency between 'exclusive territorial admission' and 'inclusive membership admission' has not gone uncontested in normative debate. Contrary to liberal nationalists, its proponents argue that the ethics of immigration debate wrongfully departs from the assumption that state borders are able to separate domestic and international spheres. Furthermore, once this wrong methodological assumption has been lifted, it is clear that there has been a theoretical inconsistency (Bosniak 2008; Cole 2000; Oberman 2017) which has had normatively unjustified consequences for political life in immigrant-receiving societies regarding the equality of citizenship (Blake 2003); freedom of all (Kukathas, 2017); and equal treatment (Mendoza 2016). While these arguments provide *pro tanto*

---

or from the European instead of the German nation); they may be members of more than one national community at once […]; and different individuals of the same 'nation' may be internally divided with regard to which context is the most relevant one[…] (De Schutter 2012, 178)".

reasons why it is better to protect the equality of citizenship, equal treatment, or freedom to all, most do not provide *all things considered reasons* for whether protecting them engender or enhance social cohesion based on a common identity. For example, it is not evident why majority citizens should not relinquish some part of their freedom in order to sustain social cohesion by, say, renting their apartment to a person with legal residency in the U.K., rather than to a person of their choice that happens to be an irregular migrant. The argument for equal treatment is an exception in this regard because it links the necessity of equal treatment to social cohesion. Therefore, it merits deeper scrutiny.

José Mendoza argues that in order to protect social cohesion in immigrant-receiving states, the control of a political community over immigration should be 'circumvented'. This circumvention needs to respect the *'socio-historical circumstances'* present in the receiving societies on the one hand, and *'immigrant rights'* on the other. Departing from the example of Mexicans in the United States, and by employing a historical analysis of the evolution of the U.S. immigration policy, Mendoza explains what he labels as *'socio-historical circumstances'* referring to the economic interdependence between the two countries. Similar to other contexts, such as Algeria and France or Turkey and Germany, there is a labour relationship between Mexico and the US and the immigration policy needs to make space for this ongoing cooperation, if the aim is not "[…] fomenting social mistrust among fellow citizens (Mendoza 2016, 53)". In other words, the admission policies should be designed in such a way as to avoid rendering Mexicans irregular, thereby reinforcing a stereotype about the Latino/a in the United States as 'being national outsiders (Mendoza 2016, 49)'. Such an analysis is able to take the two questions of admission together, but also does so in regards with social cohesion.

Mendoza's argument is inspiring as he refutes the "[…] key assumption of the social trust argument: that discretionary control over immigration can be consistent with a political community achieving or maintaining social trust (Mendoza 2016, 54)". However, the argument has two short-comings. The first has to do with its limited application to the American context. Secondly, contrary to Mendoza's assumption[6] (2016, 37-38), to the defenders of the *SCA,* sharing common institutions is *not* more important than sharing a common identity. This absence is unfortunate as the chapter aims at showing that "[…] proponents of the social trust argument

---

6 I say assumption here because Mendoza's chapter does not explicitly distinguish these different bases of social cohesion.

are bound to accept such protections [socio-historical circumstances and human rights] *based on their own moral or political commitments* [my emphasis] (Mendoza, 2016, 50)". For this, though, he needs to explain why the institutional requirements are relevant to the common national identity, as this latter constitutes the basic moral and political commitment of liberal nationalists.

This is the kind of argument that I would like to offer. I will claim that what matters when it comes to social cohesion is the kind of common identity found in post-immigration societies. Inspired by Putnam's distinction, I will identify two conceptualisations of common identity present in *the SCA,* namely a *bonding* and a *bridging* common identity. Even though the former remains the strongest conceptualisation present in liberal nationalism, my contribution will show that the second conceptualisation exists nonetheless. I will defend the view that the proponents of *the SCA* cannot but opt for this second option, by pluralising common identities and defending a 'superordinate identity' alongside bridging cultural differences. Before offering a positive defence, the following section will show why a bonding common identity is counterproductive, identifying some drawbacks that support my argument.

III. The Bonding Common Identity Challenge:

What does a conceptualisation of a bonding common identity look like? Can both it *and* the restrictive border policies justified thereby pass a normative assessment? This section will show bonding conceptions of common identity from the literature to argue that even its liberal version is not able to sustain a stable conception of justice in post-immigration societies.

It is easy to assess non-liberal versions of common identity morally, given that their 'fixed' and 'unchangeable' conceptions limit collective and individual autonomy. For example, Samuel Huntington asserted: "The core of their [American] identity is the culture that the settlers created, which generations of immigrants have absorbed, and which gave birth to the American Creed. At the heart of that culture has been Protestantism (Huntington 2005, 256)". When referring to Mexican immigrants, Huntington does not hesitate to exclude a future possibility of forging together a future common identity: "There is no *Americano Dream* [my emphasis]. There is only the American dream created by an Anglo-Protestant society. Mexican-Americans will share in that dream and in that society only if they dream in English (Huntington 2005, 256)". This conception is

defended *for its own sake*, and as such, does not allow the collectivity to change it if they so wished, and puts unreasonable limits to immigrants' autonomy. Limiting autonomy in this way is not compatible with liberalism and is radically different from a liberal nationalist conception of bonding common identity.

A liberal conception of bonding common identity is morally grounded both on the instrumental value of social cohesion, but more fundamentally on the autonomy that it generates for individuals (Kymlicka, 1995, 83). Li'av Orgad's recent book (2015, chap. 3) offers an excellent contextual discussion about national identities of Britain, Germany, and The Netherlands. Orgad's main argument in the book is that, *under some specific circumstances*, it is justified–compatible with liberalism–for majorities to defend their common identity mostly through the means offered by immigration law (Orgad 2015, 9), and policies such as "[…] citizenship tests; language requirements; loyalty oaths; attachment requirements, and integration contracts (Orgad 2015, 86–87). He argues that "[...] liberal democracies define the essence of their citizenship, and thereby the rules for joining the community, in cultural terms (Orgad 2015, 86)". This certainly implies that national identities such as Britishness, Frenchness, or Dutchness are predominantly defined *in opposition to what they are not*, in that they based their definition in a manner *opposed to the immigrant influences* at their very foundational levels:

> "A close review reveals that the values essential to the French communauté have little connection to French people of Maghrebi origin—Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians; Dutch society has little to do with the way of life of Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch; and the handbook Life in the United Kingdom is not much concerned with the life of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom—Indians or Pakistanis. The content of cultural defense policies, as reflected in immigration and naturalization requirements, mainly in Europe, does not reflect a high degree of ethno-cultural diversity. The immigrants' ways of life, traditions, and values are largely absent from the characterization of what is French, Dutch, or British. Rather, at the heart of cultural defense policies, despite the politically correct language, are the ways of life, traditions, and values of non-immigrant groups, the native-born populations (Orgad 2015, 167–68)"

The–both illiberal and liberal–proponents of a bonding common national identity aim at cohesively linking culturally similar members of a society, departing from a conception–one that is fixed or quasi-fixed respectively–that should remain and be protected as it stands, rather than being

166

changed, and especially in a manner not to include the immigrant' identities. Doubtlessly, such a conception could bind 98 % of Japanese people, 75 % of Swiss people, and 84 % of Flemish citizens around itself. Even if common national identity is less binding in Switzerland and Flanders than it is in Japan, one could argue that such an influence overall is sufficient in post-immigration societies. Indeed, perhaps a small sacrifice in terms of the individual autonomy of immigrants could be justified, who are supposed to do the adjusting and the integrating to the bonding common identity, even if unreasonable and illiberal expectations, such as dreaming in the receiving countries' language, could not be. The latter liberal position, therefore, justifies restrictive border policies and state practices of exclusion to protect the 'majority identity'.

The problem with the liberal conception of a bonding identity, apart from the insufficiency mentioned above, concerns its inability to sustain social cohesion in post-immigration societies. This has to do with its reliance on institutions and policies restricting migration–justified by the bonding common identity. The policies create and reiterate different categories of 'outsiders' in order to protect such an identity, thereby preventing the common identity from changing and evolving to encompass all. In this sense, they are counterproductive and promote mistrust. While the evidence for the incompatibility between immigration and social cohesion is ambiguous, the increasing evidence confirms that "[…] majority populations continue to support major social programmes but seek to exclude immigrants from their benefits […] (Banting et al. 2019, 207)". Recall that the common identity's power in generating trust relies on socio-psychological accounts of *sympathy* and *predictability* in social identity theory. Yet, social psychology has also demonstrated that: (1) even a non-historical, perfectly spontaneous or senseless categorisation of people into different groups can instigate a bias in favour of one's in-group (Brewer 1979; Lenard 2019, 165; Tajfel et al. 1971). And: (2) National identity could support or oppose globalisation, depending on its character (formed by various elements such as national norms, political discourses and party positions) (Huddy and Del Ponte 2019). Before further presenting this argument, it is important to explain how restrictive border policies, which this conception of common identity justifies, is able to entrench social categorisation.

1. *The establishment of differential rights*: The current border policies that aim to prevent crossings increasingly determine what people may do once inside, more than the acts of border-crossings themselves. The existence of differential rights, generated by differential member-

ship–'temporarily temporary', 'permanently temporary', 'temporarily permanent', or 'permanently permanent' (Ellermann 2019), result in unbridgeable fault lines among people, citizen and foreigner alike. They do so through the residence status that immigrants receive which, in turn, determines the rights to which they are entitled once inside the state (Bosniak 2008; Kukathas 2017). Ryan Pevnick's (2009) argument confirms the point that the social cohesion argument is not sufficient to support restrictive borders, but is sufficient to exclude immigrants from accessing the welfare state's benefits.

2. *Normalisation of a Non-egalitarian Ethos:* Differential rights, combined with the effects of the mainstreaming of the withdrawal of nationality practices[7], seem to suggest that a society can be socially cohesive even if certain groups are legitimately excluded. What is at stake here is *not* the economic inequality, as this could exist to some extent in egalitarian societies, but formal equality before law, that delimits who counts as a subject of law.[8] If such a stratification and egalitarianism are indeed compatible, then it could be simply a matter of time until other groups become targeted.

3. *Reinforcement of Discrimination*: The source of the border restrictions comes from economic and political inequalities that render certain countries much less stable and their nationals as ineligible for global mobility. Even if border enforcement is supposed to limit mobility, in theory at least, there is empirical evidence that what it does in practice is restrict mobility to: (1) the strong, risk-taking men in the cases of refugees in the framework of border walls or sea crossings (Paz 2016) and (2) to the wealthy and gifted in the case of labour migration. While they do not fully limit immigration, they nevertheless confirm that not everyone present in state territories is entitled to equal standing. A state affirms to its citizens that *some* individuals might be treated less than others by establishing restrictive border policies. This has multiple facets. Note here that the discrimination inside is directly related to the status of immigrants, especially those immigrants from restricted countries of origin. Often when immigrants come from countries, with which the state has visa-waiver or visa-free mobility agreements, they are treated either equally to the citizens or are less stigmatised at the

---

7 As the argument goes, after the mainstreaming of the withdrawal of nationality (Gibney 2019), it seems that even the acquisition of nationality is no longer permanent (Ellermann 2019).

8 Here gratitude is due to Gottfried Schweiger for emphasising this point.

very least. Others are not only stigmatised, but are also blamed for their condition of stigma. Let me briefly introduce this causal mechanism. Based on Charles Tilly's *Durable Inequality* (2009), Erin Aeran Chung (2019) notes the kind of bias that border restrictions may create, in the majority citizens' eyes: "Institutionalization of categorical pairs […] make categorical inequalities so pervasive and decisive that 'ordinary observers' will mistake the 'consequences of categorical organization' as 'results of variation in *individual* talent or effort' (2019, 3)". The claim is that these categories, which are established by the residence status, will make it so that citizens will assume that these inequalities are the responsibility of immigrants who lack ambition or commitment, thereby reducing immigrants' opportunities within the receiving society. Generalisations, such as 'welfare tourists or immigrants do not work', might be based on these categorical differences that border restrictions engender in the receiving societies. The last facet has to do with whether or not these categorical inequalities, introduced by border policies, might make majority nationals less able to recognise citizens of migration origin as 'co-nationals', even when immigrants actually come to share a common (national) identity. Immigrants can be recognisable through the particularity of their accent in the majority language and through various differences, differences which border controls establish and which majority nationals internalise; racial, religious, and ethnic traits also play a role in this regard. Being recognised as an immigrant might itself prevent majority nationals from considering them to be 'one of their own', despite the fact that they might have been born and raised in the country of reception.

4. *Pervasive Surveillance Culture in the Society:* States started to outsource border enforcement policies to their own citizens through different laws. For example, landlords are supposed to control their tenants' immigration status and report when they leave to the state administration (Kukathas, *Unpublished Manuscript*). Majority nationals become state agents discharging its duties of surveillance; this is not only a limitation of freedom, but also reinforces citizens' perception that immigrants are not true members.

These concrete examples have been provided to show that the stability of social cohesion is undermined once the liberal conception of bonding common identity informs state policies, as they will not only prevent common identity from being negotiated and changed, but also by institutionally enhancing the social categorisation. This latter point comprises the origin of mistrust of the perceived 'outgroups' in terms of the *sympathy*

account. In terms of the *predictability account,* such policies provide perverse incentives both to immigrants and majority nationals. Immigrants, despite their exclusion inside, might still prefer other *goods* that migration brings about, such as the possibility of 'better advancing their careers', 'pursuing romantic relationships', and 'enjoying new surroundings'. This could leave 'migrants happier, richer and healthier (Oberman 2017, 103)'. Recall at this point the Rawlsian tension between what justice requires–*right*–and what rational interests require–*good*. This tension will become a zero-sum game for immigrants, given that they reside in a country in which they do not receive equal treatment, due to their residence status. It is unreasonable, really, to expect them to sustain justice to the extent that the latter does not include them as 'a subject of justice' (Fraser 2009) in the first place. In other words, immigrants' rational interests and rights will be in diametrical opposition, but the reason here is that such a situation occurs as a direct result of the current policies and practices, justified by a bonding common identity. In turn, citizens are shaped by these categories inside, and will take no responsibility concerning the manner in which they treat immigrants. Moreover, they will reasonably be convinced that a lack of responsibility is what justice actually requires, given the state policies and practices that are in place.

To conclude, the *SCA* is inconsistent with its own premises of stability if it is based on a bonding conception of common identity. Moreover, being prevalent in the public debate, the justifications offered in the literature do actually worsen social cohesion by strengthening the *democratic legend* that immigration and social cohesion are incompatible. In the following section, I will argue that the *SCA* could be saved, at least conceptually, by creating a 'bridging superordinate identity' alongside it, but that justifies inclusive and non-discriminatory border policies in turn.

IV. A Bridging Common Identity:

Liberal nationalism defends a common identity that is sufficiently thick, while remaining inclusive of immigrants and minorities (Holtug 2019, 82; Miller and Ali 2014). There is another way of conceptualising common identity that liberal nationalists have hesitantly defended *to some extent*. This section will further develop this second conception and offer a normative defense in its favour. My argument in this regard will remain *conditional* and *pro-tanto*. It is *conditional* because I keep operating under the assumption that social cohesion is based on a common national identity, but also because my overall argument is conditional upon a society being

described as a post-immigration society. It is *pro tanto,* because I will not engage in an overall assessment of social cohesion alongside other goods of societal value, even though I will sometimes claim that social cohesion requires certain limits to other normative considerations. I will argue that a common identity needs to bridge differences and that doing so requires conceptualising national identities in a pluralistic way, composed of two layers: *(i)* a superordinate identity bridging the differences and mediating tensions of *(ii)* various bonding identities. Overall, it results in an identity-based social cohesion, and an internal criticism is offered to the proponents of *the SCA*–rather than an external criticism similar to José Mendoza's defending institution-based social cohesion. What distinguishes my argument from other liberal nationalist and multiculturalist scholars' defenses of a bridging identity is my claim that it *justifies open and non-discriminatory border policies.*

David Miller defends a concept of common identity that comes close to a bridging common identity, even though it is not multilayered. The ideal liberal nationalist common identity is sufficiently thick, but is also inclusive of minorities and migrants. Such an ideal is only possible when it can be changed and be in flux through a *'mutual adjustment process'* between immigrants and the members of the receiving society. This process requires immigrants to be open to the idea of accepting the "[…] current political structures and to engage in dialogue with the host community (Miller, 1995,130)", in this way their values and traditions could shape the common national identity over time (Kymlicka 2003, 88-89; Miller 2019, 27). Regarding the receiving community, it requires that: "Existing national identities must be stripped of elements that are repugnant to the self-understanding of one or more component groups (Miller, 1995, 142)". However, such a process also has its limits, a radical rupture in the national identity should be avoided (Miller, 1995, 4); for this reason, immigration should be limited.

The question then naturally becomes: If the research results in the previous section about the current shape of national identities in Europe and the U.S. are correct, and national identities are currently shaped in diametrical opposition to their respective immigrant identities, then how will it ever be possible for a non-radical transformation take place within them that could allow for such a mutual adjustment process to take place? If *Section III* is correct, then, sharing such an exclusive bonding identity will simply be counterproductive to social cohesion in post-immigration societies, unless the *substances* of these identities are *radically changed*. Yet, this is a very different conclusion from the one drawn by David Miller, for example. In discussing immigration's political controversies, Miller has

often tended to justify the majority's perspective over minority claims (See: Baycan and Gianni 2019; Miller 2016a). Miller's stance often bounces back into defending 'majority nationalism' in the face of controversies.

Liberal nationalism is able to strongly support itself in part because it relies on a certain volume of scientific evidence stemming from social psychology. For example, when Miller presents the nationality principle that suggests "[…] that identifying with a nation, feeling yourself inextricably part of it, is a legitimate way of understanding your place in the world (Miller 1995, 11)". Indeed, social psychology claims that "[…] individuals use categories to structure and give meaning to their social world; they also categorise themselves and derive from this a sense of self (Wenzel *et al.* 2007, 334)". Alternatively, when Miller moves on to link this to the ethical dimensions of nationality, he is able to still rely on the further social psychological claim. Indeed, when individuals see themselves as a member of a group, this makes them consider themselves as 'relatively interchangeable' with other members and act in 'cooperation'; all of these traits foster group 'cohesiveness' (Wenzel *et al.* 2007, 334). Thus, sharing a national identity in Miller's terms or developing a common identity in social psychology terms, include a certain number of benefits. Yet, these empirical premises do not *uniquely* lead to the normative conclusions for bonding national identity that some liberal nationalists suggest.

It is one matter to contend that societies empirically need a common identity for social cohesion; it is quite another to claim that this *should* be necessarily a 'bonding identity'. What social cohesion requires is that a common identity be shared by the maximum amount of people, not what its nature should be. Given that the bonding common identity conception only links some, another way to adjust it would be to conceive of the conception of common identity in different layers: various majority and minority bonding identities could coexist *alongside via a* "bridging superordinate identity" *and not at the expense* of bonding identities. This first additional layer of identity should not be a civic or political concept only, given that this would change the basis of social cohesion to something else than cultural identity–i.e., shared institutions, but one that is multicultural, offering *fair* recognition to all, and stemming from the cultural content originating various bonding identities. Creating a superordinate identity, when it is absent, requires some nation-building policies such as including certain minority traditions into the national symbolic and it might require teaching migration history and policy at schools to inform children. In the end, when these are not critically thought by schools, they will be uncritically learned from hearsay. Certainly, these efforts need to respect certain liberal limits, be moderate and consensual that nation building

should overall respect (De Schutter 2012, 187; Kymlicka 2001, 317-26), and the point here is not to offer a full-fledged conceptualisation of a superordinate identity and what it would exactly include in detail. Superordinate identities already exist in societies that consider themselves to be immigration societies where cultural diversity is an important part of the national identity, such as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. In these contexts, a bridging superordinate identity co-exists with bonding common identities, linking for example English- and French-speaking Canadians to the Iranian- and Greek-Canadians (Kymlicka 2015, 13). My point is simply that social cohesion's requirements in post-immigration societies are better satisfied with this conception, but would such a proposal be compatible with liberal nationalism?

This normative solution is consistent with social psychological premises of liberal nationalism, because social psychology supports both the view that social identities may be multiple and changeable, but also that intergroup relations improve, when superordinate identity is evident (Riek *et al.* 2010) and perceived to equitably represent the existing diversity (Crisp and Hewstone 2013; Wenzel *et al.* 2007). It is not surprising that a certain number of liberal nationalists such as Will Kymlicka (2015) and multiculturalists such as Bhikhu Parekh, Tariq Modood, Varun Uberoi, and Nasar Meer have defended the idea of a multicultural national identity. It would be the core of a multicultural nationhood that "[…] makes cultural diversity constitutive of and a positive resource for shared national identity (Chin 2020, 2)". My claim here is not that this conceptualisation of common identity is the prominent conception that liberal nationalism relies on generating social cohesion, but it is increasingly present in the approach nonetheless.

Helder De Schutter's (2012) work marks a transition towards a bridging common identity in liberal nationalism. His aim is to rework *liberal nationalism* by rendering it relevant to a complex moral and political world that goes beyond the simplified coupling between one-state, one-nation. In such a world, the simplicity of a single national identity would be abandoned in favour of 'pluralising national identities'. Moreover, various liberal nationalist normative requirements could be also better fulfilled in exactly this way (De Schutter 2012, 180-88). It requires that liberal nationalism offer "[…] equal recognition to different national communities (De Schutter 2012, 181)" in order to remain loyal to its normative commitments, such as individual autonomy and social justice. National pluralism could justify different policies. Equal recognition could be implemented, without territorial federalisation, either by offering services such as schooling in multiple languages or by federalisation. In this way, De Schutter

is able to conceive of unity and justice beyond national borders, such as in the *European Union*, but also within multinational federations, such as in Belgium. Another policy suggestion is made in favour of 'cultural engineering' that concerns the dedicated effort for *nation-building* on the condition that it remains consensual.

De Schutter's reworking overlaps largely with my proposal here, yet his proposal focuses on supranational and federal solutions and remains silent about immigration. To the extent that different conceptions of common identity have been articulated in this chapter, it seems that De Schutter's interpretation of common identity underestimates the fracture between the bonding and bridging conceptions found in liberal nationalism. He seems to interpret the prominent conception in liberal nationalism more in terms of the second kind. For example, certain liberal nationalists, such as David Miller and Will Kymlicka, are sympathetic towards immigrants' rights according to De Schutter, despite the fact that these latter distinguish quite sharply between national and immigrant minorities, according significantly fewer rights to the latter. Similarly, his reliance on equal recognition might also suffer from a similar problem to such a degree that a defender of this account, namely Alan Patten's recent work (2014, 290), seems to follow a similar line of partiality when it comes to immigrant minorities. This notwithstanding, De Schutter seems not to follow this line of duality as others have, but it is difficult to be sure whether his normative account of national pluralism could also apply to the states and immigrants, as he leaves it unaddressed. There is at least no explicit reason why this would not be so.

The normative defense of a superordinate bridging identity starts by identifying grounding values. A fundamental value is 'individual autonomy' and a second one is the 'instrumental value' stemming from social cohesion. A cultural identity overall provides a context of choice which renders various options meaningful to the individuals, and renders individual autonomy possible in turn. A bridging common identity could enlarge the option set, stemming from different existing sub-group identities instead of just the majority, and help both the majority nationals and minority members to actually become more autonomous. Despite the agreement about the value of autonomy, the controversy has been about the extent to which such an argument applies to immigrants. While it is generally accepted that immigrants have *some* right to it, the extent of this right's application has been rather minimal for them, given the existence of extant,

powerful justifications based on their decision to migrate.[9] Reasons that make autonomy valuable to citizens also make it valuable for immigrants (See also: Carens 2013; Thompson 2018). Thus, when either immigrants or citizens of a migrant origin decided to cross borders at one point in time, then that should not become something that creates a lifetime burden, especially if the decision was made to settle in the country of reception. My aim here is not to fully defend this idea, as this would take us too far, but to highlight that it is a plausible claim. A second normative ground for the bridging common identity is derived instrumentally from generating social cohesion in post-immigration societies. Both liberal nationalism and multiculturalism have emphasised the value of common identity in allowing societies to function in solidarity. Indeed, if so, then the state should be investing in generating a superordinate identity when it is absent, bridging the differences of various bonding identities.

It is important to emphasise that the claim here is not that a bridging common identity would bring about *immediate cohesiveness* in post-immigration societies. As we need to get from where we are now to creating this, but it is also a long-term investment overall. Despite this modesty, it is important to note that knowing the right direction is valuable, especially in terms of knowing where not to go. From the same point of view, it is evident that the bonding conception has guided state policies and institutions for the past 50 years or so, and has only been successful in delivering political discontent, polarisation and, lest we forget, various violent acts within post-immigration societies. These have been interpreted as the challenges of immigration, rather than the shortcomings of insisting on an irrelevant common identity in post-immigration societies. This conception has disproportionately placed the burden of integration on the shoulder of the newcomers, only without much responsibility being shared with the majorities. Majorities' right to self-determination has often been too charitably interpreted, according them rights that are disproportionate to their responsibilities related to social cohesion. Given that majorities are democratically powerful, they have shaped the integration requirements, border policies, nationality law in an increasingly restrictive manner. Law is constantly changing in this regard, putting immigrants and citizens of migration origin into a more precarious position through permit degradations, withdrawal of nationality practices, and demanding requirements

---

9 The consent argument offers such a justification of partiality; for its defense see (Kymlicka 2003, 96) and in terms of its refutations, see (Kukathas 2003, 77-81; Oberman 2017, 100-102).

for naturalisation. There needs to be normative limits to this treatment, for migration justice to mean something more than offering a normative justification to the way that wealthy and powerful states and their citizens are *eager* to treat immigrants and foreign residents. This is why the democratic self-determination alone cannot be the solution without proper normative limits required by social cohesion. If my analysis is correct, then at least some of this responsibility belongs to the receiving society to opt for an unjustified ideal of a bonding common identity at the state level, which does more harm than good.

What kind of border policies could stem from the conception of *a bridging national identity* that is in service of social cohesion? A bridging common identity requires border policies to be open and non-discriminatory, because as Section III has shown, social categorisations regarding in- and out-group dynamics are enhanced under restrictive border policies. Open borders do not mean that migration cannot be limited *at all*. There are certainly justified reasons, such as infrastructural shortcomings (housing and job market), that would require less migration or when someone's presence constitutes a reasonable risk for national security, that particular person should not be admitted. These kinds of exceptional cases need to be critically determined. For example, if there is a sharp demographic increase in the country, then a state might limit immigration for a couple of years for infrastructural reasons or if the state is dealing with a significant unemployment challenge, then this might be a justified reason for not exaggerating it in their own right. That is, the limitation of migration can only be exceptional and a provisional last resort, and not a principal policy solution to societal challenges. Another problem for border policies that is relevant to social cohesion concerns differential treatment among various nationalities, within the EU for example where citizens of an EU member state may decide to move to a different European member state. Such policies create a hierarchy among members and enhance social categorisations detrimental to social cohesion. Therefore, it is important for states to avoid introducing discriminatory migration policies. Ideally, a non-discriminatory migration policy would require that there be *equal numbers of immigrants admitted from different nationalities*. The problem is that a strict equality requirement would result in limiting more from neighbouring countries and countries with significant diaspora groups already present in the territory. This is because more people are motivated to migrate from these groups, e.g., Mexicans in the U.S, Dutch immigrants in Belgium and Turkish immigrants in Germany. These groups need to benefit from a *'proportionality adjustment'*, that is, these nationalities should receive additional migration places proportional to their size within the

176

receiving state. Another issue is what immigrants could do once inside, in particular in terms of accessing a set of rights such as the welfare state benefits. There are often certain requirements of residence and contribution in place for accessing these rights for citizens already, and these should apply as a matter of equal access to immigrants as well. The overall eligibility conditions should apply to *all,* otherwise it would be harmful to the trust in institutions. While the bridging conception of common identity is well-articulated in different literatures, they have not been linked to the border policies in this manner. Multiculturalists defend a separating the migration question from multiculturalism (Lægaard 2017; Modood 2019), liberal nationalists remain silent about the border policies required by the bridging common identity (De Schutter 2012; Kymlicka 2015). The only argument that comes close to my proposal is one that defends the view that multicultural theory should include claims by foreign-residents, given that citizenship is also about who deserves to become a member (Teo 2021, 9).

This is a limited argument for open borders based on post-immigration social cohesion because it is both *conditional* but also a *pro-tanto* argument. It is conditional upon a society being *already a post-immigration society* and that has at least 5 % of foreign residents in its territory and is politically polarised about migration and multiculturalism. The claim is not that social cohesion would require every society to open its borders. Pre-immigration societies, such as Japan, are not normatively required to opt for a superordinate identity alongside or open their borders. Few societies are in this state in 2021. By being only a *pro tanto* argument, it does not compare social cohesion with some other values, such as freedom of association or democratic self-determination, claiming that one value is more valuable than these latter. In this sense, scholars and citizens are free to decide to rank its value accordingly. Given its salience in the public debate, it seems that it is significantly valuable. Nonetheless, if *all things considered* some other values are deemed to be more important according to liberal nationalists, than they could release social cohesion and its requirements. My argument implies that liberal nationalists have a choice: *either they could keep defending social cohesion in this way, but that means that it will come with open borders; or they would release it but, thereby, they will lose one of the strongest justifications for restrictive borders.*

I have specified various limits to my argument, but we might ask: what does it imply for the authoritarian backlash? Currently, adopting anti-immigration and multiculturalist policies are considered a recipe to protect liberal democratic societies from an authoritarian backlash. From this perspective, it might be objected that the policy suggestions of my ar-

gument might worsen social cohesion. The objector would presumably go on to suggest restrictive border policies as a better solution—but borders have been restrictive since the 1980s. In 2021, we still have a problem, so restrictive border policies did not provide the solution. Therefore, we need to look elsewhere to identify a solution, namely the very restrictive policies and institutions. They might have created national norms regarding the nature of common identity from which far-right parties have benefited. To fully answer this objection would require an empirical solution which I cannot provide in this theoretical paper. Nonetheless, my argument hypothesizes that state policies themselves could have an adverse effect in deepening social categories. There is at least some research directly linking border policies to 'out-group bias' (Marouf 2012), but overall my reasoning is based on how results in social psychology on intergroup relations indirectly support this hypothesis. The direction that my normative argument might imply for empirical research would link the presence of immigrants, *if they are present alongside a relevant plural bridging common identity*, to *lower* political support for far-right parties. While these kinds of identities are for the moment only present in a few post-immigration societies, such as Canada, there is some support for the claim that the presence of immigrants more generally leads to a decrease in support of far-right parties (see Lonsky 2021 for a discussion of this in Finland). While my argument does not provide a satisfying alternative answer, it does provide a negative answer regarding restrictive border policies as a recipe for the authoritarian backlash.

V. Objections:

I will address some objections to my proposals for a bridging common identity and border policies it justifies. It is claimed that a common identity cannot include complex and plural content, but select a simple set of values, partially because when conflicting values would require compromising, not all issues can make subject to compromise, at least some questions require simple yes and no answers, such as: "Should the state be a constitutional monarchy or a republic? (Miller 2019, 28)". Certain questions also require few answers such as which language(s) will be designated as official language. If this is so, then a multicultural superordinate identity might not be reasonably formed without excluding certain minority cultures. Yet, not all cultural questions require such simplification; when it comes to religious cultural elements one could perfectly think that including minority religions does not require, for example, "[…]banning

Christmas, but [offering] rather some additional recognition of other religious festivals such as *Eid* or *Hannuka* (Laborde and Lægaard 2019, 181)". Even if not all spoken languages have the status of an official language, then they could be given some recognition, recognition could be given differentially in *different periods*, a thematic year for a certain minority language could be sufficient as a recognition. The point here is that there is a greater margin to implement a superordinate identity according to the contextual cultural needs in liberal democracies even when not everything will be subject to compromise and a certain partiality (absence of strict equality) will remain among the majority/minority cultural elements.

Another objection might be that neither the creation of a 'superordinate identity' nor open borders policies could receive the necessary political support under the current circumstances of an overall hostility to migration and multiculturalism. Yet, it is not clear whether citizens would still think this way if they were informed that negative experiences of migration and diversity, as well as risks to social cohesion, are at least partially due to the nature of common identity and the policies that stem therefrom. The critical assessment of social cohesion in post-immigration societies is still in its early developments, whereas the *democratic legend* of 'immigration is detrimental to social cohesion' is very prominent in the literature, and widespread in the public debate. This objection relies on how prominent this 'belief' is. What follows from this observation is that citizens did not have a widespread access to alternative accounts and, therefore, that it might be possible for them to change their minds. In other words, this objection relies on what is politically popular at this time, without being either sufficiently critical regarding its truth-value or sufficiently sensitive to the fact that what is politically popular can change if there are good reasons for it. What such an objection does is to presuppose speculatively that once this suggestion becomes accessible to citizens and offered in political debate, it would remain unpopular over time. It is an understandable *status-quo bias* in this regard.

A similar objection could be that even if social cohesion would require this in post-immigration societies, making changes at the national level or about state borders would not be the best strategy in terms of its policy implementation, as it might result in backlash. Here we are really at the level of which political strategies might have a higher chance to be implemented to allow certain normative changes to take place. For example, a certain number of scholars have prominently argued that under the current circumstances, depending on the political structure of the receiving societies, it could be easier to *rescale the common identity at the level of cities*. They rely on the fact that this option is clearly receiving

179

some political support through the movement of *Sanctuary Cities* in the U.S.; several city authorities in European cities have taken to issuing 'city cards' to *all* of their residents, including irregular immigrants. This is also increasingly gaining support in scholarship, given that cities are the main destinations for immigrants, especially large metropolitan areas or 'global cities' that welcome 'nearly one in five of the world's foreign-born population'; moreover, 'for 18 of these global cities, at least 20 per cent of the inhabitants were international migrants (United Nations 2018, 7)'. Cities are already offering 'collective identities' to their members, considering oneself either a *Berliner* or *Municher* are strongly contrasted, for example (De-Shalit 2018, 2020). Yet, more research should be done to argue that a multilayered citizenship (complemented by an urban scope) could indeed offer a nation-wide unifying narrative for the new, particular political cleavages and global challenges of our times (Bauböck 2020, 2), and not that it actually would enhance the existing divisions in the receiving countries. If the former is to be the case, then a 'bridging common identity' at the city level could be a step-forward in implementing it at the larger level. If the former is true, then it might worth a try, because such an alternative would not encounter problems described in *Section III.*

Conclusion:

This chapter has engaged with a prominent nationalist argument that restrictive immigration policies are justified by a common identity-based social cohesion. My critical assessment of this argument started by situating the *SCA* in various social scientific literatures as well as normative political philosophy. *Section I* showed that the relationship between social cohesion and immigration is ambiguous, but that engaging with a democratic legend requires assuming this relationship. *Section II* explained how the *SCA* argument works and how it has been received in the literature. Given that my aim has been to offer an internal criticism to the *SCA*, that its proponents could adopt without making serious concessions from their own political and moral commitments, I have presented one insufficient refutation by José Mendoza that has been an inspiring point of departure for this chapter. Moreover, the section also identified two conceptions of common national identity in the literature. *Section III* articulated and critically assessed the bonding common identity and identified some drawbacks that support my argument. *Section IV* identified the bridging common identity conception and normatively defended in its ability to sustain social cohesion in post-immigration societies. Moreover, it argued

that a bridging common identity, multilayered in its form, justifies open and non-discriminatory border policies. Alternatively, implementing such policies could consider starting at lower levels, such as cities.

Rethinking social cohesion, and solidarity in post-immigration societies is an important topic. The research on this topic has not been very successful in its progression, partially due to the absence of attention paid to unpacking the question: "What does, could and should it mean to share a common identity in diverse societies?" Yet, different causal mechanisms have recently been specified and some of the sources of disagreement have led to ambiguous research results becoming clarified (Erez 2017; Gustavsson and Miller 2019; Holtug 2010, 2016, 2019). I hope that the conceptual articulation of alternative common identities further contributes to this clarification by way of a close focus on their empirical premises in social psychology alongside their normative junctures in liberal nationalism that I offered in this chapter. One disadvantage of developing a *pro-tanto* argument for social cohesion is in not identifying the *all things considered* challenges that such an argument might receive from within liberal nationalism. Further research could demonstrate whether or not and the extent to which liberal nationalists could defend, modify, or criticise a bridging common identity in post-immigration societies.

Bibliography

Banting, Keith, Will Kymlicka, Allison Harell, and Rebecca Wallace. 2019. "Beyond National Identity." In *Liberal Nationalism and Its Critics: Normative and Empirical Questions*, eds. Gina Gustavsson and David Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 205–25.

Bauböck, Rainer. 2020. "Cities vs States: Should Urban Citizenship Be Emancipated from Nationality?" In *Cities vs States: Should Urban Citizenship Be Emancipated from Nationality?*, EUI Working Paper, eds. Rainer Bauböck and Li'av Orgad., 1–6. https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/66369/RSCAS_2020_16.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (December 3, 2020).

Baycan, Esma. 2020. "Post-Immigration Social Cohesion Requires Open Borders and/or Urban Citizenship." *NCCR On the Move Blog*. https://blog.nccr-onthemove.ch/post-immigration-social-cohesion-requires-open-borders-and-or-urban-citizenship/.

Baycan, Esma, and Matteo Gianni. 2019. "What Is Wrong with the Swiss Minaret Ban?" In *Religion and Political Theory: Secularism, Accommodation and the New Challenges of Religious Diversity*, eds. Jonathan Seglow and Andrew Shorten. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 175–94.

Blake, Michael. 2003. "Immigration." In *A Companion to Applied Ethics*, Blackwell companions to philosophy, eds. R. G. Frey and Christopher Heath Wellman. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 224–37.

Bosniak, Linda. 2008. *The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership*. 2. printing, 1. paperback printing. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Brewer, Marilynn B. 1979. "In-Group Bias in the Minimal Intergroup Situation: A Cognitive-Motivational Analysis." *Psychological Bulletin* 86(2): 307–24.

Brock, Gillian. 2020. *Justice for People on the Move: Migration in Challenging Times*. Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Canovan, Margaret. 2000. "Patriotism Is Not Enough." *British Journal of Political Science* 30(3): 413–32.

Carens, Joseph H. 2013. *The Ethics of Immigration*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Carter, David B., and Paul Poast. 2017. "Why Do States Build Walls? Political Economy, Security, and Border Stability." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(2): 239–70.

Chung, Erin Aeran. 2019. "Creating Hierarchies of Noncitizens: Race, Gender, and Visa Categories in South Korea." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*: 1–18.

Cole, Phillip. 2000. *Philosophies of Exclusion: Liberal Political Theory and Immigration*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Council of Europe. 2010. *New Strategy and Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion*. https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/source/2010Strategy_ActionPlan_SocialCohesion.pdf.

Crisp, Richard J., and Miles Hewstone. 2013. *Multiple Social Categorization: Processes, Models and Applications*. London: Psychology Press.

De Schutter, Helder. 2012. "European Ties That Bind: Political or Cultural?" In *Federalism in the European Union*, Modern studies in European law; v. 33, eds. Elke Cloots, G. de Baere, and Stefan Sottiaux. Oxford, U.K.; Portland, Or: Hart Pub, 169–90.

De-Shalit, Avner. 2018. *Cities and Immigration: Political and Moral Dilemmas in the New Era of Migration*. First edition. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

———. 2020. "Thinking Like a City, Thinking Like a State." In *Cities vs States: Should Urban Citizenship Be Emancipated from Nationality?*, EUI Working Paper, eds. Rainer Bauböck and Li'av Orgad., 7–9. https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/66369/RSCAS_2020_16.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (March 15, 2020).

Ellermann, Antje. 2019. "Discrimination in Migration and Citizenship." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*: 1–17.

Erez, Lior. 2017. "Anti-Cosmopolitanism and the Motivational Preconditions for Social Justice." *Social Theory and Practice* 43(2): 249–82.

Esping-Andersen, Gosta. 1985. "Power and Distributional Regimes." *Politics & Society* 14(2): 223–56.

Ferry, Jean-Marc. 2014. "Pour un socle social européen." *Cahiers philosophiques* 137(2): 7.

Fraser, Nancy. 2009. *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Gibney, Matthew J. 2019. "Denationalisation and Discrimination." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*: 1–18.

Gustavsson, Gina, and David Miller, eds. 2019. *Liberal Nationalism and Its Critics: Normative and Empirical Questions*. New product. New York: Oxford University Press.

Habermas, Jürgen. 2001. *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays*. Polity Press.

Holtug, N. 2010. "Immigration and the Politics of Social Cohesion." *Ethnicities* 10(4): 435–51.

Holtug, N., and A. Mason. 2010. "Introduction: Immigration, Diversity and Social Cohesion." *Ethnicities* 10(4): 407–14.

Holtug, Nils. 2016. "Identity, Causality and Social Cohesion." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*: 1–17.

———. 2019. "Does Nationhood Promote Egalitarian Justice?: Challenging the National Identity Argument." In *Liberal Nationalism and Its Critics: Normative and Empirical Questions*, eds. Gina Gustavsson and David Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 78–95.

Huddy, Leonie, and Alessandro Del Ponte. 2019. "National Identity, Pride, Chauvinism-Their Origins and Consequences for Globalization Attitudes." In *Liberal Nationalism and Its Critics: Normative and Empirical Questions*, eds. Gina Gustavsson and David Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 38–56.

Huntington, Samuel P. 2005. *Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.

Kaergard, N. 2010. "Social Cohesion and the Transformation from Ethnic to Multicultural Society: The Case of Denmark." *Ethnicities* 10(4): 470–87.

Kesler, Christel, and Irene Bloemraad. 2010. "Does Immigration Erode Social Capital? The Conditional Effects of Immigration-Generated Diversity on Trust, Membership, and Participation across 19 Countries, 1981–2000." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 43(02): 319–47.

Koopmans, Ruud. 2010. "Trade-Offs between Equality and Difference: Immigrant Integration, Multiculturalism and the Welfare State in Cross-National Perspective." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36(1): 1–26.

Kukathas, Chandran. Forthcoming. *Freedom and Immigration*.

———. 2003. *The Liberal Archipelago: A Theory of Diversity and Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2017. "On David Miller on Immigration Control." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 20(6): 712–18.

Kymlicka, Will. 2001. *Politics in the Vernacular*. Oxford University Press. http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/0199240981.001.0001/acprof-9780199240982 (January 25, 2019).

———. 2003. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

———. 2015. "Solidarity in Diverse Societies: Beyond Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Welfare Chauvinism." *Comparative Migration Studies* 3(1): 17.

Kymlicka, Will, and Keith Banting. 2006. "Immigration, Multiculturalism, and the Welfare State." *Ethics & International Affairs* 20(3): 281–304.

Laborde, Cécile, and Sune Lægaard. 2019. "Liberal Nationalism and Symbolic Religious Establishment." In *Liberal Nationalism and Its Critics: Normative and Empirical Questions*, eds. Gina Gustavsson and David Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 172–87.

Lægaard, Sune. 2017. "On the Reciprocal Subordination of Multiculturalism and Migration Policies." In *Multicultural Governance in a Mobile World.*, ed. Anna Triandafyllidou. Edinburgh Univ Press.

Lenard, Patti Tamara. 2019. "Inclusive Identities." In *Liberal Nationalism and Its Critics: Normative and Empirical Questions*, eds. Gina Gustavsson and David Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 155–71.

Lonsky, Jakub. 2021. "Does Immigration Decrease Far-Right Popularity? Evidence from Finnish Municipalities." *Journal of Population Economics* 34(1): 97–139.

Macedo, Stephen. 2011. "When and Why Should Liberal Democracies Restrict Immigration?" In *Citizenship, Borders, and Human Needs*, ed. Rogers M. Smith. University of Pennsylvania Press, 301–23. http://www.jstor.org.kuleuven.ezproxy.kuleuven.be/stable/j.ctt3fh9s7.17.

Marouf, Fatma. 2012. "Regrouping America: Immigration Policies and the Reduction of Prejudice." *Havard Latino Law Review* 15: 129–82.

Meer, Tom van der, and Jochem Tolsma. 2014. "Ethnic Diversity and Its Effects on Social Cohesion." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40(1): 459–78.

Mendoza, José Jorge. 2016. "Latino/a Immigration: A Refutation of the Social Trust Argument." In *Migration Policy and Practice: Interventions and Solutions*, eds. Harald Bauder and Christian Matheis., 37–57. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4009228_0 (November 8, 2016).

Miller, David. 1995. *On Nationality*. Oxford : Oxford : New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press.

———. 2008. "Immigrants, Nations, and Citizenship." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 16(4): 371–90.

———. 2016a. "Majorities and Minarets: Religious Freedom and Public Space." *British Journal of Political Science* 46(02): 437–56.

———. 2016b. *Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

———. 2019. "The Coherence of Liberal Nationalism." In *Liberal Nationalism and Its Critics: Normative and Empirical Questions*, eds. Gina Gustavsson and David Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 23–37.

Miller, David, and Sundas Ali. 2014. "Testing the National Identity Argument." *European Political Science Review* 6(2): 237–59.

Mitsuru, Obe. 2018. "Famous for Its Resistance to Immigration, Japan Opens Its Doors." *Nikkei Asian Review*. https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Cover-Story/Famous-for-its-resistance-to-immigration-Japan-opens-its-doors.

Modood, Tariq. 2019. "A Multicultural Nationalism?" *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* XXV(II): 233–46.

Oberman, Kieran. 2017. "Immigration, Citizenship, and Consent: What Is Wrong with Permanent Alienage?: Immigration, Citizenship & Consent." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 25(1): 91–107.

Orgad, Li'av. 2015. *The Cultural Defense of Nations: A Liberal Theory of Majority Rights*. First edition. Oxford, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Patten, Alan. 2014. *Equal Recognition the Moral Foundations of Minority Rights*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1660477 (July 6, 2016).

Paz, Moria. 2016. "Between the Kingdom and the Desert Sun: Human Rights,Immigration, and Border Walls,." *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 34(1): 1–43.

Pevnick, Ryan. 2009. "Social Trust and the Ethics of Immigration Policy*." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 17(2): 146–67.

Putnam, Robert D. 2007. "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-First Century The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30(2): 137–74.

Rawls, John. 1999. *A Theory of Justice*. Rev. ed. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

———. 2003. *The Law of Peoples: With "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited."* 5. pr. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press.

Riek, Blake M. et al. 2010. "Does a Common Ingroup Identity Reduce Intergroup Threat?" *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 13(4): 403–23.

Seglow, Jonathan. 2005. "The Ethics of Immigration." *Political Studies Review* 3(3): 317–34.

Stevens, Guy, and Eveline Vergauwen. 2014. "Een Vlaming Op Zes Is van Vreemde Herkomst." *De Standaard*. http://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20140127_00949168 (January 2, 2017).

Stilz, Anna. 2019. *Territorial Sovereignty: A Philosophical Exploration*. First edition. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Tajfel, Henri, M. G. Billig, R. P. Bundy, and Claude Flament. 1971. "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 1(2): 149–78.

Tamir, Yael. 1995. *Liberal Nationalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=537710 (January 25, 2019).

Teo, Terri-Anne. 2021. "Multiculturalism beyond Citizenship: The Inclusion of Non-Citizens." *Ethnicities*: 146879682098493.

Thompson, Simon. 2018. "The Expression of Religious Identities and the Control of Public Space." *Ethnicities*: 146879681878593.

Tilly, Charles. 2009. *Durable Inequality*. Nachdr. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.

United Nations. 2018. *Sustainable Cities, Human Mobility and International Migration*.. Report for the Secretary General. https://undocs.org/E/CN.9/2018/2 (January 3, 2020).

Van Parijs, Philippe. 2004. "Cultural Diversity against Economic Solidarity?" In *Cultural Diversity versus Economic Solidarity: Proceedings of the Seventh Francqui Colloquium, Brussels, 28 February-1 March 2003*, Bibliothèque scientifique Francqui, Francqui scientific library, ed. Philippe Van Parijs. Bruxelles: De Boeck, 371–96.

Walzer, Michael. 2008. *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*. New York: Perseus Books, LLC : Basic Books. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=553616 (March 30, 2016).

———. 2014. "Citizenship, Pluralism and Political Action." *Reset:Dialogues of Civilizations*. https://www.resetdoc.org/story/citizenship-pluralism-and-political-action/ (April 5, 2019).

Wellman, Christopher Heath. 2008. "Immigration and Freedom of Association." *Ethics* 119(1): 109–41.

Wenzel, Michael, Amélie Mummendey, and Sven Waldzus. 2007. "Superordinate Identities and Intergroup Conflict: The Ingroup Projection Model." *European Review of Social Psychology* 18(1): 331–72.

Wilcox, Shelley. 2004. "Culture, National Identity, and Admission to Citizenship." *Social Theory and Practice* 30(4): 559–82.