Liberal Nationalism, Culture, and Justice[1]

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Abstract: Over the past ten years or so, the position of Liberal Nationalism has progressed from being an apparent oxymoron to a widely accepted view. In this paper I sketch the most prominent liberal defenses of nationalism, focusing first on the difficulties of specifying criteria of nationhood, then criticizing what I take to be the most promising, culture-based defense, forwarded by Will Kymlicka. I argue that such an approach embroils one in a pernicious conservatism completely at odds with the global justice concerns that I take to be central to liberalism with its core values of equality and liberty.

Let us define nationalism as the thesis that every nation should have its own state. In this paper I argue that a liberal cannot mount a defense of such a policy without involving herself in contradiction. Implicit in the definition is the assertion that states are distinct from nations, a difference much pressed in the currently burgeoning philosophical literature on nationalism, if ignored in the colloquial use of the terms.[2] Typically, to illustrate this distinction, examples are presented both of multinational states (arguably Great Britain and Canada) as well as single nations distributed across distinct states (Postwar Germany up until 1989).[3] It is generally agreed that states are simply political entities, consisting of the institutions and apparatus of government.[4] Nations, on the other hand, are trickier to define. They are not, unlike *countries*, chunks of land or geographical entities. Almost unanimously it is agreed that a nation is a group of *people*.[5] The challenge for the nationalist, then, is to show that nations are the kinds of groups that should have the autonomous sovereignty that the apparatus of statehood brings, given the fundamental impact that statehood has both on the lives of the nationals and non-nationals affected and on the international landscape. The challenge for the *liberal* nationalist is to do so within the confines of liberal principles. Can such a thing be done? On this question, consensus appears to have shifted over the past decade. Yael Tamir in her 1993 book *Liberal Nationalism* felt the need to defend the titular term against the charge that it was an oxymoron.[6] However,

in a talk presented less than five years later, Will Kymlicka reported that "there seems to be growing acceptance of the legitimacy of some or other form of *liberal nationalism*."[7] It is certainly true that increasing numbers of liberal political theorists have attempted to show that liberalism's twin ideals of liberty and equality are not only compatible with, but may even presuppose a commitment to nationalism in some form. Liberals have supported secession drives by former colonies, from East Timor to Lithuania to Scotland, in the name of liberty, specifically the right to self-government of national groups.[8] Liberals of an egalitarian bent support institutions like state welfare or health-care systems that, while not necessarily nationalistic, are currently restricted to within nation-states, and, several writers have suggested,[9] are nationalistic in that they require a shared nationality for members to accept the justice of the redistributive efforts. Partly for the foregoing reasons, growing numbers of writers have argued that nationalism has long been an unacknowledged element of liberalism, from Rousseau[10] through Mill to Rawls.[11]

On the face of it, however, the core values of liberalism do not appear to sit well with nationalism. Liberalism is inherently individualistic, yet nationalism in its most familiar forms is holistic, usually requiring the valuing of the nation as an entity above the goods of the individuals that comprise it. Furthermore, even the allegedly egalitarian side of nationalism appears to run counter to liberalism's commitment to respect equally the basic rights and liberties of all humans. A welfare state that operates only within a comparatively wealthy nation-state like Germany will redistribute goods to poor Germans who are already far better off than vast numbers of potential recipients (Afghans, for example) who are excluded by the system's national bias.[12]

The current system of nation-states directly affects pressing issues of global justice. Nationalists can claim to be defending the right of all nations in the world to control their own destinies, but in effect this means that wealth and resources are controlled by Western powers, and individuals born into poverty-stricken countries cannot hope to approach the standard of living of their First World counterparts. It also means, of course, that the wealthiest states can control the world agenda and consume and pollute out of all proportion to their populations. This aspect of nationalism is less discussed in the literature, which tends to focus on the rights of minority nations to autonomy from states controlled by larger nations. In my view, however, a liberal defense of nationalism must explain how a system of nation states better respects the basic rights of humans than a drive to globalize redistributive systems of justice.

Meeting this challenge requires first a definition of the nation. Purported criteria of nationhood fall into two main categories: what I shall call *objective* and *subjective*. By objective criteria of nationhood I simply mean

features shared by a group of people irrespective of their wills.[13] Shared language, homeland, ethnicity, history, and culture are all candidates that have been put forward.[14]

There are two basic problems with such criteria. First, whenever each criterion is examined alone, it is possible to come up with counterexamples to show that it appears to be neither a necessary nor sufficient condition of a nation.[15] Consider language, for example—an important motivation for nationalist drives in Quebec and the Basque and Catalan regions of Spain, among many others. Eric Hobsbawm points out that in 1789, only 50% of French people spoke French, and when Italy was unified in 1860, only 2.5% of Italians spoke Italian.[16] Hobsbawm and others conclude that a shared language is not necessary for a people to constitute a nation, and that indeed shared languages are more often the result of nation-building practices than the motivation for them.[17] The idea of a nomadic nation is not incoherent, so a homeland is not necessary. Polyethnic nations seem plausible, the US being an apparent notable example, and histories have often been retroactively created for existing nations. Ernest Renan famously remarked that "To forget and—I will venture to say—to get one's history wrong, are essential factors in the making of a nation; and thus the advance of historical studies is often a danger to nationality."[18]

The second problem of objective criteria is for the liberal nationalist rather than nationalists in general. Liberalism, with its focus on the individual and its twin ideals of liberty and equality, has long been the enemy of chauvinisms. Sexism and racism are rejected by liberals because they involve a violation of equal respect for all humans and typically entail the curtailment of particular liberties on the basis of human features that are deemed by liberalism to be morally irrelevant. One would think, therefore, that if one's nationality is as beyond one's control as one's (initial) sex or race are typically assumed to be, then liberalism should condemn nationalism by association. Perhaps there is no inherent wrong simply in categorizing people according to the objective features put forward as relevant to nationality,[19] while this is less clearly true of race and sex, but the nationalist calls for a person's nationality to have serious political ramifications, with results that can be horrific, as events over the past decade in the Balkans and sub-Saharan Africa have illustrated.[20]

It cannot be denied, however, that vast numbers of people identify themselves as possessing a nationality, and wish this feature of themselves to have political import. This suggests that respect for individuals can itself lead to nationalism, where the nation is constituted *subjectively*, each one comprised of those who see themselves as part of it. On this view a nation is, in the oft-quoted words of Renan, a "daily plebiscite,"[21] or in Benedict Anderson's phrase, "an imagined community."[22] Yael Tamir puts it this way: "A nation, like lovers or friends, is the kind of group whose existence cannot be inferred

from the mere existence of certain shared objective features but must refer to the members' shared consciousness and feelings of communion."[23]

The subjective approach seems potentially compatible with liberalism, and indeed the voluntaristic aspect of it mirrors liberalism's social contract tradition. However, questions need answering about this approach, too. First, how many people have to conceive of themselves as sharing a nation for their so doing to constitute a nation? If all that co-nationals have in common is their self-perceived co-nationality, this does not settle any substantive properties of nations to differentiate them from other groups that meet this standard—sororities, fan clubs, international brother-and-sisterhoods of chartered accountants, et al.—without being nations. Second, is my nationality solely my choice, or does it depend on others' acceptance? Can I decide to be French unilaterally? Aside from purely ontological issues, if nationhood carries with it the right to form a state it should not be the case that we could have 250 million individual nations in the US alone. On the other hand, if others' acceptance is required, this opens the door to a majority excluding willing minorities, rather like country clubs keeping out *hoi polloi*. Third, are there standards for what can count as a basis for my decision? If, as seems very likely, those reasons are identification with a nation whose history is largely fabricated in the manner that Renan positively encouraged, doesn't that taint or undermine the nation itself?[24]

These three challenges suggest to some writers—David Miller and Yael Tamir, notably—that the best definition of a nation must involve both objective and subjective features.[25] *Subjective* to avoid the charge of illiberality, *objective* to provide a basis for the subjective ascription of nationality thereby to distinguish nations from other types of groups. Such a combination provides a response to the three challenges to a solely subjective definition. First, the number of people is settled by the number of people who share the relevant objective feature or features— say, the French nation consists of all French speakers who share a distinctive common culture that finds its home on French soil. Second, therefore, I cannot decide to be French if the relevant objective features cannot be ascribed to me. If I have never set foot on French-controlled territory, am unfamiliar with French culture and do not speak a word of the language, then however earnestly I wish to describe myself as French, I am not. While my case is perhaps sad, note that what prevents my self-ascribed Frenchness successfully realizing a French nationality is not the decision of others to exclude me. I may curse my luck but I cannot claim that my exclusion is an intentional snubbing. Finally, my decision must be based on conscious acknowledgment by me of my own possession of the relevant characteristic(s), and not on some strange whim. Nationality must be rational at some level, which perhaps would help to eliminate the worst bases for nationalist sentiment.

By requiring objective features, then, the combined approach answers objections to a purely subjective definition of the nation. However, there are still unanswered questions about the relevant objective features. First, what are they? Second, why are those features relevant to possessing a right to self-government? And third, supposing such a right exists, is it strong enough to justify a system of nation states against the objection of gross global injustice?

Of the objective criteria considered above, culture remains as yet unchallenged. The most promising aspect of culture is that, to a greater extent than any of the rival objective criteria, a national culture is within the control of the citizens who share it. That is, individuals need not be passive recipients of the force that shapes their nationality and by extension their self-identity; instead they can help to shape it, and in so doing realize the individual autonomy much prized by liberalism. Thus, culture has both an objective aspect—each individual experiences her national culture as a fact of life (and therefore nations are not individual creations of whimsy)—and a subjective aspect—a national culture is a social construct, embodying the ongoing decisions of the nation as a human collective.

Without an argument as to why *national* cultures are valuable things, though, this conception still does not provide a reason for the liberal to endorse a system of nation-states. (That is, it is not simply enough that the cultures be valued, but that one is both rationally and morally justified in valuing them.) It is true that national cultures seem to be a fact of our direct experience, but so do office cultures, team cultures, youth cultures, and so forth, without calls for each of those entities to have its own state.[26] Several liberal writers (Ronald Dworkin, Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz, among others[27]) have seen the need for such an argument and provided variants. Perhaps the most influential distinctively liberal argument for protecting national cultures, however, is that developed by Will Kymlicka.[28]

Kymlicka's argument has two steps. First, his conception of the prerequisites for liberty requires both that individuals be free to choose their own plan of life (they live life "from the inside") and that they be free to revise the beliefs that make up that life plan once chosen. Second, he claims that a *societal culture* is essential to liberty so conceived,[29] where a societal culture is "a culture which provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres. These cultures tend to be territorially concentrated and based on a shared language".[30] (That is, essentially a national culture.)

How successfully can this argument be used as a defense of nationalism? First we must know why protecting societal cultures requires a state for each nation. Kymlicka's response is that

> for a culture to survive and develop in the modern world, given the pressures towards the creation of a single common culture in each country, it must be a societal culture. Given the enormous significance of social institutions in our lives, and in determining our options, any culture which is not a societal culture will be reduced to ever-decreasing marginalization.[31]

However, even if we concede (as anthropologists have long argued) that we are culturally embedded such that our culture, in Dworkin's words, "provides the spectacles through which we identify experiences as valuable,"[32] as well as this further claim that a culture must be embedded in the machinery of government to thrive, this is not necessarily an argument for a *plurality* of national cultures, each attached to the institutions of statehood. As Jeremy Waldron has pointed out,[33] all it establishes is that individuals need access to *a* culture. Kymlicka's response is that movement between cultures is rare and difficult, comparable to taking a vow of poverty and entering a religious order. For this reason, one should be regarded as being reasonably entitled to *one's own* culture, and not required to give it up.

I'm not sure how convincing this response is. For one thing, if a state suddenly instituted the policy of indoctrinating all children too young yet to have their own culture with a single state-sponsored culture, then no movement would be required, but it would effectively eliminate the need for statehood for minority nations. There are liberal objections to such a proposal, of course, but they turn on parents' rights to pass on their culture to their children, and not on the defense of the liberty of the children.

Another implication of Kymlicka's assertion that each individual has a right to *her particular* culture is that, in effect, he is arguing that cultures are the joint property of particular groups, to dispose of how they will. I suggest that they should instead be viewed as the joint property of the human race. This is not only true to our intuitions (who, when hearing of the destruction of giant statues of Buddha by the Taliban, and of some of the earliest traces of civilization by Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, did not think "they have no right!") but accords better with what I maintain are the necessary global humanist underpinnings of liberalism.[34] Indeed, the first element of freedom as he conceives it, the freedom to choose one's plan of life, requires cultural mobility.

That is, Kymlicka's culture argument relies only on the second element of freedom, the freedom to revise one's beliefs, which, he claims, requires a secure cultural framework. However, he also asserts that the freedom to choose one's plan of life is essential to liberty. One can imagine a Millian argument that there should be the largest possible marketplace of cultures, so that each

individual has the opportunity to choose among the widest profusion of conceptual schemes as part of one's experiments in living. This kind of argument is a fickle friend to the nationalist: it argues that individual freedom requires a profusion of cultures, but the same commitment to maximal choice will be an enemy of marrying national cultures to the instruments of statehood, with the attendant possibilities of isolationism (particularly if members of that culture see it to be threatened).[35] Thus, protecting the first element of freedom provides an argument both for ensuring that children can switch between cultures as painlessly as possible, should they so choose, and for denying cultures the right to prohibit entry to outsiders.[36]

To assess the implications of Kymlicka's culture-based nationalism, let us imagine a small self-contained culture (like the Amish, only perhaps with their own language), which we can call the Isham. Recall that the liberal views cultures as the creations of their participants. Combine that with Kymlicka's endorsement of the freedom to revise one's beliefs and commitments, and what results is that the free actions of a culture's participants will alter the culture, and this is not to be regretted. If the Isham decide unilaterally to abandon their way of life, then that can only be respected as their choice.[37]

However, what happens if increasing numbers of Isham choose to leave the lifestyle? At what point does the culture cease to be viable as a source of options, and indeed become a positive restriction to the few people raised in it? A gradual conversion of the Isham culture into that of the dominant state culture would seem to be advisable, so that at no point does a particular Isham feel that her culture is being destroyed, but at the same time there will never be a time when a small band are isolated, with no viable lifestyle left, and called upon to abandon their culture "cold turkey." If instead the Isham are granted separate statehood, only one aspect of the liberty of Isham children will be maximized, and at the same time, the Isham would be granted the right to exclude large numbers of (let us stipulate) much poorer immigrants in the name of protecting their culture. But why should the Isham deny indigents access to valuable resources in the name of protecting a culture? Because, says Kymlicka, their incursion would diminish a culture that provides a context of choice for its members, abandonment of which would be very difficult. However, it would not be difficult for *all* members, only those adults set in their ways. But all adults even *within* cultures face something similar over the course of their lives.

Consider the following story that aired on National Public Radio a couple of years ago, related by a man whose parents were Belgian immigrants. They worked for many years in the U.S., all the time insisting that they would retire to Belgium when they'd earned enough. Well, the time came, and they did indeed return to Belgium. They were back in New Jersey within two years. His analysis: they realized they were not nostalgic for Belgium; they

were nostalgic for the '50s. Every time I return to England and see everyone talking on cell phones and measuring things in kilos and litres, I know the feeling. As people get older, they find themselves more and more marginalized by what is supposedly their own culture. Must the culture they feel comfortable with be granted statehood too? Certainly their plight is important, and they must be included as much as is possible, but ideally by assimilation into the modern world.[38]

Kymlicka bemoans the fact that Dworkin, for example, has too homogenized a view of societal culture. But I think he is guilty of ignoring the divergence of cultural worldviews among generations within a single nation. Certainly he can argue that they share a great many things in common, and in particular, a commitment to institutions like the rule of law and (in the U.S.) a divided government. But again, these similarities are as a result of sharing a *state*, and cannot be used to justify statehood for nations.

Kymlicka insists that nationalism is not going away in the face of increasing liberalization of cultures. He points to the fact that support for Quebec nationalism has paradoxically *increased* with the decreasing distinctiveness of the Quebec way of life.[39] Viewed in the light of the combined criteria for nationality that we discussed earlier, this would seem to suggest that the people of Quebec are acting irrationally—the strength of their subjective ascription of nationality is rising when the basis for such ascription is ebbing away. This seems to me an indication that, despite liberal nationalists' insistence otherwise, nationalism at root is as its critics have always charged it to be, just another instance of humanity's impulse to clump in groups for the purpose of excluding others, an impulse which seems strongest the more similar those people are. A favorite illustration of this tendency is the scene in Monty Python's *Life of Brian*, where the leader of the *People's Front of Judea* (membership, approximately 3) reacts with disgusted horror at Brian's confusion of that group with the *Judean People's Front*. Experience with student politics also gave me the distinct impression that the less distinguishable two organizations are, the greater the vitriol discharged between them. It is certainly odd that Kymlicka should cite this example with approval. If the Quebec culture finally becomes indistinguishable from its neighbors, then there is no culture-based argument for its statehood any more.[40]

At the outset, I quoted Kymlicka stating that there was emerging consensus over liberal nationalism. On his view, "According to liberal nationalism, it is a legitimate function of the state to protect and promote the national cultures and languages of the nations within its borders."[41] Kymlicka's nationalism is clearly a more subtle and complex entity than my simple definition would allow, as his nationalism is compatible with multination states so long as there are "schemes of federalism or consocialism to

enable national minorities to exercise self-government." However, elsewhere[42] he argues that federalism will almost inevitably lead to secession anyway, so perhaps his view would in effect collapse into a call for statehood for each nation.[43] Even should it not, though, his view is that there is general consensus around the claim that national cultures deserve state protection, for the simple reason that "there is no clear alternative position."[44]

Several possibilities present themselves. One interpretation of the claim is that liberal nationalism is the only position that is not morally repugnant. I think such a claim would flounder. As I have argued, the conceptual apparatus of liberalism can only clearly be employed to protect national cultures when illiberal acts are committed in their destruction. But, while such cases are depressingly common in the real world, they are not sufficient to underpin a thoroughgoing *nationalism*. Other, non-national, cultures might be equally valued.[45]

Another possible interpretation of the claim is that there are no well-conceived alternatives in ideal theory. That would be a bold dismissal of the so-called *cosmopolitan* position, whose defenders are growing in number apace with the liberal nationalists, and include Brian Barry, David Waldron, David Held and Thomas Pogge, for example. Also, such a claim would entail classifying liberal nationalism as an ideal theory. While I have fewer principled objections to an ideal liberal nationalism that calls for independence for each nation, with genuine equality of resources maintained amongst nations, such a position leads one into tangled disputes about the nature of nations that create more problems than they solve. Moreover, ideal liberal nationalism loses the strongest appeal of any kind of nationalism—that it acknowledges the reality of actually existing national cultures and sentiments. For this reason, I think that the safest interpretation of Kymlicka's claim is that liberal nationalism is the only morally defensible compromise between theory and the world as we know it, that acknowledges and attempts to accommodate the central value of nationality to one's identity.

On this view, liberal nationalism must cater to the needs of already familiar national cultures, with already entrenched claims to resources and territories. If this is how we are to take the position, then I contend that so-called liberal nationalism is in effect perniciously conservative.[46] Consider, for example, David Miller's apparently radical defense of nationalism as the best barrier against the culture-sapping forces of global capitalism.[47] On closer inspection, this argument commands us to protect fairly wealthy cultures, such as France's or Italy's, at the expense of the cultures of poorer nations who will never be in a position to enforce culture-preserving measures anyway. Besides which, for whom are these valuable cultures being preserved? If it is the already-privileged members of these first-world nations, then we are conceding that it

is justifiable to cordon off a resource of inherent value from much of the human race, because to do otherwise would be to adversely affect an elite few.

In conclusion: liberal nationalists cannot escape the tension in their positions. Either they must fully endorse nationalism and acknowledge their conservatism (perhaps by defending the kind of cultural relativism that notoriously has been unjust regimes' defense against a call for human rights) or they should concede the injustice of nationalism and turn their efforts to outlining peacefully revolutionary processes whereby the boundaries between nation-states can wither away.

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Notes

1.   Work on this project was supported by a Horace W. Rackham Fellowship from the University of Michigan. The final version has benefited greatly from the insightful comments of two anonymous readers, except where I had no answer for their criticisms.

2.   See, for example, Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1; David Miller, On Nationality, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 18–19.

3.   Canovan also suggests that "a Polish nation still existed after the Nazi conquest of Poland, and had existed for some time before the establishment of the Polish state following the First World War." See Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood and Political Theory* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1996), 51–52.

4.   Of course states are not just any systems of government. For example, unions and private clubs have governing institutions and electoral processes but are not states. Nor are states necessarily the overarching political framework for all such smaller systems of government, because some states are part of larger federations, the European Union, the United Nations, etc., to which citizens or organizations may appeal to settle intra-state disputes. I will not here debate the extent of the powers of states, but let us assume that their governments have sovereignty over a region and a population. This does not settle much: for example, the current US administration is contesting the jurisdiction of an international war crimes tribunal. Does the existence of such a thing threaten US sovereignty? I leave such questions aside here.

5.   That said, territoriality is clearly an important part of nationhood for the vast majority of those who assert a nationality. (David Miller, for example, insists that "A nation [in contrast to ethnicities and religions] must have a homeland," Miller, 24.) Nevertheless, I maintain that it is not an essential feature (except insofar as people take up physical space and need to be somewhere), in that the notion of a nomadic

nation is not conceptually incoherent. I cannot do justice to the debate over the importance of territoriality to nationhood here, but for a good argument that territoriality should not be a part of nationhood, see Brian Walker, "Social Movements as Nationalism, or, On the Very Idea of a Queer Nation" in Couture, Nielsen and Seymour eds., *Rethinking Nationalism* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1996) 505–547 (also note 45 below).

6.   Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

7.   Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 39.

8.   For contrasting views on whether such a right should be viewed as "plebiscitary" or as contingent on prior abuses ("remedial right only"), see Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz, "National Self-Determination," *Journal of Philosophy* 87 (1990): 439–61; and Allen Buchanan, "Democracy and Secession" in Margaret Moore ed. *National Self-Determination and Secession* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 14–33.

9.   See for example: David Miller, *On Nationality* (especially ch. 4); Margaret Canovan, Nationhood (especially ch. 4); and Andrew Mason, "The state, national identity and distributive justice," *New Community* 21 (1995), 241–254.

10. Classification of Rousseau as a liberal is controversial. However, classification of him as anything is universal, and his insistence on the liberty and equality of individuals and acknowledged influence on clearly liberal thinkers like Kant and Rawls warrants his inclusion in this list.

11. See Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, chapter 6 in particular; Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 93; Miller, 93 (sic); Margaret Canovan, *Nationhood*, chapter 3 and "The Skeleton in the Cupboard: Nationhood, Patriotism and Limited Loyalties" in Caney, George and Jones eds., *National Rights, International Obligations* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1996), 69–84.

12. It could be argued that there is nothing intrinsically illiberal about the idea of nation-states, if they were organized in such a way to ensure equality of resources among them. That is, one can imagine a world in which each nation was self-governing, and yet global resources were distributed evenly across all nation-states, so that the poorest Germans were on a par with the poorest Afghans. I will argue below that there are further objections to be made against even such a fantasy world as this. Furthermore, the extensive inter-state redistributive agencies required to maintain such equality would surely call one to question the sovereignty of the various nation-states: we would arguably have a very large federal system instead of a collection of autonomous states. For now, however, suffice it to say that such a world is very far from being *our* world, and yet liberal nationalists have made it clear that they intend their defenses of nationalism to apply to real-world issues. (Thanks to an anonymous commentator for alerting me to this possibility.)

13. I do not want to imply by the use of the term "objective" that any of the features I classify under that rubric are uncontroversially possessed by any particular group or

are in any way scientifically measurable. Whether a group shares a language or culture, for example, will always be a matter of debate, and the varying theoretical rubrics of different observers will warrant different ascriptions. (For this reason an anonymous commentator prefers the term "ascriptive".) However, the fact remains that third parties can make the ascription without members of the relevant group even being aware that they are being so classified, in stark contrast with *subjective* criteria.

14. See Miller, chapter 2 and Yael Tamir, "Reconstructing the Landscape of Imagination" in Caney, George and Jones eds., *National Rights, International Obligations* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1996), 85–101 for example.

15. I say "appears" because, depending on one's commitments one can always reject the apparent counterexample as failing to count as a nation. Is Switzerland a nation, for example? If so, then a common language is not necessary for nationhood. However, it is equally possible to argue that Switzerland is a multi-national state. If one takes that route, however, it could count against another criterion such as that of common political culture. As David Miller writes: "In Switzerland a national identity was quite deliberately fostered in the course of the nineteenth century...with the result that the Swiss today share a common national identity as Swiss over and above their separate linguistic, religious and cantonal identities," Miller, 94–95.

16. Cited by Judith Lichtenberg, "Nationalism, For and (Mainly) Against" in Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan, eds., *The Morality of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 159.

17. For a competing view, see Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, 212–218.

18. Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" (1882) in Alfred Zimmern ed., *Modern Political Doctrines* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 190. Often the history or historical figures may be real enough, but they are not the history of one's nation. Stonehenge, for example, is often held up as something that the English should be proud of, but England did not exist when it was built, and its builders probably did not produce descendants who would nowadays count as English.

19. Although ethnicity is of course a problem case, and A. D. Smith has argued that ethnicity is the most important and pervasive basis of nationality. See Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

20. The most glaring atrocities have been ethnically motivated rather than explicitly nationalistically motivated, it is true. But as "ethnicity" is a slippery, and almost certainly conceptually bankrupt term, the divide between ethnic nationalism and cultural nationalism is difficult to draw. And one prominent writer on nationalism who regards "ethnicity" at least as a legitimate notion, has argued that all nations have an ethnic origin (Smith 1986).

21. Renan, p. 203. The full quote acknowledges the importance of a shared history as well: "Thus we see that a nation is a great solid unit, formed by the realization of sacrifices in the past, as well as of those one is prepared to make in the future. A nation implies a past; while, as regards the present, it is all contained in one tangible

fact, viz., the agreement and clearly expressed desire to continue a life in common. The existence of a nation is (if you will forgive me the metaphor) a daily plebiscite, just as that of the individual is a continued affirmation of life."

22. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). "Imagined" because each individual will never meet the vast majority of her co-nationals, yet conjures up a sense of community nonetheless.

23. Tamir, "Reconstructing the Landscape," 89.

24. For an argument that nationalists can legitimately make use of falsehoods to foster a national spirit, see David Archard, "Myths, Lies and Historical Truth: A Defence of Nationalism" *Political Studies* 43 (1995): 472–481.

25. See Tamir, "Reconstructing the Landscape" and Miller, chapter 2.

26. Kymlicka does stipulate that societal cultures are "institutionally complete"— that is, "containing a full range of social, educational, economic, and political institutions, encompassing both public and private life," Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 78. However, to say that this is what distinguishes societal cultures from other kinds is simply to beg the question: statehood provides such things, so the possession of them cannot be an argument for being awarded statehood.

27. Ronald Dworkin, "Liberal Community," *California Law Review* 77 (1989): 479–504; Margalit and Raz, "National Self-Determination," *Journal of Philosophy* 87 (1990): 439–461.

28. See especially Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), *Multicultural Citizenship*, 1995, and *Politics in the Vernacular*, 2001.

29. "Put simply, freedom involves making choices amongst various options, and our societal culture not only provides these options, but also makes them meaningful to us," Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 83.

30. Ibid., 76.

31. Ibid., 80. David Miller also argues that without state boundaries, the forces of global capitalism will homogenize all cultures—see Miller, 186–187.

32. Dworkin, 228.

33. Jeremy Waldron, "Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative," *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, 25 (1992): 751–793.

34. One of the primary defining characteristics of an "encompassing group," Margalit and Raz's term for the kind of body of people eligible for the right of self-government, is that the people share a history, presumably to the exclusion of other humans. But I believe that all humans should be able to identify with the works of the Ancient

Greeks, say, and not just modern Greeks because their national history creates some tenuous link with those actions.

35. Mill famously wrote that it was better for the Breton to assimilate to France, and the Welshman to Britain than to "sulk on his own rocks, the half-savage relic of past times, revolving in his own little mental orbit," J.S. Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) in John Gray ed., *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 431.

36. Kymlicka defends rights of exclusion—see his example of Inuit residency restrictions in Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community, and Culture*, 146–150.

37. One might have a Millian reason to regret the passing of Isham culture, as I discuss below.

38. I have not discussed the possibility of sudden and catastrophic loss of culture, where no slow assimilation is possible. Certainly this is something that individuals should be protected against wherever possible. However, such collapses are invariably the result of illiberal actions, and a liberal can oppose them without thereby committing herself to nationalism *or* "culturalism". (Thanks to an anonymous commentator for this point.)

39. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 87–88.

40. Kymlicka does note Michael Ignatieff's barb that nationalists are guilty of the "narcissism of minor differences" but in response only goes on to insist that "the evidence is overwhelming that the members of liberal cultures *do* value their cultural membership" (Ibid.). This is an inadequate response: they may indeed value such membership, but that does not mean that we should be moved to respect this attitude any more than we should value the racist's valued membership in what he perceives to be his own race. (Even if the nationalist's sentiment is not as clearly repugnant as the racist's, it is by no means clear that all nationalists are valuing *the same thing*. Each nationalist could have a different reason for valuing her membership, and it is quite possible that other nationalists could reject that conception. Witness different people's ideas of what 'Un-American' behavior amounts to.)

41. Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, 39.

42. Will Kymlicka, "Is federalism a viable alternative to secession?" in Percy B. Lehning ed., *Theories of Secession* (London: Routledge, 1998), 111–150.

43. This is too quick, and it is worth distinguishing, as Kymlicka does, between *minority* nationalism (a call for recognition of minority, almost invariably aboriginal, nations), with which he is most concerned from *majority* nationalism (which calls for nation-building practices that might see it as their goal to assimilate minority nations).

44. Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, 43. It should be noted that he is saying here that there is no clear alternative to liberal *culturalism*, where liberal nationalism is a

form of liberal culturalism, but his earlier claim about consensus was concerning liberal nationalism. How is this claim of victory "by default" to be assessed?

45. Even if we stick to valuing national cultures, Kymlicka's list of national cultures is arguably artificially restricted. I concur with several points in Brian Walker's valuable analysis and critique of culturist nationalism (Walker, "Social Movements as Nationalism"): first, the criteria for nationhood seem to be tailored to fit pre-existing nations, thereby undercutting the rights of diasporic groups and social movements. However, once we acknowledge this chauvinism and remove requirements for nationhood (specifically territoriality) that are products of this jury-rigging, we see that there is an enormous profusion of potential nations (his main example is the homosexual nation) thereby rendering the goal of statehood for each a practical impossibility.

46. As Walker (Ibid.) points out, if the only nations that can count as such are pre-existing nations, then we are perpetrating a double injustice against nascent or diasporic not-quite-nations: the *actual* nations already have territory and (usually) some measure of institutional framework to protect their cultures, and now their position is entrenched in theory. The "non-national" social movements, however, do not even yet have a territory, or any opportunity to entrench their culture (even to the extent of having streets named after cultural heroes) and are now denied even the chance to achieve this status.

47. Miller, 186–187. Miller insists that eroding of national identities (on a cosmopolitan model) would result in "the world market as the distributor of cultural resources... [which] will be bad news for the non-élite" because they will no longer have access to the rich common cultures that once existed and their economic position will "increasingly be determined by the workings of the global market". Both of these only apply to the "non-élite" already living in first-world nations. The poor of other countries never had access to those cultures and have fates that are already determined by the workings of the global market.