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Abstract:

Can the demos be uncoupled from the ethnos? Can there be a democratic politics of state-boundaries, or are borders a condition of the possibility of democratic politics rather than a possible subject for those politics? The author argues for the decoupling strategy and affirms the possibility of a democratic politics about borders, anchoring the discussion in the politics of Northern Ireland. The argument turns on the analysis of public reasoning. It is argued first that culturalist accounts of self-determination are misconceived and that political institutions, and not cultural identity, make collective self-determination possible. Secondly, that the demos is constituted by acts of mutual recognition required by the practice of public reasoning, and that this practice cannot be confined with state-boundaries. Taken together this allows us to conceive of the unity of a people as constituted by practices of public reason, given effect by institutions whose configuration is never finally fixed.

What is it, if not ethnicity which makes a collection of individuals into a people, a collective political agent? In particular, can a divided society find a distinctly democratic way to resolve its difficulties and forge a common citizenship without implicitly relying on some unacknowledged link between citizenship and ethnicity? Nationalists, of course, will welcome any such link, arguing that it

is indeed an implicit and necessary assumption of citizenship and nationalists of a liberal bent will argue that, provided the national identity involved is suitably inclusive, this link plays an essential role in motivating social cooperation(Miller 1995). Others, however, more sensitive to internal diversity, are rightly critical of the cultural assimilationism which even an inclusive nationalism requires. An alternative solution then is that offered by multiculturalists, who believe, like nationalists, that cultural membership cannot be divorced from citizenship, but conclude that, as the nation-state is a utopian ideal rather than a fact on the ground, we must opt for a formally group-differentiated citizenship which will licence the institutional recognition of cultural pluralism(Kymlicka 1995; Tully 1995). With the right institutional arrangements, groups may exercise political autonomy *as groups*, within the same state. Both nationalists and multiculturalists however join in rejecting what they see as an implausible liberal 'neutralism' which seeks to decouple thicker group memberships from citizenship, as the only way in which to render it properly inclusive (Tamir 1993)106.[1]

My aim in what follows is to set out an interpretation of democratic citizenship which is consistent with this 'decoupling' strategy but which is not liable to the standard critiques of 'neutralism': that it is too thin, & that is it implicitly biased in favour of the dominant cultural group and the political status quo. What I

need, first of all then, is some account of the unity of the demos which is consistent with a broadly impartialist, liberal-egalitarian outlook. Secondly, if we are to avoid the charge that liberal egalitarians are compelled to simply take the boundaries of the state and citizenship for granted, and therefore *implicitly* favour national majorities, then I need some account of how this view might allow for critical reflection on the boundaries of the state. Here the task will be to steer a course between the Scylla of nationalism and the Charybdis of a cosmopolitanism that has nothing to say about borders other than that they must all ultimately be abolished. I take it that a liberal egalitarian account of the unity of a democratic people cannot remain silent on this question, but rather must offer some account of how state-borders might become the subject, rather than simply the presupposition of democratic politics.

My strategy involves two components: one, institutional, and the other attitudinal, specifically, 'recognitional', both answering to different aspects of public reasoning. The institutional component, which centres on the conditions of forming a determinate collective will, serves as an alternative to nationalist accounts of popular sovereignty(Habermas 1998; Pettit 1999). The recognitional component, which turns out to be central to the practice of public reasoning, provides the basis for a non-culturalist account of the unity of a people. Taken

together, I argue that these elements allow us to conceive of a democratic politics *about* state-boundaries that centres on the idea of a public as something to be constructed, rather than on the unity of a pre-political people.

I shall be taking a hard case as the focus of my discussion, firstly, because the liberal-egalitarian case will be strengthened if we can show that it can cope with such cases (and cope better than its rivals), and secondly, because one promising way to approach the question of what constitutes the unity of a democratic people should be to start with an examination of a society that conspicuously lacks this unity in the hope that we can identify the missing element. The hard case I have in mind is, of course, Northern Ireland, and it is a hard case for two reasons: because a divided society like this seems to provide the best possible example of the strength of nationalist identifications and the weakness of any thin commitment to constitutional essentials; and because the nature of the conflict concerns the boundaries of the demos itself, and here nationalist and cultural accounts more generally seem to have a crucial logical advantage: they can provide a clear account of *who* the people are, and consequently, *where* the boundaries of the demos *ought* to lie. The liberal egalitarian alternative, however, seems entirely ill-equipped to provide any guidance whatsoever on this score, being concerned with how things ought to be arranged *within* a state whose

boundaries are treated as given, but essentially silent on the question of where those boundaries should lie.

In response, I suggest firstly, that the apparent strength of nationalist accounts turns out to be their greatest weakness. Nationalism's much vaunted motivational force is the very thing that renders it so extremely divisive and a force for political instability in the real world, in contrast to the imagined world of already achieved nation-states. In a divided society, nationality will not serve as the basis for common citizenship, but rather as the basis for ongoing conflict. With respect to the question of borders, as I have indicated above, it is clear that a liberal egalitarian view cannot simply confine itself to the justice of institutions within state boundaries, but must also have something to say about those boundaries themselves. The thrust of the argument here, however, is that contrary to appearances, democratic theory has a wealth of theoretical resources for providing practical guidance on *handling* the 'boundary problem', and not that such theories can ultimately resolve the logical conundrum itself(Whelan 1983). Democrats can live with the circularity identified by the boundary problem, provided, of course, that this does not place boundaries entirely beyond the reach of democratic politics. Accordingly, I shall not, however, aim to offer a conclusive answer to the Northern Ireland's 'constitutional question'. This

would be to ask too much of an egalitarian political theory. What I do hope to offer, however, is an indication of how the respective political projects of both Irish Nationalism and British Unionism may be rationally, and legitimately pursued, and how a democratic politics about borders ought to be conducted.

Demos and Ethnos: the Limits of Democratic Politics?

Why is it that the nationalist account seems to offer the most coherent solution to the problem of identifying the demos? Clearly it is because nationalists have at their disposal an independent criterion for identifying the demos, i.e. it is treated as identical with the ethnos. Ostensibly pre-political criteria such as language use and shared cultural practices etc. serve to pick out who 'the people' are, independently of any reference to the boundaries of actual states and legal criteria of citizenship(Gellner 1983).

One important objection to this account is that in the real world states are almost never clear-cut nation-states, and to treat the majority ethnos as the political demos means that members of the minority will be consigned to second-class

citizenship, which is clearly repugnant. For this reason, egalitarians will be attracted to purely territorial accounts of the limits of citizenship. If the criterion of civic membership is given by a territorial limit rather than by ideas about descent or cultural membership, then, in circumstances of ethnic diversity, it will be possible to avoid institutionalising hierarchical, ethnically exclusive, relations between different groups within the populace. If, by contrast, we identify the citizenry with a particular ethnic group or a dominant narrative about cultural identity and political agency, then those who fall outside this group, while still subject to the same burdens entailed by citizenship, will be demoted to a second-class status. Lying within the borders of the state but outside the borders of the people, their interests will count for less, and their voices will be discounted in 'public' deliberation. The attraction of a simply territorial criterion, i.e. residence within the territory, is obvious: to the extent that one is subject to the laws, and must bear the burdens of citizenship, then one is entitled to participate in public affairs on an equal footing, with entitlement to the same rights as any other resident.

Clearly, no state operates, as yet, with such a purely territorial account, although few remain committed to a thoroughgoing *jus-sanguinis* model of civic membership. Most states while they permit naturalisation, will still operate a

distinction between citizens and resident aliens, the latter having a more narrowly circumscribed set of rights than that former, despite being subject to the burdens of citizenship: i.e. they are regarded as bound by collective decisions, but are denied the right to participate in decision-making, i.e. political citizenship (over and above limited access to welfare and some civil rights). This produces the curious irony, that ex-pat citizens may often have voting rights, but resident aliens (who are subject to the decisions in question while ex-pats are not) typically do not(Benhabib 2004). Be that as it may, it is clear that the moral argument favours the territorial criterion: what matters is participation in a particular set of cooperative relations, and to the extent that one is resident in a state and accepts the burdens of citizenship then one is morally entitled to the same rights as everyone else participating in this scheme. Increasingly, too, there are moves in the direction of legal recognition of this case: EU citizens may participate in local elections of the member state in which they reside, regardless of nationality, while some states permit certain categories of resident alien to vote in national elections too.[2] It may be utopian to suppose that any state will ever be wholly free from attempts to exploit exclusive interpretations of the demos in domestic politics, but the notion of a purely territorial criterion for civic membership is evidently conceptually coherent, morally attractive to egalitarians, and also, to some extent, already embodied in existing institutions.

It would not seem to be of much use, however, in offering guidance as to how to respond to the problems posed by divided societies such as Northern Ireland. The problem which the territorial criterion responds to is that of hierarchical relations *within* a given territory: it has nothing to say about where the borders of any territory ought to be. While it is premised on the idea that everyone within the territory should have the right to participate on an equal footing in deliberations about public affairs, the attempt to make the borders of the public itself the subject of democratic deliberation runs into the familiar problem that there can be no democratic decision about the borders of a democratic state because democracy *presupposes* the existence of a clearly delimited people entitled to participate in such decisions. When questions about where to draw the line delimiting the territory and therefore the demos, arise, an appeal to purely civic, democratic, values and principles is powerless simply because this question must be settled first as a precondition of democratic politics. While the territorial criterion can weaken the grip of an exclusivist politics about the nature of the demos, here it seems to reach its limit. The boundaries of the demos are contestable in the strong sense that what might count as a democratic decision concerning those boundaries will be determined by prior choices about who is to

count as the demos in the first place, which is, of course, the very point at issue(Gallie 1955-6).

This can be clearly illustrated with reference to Northern Ireland. If this were primarily a sectarian conflict, centred on religious communities, then it would, in a sense, be less intractable. Instead, it is primarily a *national* conflict in which national divisions have been reinforced by an overlapping religious division(Ruane and Todd 1996)22-30(McGarry and O'Leary 1995).[3] The conflict then is precisely about the boundaries of the territory and, by implication, the nature of the demos, i.e. the political people. Who has a right to participate in such a decision is what is directly at issue. Unionists will want to say that the appropriate demos is the UK, although, given the apparent indifference to their fate exhibited by most of their fellow Britons, confining the right to vote in any border poll to Northern Ireland itself has clear attractions for UK governments. Nationalists naturally believe that this loads the decision against them and would prefer the decision to be taken by Ireland as a whole, excluding GB. Dublin and London for their part, are happy to confine the decision to Northern Ireland itself, for although any change in Northern Ireland's status would have considerable implications for the citizens of each jurisdiction, neither is keen to move Northern Ireland to centre-stage in the domestic politics of either polity. At

any rate, it would seem that there is no clear answer to the question as to 'who votes?' whatever answer is adopted appears to presuppose the very answer which such a vote is to decide. Evidently, this is not just a logical problem, but a serious political problem too: this is the very source of Northern Ireland's inability to establish stable political institutions enjoying robust legitimacy.

One way to develop the sort of democratic position that we are concerned with here would be to simply insist on the idea that a commitment to democracy simply *is* a particular view of the internal organisation of states and that therefore, as democrats, we should properly have nothing whatsoever to say about boundaries. Certainly, the view adopted here is that our primary focus should always be on ensuring that the internal institutional configuration of any state should be such as to permit equal participation in collective decision making. To the extent that this is the case, then secessionist pressures must be correspondingly weak – the primary solution to boundary problems will always be an internal solution. However, while it is clearly an implication of the view adopted here that we should not care too much about state boundaries, there are obviously good reasons to avoid simply endorsing existing state boundaries. Liberal egalitarians do indeed, as liberal nationalists affirm, take the existence of boundaries for granted(Tamir 1993)117, but this doesn't mean that liberal

egalitarians are committed to endorsing whatever *configuration* of boundaries we find ourselves confronted with. Nationalists, will, of course, insist that we cannot take existing boundaries at face value: to do so would simply be to endorse the current set of hierarchical relations between national groups. Liberal nationalists are right to argue that liberal egalitarians cannot simply ignore the issue of boundaries: at the very least it would be irresponsible to avoid addressing an issue that is after all a key source of political conflict. Having said that, it is worth noting that liberal nationalism is itself particularly studious in avoiding discussion about the external boundaries of the state, and is altogether more comfortable with discussions about integrating individual immigrants into the nation's public culture. The liberal nationalist prefers to build nations around existing states, rather than to build states around existing nations, as orthodox nationalism demands. Some cosmopolitans will respond that far from ducking the issue of state boundaries, they actually have a substantive position on it: a world of states is morally untenable, and boundaries must be eliminated. While this cosmopolitanism (which may exist more in the minds of non-cosmopolitans than anywhere else) offers substantive moral reasons for thinking that boundary disputes ought not to play a role in our politics, the avoidance of this issue on the part of liberal nationalists is rather more puzzling, suggesting a distinctly utopian view of the politics of nationalism in which the difficult questions about

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the political coexistence of nations have simply been swept under the carpet. The liberal-egalitarian view adopted here, however, takes its lead from mainstream cosmopolitanism in that it rejects the idea of a world-state as undesirable (foot Kant on tyranny), and affirms the value of maintaining a range of multi-level democratic institutions as the best way to discharge cosmopolitan obligations(Pogge 1992). If plural jurisdictions are to be part of this world, then liberal-egalitarians will, however, need to develop some account of how we might have a democratic politics which takes the configuration of these boundaries as its subject, and not simply as its founding presupposition.

Given that we cannot plausibly duck the question of redrawing boundaries, is there anything that we can say about it between the polar opposites presented by the nationalist commitment to national self-determination on the one hand, and the cosmopolitan vision of a world without borders on the other? The first point to make is that there do appear to be good, non-nationalist, reasons for recognising a right to secession on the part of minorities, of the sort sketched by Buchanan(Buchanan 1995). (I dissent however from his endorsement of the cultural survival rationale, however, taking any right to secession to be contingent on violations of the traditional civil, political, and welfare, rights). What does the work in Buchanan's account is the idea of the violation of

individual rights: where this occurs, individuals may act in concert to reorganise the state in such a way to eliminate such abuses. Where this is impossible to effect within a particular state's institutions, then secession is a legitimate goal. The steps that may be permissible to successfully secede are themselves subject to the usual caveats about the permissible use of force. National identity clearly plays a role here in serving as a *marker* for the purposes of discrimination, on the one hand, and, presumably, in identifying candidate states for the purposes of secession on the other hand, but the argument does not rely upon any putative right to *national*-self-determination per se. Rather it is simply the case that for rights-violations of a certain sort, i.e. those directed as individuals identified as members of a minority national group, secession, quite contingently, becomes a *possible* remedy in a way that it is not for members of other groups subject to similar discrimination. For these groups, it is simply the case that emigration will be the only practical option where internal reform cannot be effected.

The Limits of Nationalism: Division & Misrecognition

The sort of pure egalitarian, democratic, view canvassed above, which seeks to decouple national and civic identity faces one apparently insuperable obstacle: it

sets out a vision of the internal organisation of states, but *logically* must remain silent on the question of their proper boundaries. I want to suggest now, that the apparent advantage enjoyed by nationalism in this respect is illusory. The multicultural theory of ethnic accommodation has some clear advantages over the nationalist model, and has rightly focused our attention on a range of potentially useful institutional devices, but I shall indicate why it too is theoretically ill-suited to address the difficulties of constituting democratic citizenship in a divided society.

The nationalist account purports to offer a determinate answer to the question of where state boundaries should lie, i.e. that they should be coterminous with nations. However, faced with a divided society like Northern Ireland, it runs into the difficulty that where two nationalities are in contention over the same piece of territory, it cannot decisively resolve the question in favour of one side or the other(Miller 1995). Affirming that *both* nations have a right to self-determination simply fails to offer a determinate answer as to which group should control the territory in question.[4] Partition/repartition is not an attractive solution for the simple reason that in the real world, populations are typically intermingled in such a way as to defeat tidy territorial carve ups: each act of partition creates new national minorities, which is of course, unacceptable from a nationalist

perspective. The only practical solution to this problem consistent with nationalist presuppositions will be to supplement territorial partition with forced population movement (or worse): imposing new borders is never enough to solve the problem of national minorities.

In the context of Northern Ireland, this dilemma of indeterminacy has led Nationalists and Unionists to adopt interpretive strategies which try to present the conflict in terms which make it easier to resolve in theory, if not in practice. Nationalism's traditional strategy for getting around this dilemma involves a simple denial that Unionists are truly British in the first place. If they can be interpreted simply as Irish people who are, however, in deep denial about their true identity then the coherence of the nationalist project is not threatened. Of course, Irish nationalism officially aspires to reconstitute Ireland in impeccably civic terms(Whelan 1996), and this encourages the interpretation of Unionists in primarily religious terms: insofar as they are not British but Protestant there is no obvious difficulty, logical or practical, in integrating Irish Protestants into an Irish republic – a move which has already been successful with respect to the Protestant minority in the South. To the extent that there is a *national* conflict, on this view, it has been conducted between Nationalists and 'the Brits' – where the 'Brits' are understood to be the English, not the British, Unionist, population. The

requirements of nationalist political theory, then, have forced Irish nationalism to 'misrecognise' the Unionist community to the extent that nationalism refuses to recognise that Unionists see themselves as British.

Unionists, it is fair to say, do not have such a unified interpretation of the conflict, possibly because their position as defenders of the constitutional status quo seems not to have encouraged the elaboration of a Unionist *project* as such, over and above the minimal aspiration to avoid inclusion in an Irish republic(Coulter 1994).[5] As Irish Nationalists are committed to changing the status quo, they clearly have an incentive to develop a more elaborate case for constitutional change. The most promising strand of unionism, from a liberal-egalitarian perspective, is a civic, largely integrationist, politics which presents unionism as driven by an attachment to a civic interpretation of Britishness(Aughey 1990). On this view, unionism is itself a form of constitutional patriotism to a set of political institutions which are shared between several different constituent nations(Habermas 2001).[6] This model has a symmetrical relationship to the civic version of Irish nationalism: it holds out the prospect of integrating the other side as equal citizens, primarily, however, under a religious description, i.e. Protestants can become Irish citizens on the nationalist view, while Catholics can become British citizens on the Unionist

view. This repeats the mistake of misrecognising the nationality of the other side, but also reflects a significant failure on the Unionist side, to recognise the ethnic and religious baggage with which the favoured civic identity has been laden. Unionism, even in its civic variants, then, has typically failed to appreciate that institutional ties between political unionism and Protestant organisations such as the Orange Order, and cultural attachments to a particular, increasingly outdated view of Britishness, which harks back to a monocultural, Protestant, imperial past seriously undermine their attempts to present Britishness not as a national but as a civic identity(Robbins 1990; Colley 1992).[7] To be sure, Irish nationalism is also guilty of similar self-deception to the extent that even its self-consciously republican variant is still wedded to a thick cultural model of Irishness as Gaelic, if not, officially at least, to Irishness as Catholic. This exclusive tendency is arguably stronger in the loyalist, Northern Ireland-nationalist, strands of unionism, which has hitherto shown little interest in integrating, or assimilating the Irish nationalist population.

Not only does the logic of nationalism produce inevitable blind-spots on both sides here – blind spots affecting both their interpretation of their opponents and of themselves, the conflict itself has arguably accentuated exclusivist tendencies within both camps which serve to undermine moves in the direction of inclusive

civic nationalisms, whether Irish or British. It's not hard to see why this might be so: to the extent that each community sees itself as under threat, whether from the British state, or from republican terrorism, the incentive to strengthen group solidarity and morale by reinforcing those features of collective identity which underline the differences and distinctiveness will be strong as these provide a bulwark against assimilation, and against backsliding by more moderate tendencies within one's own community(Ruane and Todd 1996)60. To the extent that Nationalists, for example, resist assimilation into a historically hostile British state, through emphasising their distinctive Gaelic identity and culture, then this will undermine attempts to present the nationalist project in terms of a secular, inclusive, continental republicanism, which can provide the underpinnings for an Ireland in which 'Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter' can share as equals. Not only are these tendencies evident as distinct currents within nationalism and unionism more widely but they are evident in the case of Sinn Féin especially, within the same political organisation.[8]

At this point the liberal nationalist can, of course, insist that this sort of social and political division is precisely what the emphasis on a strong, inclusive, national identity is designed to remedy. With deeper roots than a purely institutional focused constitutional patriotism, this sort of national identity can prevent the

emergence of this sort of division, something which multicultural models of 'plural monoculturalism' will only encourage (Sen 2006)157. However, it is not clear, first of all, that the attempt to strengthen national identity will not actually accentuate divisions, a dynamic evident in the Northern Ireland case, nor is it clear just what work the distinctively *national* components of this shared identity are actually doing. While it is certainly desirable to live in a state characterised by a shared public culture(Miller 1995; Baillie 2000), and the absence of social division centred on ethnicity, it is not clear that the liberal nationalist can provide us with any useful guidance on the practical matter of how we might achieve such as state if we don't already inhabit one, for in a society like Northern Ireland it is clear that a shared civic people won't be built on the foundations of either British or Irish nationalities as things currently stand(Todd 1995).

This is one reason why multicultural solutions appear to be more practicable than liberal nationalism's unhelpful strictures on maintaining a shared public culture and national identity: in the real world, we may be able to assimilate immigrants when they turn up on our shores, but the attempt to assimilate indigenous national minorities will only accentuate conflict, over and above concerns about the moral permissibility of attempts to do so. It is hard to imagine that any of the measures employed to build nation-states, the coercion entailed in

forging political, linguistic, and religious, unity in particular, could be endorsed today.

The Limits of Multiculturalism: Plural Monoculturalism?

The multiculturalist solution, or at least, its general orientation towards internal solutions, whether in terms of federal arrangements, group-representation, or consociationalism, is clearly more attractive(Kymlicka 1995; Tully 1995). To the extent that multicultural citizenship is an umbrella, under which a range of cultural memberships may flourish, it must be more attractive to pluralists than the nationalist alternative which operates with the crude tools of assimilation, partition, domination, and/or expulsion. The problem here is that multiculturalism has never shaken off the communitarianism from which it was born(Taylor 1994; Benhabib 2002). It is concerned above all with accommodating groups' concerns with preserving their cultural identity and practices. This makes it ill-suited to coping with the problems of a divided society, to the extent that the task of overcoming these divisions requires the *transformation* of relations between groups, and by implication, relations *within* groups: the relations groups have to their own history, traditions, and projects(Ruane and Todd 1996).

Divided societies, one might say, have already got a well-embedded de-facto group-differentiated citizenship and need rather to overcome, rather than reinforce this. The founding move of multicultural political theory was to recognise that some marginalised groups wish to resist assimilation/integration, while the central problem for a divided society like Northern Ireland is to work out how to integrate already separate communities under a common citizenship(Kymlicka 1989).

This basic orientation renders multicultural political theory deaf to complaints about 'tribalism', a phenomenon universally acknowledged to be central to Northern Ireland's problems and regularly manifested in a depressing inability by members of each community to acknowledge the legitimate complaints of the other and to rise above the sterile assertion of an exclusive victim status. By making cultural survival its central concern(Spinner-Halev 2000), multicultural political theory lacks the resources to offer guidance on how best to strengthen those forces within communities which may prompt the sort of critical self-examination which is required to undermine sectarianism. While the suggestion that a looser, less comprehensively assimilationist model of civic integration is desirable is certainly sound, the multicultural model of celebrating a plurality of internally undifferentiated cultural blocs is decidedly less attractive. This model

relies, despite loud protestations to the contrary, on a fundamentally privatised, apolitical conception of culture, which is inimical to internal diversity and public contestation – phenomena which may be better sustained by a more traditional liberal concern with individual freedom and toleration(Barry 2001). Furthermore, a misplaced focus on securing esteem recognition for particular cultural practices may in fact fuel a competitive and destructive cultural politics which will undermine integration in the name of securing 'respect' for one's particular 'tradition(MacGinty and duToit 2007).

That said, the multicultural predilection for difference-sensitive institutional solutions is sound, even if the culturalist rationale offered for them is not. While some in Northern Ireland believe that building a common citizenship requires us to resist 'sectarian' measures such as 50/50 police recruitment, or the formal power-sharing arrangements entailed by the GFA, it is clear that a non-culturalist, liberal egalitarian rationale can be offered for these innovations. Indeed, the hope that we could build equal citizenship without monitoring the 'perceived community background of job applicants' or without taking positive steps to increase Catholic recruitment to the PSNI may look suspiciously like a case of well-intentioned people simply wishing the world away. Fortunately, liberal egalitarian political theory can licence justifications for departures from

strict equal treatment which serve to bolster equal opportunities and in doing so,

build confidence in the fairness of shared institutions. The goal of breaking down

the sectarian monoliths does not commit us to an impotent 'difference-blindness'

which is unable to respond to the facts of social division.[9] Having indicated why

both nationalist and multiculturalist models of citizenship fail to address our

central concerns, I want to proceed now to the construction of my two-stage

account of an alternative model of liberal-egalitarian citizenship. This requires

me to outline, firstly, the sort of deliberative/republican model of political

autonomy which will justify the adoption of some of the counter-majoritarian

devices favoured by multiculturalists to protect minorities, while ditching the

idea that we must have our political autonomy mediated by group membership

in any but the weakest sense.

Political Autonomy: the Institutional Basis of Collective Decision-Making

Both nationalist and multiculturalist accounts regard political autonomy as

group mediated, albeit with differing views regarding the institutions required

to allow groups to exercise political autonomy qua groups. I reject this group-

mediated account of political autonomy in favour of an account which is

normatively individualist, although not ontologically atomist(Pettit 1993). What this amounts to is a rejection of populist accounts of democratic rule, which treat institutions as the medium whereby the will of the group is translated into action. Multiculturalism, while pluralist with respect to 'peoples', and counter-majoritarian in outlook, endorses a view which has the same basic structure: democratic institutions are simply instruments for translating the will of the peoples concerned into actions.

The alternative view, endorsed here, is that democratic institutions are constitutive of an authoritative *democratic* will, such that without these institutions there may be social groups, but no collective *will* as such(Habermas 1998). This is not an atomist view which would deny that there are ever *any* collective intentions, but only those of individual agents(Searle 1995). Rather, the point is that while we can assign collective intentions with a relatively high degree of determinacy to relatively small collectives, in tightly circumscribed contexts, concerning relatively simple decisions, the larger the group, and the more complex the intentions the more difficult it will be to identify a unique candidate amongst the range of possible *interpretations* of the collective's will. To that extent, the will must be indeterminate without the sort of formal mechanisms that make a collective will possible. We needn't hesitate to ascribe a

collective intention to a group of students in a seminar room to end early and break for lunch, without going to the trouble of taking a vote, but when a state's budget priorities are at stake, involving all manner of complex trade-offs, then talk of collective intention is essentially empty in the absence of formal decision-making procedures.

In addition to the issue of indeterminacy there is also the legitimacy question: not only must a group have formal institutional mechanisms for turning the intentions of members into a genuinely *collective* will, it must have mechanisms of a particular sort if we are to attach moral weight to the expression of this will. This is to say, that if these mechanisms do not afford each group member a substantively equal opportunity to influence the outcome of the group decision-making process, but rather have a hierarchical character which does not permit equal opportunities to all to influence the outcome of collective deliberation, then we are entitled to discount group claims on the grounds that they are the product of internal inequality, rather than of a freely formed collective will(Cohen 1997).

Groups may resist internal democratisation, of course, and citizens may legitimately opt out of politics, but to the extent that they seek to be political

actors, expressions of collective intentions should be weighted according to the character of their internal deliberations. By this I mean simply, that they will carry less authority in public deliberations in the judgements of those participating. We should be entitled, as deliberators, to discount those expressions of group interest by community figures where we have reason to suppose that the views expressed, are the product of inequality. Without institutions, collective agency is indeterminate, and without the right sort of institutions, i.e. those that give members an equal say in forming that will, we ought not to take the pronouncements of spokesmen as authoritative.[10]

It is, then, the *institutions* of democratic government which make it possible for collections of individuals and/or collections of groups, to have a determinate, collective will that is binding on all. There is no collective will prior to these institutions, rather these are constitutive of the collective political will. This is only binding, however, to the extent that the institutions treat all as equals. We should be clear here that rejecting group mediated political agency does not entail a rejection of groups per se, whatever that might mean, but only of the view that their status as political agents can be taken at face value, or that they must serve as the building blocks of a political theory. Nor does it suppose that political autonomy can be enjoyed by individuals without collective action:

Political autonomy is a public good in the sense that it must be jointly produced. This normatively individualist account of democratic politics neither denies that groups exist, nor that there is such a thing as cultural membership, or situatedness, and it does not treat democratic decision-making simply as a matter of aggregating individual preferences. Political autonomy is a public good produced by individuals acting in concert, who participate in forming a collective will through a process of public reasoning(Pettit 1999).

The normative individualism which stresses the need to guarantee each citizen an equal share of political autonomy also justifies the adoption of measures to promote a more inclusive politics, gender quotas for parliamentary candidates for example(Phillips 1995), but also devices such as the formal power-sharing arrangements set out in the GFA. On the view set out here, these are justified not because people have a fundamental right to govern themselves through their ethnic blocs, but simply in order to protect individual members of minorities from the risk of majority domination. These counter-majoritarian measures are justified not in the name of the value of preserving cultural identity, but rather as devices to guarantee each citizen an equal share of political autonomy. The particular justificatory route adopted is important, however, for the individualist rationale, unlike the culturalist, dictates that institutional designs must also

guard against the risk of supporting 'internal' hierarchies which will stifle cultural contestation and inclusive deliberation(Pettit 1997; Sunstein 2003).

This model of collective decision-making belongs to a family of deliberative conceptions of democracy inasmuch as the interpretation of political autonomy involved includes a conception of public reason, and what Rawls terms, the 'duty of civility', i.e. the obligation on all citizens to refrain from seeking to employ the shared coercive power of the state for private ends(Rawls 1993). To this extent it is at odds with purely aggregative models of political decision-making, which are open to the problem of majority domination(Elster 1997). Legitimate collective decisions follow a process of public reasoning in which unreasonable personal preferences will be exposed as lacking the requisite public justification.(Elster) On its own however, this account appears to be incomplete for by tying the possibility of forming a legitimate collective will to a determinate set of political institutions, it appears to have no way out of the paradox of democratic foundation outlined above: taking democratic institutions themselves to be constitutive of the demos still leaves us without an account of where those boundaries should lie, or rather, without an account of how we might have a democratic politics about the limits of the demos. In what follows, I shall argue

that this problem can be resolved, in theory at least, with reference to a particular conception of recognition, and of the public sphere.

Recognition and Reason: Imagining & Constructing the Public Sphere

A plausible model of deliberative democracy has two components: institutional and recognitional. On the one hand, the ideal of public reasoning needs to be embodied in a set of institutions which make it possible for citizens to form a determinate collective will, while on the other hand, the same ideal of public reason indicates that these institutions should be configured in such a way as to promote the practice of public reasoning. This practice, I suggest, must be thought of as one in which the notion of respect recognition plays a central role(Honneth 1992; Honneth 1995; Fraser and Honneth 2003). To see why this is so, we must reflect on what is involved in public reasoning.

Goodin suggests that we think of public reasoning as having two aspects, an external reflective aspect and an internal reflective component(Goodin 2000). The former refers to the business of reasoning in public as it were, when we engage our fellow citizens in actual dialogue about our common affairs. The latter refers,

by contrast, to the internal dialogue that we all, as deliberating agents, carry on in our minds. Much of the literature on deliberative democracy stresses the external collective aspects of deliberation, seeing it as the kernel of a potentially radical direct democratic challenge to representative institutions, and there is a corresponding suspicion of any stress on the internal reflective aspect of deliberation. This is presumably because internal reflective deliberation can be carried on without any actual collective dialogue taking place at all, so to insist upon its importance may also be to weaken the case for greater direct participation in decision-making. These misgivings are misplaced however, for while it is true that internal reflective deliberation is independent of external collective deliberation, it is also the case that in the right circumstances, external collective deliberation can serve a useful role in correcting flaws in our individual internal deliberations, whether by exposing flaws in our reasoning, correcting errors of fact, or by enlarging our moral imaginations. Here, however, it is the link between the imagination and internal reflective public reasoning that is significant.

It is clear that there are considerable limitations on the scope of external collective deliberation: the number of people with whom we can realistically hope to engage in dialogue of this sort can only ever be extremely limited, even

allowing for the opportunities afforded us by the internet and the emergence of the blog, welcome as these are. What matters, then, Goodin suggests, is that we try to expand citizen's imaginations, such that they can imagine the lives and arguments of others whom they could never hope to meet in their day to day life(Goodin 2000). Of course, this is not just an optional add-on to the business of public reasoning, a theoretical fix to make up for the difficulties posed by mass-society: the imagination *necessarily* plays a central role in public reasoning. When we accept the burdens of public reasoning we undertake to provide reasons for our preferred policies which are in principle acceptable to our fellow citizens, allowing for the fact of reasonable ethical pluralism, and this means that we must imagine ourselves presenting our reasoning before an imagined public that exceeds the range of persons with whom we actually have an opportunity to voice our arguments(McBride 2003). We must consider the interests of those who we may never meet – those not only geographically distant from us, but also those who are *socially* distant, who occupy very different social locations and who live very different lives. Further, we must, of course, not only consider their interests but also seek to engage with the best arguments we can imagine them making against our preferred policy – and not confine ourselves to those arguments which are in fact voiced, which may be flawed in various ways. To do otherwise would be to fail in our obligation to extend equal consideration to the

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interests of those affected and would allow us to exploit inequalities in the distribution of argumentative skills (which are presumably the product of other social inequalities)(Young 2000).

Our reasoning, it is often said, is essentially public, in that for anything to count as a reason, it must be capable of being adopted by another. We can press this point, as O'Neill suggests, to the conclusion that reasoning cannot be limited to particular groups, whether of churches or bodies of citizens but must always be in some sense open to inspection by others – to engage in reasoning then is always to place oneself before the tribunal of reason itself, where it's composition cannot ultimately be limited to an audience of our own choosing(O'Neill 1997). Public reasoning, then, is not simply the reasoning of a particular group of citizens about their common affairs, but is reasoning which can always be overheard so to speak – it becomes available for others to assess, and those who engage in it are obliged to open themselves to the criticism not just of a particular bounded 'public' but to an imagined public which is in principle unlimited.[11] To try to circumscribe the audience of public reasoning, then, is to betray the essentially limitless character of reason, and one's obligations as deliberating agent.

How, then, does this account of the imagined public of public reasoning serve to clarify the problems at hand: the unity of the demos and the possibility of a democratic politics of state-boundaries? With respect to the unity of the demos, it suggests, firstly, that to engage in public reasoning we must extend a certain sort of recognition to those potentially affected by our preferred policies. The duty of civility requires us to take their interests into account, and in so doing, to consider their stated views of these interests. They must, quite simply, *count* as equals in our deliberations. This is clearly an example of respect recognition, the universal recognition we extend to others simply by recognising them as equal members of the moral community(Honneth 1992). The centrality of this mode of recognition to deliberative democratic politics is often obscured by the assumption that recognition is first and foremost a matter of endorsing the self-image of particular cultural groups and/or adopting group-differentiated institutions of various sorts.[12] It is clear however, that public reasoning does not require us to extend this thicker, esteem-based, mode of recognition to others. Rather we are required to respect their right to define themselves as they please, and to *consider their own view of their interests*, even if ultimately we choose to withhold esteem recognition from their particular identity (or aspects thereof) and to discount their stated interpretation of their interests(McBride 2005).

What this means for a divided society like Northern Ireland should now be clear: an egalitarian view of citizenship requires citizens to extend this fundamental form of recognition to those who belong to the alternative community – where this means that those others are to count as genuine equals in deliberation. This is not a matter of endorsing or valuing their *particular* identities but of recognising their right to be counted as part of the projected 'we' of public deliberation, the 'we' to whom one seeks to justify one's arguments. While democratic institutions make a collective *will* possible, it is this act of mutual recognition on the part of deliberating agents which brings a demos, a democratic *people*, into being.[13] A demos is simply the 'we' created by the act of recognition required by public reasoning, and it acquires a will where there are the institutional mechanisms which permit a determinate will to be formed. While citizens may remain highly critical of aspects of each others traditions and culture, and choose to reject arguments made in their name, this is very different from the sort of disregard detailed above in which Irish Nationalists, for example, simply refuse to recognise, i.e. respect, the right of Unionists to define themselves as British. This disregard is aimed at simply excluding difficult problems from one's deliberations, a misrecognition of the other which constrains deliberation, while a critical engagement with the cultural identity of the other can be premised on recognition of the other's right to view themselves

through the particular lens in question, even where this lens is judged to be flawed in some ways – these interpretations are, modified, reconstructed, and sometimes rejected in the process of deliberation, but cannot, consistent with public reasoning, be excluded from deliberation from the outset.

The first key implication of this argument is, firstly, that a functioning deliberative democracy requires a significant recognitional component. Against the culturalist view that the politics of recognition is fundamentally concerned with according esteem to particular cultural identities(Thompson 2003), the view set out here centres on the moment of universalist respect recognition required by the practice of genuinely public, i.e. unrestricted, reasoning. It is this moment of recognition that constitutes the unity of a people, and not some allegedly pre-political ethnic identity. Liberal nationalists advance some way in this direction by seeking to locate nationality in a shared 'public culture' rather than in a pre-political ethnicity. However the liberal nationalist account of public culture fudges the issue of publicity: if it is to be a genuinely nationalist public culture then one must endorse patently absurd nationalist readings of universal values, e.g. that toleration is a *uniquely* British value, while on the other hand, to admit that these values are indeed universal, robs them of their distinctively national flavour(Miller 1995). Liberal nationalists are right, however, to think that a body

of citizens should be bound to one another by a sense of solidarity and not merely by sharing a formal legal status. The argument from recognition through public reasoning indicates that this solidarity takes the form of a civic trust which is sustained through practices of public reasoning, i.e. it is through the conduct of democratic politics that civic trust is built, rather than relying on pre-political aspects of culture or identity(Habermas 1998).[14]

Secondly, it is a clear implication of the view set out here that the demos must inevitably have fuzzy boundaries to the extent that it is an imagined phenomenon, constituted by the sort of recognition required by unrestricted public reasoning. This must appear, at first blush, to be a fatal weakness – it seems to rob the demos of clearly defined boundaries for simply to recognise another as a member of my imagined public seems to include them in the demos. This degree of inclusiveness, however, threatens to rob the notion of the demos of its content and commit us to an implausibly stateless cosmopolitanism.

This should not be surprising – this is an egalitarian view at heart, and as such it must have cosmopolitan implications: we cannot, as egalitarians impose artificial constraints upon the equal consideration of interests. It is inevitable then that our imagined publics must spill over the bounds imposed by actual state borders,

and include many who are not, strictly speaking, our fellow citizens at all. Equally, the same public-expanding recognition seems to work at the sub-state level, extending beyond formal politics to many day to day interactions in which we may find ourselves called upon to consider the interests of others. I take it that these are indeed the implications of the sort of egalitarian view set out here, which requires us to deliberate about the interests of others and in so doing extend respect recognition to them. It points both to cosmopolitanism on the one hand, and towards the democratisation of social relations(Pateman 1970) on the others, and it cannot plausibly be confined to particular states, or to the world of formal politics within given states(Pogge 1992).

Taken together with the institutional component of democratic autonomy however, these potentially disturbing implications may appear less utopian in aspect. We need institutions to make a collective political will possible, to enable us to act in the world. To this extent state-boundaries continue to serve a purpose, and their boundaries will be relatively clear, at least, they will be clear enough to prevent disputes about the jurisdiction of particular collective acts. Our imagined public will always spill over these boundaries, which is as it should be given that the impact of our actions, private and public, will often do so as well. The idea of an unbounded imagined public is, however, compatible

with that of a bounded state to the extent insofar as our public reasoning has two aspects. On the one hand, it is directed towards forming a will, i.e. taking a decision. As such we are obliged in the first instance to confine our deliberations to considering the interests of those potentially affected by the decision in question. This may not only be confined to our particular state, but even to subsets of the citizenry within that state(Goodin 2007). However, even where our deliberations are restricted in this way by the nature of the decision before us, they remain open in the sense that our reasoning is always open to inspection by others not involved in our own particular political process, and must be so if it is to count as reasoning at all. Even where we are not directly affected by decisions taken in other states, we may follow their citizens' deliberations, and adopt views for and against particular positions adopted therein. While, as citizens they may not be obliged to justify themselves to us, as reasoning agents they should not be indifferent to counterarguments and reconstructions, no matter what their source. As deliberating citizens, we form a collective will for a particular state, but our reasoning is always open to all.

Of course, where our actions affect others then we are obliged to take them into consideration in our deliberations, even if they lie beyond our borders. Indeed, we may find that this obligation may be best discharged by establishing

transnational deliberative fora of various sorts to support our deliberations and to make collective problem solving possible with those lying outside the borders of our state. What emerges, on this view, is not a picture of a world-state, but rather of a world of imagined publics which is never wholly coterminous with state boundaries and in which these boundaries themselves may be placed in question *within* a democratic politics which is concerned with determining the appropriate configuration of institutions for coping with the problem at hand. Our guiding principle here is the idea that we need to avoid exclusions which involve those affected by decision-making both within and without existing state borders.

Sometimes this will be a matter of establishing transnational institutions, while in other circumstances, it may be a matter of shifting those borders themselves, to avoid inclusion in arrangements where are our interests are not given due consideration. This latter situation involves secession on the one hand, but also (and this is where the difference with traditional nationalist models of secession becomes clearer) of finding, or better still, building a home, i.e. of constructing a public in which one can participate as an equal. While the traditional nationalist model takes the identity of a people for granted, on this public-reason-centred view, this is too simple, for not only must one ensure that one extends genuine

recognition to everyone within one's current political institutions, but also seek the same recognition beyond one's current borders, from those within one's preferred political destination. This is best understood, not as a matter of simply reuniting a pre-existing people, but of constructing a new public, inclusive of all its potential citizens. The liberal-egalitarian secessionist must engage with the interests both of those who would become a minority under any new arrangements, but also seek to engage the interests of those in the proposed destination state – for there could be no justification for joining a polity in which one's interests would not receive equal consideration. Because public reasoning has a dual aspect, a limited decision oriented aspect and an unrestricted reason-oriented aspect, one can now make sense of the idea of a democratic politics of borders as one which proceeds by enlarging the public through engaging the deliberative imagination of all those concerned, regardless of where they stand with respect to current state boundaries. The goal of such a politics is not to align borders with ethnicities, but to align borders such that those already participating in the informal public deliberations of a given state can participate fully in its collective *decision*-making. Whether constructing transnational deliberative fora, or opting to secede from and/or unite with existing states, the guiding principle is given by the idea of political autonomy – the right to participate as an equal in deliberations about the decisions which affect one's life.

The logical conundrum of the boundary problem is not solved – decisions cannot but be taken within existing democratic institutions, but it can be handled, and it should be clear now that democratic theory has at its disposal, non-nationalist, public reason centred resources to guide how we might handle a democratic politics about state boundaries.

Conclusion

How might we think of such a politics proceeding in a Northern Ireland context? Firstly, to the extent that Nationalist and Unionists seek to pursue their political projects consistent, broadly speaking, with a liberal egalitarian outlook, then each must take, as its first priority, the development of the 'internal' recognitional component of democracy. While the GFA has provided a set of formal power-sharing institutions apparently capable of ensuring equal political autonomy, what clearly remains is to strengthen the informal, attitudinal component of public reasoning, which is necessary if democratic politics is to be conducted within Northern Ireland. This will not be a matter of forging a national identity as a precondition of democratic politics, but of engaging in genuine public reasoning in which participants expand their democratic imaginations in order to

genuinely include others as equals in their deliberations rather than excluding them from the outset through misrecognition and caricature. Through the practice of unrestricted public reasoning, then, a demos may be forged. While such a demos may not share a national *identity* – the common citizenship to be constructed here is built on the inclusiveness of public reasoning, and not by pre-political identities - it would, however possess the *unity* proper to a democratic people.

Of course, both Nationalists and Unionists have ambitions that extend beyond Northern Ireland, albeit in different directions. Clearly, the liberal egalitarian cannot offer a determinate answer to whether Northern Ireland ought, as a matter of justice, to be British or Irish. In this respect, however, the liberal egalitarian is, of course, no worse off than the nationalist. The position sketched here can, though, offer some guidance on how each project may legitimately proceed. Firstly, it is clear that the disastrous politics of anglo or of hiberno-phobia have no place in this picture. To insist that Britain or Ireland are foreign countries whose affairs are of absolutely no concern to one or other community within Northern Ireland is an absurd position which ignores the complexity of interactions between these states. Regardless, then of the ultimate constitutional outcome of Northern Irish politics, the sort of trans-national/cross-regional

institutions established under the GFA are likely to be permanent features of the political landscape, as would be required by the all-affected principle (these institutions are nested, of course, within a larger European context of similarly overlapping jurisdictions).

On the view adopted here, we must be sceptical too of attempts to represent solutions such as joint British-Irish sovereignty over Northern Ireland as required by *justice*. On a culturalist view, whether nationalist or multiculturalist, we might, for example, suppose that, if cultural groups possess a basic right to self-determination as groups, then a fair solution would be one which simply awards joint-sovereignty over Northern Ireland to British and Irish Governments, rendering it both British and Irish territory. This rationale for joint-sovereignty can remain silent, of course, on the question of internal democracy within Northern Ireland, being compatible, for example with allowing citizens to exercise their rights to political autonomy through participation in Irish or British elections without recognising any need for cross-community deliberation within Northern Ireland. This rationale also supposes that a solution may be effected which can leave Nationalist and Unionist identities and traditions entirely untouched. It is difficult to see how this might serve as the basis for overcoming social division and building the practices of

public reasoning required for stable democratic politics within Northern Ireland. While deeply implausible, this rationale for joint sovereignty is entirely consistent with the apolitical view of cultural identity central to the culturalist outlook. This is not at all to say, however, that joint-sovereignty is not a legitimate option – my criticism centres only on the culturalist rationale which may be offered for it. Indeed, not only is it legitimate, it may even turn out to be a solution acceptable to both Nationalists and Unionists in the long run, but the rationale for judging this solution to be legitimate is, on my account, a matter of the extent to which it facilitates democratic government, and not the symmetry such a solution possesses with respect to Irish and British identities.

In principle, the traditional alternatives, belonging to a unitary state, British or Irish, may also be legitimate options however difficult they may be to achieve in practice. In this case the task for Nationalists and Unionists is first to build robustly inclusive practices of public reasoning within Northern Ireland, but then to build Northern Irish concerns into the public imaginations of the larger polity – whether Irish or British. For Nationalists, this will be a matter of building Northern Ireland into the public imagination of the Republic, as a part of the project of persuading Unionists that their interests will be given equal consideration within any future united Ireland, a move that will obviously

require some transformation both within the public imaginations of both Northern Nationalists and the Southern citizens. For Unionists, a similarly dual aspect approach will be needed in order to assure Nationalists that their interests may be given equal consideration within the existing institutions.

This may seem to hand Unionists a clear advantage in that they need only defend the status quo, but this overlooks a key problem for Unionists – not only must they overcome Nationalist distrust, but building Northern Ireland into the public imagination of the wider UK will be an uphill struggle in the face of the indifference and often ignorance of the wider British public concerning Northern Ireland. To the extent that Northern Ireland is on the margins of the larger British public imagination it will be difficult to claim that Northern Irish interests receive equal consideration within the UK. Equally, Nationalists should not underestimate the resistance of many in the Republic to getting more closely involved in the affairs of Northern Ireland. While Northern Ireland is much more central to the political imagination of the Republic than it is to that of the wider UK, it is also the case that many Northern Nationalists are more closely engaged in the public affairs of the UK, than in those of the Republic(O'Connor 1993)347.[15]

Of course, pursuing these projects in the manner suggested here, rather than through the traditional nationalist politics of identity assertion and mutual misrecognition, will be risky for both Nationalists and Unionists. To the extent that inclusive deliberation takes hold, the distinctiveness of each community's identity will be lessened, or at least, the salience of these differences, raising the prospect that each may be more easily assimilated into the other's preferred destination. Whether this makes Nationalist or Unionist projects more easily realisable, or whether, as is perhaps more likely, this simply facilitates the development of some sort of institutionally complex deliberative arrangements short of inclusion in either a British or an Irish nation-state, is a matter for speculation, but what is clear is that in contrast to the traditional nationalist conception of popular sovereignty, the theory advanced here can recognise all of the above as legitimate possible outcomes, provided that each were to embody sufficiently robust practices of public reasoning.

What this argument will have shown however, is that an egalitarian theory does have something useful to say about the unity of democratic peoples which is neither unhelpfully utopian, nor resigned to presupposing the status-quo. It can conceive of a democratic politics which can make the limits of the demos a subject for democratic deliberation, and offer guidance on how this politics

might legitimately be pursued. That existing states did not begin as democracies is not ultimately an insuperable logical or practical obstacle to their democratisation, and democrats need not be embarrassed at the apparent 'incompleteness' of democratic theory provided this theory can offer guidance on how best to proceed in the world in which we find ourselves. Rather than make identity the goal, or equally, the presupposition, of democratic politics, it takes the unity of a people, and the limits of a democracy to be internal to democratic politics itself, and to that extent open and unfinishable, like the democratic conversation itself.

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[1] Following Barry, I reject the term 'neutralism', preferring 'impartialist' for the reason that policies issuing from impartialist procedures do not have to be 'neutral' in their effects.

[2] Irish citizens have always been entitled to vote in UK general elections, for example, although this is a product of legal anomalies in the process of the Republic becoming independent rather than an expression of an explicit commitment to a strong model of inclusive citizenship. The Republic, for its part, now permits UK citizens to vote in elections, by way of reciprocating. It is clearly not unthinkable that EU citizens more generally will in time come to enjoy full voting rights in all member states. While the current practice then, is mixed, the idea that the national component of citizenship might be further sidelined, is not utopian.

[3] That said, it is important to note the lack of symmetry between the primarily political interpretation of the conflict adopted by Irish Nationalists, and the more religiously inflected interpretation adopted amongst the Protestant, Unionist community. This lack of symmetry in interpretations of the nature of the conflict itself is directly related to the problem of misrecognition explored here.

[4] Tamir's attempt to reconcile Palestinian and Israeli rights to national self-determination within the state of Israel conspicuously fails to offer the Palestinians an *equal* right to national self-determination.

[5] This is clearly reflected in the division within unionism on whether to pursue an integrationist strategy, or a devolutionist, 'Northern Ireland nationalist' line.

[6] Whether the devolutionist politics of the DUP will increasingly take on a civic character and relinquish its traditionally more loyalist flavour as the longer participation in power-sharing is sustained, remains to be seen.

[7] The leading exponents of civic unionism, the UUP have, until very recently, been institutionally linked to the Orange Order (a tie broken by the Order in the end, rather than by the UUP). A similar confusion of British and Protestant identity surrounds the issue of marching, and the almost certainly doomed attempts to rebrand the 12th of July celebrations as 'Orangefest'.

[8] This contradictory tendency is clearest in Sinn Fein, which combines both a traditional Gaelic cultural Irishness, evident in its extensive use of (often halting) Irish in its public pronouncements, with an official commitment to a secular tradition of Enlightenment republicanism, with strong internationalist elements. On the unionist side of the house the picture is less clear-cut, with Orangeism providing the central cultural element of Northern Irish British identity. The development of an interest in an the Ulster-Scots identity and language is a

curious attempt to mimic the apparent success of the Gaelic revival in nationalism, but may prove less resistant to assimilation than its proponents believe. To the extent that the cultural component of unionism becomes focused on language and folk-dancing, and less on a commitment to the state-centred Whig nationalism of Protestant Succession then it will be easier to assimilate within a culturally pluralist Irish nationalism.

[9] Responding to the facts, of course, should not mean capitulation to sectarianism however: institutional design is a complex affair and will necessitate hard choices about trade-offs between values. Provided these are frankly acknowledged, we may hope, however, to build features into our institutions which can at least mitigate possible costs.

[10] 'Discounting' as I call it here, is an essential feature of any piece of deliberation in which we must weigh a complex array of considerations, and assessments of the credibility or representativeness of spokesmen is, of course, just one of the criteria we apply in this process.

[11] O'Neill notes that Rawls takes a bounded, Rousseauian view of the public reason as the reason of a given body of citizens, and regards this as presupposition of public reason. The view adopted here, follows the Kantian view set out by O'Neill, which views any such restriction as incompatible with genuine public reasoning. Contra Rawls, it is the practice of public reasoning that constitutes a people, through the mutual recognition involved.

[12] I argue in McB (EJPT – forthcoming) that the logic of esteem recognition actually tends to have the opposite effect – a view borne out in the Northern Ireland context by MacGinty & du Toit.

[13] My thinking here has been clarified by a paper on collective intentionality by Blain Neufeld (RIA presentation, 2006).

[14] As Hardin (2006) points out, it is trustworthiness that is valuable, and not trust per se. We may tend to trust people who share features of our identity or culture, but to the extent that the practice of public reasoning can be sustained in the conduct of everyday politics, it serves to make manifest the *trustworthiness* required to forge a common citizenship out of a divided society.

[15] Sinn Fein's failure to make further electoral advances in the recent election in the Republic has been plausibly attributed to misjudgements on the part of party strategists about the concerns of the Republic's citizens, and in particular, an overestimation of the importance of Northern Irish affairs to the Republic's politics.