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Republican Nationalism: Nations, Cultures, and Politics

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Graduate Program in Political Science

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This project deals with the ongoing importance of nations, cultures, and politics in the modern world, and with the complex and layered relationships between them. Despite the expanding phenomenon of globalization, which promises to open up borders and tear down the boundaries between peoples, nations remain the most important actors in international politics and nationalism continues to be a potent force throughout the world. This project explores the significance of nations and cultures for politics, with special emphasis on the importance of nationalism and nationalist theory in the twenty-first century. I argue that there are significant gaps in the literature on republican political theory and on nationalism, and I address these gaps by turning to the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau's philosophy uniquely combines nationalism with republican citizenship and participatory democracy, and his perspective shares many commonalities with David Miller, a contemporary nationalist thinker who combines the principle of nationality with republican citizenship. I argue that the theories of Rousseau and Miller form the foundations of republican nationalism; a unique strand of nationalist theory that is distinct from other perspectives—and from liberal nationalism in particular—and should be treated as separate in the literature. I seek to develop republican nationalism as a theoretical framework that looks at the major questions in the literature from a novel perspective and provides new solutions to some of the discipline's most persistent problems. By identifying republican nationalism as an approach that is firmly rooted in the wider traditions of republicanism and nationalism, and by demonstrating that this approach is distinct from liberal nationalism and other alternative perspectives, I hope to make valuable contributions to the literature and help move the debate within nationalist theory forward. I conclude by emphasizing the continuing relevance of nations, cultures, and politics in the modern world, and by stressing that nationalism is likely to remain a potent force in world affairs. For this reason, it is still as crucial as ever to treat nations and nationalism as serious subjects of academic study, and to keep the debates currently taking place within nationalist theory moving forward.

Keywords

Nations, Nationalism, Culture, Politics, Citizenship, Democracy, Participation, Rousseau, Republicanism, Republican Nationalism

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Dr. Charles Jones for his thoughtful supervision and guidance throughout the project, and for his virtually endless patience in helping me work through some of the more difficult theoretical problems. I would also like to thank Drs. Richard Vernon and Douglas Long for their help, advice, and encouragement during the critical early stages of the project. I want to acknowledge the financial support that this project received through the University of Western Ontario Ph.D. Funding Package and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) Program. I must also mention Drs. Leah Bradshaw and William Mathie of Brock University, who first kindled my love for political philosophy during my undergraduate and MA studies. I am extremely grateful to my friends and family for their constant support and encouragement throughout my educational journey, including my mother Snežana, my father Srećko, my brother Igor, my fiancée Stephanie, and my friends Michael Shelton, Miloš Kovač, Nate Anderson, Bojan Mandić, and Martina Tepavčević, among others. Finally, I want to thank my grandparents, Dušan and Milka Obradović, without whose loving care this project, and every other project, would have been impossible.

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Preface

This project deals with the continuing importance of nations, cultures, and politics in the modern world, and with the complex and layered relationships between them. Despite the expanding phenomenon of globalization, which promises to open up borders and tear down the boundaries between peoples, nations remain the most important actors in international politics and nationalism continues to be a potent force throughout the world. Between separatist movements in places like Quebec and Catalonia, the Kurdish struggle for a national homeland and its implications for the already complex situation in the Middle East, and the international tensions between powerful nations such as China and Japan, the concept of “the nation” and the ideas and beliefs that accompany it still exercise immense influence over real-world actions and decisions. This project explores the continuing relevance of nations and cultures for politics, with special emphasis on the importance of nationalism and nationalist theory in the twenty-first century.

Much has been written about nations and nationalism, and about the meaning of these ideas for citizenship and democracy. Major questions on the subject include: Is nationalism compatible with democracy, or do nationalist movements naturally gravitate towards authoritarianism? Is nationalism inherently chauvinistic, or is it possible for nationalists to reject militarism and endorse equal respect for other nations (and for minorities within their own nations)? Can we keep matters of culture and nationality from biasing the political process, or does politics always involve cultural and national elements? Does national belonging still hold any value in the modern world, and is the value of political participation intrinsic or instrumental? Moreover, could it be that the nation-state is already an outdated concept, soon to be replaced by larger supranational bodies such as the European Union (EU)? I tackle these familiar and much debated questions from a fresh perspective by introducing a new theoretical approach which I call republican nationalism.

Republican nationalism is rooted in the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who is a central figure for this project because of his status as an influential thinker of the republican political tradition and the father of modern nationalism. I argue that Rousseau’s philosophy has been largely neglected in much of the contemporary literature on republicanism and nationalism, and this has left both traditions with significant theoretical gaps. Rousseau’s

approach uniquely combines nationalism with republican citizenship and participatory democracy, and a closer study of his work provides valuable insight into these important concepts. The second central figure for this project is David Miller, a contemporary nationalist thinker who attempts to combine the principle of nationality with republican citizenship in a way that shares many parallels with Rousseau. I argue that the works of Rousseau and Miller form the foundations of republican nationalism, a unique strand of nationalist theory that is distinct enough from other perspectives—and from liberal nationalism in particular—to be treated as separate in the literature.

My goal is to develop republican nationalism as a theoretical framework that looks at the major questions in the literature from a novel perspective and provides unique solutions to many of the problems posed. I hope that by identifying republican nationalism as an approach that is firmly rooted in the theoretical traditions of republicanism and nationalism, and by demonstrating that this approach is distinct from liberal nationalism and other alternative perspectives, I will be able to make valuable contributions to the literature and help move the debate within nationalist theory forward. More research will be needed to develop republican nationalism into the kind of serious approach to political decision-making that liberal nationalism has become thanks to the groundbreaking work of liberal thinkers like Yael Tamir and Will Kymlicka. Nevertheless, I hope that this project will serve as an important first step in that direction by establishing republican nationalism as a distinct and defensible theoretical framework.

Chapter 1 deals with nations and nationalisms; it provides working definitions for “nation,” “nationalism,” and “nationalist theory” and gives an overview of the main debates that have been taking place within nationalist theory over the past several decades. The chapter identifies three distinct approaches to nationalism: ethnic nationalism, civic nationalism, and cultural nationalism. The debate between civic and ethnic nationalism had been the focus of nationalist scholarship for many years, but more recently many nationalist thinkers have argued that the civic vs. ethnic divide is misleading because all nationalisms have a fundamental cultural component. Cultural nationalism appears to be the framework within which the debate in nationalist theory is currently taking place, but there is still a great deal of diversity between theorists who identify as cultural nationalists. Liberal nationalism is

the most prominent strand of cultural nationalism, but I argue that the writings of Rousseau and Miller point towards a distinct republican alternative.

Because of the crucial role that republican political theory plays in developing the concept of republican nationalism, Chapter 2 looks at the historical development of republicanism. By identifying the major thinkers in the tradition and the distinct strands of republicanism that have emerged over time, I hope to demonstrate that there is a significant gap in the literature on republicanism concerning the role that culture and nationality play in politics. While the contemporary debate in republican political theory has largely been taking place between instrumental republicans on the one hand and civic humanists on the other, I argue that there is a third strand of republican theory rooted in the works of Rousseau, who makes an intrinsic connection between the national culture and participatory democracy. Rousseau's cultural approach to republicanism has been largely neglected by contemporary republican thinkers, but it offers valuable insights into the important connection between culture and politics, and between nationalism and democracy.

Due to Rousseau's central importance for both republican and nationalist theory, Chapters 3 & 4 take an in-depth look at his philosophy. Chapter 3 considers the significant contributions that Rousseau has made to republicanism, while Chapter 4 argues that Rousseau's philosophy is fundamentally distinct from liberalism and cannot be subsumed under the wider liberal umbrella (as thinkers like Joshua Cohen have attempted to do). I contend that Rousseau is both a distinctly republican thinker and the founder of modern nationalism; the fundamental connection that he makes between republicanism and nationalism points towards a distinct strand of nationalist theory that I call republican nationalism.

Chapter 5 defines the concept of republican nationalism through a comparison of Rousseau's writings and the works of David Miller. While there are notable differences between the two, Rousseau and Miller embark on very similar projects; in fact, I argue that Miller accepts the fundamentals of Rousseau's republicanism, and that his theory amounts to a sophisticated attempt to modernize Rousseau's philosophy. Chapter 6 contrasts the liberal nationalism of Yael Tamir and Will Kymlicka with republican nationalism. I aim to show that the two approaches are sufficiently distinct to warrant separate classifications within

nationalist theory, and I identify six major differences between liberal and republican nationalism in order to illustrate this point.

The final chapter (Chapter 7) restates my main claims and arguments, considers the contributions that this project has made to the literature on republicanism and nationalism, and addresses some important questions that proponents of republican nationalism will have to grapple with in the future. I conclude by emphasizing the continuing relevance of nations, cultures, and politics in the modern world, and by stressing that nationalism is likely to remain a potent force in world affairs for the foreseeable future. For this reason, it is still as crucial as ever to treat nations and nationalism as serious subjects of academic study, and to keep the debates currently taking place within nationalist theory moving forward.

Chapter 1

1 Nations and Nationalism

Our contemporary understanding of the “nation” and consequently of “nationalism” developed as part of a complex and often turbulent process that took place over many centuries. Historically nationalism has taken on a variety of diverse forms, from left-wing emancipatory and anti-colonial nationalism to imperialist chauvinism and fascism. While some aspects of nationalist theory can be said to date back to antiquity, other aspects appear to be quintessentially modern. These and others circumstances have made it difficult and often controversial to theorize about nationalism and its implications, and the word itself continues to have different meanings to different people. In this chapter, I consider the continuing relevance of nationalism in the modern world, and I identify three primary theoretical frameworks within nationalist theory: 1) ethnic nationalism, 2) civic nationalism, and 3) cultural nationalism. Ethnic nationalism presupposes a common national identity based on ethnic ties, while civic nationalism postulates a civic commitment to common political principles, practices, and institutions. Neither purely civic nor strictly ethnic, cultural nationalism presupposes a common public culture that is not defined by ethnic ties and yet requires more than a civic commitment to common principles and practices. Cultural nationalism emphasizes the importance of a common public culture for nations and their citizens; these citizens need not belong to any particular ethnic, religious, or tribal group, but they do need to accept a set of shared traditions, moral commitments, and responsibilities within the political community. Ultimately, this chapter argues that cultural nationalism is the framework within which the current debate about nationalist theory is taking place. I aim to clarify the terms of this debate, and I argue that nationalism remains a potent force in the twenty-first century.

1.1 What Is a Nation?

In *On Nationality*, David Miller identifies five elements that distinguish nationality from other collective sources of identity. These are: 1) national communities are constituted by belief; their existence depends on a shared belief that its members

belong together and on the common desire of those members to continue living together in the future. 2) A nation is an identity that embodies historical continuity; the nation is a unique form of association because it stretches backwards in the past and forwards in the future, forming a distinct community of obligation between us, our ancestors, and our descendants. 3) National identity is an active identity; national communities actively work together to make decisions, achieve goals, and so on. 4) National identity connects a group of people to a specific geographical location; every nation has a homeland and either is or aspires to become a political community. 5) National identity demands that the individuals who share it have something in common. Miller defines this commonality as a set of characteristics that constitute a common public culture; this public culture goes beyond mere political principles and represents a shared understanding about how a group of people should conduct their life together. A common public culture should not be so all-embracing that it destroys private subcultures, but it should have substantial content and meaning for members of the national community.¹ These five elements are helpful to keep in mind when considering what constitutes a nation, and how the nation differs from other forms of group association.

As human beings we are social creatures who live almost exclusively in communities of some type, and the bonds that are created within these communities often translate into a powerful sense of allegiance and belonging. It is nearly impossible to imagine the individual as being completely independent of his communal context, and it would be impossible to reduce human beings to atomistic individuals who exist prior to society. As Neil MacCormick observes, “the truth about human beings is that they can only become individuals—acquire a sense of their own individuality—as a result of their social experiences within human communities. Thus ‘the individual’ is as much a product of ‘society’ as vice versa. Even political individualism is a program for *social* organization.”² With this in mind, it is clear that studying the nation as one of the most

¹ David Miller, *On Nationality*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 22-27.

² Neil MacCormick, “Nation and Nationalism,” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 189.

powerful forms of social organization in the modern world is an essential component of studying human beings in general.

It is important not to confuse the nation with the state. According to Miller, the “nation” is a community of people with an *aspiration* for political self-determination, whereas the “state” refers to the set of political institutions that the nation seeks to establish for itself.³ On the one hand, states are seen as legalistic and largely procedural entities which, to paraphrase Max Weber, have a monopoly over the legitimate use of force within their sovereign territory and seek to uphold laws and protect their citizens from harm. On the other hand, to paraphrase Ernest Renan, nations refer to cultural communities constituted by a form of popular consciousness rather than legal procedures, including a shared sense of a common past and a present will to live together. It is also important to differentiate between nationality and ethnicity: there are nations which have been formed by a single and largely homogeneous ethnic group (e.g. Japan), and there are also nations which were formed out of many different ethnic groups (e.g. United States, Canada, and even France).⁴ As Neil MacCormick points out,

A nation is constituted by a relatively large grouping of people who conceive themselves to have a communal past, including shared sufferings and shared achievements, from which past is derived a common culture that represents a form of cultural continuity uniting past and present and capable of being projected into the future. This continuity is not a static one, but is in a sense “organic.” The common culture, the common way of doing and living, the common language (though nations need not be identified with a single language, e.g., Switzerland), have changed over time, but the changes occur within and make sense within an uninterrupted tradition, and stem from each generation’s own choices, as distinct from having been imposed *ab extra*.⁵

Benedict Anderson famously argued that nations are “imagined communities” constituted by a group of people who see themselves as members of a particular national community

³ Miller, *On Nationality*, 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵ MacCormick, “Nation and Nationalism,” 191.

sharing a common history.⁶ Their understanding of this common history may include unsubstantiated myths and fictitious accounts of historical events, but this does not take away from the fact that the people in question hold these myths as important aspects of a common history and tradition. Out of this tradition emerge a shared consciousness and a sense of common identity that play a real and important part in the lives of the members of a national community.⁷ Although nations may be imagined communities and although they may often be grounded in less than accurate historical accounts, they are real because they exist in the shared consciousness of their members and play a significant role in the lives of those members. Every single day crucially important decisions with major practical consequences are made based on our understanding of nations, both our own nation and other nations which coexist alongside our own on the world stage. Though nations may exist only in our consciousness, this consciousness still shapes our actions and behaviours in meaningful ways. This means that nations and the complex issues that surround them are and continue to be a part of our common reality.

1.2 What Is Nationalism?

In *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Liah Greenfeld defines nationalism as a source of individual identity that is located within a “people,” seen as the bearer of sovereignty, the central object of loyalty, and the basis of collective solidarity.⁸ Greenfeld believes that nationalism forms the basis of the modern world, and she uses the word as an umbrella term which includes the related phenomena of national identity (or nationality) and consciousness, and collectivities based on these phenomena; i.e. nations. Occasionally nationalism refers to the articulate ideology on which national identity and consciousness rest, but nationalism is not necessarily a form of particularism. Nationalism “is a political ideology (or a class of political ideologies deriving from the

⁶ See: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (Revised Edition)*, (London & New York: Verso, 2006).

⁷ MacCormick, “Nation and Nationalism,” 192.

⁸ Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 3.

same basic principle), and as such it does not have to be identified with any particular community. A nation coextensive with humanity is in no way a contradiction in terms.”⁹ The concept of a nation coextensive with humanity is certainly controversial within nationalist circles, but it speaks to the diversity of views that proponents of nationalism hold. On the one hand, the nation might refer to a *sovereign people*, which presupposes a political ideology that is not necessarily particularistic and is in fact inherently linked to democracy. On the other, the nation might also refer to a *unique people*, which is a particularistic conception and has the potential to become authoritarian. Nevertheless, Greenfeld emphasizes that nationalism was the form in which democracy first appeared in the world (embodied in the idea of the people as bearers of sovereignty); as such, nationalism originally developed *as* democracy. In fact, democracy and nationalism are “inherently linked, and neither can be fully understood apart from this connection.”¹⁰ Greenfeld’s major point is that nationalism *defines* modernity, and that the idea of the “nation” forms the constitutive element of modernity. As such, modernity is defined by nationalism, and not the other way around.¹¹ National identity preceded the formation of nations (the nation is a pre-political community), and it is nationalism which has made the modern world, politically, what it is today.¹² These are important points, and we will return to them often in the coming chapters. In the following section, I consider the importance of nationalist theory, its development and contemporary relevance.

1.3 What Is Nationalist Theory?

Nationalism can be understood as a system of ideas and beliefs that places a high value on one’s attachments to the nation and national community. Some thinkers argue that nationalism does not qualify as a distinct ideology, and critics are skeptical about any form of nationalism being compatible with democratic values. According to Charles

⁹ Ibid, 7.

¹⁰ Ibid, 10.

¹¹ Ibid, 18.

¹² Ibid, 21.

Taylor, however, critics of nationalism fail to adequately explain where nationalism gets its moral thrust.¹³ Nationalism can foster a strong sense of solidarity between elites and non-elites, rich and poor, peasants and intelligentsia; this is a real and politically significant solidarity based in common nationality. Before the 18th century, society was largely hierarchical and being a part of society meant belonging to a very specific segment of it, such as being part of a guild or being subject to a Lord. And yet today, “I stand, alongside all my fellow citizens, in direct relationship to the state that is the object of our common allegiance.”¹⁴ This is an important point, and it speaks to the continuing relevance of nationalism in the modern world. Having survived both communism and imperialism, and in spite of globalization and the recent push towards supranational organizations such as the EU, the nation-state remains the primary mode of political organization in the modern world, and common nationality is perhaps the strongest unifying force among human beings.

Benedict Anderson states that “unlike most other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers: No Hobbes, Tocquevilles, Marxes, or Webers.”¹⁵ Ronald Beiner believes that this is in part because unlike other theories, nationalism is concerned with the particular: with distinct national contexts which shape each nation’s unique worldview. The particular circumstances of any given nation are often (though not always) so unique that they cannot be generalized into universal principles. The question is whether we can construct a general account of obligations, rights, and prohibitions that apply to all cases of nationalism, or whether different nationalisms are so diverse and embedded within their own particular contexts that all attempts to generalize them are futile.¹⁶ Furthermore, nationalism is an extremely diverse theoretical framework with many different strands. Historically, nationalist movements pushing for independence

¹³ Charles Taylor, “Nationalism and Modernity,” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 223.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5.

¹⁶ Yael Tamir, “Theoretical Difficulties in the Study of Nationalism,” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 68.

from imperial and colonial powers have often been decisively left-wing, but the extreme right-wing and fascist movements of the interwar period have also claimed a nationalist legacy. As a result, nationalist claims are often viewed with suspicion, and theorists of nationalism are forced to be on the defensive. Moderate forms of nationalism are dismissed by critics as not constituting “real” nationalism, whereas “real” nationalism is immediately labeled as harmful and dangerous.¹⁷ In fact, the excesses of some self-proclaimed nationalist movements have prompted critics to dismiss the very idea of nationalism as a return to a primitive and pre-modern tribalism which has no place in the modern world. Consequently, the question of whether nationalism is a modern or pre-modern idea has been the subject of intense debate over the last several decades. I already mentioned Greenfeld’s take on the issue, but another compelling answer is provided by Miller, who states that our sense of nationality is both modern *and* pre-modern; while the sense of kinship and belonging to a community is not a modern idea, what is modern and distinctive about nationalism is the idea of a body of people capable of acting collectively and of conferring authority on political institutions. According to Miller,

Ideas of national characters and so forth were of long-standing. What is new is the belief that nations can be regarded as active political agents, the bearers of the ultimate power of sovereignty. This in turn was connected to a new way of thinking about politics, the idea that institutions and policies could be seen as somehow expressing a popular national will.¹⁸

Nevertheless, nationalism continues to be portrayed by critics as too sentimental, chaotic, and irrational to form a cohesive theoretical framework. For some, nationalism represents an emotional force that subverts reason and rational thinking, which makes it incompatible with Enlightenment values and therefore dangerous.¹⁹ Proponents of nationalism, including those attempting to construct a defensible academic theory of nationalism, must answer this criticism.

¹⁷ Ibid., 71.

¹⁸ Miller, *On Nationality*, 30-31.

¹⁹ Tamir, “Theoretical Difficulties in the Study of Nationalism,” 69.

Yael Tamir argues that defensible theories of nationalism can in fact be constructed, and urges more scholars to contribute to the project.²⁰ She states that:

A theory of nationalism must structure itself independently of all contingencies. Its basis must be a systematic view of human nature and of the world order, as well as a coherent set of universally applicable values... [A] theory of nationalism, like all other political theories, must be constructed in the abstract but cannot be implemented outside of a particular context.²¹

According to Tamir, a theory of nationalism will include a particular set of descriptive statements followed by normative claims focusing on the moral, social, and psychological importance of national and cultural membership, which will in turn be followed by an inventory of the means necessary to preserve it. The major points on which nationalist theorists will disagree are: the nature of the relationship between the nation and its individual members, the normative justifications for the existence of the nation, and the political goals and aspirations that nationalism supports.²² Wayne Norman agrees that there is a need to theorize nationalism, arguing that philosophers have an important role to play in shaping nationalist studies in general. According to Norman, “a normative theory of nationalism should be concerned with the nature of national identities, the political attempts to forge them, the rhetoric and ideologies that are used in such attempts, and the principles nationalists use to justify these kinds of politics; among other things.”²³ It is worth repeating that although nationalism is often referred to as “by far the most potent ideology in the world,” it is also considered the only major political ideology without a great theorist of its own. Anderson points out that the theorists of nationalism are often puzzled by the discrepancy between the political power and vitality of nationalism and its relative philosophical poverty and even incoherence.²⁴ As

²⁰ Ibid., 68.

²¹ Ibid., 82.

²² Ibid., 84.

²³ Wayne Norman, “Theorizing Nationalism (Normatively),” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 57.

²⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 5.

previously mentioned, Anderson claims that nationalism never produced its own grand thinker such as Hobbes, Tocqueville, Marx, or Weber. Norman expands this list, adding Rousseau, Kant, and Rawls to the list of theorists whose equivalent nationalist theory lacks. While I support the call to develop nationalist theory into a more cohesive theoretical framework, I disagree with the claim that nationalism lacks its own great theorist. In the coming chapters I will argue that Jean-Jacques Rousseau is in fact the grand thinker of nationalist theory and the father of modern nationalism. I also suggest that Rousseau's political philosophy forms the basis of a distinct *republican* strand of nationalist theory which merits closer academic consideration in the future.

1.4 Civic vs. Ethnic Nationalism

For many years the central conflict within nationalist theory had been the debate between civic and ethnic nationalism. Michael Ignatieff defines civic nationalism as the belief “that the nation should be composed of all those—regardless of race, color, creed, gender, language, or ethnicity—who subscribe to the nation’s political creed,” and he understands the civic nation to be “a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values.”²⁵ According to Ignatieff, the civic nation is a community created by the free choice of individuals to come together in order to uphold particular political values and practices. Civic nationalism is based on the freely given consent of each member of the nation and it looks at national belonging as a form of rational attachment. Civic nationalism is distinct from ethnic nationalism, which holds that our deepest attachments are inherited rather than chosen, and that the national community defines the individual rather than the other way around.²⁶ In this context, civic nationalism was portrayed as the “good” and “rational” type of nationalism found in Western liberal democracies, whereas ethnic nationalism was dismissed as the “bad” and “dangerous” type of nationalism prevalent in non-Western states. The implication was that civic nationalism as defined by such

²⁵ Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*, (London: BBC Books, 1993), 6.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 7-8.

thinkers as Ignatieff and John Plamenatz constitutes the only defensible form of nationalism, whereas all other forms of nationalism were automatically seen as irrational and undesirable (ethnic, Eastern, dangerous).²⁷

David Miller, Bernard Yack, Yael Tamir, and Will Kymlicka, among others, challenge the rather simplistic claim that Western nations embrace civic nationalism (which is good) while Eastern nations embrace ethnic nationalism (which is bad). Yack states: “the characterization of political community in the so-called civic nations as a rational and freely chosen allegiance to a set of political principles seems untenable to me, a mixture of self-congratulation and wishful thinking.”²⁸ This is because all collective identities are in a constant process of development and interpretation, and even if collective identities such as American, Canadian, or French are merely sites for controversy and construction (as opposed to pre-determined and static identities), these sites themselves are cultural artifacts that are inherited from previous generations. The purely civic nation is a myth, because every nation consists of a contingent inheritance of distinctive experiences and cultural memories that represent an inseparable part of its national identity. Western nations such as the United States, Canada, and France are not merely voluntary associations made up of individuals who are interested in upholding certain political principles. Political loyalty cannot be reduced to a random association of individuals held together exclusively by particular political values and practices because every nation constitutes a *pre-political* community with a cultural “horizon” of shared historical experiences and cultural memories.²⁹ Furthermore, the purely ethnic nation is also a myth, because it implies that national identity is constant and unchanging and that members of the nation have no choice or input in the shaping of their national identity.

²⁷ See also: John Plamenatz, “Two Types of Nationalism,” in *Nationalism: the Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, edited by Eugene Kamenka (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973), 23-36.

²⁸ Bernard Yack, “The Myth of the Civic Nation,” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 105.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

Commenting on Ernest Renan's famous statement that the nation is a "daily plebiscite," Yack states:

The nation may be a daily plebiscite for Renan, but the subject of that plebiscite is what we will do with the mix of competing symbols and stories that make up our cultural inheritance. Without a "rich legacy of memories" there are no communal loyalties to be tested by consent. The myth of the *ethnic* nation suggests that you have no choice at all in the making of your national identity: you are your cultural inheritance and nothing else. The myth of the *civic* nation, in contrast, suggests that your national identity is nothing but your choice: you are the political principles you share with other like-minded individuals.³⁰

Although many of its critics portray nationalism as a romantic and irrationalist theory that emphasizes inheritance instead of choice and wants to bring the pre-political community into politics, through the doctrine of popular sovereignty even classical liberalism implies that citizens should think of themselves as forming a community that is prior to political institutions. Locke's famous distinction between the commonwealth and the community implies that there is a people that are prior to the state, and that these people have the right to limit the political powers of the state and even dissolve the government in extreme circumstances. The fundamental idea behind this distinction is that political institutions and the state may dissolve but the people and the community remain intact; the very concept of a sovereign people forming a national community rests on an understanding of the community as distinct from the state (which is merely a tool of self-government). According to Yack, because they emerged within a specific historical context even the quintessential liberal ideals of "individual rights and political freedoms depend to a certain extent on contingencies and vagaries of shared memory and identity."³¹

Thus, while it would be inaccurate to conceive of the nation as a reflection of an inherited and unchanging ethnic identity (all identities are dynamic and change over time), it is also inaccurate to portray the nation as nothing more than a voluntary

³⁰ Ibid., 107.

³¹ Ibid., 110.

association of individuals brought together by a shared commitment to common political principles, practices, and institutions (a purely civic nation). For one thing, liberal principles have themselves developed within political communities with their own inherited cultural identity. For another, even if a nation could be purely civic and based solely on shared political principles, it is not necessarily true that this type of state would be more desirable or tolerant. As the example of McCarthyism in the United States illustrates, individuals can be excluded and discriminated against based simply on the fact that they hold different political principles from the majority. In the end, it is important to understand that every nation has its own unique cultural inheritance, and as Renan suggested, the nation grows out of the choices we make within that inheritance. As such, the state is always to some extent a product of pre-political culture and it cannot be culturally and linguistically neutral.³² It is impossible to answer the myth of an unchanging ethnic identity with a countermyth of a purely civic state.³³ There is no such thing as a purely political culture, and it is impossible to completely exclude each nation's distinct pre-political cultural inheritance from politics. This does not mean that we do not have the ability to collectively shape and reshape our national identity over time through an active political culture and vibrant civil society, but this is always done within the particular cultural context we have inherited. As Yack concludes,

In the end, I believe Renan got it right. Two things make a nation: present-day consent and a rich cultural inheritance of shared memories and practices. Without consent our cultural legacy would be our destiny, rather than a set of background constraints on our activities. But without such a legacy there would be no consent at all, since there would be no reason for people to seek agreement with any one group of individuals rather than another.³⁴

³² The term "pre-political" traditionally refers to communities that existed before the formal political institutions of the state were established. However, in contemporary discourse "pre-political" is often used to refer to everything that lies outside of the formal domain of politics (including things like culture, tradition, customs, and so on). A more accurate term for this would be "extra-political" (beyond the political) because although cultures, traditions, and customs have pre-political origins, they also change over time and are not static artifacts of a pre-political past.

³³ Beiner, "Introduction," 13.

³⁴ Yack, "The Myth of the Civic Nation," 116.

We need to move beyond the civic vs. ethnic divide because both options are inadequate; both perpetuate myths of their own while neglecting the essential cultural aspect of nationalism. In the next section, I take a closer look at the idea of cultural nationalism and how it contributes to the debate surrounding nationalist theory and practice.

1.5 Cultural Nationalism

Both civic and ethnic nationalism fail to account for the cultural dimension that plays a crucial role in the life of every nation. For this reason, the debate surrounding nationalism has shifted focus towards cultural nationalism, examined in different ways by such authors as David Miller, Yael Tamir, Will Kymlicka, Kai Nielsen, Bernard Yack, and others. Nielsen asserts that nationality always involves a richer cultural component; although they fail to recognize it, both civic and ethnic accounts of nationalism are forms of cultural nationalism, but cultural nationalism itself need not be strictly civic or ethnic.³⁵ As Nielsen explains, “cultural nationalism defines the nation in terms of a common encompassing culture,” but, according to Nielsen, the nature of that culture can take many forms from nation to nation, including that of a liberal democratic culture.³⁶ Therefore, the primary aim of nationalist movements is seen as the preservation and promotion of the particular national culture they represent; their aim is not necessarily the oppression of other cultures. According to John Dunn,

Cultural nationalism is in the first instance little more than valuing the existing human social identity at a point in time when this has come to feel itself under pressure. It is not necessarily culturally bigoted—committed to the infliction of its own local cultural proclivities in a hegemonic fashion on the rest of the world. Indeed, as Isaiah Berlin has eloquently insisted, the first great protagonist of cultural nationalism, the German social philosopher Herder, took the view that it was *necessarily* opposed to any such venture. Valuing the plurality of cultures and languages, the subtle ecological variety and nuance of human practices, distinctly for themselves, for their existent idiosyncrasy, rather than assessing their merits in terms of their conformity with or deviation from some supposedly humanly universal aesthetic or ethic, he refused to see hierarchy within the realm of

³⁵ Kai Nielsen, “Cultural Nationalism, Neither Ethnic nor Civic,” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 125.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

cultures and insisted that, as structures of lived sentiment, they must instead be accorded intrinsic value rather than appraised sternly from the bastion of a single culture.³⁷

Proponents of a purely civic nationalism such as Ignatieff ignore the significance of national identity because they refuse to consider people's attachment to culture. According to Ignatieff, what matters is either political principles and practices (civic nationalism) or ethnic descent (ethnic nationalism).³⁸ Kymlicka believes that Ignatieff commits an error when he labels Flemish and Quebecois nationalisms as ethnic in nature. According to Kymlicka, "the Quebecois and the Flemish accept immigrants as full members of the nation, so long as they learn the language and history of the society. They define membership in terms of participation in a common culture, open to all, rather than on ethnic grounds."³⁹ Even Western democracies such as the United States, Canada, and France, which have been described as civic nations in the past, compel immigrants to learn the language and history of the nation in order to integrate them into the common culture. In fact, immigration laws illustrate quite clearly the role of culture in the politics of nations. If a nation was constituted on purely civic grounds, it would be compelled to accommodate every person who demonstrates a commitment to the specific political principles and practices upon which that particular nation is founded, and it could not impose any additional cultural requirements on those individuals. There is no modern nation, Western liberal democracies included, that actively embraces every potential immigrant who happens to accept a particular set of political principles.

What's more, proponents of the myth of a purely civic nation tend to portray civic nationalism as inherently good, peaceful, and democratic and contrast this with ethnic nationalism, which must therefore be inherently bad, violent, and dangerous. However, ethnic nationalism is not behind all nationalist conflicts in the world. Often it is civic

³⁷ John Dunn, "Nationalism," in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 42.

³⁸ Will Kymlicka, "Misunderstanding Nationalism," in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 134.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 133.

nationalists who create conflict by forcibly trying to assimilate national minorities into a single civic culture (e.g. the Kurdish minority in Turkey). In so doing, civic nationalists are prepared to grant members of minority cultures equal citizenship and legal rights under state law but they deny them a separate national identity. On the grounds that the majority nation is non-ethnic and therefore inclusive, civic nationalist often attempt to assimilate ethnic minorities against their will, as was the case with Native Americans, Hawaiians, and Puerto Ricans in the United States. Furthermore, civic nationalism is not necessarily democratic. Not all civic nations have been liberal democracies, and for much of the 20th century ethnically diverse countries like Brazil and Argentina embraced a form of civic nationalism by promoting a common national identity and citizenship status for all citizens regardless of their diverse ethnic backgrounds while being governed by military dictatorships.⁴⁰

Cultural nationalists want to move beyond the civic vs. ethnic divide and they offer a more nuanced understanding of national identity and nationalism, an understanding which accounts for the importance of culture. Miller argues that a common national culture “not only gives its bearers a sense of where they belong and provides an historical identity, but also provides them with a background against which more individual choices about how to live can be made.”⁴¹ Miller concedes that a person is likely to be a participant in a number of other cultures alongside the national culture, including family, class, ethnic group, and so on, which means that nationality is certainly not the only cultural resource available to a person at any given time. Nevertheless, national culture is an important resource that ought to be preserved by the state. As Kymlicka explains, paraphrasing Yael Tamir’s views,

Being able to express one’s cultural identity is important for many reasons. Cultural membership is a precondition of autonomous moral choices. Actions performed in a cultural context are “endowed with additional meaning” because they can be seen both as acts of individual achievement and as contributions to the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 135.

⁴¹ Miller, *On Nationality*, 85-86.

development of one's culture; and shared membership in a culture promotes a sense of belonging and relationships of mutual recognition.⁴²

Thus, a well functioning state rests upon a pre-political, or, more accurately, an extra-political sense of cultural belonging. As Miller indicates, common nationality is significant because:

It provides the wherewithal for a common culture against whose background people can make more individual decisions about how to lead their lives; it provides the setting in which ideas of social justice can be pursued, particularly ideas that require us to treat our individual talents as to some degree a 'common asset', to use Rawls's phrase; and it helps to foster the mutual understanding and trust that makes democratic citizenship possible.⁴³

Kymlicka emphasizes the importance of cultural belonging to individual well-being, and conceives of the nation as a "societal culture." According to Kymlicka, a societal culture "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."⁴⁴ However, even though extra-political culture is an inevitable component of common nationality, this does not mean that the content of said nationality should be set in stone. National identities and the culture that surrounds them can and do change significantly over time, and this change should not be seen as constituting the dissolution of those identities. Change is inevitable, and for democratically-inclined nationalist thinkers in particular, it is important to ensure that changes occur through a process of free and open deliberation between fellow citizens, including immigrants and minorities.

In short, cultural nationalism moves beyond the overly simplistic civic vs. ethnic divide, it emphasizes the inevitable connection between state and culture, and it asserts

⁴² Kymlicka, "Misunderstanding Nationalism," 183.

⁴³ Miller, *On Nationality*, 185.

⁴⁴ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 76.

that there can be no purely political conception of the nation. Cultural nationalists argue that there is nothing inherently fanatical or antidemocratic about nationalism, and many suggest that nationalism is compatible with liberalism (Tamir, Neilsen, Kymlicka, and others). The main point that these theorists make is that “*all nationalisms are cultural nationalisms of one kind or another. There is no purely political conception of the nation, liberal or otherwise.*”⁴⁵

1.6 Current Debates within Cultural Nationalism

Despite accepting a common theoretical framework that stresses the connection between politics and culture, cultural nationalists differ in their views. In the literature, cultural nationalists have traditionally been divided into two camps: liberal nationalists on the one side, and non-liberal (sometimes called communitarian or conservative) nationalists on the other. Liberal nationalists such as Tamir and Kymlicka acknowledge the importance of cultural belonging to individual well-being, and they endorse a “right to culture” for all nations, including national minorities. They believe that the importance of cultural belonging can be justified on purely individualist grounds; in line with liberal principles, cultural belonging is seen as valuable because it improves the lives of the individual members of a cultural group, provides them with a meaningful context for making decisions, and so on. Moreover, liberal nationalists reject all collectivist versions of nationalism which value the well-being of the nation as a whole over the well-being of individuals.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Bhikhu Parekh says that those cultural nationalists such as Roger Scruton, generally described as non-liberal or conservative nationalists, believe that nationality precedes the individual and that nations form spiritual and moral communities.⁴⁷ Unlike their liberal counterparts, conservative nationalists believe that the source of political legitimacy lies not in individual consent but in the national will of the

⁴⁵ Nielsen, “Cultural Nationalism,” 127.

⁴⁶ Judith Lichtenberg, “How Liberal can Nationalism be?” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 170-171.

⁴⁷ Bhikhu Parekh, “The Incoherence of Nationalism.” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 298.

people as a whole. Furthermore, Parekh tells us that conservative nationalists see the nation as the highest moral and political principle and believe that the integrity of the nation must be preserved at all costs, even at the expense of such fundamental liberal principles as freedom of speech and individual rights.⁴⁸ Non-liberal nationalists tend to believe that a shared national identity must be grounded in a common communal conception of the good life, while liberal nationalists hold that the basis for a common national identity must be a thinner and more diffuse sense of belonging, typically consisting of a shared history, territory, language, and common public institutions.⁴⁹ Kymlicka says that this constitutes a clear difference between liberal nationalism and most conservative and communitarian theories, which advocate for a ‘politics of the common good’ and reject the liberal nationalist conception of the good as too thin.⁵⁰ Non-liberal nationalists do not believe that social unity can be sustained by such weak bonds as shared principles of justice, or a thinned-out liberal nationalist conception of national identity.⁵¹ As such, cultural nationalists remain largely divided into liberal nationalists and non-liberal nationalists.

David Miller is a cultural nationalist who attempts to combine the principle of nationality with republican citizenship. Miller’s goal is to “reassert the underlying values of republican citizenship as a form of politics and nationhood as a form of political identity, while simultaneously thinking about how to best implement these values in the contemporary world.”⁵² Miller places himself inside the liberal nationalist camp, but as Parekh points out, “although Miller is a liberal and wants the nation to be constituted along liberal lines, he realizes that [liberalism and nationalism] might conflict, and then he tends to privilege nationalism. Since the national culture gives a society its distinct

⁴⁸ Ibid, 299.

⁴⁹ Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 264-265.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 266.

⁵¹ Ibid, 271.

⁵² David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 2000), 3.

identity, he insists that the state cannot and ought not to be neutral with respect to it.”⁵³ I believe that Miller’s work makes an important contribution to the current debate within cultural nationalism, and this project seeks to build on many of his arguments. In Chapters 5 in particular, I argue that Miller’s work is firmly rooted in the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the theoretical father of modern nationalism, and I suggest that although Miller identifies as a liberal nationalist, his work points towards a distinct *republican* strand of cultural nationalism. Chapter 6 focuses on drawing out the rather stark differences between the liberal nationalism of Tamir and Kymlicka on the one hand, and Rousseau’s and Miller’s republican nationalism on the other. My aim is to show that republican nationalism forms a distinct theoretical strand of cultural nationalism and constitutes a defensible alternative to liberal nationalism. In the next chapter, I consider republican political theory and the origins of republican citizenship (a central aspect of Miller’s philosophy), before taking an in-depth look at the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the first modern thinker to combine republicanism with nationalism.

⁵³ Parekh, “The Incoherence of Nationalism,” 304.

Chapter 2

2 Republican Political Theory

In this chapter I define republican political theory, trace its historical development, and identify the various distinct strands of thought that exist within the republican theoretical tradition. I then go on to juxtapose republicanism with liberalism, and I attempt to show that republican political theory offers a unique perspective on some of the most important concepts in political theory, including freedom and political participation. Finally, I discuss a specific strand of republicanism, which I refer to as *cultural republicanism*, that is rooted in the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and that has been largely neglected in contemporary republican literature. Contrary to many modern republicans, including Hannah Arendt, Philip Pettit, Quentin Skinner, and Iseult Honohan, I suggest that “extra-political” cultural values and national identity constitute an important component of every political community, including a republican one. As noted in the previous chapter, Honohan and others use the term “pre-political” to refer to everything that lies outside of the formal domain of politics (including culture, tradition, customs, national identity, and so on). Although these concepts have pre-political origins, they also change over time, and they continue to change after political institutions are established. Because these concepts still play an important role in the lives of citizens, a more accurate way to describe them is “extra-political,” a term which encompasses both the pre-political roots and contemporary relevance of culture and national identity.⁵⁴ I argue that it is impossible to separate certain aspects of extra-political culture from politics, and I believe that a properly functioning republic rests at least to some extent on an extra-political sense of common culture and nationality. As discussed in the previous chapter, there is no modern community with a public culture that is exclusively political and based on a purely civic commitment to common political principles, practices, and

⁵⁴ In Chapter 4 I expand on the argument that culture and national identity have pre-political roots but also change and evolve after political institutions are established. For the argument that national identity precedes the formation of nations, see: Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 21.

institutions. Political communities cannot be reduced to a random association of individuals held together solely by common principles, practices, and institutions; instead, every modern nation constitutes an extra-political community with a cultural “horizon” of shared historical experiences and cultural memories.⁵⁵ I argue that within the admittedly diverse republican tradition there exists a body of work that takes this connection between extra-political culture and politics seriously. This strand of thought, henceforth referred to as cultural republicanism, is best expressed in the philosophy of Rousseau, but it is also clearly present in the works of contemporary republican thinker David Miller. In the sections that follow, I take a closer look at this largely neglected strand of republican theory.

2.1 What Is Republicanism?

In the book *Civic Republicanism*, Iseult Honohan provides perhaps the most comprehensive overview of the republican political tradition as a whole, tracing its historical development and identifying the most important debates within the tradition. She defines republicanism as a middle ground between the extremes in the liberalism vs. communitarianism debate. According to Honohan, republicanism has a richer understanding of political community than mainstream liberalism, but is less homogenising and exclusive than nationalism and other forms of communitarianism.⁵⁶ Honohan explains:

Republican politics is concerned with enabling interdependent citizens to deliberate on, and realise, the common goods of an historically evolving political community, at least as much as promoting individual interests or protecting individual rights. Emphasising responsibility for common goods sets republicanism apart from libertarian theories centered on individual rights. Emphasising that these common goods are politically realised sets republicanism apart from neutralist liberal theories which exclude substantive questions of values and the good life from politics. Finally, emphasising the political construction of the political community distinguishes republicans from those

⁵⁵ Miller, *On Nationality*, 106.

⁵⁶ Iseult Honohan, *Civic Republicanism* (London: Routledge, 2002), 2-5.

communitarians who see politics as expressing the pre-political shared values of a community.⁵⁷

Honohan defines republicanism as a very specific variant of communitarianism, one which values *citizenship*, or membership in a *political* community, as “distinct from other kinds of community based on pre-political commonality, of, for example, race, religion or culture.”⁵⁸ I take issue with Honohan’s claim that any political community can be understood in strictly political terms, and I argue that every political community, including a republican community, has an undeniable cultural component that cannot be separated from politics. I will return to this point later, but first it is important to understand the historical development of republicanism, the key thinkers that shaped the tradition, and the distinct theoretical strands of republicanism that have emerged over time. *Civic Republicanism* offers valuable insight into these questions.

Honohan notes that there is a great amount of diversity within the republican political tradition, but she identifies four key themes that she believes run throughout the tradition as a whole: a) civic virtue and the common good, b) duty of participation, c) freedom, and d) recognition. These themes are defined and prioritized differently by the various republican thinkers, which has led to the development of distinct strands of thought within the republican tradition. Honohan believes that there are two dominant approaches within republican theory: 1) instrumental republicanism, which sees citizenship as a means to the end of preserving individual freedom rather than a relationship or activity with significant intrinsic value, and 2) strong republicanism, which emphasizes the intrinsic value of participating in self-government and realizing common goods as citizens.⁵⁹ The differences between these two approaches represent the main division within the contemporary republican tradition and form the foundations for the central debate between contemporary republican thinkers.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 8.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 8-9.

Republicanism traces its roots to Aristotle, who believed that human beings are by nature political and that they could fully realize this nature only through political participation and taking an active role in shaping the laws that govern them. Aristotle sees political participation as intrinsically valuable for realizing man's nature and potential. Freedom is instrumentally valuable in that it makes meaningful political participation possible, but the primary goal is virtue and the realization of one's nature. Aristotle's philosophy influenced the strong republican strand within republican political theory; strong republicans see political participation as an essential component of "the good life," and some go even further, arguing that participation in civic activity constitutes the highest realization of human nature.⁶⁰

From Aristotle, the roots of republican political theory can be traced to Roman statesman Cicero, who was himself influenced by Aristotle. Cicero emphasized the importance of the mixed regime, the separation of powers, and the rule of law. His work formed the basis for the instrumental republican strand within republican political theory, which holds that republican freedom is not achieved through active political participation but through living under just laws and fair institutions instead of the arbitrary will of others. Citizenship for Cicero was not synonymous with active participation; rather, citizenship refers to the equal legal status that every citizen is entitled to by law. Although Aristotle and Cicero are described as antecedents of republicanism rather than full-fledged republicans themselves, Aristotle's emphasis on political participation and Cicero's emphasis on the rule of law played a major role in shaping republicanism and the main division within the tradition. Ultimately, both thinkers stress the importance of virtue and the public good over material and individual interests, and both hold that freedom is not a natural human condition that limits the power of government; rather, meaningful freedom is only made possible by the laws of a political community. Moreover, freedom is not the ultimate goal but merely a means to attaining virtue and pursuing the common good.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Ibid, 20-30.

⁶¹ Ibid, 40.

The political ideas of Aristotle and Cicero were rediscovered during the Renaissance by a number of prominent Florentine republican thinkers, including Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli was among the leaders of a republican revival that was seen as a reaction against the Christian theological approach to politics that dominated Western Europe following the fall of Rome. J.G.A. Pocock calls this “the Machiavellian moment,” a point in time when the republicans of Florence rejected the Christian emphasis on happiness in the afterlife and looked to restore the Roman ideals of citizenship and civic virtue to politics.⁶² Machiavelli famously rejects conventional Christian morality and advances a new kind of morality, one that subordinates religion to politics and stresses the importance of preserving the republic and the liberty it offers in this life. Machiavelli emphasizes the need for military dynamism in preserving the republic, and he prioritizes military and civic service over active participation in politics. While there ought to be equal opportunity for all virtuous citizens to govern, the rulers will always be made up of the virtuous elite rather than all the citizens collectively. It is important to note that at the same time as Machiavelli is writing in Florence, the Venetian republic was developing a separate commercial model of republicanism that focused less on military might and expansion and more on the importance of commerce. Ultimately, Machiavelli’s revival of republican ideals, including the rule of law, the mixed regime, and civic virtue, coupled with the development of the Venetian commercial model of republicanism, had a profound impact on the republican ideas of James Harrington and the wider Atlantic tradition.

By the 18th century we see two distinct strands of republicanism take shape: participatory republicanism and representative/institutional republicanism. The participatory model of republican political theory is expressed in the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who proclaims that meaningful freedom consists in democratic self-rule; in living according to laws we make for ourselves through direct political participation. In order to be free, man must substitute natural freedom (pre-political freedom or license) for civil and moral freedom, and he must substitute his corrupting

⁶² See: J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

dependence on individuals for the reciprocal dependence on the community as a whole. According to Rousseau, moral freedom entails learning to overcome one's narrow self-interest in order to see beyond it and understand the common good. In order to be free in the most meaningful sense, man must attain a level of "self-mastery" and take an active part in collective will formation. As Honohan points out, for Rousseau "real freedom is won only in political society, and exercised by collectively self-governing citizens."⁶³

Rousseau sees the ideal republic as a small moral community of responsibility modeled on the family, and it is necessarily limited in size and scope. As Honohan explains, "in the republic citizens are bound by a strong sentiment of patriotism, love of their country, which is grounded in their dependence on the social whole. This identification lies between selfishness and altruism. It is modelled on the close face-to-face relations of the family: love for the motherland, and *fraternity* between citizens."⁶⁴ The ideal republic ought to be small because freedom diminishes with increased size; a larger community cannot be as participatory, which opens the door for corruption through representation and institutionalism. According to Rousseau, in order to overcome their narrow self-interests in the name of the common good, the citizens of a republic must possess a sense of shared destiny, a common history and culture, and close emotional attachments to each other.⁶⁵ This is what makes willing generally possible, and what allows the general will to take shape. The larger a republic becomes, the harder it is for citizens to relate to each other and pursue the common good at the expense of individual self-interest and factional group interests. Thus, Rousseau's ideal republic is small, independent, and defensive in character, though he readily acknowledges that this ideal is difficult to achieve in practice. This is in sharp contrast to both Machiavelli's militaristic expansionist republic and Harrington's large commercial republic. According to

⁶³ Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, 89.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁶⁵ Rousseau's *Government of Poland* and *Constitution for Corsica* emphasize these points heavily. In particular, see: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Plan for a Constitution for Corsica," in *The Plan for Perpetual Peace, On the Government of Poland, and Other Writings on History and Politics*, trans. Christopher Kelly and Judith Bush, (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2005,) 133-156.

Rousseau's participatory model of republicanism, citizens are only free when they are active participants in their own self-government.⁶⁶ In addition, Rousseau's republicanism has a strong *cultural* component that emphasizes the importance of patriotism, fraternity, solidarity, and the love of nation. This cultural aspect to Rousseau's republicanism is crucial for locating his specific brand of republicanism within the wider republican tradition, and in the following section I discuss in greater detail the various strands of republican political theory before examining the nature of Rousseau's cultural republicanism.

The second major model of republicanism is the representative/institutional model, which was greatly influenced by Harrington and Venetian commercial republicanism. Some of the American founding fathers, including James Madison, pick up on this line of thought and argue that republican freedom should be defined in terms of the security of life, liberty, and property, to be protected by a representative form of government and the constitutional separation of powers. This particular understanding of republican freedom allows republics to expand far beyond Rousseau's small moral community of responsibility, and the participatory vs. representative divide was a central issue in the eighteenth century debate between the federalists and anti-federalists in the newly independent American state, with the anti-federalists defending a small participatory republic and the federalists favoring a large representative state.⁶⁷ This same divide is still at the heart of the debate between republican thinkers today, and keeping these issues in mind will help us to identify and delineate the various distinct strands within contemporary republican thought.

2.2 Republicanisms

Following the French Revolution, some argued that the republican ideas of thinkers like Rousseau contributed to the revolution's excesses, and many abandoned republican political theory in favor of liberalism, a theoretical framework inspired by the

⁶⁶ Ibid, 110.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

writings of John Locke. During the twentieth century another republican revival takes place in response to the perceived dominance of liberalism. The two strands of republicanism most represented in contemporary republican literature are instrumental republicanism and strong republicanism. For instrumental republicans, citizenship is seen as a means of preserving individual freedom and not a relationship or activity with intrinsic value. Strong republicans stress the intrinsic value of participating in self-government and realizing common goods as citizens. Honohan identifies Hannah Arendt and Charles Taylor as the most prominent contemporary proponents of strong republicanism. As Honohan explains:

Reacting to totalitarianism and neutralist liberalism, [Arendt and Taylor] stress the expressive dimension of politics, in which people seek not only to be treated as legal and political equals, but to have the value of their projects and identities confirmed in public. Arendt and Taylor justify the reevaluation of political action in three dimensions. They draw attention to the ways in which self-realisation requires public recognition, they see freedom in positive terms as realised in political action, and they reaffirm the role of politics in realising shared goods.⁶⁸

Arendt argues that individual freedom and recognition can only be achieved through political participation because political activity constitutes the highest expression of human liberty. She stresses the importance of political action within a vibrant public space, and she advocates for preserving the less structured area of action and debate that forms the context within which the state acts and which has been eroded in contemporary society. Unlike Rousseau, she rejects consensus-based politics and believes that the political community should not be based on the moral sentiments. According to Arendt, citizens should not be seen as an extended family but as independent individuals who work together as colleagues. Citizens who share a common public space become a *political* community; this community is not bound by a common identity or shared cultural values, but rather by the strictly political concerns that arise from living in a common world and participating in a shared public realm. Arendt disagrees with Rousseau's claims that citizens living together within a political community form a common will, and she believes that rather than becoming part of a larger whole each

⁶⁸ Ibid, 111.

citizen interacts independently with other citizens within the public space. As Honohan points out, “those who share a public realm become a political community, in which citizens are bound, not by common identity or shared cultural values, but by concerns arising from living in a common world and by participation in a common public realm. Against Rousseau’s claims, they do not come to form a common will, but face common concerns and a common world.”⁶⁹ I will challenge the assumption that citizens of a political community need not be bound by a common identity and shared cultural values later on in this chapter. Honohan notes that some problems with Arendt’s conception of the political community include the fact that she overvalues political life by portraying it as the highest fulfillment of human nature, and the fact that she assumes that since political participation is an intrinsic good, it cannot also be considered an instrumental good. In addition, she has an individualistic conception of political recognition and she neglects the social and cultural dimensions of recognition.⁷⁰

Charles Taylor considers himself to be a liberal perfectionist who wants to promote the goods of freedom and self-rule in conformity with rights founded on equality. Taylor sees modern civic republicanism as a specific strand of liberalism that values participation in collective self-government as well as the realization of common goods and individual freedom. Honohan notes that for Taylor, “freedom is a matter of realising ourselves according to our most central purposes, not the absence of interference. Thus politics is an arena for self-expression and public recognition of identity and values, and not just a framework for maintaining order and just distribution.”⁷¹ Taylor believes that social practices and the community that sustains them are not merely instrumental to but also constitutive of individual identity. Taylor addresses the problems in some of Arendt’s work by arguing that political participation has both intrinsic *and* instrumental value; participation plays a role in the formation of an individual’s identity, and it also provides an opportunity to achieve other important ends,

⁶⁹ Ibid, 124.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 131.

⁷¹ Ibid, 132.

such as preserving liberty within the political community. Due to the fact that culture sustains identity and meanings for individuals, Taylor unlike Arendt believes that culture should be given expression in politics. But unlike Rousseau, Taylor is not interested in promoting a common *national* culture; instead, he advocates multiculturalism, stressing that equal rights for individuals are not in themselves enough to satisfy the need for cultural recognition. Taylor argues that the political community must at times abandon neutrality in order to accommodate the claims of culture, and he believes that liberals themselves have a particular vision of the good life which puts special value on freedom and autonomy. Taylor argues that special value should also be given to recognition, including the recognition of culture, because culture and other categories such as race and gender play an important part in the formation of each individual's identity. Taylor criticizes what has been alternatively referred to as "negative freedom" or "freedom as non-interference" by claiming that doing whatever one wants as long as that action does not conflict with the law does not necessarily equate to freedom in the proper sense. For instance, an alcoholic may be at liberty to legally buy alcohol and feed his addiction in this way, but that does not mean that he is properly free. In fact, one could say that the alcoholic is a slave to his addiction and the opposite of free. For Taylor and most strong republicans, freedom presupposes the ability to act according to what one understands to be their most important purposes, and this is best achieved through active participation in the political community.⁷²

Strong republicanism can be broadly defined as a political philosophy focused on the idea of promoting a specific conception of the good life consisting in political participation and civic virtue, as well as on fighting any sort of corruption that would undermine these values. For strong republicans, civic virtue and active political participation should be considered public goods which are intrinsically valuable for human flourishing. Strong republicans claim that their understanding of civic virtue and political participation is shared by the classical republican tradition; political freedom requires citizens to share in the good life by embracing the public goods of civic virtue

⁷² Ibid, 136.

and active political participation. This conception defines freedom in terms of realization rather than opportunity. Stemming from Rousseau's belief that freedom lies in obeying laws one makes for oneself, political participation is understood as the highest expression of human freedom. Political freedom means realizing our highest purposes and attaining recognition through politics, as well as realizing common projects and shared common goods among citizens.⁷³

The other major strand of contemporary republicanism is instrumental republicanism, expressed in the works of Quentin Skinner, Philip Pettit, and Frank Lovett, among others. Instrumental republicans argue that achieving republican freedom does not require citizens to become anything in particular (self-realization) or take an active part in creating the laws that govern them. While civic virtue and political participation are instrumentally valuable for preserving liberty (the price of freedom is eternal vigilance), Pettit argues that republican freedom is not properly defined as self-mastery but as "freedom from domination." In an article entitled *Neo-republicanism*, co-authored with Frank Lovett, Pettit defines his neo-republicanism as a contemporary public philosophy rooted in the classical republican tradition.⁷⁴ According to Pettit and Lovett, the three key concepts of neo-republicanism are:

First and most important is the conception of a free person as one who does not live under the arbitrary will or domination of others. Second is the associated conception of a free state as one that attempts to promote the freedom of its citizens without itself coming to dominate them. And third is the conception of good citizenship as consisting in a vigilant commitment to preserving the state in its distinctive role as an undominating protector against domination. The aim of the neorepublican research program is to rethink issues of legitimacy and democracy, welfare and justice, public policy and institutional design, from within the framework that these basic ideas provide.⁷⁵

⁷³ Ibid, 186.

⁷⁴ Frank Lovett and Philip Pettit, "Neorepublicanism: A Normative and Institutional Research Program", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12 (2009): 11-29.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 12.

Instrumental republicans argue that citizenship does not require direct participation or expressed consent by the citizen body, but rather options for contestation (voicing disagreement and criticism of the government). Instrumental republicans advocate a constitution that establishes the separation of powers and the rule of law, and defines good citizenship as a commitment to preserving the state in its role as an undominating protector against domination. While the separation of powers and the rule of law have been appropriated by the liberal theoretical framework, Pettit and other instrumental republicans claim that their conception of citizenship is what makes their approach distinctly republican.

Instrumental republicans claim to espouse a unique understanding of freedom that sets them apart from both liberals and strong republicans. According to Pettit and Lovett, strong republicans define freedom in terms of self-mastery and realization (freedom as self-mastery, FSM), while liberals define freedom as the absence of direct interference by outside forces on their ability to make free choices (freedom as non-interference, FNI).⁷⁶ By contrast, or so it is claimed, instrumental republicans define freedom as the absence of arbitrary power, whether it is actually exercised or not (freedom as non-domination, FND).⁷⁷ Thus, even when one's choices are not interfered with directly, to be dependent on the arbitrary power of another at any time is to lack freedom in the proper sense. For instance, a slave with a benevolent master who does not interfere with the slave's actions directly may be considered free according to FNI, but the very fact that the arbitrary power of master over slave exists in the first place would mean that the slave is not free according to the standards of FND. While proponents of FNI see all laws as a form of restraint on freedom, proponents of FND hold that laws that are not arbitrary but reflect the will of the people and are made in their interest do not restrain freedom but enlarge it. This chapter will engage with four different conceptions of freedom, including the aforementioned FSM, FNI, and FND, but also freedom as political autonomy or FPA,

⁷⁶ The claim that FNI adequately describes the conception of freedom embraced by liberals is disputed by many liberal thinkers, and it would be difficult to argue that someone like Rawls endorses FNI. I take a closer look at the liberal critique of the instrumental republican view later in this chapter.

⁷⁷ Lovett and Pettit, "Neorepublicanism", 14.

which Honohan identifies as the conception of freedom preferred by civic humanists like her.⁷⁸ The following table sums up the differences between these four conceptions:

Table 1: Four Conceptions of Freedom

| Freedom as Non-interference (FNI) | Freedom as Non-domination (FND) | Freedom as Political Autonomy (FPA) | Freedom as Self-mastery (FSM) |
|---|--|--|---|
| Freedom is the absence of direct interference by outside forces on one's ability to make free choices (espoused by libertarians and some liberals). | Freedom is the absence of arbitrary power, whether it is actually exercised or not. Even when our choices are not interfered with directly, to be dependent on the arbitrary power of another at any time is to lack freedom in the proper sense (espoused by instrumental republicans like Pettit). | Freedom demands more than simply obeying laws and being free from domination; freedom demands that citizens have a direct say in shaping the laws that govern them (espoused by civic humanists like Honohan). | Freedom requires the kind of participation endorsed by FPA, but freedom also requires <i>self-mastery</i> : overcoming mere appetites and narrow self-interests/factional interests for the common good. FSM creates new potentialities: it allows citizens to achieve their full potential and attain certain goods as a community that they could not attain individually (espoused by cultural republicans like Rousseau). |

⁷⁸ The four conception of freedom considered here do not form an exhaustive list. For instance, the standard welfare liberal understanding of freedom is not included (T.H. Green rejects FNI because one can be unfree to do something for reasons of poverty, ill health, and ignorance, even if no one is directly interfering).

As the table demonstrates, treating FNI, FND, FPA, and FSM as four distinct conceptions of freedom can be confusing. The four concepts can be further separated according to Isaiah Berlin's two concepts of liberty thesis, with FNI and FND classified as having a negative conception of freedom (freedom from), and FPA and FSM classified as embracing a positive conception of freedom (freedom to). As far back as 1967 Gerard MacCallum tried to simplify such distinctions by arguing that discussions of freedom always have a triadic relation and can be represented simply as "agent > obstacle > goal." Put another way, the [agent] is free *from* [obstacle] *to* do or be [goal]. As such, freedom is always *from* something and *to* something, so it does not make sense to think of freedom as being either positive or negative. MacCallum argues that both the "positive" and "negative" concepts actually share the same concept of freedom, stating that "it would be far better to insist that the same concept of freedom is operating throughout, and that the differences, rather than being about what *freedom* is, are for example about what persons are, and what can count as an obstacle to or an interference with the freedom of persons so conceived."⁷⁹ MacCallum believes that the real debate is not about what "freedom" means, but about the true identity of the agent whose freedom is being considered (is it the individual, or the community, or the nation?), and what counts as an obstacle to our freedom (which will depend on our definition of the agent). MacCallum's formula appears to simplify the concept of freedom and remove the confusing distinctions that many theorists rely on, and yet "despite the utility of MacCallum's triadic formula and its strong influence on analytic philosophers, however, Berlin's distinction continues to dominate mainstream discussions about the meaning of political and social freedom."⁸⁰ As such, most of the contemporary theorists considered in this chapter continue to use the language of positive and negative liberty, and they intentionally compare their own conceptions of freedom to either FNI, FND, FPA, or FSM. For the sake of clarity and in

⁷⁹ Gerard C. MacCallum, "Negative and Positive Freedom," *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 76, No. 3, (July 1967): 320.

⁸⁰ Ian Carter, "Positive and Negative Liberty," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, March 5, 2012, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberty-positive-negative/>.

order to engage with their arguments on their own terms, I will stick to the classifications that they themselves are using.

Instrumental republicans like Pettit reject the view that political participation and civic virtue are intrinsically valuable aspects of a particular vision of the good life and consider them to be merely instrumentally valuable for securing and preserving political liberty, understood as independence from arbitrary rule. FND does not require the realization of any particular purpose on the part of the citizen; it requires only the absence of something, namely, the absence of dependence on arbitrary power or domination. This is different from “positive” conceptions of freedom, which hold that freedom in the proper sense can only be achieved through the realization of certain purposes (self-realization). Honohan separates the positive freedom of a specific type of strong republicanism that she refers to as “civic humanism” from freedom as self-mastery; she claims that civic humanists like her believe in freedom as political autonomy (FPA), and she distinguishes FPA from what she considers to be the “more communitarian” understanding of freedom embodied in the works of Rousseau (freedom as self-mastery, FSM). I want to point out that there is no inherent connection between communitarianism and FSM, and although Honohan uses this comparison in an attempt to differentiate her own view from FSM, trying to equate the two leads to more confusion. Having said that, Honohan argues that autonomy cannot be fully realized in politics, but neither can it be fully realized outside of politics. For this reason, autonomy needs a political expression, and personal autonomy must extend to political autonomy. FPA requires citizens who are engaged in politics to follow purposes that they can endorse as their own, in the sense that they have a real say in shaping them. Political participation is a necessary aspect of freedom; FPA demands more than simply obeying laws and being free from domination, it requires citizens to have a direct say in shaping those laws.⁸¹ As Michael Sandel points out, “I am free insofar as I am a member of a political community that controls its own fate and is a participant in the decisions that govern its affairs... the republican sees

⁸¹ Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, 188.

liberty as internally connected to self-government and the civic virtues that sustain it.”⁸² Honohan juxtaposes FPA with Rousseau’s understanding of freedom as self-mastery, claiming that while FPA requires citizens to contribute to shaping collective social practices, it does not follow Rousseau in his attempt to extend autonomy to the level of society by positing a unitary, corporate subject. According to Honohan:

If participation and freedom are to be connected, it must be in some way that maintains personal freedom in individual lives while allowing for collective self-government. To leave room for personal freedom, a more positive conception of freedom cannot be based on a fixed account of human nature, or require citizens to act according to a pre-determined ranking of goals and purposes. It cannot define political activity as the highest good of a human life, nor assume that there is a unitary common good of society. If autonomy is a matter of acting according to goals a person can endorse, someone cannot be ‘forced to be autonomous’ by being coerced into behaving in a certain way, though he may perhaps be prevented from acting in ways that would further reduce his autonomy in the future. Political equality is central to the idea of freedom as participation in collective self-government.⁸³

Rousseau’s vision of freedom, which he calls civil and moral freedom, differs from FPA because it requires self-mastery, and because it can only be achieved within a political community with a shared national identity and conception of the good life. This conception of the good represents a shared moral consensus between citizens, one that is shaped by the national culture and held up as the ideal that the society should strive for. As such, citizens are guided towards pursuing this good through laws, mores, and a comprehensive moral education.

The debate between instrumental republicans and strong republicans is an ongoing one, with both sides claiming to represent the legacy of the classical republican tradition. In his book *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government*, Pettit develops his instrumental vision of republicanism and defines instrumental republicanism

⁸² Quoted in Honohan’s *Civic Republicanism* on page 189. Full citation is not given.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 190.

as *the* public philosophy that embodies the classical republican tradition.⁸⁴ In so doing, he almost completely ignores the important contributions that thinkers like Aristotle and Rousseau have made to republican political theory, and many strong republicans take serious issue with his claims. The main debate within contemporary republican theory has been taking place between instrumental republicans like Pettit and those strong republicans like Honohan who refer to themselves as civic humanists, but who also tend to dismiss what they consider to be “more communitarian” versions of strong republicanism. Nevertheless, I contend that along with instrumental republicanism and civic humanism there exists another strand of republican theory that needs to be considered more carefully; I am referring to *cultural republicanism*, a distinct strand of republican theory rooted in the works of Rousseau. Cultural republicanism is the least prominently represented in the literature, and it is often dismissed by both instrumental republicans and civic humanists for being dependent on the existence of a shared extra-political culture. In Chapter 3 I draw out this cultural strand of republican political theory, but first I take a closer look at the debate between republicanism and liberalism, including the liberal critique of republicanism. By considering how the different strands of republicanism compare to the liberal theoretical framework we will gain a better understanding of what each unique strand has to offer, and how they ultimately compare to each other.

2.3 The Republicanism vs. Liberalism Debate

As previously mentioned, instrumental republicans such as Skinner, Lovett, and Pettit believe that their version of republicanism most closely represents the classical republican tradition, and they tend to dismiss thinkers like Aristotle, Rousseau, Arendt, and Taylor as proponents of civic humanism, a classification that they believe is distinct from republicanism. Pettit says that FNI, which he claims is the dominant liberal conception of freedom, was first developed by Thomas Hobbes. Pettit claims that for Hobbes freedom is the absence of interference, and this type of freedom can be

⁸⁴ Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

maximized even in conditions of extreme domination. Thus, though a slave might be dependent on the arbitrary power of his master, as long as the master is benevolent and does not interfere directly with the actions of the slave, the slave is free. On this view, laws are seen as interferences with liberty, but they are interferences which exist to prevent more potential interferences by other parties. Laws are a necessary evil; law is seen as a restriction on freedom, but a restriction that is preferable to the alternative of anarchy. As such, freedom exists only inside the realm where law does not intrude.⁸⁵ Pettit believes that this conception of freedom lost prominence in the 18th century as the republican conception of freedom as non-domination gained in popularity (Pettit classifies Harrington and Locke as proponents of FND), but that FNI was successfully revived again by William Paley and Jeremy Bentham. Pettit argues that FNI has continued to be the dominant conception of freedom ever since, and it is only now being challenged once again by those seeking to revive the republican concept of FND.⁸⁶ Pettit defines non-domination as the condition under which individuals live in the presence of others but at the mercy of none, and he claims that FND constitutes the “supreme political value” of the republican tradition.⁸⁷ FND allows citizens to live without uncertainty about arbitrary interference in their lives and protects citizens from subordination and undue influence by the rich and powerful. Pettit and virtually all republican thinkers believe that in order to make meaningful freedom possible there have to be limits on material inequality in a republican society; broadly speaking, republicans tend to accept Rousseau’s maxim that “no citizen should be so rich as to be capable of buying another citizen, and none so poor that he is forced to sell himself.”⁸⁸ However, republican thinkers interpret this maxim in different ways, and more will be said about Rousseau’s own views on the limits of material inequality in Chapter 3. For now it is

⁸⁵ Pettit, *Republicanism*, 36-37.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 45-50. Pettit’s claim here is somewhat odd given the strong influence of the welfare liberal conception of freedom as expressed by T. H. Green.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 80.

⁸⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract, Book II Ch. 11*, ed. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2011) 189.

important to note that Pettit sees FND as an instrumental primary good, or something that every individual has an instrumental reason to want regardless of what else they may want. According to Pettit, it is not enough to rely on the reciprocity of individuals as this may lead to unequal results; FND is a political goal that the state should actively advance for all of its citizens. In his defense of FND, Pettit dismisses the concept of freedom as self-mastery (FSM). He argues that the participatory ideal of active citizenship is not feasible in the modern world, and he claims that the prospect of each citizen being subject to the will of all is “scarcely attractive.”⁸⁹ As such, the state must not seek to actively promote FSM because FND is enough. Pettit and other instrumental republicans maintain that FND is a superior conception of freedom to both the “liberal” FNI and the various conceptions of freedom promoted by strong republicans (civic humanists and cultural republicans). Instrumental republicans believe that FND represents *the* conception of freedom of the classical republican tradition, but this claim faces criticism not only from other republicans, but also from liberals.

Liberal critics of republicanism such as Robert E. Goodin and Alan Patten consider instrumental republicans like Skinner and Pettit to be revisionists of republicanism, and they argue that it is debatable whether instrumental republicanism is the appropriate interpretation of the classical republican tradition. Goodin’s first major criticism is that there is no meaningful disagreement between the instrumental republicanism of Skinner and Pettit and the liberalism of someone like John Rawls; in fact, Rawls believed that instrumental republicanism was perfectly compatible with his own form of liberalism. Furthermore, Goodin claims that FND is not a unique conception of liberty because this allegedly “liberal” conception of liberty as non-interference taken to its logical conclusion of securing FNI for the future would amount to essentially the same thing as FND.⁹⁰ While some liberal theorists may have been negligent in their theoretical formulation of FNI, in practice the two conceptions of liberty amount to the same thing: the separation of powers, the rule of law, and civic virtue. Goodin’s second

⁸⁹ Pettit, *Republicanism*, 81.

⁹⁰ Robert E. Goodin, “Folie Républicaine”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 6 (2003): 61.

criticism is that instrumental republicanism does not offer a different vision of citizenship and public service from liberalism. Republicanism is not unique in its call for more deliberation, as non-republican arguments for more deliberation have been made by a number of thinkers, including Rawls and Jurgen Habermas. In fact, Rawlsian liberalism places special emphasis on the importance of deliberation and civic virtue for preserving a free liberal society. Although instrumental republicans and liberals may make different claims about the origins of rights, or the relationship between liberty and law, according to Goodin it all amounts to the same thing in practice. Rawlsian liberalism does not appeal to pre-political rights that individuals possess in the state of nature, but rights that come out of a democratic community concerned with fairness. As such, laws are grounded in fairness and aim to protect rights and liberties, not restrain them in the Hobbesian sense.⁹¹

Goodin ultimately concludes that there is no meaningful difference between Enlightenment liberalism and the instrumental (Goodin calls it “liberal”) republicanism of someone like Skinner and Pettit (autonomous individuals with natural rights working together for common interests), and he sees no advantage in employing the language of republicanism instead of the established terminology of liberalism to advocate what amounts to the same thing in practice. At the same time, he argues that the “more communitarian” strands of republicanism “prioritize the public over the private as part of their program of deprioritizing rights and restoring public duty and responsibility to the center of the political stage” and maintain that individual agency is a function of collective identity, which Goodin believes are ideas that should be dismissed as dangerous.⁹² While both liberals and instrumental republicans believe that political decisions are shaped and reshaped by public conversation and are not extra-political, cultural republicans like Rousseau believe in the possibility of an extra-political ethical consensus. Ultimately, Goodin argues that this “communitarian” approach is not feasible in modern heterogeneous and pluralist political communities, arguing that while

⁹¹ Ibid, 65-69.

⁹² Ibid, 70.

instrumental republicanism is compatible with and essentially indistinct from liberalism, “communitarian” forms of republicanism ought to be rejected outright. Goodin is applying the label “communitarian” to refer to strong republicans, including civic humanists and cultural republicans. Others like Alan Patten do the same thing, but I do not think that the “communitarian” label is particularly useful in this context (communitarianism is distinct from republicanism), and I will continue to use instrumental republicanism, civic humanism, and cultural republicanism to refer to these three distinct strands of republican theory.

Alan Patten concurs with Goodin that there are no meaningful differences between the instrumental republicanism of someone like Skinner and contemporary liberalism. He claims that the liberal critique of republicanism, which holds that republicanism ignores the inherent plurality of human ends and values by presuming that there is some single good that is good for everyone, has largely succeeded. However, today we have revisionist republicans such as Skinner and Pettit who embrace “negative” liberty but hold that active citizenship is an instrumental good that contributes to the preservation of a free society.⁹³ While he maintains that the instrumental republican critique of liberalism fails because it is in fact perfectly compatible with contemporary liberalism (FNI and FND amount to the same thing, political participation and civic virtue are important for liberals as well as republicans, and so on), Patten believes that real differences do exist between liberalism and the “communitarian” republicans such as Taylor, but he asserts that liberals are right to reject the arguments of strong republicans. Taylor believes that liberals fail to recognize that “patriotism” is a condition for the preservation of a free society. Furthermore, as Patten observes, “Taylor's point seems to be that the maintenance of liberty requires that individuals view citizenship not merely in instrumental terms, but as a good in itself, which is shared with others, and which is integral to their identities and self-understandings.”⁹⁴ Nonetheless, Patten claims that

⁹³ Alan Patten, “The Republican Critique of Liberalism,” *British Journal of Political Science*, 26 (1996): 26-27.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 37.

Taylor's view is still instrumental as he defends the importance of public service and civic virtue for society, but does not defend citizenship as an integral part of the good life. Patten also claims that while a liberal patriotism (sometimes referred to as constitutional patriotism) may play an important role for maintaining a free society, a non-liberal patriotism tied to particular historical institutions, traditions, culture, language, and/or ethnicity (extra-political factors) may in fact serve causes that threaten liberty.⁹⁵ As such, Patten believes that liberals should resist claims that some type of non-liberal patriotism is required for preserving freedom as this would amount to appeasing injustice in the name of culture, and deprioritizing the right over the good.⁹⁶

Although instrumental republicans like Pettit may answer such criticisms by repeating their claim that FND is a richer conception of freedom than FNI, and by arguing that republican citizenship and civic virtue require more contestation than currently exists in contemporary liberal democracies, it is questionable whether such responses justify the existence of instrumental republicanism as a theoretical framework separate from liberalism, or whether instrumental republicanism amounts to a restatement of values that fit within the existing liberal framework. And while it can be argued that instrumental republicanism appears to be perfectly compatible with liberalism, strong republicans like Honohan, Taylor, and David Miller challenge the Rawlsian concept of reasonable pluralism, which states that comprehensive doctrines (moral, religious, and so on) about constitutional essentials and basic rights should be kept out of public deliberation. This is because certain comprehensive doctrines, cultural attachments, and religious beliefs are constitutive of an individual's identity, and excluding such fundamental beliefs from deliberation would not reduce conflict in society but rather alienate the individuals in question from society as a whole by denying political expressions to their most cherished thoughts and beliefs. Taylor would argue that the state must at times abandon neutrality in order to address pressing cultural claims; respect

⁹⁵ See Chapter 1 and the discussion on nationalism for why Patten's ideas about a purely extra-political, constitutional/civic patriotism are unrealistic.

⁹⁶ Patten, "The Republican Critique of Liberalism," 40-41.

for individual rights is not enough if these rights do not take into account cultural recognition and other factors that may be constitutive of an individual's identity. On this view, liberty in the proper sense requires more than the absence of restraint; liberty requires the realization of one's highest purposes and the political recognition of one's fundamental thoughts and beliefs. But as I hinted at earlier, among the strong republicans there remains a further distinction between civic humanists like Arendt, Taylor, and Honohan on the one hand, and cultural republicans like Rousseau on the other. In the following section I take a closer look at this distinction.

2.4 Strong Republicans: Civic Humanism vs. Cultural Republicanism

I have addressed the distinction between instrumental republicanism on the one hand and strong republicanism (civic humanism and cultural republicanism) on the other. I will now contrast the civic humanism of Iseult Honohan with what she considers to be a "more communitarian" version of republicanism, and one which she rejects. This version is best expressed in the works of Rousseau and I refer to it as cultural republicanism. In explaining her own understanding of republican political autonomy, Honohan claims that "the substance of republican politics is based on interdependence (rather than commonality), is created in deliberation (not pre-politically), emerges in multiple publics to which all can contribute, and is not definitive but open to change."⁹⁷ In so doing, she tries to distinguish her own conception of republicanism from the republicanism of Rousseau, who stresses the importance of establishing a moral community of citizens with a shared conception of the public good and a common national identity and culture (Honohan refers to this as "pre-political" culture, which she differentiates from civic culture formed through the political process alone. I use "extra-political" instead). Honohan suggests that on the republican view, cultural claims, much like moral claims, must be subject to debate and deliberation; not all identities and cultures receive equal political recognition, as not all cultures and identities are equally conducive of personal

⁹⁷ Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, 249.

autonomy. Republican recognition refers to individuals gaining a civic or political identity as politically autonomous citizens deliberating on the conditions of their common life. As such, political activity constitutes an important part of the individual's identity. However, Honohan argues that:

[The] contemporary articulation of republican politics does not mean directly establishing the shared values of an existing cultural community, since the values embodied are subject to the filter of deliberation, are politically constituted and contestable. Since the republic does not embody pre-political cultural values, republican recognition should be distinguished from a communitarian establishment of a package of shared values or conceptions of the good life.”⁹⁸

A cultural republican like Rousseau would agree with Honohan that cultural and moral claims are subject to debate and deliberation, and that they are contestable. However, cultural republicans do believe that every republic embodies extra-political elements (national identity and culture, traditions and customs, language, and so on) and that we can and should embrace a democratic and moral consensus in the form of a shared package of values and conceptions of the public good.

Referring back to the previous chapter, cultural republicans like Rousseau join with cultural nationalists in arguing that there is no such thing as a purely political culture, and that it is impossible to clearly separate each nation's distinct extra-political cultural inheritance from politics. This does not mean that we do not collectively shape and reshape that cultural inheritance over time through debate and deliberation, but this debate always takes place within the particular cultural context that we have inherited.⁹⁹ Honohan believes that citizens can create an independent *political* culture through civic institutions and through the act of participation and deliberation, a political culture that does not embody extra-political culture, identity, beliefs, traditions, and customs of the society in question. In the previous chapter we established that although all collective identities are in a constant process of development and interpretation, a purely civic community with an exclusively political culture is impossible. Every political community

⁹⁸ Ibid, 259.

⁹⁹ Yack, “The Myth of the Civic Nation,” 116.

consists of a contingent inheritance of distinctive experiences and cultural memories that represent an inseparable aspect of its collective identity. Nations such as the United States, Canada, and France are not merely voluntary associations made up of individuals who are interested in upholding certain political principles, or whose only commonality lies in their active participation in politics. Political loyalty cannot be reduced to a random association of individuals held together exclusively by particular political values, institutions, and practices because every nation constitutes an extra-political community with a cultural “horizon” of shared historical experiences and cultural memories.¹⁰⁰ Every community has its own unique cultural inheritance, which means that the political community is always to some extent a product of extra-political culture and it cannot be culturally and linguistically neutral. Cultural republicans accept David Miller’s assertion that a properly functioning political community rests upon an extra-political sense of common culture and nationality. According to Miller, common nationality is significant because:

It provides the wherewithal for a common culture against whose background people can make more individual decisions about how to lead their lives; it provides the setting in which ideas of social justice can be pursued, particularly ideas that require us to treat our individual talents as to some degree a ‘common asset’, to use Rawls’s phrase; and it helps to foster the mutual understanding and trust that makes democratic citizenship possible.¹⁰¹

Will Kymlicka also emphasizes the importance of cultural belonging to individual well-being, and he conceives of the national political community as a “societal culture.” According to Kymlicka, a societal culture “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.”¹⁰² The type of culture that Miller and Kymlicka are referring to is more than a purely civic

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 106.

¹⁰¹ Miller, *On Nationality*, 185.

¹⁰² Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 76.

culture formed solely through political institutions, active citizenship, and deliberation. They recognize that the common culture of each political community has important extra-political elements, such as a shared language, cultural values, customs, and traditions, and that these components play a significant role in shaping the political culture of each community. As such, it is impossible to say where extra-political culture ends and where political culture begins, as Honohan attempts to do. Furthermore, although cultural republicans accept that extra-political cultural values and shared conceptions of the good are subject to debate and revision as part of the deliberative process, cultural republicans argue that there is still assumed to exist at any given time a substantive consensus on what constitutes the cultural values of society and its conception of the public good. For cultural republicans, the role of the political community is not to keep these values and conceptions of the good out of politics; rather, the community is justified in actively promoting them through public institutions and policies. This view will be addressed in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6 as part of my discussion of *republican nationalism*, a concept that combines cultural republicanism and nationalism. For now, it is enough to note the difference between Honohan's attempt to separate extra-political culture and nationality from the political process, and the cultural republican view that this cannot be done.

Honohan also points out that the republican conception of recognition places considerable importance on the attitudes, relationships and mutual obligations between citizens, as opposed to the liberal tendency to emphasize the contractarian agreement on common procedures, institutions, and a pragmatic coexistence.¹⁰³ Honohan believes that while liberals take an association of strangers and communitarians take the family as the model for the political community, republicans see their fellow citizens as colleagues; separate, diverse, and relatively distant individuals whose involuntary interdependence creates common concerns and the possibility of addressing them together (the colleagues model of citizenship). As Honohan notes, "on this analogy citizens may be relatively distant and different from one another, have no close emotional engagement, but yet

¹⁰³ Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, 266.

recognise the commitments entailed in a valuable relationship, thicker than the civility between strangers but of a kind different from friends and family.”¹⁰⁴ Honohan considers this particular conception of citizenship to be quintessentially republican, as opposed to liberal or communitarian. However, we know that some of the thinkers who most profoundly influenced republicanism, including Aristotle and Rousseau, conceived of citizenship as more than a relationship between colleagues; for Aristotle, the relationship between citizens was based on *friendship*, and for Rousseau it was modeled on the *family*. Thus, it appears that Honohan commits the same error as Pettit; in order to paint republicanism as a whole in a particular light, she discounts the views of some of the most important theorists in the tradition. Rousseau would accuse Honohan of neglecting the importance of *sentiments* in tying the political community together, sentiments which are a prerequisite for establishing a society in which citizens are capable of overcoming their narrow self-interest in the name of the common good.

Honohan believes in promoting a political patriotism over what she calls ethnic and cultural nationalism. She claims that the love of country must be synonymous with the love of liberty attained through the republic, because republicans are concerned with self-determining and self-governing citizens, not with nations or cultures. She argues that culture can be taken into account in politics without making a common national culture the basis of a political community, and she sees nationalism as a form of communitarianism that is based on a “pre-political” (extra-political) identity. Whereas cultural nationality is based on a perceived commonality of extra-political culture or history, for Honohan republican citizenship is based not on extra-political commonality but on the political recognition of multiply generated independencies, and on the interaction that takes place within the framework of a state. Honohan says that in a republican state there are no cultural restrictions on membership, and if there are common cultural values they are the outcome of political interaction, provisionally embodied and open to change. According to Honohan:

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 269.

The republican conception of citizenship outlined here is closer to that of a liberal nationality, in which citizenship is defined in terms of membership of a shared public culture, rather than a deeper culture or ethnicity. But it is still distinct from it, since republican citizenship rests fundamentally on the possibility of self-government of those who share a common fate rather than on specifically articulated public values.¹⁰⁵

In stark contrast to Honohan's view, cultural republicans make a common national identity and culture the basis of the political community (as is evident in Rousseau's *Constitution for Corsica* and *Government of Poland*), and they hold that while loving liberty and the laws is important, the love of country must also be synonymous with the love of nation. Honohan acknowledges that it has been argued that, in practice, individuals will recognize the importance of republican citizenship only if it is rooted in some type of common culture. Essentially, "the argument is that in large modern states, in which people cannot personally identify with others, citizens' virtue, or active participation, supporting the common good and accepting the degree of redistribution which republican politics requires, depends on their being able to share certain sentiments and identity, or at least to give priority to a shared public culture."¹⁰⁶ On this account, the nation is the necessary foundation for the republican community. Miller believes that "nationality gives people the common identity that makes it possible for them to conceive of shaping their world together."¹⁰⁷ In this regard, Miller's view is in line with Rousseau's, who also believes that only a common national identity can create the bonds necessary for establishing a community of virtuous republican citizens capable of seeing beyond their individual interests and embracing the common good. For Rousseau, the common good consists of actively promoting the kind of civic virtue and citizen character that ensures the development of a spirit of fraternity, solidarity, and reciprocity, which is made possible only by the strong social bonds of a *national* community.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 275.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 276.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Nevertheless, Honohan argues against rooting republican citizenship in a common culture and nationality because modern nations are by and large not ethnically homogeneous nation-states. As we live in a diverse and pluralistic world, Honohan believes that giving precedence to an existing common public culture will be advantageous for some and exclusive or even oppressive to others. It is important to note, however, that while cultural republicans clearly root republican citizenship in a common national culture, they are not actually advocating for the establishment of ethnically homogeneous nation-states that are open only to members of one particular ethnicity or culture. What they want is the promotion of a shared national culture that includes all of the diverse ethnicities and subcultures which already exist within the modern state, and yet still forms an *encompassing* national identity that all citizens can embrace. While citizens may belong to various ethnic, cultural, or territorial groups, and while they should be free to maintain those ties, they should also be willing to embrace a common *national* culture that transcends sectional identities and unites the citizens into a single national community (for more on this, see Chapters 5 and 6). Honohan maintains that republican solidarity should be understood as a commitment to the people with whom we are interdependent within the political community, and that it should not be defined in terms of either liberal institutions and political principles, or loyalty to a nation, whether ethnic, cultural, or civic. According to Honohan, “sharing a common fate may often be enough to motivate support for policies which aim at the common good without there needing to be a deeper sense of belonging together, which a shared national identity would involve.”¹⁰⁸

Moreover, in claiming that the interdependence of the citizens’ fate and future ought to constitute a sufficient foundation for the political community, Honohan goes so far as to raise the possibility of a “republican cosmopolitanism” that allows for multiple sovereignties and more porous boundaries, referencing the European Union (EU) as a potential example of this new type of community. A republic which does not depend on pre-existing and extra-political cultural commonalities would provide a model for future

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 281.

transnational political communities, and the EU is the most vivid modern example of attempting to establish the institutions of government at levels other than the nation. Honohan argues that, like the relationships between colleagues, the relationships and obligations of republican citizens can be more permeable and extensive than those between the members of a single common culture.¹⁰⁹ Thus, Honohan offers the possibility of a cosmopolitan citizenship emerging from the bottom up, “through the development of increasing webs of relationships or ranges of overlapping economic, environmental and cultural interdependencies, rather than depending on the prior existence of a world-state or based on *a priori* principles of a universal humanity.”¹¹⁰ She concludes that the recognition and special obligations of citizens are rooted in interdependence rather than commonality, cultural identity, or feelings of attachment, and that instead of having to choose between nationally based obligations and cosmopolitan obligations, “we should think of people as having responsibilities in irregularly extending and overlapping networks in which citizenship rather than nationality constitutes one of the most important frameworks.”¹¹¹

This is what Honohan calls the republican conception of citizenship (colleagues model of citizenship), and she contrasts this model with what she believes to be two polarized alternatives; the liberal model (capable of extension but too thin), and the cultural nationalist model (demands commitment at the cost of excluding or oppressing non-members). And yet by calling her colleagues model of citizenship *the* republican conception of citizenship, she again ignores the friendship model of citizenship of Aristotle and the family model of citizenship of Rousseau. Rousseau argues that loving one’s fellow citizens as members of an extended family (as opposed to treating them like colleagues), loving the community, and loving the nation constitute the prerequisites for establishing the rule of the general will (for more on this, see Chapters 3 and 4). As such, his ideas were crucial to the development of our modern understanding of national

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 284.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 286.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 288.

identity and culture, and his philosophy provided the moral justification for nationalism. In the *Constitution for Corsica*, Rousseau declares: “Every people has or ought to have a national character, and if it lacks one it would be necessary to begin by giving it one.”¹¹² He believes that a common national identity has intrinsic value, and that this identity helps shape citizens into virtuous members of the republic. Furthermore, Rousseau stresses that a proper republican state should be defensive in character, limited in size, and that it must remain autonomous and sovereign. Rousseau would never have endorsed Honohan’s views about a “republican cosmopolitanism” with multiple sovereignties and porous borders akin to those of the EU. Aside from the bureaucratic complexities and democratic deficits of the EU, Rousseau would have seen such supranational projects as dangerous infringements on the sovereignty of the republic and as threats to the preservation of its distinct national character. Moreover, as Catherine Frost argues:

Transnational democratic institutions have turned in disappointing results when it comes to capturing the loyalty or allegiances of the multinational populations they serve (Kymlicka 2004: 257-61). Such institutions may be established, and often with the best of intentions, but representation cannot be imposed on a population. In the absence of a pre-existing frame of reference that reflects this structure, a multinational or transnational representational order is unlikely to have much meaning or legitimacy for a population. And at present any transnational or multinational frameworks that exist (such as the European Union, for instance) are weak as compared to national ones (Kymlicka 2004: 258; Murphy and Harty 2003: 186). While they may present a more pluralist alternative to nationalism, then, these new political forms may also reduce the representational resources a population can bring to bear on its political and cultural life.¹¹³

As we can see, the views of a contemporary civic humanist like Honohan are very different from a cultural republican like Rousseau, and also from other contemporary republican thinkers like Miller. Just like Rousseau, Miller believes that the virtues required by republican citizenship can be cultivated only within the borders of a nation-state, and a common national identity and public culture are essential for producing the

¹¹² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Plan for a Constitution for Corsica,” in *The Plan for Perpetual Peace, On the Government of Poland, and Other Writings on History and Politics*, trans. Christopher Kelly and Judith Bush, (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2005,) 133.

¹¹³ Catherine Frost, *Morality and Nationalism*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 116.

kind of solidarity that is needed for a system of inclusive deliberative democracy to take shape.¹¹⁴ A common public culture should not be so all-embracing that it destroys private subcultures, but it should have substantial content and meaning for members of the national community.¹¹⁵ Consequently, Miller posits that “political communities should as far as possible be organized in such a way that their members share a common national identity, which binds them together in the face of their many diverse private and group identities.”¹¹⁶ Although Honohan and others tend to classify them as “communitarian,” republicans like Miller rightly resist the label because it does nothing to clarify the debate within republicanism, and I argue that Miller’s theories fall within a distinct *cultural* strand of republicanism that is rooted in the works of Rousseau. Cultural republicanism differs from both instrumental republicanism and civic humanism, but it remains an integral part of the wider republican tradition. In the next chapter, I take a closer look at Rousseau’s specific brand of republicanism and how it relates to our modern understandings of democracy, culture, and nationalism.

¹¹⁴ Miller, *On Nationality*, 5.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, 22-27.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 188.

Chapter 3

3 Rousseau's Republicanism

In this chapter I address some misconceptions about Rousseau's political philosophy and its relationship to the French Revolution and beyond. I then go on to consider Rousseau's cultural republicanism and I identify his most important contributions to republican political theory, including his notions about the two social contracts and the problem of inequality, as well as his understanding of the people as sovereign, the general will, and the moral republic. In Chapter 4, I argue that Rousseau is both a distinctly republican thinker and the father of modern nationalism, and that his unique brand of republicanism has important implications for contemporary debates in nationalist theory.

3.1 Addressing Misconceptions: Rousseau and the French Revolution

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) left a lasting legacy on republican political theory and on the wider discipline of political science. The influence of his ideas can be seen in the works of such diverse thinkers as Kant, Wollstonecraft, Hegel, Marx, Rawls, and Derrida. Rousseau's ideas are said to have inspired the ideals of the French Revolution, and it is believed that Robespierre carried a copy of Rousseau's *Social Contract* everywhere he went. Consequently, liberal thinkers from Benjamin Constant to Isaiah Berlin have suggested that the excesses of the French Revolution (including the Terror) have their roots in Rousseau's work. Further still, some have suggested that the brutal totalitarian movements of the 20th century can be traced back to Rousseau's philosophy. As J.S. Maloy observes:

Rousseau's efforts to develop an account of moral economy have supplied much of the ammunition over the years for those who have charged that Rousseau's politics are essentially "totalitarian." The dangers of trying to realize an antique conception of virtue under modern conditions were flagged as early as 1819 in Constant's famous speech on "ancient" and "modern liberty." But the twentieth century added Nazism and Stalinism to Jacobinism on the list of horrors for which

Rousseau could be blamed. The question of moral psychology was paramount in all this, for Rousseau was considered to have advocated just the sort of tampering with human nature which the totalitarian regimes of mid-century had tried to instantiate.¹¹⁷

To use Constant's terminology, Rousseau is known for defending "ancient" liberty which defines citizenship as a moral obligation to actively participate in politics, and which requires self-realization and considerable self-sacrifice with regards to the citizen's time and energy. This is distinct from "modern" liberty, which is defined primarily in terms of equal legal status, the rule of law, and freedom from undue interference by government.¹¹⁸ Although the "totalitarian thesis" in Rousseau has largely been discredited among committed students of his work, the residue of totalitarianism still hangs over discussions of Rousseau in lecture halls and seminar rooms of twenty-first century universities. The underlying assumption is always that "Rousseau did indeed defend, in the name of the radical alteration of human character, authoritative and robustly transitive mechanisms of psychological influence and control."¹¹⁹ Rousseau argued for the regulation or redirection of natural inclinations or passions, but he did *not* advocate wholesale psychological transformation (a defining characteristic of totalitarian regimes).¹²⁰ As noted in the previous chapter, Rousseau did believe in freedom as self-mastery (FSM) and in channeling the passions in constructive rather than destructive ways. Nevertheless, Rousseau condemned all forms of authoritarian rule by a single person or group of people, argued for a profoundly democratic society in which all sovereign power rests in the general will of the people, and insisted that all individuals must be treated as autonomous moral agents. As such, I interpret Rousseau's philosophy

¹¹⁷ J.S. Maloy, "The Very Order of Things: Rousseau's Tutorial Republicanism," *Polity*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (April 2005), 237.

¹¹⁸ For more, see Chapter 2 and the distinctions between positive and negative liberty, as well as between instrumental and strong republicanism.

¹¹⁹ Maloy, "The Very Order of Things," 237.

¹²⁰ For more, see: J.S. Maloy, "The Very Order of Things: Rousseau's Tutorial Republicanism," *Polity*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (April 2005), 235-261.

to be not only incompatible with but directly opposed to all types of totalitarian rule. A careful study of Rousseau's work must begin with this basic understanding.

There is little doubt that Rousseau's republican ideals had a profound influence on the French Revolution, but it is important to address some of the misconceptions regarding this influence. Contrary to claims that the actors of the French Revolution were attempting to faithfully implement Rousseau's theoretical principles in practice, François Furet points out that "the revolutionaries were quite unfaithful to the *Social Contract*: between 1789 and 1800, they devoted all their energy to founding a representative government, the very type Rousseau had declared intrinsically corrupt, since the will of the people could not be transferred and therefore could not be represented."¹²¹ Revolutionaries like the Abbé Sieyès argued that the unenlightened masses did not possess sufficient virtues of citizenship to take a direct and active part in governing, and his solution was the representation of the less enlightened by the more enlightened. He proclaimed that "without alienating their rights, citizens may delegate their exercise," a statement that appears contrary to the principles of the *Social Contract*. The institutions that were established during the French Revolution were "obviously incompatible with Rousseau's insistence in the *Social Contract* on the formation of the law by the general will."¹²² Furthermore, Rousseau cannot be blamed for the fact that the French revolutionary period was so receptive to an absolutist conception of sovereign power. The reality is that prerevolutionary France was also the France of absolutism; the revolutionaries carried over the tradition of absolute sovereignty in France from monarchy into republicanism. Tocqueville demonstrated that the absolute monarchy of prerevolutionary France "constituted in itself a first revolution that was in itself a necessary condition for that of 1789," and as Furet observes, France's "experience of absolutism led directly to a unitary concept of sovereignty. Experience and the habits it

¹²¹ François Furet, "Rousseau and the French Revolution," in *The Legacy of Rousseau*, ed. Clifford Orwin and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 173.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 174.

bred were surely more compelling than the effects of reading the *Social Contract*—which had hardly been a best-seller.”¹²³

For more than two centuries critics have tried to implicate Rousseau’s ideas in the excesses of the French Revolution and the terrible crimes that took place during the Terror. Robespierre, the leader of the Jacobins, is often portrayed as a zealous follower of Rousseau and his actions are presented as the inevitable consequence of trying to implement Rousseau’s ideas in practice. Jacob Talmon went so far as to directly blame Rousseau’s philosophy for the rise of that he calls “totalitarian Messianic democracy,” claiming that “Rousseau’s ‘general will’, an ambiguous concept, sometimes concocted as valid a priori, sometimes as immanent in the will of man, exclusive and implying unanimity, became the driving force of totalitarian democracy, and the source of all its contradictions and antinomies.”¹²⁴ While Rousseau’s republican ideals, including his notions about the two social contracts, the people as sovereign, the general will, and the moral republic, appealed to many of the revolutionaries, it would be academically dishonest to blame Rousseau’s ideas for the actions of the revolutionaries, or to hold him responsible for the Revolution’s failings. The revolutionaries, including Robespierre, had their own agendas, and in pursuing them they did not hesitate to disregard Rousseau’s fundamental ideas and principles. A close study of his work shows that Rousseau would not have condoned the excesses of the Revolution and, as Allan Bloom argues, “Rousseau would... certainly have disapproved of Robespierre.”¹²⁵ In fact, it was widely understood that Rousseau had neither predicted the Revolution nor anticipated the bloodshed that followed, to say nothing of condoning it. As William Doyle writes: “It is hard to imagine either Voltaire or Rousseau reveling in the events which, from only eleven years after their deaths, were often so glibly attributed to their influence.

¹²³ Ibid., 175.

¹²⁴ J.L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (Britain: Secker & Warburg, 1960), 6.

¹²⁵ Allan Bloom, “Rousseau’s Critique of Liberal Constitutionalism,” in *The Legacy of Rousseau*, ed. Clifford Orwin and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 163.

Robespierre, as proud a disciple as any of the Enlightenment, declared: ‘Political writers... had in no way foreseen this Revolution.’¹²⁶

Although Robespierre paid lip service to Rousseau’s notion of popular sovereignty (the people as sovereign) in the early years of the Revolution, after expelling the Girondins from the National Convention, Robespierre “would unceasingly defend the national representation against any popular intervention, and his notion of the dictatorship of public safety, which he exercised by virtue of powers granted by the Convention and only the Convention, no longer resembled in any way the ideas of the *Social Contract*.”¹²⁷ Furthermore, even if Robespierre had been genuinely committed to Rousseau’s ideals in principle, his methods were obviously incompatible with Rousseau’s philosophy and Rousseau himself would surely have condemned them. Rousseau stressed that the general will could not be represented by any one man or committee of men and he abhorred political factionalism; as such, the mass executions of the Terror, conducted without due process and carried out as a means to the end of eliminating perceived opponents of the Jacobin faction, would have shocked Rousseau. And while the revolutionaries were certainly aware and respectful of the republican writings that Rousseau produced in an era dominated by political absolutism, they never attempted to directly follow his political formulas during the course of the Revolution. Nevertheless, Rousseau’s work remains a critical tool for evaluating the successes and failures of a Revolution that was inspired by the same spirit of freedom and equality that he first brought to life in his writings.

3.2 The Two Social Contracts and the Problem of Inequality

In this section I discuss the lasting importance of Rousseau’s ideas about the two social contracts and the problem of inequality. I emphasize that these aspects of Rousseau’s philosophy are firmly rooted in republican political thought, and that they

¹²⁶ William Doyle. *The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 74.

¹²⁷ Furet, “Rousseau and the French Revolution,” 177.

make an important contribution to republicanism. When I say “the two social contracts,” I am referring to the fact that Rousseau distinguished between the *current* social contract (which Hobbes and Locke sought to explain and defend in their own different ways, and which Rousseau believed to be illegitimate and therefore immoral), and the *new* social contract proposed by Rousseau (which is the subject of his *Social Contract*, and which he believed to be legitimate and therefore moral).

According to Rousseau, those like Thomas Hobbes who claim that the state of nature is one of violence and competition, and who then go on to draw conclusions about the nature of the social contract based on this view, do not go back far enough. In the *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau contends that before the development of society man led a simple and peaceful way of life. The differences that set man apart from all the other creatures was his unique ability to consciously share in his own operations, as well as his capacity for self-improvement. Unlike animals, understood by Rousseau to be ingenious machines of nature governed solely by instinct, man is a creature governed by free will. All animals are born with *amour de soi*, a self-regarding love of self that is independent of the opinions of others, but it is man’s free will and capacity for self-improvement that gives him the unique ability to act against his natural instincts. It is his free will and the ability for self-improvement (perfectibility) that distinguishes man from other animals and eventually leads him to develop complex and interdependent social relationships with other human beings that go beyond the mere instinct for self-preservation. Out of these complex social relationships we see the eventual development of pre-political societies (communities of people who live together but have not yet established formal political institutions or laws), and the formation of these permanent communities ultimately gives rise to what Rousseau calls *amour-propre* (an artificial love of self that is dependent entirely on the opinion of others). Rousseau explains:

Amour-propre must not be confused with the love of self [*amour de soi*]: for they differ both in themselves and in their effects. Love of self [*amour de soi*] is a natural feeling which leads every animal to look to its own preservation, and which, guided in man by reason and modified by compassion, creates humanity and virtue. *Amour-propre* is a purely relative and fictitious feeling, which arises in the state of society, leads each individual to make more of himself than any other, and is the real source of the ‘sense of honour.’ This being understood, I maintain

that, in our primitive condition, in the true state of nature, *amour-propre* does not exist.¹²⁸

Amour-propre is synonymous with narrow self-interest, selfishness, vanity, and an extreme dependency on the opinions of others (we see ourselves through the eyes of others, and our own identity depends on what others think of us). According to Rousseau, as men in the state of nature become more social, they begin to compare themselves to others, become mindful of their opinions, and develop a sense of pride that often degenerates into jealousy and rivalry. *Amour-propre*, this uniquely human characteristic, becomes the source of all the inequality and corruption in society as men engage in endless competition over property, honour, and power, thereby becoming selfish, petty, and ruthless creatures. Simply put, *amour-propre* is the root cause of all the vices in civil society and the primary source of injustice in the modern world. In Rousseau's view, natural man is self-regarding and compassionate; when Hobbes spoke of the "state of nature" that was a state of war of all against all, he was not talking about man in his natural state, but about the social man already corrupted by the negative effects of *amour-propre*. Hobbes fails to see the state of nature as it was before pre-political societies were formed, and he also fails to acknowledge the universal principle of compassion which governs natural man. Rousseau says:

There is another principle which has escaped Hobbes; which, having been bestowed on mankind, to moderate, on certain occasions, the impetuosity of [*amour-propre*], or, before its birth, the desire of self-preservation, tempers the ardour with which he pursues his own welfare, by an innate repugnance at seeing a fellow creature suffer. I think I need not fear contradiction in holding man to be possessed of the only natural virtue, which could not be denied him by the most violent detractor of human virtue. I am speaking of compassion, which is a disposition suitable to creatures so weak and subject to so many evils as we certainly are: by so much the more universal and useful to mankind, as it comes before any kind of reflection; and at the same time so natural, that the very brutes themselves sometimes give evident proofs of it.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origins of Inequality," in *The Social Contract and the Discourses*, trans. G.D.H. Cole (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1973), 66.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

As men begin comparing themselves to others in society, they begin competing for wealth, esteem, and property (private property itself being the primary cause of material inequality in the modern world), and they also begin exploiting each other for their own private advantage. As the state of pre-political society becomes a state of war, those who had amassed great wealth and property by exploiting their fellow man find their ill-gotten riches constantly threatened by the poor masses who know that the rich have no legitimate claim to their unequal wealth; the rich are nothing more than usurpers of the fruits of the earth, which belong equally to all. Rousseau famously states:

The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying *This is mine*, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: Beware of listening to this imposter; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody.¹³⁰

Rousseau argues that this constitutes “the first step towards inequality, and at the same time towards vice.”¹³¹ Eventually, the rich minority decided to protect their own unequal wealth from the poor majority by creating political institutions which, under the guise of preserving order and security, secured the usurpations of the rich against retaliation from the poor. With that, the first (and current) social contract was established.

Just as he rejects Hobbes’ account of human nature, Rousseau disavows Locke’s take on private property. Rousseau argues that free and equal people would never consent to the great inequalities of wealth that characterize modern society. For Rousseau, the social contract that Locke describes in effect justifies and defends class divisions, exploitation, and large inequalities in wealth because Locke is primarily concerned with the “rational and industrious man” and his “right” to protect his property from both the king and the poor masses. Rousseau is concerned with all citizens, and while he believes

¹³⁰ Ibid, 76.

¹³¹ Ibid, 81.

that private property is justified within reason, he asserts that for a republican society to remain free and democratic, there have to be firm limits on material inequality.¹³²

As noted in the previous chapter, Rousseau tells us that no citizen ought to be wealthy enough to buy another, or so poor as to have to sell himself.¹³³ In the *Discourse on Political Economy*, he emphasizes that “it is therefore one of the most important functions of government to prevent extreme inequality of fortunes; not by taking away wealth from its possessors, but by depriving all men of means to accumulate it; not by building hospitals for the poor, but by securing the citizens from becoming poor.”¹³⁴ Firm limits on material inequality are necessary in order to allow all individuals to achieve their full potential as citizens; meaningful democratic citizenship is impossible for those who are so poor that they depend entirely on others for their very survival. Rousseau distinguishes between two types of inequality: the first is natural inequality, which includes disparities in physical strength, intellectual capacity, age, and health. The second is moral inequality, which is an artificial form of inequality that arises only in society. Whereas natural inequality is simply the way things are by nature, moral inequality is socially constructed and can be either just or unjust. Rousseau believes that as far as moral inequality is concerned, citizens ought to be distinguished based on their contributions to society; social privileges should not be distributed to all citizens indiscriminately, but to each according to his deserts. According to Rousseau, “distributive justice would oppose this rigorous equality of the state of nature, even were it practicable in civil society; as all the members of the State owe it their services in proportion to their talents and abilities, they ought, on their side, to be distinguished and favoured in proportion to the services they have actually rendered.”¹³⁵ Although he is a

¹³² Bloom, “Rousseau’s Critique of Liberal Constitutionalism,” 152-153.

¹³³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract, Book II Ch. 11*, ed. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2011) 189.

¹³⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Discourse on Political Economy,” in *The Social Contract and the Discourses*, trans. G.D.H. Cole (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1973), 134.

¹³⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origins of Inequality,” in *The Social Contract and the Discourses*, trans. G.D.H. Cole (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1973), 100.

strong proponent of meritocracy, Rousseau concedes that some degree of material inequality is bound to exist within society (he does not believe in complete equality of outcome or in abolishing private property), but he argues that material inequality, being entirely manmade, can be either justified or unjustified. As Frederick Neuhouer explains, “in saying, for example, that the state’s goal should be to bring the extremes of rich and poor ‘as close together as possible,’ Rousseau acknowledges that absolute equality in ‘power and riches’ is too severe a demand (*SC*, II.11.ii). Thus, the mere artificiality of inequality does not imply that it is unjustified; its artificiality merely means that it is appropriate for normative questions regarding its legitimacy to be raised.”¹³⁶

Rousseau stresses the importance of limiting material inequality in society because excessive dependence on others destroys freedom; those who are very poor will be forced to do things to survive that they may never have done under other circumstances, and those who are very rich will be able to use their wealth to gain undue influence over others. Neuhouer correctly notes that according to Rousseau, equality is instrumentally valuable for freedom because material inequality greatly exacerbates the dependence of citizens on others; inequality is derivative of freedom in that too much inequality threatens freedom.¹³⁷ As Neuhouer states,

That Rousseau condemns economic inequality because of its consequences is made clear in his discussion of the constraints that considerations of freedom place on inequality, especially in his well-known claim that the general will has two principal aims—freedom and equality—and that equality (in wealth and power) is such an aim because “freedom cannot subsist without it” (*SC*, II.11.i.). Here Rousseau states unambiguously that we should seek economic equality because (and only when) it threatens social members’ freedom.¹³⁸

Material inequality is acceptable only in so far as it does not threaten the fundamental interests of any citizen, including his freedom and the basic social conditions of his well-

¹³⁶ Frederick Neuhouer, “Rousseau’s Critique of Economic Inequality”, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (September 2013), 195.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 197.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 208.

being. As such, the legitimate republic (once established by the *new* social contract) has both the right and the obligation to set policies that ensure that material inequality will be limited in this way. It must be stressed, however, that the specific type of freedom that Rousseau is interested in promoting is freedom as self-mastery or FSM, which requires citizens to be ruled by laws that they make for themselves. Neuhaus does an excellent job of connecting Rousseau's understanding of freedom and equality to his emphasis on the importance of participation, stating:

If laws—even good laws—are to avoid being a source of domination, they must actually be made by those subject to them. Because legislation must be a collective enterprise, I can determine the laws that govern me only by actively participating in a democratic process in which those laws are made. As a citizen, I determine for myself what I am to do only insofar as I am an active member of the group that literally makes the laws that govern all of us. Moreover, my participation in that process must be sufficiently substantial that the claim that the laws issue from me—from an *us* that incorporates me as an active participant—is not merely a hollow slogan, even when some of the laws that emerge from that process diverge from my opinion of what our collective ideals and interests require us to do. This is why participatory democracy is not a peripheral feature of Rousseau's vision of the legitimate republic; it is, rather, essential to avoiding domination in such a republic, and on this issue his differences from traditional republicans could hardly be starker. Rousseau agrees with them that “law that answers systematically to people's . . . interests . . . does not compromise people's liberty,” but only on the further condition that those laws are, in a robust sense, collectively issued by the very people subject to them.¹³⁹

Rousseau holds that we must have firm limits on material inequality in order to make meaningful democracy possible. This satisfies the first requirement of FSM, which states that citizens must have a direct say in shaping the laws that govern them (see table in Chapter 2). The other requirement of FSM is that citizens must learn to overcome their mere appetites and narrow self-interests in the name of the common good, and setting firm limits on material inequality is also fundamentally important for this second requirement. David Lay Williams explains:

Perhaps the most pernicious effects of economic inequality, for Rousseau, are wrought on the soul. Tremendous wealth, on his reasoning, enfeebles the

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 202.

conscience. We social animals are always driven to distinguish ourselves, to prove ourselves better than others. This is not always socially destructive, insofar as distinction is granted for the right reasons – namely, civic and sociable behavior. Society, however, has increasingly not only rewarded distinction with wealth, but made wealth a distinction worthy of respect. Where this happens, one’s status owes not just to one’s wealth per se, but to one’s wealth relative to the poverty of others. Rousseau worried that in the most unequal societies, the rich would acquire a “pleasure of dominating” that renders them “like those ravenous wolves which once they have tasted human flesh scorn all other food, and from then on want only to devour men.” Against a mind degraded in this way, addicted to the pleasure of domination, no appeal to justice, fairness, or any other value we like to think defines us, can have any effect; and no just society can stand on such foundations.¹⁴⁰

In sum, equality is instrumentally valuable for Rousseau because it makes FSM possible. Although we cannot eliminate it completely, in the legitimate republic established by the new social contract we must set firm limits on material inequality in order to ensure that all citizens have the ability to fully express their freedom through self-realization and political participation. A civil society which fails to live up to these standards is illegitimate; in allowing excessive material inequality it denies freedom in the fullest sense and is in effect governed by the principle of “might makes right.”

Rousseau declares that civil society in its current form fails to live up to the aforementioned standards, and that the social contract as it exists today is illegitimate because it “irretrievably destroyed natural liberty, eternally fixed the law of property and inequality, converted clever usurpation into unalterable right, and, for the advantage of the few ambitious individuals, subjected all mankind to perpetual labour, slavery, and wretchedness.”¹⁴¹ Simply put, those who currently rule over the people do not have legitimate authority. This is because the current social contract formalizes and institutionalizes the law of the strongest, a condition it was originally designed to remedy.

¹⁴⁰ David Lay Williams, “Should We Care About Inequality? Let’s Ask a Philosopher,” *The Washington Post*, March 28, 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/28/should-we-care-about-inequality-lets-ask-a-philosopher/> (retrieved 25 November, 2015).

¹⁴¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origins of Inequality,” in *The Social Contract and the Discourses*, trans. G.D.H. Cole (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1973), 89.

It is a contract into which mankind entered unwittingly and under false pretences. On that basis, Rousseau declares the current social contract null and void, and he sets out to establish a new, legitimate contract that has the moral and political authority to govern man.

3.3 The People as Sovereign, the General Will, and the Moral Republic

Having argued that the current social contract is illegitimate because it is founded upon arbitrary force and therefore has no moral basis, Rousseau sets out to develop a new legitimate social contract founded upon morals and reciprocity. According to Rousseau, “society must be studied by means of men, and men by means of society. Those who want to treat politics and morals separately will never understand anything of either of the two.”¹⁴² For Rousseau, politics is not merely about security or private property, it is about *morality*. It is worth noting that both Hobbes and Locke saw their own visions of political sovereignty as moral visions, but Rousseau rejects their claims, arguing instead that the social contracts they described were illegitimate and therefore immoral. Conceding that it is no longer possible for man to return to the state of nature, Rousseau wants to find a way to bring diverse groups of individuals together in civil society and turn them into a sovereign people in a way that would end the unequal dependence of men on each other (such as the dependence of the poor on the rich, and vice versa) and replace it with the reciprocal dependence of each individual on the whole. This new contract must somehow ensure that each man gives himself to all and yet remains as free as before.

In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau seeks to establish legitimate sovereign authority, and he does so by providing what he believes to be the only moral foundation for sovereignty—the *general will*. As G.D.H. Cole observes:

¹⁴² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 235.

Rousseau's purpose in the *Social Contract* is to show that the 'sovereign'—the people, considered collectively as a body with the authority to lay down absolutely binding law for each of its members—has a moral claim on our allegiance that stems from our having (whether actually or in thought) given ourselves to its authority without reservation. This supposes that we are so completely members of the state to which we all owe allegiance that there is no competing moral authority in our lives; and Rousseau gave great offence to his contemporaries by relegating religion to a subordinate role in the political system, and doing everything possible to remove the possibility of conflict between our duties to God and our duties to the 'sovereign'.¹⁴³

By relegating religion and other competing moral authorities to a subordinate role in politics, Rousseau follows in the classical republican tradition of Machiavelli, who famously divorced civic from Christian values. In fact, J.G.A. Pocock claims that "Rousseau was the Machiavelli of the eighteenth century," adding that "as with Machiavelli, it took time to discern the extraordinary strength of intellect which kept Rousseau a major classical theorist in the humanist succession."¹⁴⁴

When I say "the people as sovereign," I am referring to Rousseau's belief that the general will cannot be represented, and that all citizens are therefore obliged to take an active part in creating the laws that govern them. According to Rousseau, the true sovereign is neither a ruling class nor the formal institutions of the state, but the citizen body as a whole. The people govern through the general will; a will that is indivisible and always aims at the common good. To be a citizen of a community governed by the general will requires overcoming one's narrow self-interest in the name of the common interest—overcoming one's particular will in the name of the general will (FSM). The particular will is defined as being solely concerned with what is in each individual's private interest, even if said interest can only be satisfied at the expense of the community as a whole. Conversely, the general will always considers what is in the common interest of the community and holds that what is best for the whole is ultimately best for the

¹⁴³ G.D.H. Cole, trans., *The Social Contract and the Discourses* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1958), xx.

¹⁴⁴ J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 504-505.

individual, who is an intrinsic part of that whole. It is this general will—this enlightened part of ourselves that aims only at the common interest—that pulls us up by our chains and forces us to be free; forces us to reciprocate the virtues, duties, and responsibilities of our compatriots; forces us to be *citizens*.

Rousseau's republicanism distinguishes itself from the instrumental republicanism of someone like Machiavelli (and contemporary instrumental republicans like Pettit and Skinner) by its strong emphasis on morality and the good. I use the term "moral republic" to refer to the society that Rousseau hopes to establish through the new and legitimate social contract that he proposes because, according to Rousseau, all other political communities are illegitimate and therefore immoral; they merely institutionalized the principle of "might makes right" and thus failed to promote meaningful freedom for their citizens. For Rousseau, only a republic ruled by the general will is a *moral* republic. It is important to note that Rousseau is not merely interested in a well-armed and stable republican state that can protect its citizens from foreign invasion and tyranny. Rather, he wants to establish a strong republic with a firm moral grounding. He seeks not only the formation of stable political institutions, but also to reform the moral character of citizens and to synthesize civic duty and pragmatic notions of the common good with the classical pursuit of morality and justice. Rousseau insists that strict laws alone cannot instill proper morals into the citizens of a republic; laws ought to draw their force from proper morals, not the other way around. Furthermore, citizens should not only observe but love the laws as an embodiment of good morals and civic virtue. Rousseau references Ancient Sparta, where "laws and morals [manners], intimately united in the hearts of the citizens, made, as it were, only one single body."¹⁴⁵ According to Rousseau, the only proper laws are laws which are derived from proper morals and from the noble values of the citizens themselves. Unlike Machiavelli, Rousseau asserts that no laws, no matter how noble, can bring prosperity to a society that has already embraced vice. Good laws and strong armies are not sufficient to secure the

¹⁴⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theatre*, trans. Allan Bloom (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), 66-67.

continued existence of a political community; promoting good morals is just as important. What this means for Rousseau is simple: citizens must do more than merely abide by the laws of the state; rather, they must actively strive to become better people, to pursue self-realization and self-overcoming, and to learn to put the common good before their own private interests. Furthermore, they must take an active part in creating the laws that govern them through direct political participation. In essence, republican citizens must embrace FSM, which requires genuine moral *and* civic virtue; for Rousseau, the good man and the good citizen are one and the same.

Rousseau sees the general will as a shared moral consensus that all citizens strive to establish, and this will alone constitutes sovereignty. The general will establishes a moral and collective body, *le moi commun* (the public person), which Rousseau defines as “a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before.”¹⁴⁶ Rousseau explains:

At once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains votes, and receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life and its will. This public person, so formed by the union of all other persons, formerly took the name of city, and now takes that of Republic or body politic; it is called by its members State when passive, Sovereign when active, and Power when compared with others like itself. Those who are associated in it take collectively the name of people, and severally are called citizens, as sharing in the sovereign power, and subjects, as being under the laws of the State.¹⁴⁷

Rousseau declares that the moral republic must be governed by the people directly, i.e. by the general will of the people, because only the general will aims at the common good of all. Joshua Cohen tells us that “in strikingly spare, intense prose, [Rousseau] gives us a picture of a *free community of equals*, a social-political world in which individuals realize

¹⁴⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, ed. V. Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 49-50.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

their nature as free by living together as equals, giving the laws to themselves, guided in those lawgiving judgments by a conception of their common good.”¹⁴⁸ This is a complex concept, and Rousseau’s critics often claim that it is difficult to determine the general will in practice. Furthermore, critics argue that it is equally difficult to determine whether the general will ultimately aims at the common good. After all, is it not possible for a large group of people to collectively decide to plunge the state into war and chaos? Is it not possible for the general will to become destructive and harmful for society as a whole?

Rousseau holds that the general will is always right and always tends to the public advantage because “undertakings which bind us to the social body are obligatory only because they are mutual; and their nature is such that in fulfilling them we cannot work for others without working for ourselves.”¹⁴⁹ For Rousseau, the only human law that is worthy of obedience is the law we make for ourselves. The general will presupposes a reciprocal agreement between citizens who share common interests; in making political decisions, we ourselves must submit to all of the conditions we impose on others. At the heart of this moral project lies the idea of self-overcoming, or the ability and willingness of the citizen to move past his narrow self-interests in order to grasp, understand, and act upon what is in the common interest. This capacity for willing *generally* constitutes a new kind of freedom; a freedom which moves beyond the satisfaction of mere appetites and allows us to make genuine moral choices. This is a form of human rationality clearly distinct from the strictly self-regarding calculation of personal benefit. Humans are uniquely free because they can choose to resist their appetites and attain a level of self-realization that allows them to serve a good greater than themselves. This is what makes human beings unique among all living creatures; for Rousseau, self-realization and self-overcoming in the name of the common good constitute the most meaningful form of human freedom (FSM).¹⁵⁰ The ability to will *generally* allows citizens to achieve their

¹⁴⁸ Joshua Cohen, *A Free Community of Equals*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 10.

¹⁴⁹ Rousseau, *Social Contract and the Discourses*, 204.

¹⁵⁰ Cohen, *A Free Community of Equals*, 27-29.

full potential as human beings and accomplish feats that would have been impossible outside of the moral republic. In other words, citizens of the moral republic have at their disposal unique choices and opportunities that they would not have anywhere else. In line with the republican understanding of the relationship between freedom and laws, citizens of the moral republic are *more* free than other men; by overcoming the inclination to only satisfy their mere appetites at the expense of everything else, citizens stop being slaves to their appetites and become free in the most meaningful sense. As Bloom explains, “obedience to the general will is an act of freedom.”¹⁵¹ In submitting himself to the rule of the general will, the citizen commits himself to the pursuit of the common good; the good of society as a whole, and by extension, the good of each individual member of society. In obeying the general will man obeys only himself. As Rousseau outlines in the *Social Contract*, “each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.”¹⁵² Only through this reciprocal moral commitment can citizens manage to simultaneously live in civil society and yet still remain free by the standards of FSM.

It is important to note that the general will is not the sum of particular wills. The particular will of each citizen represents the private interest of said individual; it does not take the common good of the community into consideration, and it is often directly opposed to it. By contrast, the general will represents the shared (or general) interest of the republic as a whole, including the common good of all the members of the community. I will use an example to demonstrate the distinction between a particular and general will: a wealthy citizen studying to become a doctor may feel that it is in his particular interest for medical school tuition rates to be raised to a point where most other people are unable to afford them. If this were the case, the wealthy citizen would have less competition in the job market and would likely have his pick of prestigious medical positions due to a lack of other qualified candidates. However, although it would benefit

¹⁵¹ Bloom, “Rousseau’s Critique of Liberal Constitutionalism,” 157.

¹⁵² Rousseau, *Social Contract and the Discourses*, 194.

the wealthy citizen in the short-term, the tuition hike would eventually lead to a reduced quality of medical care and a dangerous shortage of qualified doctors in the community. This would have profoundly negative long-term effects on the community as a whole and, inevitably, on the wealthy citizen himself, on the members of his own family, on his descendents, and so forth. As such, it is clear that the tuition hike in question is incompatible with the common good and is therefore contrary to the general will.

It is also important to note that the general will is not necessarily unanimous, although for a will to be general the votes of all citizens must be counted.¹⁵³ Rousseau explains:

There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter considers only the common interest, while the former takes private interest into account, and is no more than a sum of particular wills: but take away from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel one another, and the general will remains as the sum of the differences.¹⁵⁴

Put simply, the general will is the will that remains once particular wills are canceled out, and this general will always aims at the common good, never at the particular good of individual parts at the expense of the whole. Although narrow self-interest may at times cloud the judgment of individual citizens, thereby leading them to will particularly rather than generally, in the majority of cases citizens of the moral republic will be able to recognize the general will. Referring back to the tuition hike example, a few wealthy citizens studying to become doctors may still support the tuition hike for selfish reasons, but a society which encourages the kind of self-realization and self-overcoming that Rousseau advocates is unlikely to have many individuals who are so blinded by selfishness that they would push for policies that are sure to cause great harm to the entire community in the long run (and, ultimately, to themselves).

The general will is indivisible, and because it is indivisible an act of the sovereign is not the convention between a superior and an inferior but a convention between a body

¹⁵³ Ibid., 200.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 202.

and its parts. Rousseau argues that the sovereign cannot be represented and must be made up of all the citizens collectively, while the executive branch of government, which is made up of representatives, must serve only as an intermediary between the sovereign and its subjects, executing the laws enacted by the sovereign while preserving civil and political liberty. For Rousseau, the government and the sovereign are two distinct concepts. Government officials are mere officers of the people and not its masters; they must be accountable to the sovereign at all times. The fact that the sovereign cannot be represented means that all of the citizens collectively constitute the sovereign power, and hence they must all participate in the democratic process. As Cohen notes:

Sovereign authority lies in effect in the shared understanding of the common advantage in which the interests of each are taken into account. This is the force of Rousseau's remark that the sovereign is not a determinate individual or a determinate collection of individuals, but a "collective being" (SC2.I.2.), a *we* that is constituted by a collection of persons who share an understanding of the common good and accept the authority of that common good in matters of collective decision, not a collection united in submission to a single will.¹⁵⁵

It is clear that Rousseau's political vision of sovereignty is one of participatory democracy, a system in which all citizens take an active part in governing themselves (the people as sovereign). But this system can exist only within the moral republic, where the principle of "might makes right" has been rejected in the name of morals and reciprocity. Furthermore, the rule of the general will cannot be established unless the citizens learn to overcome their narrow self-interest in the name of the common interest. In the following section I argue that, according to Rousseau, citizens must learn to overcome their narrow self-interest and become free in the most meaningful sense (FSM) by embracing the *balance of loves*.

3.4 The Balance of Loves: *Amour de soi*, *Amour-propre*, and Compassion

¹⁵⁵ Cohen, *A Free Community of Equals*, 66.

How can republican citizens come to will *generally*, rather than simply pursue their own private agendas? They do so by setting aside narrow self-interests and committing themselves to the common good of society as a whole. We arrive at the general will by equating the fate of all our fellow citizens with our own individual fate, and the common good of all citizens with our own individual good. In short, we wish unto others as we wish unto ourselves. That said, there are two essential preconditions that must be satisfied for the general will to take shape. The first precondition is to rediscover a sense of *amour de soi* in the face of the corrupting influence of *amour-propre*; we must find a healthy balance between our natural self-regarding love and our social love of self that is dependent on the opinions of others. In the *Discourse on Inequality*, Rousseau tells us that in the state of nature *amour de soi* (the self-regarding love of self) leads every animal to look to its own preservation. However, while in animals *amour de soi* simply amounts to the natural instinct for self-preservation, in human beings it takes on a larger role; according to Rousseau, *amour de soi* “guided in man by reason and modified by compassion, creates humanity and virtue.”¹⁵⁶ Thus, natural man’s uniquely advanced sense of reason coupled with compassion is able to guide and modify man’s *amour de soi* into a quintessentially human quality which creates humanity and virtue. The rise of society and the birth of *amour-propre* corrupts man and turns his gentle natural passions into hateful artificial ones; as such, the key difference between natural man and the social man is “that the savage lives within himself, while social man lives constantly outside himself, and only knows how to live in the opinion of others, so that he seems to receive the consciousness of his own existence merely from the judgment of others concerning him.”¹⁵⁷ If the social man has any hope of overcoming the negative consequences of *amour-propre* (and Rousseau thinks he does, otherwise the entire project of the *Social Contract* would be meaningless), the social man must first rediscover some sense of *amour de soi*. Although it is impossible to return to a state of nature where *amour de soi* reigns supreme and *amour-propre* is nonexistent, the social

¹⁵⁶ Rousseau, “Discourse on Inequality”, 66.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 104.

man must learn to “step back” from the web of dependencies cast by *amour-propre* in order to critically assess them. As long as social man receives, as Rousseau says, “the consciousness of his own existence merely from the judgment of others,” he will be unable to conceive of himself outside the mingled web of *amour-propre*; he will identify completely with what others think of him, and he will see himself solely as others see him. Such a man could not possibly break through the corrupting influence of *amour-propre* and rediscover his humanity and virtue, because he would be completely unable to look beyond the paradigm of *amour-propre*. The first step must be to rediscover a sense of *amour de soi*, which amounts to the realization that I as a human being have intrinsic worth, and that this intrinsic worth is independent of the opinions of others, of the social relationships that bind me to others, of the public roles I adopt, and so forth. In the state of nature this sense of intrinsic worth, coupled with a natural sense of compassion, is the whole story of man. However, in civil society I have social relationships and both public and private roles and obligations that I cannot hope to escape entirely. Nevertheless, once I realize that those social bonds are not the entirety of my existence and that my worth as a human being does not depend on the opinions of others, I am able to “step back” from *amour-propre*, critically assess its consequences, and channel the passions associated with it in more positive and constructive ways. I am able to discern which effects of *amour-propre* are justified and which are not, how much moral inequality is just and how much is unjust, which social expectations are reasonable and which are unreasonable, and so on.

In book 2 of *Emile*, Rousseau tells us that *amour-propre*, despite its many negative effects, is not intrinsically good or bad; it becomes good or bad “only by the applications made of it and the relations given to it.”¹⁵⁸ In *Emile* in particular, Rousseau’s task is to avoid the negative effects of *amour-propre* by raising his pupil according to nature and removing him from the opinions and judgments of society until reason, the guide of *amour-propre*, becomes fully developed. As noted previously, in civil society reason gives way to rational prejudices and overshadows our natural compassion,

¹⁵⁸ Rousseau, *Emile*, 92.

allowing for the development of excessive *amour-propre*. Rousseau believes that if his pupil can remain uncorrupted by the depravity of modern society for long enough to develop a sense of reason independent of the negative effects of *amour-propre*, he can rediscover a sense of *amour de soi* and lead a life of virtue despite the corruption of civil society. In other words, by remaining uncorrupted for long enough to realize that he as a human being possesses intrinsic worth independent of the opinions of others, Emile can tame (though not completely eliminate) his *amour-propre* by rejecting its excesses and channelling its passions in a more constructive direction.¹⁵⁹ This means that although *amour-propre* is the source of the corruption of modern man, it can also have a positive and constructive character. In fact, Rousseau believes that within a political community made up of citizens who are capable of reforming their character and embracing FSM “all of the advantages of the natural state would be united with those of the civil state, and freedom which keeps man exempt from vices would be joined to morality which raises him to virtue.”¹⁶⁰

In his book *Rousseau*, Nicholas Dent notes that *amour-propre* is not inherently competitive and aggressive, although it often takes on these characteristics within modern society. In fact, if *amour-propre* was always and inevitably destructive, the fact that we cannot hope to eliminate *amour-propre* in modern society would make it pointless for Rousseau to have written the *Social Contract* in the first place.¹⁶¹ Dent emphasizes the role of compassion in taming *amour-propre* in order to arrive at a healthy balance of loves between *amour-propre* and the rediscovered sense of *amour de soi*. Dent defines the role of compassion in Rousseau as that of “the mainspring for a more humane and productive basis for moral union between people.”¹⁶² Compassion is for Rousseau the

¹⁵⁹ For a contemporary account of the dangers of excessive *amour-propre*, how it is self-defeating and makes us worse off if we choose to act on it, see: Robert H. Frank, *Luxury Fever: Weighing the Cost of Excess*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

¹⁶⁰ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 85.

¹⁶¹ Nicholas Dent, *Rousseau* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 71-72.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 42.

sole natural virtue, and out of compassion flow all of the social virtues; although compassion has been silenced by excessive *amour-propre* within modern society, compassion can also give birth to a more benign *amour-propre* that allows us to have a positive regard for others while still respecting ourselves.¹⁶³ For Rousseau compassion refers to more than mere pity, and so “even benevolence and friendship are, if we judge rightly, only the effects of compassion, constantly set upon a particular object: for how is it different to wish that another person may not suffer pain and uneasiness and to wish him happy?”¹⁶⁴ Thus, natural compassion does not stop at hoping that others won’t suffer unnecessary harm; we also wish for others to be happy, and our social virtues, such as benevolence and friendship, are the effects of compassion set upon a particular object. As Rousseau points out:

It is then certain that compassion is a natural feeling which, by moderating the violence of love of self in each individual, contributes to the preservation of the whole species. It is this compassion that hurries us without reflection to the relief of those who are in distress: it is this which in a state of nature supplies the place of laws, morals, and virtues, with the advantage that none are tempted to disobey its gentle voice.¹⁶⁵

Compassion moderates “the violence of love of self in each individual,” and while it comes naturally and pre-reflectively in the state of nature where it is “obscure yet lively,” in the state of society where there is excessive *amour-propre* compassion is “developed yet feeble.”¹⁶⁶ This means that the social man still has a sense of compassion, but it has been silenced by *amour-propre*. In order to successfully moderate the negative effects of *amour-propre*, the next step after rediscovering a sense of *amour de soi* must be to discover anew the sole natural virtue: the virtue of compassion.

With *amour de soi* alone, we have a regard for ourselves but not necessarily for others; in the state of nature where *amour-propre* is nonexistent man has no love for the

¹⁶³ Ibid, 72.

¹⁶⁴ Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 68.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

public good. Conversely, with excessive *amour-propre* we come to possess the kind of vanity and selfishness that prevents us from seeing the public good. Essential for the balancing of these two extremes is our natural compassion; compassion is what allows us to overcome the corrupting influence of *amour-propre* and lift ourselves out of the greed and vanity of modern society and into a union of reciprocal regard with our fellow citizens that goes beyond the solitary existence of natural man. Even in the state of nature, compassion compels us to help our fellow human beings who are in need. As such, compassion leads us to look beyond merely our own self-preservation and teaches us to have a positive regard for others. In his analysis of *Emile*, Dent does an excellent job of expounding this view. As Dent points out,

Compassion, spontaneously shown and not used to trap, control or patronise, elicits gratitude as its natural response and by that the compassionate person is thanked and cherished by the one they have helped. A union of mutual regard and esteem is established, created by these interconnections of feeling and concern. Thus it is that another can have a place in our life but without at once being experienced as presenting a challenge and confrontation.¹⁶⁷

This union of mutual regard and esteem that arises out of compassion takes on a new importance once man leaves the state of nature and establishes the permanent relationships of a civil society. We know that compassion is the only natural virtue, and that all social virtues flow out of compassion, but compassion can also be silenced by excessive *amour-propre* that exists in civil society. Rousseau believes that once he has rediscovered a sense of *amour de soi*, the social man must next learn to channel his natural compassion in a way that will give rise to a more benign form of *amour-propre*; with the help of compassion, man must lift himself out of the egoism of civil society and into a union of reciprocal regard with his fellow citizens.¹⁶⁸ In order to accomplish this task, Rousseau wants to turn man's natural compassion from a particular other or a particular group of others to the political community as a *whole*; our natural compassion

¹⁶⁷ Dent, *Rousseau*, 103.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 72.

must be directed towards the bond generated by a shared pride in country and nation. In short, we must direct our natural compassion towards the *national* community.

Here we arrive at the intrinsic link that Rousseau makes between republicanism and nationalism, a relationship which will be thoroughly examined in the following chapter. For now, it is important to note that the bond which Rousseau wants to foster must go beyond particular attachments to certain people or groups (factionalism), but it cannot extend beyond the national community; the bonds that bind us to wider regional or global communities are too thin to become meaningful objects of our compassion. Moreover, the development of a common language is critical to the project of directing one's natural compassion towards the nation as a whole; a common language allows people to join together and pursue common purposes as a community. As Anne M. Cohler points out, "a language which embodies men's passionate concern for each other, men's pity [compassion], can be used to call the people speaking it to a common pity [compassion] for their common existence. They can come freely to a common opinion and common activity."¹⁶⁹ Once a common language is established by members of a community, they no longer act merely in terms of animal self-preservation; their common language brings them closer to each other and allows them to feel the kind of compassion for one another that would have been impossible in the state of nature. As such, Rousseau believes that the moral republic must be founded on the *nation*; the state must be rooted in the sociability and compassion of the nation, rather than the defense of property or anything along those lines.¹⁷⁰ As Cohler notes, "different languages and their accompanying customs are the specific characteristic of nations, and they permit men to use their capacity both to feel pity [compassion] and to make standards, their most specifically human characteristics."¹⁷¹ For Rousseau, the only way to establish the new

¹⁶⁹ Anne M. Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1970) 124. Note: I feel that the word "compassion" is a better translation of Rousseau's *pitié* than "pity", which is Cohler's preferred term. I noted earlier that Rousseau's idea of compassion goes well beyond our conventional understanding of "pity."

¹⁷⁰ Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism*, 127.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 124-125.

and legitimate social contract which is grounded in morals and reciprocity is to direct our natural compassion towards the national community.

Compassion plays the crucial role of balancing our natural love and our selfish love; compassion allows us to moderate our *amour-propre* and to channel it in more constructive ways, while at the same time keeping our rediscovered sense of *amour de soi* connected to the community and to the public good. Compassion is the key to finding the proper balance of loves so that we will not seek either to exploit others for our own selfish ends or to abandon society altogether and pursue a life of solitude; compassion allows us to become both, good men *and* good citizens. This ambitious project requires a significant amount of self-realization and self-overcoming on the part of each citizen; the moral republic requires citizens to rediscover a sense of *amour de soi*, direct their natural compassion towards the nation, and overcome their narrow self-interests and the excesses of *amour-propre* in the name of the common good.

As I hinted at earlier, one of the preconditions for establishing the political community ruled by the general will is a shared national character and strong love of country, to which citizens owe not only their lives, but also the morality of their actions and the love of virtue. According to Rousseau, it is within one's country that man "learns to struggle with himself, to conquer himself, to sacrifice his interest to the common interest," and thus, without one's country, man would never attain virtue, morals, or meaningful freedom.¹⁷² Rousseau emphasizes that in order to achieve the balance of loves needed for willing generally, we must forge strong social bonds of shared pride in country and nation, and a sense of common identity, history, and destiny. We need a shared sense of common life with our fellow citizens, and this is why Rousseau stresses the importance of patriotism, shared customs, public education, and civil religion; his aim is to sustain the unity of society under laws addressed to the common good.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Rousseau, *Emile*, 474.

¹⁷³ Dent, *Rousseau*, 46.

3.5 Rousseau's Republicanism and Democracy

Rousseau's emphasis on freedom as self-mastery on the one hand, and on a shared national identity and love of nation on the other, clearly distinguishes his brand of republicanism from instrumental republicanism and civic humanism. Some readers of Rousseau have a habit of intentionally downplaying his commitment to FSM and the love of nation, while others have rightly referred to Rousseau as the founder of a distinct brand of republicanism, as well as the father of modern nationalism. I will discuss the connection between Rousseau's cultural republicanism and nationalism in the next chapter, but for now it is enough to note that Rousseau's vision of the moral republic reflects a conception of sovereignty that is more directly democratic than that of contemporary liberal democracies. One of Rousseau's biggest contributions to republican political theory is his conception of a more democratic sovereign; *the people as sovereign*. According to Rousseau, sovereignty cannot be divided or represented, it takes shape through the general will of the citizens themselves, and it stands as the source of all moral authority and legitimacy within the political community. No political thinker prior to Rousseau succeeded in justifying on moral grounds why a citizen of a democratic state ought to obey laws which he considers contrary to his self-interest; it was Rousseau who revealed to us that beyond the narrow particular wills of mankind lies an enlightened will that requires overcoming oneself and committing oneself to the common good. As Bloom outlines:

Only Rousseau found the formula for that, distinguishing self-interest from moral obligation, discerning an independent moral interest in the general will. He discovered the source of moral goodness in modern political principles and provided the flag democracy could march under. So, at least, it was understood. Regimes dedicated to the sole preservation of man do not have the dignity to compel moral respect.¹⁷⁴

Rousseau conceives of a political community that is fundamentally democratic in character, and his contributions to both republican political theory and the democratic tradition would come to influence everyone from Alexis de Tocqueville to contemporary

¹⁷⁴ Bloom, "Rousseau's Critique of Liberal Constitutionalism," 156.

proponents of deliberative and radical democracy. He leaves us with the inescapable feeling that our own representative political systems are missing something fundamental, and that they fail to deliver on the liberty and equality they promise. In the next chapter, I take a look at what distinguishes Rousseau's unique brand of republicanism from liberalism, and I examine the fundamental connection between Rousseau's republicanism and nationalism.

Chapter 4

4 Is Rousseau a Liberal? Comparing Cultural Republicanism and Liberalism

I begin this chapter by distinguishing between Rousseau's unique brand of republicanism and various forms of liberalism. I then go on to address the misconceptions that some liberal thinkers appear to have about Rousseau's political philosophy, before examining the inherent link that Rousseau makes between republicanism and nationalism. My argument is that while Rousseau's unique brand of republicanism shares some commonalities with liberal theory, other aspects of his philosophy make it sufficiently distinct from liberalism to merit consideration as an altogether separate perspective.

4.1 Political Neutrality and Perfectionism

When it comes to the relationship between politics and conceptions of the good, liberals can be roughly divided into two camps: neutralists and perfectionists. Stephen A. Gardbaum argues that among contemporary liberals there exists a divide between liberal neutralists and liberal perfectionists, and that most contemporary liberals have largely accepted the principle of state neutrality toward conceptions of the good.¹⁷⁵ This political neutrality goes beyond purely procedural concerns and represents a substantive conception of state neutrality regarding theories of what is valuable in life. As Gardbaum explains, "according to this view, the state must remain neutral not only with respect to religious conceptions and ways of life, as the establishment and free exercise clauses are often taken to mandate, but also with respect to, and among, secular conceptions."¹⁷⁶ Liberal neutralists defend the principle of neutrality of justification, which holds that the state must justify its actions without assuming the superiority of one conception over

¹⁷⁵ Stephen A. Gardbaum, "Why the Liberal State Can Promote Moral Ideals after All," *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 104, No. 6 (April 1991), 1353.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 1351.

others. And while many contemporary liberals tend to defend substantive state neutrality as both descriptively and normatively valid, some republican critics of liberalism accept the descriptive claim of neutrality while openly criticizing modern liberalism at the normative level, arguing that liberal neutrality represents a shallow political ideal. In contrast to liberal neutrality, some forms of “republicanism [hold] that the ends of government should be richer and more extensive; in particular, the state should promote the primacy of public over private life and inculcate civic virtue among its citizens.”¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, Gardbaum argues that it is the *content* of the good pursued, rather than the mere desire to pursue the good, that truly distinguishes liberals and their critics (including republicans).

One of the most prominent contemporary liberal perfectionists is Joseph Raz, and in *The Morality of Freedom* he famously offers a liberal foundation for a political morality. Raz believes that while it is important that governments do not abuse their power or infringe on individual liberties by unduly interfering in the lives of citizens, governments are also justified in acting to actively promote individual freedom.¹⁷⁸ Raz identifies two related views often embraced by modern liberal neutralists: the first is that governments ought to be blind to the truth or falsity of moral ideals or conceptions of the good, and the second is that governments must be neutral regarding different people’s conceptions of the good. According to Raz, both of these views “are inspired by the thought that people are autonomous moral agents who are to decide for themselves how to conduct their own lives and that governments are not moral judges with authority to force on them their conceptions of right and wrong. That is why anti-perfectionism is often regarded as being a doctrine of political freedom.”¹⁷⁹ Anti-perfectionists believe that implementing and promoting ideals of the good life, even when these ideals are worthy in themselves, is not a legitimate role of government; government action ought to be neutral regarding ideals of the good life. As such, “the doctrine of political neutrality

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 1352.

¹⁷⁸ Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 18-19.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 108.

advocates neutrality between different conceptions of the good,” and Raz associates political neutrality with the work of such liberal thinkers as Nozick and Rawls.¹⁸⁰ However, Raz believes that Rawls and others who argue for political neutrality ultimately fail to establish their case, and that they are too quick to assume a connection between neutrality and autonomy. According to Raz, “political neutrality, conceived of as the exclusion of ideals, prevents governments from acting for reasons, which appeal to conceptions of the good, whether valid or invalid. Such a position relies on an elusive distinction between one part of morality, the good, and another, the right.”¹⁸¹ Raz argues that the traditional autonomy-oriented understanding of individual freedom leads to a “moralistic” doctrine of political freedom (one that is based on the moral value of individual liberty).¹⁸²

Raz’s view is perfectionistic in that he believes that governments in liberal societies ought to actively promote the ideal of personal autonomy as an essential element of the good life. Raz describes the ideal of autonomy as follows:

Autonomy is an ideal of self-creation, or self-authorship; it consists in an agent's successful pursuit of willingly embraced, valuable options, where the agent's activities are not dominated by worries about mere survival. Autonomy in its primary sense is to be understood as the actual living of an autonomous life; autonomy in its secondary sense is to be understood as the capacity to live autonomously. To be autonomous, agents have to meet three conditions: they must possess certain mental capacities, they must have an adequate range of valuable options, and they must enjoy independence from coercion and manipulation. Autonomy should be distinguished from self-realization, as autonomous persons may choose not to realize their capacities. Autonomy itself, in an environment that supports autonomy, is not similarly optional, as living autonomously is the only way of flourishing within an autonomy-supporting environment.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 110.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 134.

¹⁸² Ibid, 367.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 368.

Raz distinguishes his understanding of personal autonomy from the idea of self-realization, which is so crucial for FSM, but he nonetheless states that living in an environment that supports autonomy cannot be merely optional in liberal societies; governments cannot be neutral about autonomy and they must actively promote and foster an autonomy-supporting environment. Raz believes that once we embrace the ideal of autonomy, we become morally committed to pluralism; in order to provide citizens with an adequate range of valuable options, we must endorse moral pluralism.¹⁸⁴ Raz's objective is to demonstrate that a powerful argument in support of political freedom is derivable from the value of personal autonomy, and to show that liberalism can be founded on the perfectionistic ideal of personal autonomy. As Raz explains:

The moral outlook the implications of which we have explored is one which holds personal autonomy to be an essential element of the good life. We saw that such a morality presupposes competitive pluralism. That is, it presupposes that people should have available to them many forms and styles of life incorporating incompatible virtues, which not only cannot all be realized in one life but tend to generate mutual intolerance. Such an autonomy-valuing pluralistic morality generates a doctrine of freedom. It protects people pursuing different styles of life from the intolerance which competitive pluralism has the inherent tendency to encourage, and it calls for the provision of the conditions of autonomy without which autonomous life is impossible.¹⁸⁵

It is worth noting that contemporary liberal neutralists like Ronald Dworkin are also concerned with moral ideas; in fact, Dworkin argues that political neutrality grows out of an ethical commitment.¹⁸⁶ Dworkin believes that since the government must treat all citizens as equals, and since those citizens disagree in their conceptions of the good life, the government fails to treat citizens equally if it prefers one conception of the good over another. For Dworkin, the constitutive morality of liberalism is "a theory of equality that requires official neutrality amongst theories of what is valuable in life."¹⁸⁷ As such,

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 399.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 424-425.

¹⁸⁶ Ronald Dworkin, "Foundations of Liberal Equality", in *Equal Freedom (Selected Tanner Lectures in Human Values)*, ed. Stephen Darwall, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 229.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 203.

liberal neutralists differ from liberal perfectionists not in that they disregard morality altogether, but in that their ethical commitments lead them to draw different conclusions about the legitimate role of government.

Gardbaum states that “the structure of the general argument for political perfectionism (whether of the liberal or nonliberal variety) is as follows: (a) one way of life is better than others; (b) as a result, the state should promote it.”¹⁸⁸ While this statement is a bit misleading in that liberal perfectionists like Raz believe that personal autonomy is an essential *element* of the good life rather than a substantive conception of the good in and of itself, Gardbaum’s distinction between propositions (a) and (b) is useful for differentiating between liberal perfectionism and neutralism. Several versions of liberalism, including those associated with Locke, Kant, and Mill, confirm that proposition (a) has no particular political implications and is not necessarily antiliberal. Furthermore, Kant and Mill, who argued that personal autonomy represents a superior way of life, also affirmed proposition (b); they held that the state should actively promote this particular conception of the good. In order for the state to do so, Kant and Mill believed that “the state must remain neutral with respect to all other particular values, for autonomy requires that the individual freely choose her ends and not be coerced into them.”¹⁸⁹ In his book *J. S. Mill*, Dale E. Miller notes that while Mill is an advocate of permissive neutrality, which forbids coercing people into adopting certain forms of life and avoiding others, unlike Rawls or Dworkin he is not an advocate of persuasive neutrality, which forbids the state from advocating certain forms of life over others. As Miller observes, for Mill “society in general and the state in particular can actively encourage people to choose temperate and productive ways of living. It can even encourage them to develop their higher faculties and cultivate their individuality.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Gardbaum, “Why the Liberal State Can Promote Moral Ideals after All”, 1353.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 1354.

¹⁹⁰ Dale E. Miller, *J.S. Mill: Moral, Social, and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010) 149.

If we take John Stuart Mill as an example, we can say that he is a liberal perfectionist because he believes in the superiority of the ideal of personal autonomy, and because he argues that the state must promote this ideal. Furthermore, while Mill opposes coercing people into adopting certain forms of life and avoiding others, he holds that the state can actively encourage citizens to choose productive ways of living over unproductive ones, and he also believes that the state can foster the development of the citizens' higher faculties, thereby cultivating their character. In this sense Mill can be distinguished from liberal neutralists, who believe that the state should be excluded from the duty to promote any particular way of life over another.¹⁹¹ But how does Mill's perfectionism, which we have classified as *liberal*, differ from other forms of perfectionism? Gardbaum contrasts Mill's liberal perfectionism with the communitarian perfectionism associated with MacIntyre and Sandel, noting that "communitarianism advances the 'communal' way of life as better than (or rationally superior to) the 'liberal' and claims that, as a result, politics should be structured to promote it."¹⁹² Although this applies specifically to "communitarianism," we can say that the distinction also applies to Rousseau's republicanism. Liberal perfectionism distinguishes itself from communitarian and republican perfectionism by the *content* that it assigns to the rationally superior way of life; liberal perfectionists may advocate the promotion of the moral ideal of personal autonomy while republican perfectionists advocate the promotion of the moral ideals of participation and civic virtue. As Gardbaum explains, "communitarians and liberal perfectionists disagree only about the content of the better way of life, and not about the role of politics or the relationship between politics and morality. The political communitarian sees in the liberal perfectionist not moral emptiness, but moral error."¹⁹³

Ultimately, both liberal perfectionists like Mill and republican perfectionists like Rousseau may readily concede that whether or not we can identify a way of life that is inherently better than others, people in society will *in fact* continue to espouse different

¹⁹¹ Gardbaum, "Why the Liberal State Can Promote Moral Ideals after All", 1353.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 1354.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, 1355.

views about the good. However, a commitment to neutrality does not necessarily follow from this reality. Perfectionists, both liberal and republican, “can claim that this diversity of beliefs is precisely *why* the state has the affirmative duty to foster rationally superior ways of life. Without the state’s help and guidance, people left to their own devices will not be in a position to lead the most valuable life available to them.”¹⁹⁴ A version of this argument, which emphasizes the essential educational and moral role of political institutions, is explicit in Mill’s *Considerations on Representative Government* and Rousseau’s *Considerations on the Government of Poland*.¹⁹⁵ In the following section, I compare the political perfectionism of Mill to that of Rousseau in order to gain a better understanding of the differences between liberalism and Rousseau’s republicanism.

4.2 Mill vs. Rousseau: Contrasting Liberal and Republican Perfectionism

Although there is great diversity among liberal thinkers, for the sake of clarity I will continue to use the example of Mill’s liberal perfectionism and compare it directly to Rousseau’s particular brand of republicanism. Because Mill is a perfectionist whose arguments have notable parallels with Rousseau’s, comparing Mill and Rousseau will help us clarify the distinction between Rousseau’s cultural republicanism and liberalism. Mill has a clear vision of the *content* of the good life: it consists of preserving and promoting personal autonomy in order to enable individuals to develop their higher faculties and cultivate their citizen character by choosing their own path in life, making their own decisions, and interacting freely with others on a fair and equal basis. According to Mill, preserving the good of individual liberty represents utility in the largest sense and intervention for the sake of preserving this good and the benefits it provides to the individual and to society as a whole is sometimes justified. Mill’s vision of the good life remains a liberal vision, but it is clearly a moral and perfectionistic vision.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 1365.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

Without neglecting the importance of reason and intellectual faculties which are so central to Mill, Rousseau is nevertheless primarily concerned with the sentiments. Rousseau believes that the passions lie at the heart of good citizenship and the cultivation of proper character, arguing that without the passions we would be bad citizens; although the passions can have a negative influence on our behaviour, they can also be channeled in constructive ways that engender civic virtue. J. S. Maloy argues that Rousseau ultimately seeks to reform human nature in order to create noble and virtuous citizens in a world that has been corrupted by the negative effects of *amour-propre*.¹⁹⁶ As Maloy points out, “in line with the best ancient examples of statesmanship, and in self-conscious opposition to modern practice, Rousseau constantly emphasized the role of *moeurs* (‘mores’ or ‘morals’) in shaping political outcomes.”¹⁹⁷ In fact, his deep concern with moral psychology and his emphasis on the importance of recovering virtue have “garnered Rousseau recognition as a precursor of a ‘formative project of republican politics’ meant to endow citizens with the civic traits appropriate to self-government.”¹⁹⁸ Rousseau stresses that the domain of *moeurs* merits as much attention from statesmen as the domain of law; while laws regulate conduct, it is *moeurs* that regulate attitudes and dispositions.¹⁹⁹ As Maloy observes, “to the extent that conduct depends on disposition, then, *moeurs* are the most fundamental element of politics.”²⁰⁰ Hence, since *moeurs* are prior to laws and institutions, they play a crucial role in developing citizen character and fostering civic virtue. In the *Discourse on Political Economy*, Rousseau famously proclaims: “Make men, therefore, if you would command men: if you would have them obedient to the laws, make them love the laws.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Maloy, “The Very Order of Things: Rousseau’s Tutorial Republicanism,” 235-261.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 236.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 237.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 239.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 239-240.

²⁰¹ Rousseau, “Discourse on Political Economy,” 127.

Rousseau saw disposition and customs as central to fostering civic virtue and proper citizen character, and he “sought to repair the moral fiber of the modern state and to shore up its longevity.”²⁰² As noted in the previous chapter, Rousseau believes that citizens must rediscover a sense of *amour de soi* in the face of the corrupting influence of *amour-propre* and, by directing their natural compassion towards the nation, channel their *amour-propre* in more positive and constructive ways. According to Rousseau, in a political community made up of citizens who are capable of reforming their nature and character “all of the advantages of the natural state would be united with those of the civil state, and freedom which keeps man exempt from vices would be joined to morality which raises him to virtue.”²⁰³

Rousseau believes that narrow self-interest engendered by excessive *amour-propre* harms the public good, and he holds that political authority must rest with the general will of the citizens. The general will refers to the enlightened will of the people that “is always for the common good”; the rule of the general will amounts to the “rule of justice.”²⁰⁴ In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau maintains that “the general will alone can direct the forces of the State according to the end of its institution, which is the common good.”²⁰⁵ Because citizens corrupted by the passions of excessive *amour-propre* are incapable of seeing beyond their narrow self-interest and willing generally, in order to establish proper political institutions we must reform the character of the citizens themselves. In the *Discourse on Political Economy*, Rousseau contends that “the main-spring of public authority is in the hearts of the citizens, and that nothing can replace the morals in sustaining government”²⁰⁶ For Rousseau, justice has to be reciprocal, and in order for citizens to look beyond their narrow self-interest for the sake of justice, the

²⁰² Maloy, “Rousseau’s Tutorial Republicanism,” 242.

²⁰³ Rousseau, *Emile*, 85.

²⁰⁴ Maloy, “Rousseau’s Tutorial Republicanism,” 242.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and other later political writings*, ed. V. Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 13.

citizens must have favorable dispositions. Thus, favorable dispositions must prevail among the citizens if the state is to be ruled by the general will (rather than the particular will of either a ruling elite or a self-interested majority). The citizens must be disposed to embrace the general will, for when “the people is seduced by private interests . . . the public deliberation will be one thing, and the general will another thing entirely.”²⁰⁷ As Maloy points out, “it was imperative that [the citizens] refuse to see the freedom of fellow citizens sacrificed to factional or private interests: fraternity and solidarity are central to Rousseauian civic virtue.”²⁰⁸ Like Mill, Rousseau stresses the importance of cultivating a specific citizen character and a “civic ethos,” but Rousseau places much more emphasis on fostering fraternity and solidarity than Mill does. Mill believes that preserving individual liberty and fostering a public environment of open factionalism and contestation leads to the cultivation of strong citizen character and ultimately to the greatest happiness, whereas Rousseau puts more emphasis on cultivating a citizen character that fosters solidarity as part of a shared moral consensus.²⁰⁹

Much like Mill, Rousseau believes that human moral dispositions are shaped environmentally, and thus we ultimately need to create a social environment that nurtures morality and civic virtue. With this in mind, Rousseau identifies specific social institutions which can foster favorable dispositions among citizens and cultivate citizen character, including: 1) a public education system that rears children “in common in the midst of equality,” and nurtures pupils in the spirit of solidarity, 2) public spectacles which promote a sense of solidarity and regulate behaviour through public scrutiny, 3) a civil religion which promotes loyalty and commitment to the greater good, 4) strictly defensive citizen militias which require that all citizens be prepared to defend the nation against foreign invaders, and 5) a self-organized civil society, such as the civil “circles”

²⁰⁷ Maloy, “Rousseau’s Tutorial Republicanism,” 244.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ I expand on this in Chapter 6, but for now it is enough to note that when I talk about a shared moral consensus I am referring to the notion that inside Rousseau’s moral republic there exists a consensus on what constitutes a shared conception of the good. It is a consensus that has more substantive content than the good of liberal perfectionism, and it is arrived at and amended through the deliberative process.

of Geneva, which engage in independent discussion and criticism of the government.²¹⁰ As such, we can see that Rousseau is deeply concerned with moral reform, channelling the passions in more constructive directions, and cultivating virtue and a specific type of citizen character. As Maloy observes, the moral “transformation” that Rousseau advocates is “neither radical or deep in nature, nor invasive, coercive, or violent in method”; rather, Rousseau wants to foster favorable dispositions among citizens and cultivate a civic ethos that “redirects *amour-propre* from pursuing personal exploitation to positive public enterprises.”²¹¹

Rousseau’s republicanism is perfectionistic in that it seeks to cultivate a specific type of citizen character for the sake of promoting a particular conception of the good. Despite claims to the contrary, Rousseau’s vision of the good is not incompatible with a democratic society, but his understanding of democracy rests on the premise that a moral consensus among citizens is possible, and that the purpose of the political process must be to arrive at this consensus. As such, citizens must not approach the political process with the intention of promoting their own narrow self-interest at the expense of the public interest; rather, they must be committed to promoting the public interest and the common good in the spirit of solidarity and reciprocity. Rousseau believes that this spirit of solidarity and reciprocity can arise only within the relatively small republican community, and Rousseau’s vision of the good is rooted in strong social bonds of shared pride in country and nation, and a sense of common history and destiny. Over the years some liberals have tried to place Rousseau’s theories within the liberal camp, and in so doing they deliberately downplayed what they refer to as the “more communitarian” strands within Rousseau’s work. Joshua Cohen acknowledges that he himself had been guilty of this prior to 1999, but he now concedes that the strong emphasis on social solidarity and national attachment in Rousseau’s work cannot be ignored (even though Cohen himself finds these aspects of Rousseau to be “unattractive”).²¹² Ultimately, I

²¹⁰ Maloy, “Rousseau’s Tutorial Republicanism,” 246-247.

²¹¹ Ibid, 250.

²¹² Cohen, *A Free Community of Equals*, 5.

argue that Rousseau is *not* a liberal; rather, he is the founder of a unique strand of republican political theory which I refer to as *cultural republicanism*, and which is distinct from liberalism.

In the previous chapter I mentioned that, for Rousseau, there are two preconditions for establishing a society ruled by the general will. These preconditions are: (1) citizens who embrace freedom as self-mastery (FSM) and are able to rediscover a sense of *amour de soi* while using their natural compassion to channel *amour-propre* in more constructive ways, and (2) a shared national identity and a strong love of country that engender fraternity and solidarity. In endorsing FSM as the preferred conception of freedom, Rousseau distinguishes himself from Mill (and contemporary liberal perfectionists like Raz) by embracing self-realization as a central aspect of the good life. As noted earlier, the ideal of personal autonomy that liberal perfectionists like Raz endorse is distinct from the idea of self-realization because autonomous individuals may choose not to realize their capacities, whereas for Rousseau a citizen who fails to embrace FSM is not fully free. Rousseau also condemns factionalism; unlike a political community governed by the general will, societies governed by competing factions such as political parties are unjust because they split the general will and turn the political process into a struggle between competing particular wills. Factionalism and partisanship are inherently unjust for Rousseau; in the *Social Contract* he famously states that “it is therefore essential, if the general will is to be able to express itself, that there should be no partial society within the State, and that each citizen should think only his own thoughts.”²¹³ Factionalism entails advantaging some at the expense of others, and Rousseau believes that the more divided the citizens become, the farther away they are from justice. The content of Rousseau’s vision of the good life is therefore unique to his particular brand of republicanism; unlike Mill, whose understanding of the good entails preserving and promoting personal autonomy along with pluralism and contestation in order to enable individuals to develop their higher faculties and properly cultivate their citizen character, Rousseau’s conception of the good entails promoting FSM (including

²¹³ Rousseau, *The Social Contract and the Discourses*, 203.

self-realization), a shared moral consensus, and a spirit of solidarity and reciprocity made possible by the strong social bonds of a *national* community. Although Mill and Rousseau both espouse perfectionistic theories which allow for political institutions to play an important role in cultivating proper citizen character and in establishing the kind of political and social environment that is most conducive to advancing the good, they ultimately disagree about the specific *content* of the good, and about the best strategy to promote it.

For a liberal perfectionist like Mill, the good consists of preserving and promoting the ideal of personal autonomy in order to enable individuals to develop their higher faculties and cultivate their citizen character by choosing their own path in life, making their own decisions, and interacting freely with others on a fair and equal basis. This ultimately increases happiness by leading to the improvement of individual character and to the progress of society as a whole. To promote this good, society must remain neutral with regard to all other particular values in order to foster an environment of pluralism and contestation which allows for individuals to freely choose their ends without being coerced into them. It is free choice and the diversity of opportunities that makes character development and social progress possible, and so neutrality about other ideals is in this case only a means to the end of advancing the ideal of autonomy.

For Rousseau, political participation and a shared national identity hold intrinsic value and are therefore fundamental elements of the good life; moreover, the public good consists of promoting FSM and the kind of citizen character that ensures the development of a shared moral consensus and a spirit of solidarity and reciprocity made possible by the strong social bonds of a national community. Political and social institutions must strive to nurture the development of this moral consensus, rather than promote the kind of pluralism and partiality that are so important for Mill. That is not to say that Mill neglects the importance of community, or that Rousseau rejects the value of autonomy. Mill is certainly concerned with fostering a public spirit and with nurturing a commitment to community, and Rousseau sees political autonomy (each citizen thinking only his own thoughts) as essential for the general will to take shape. The difference is simply that Mill views liberty in terms of free choosing among diverse options, which allows individuals

to determine the best choice, thereby improving their own character and advancing the good, while Rousseau views liberty as self-realization and believes that advancing the public good requires the development of a shared moral consensus.²¹⁴ Rousseau's moral republic makes meaningful moral and civic freedom possible because it enables citizens to will *generally*, but the ability to do so presupposes a different type of freedom (freedom as self-mastery).²¹⁵ Rousseau's understanding of FSM enables citizens to move beyond the mere satisfaction of appetites and allows them to make genuine *moral* choices; rather than making decisions based on their own self-interest (which does not constitute a "moral" choice), they are able to look beyond their own private good and make decisions based on the *common* good (which constitutes a "moral" choice). This is because certain moral choices are only available within the community ruled by the general will, and citizens of other political communities do not have the same sets of choices available to them. Because citizens of other communities cannot look beyond their own self-interest, they are always competing with their fellow citizens rather than working together to achieve ends greater than themselves. As a result, citizens of other communities fail to develop the kind of solidarity that is needed for a more efficient pursuit of the common good. Without a shared moral consensus and the fraternity and solidarity it engenders, certain common goods will forever remain out of reach for the citizens of other communities. As they do not live within a moral community that is governed by laws that they have made for themselves, and as they have not attained freedom as self-mastery (as opposed to some other conception of liberty), these citizens are unable to achieve their full potential as human beings (self-realization). These citizens are not free in the most meaningful sense of the word because those who are incapable of looking beyond their narrow self-interests continue to be slaves to their appetites; their options are limited to self-interested pursuits and political factionalism, and so the unique possibilities that the collective pursuit of the common good offers are denied to them.

²¹⁴ Self-realization can only be achieved through political participation and by sharing in the same national identity and culture as one's fellow citizens, which is why participation and a shared national identity hold intrinsic value for Rousseau.

²¹⁵ See table in Chapter 2.

4.3 Liberal Misrepresentations of Rousseau's Republicanism

To further emphasize the distinction between Rousseau's republicanism and liberalism, I will examine Joshua Cohen's *Rousseau: A Free Community of Equals*. Cohen is a student of John Rawls, and in his book on Rousseau he rightly points out that Rawls was influenced by Rousseau's ideas. In fact, Cohen states that "[Rawls] once said in passing that his two principles of justice could be understood as an effort to spell out the content of the general will."²¹⁶ With this in mind, Cohen tries to trace the development of some of Rousseau's most important ideas through thinkers like Hegel and Kant all the way to Rawls and his political liberalism. While Cohen's book provides meaningful insights into Rousseau's work, there are some important points of disagreement between my own understanding of Rousseau's philosophy and Cohen's reading. Namely, Cohen claims that Rousseau can be read as philosophically liberal and sociologically communitarian, arguing that "the social compact itself and the conception of a free community of equals do not establish strong communitarian demands of solidarity: those demands are part of Rousseau's political sociology of a free community of equals."²¹⁷ The implication here is that liberals can accept those aspects of Rousseau's political philosophy which they find compelling, while distancing themselves from his communitarian sociology, which is less compelling because it imposes demanding conditions of civic solidarity as preconditions for a "free community of equals."²¹⁸ As Cohen points out, "convictions about the possibility of a free community of equals need some story about civic solidarities. If Rousseau's is too narrowly confining, an alternative

²¹⁶ Cohen, *A Free Community of Equals*, 2.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, 22.

²¹⁸ Note: When referring to the political community ruled by the general will, I prefer the term "moral republic" to Cohen's "free community of equals." I argue that while the citizens of the moral republic must be free and equal as Cohen suggests, there is more to it. Namely, they must *also* share a national identity and culture, and they must arrive at some form of moral consensus about conceptions of the good (for example, they must accept that political participation and a shared national identity and culture hold intrinsic value and are necessary elements of the good life).

is needed.”²¹⁹ I argue that Cohen is mistaken in his attempt to separate Rousseau’s philosophy, which he claims is “liberal,” from his sociology, which he labels “communitarian.” These two aspects of Rousseau’s work cannot be considered separately, and any attempt to do so amounts to selectively picking and choosing individual parts of his philosophy, even when this is incoherent. My argument is that Rousseau is a cultural republican whose philosophy and sociology form a single, comprehensive, and unified body of work.

One of the lynchpins of Cohen’s argument is the following claim:

Rousseau’s political ideal of a free community of equals has a strongly liberal cast: it is founded on values of individual self-love and freedom, justified through a compact among individuals conceived of as free and equal, aimed at advancing the basic interests of individuals, concerned to establish relations of equality under law, and it requires that equal citizens give priority in politics to their common good. The arguments are secular; the only reason for the exercise of political authority is public utility; there is no trace of an organic conception of society; nor is authority designed to serve the cause of human perfection.²²⁰

There are several problems with this statement. When Cohen says that Rousseau’s political ideal of a moral republic has “a strongly liberal cast,” he is actually saying that the specific parts of Rousseau’s work that he deliberately chooses to focus on are not incompatible with liberalism. Furthermore, when he calls the arguments “secular” he is ignoring Rousseau’s considerable emphasis on the importance of civil religion. When Cohen claims that “the only reason for the exercise of political authority is public utility” he is ignoring the fact that Rousseau’s understanding of morality is not utilitarian,²²¹ and when he says that authority is not designed to serve the cause of “human perfection,” he is telling a half-truth. If by “human perfection” Cohen is referring to an abstract notion of perfection, then he is certainly right; human beings are inherently imperfect creatures, as

²¹⁹ Cohen, *A Free Community of Equals*, 22.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, 21.

²²¹ Allan Bloom accurately points out that for Rousseau “utilitarian morality is no morality at all.” For more, see: Allan Bloom, “Rousseau’s Critique of Liberal Constitutionalism,” in *The Legacy of Rousseau*, ed. Clifford Orwin and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 152-153.

Rousseau readily acknowledges. However, if by “human perfection” Cohen is referring to the *perfectibility* of citizens, then his argument is simply wrong (as Rousseau’s endorsement of freedom as self-mastery and his emphasis on self-realization demonstrates). Cohen deliberately downplays the importance of a substantive idea of the good in Rousseau in order to make his philosophy more compatible with that of Rawls, emphasizing instead how both thinkers believe in according equal consideration to individual members of the political community.²²² Cohen goes on to claim that Rousseau does not seem to count the cultivation of human capacities and self-realization as part of a common good to be promoted through collectively authorized laws and regulations.²²³ This is a half-truth. Self-realization and self-mastery may not be “part” of a common good to be promoted, but they form the first of two necessary *preconditions* for recognizing the common good and willing generally in the first place. Only those individuals who embrace FSM and learn to fully realize themselves as citizens to the extent that they are able to overcome their narrow self-interests are capable of understanding the common good and willing generally. Furthermore, these citizens must take an active part in creating the laws that govern them. Without such citizens, a political community ruled by the general will is impossible. Without self-realization and self-mastery, Rousseau’s moral republic is unattainable.

The second necessary precondition for recognizing the common good and willing generally is a shared national identity and strong love of country that engender fraternity and solidarity. This is an aspect of Rousseau’s thought that Cohen finds “unattractive,” and which he tries to separate from other more appealing concepts (separating “liberal” philosophy from “communitarian” sociology). Again, this cannot be done. We know that Rousseau says: “Every people has or ought to have a national character, and if it lacks one it would be necessary to begin by giving it one.”²²⁴ Hence, he believes that a shared

²²² Cohen, *A Free Community of Equals*, 42.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 44.

²²⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Plan for a Constitution for Corsica,” in *The Plan for Perpetual Peace, On the Government of Poland, and Other Writings on History and Politics*, trans. Christopher Kelly and Judith Bush, (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2005,) 133.

national identity is intrinsically valuable and *necessary* because the national character shapes citizens into virtuous members of the republican nation. In *Emile* he proclaims:

O Emile, where is the good man who owes nothing to his country? Whatever country it is, he owes it what is most precious to man—the morality of his actions and the love of virtue. If he had been born in the heart of the woods, he would have lived happier and freer. But he would have had nothing to combat in order to follow his inclinations, and thus he would have been good without merit; he would not have been virtuous; and now he knows how to be in spite of his passions.²²⁵

Rousseau goes on to say that it is only within his country that man “learns to struggle with himself, to conquer himself, to sacrifice his interest to the common interest. It is not true that he draws no profit from the laws. They give him the courage to be just even among wicked men. It is not true that they have not made him free. They have taught him to reign over himself.”²²⁶ As is often the case with Rousseau, these few passages alone speak volumes about his unique brand of republicanism. First, we see that national identity and the love of country are not something secondary in Rousseau; they are not an afterthought in the form of a “communitarian” sociology designed to prop up a “liberal” philosophy. We see that a shared national identity and the love of country are not merely instrumentally valuable for the purpose of sustaining stable political institutions; rather, they are also intrinsically valuable because they shape the character of citizens, teach them to be moral and free, and allow them to attain the kind of self-realization that enables them to will generally and perceive the common good. As such, a shared national identity and love of country are a necessary precondition for establishing the moral republic; without this precondition the general will cannot express itself. Second, these passages from *Emile* also point us back to the first precondition—freedom as self-mastery. Rousseau tells us that a man born in the woods would be happy and free by standards of the state of nature, but he would not be virtuous. Without his national community, man would never learn to overcome his passions, to struggle with himself and conquer himself, to sacrifice his interest for the common interest. Such a man would

²²⁵ Rousseau, *Emile*, 473.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

be incapable of seeing beyond his own private interest and understanding the public good; he would be incapable of willing generally. Lastly, in these passages Rousseau reveals that natural freedom is not the most meaningful form of freedom. He tells us that although natural man is free by the standards of the state of nature, the national community and its laws make him *freer* still because they make meaningful freedom possible. What is meaningful freedom? Meaningful freedom requires more than license, more than non-interference, and more than non-domination; it requires man to “reign over himself,” to overcome his narrow self-interests and attain *virtue* (which couldn’t exist without self-overcoming). Meaningful freedom is freedom as self-mastery (FSM). And so we see the two preconditions coming together, each requiring the other: without attaining FSM through self-realization and self-overcoming, the general will cannot express itself, and without a shared national identity and a love of country to guide our *amour-propre* towards the public good, there can be no FSM. The two preconditions are interconnected, and without both of them there can be no “free community of equals,” at least not according to Rousseau. Since it is therefore impossible to separate Rousseau’s “liberal” philosophy from his “communitarian” sociology, it is clear that Cohen must either acknowledge that he is merely picking and choosing those aspects of Rousseau’s thought which he finds attractive while unduly dismissing the less attractive ones, or he must abandon hope of making Rousseau’s philosophy compatible with Rawlsian liberalism.²²⁷

Nevertheless, Cohen claims that his book is attempting to give a genuine and holistic account of Rousseau’s philosophy, which he believes is closer to liberalism than most people realize. Unfortunately, he makes several errors in his representation of Rousseau’s ideas. Cohen says that “the interest in self-development appears not to play any role in Rousseau’s account of the common good.”²²⁸ This is clearly wrong, because while Rousseau does not give specific ways of developing ourselves as part of the *content*

²²⁷ The first section of this chapter established that Rousseau is a perfectionist whereas Rawls is a neutralist. That is but one of several important differences between them, demonstrating that while Rawls was certainly influenced by Rousseau, their views are very different.

²²⁸ Cohen, *A Free Community of Equals*, 42.

of the common good (for instance, he does not say that the common good demands that all citizens learn Latin), he does believe that self-development in the sense of self-realization and self-overcoming constitute a necessary precondition for understanding the common good and actively pursuing it. Regarding the notion of a social association regulated by the general will, Cohen states:

The ideal is a political community—a *we*, a people—unified by a shared understanding of the common good defined in terms of the common interests of the members, and a shared willingness on the part of the citizens to place considerations of the common good above other considerations, and in particular considerations of personal advantage, with well-founded confidence that the society conforms to their understanding. It is a free community of equals: a *community* because of the shared allegiance to the common good; a community of *equals* because the content of the idea of the common good reflects a commitment to treat other members as equals by giving their interests equal weight along with one's own; and a *free* community of equals because the members, assumed to endorse the common good as the basis for legitimate law, have their own will as a rule.²²⁹

Here Cohen is talking about a shared allegiance to the common good, an equal regard for fellow citizens, and freedom in the sense of self-rule. There is nothing wrong with these three points as such, but Cohen fails to recognize the common thread that runs through all of these concepts: freedom for Rousseau means FSM, which is a demanding conception of freedom that requires self-overcoming and self-realization, and this freedom, along with a shared national identity and love of country, constitutes a necessary precondition for establishing the community ruled by the general will in the first place. According to Cohen, “solving the fundamental problem [of living under a sovereign without giving up one's freedom] requires a political community regulated by a shared understanding of the common good. Only then, in the society of the general will, can people both be assured the protection of their person and goods, and express the freedom that belongs to their nature.”²³⁰ Cohen seems to believe that the “communitarian” aspects of Rousseau's thought are merely strategies that he employs in order to preserve and sustain the society

²²⁹ Ibid, 58-59.

²³⁰ Ibid, 60.

of the general will once it has already been established, and can be thought of as separate from his “liberal” philosophy which establishes this society in the first place. Cohen does not seem to understand that these “communitarian” aspects, including a shared national identity and love of country as well as self-realization and self-overcoming, form the necessary preconditions for the initial establishment of the society of the general will. It is true that people can fully *express* the freedom that belongs to their nature once the society of the general will has been established, but this freedom (in the form of FSM) must be there to begin with, otherwise citizens would be incapable of willing generally. Cohen also says: “under conditions of social interdependence, we can express our nature as free and thus achieve moral freedom only if we have a general will, and having such a will constitutes civic virtue. And that is to say that virtue, which is possible for us, is also required for realizing our nature.”²³¹ But the general will does not take shape in just any given society under any given conditions: Rousseau clearly tells us that it requires citizens who are free in the most meaningful sense (FSM), have a shared national identity and culture, and love their country and its laws. We can fully express our moral freedom only if we have a general will, but in order to have a general will we must have achieved FSM and been part of a *national* community to begin with.

Regarding the necessary conditions for having a general will, Cohen says:

Because having a general will requires giving equal weight to the interests of each citizen, people will only develop a general will if their conditions are fundamentally equal, whatever the differences in the particular circumstances. In the earlier discussion of “motivational complements,” I sketched the background conditions of the formation of a general will, indicating how reciprocity, generalized compassion, and the sense of self-worth might all come to support an allegiance to the general will, assuming appropriate institutional conditions—in particular, conditions in which we are regarded as equals and experience others as such.²³²

All of this is accurate, but it is not the whole story. Cohen only gives us part of the story in order to stay true to his narrative, claiming that for Rousseau “justice commands

²³¹ Ibid, 113.

²³² Ibid, 153.

reciprocity, not saintly self-sacrifice.”²³³ Throughout the book, Cohen tries to move away from the demanding preconditions Rousseau establishes for forming the society of the general will. Cohen wants to separate the “more attractive” aspects of Rousseau’s work from the “less attractive” ones, including the need for self-realization and self-overcoming (overcoming mere appetites and private interests in the name of the common good), and for a shared national identity and strong love of country. The reason for his strategy is simple: most liberals have an aversion towards the kind of self-realization and self-overcoming that FSM calls for, and for the strong national bonds (including a shared national identity) that are indispensable to Rousseau. Cohen wants to reconcile Rousseau’s work with Rawlsian liberalism, and so he chooses to focus on equality, reciprocity, compassion, and self-worth, while sweeping FSM and a shared national identity under the rug. Unfortunately, by doing so he fails to give us the whole story about Rousseau’s republicanism. We certainly need equality, reciprocity, compassion, and self-worth, but these are fully embraced only by those individuals who attain FSM and live inside a national community of fiercely patriotic citizens. Without these preconditions, a society ruled by the general will would be impossible, because the citizens would be incapable of overcoming their narrow self-interests and willing generally in pursuit of the common good. That, at least, is what Rousseau believes. In Chapters 5 and 6 I argue that the community ruled by the general will also presupposes a shared moral consensus about conceptions of the good, a point that both Rawls and Cohen would surely reject in their own work, but a point that Rousseau endorses when he implies that political participation and a shared national identity constitute necessary elements of the good life.

In *Rousseau and Nationalism*, Anne M. Cohler makes it clear that, for Rousseau, national compassion is a prerequisite for the general will, and that the nation is the foundation of the social contract. Cohler states that “the basis of a government or the social contract is a certain kind of opinion, an attachment of the men in a political order

²³³ Ibid, 159.

to the whole, grounded in their national similarities.”²³⁴ Rousseau asserts that the sole way to improve public morals and make men virtuous is to make them love their country, stating: “It is certain that the grandest miracles of virtue have been produced by love of one’s country: this agreeable and lively sentiment that joins the force of *amour-propre* to all the beauty of virtue, giving it an energy which, without disfiguring it, makes of it the most heroic of all the passions.”²³⁵ Loving one’s country and sharing a common national identity with one’s fellow citizens allows individuals to turn their particular wills towards the common good, and to replace individual self-interest with the common interest. For Rousseau, the *national* community is unique and our attachment to it holds special value: attachments to one’s family or faction are too narrow, and attachments that go beyond the nation, such as an attachment to all of mankind, are too broad to sustain a community ruled by the general will. As such, only passionately patriotic citizens can hope to establish the rule of the general will, for it is “patriotic intoxication which alone can raise men above themselves, and without which freedom is only a vain word and legislation only an illusion.”²³⁶ Liberals like Cohen and Rawls may disagree with Rousseau on this point, but if they choose to abandon the non-liberal preconditions that Rousseau imposes on his moral republic (including FSM and a shared national identity), then they must acknowledge that they are abandoning some of the most fundamental aspects of Rousseau’s philosophy. We cannot separate these preconditions from Rousseau’s work without losing the entire spirit of his philosophy, and we cannot selectively choose only those of his ideas which we find attractive while ignoring the others in order to (mis)represent him as a liberal. I have argued that while Rousseau’s philosophy shares some common principles and concerns with liberalism, his cultural republicanism constitutes an altogether different perspective. Cohen’s interpretation of Rousseau is incomplete, and therefore incoherent. In the following section, I discuss the fundamental

²³⁴ Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism*, 150.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, 170.

²³⁶ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Considerations on the Government of Poland,” in *The Plan for Perpetual Peace, On the Government of Poland, and Other Writings on History and Politics*, trans. Christopher Kelly and Judith Bush, (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2005,) 222.

connection between Rousseau's republicanism and nationalism. It is important to note that some liberals also identify as nationalists, and *liberal nationalism* is a vibrant theoretical strand within contemporary nationalist theory. Nonetheless, in Chapter 6 I compare and contrast what I refer to as *republican nationalism* (a distinct strand of nationalism inspired by Rousseau's philosophy) with the liberal nationalism of Tamir and Kymlicka. My argument is that republican nationalism constitutes a separate strand of nationalist theory, and that it represents a defensible alternative to liberal nationalism.

4.4 Cultural Republicanism and Nationalism

In Chapters 2 and 3 I argued that Rousseau made an important contribution to the republican theoretical tradition, and that his philosophy constitutes a distinct strand of republican theory which I refer to as cultural republicanism. Rousseau's cultural republicanism emphasizes two important preconditions that the political community must satisfy in order to establish the rule of the general will. The republic must consist of (1) citizens who embrace FSM and are capable of rediscovering a sense of *amour de soi* while using natural compassion (directed toward the national community) to channel their *amour-propre* in more constructive ways, and (2) citizens who have a shared national identity and a strong love of country, which engender fraternity and solidarity. At this point I want to argue that along with being an important thinker of the republican tradition, Rousseau is also the philosophical father of modern nationalism. Perhaps the single most comprehensive account of the intrinsic connection between Rousseau's republicanism and nationalism is Cohler's aptly named *Rousseau and Nationalism*, and I will pay special attention to it in this section.

According to Cohler, "Rousseau was the chief founder of the doctrine of nationalism"²³⁷ and "the first true nationalist."²³⁸ Marc F. Plattner states that "the thinker perhaps most commonly identified as the key source of the nationalist idea is none other

²³⁷Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism*, 18, 189.

²³⁸Ibid, 189.

than Jean-Jacques Rousseau.”²³⁹ Hans Kohn claims that Rousseau “provided the modern nation with its emotional and moral foundations” and prepared “the modern basis” of “the identification of nation and state.”²⁴⁰ A 1939 volume by the British Royal Institute of International Affairs states: “The importance of Rousseau’s thought in the development of the idea of nationalism can hardly be exaggerated.... Rousseau provided the theoretical foundations upon which alone the nationalism of the nineteenth century could be built.”²⁴¹ Rousseau’s emphasis on the importance of a distinct national character and the love of country as prerequisites for establishing a society ruled by the general will laid the foundation of the modern understanding of national identity. Rousseau’s philosophy provides nationalism with a moral justification that continues to appeal to nationalist thinkers well into the twenty-first century. Plattner argues that “whatever Rousseau’s deepest intentions or hopes for the political future of Europe may have been, without question his thought played a crucial role in laying the foundations of modern nationalism.”²⁴² All of the national independence movements and revolutionary struggles that came after him owe their philosophical roots to Rousseau. Furthermore, Plattner suggests that Rousseau may not only be the founder of modern nationalism, but also of modern internationalism, which is fundamentally defined by the nation-state system which Rousseau helped create. According to Plattner:

One might say that modern nationalism, unlike the patriotism of the ancient city, does not *necessarily* entail harshness to foreigners. Indeed, a Georgian political thinker, Ghia Nodia, has argued that “the idea of nationhood is an idea of membership in humanity” and points out that the United Nations, based on the principle of respect for national sovereignty, is the first political organization to embrace virtually the whole world. Thus it may not be so paradoxical as it first

²³⁹ Marc F. Plattner, “Rousseau and the Origins of Nationalism,” in *The Legacy of Rousseau*, ed. Clifford Orwin and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 184.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 184-185.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 195.

appears that Jean-Jacques Rousseau might be viewed simultaneously as a founder of both modern nationalism and modern internationalism.²⁴³

Rousseau defines nations as groups of people who live together and share a common language, as well as common habits and manners.²⁴⁴ According to Rousseau, the movement of men from the state of nature to civil society takes place gradually and is made possible by certain characteristics that are unique to mankind. In the state of nature men are independent and self-sufficient, and they come into contact with other members of their species only when driven to do so by necessity (e.g. the need to procreate). However, men are eventually compelled by various circumstances, including the particularities of territory and climate, to come together and form pre-political communities (permanent settlements which lack formal political institutions). Life in these communities leads to the formation of a common language, as well as shared customs and manners, resulting in the development of an unconscious sociability grounded in these pre-political similarities. Over time these groups develop a distinct character and culture, as well as strong social and communal bonds. Rousseau believes that these pre-political communities come to constitute what we now think of as nations, and so through his account of the state of nature “Rousseau has made it theoretically possible to find a prepolitical sociability on which nations could be based.”²⁴⁵ According to Rousseau, within every community language must develop before politics. A community of individuals who decide to live together must first form a nation constituted by a common language and customs rather than by politics.²⁴⁶ Once groups of people beyond the family unit are forced to live together by physical circumstances stemming from natural divisions of the land, the concentration of resources in particular areas, and so forth, they begin to form nations. As Rousseau states: “Men, who have up to now been roving in the woods, by taking to a more settled manner of life, come gradually together,

²⁴³ Ibid., 196-197.

²⁴⁴ Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism*, 149.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 95.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 115.

form separate bodies, and at length in every country arises a distinct *nation*, united in character and manners, not by regulations or laws, but by uniformity of life and food, and the common influence of climate.”²⁴⁷ Thus, the external circumstances which compel men out of the state of nature lead them to form nations with their own distinct national character and culture.

In his understanding of what constitutes a nation, Rousseau extends the term to include all groups of people that can be distinguished by a unique language and distinct customs and manners. In his discussion of southern languages in particular (languages that formed in milder climates, such as in Southern Europe), Rousseau praises them for embodying a passionate concern for other members of the nation. Rousseau believes that while the harsh climate forced northern peoples to develop languages which are closely tied to their self-preservation, southern peoples lived in less dire circumstances and were thus able to develop more colorful and passionate languages that allowed them to appeal to common purposes extending beyond bare survival. For this reason, Rousseau feels that men in southern nations in particular have all the distinguishing characteristics of men; rather than acting merely in terms of animal self-preservation, they created a language that brought them closer to each other and allowed them to feel the kind of compassion for one another that would have been impossible in the state of nature. One need not necessarily accept Rousseau’s distinction between northern and southern languages to understand the point that he is making about the importance of a common language for establishing the kind of communities that make allegiance to a shared national identity possible. As Cohler points out, “different languages and their accompanying customs are the specific characteristic of nations, and they permit men to use their capacity both to feel pity [compassion] and to make standards, their most specifically human characteristics.”²⁴⁸ Rousseau would argue that any legitimate political community must

²⁴⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origins of Inequality,” 81. Emphasis on “nation” is my own.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 124-125. Note: I feel that the word “compassion” is a better translation of Rousseau’s *pitié* than “pity,” which is Cohler’s preferred term. As noted in Chapter 3, for Rousseau *pitié* denotes more than what is commonly understood as “pity” in English.

be founded on nations, because, as noted earlier, the mutual regard and compassion required for the general will to take shape is only possible within nation-states.

While the type of generalized compassion that exists in political communities first developed within nations, it has since been overwhelmed in modern society by *amour-propre*, which takes the form excessive competitiveness, greed, and vanity. As we know from the *Discourse on Inequality*, the development of *amour-propre* ultimately led to the establishment of an illegitimate social contract through which the rich tricked the poor in order to preserve their unequal property. Rousseau claims that this is the nature of the social contract described in various ways by Hobbes and Locke, a social contract which formalized the principle of might makes right and “converted clever usurpation into unalterable right.”²⁴⁹ However, Rousseau’s ultimate goal is to establish a new, legitimate social contract that is grounded in morals and reciprocity, and that institutionalizes the rule of the general will. In order to achieve this, Rousseau believes that the state must be founded on the sociability and compassion of a nation, rather than the defense of property.²⁵⁰ A group of individuals living in a national community develop pre-political similarities, including a common language and shared customs and manners (a national identity and culture), which provide them with the common ground for morality and the capacity to act collectively as a group. In book 1 of the *Social Contract*, Rousseau says that the fundamental problem of the entire work is to find a form of association in which each man “while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before.”²⁵¹ The conclusion he reaches is that the association in question can only be the nation (sub-national associations are too narrow, supra-national associations are too broad), and that the political institutions of the political community ruled by the general will must be built around the nation. As Choler indicates:

Can men both preserve themselves and express their freedom? To preserve themselves, men must come together and act according to a single standard. To

²⁴⁹ Rousseau,, “Discourse on Inequality”, 89.

²⁵⁰ Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism*, 127.

²⁵¹ Rousseau, “The Social Contract,” 174.

be free, a man must act according to a standard that he has prescribed for himself. To be free together, a group of men must all act with respect to a single standard to which they have all agreed.²⁵²

This single standard emerges to a sufficient extent only within the nation (shared national identity and culture, moral consensus on conceptions of the good), and so in order for the social contract to be legitimate and for man to remain free even within civil society, the political community must be grounded in the *national* community.

Once nations have been formed, it becomes necessary to give these nations legitimate political institutions. In the *Constitutional Project for Corsica*, Rousseau advises the Corsicans to form the type of government that has the least costly administration, requires the smallest number of official categories, and has the shortest chain of command. According to Rousseau, this “is in general the republican and in particular the democratic state.”²⁵³ Here Rousseau distinguishes his preferred brand of republicanism, which is participatory and hence democratic, from more institutional and aristocratic versions of republicanism.²⁵⁴ He then goes on to tell the Corsicans that every people ought to have a unique national character, and that love of country is the best foundation for establishing lasting political institutions. Rousseau asserts that “the best motive force of a government is love of the fatherland and this love is cultivated along with the fields.”²⁵⁵ Thus, we see a direct connection between Rousseau’s cultural republicanism and nationalism: the government formed by the legitimate social contract must be republican and democratic, but it must also be grounded in the nation. In *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, Rousseau directly links love of country with republican virtue and freedom, and he argues that only citizens who love their country can sustain strong republican institutions. Rousseau tells the Poles that they must direct the passions of their citizens towards the love of country, because “loving the

²⁵² Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism*, 141.

²⁵³ Rousseau, “Corsica,” 127.

²⁵⁴ Historically, republicanism was not synonymous with participatory democracy. For example, the republicans of Rome (such as Cicero) and of the Renaissance (such as Machiavelli) were not democrats.

²⁵⁵ Rousseau, “Corsica,” 156.

fatherland, they will serve it out of zeal and with all their heart. With this feeling alone, legislation, even if it were bad, would make good Citizens; and it is never anything but good citizens who make up the force and the prosperity of the State.”²⁵⁶ He praises the Poles for having survived as a nation despite having been conquered by more powerful states throughout their history. In so doing, Rousseau makes it clear that the Poles constitute a pre-political nation with commonalities that can endure various forms of political rule, including rule by foreign powers. He then tells the Poles that the only way to secure the stability of their state for the future “is to establish the Republic so much in the hearts of the Poles that it continues to exist there in spite of all its oppressors’ efforts.”²⁵⁷

Rousseau advises the Poles to establish national institutions which will preserve, cultivate, and further develop their distinct national character. He indicates that political institutions must be grounded in the nation, but he also acknowledges that the national identity and culture are subject to change; once national institutions are established, they have an important role to play in shaping and guiding the development of the national character. According to Rousseau, “national institutions are what form the genius, character, tastes and morals of a people; what make it itself and not another, what inspire in it that ardent love of the fatherland founded on habits impossible to uproot, what make it die of boredom among other peoples in the bosom of delights of which it is deprived in its own.”²⁵⁸ From this we can see that Rousseau believes in building on a pre-existing and pre-political group, the nation, but he does not claim that the political institutions built around the nation are going to leave it unchanged. In fact, as Cohler observes:

To build a political order on a nation alters the nation irrevocably. Even systematic expression of the pre-existing opinion would alter it, and Rousseau proposes more than this in the development of passionate attachment to a political order that did not previously exist. It seems, therefore, that Rousseau expresses both the opinion of later nationalists that political order ought to be built on

²⁵⁶ Rousseau, “Poland,” 175.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 174.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

nations and a further opinion, which they never publicly admit, that this building will make radical changes in the nations.²⁵⁹

Rousseau wants the Poles to ground their new republic in the Polish nation, but he also wants them to establish social institutions that will encourage an attachment to the new national political order, including public education taught by citizens and intended for fostering a common national spirit, bestowing public honors on those who contribute most to the nation, and ending the luxury and privilege enjoyed by the nobles. The ultimate goal of all social institutions is to make the citizens passionately attached to the political order, which is grounded in their common membership in the nation.²⁶⁰

Rousseau asserts that the people will not form a strong attachment to their political institutions without a public education. The citizens must be taught from a very young age to identify with the country as a whole instead of seeing the world solely through the lens of individual self-interest. This type of national education is not only desirable for Poles but for all free men, and it is absolutely necessary in a republican society. As Rousseau explains:

It is education that must give the national form to souls, and direct their opinions and their tastes so that they will be patriots by inclination, by passion, by necessity. Upon opening its eyes a child ought to see the fatherland and until death ought to see nothing but it. Every true republican imbibes the love of the fatherland, that is to say, of the laws and of freedom along with his mother's milk. This love makes up his whole existence; he sees only the fatherland, he lives only for it; as soon as he is alone, he is nothing: as soon as he has no more fatherland, he no longer is, and if he is not dead, he is worse than dead.²⁶¹, ²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism*, 34-35.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, 38.

²⁶¹ Rousseau, "Poland", 179.

²⁶² Note: When Rousseau links love of country to love "of the laws and of freedom" he is not advocating a purely civic nationalism based on common political principles and practices. Rousseau believes that laws must be derived from proper morals and from the noble values of the citizens, and he asserts that no laws, no matter how noble, can bring prosperity to a society that has already embraced vice (see *Letter to d'Alembert*, 66-67). In order for citizens to develop proper morals in the first place, they must be part of a national community.

Again we see in Rousseau a clear and unshakable link between nationalism and republicanism; a shared national identity and the love of nation are (along with FSM) the necessary preconditions required for establishing a republican political community ruled by the general will. Without a shared national identity and a strong love of nation, citizens would not be capable of looking beyond their individual self-interest and committing themselves to the common good. Rousseau's cultural republicanism is therefore intrinsically linked to nationalism, and his republican ideals cannot be considered separately from his defense of nationalism. When Liah Greenfeld argues that nationalism was the form in which democracy first appeared in the modern world (embodied in the idea of the people as bearers of sovereignty), meaning that nationalism originally developed *as* democracy, she is surely thinking of Rousseau. For Rousseau as for Greenfeld, democracy and nationalism are "inherently linked, and neither can be fully understood apart from this connection."²⁶³

We know that Rousseau's philosophical starting point is the nation as a pre-political group with particular characteristics. The legitimate government and the social institutions that support it must be built on the nation, because only within the nation is it possible to develop the kind of passionate attachment to the political order that is required for the general will to take shape. This type of attachment requires both nations *and* politics; it leads to the establishment of a common will or opinion that is based on the nation but expressed through politics (the general will).²⁶⁴ As Cohler observes:

Men were to be made to love their laws and the government to serve them through good administration of the laws. This procedure assumes that the political and national cores are there to be found by the good politician; his task is to seek out and try to strengthen the cores with institutions designed to make men attached to their nation and to establish good opinion.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 10.

²⁶⁴ Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism*, 38.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 175.

The nation is the foundation for the legitimate social contract, and national attachments which lead to a strong feeling of compassion for one's fellow citizens (love of nation) are a prerequisite for the general will. This is because in nations men share a certain character and culture that exist prior to the social contract, including a common language, customs, and manners. These men immediately recognize their similarities, such as their ability to communicate in the same tongue, and as a result they form the strong bonds required for willing generally. Cohler notes that "Rousseau did settle on nations, as we have seen in the *Considerations on Poland*, for the pre-existing community upon which a free political convention could be established," adding that for Rousseau "the nation should be the foundation for the social contract."²⁶⁶ In order to be legitimate, the social contract must reflect the general will of the governed, and only members of a national community are capable of feeling enough compassion for each other to equate the fate of their fellow citizens with their own fate as individuals, and to overcome narrow self-interest in the name of the common interest. Thus, "the basis of a government or the social contract is a certain kind of opinion, an attachment of the men in a political order to the whole, grounded in their national similarities."²⁶⁷ This does not mean that the nation will not change over time, or that the national culture cannot accommodate new members, but it asserts the existence of a common national culture that can survive independently of the political system, which is why the Polish nation could endure the rule of foreign powers and still remain distinct.

In the *Discourse on Political Economy*, Rousseau makes two claims: that the government must be made to follow the general will, and that the citizens must be made to love the laws. Simply put, particular wills must be made to agree with the general will, but this can only be achieved once the people learn to love their nation, its laws, and its ways of living. So we see that for Rousseau, forming a legitimate political order is directly connected to the love of nation.²⁶⁸ The legitimate political community is

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 143.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 150.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 165.

grounded in the nation, a group of people defined by their pre-political characteristics, but the will and character of the nation and its members is best expressed through politics. Cohler explains:

In Rousseau's understanding, the expression of men's peculiar humanity can only be achieved for most men through politics. He denies the possibility put forth by the Enlightenment and by Kant that the universality of the arts and sciences is an adequate substitute for political community. In order to be moral, men cannot act merely on the basis of their freedom, or their capacity to create standards; rather they must limit that freedom to some appropriate use. In national politics, the expression of men's peculiarity is carefully limited to a feeling of unity with some other men. This feeling of unity, however, is based on common membership in a nation whose criteria are nonpolitical.²⁶⁹

And while the nation is the starting point for the political community, we also know that nations change over time. Rousseau acknowledges that all societies change; the chief task of the political order is to allow the expression of these changes and to adapt to them. The character and culture of the nation are not set in stone, and the content of the general will changes over time. Nevertheless, the "adaptation" and "integration" of these changes can only take place within a pre-existing national community.²⁷⁰

Once a legitimate political order is established around the nation, the next step is to ensure that the republic remains free and virtuous in a world of rival states and aggressive foreign powers. When it comes to international affairs, Rousseau advocates a defensive form of nationalism that seeks to preserve the nation's sovereignty and distinct character and culture, while respecting the sovereignty and culture of other nations. Unlike Machiavelli, Rousseau opposes all forms of military expansionism at the expense of other nations, and unlike Madison, he wants to keep the republic small and self-sufficient. In *Government of Poland*, Rousseau famously states that "whoever wants to be free ought not to want to be a conqueror."²⁷¹ At the same time, he claims that the best way to keep a nation from itself being conquered is to ensure that all its citizens are

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 193-194.

²⁷⁰ Ibid, 14.

²⁷¹ Rousseau, "Poland," 217.

endowed with civic virtue and the love of nation. With regards to Poland, Rousseau proclaims that “a single thing is enough to make it impossible to subjugate; love of the fatherland and of freedom animated by the virtues that are inseparable from it.”²⁷² If its citizens are honorable, virtuous, and fiercely patriotic, no foreign power will find it profitable to invade the republican nation; invaders would not only be fighting a monarch or an army, but an entire people, each individual citizen committed to defending every inch of the fatherland with his life. Rousseau urges the Poles to cultivate that “patriotic intoxication which alone can raise men above themselves, and without which freedom is only a vain word and legislation only an illusion.”²⁷³ This is because only the love of nation can compel men to look beyond their narrow self-interest and risk their very lives in the name of the common interest; without this love, the general will cannot express itself.

We can see that for Rousseau the strength of a nation depends on the virtue of its citizens, not on military power or commercial success. In fact, Rousseau is a staunch critic of the excessive inequality between the rich and poor that characterizes most modern states (for more on this, see Chapter 3). Rousseau believes that a nation which allows the love of country to be replaced by a love of money in the hearts of its citizens becomes weaker and less prosperous; as individual citizens accumulate vast amounts of wealth, they are no longer concerned with the common good, but only with their own private interest. This threatens national solidarity and destroys the general will. As he warns the Poles, “the immense distance between the fortunes that separate the Lords from the petty nobility is a great obstacle to the reforms needed for making the love of the fatherland the dominant passion. While luxury reigns among the Great, cupidity will reign in all hearts.”²⁷⁴ Rousseau believes that all economic institutions must be subordinate to the political: economics have no logic separate from the common good,

²⁷² Ibid, 222.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 178.

and economic activities which are intended to benefit individuals at the expense of the whole are to be discouraged because they take away from national patriotism.²⁷⁵

Once all of these aspects of Rousseau's philosophy are taken into account, it becomes clear that his understanding of FSM has three interconnected layers: individual self-mastery, political self-rule (in the form of a participatory democracy), and national self-determination. Referring back to McCallum's typology, the agent for self-mastery is the individual, and the goal is to overcome the obstacles of mere appetites and narrow self-interests in order to realize one's full potential and pursue the common good. The agent for political self-rule is the citizen body, and the goal is for all citizens to participate actively in politics in order to be governed by laws that they make for themselves. Finally, the agent for national self-determination is the nation-state, and the goal is to preserve and promote the sovereignty of the state within an international system of rival powers. More will be said about these three layers of self-rule in the coming chapters, but for now it is enough to emphasize that all three are interconnected and critically important for Rousseau's understanding of freedom: existing states can have self-determination without political self-rule or individual self-mastery (e.g. authoritarian states), or they can have both self-determination and some form of political self-rule without individual self-mastery (e.g. modern liberal democracies). Theoretically, a state could possess individual self-mastery and national self-determination without political self-rule (e.g. some version of Plato's ideal city). Nevertheless, for Rousseau the three layers are interconnected, and they are inseparable from his understanding of FSM.

Rousseau is rightly considered the philosophical father of modern nationalism, and there is a clear and unshakable connection between his republican philosophy (cultural republicanism) and nationalism. Rousseau is a strong advocate for republican and democratic political institutions, and he wants all citizens to take an active part in shaping the laws that govern them. In addition, he believes that the legitimate political community must be grounded in the nation, because only a common national identity and

²⁷⁵ Cohler, *Rousseau and Nationalism*, 37.

culture allows for the developments of the kind of strong social bonds that are required for the general will to express itself. This is because only citizens who embrace both FSM and the love of nation are capable of overcoming narrow self-interests in the name of the common interest. It is therefore clear that we cannot separate Rousseau's nationalism from other aspects of his work without losing the essence of his philosophy. In the following chapter, I consider the importance of Rousseau's philosophy in the twenty-first century, and I look at the connection between Rousseau's cultural republicanism and the work of contemporary republican thinker David Miller. I argue that Rousseau's work gives rise not only to a distinct strand of republican political theory, but also to a unique strand of cultural nationalism which I call *republican nationalism*. I believe that republican nationalism makes an important contribution to the current debate within nationalist theory, and that it represents a defensible alternative to liberal nationalism.

Chapter 5

5 Republican Nationalism

In the preceding chapters I argued at length that Rousseau is both the father of modern nationalism and a major thinker of the republican political tradition. Rousseau recognizes the importance of stable republican institutions and participatory democracy, and he also defends the need for a shared national identity and love of nation. In this chapter, I consider whether we can combine republican citizenship with nationalism as Rousseau attempts to do. In so doing, I will pay special attention to the works of contemporary political theorist David Miller, who embarks on a similar project to that of Rousseau

5.1 Nationalist Theory Today

In the past two decades, the idea of liberal nationalism has emerged as an attempt to bridge the divide between liberalism and nationalism. Will Kymlicka says that “the failure of liberalism to understand nationalism is directly related to its failure to acknowledge the inevitable connection between state and culture,” and liberal nationalists along with other cultural nationalists have sought to address this problem.²⁷⁶ Liberal nationalists seek to formulate a theory of nationalism that is neither too exclusive nor too individualistic, and that takes the “illiberal sting” out of nationalism by making nationalism compatible with liberal principles and practices.²⁷⁷ However, Ronald Beiner worries that this proposed liberal compromise may rob nationalism of some of the things that make it so philosophically interesting. According to Beiner,

The national idea has been such a potent force in the modern world, and opens up a far-reaching philosophical alternative to liberal conceptions of the meaning of life.... precisely because it involves profound ideas of national belonging,

²⁷⁶ Kymlicka, “Misunderstanding Nationalism,” 140.

²⁷⁷ Ronald Beiner, “Introduction,” in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 12.

national destiny, rootedness in a community of experience, memories of a shared past, and so on. These are powerful notions, and I am not sure that one is able to do justice to them by seeking to split the difference between liberalism and nationalism.²⁷⁸

I would argue that the liberal nationalism of someone like Tamir or Kymlicka amounts to more than an attempt to merely “split the difference” between liberalism and nationalism, but it is clear that the liberal nationalist project has its critics. In addition, theorists like David Miller have challenged some proposed liberal compromises, such as Maurizio Viroli’s patriotism as an alternative to nationalism. Miller asserts that “nationalism helped to form an inclusive political community from people divided by attributes such as class and religion. Since that is still our predicament today... we need the cement of a common culture to underpin our democratic politics.”²⁷⁹ Miller wants to embrace the values of republican citizenship as a form of politics and the values of nationhood as a form of political identity, and he is interested in how to best implement these values in the modern world. Miller links republican citizenship with a more participatory conception of politics and with deliberative democracy, and he argues that republican citizenship is better suited to bring diverse groups of people into public discourse than alternative conceptions of citizenship.²⁸⁰ According to Miller, the types of virtues that are required for republican citizenship can be cultivated only within the borders of a nation, and a common national identity and culture are essential for producing the kind of solidarity that is needed for a system of inclusive deliberative democracy to take shape.²⁸¹ Consequently, Miller posits that “political communities should as far as possible be organized in such a way that their members share a common national identity, which binds them together in the face of their many diverse private and group identities.”²⁸²

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 22.

²⁸⁰ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 3.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 5.

²⁸² Miller, *On Nationality*, 188.

Miller identifies four areas where liberals and nationalists will likely come into conflict. These include 1) the question of whether national membership is freely chosen or whether it is part of a cultural inheritance, 2) the question of whether the political community is based on individual consent or whether political institutions ought to express the collective will of the national community, 3) the question of whether public life and political participation have intrinsic value (according to Miller, while liberals see little intrinsic value in it, “nationalists, by contrast, are likely to attach intrinsic value to public life, and to adopt a republican view of citizenship, according to which the citizen should be actively engaged at some level in political debate and decision-making.”²⁸³), and 4) the question of whether the state should be neutral with regards to culture (most liberals tend to favor neutrality, but nationalists advocate non-neutrality with regards to the shared national culture because an encompassing national culture gives the society its distinct identity).²⁸⁴ Having identified four areas of likely contention, Miller maintains that nationality is not in itself an illiberal idea. Our understanding of the principle of nationality will undoubtedly affect how we think about important issues such as culture, citizenship, education, minority rights, political boundaries, and so on, but Miller argues that one can be a liberal and still value nationality. Miller appears to consider his own perspective to be a variant of liberal nationalism, nevertheless, as Bhikhu Parekh points out in his critical assessment of Miller’s theory, “although Miller is a liberal and wants the nation to be constituted along liberal lines, he realizes that [liberalism and nationalism] might conflict, and then he tends to privilege nationalism. Since the national culture gives a society its distinct identity, he insists that the state cannot and ought not to be neutral with respect to it.”²⁸⁵ Miller’s work constitutes an important contribution to the current debate within cultural nationalism, and his project has clear parallels with Rousseau’s work. Miller examines the relationship between republican citizenship and nationality (shared national identity) in his three major works: *On Nationality*,

²⁸³ Miller, *On Nationality*, 194.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 193-195.

²⁸⁵ Parekh, “The Incoherence of Nationalism,” 304.

Citizenship and National Identity, and *National Responsibility and Global Justice*. In the following section, I consider Miller's arguments and how they relate to the connection that Rousseau makes between republican political theory and nationalism. Although Miller tends to identify his own perspective as a variant of liberal nationalism, I suggest that his theory points towards a distinctly *republican* approach to nationalism.

5.2 Republican Citizenship and the Nation

In *Citizenship and National Identity*, Miller looks at the meaning of citizenship in the modern world, and he considers whether nationality continues to be a defensible principle around which we should organize our politics. Miller believes that citizenship and nationality are fundamentally connected; the conception of citizenship that he advocates (he himself calls it "republicanism") is feasible only where it can call upon the ethical resources of the *national* community.²⁸⁶ Miller wants to "reassert the underlying values of republican citizenship as a form of politics and nationhood as a form of political identity, while simultaneously thinking about how to best implement these values in the contemporary world."²⁸⁷ Miller contrasts the republican model of citizenship with two other models: liberal and libertarian. He claims that republican citizenship is better suited to bring the diverse groups of people inhabiting modern nation-states into the public discourse, and he advocates for a form of deliberative democracy that is more participatory in nature than contemporary liberal democracy. Nevertheless, Miller stresses that the types of virtues that are required by the republican model of citizenship can only be cultivated within national borders, and that a shared national identity constitutes a necessary precondition for achieving the solidarity necessary for a functional system of deliberative democracy.²⁸⁸ We can already see that Miller's project has many parallels with Rousseau, who also believed that the moral republic had to be grounded in the nation.

²⁸⁶ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 1.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

Miller defines republican citizenship as follows:

The republican conception of citizenship conceives the citizen as someone who plays an active role in shaping the future direction of his or her society through political debate and decision-making. It takes the liberal conception of citizenship as a set of rights, and adds to it the idea that a citizen must be someone who thinks and behaves in a certain way. A citizen identifies with the political community to which he or she belongs, and is committed to promoting its common good through active participation in its political life.²⁸⁹

Proponents of republican citizenship believe that through open public discussion the citizen body can arrive at a substantial degree of consensus on issues of common concern, including the question of what constitutes the public good. Liberal critics of republican citizenship would challenge this view and argue instead that in modern political communities the search for consensus is incompatible with the fact of plurality.²⁹⁰ As such, republican citizenship is more in line with Rousseau's claim that a moral consensus among citizens is possible, and that this consensus constitutes the general will of the people. Miller argues that the republican conception of citizenship places no limits on the types of demands that can be put forward in the political forum, and it doesn't discriminate between demands stemming from personal conviction or demands stemming from group identity. Republican citizenship requires citizens to provide reasons for what they are claiming, but it does not require them to give up their potentially controversial conceptions of the good when entering the public sphere. Furthermore, republican citizenship can be said to uphold a particular conception of the good which may conflict with the private conceptions of individual citizens because it clearly values a life of public participation over a strictly private life.

Miller believes that while the republican tradition has held up the active and virtuous citizen as the model of good citizenship, one need not endorse active participation in politics as the *highest* good in order to be a republican. According to Miller, the republican view also supports the more modest position that politics

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 53.

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 55.

constitutes a *necessary* part of the good life, but that individual citizens can assign different weight to political participation depending on their own personal values.²⁹¹ Miller is not always clear about whether he believes that political participation holds intrinsic value, though he implies that this is the case when he says that nationalists are “likely to attach intrinsic value to public life.”²⁹² He states that it should “be part of each person’s good to be engaged *at some level* in political debate,” indicating that participation is a necessary part of the good life for everyone, but he maintains that this “is consistent either with regarding political activity as intrinsically fulfilling or regarding it as a necessary precondition for other activities which do have intrinsic value.”²⁹³ He also states that those individuals who voluntarily exclude themselves from politics (anarchists or religious fundamentalists, for instance) cannot be regarded as full citizens on the republican view, even if they have the formal rights of citizenship. Moreover, having such individuals living in a republican society would be “regrettable” and republicans “may want to take steps to discourage the formation of such groups.”²⁹⁴ With that said, it seems that Miller does personally believe that political participation holds intrinsic value, but he also wants to stress that the republican conception of citizenship can be embraced by those individuals who see participation as not holding intrinsic value in and of itself, but believe that participation constitutes a necessary precondition for carrying out other activities with intrinsic value. To further illustrate my claim, consider what Miller says about the role of politics in the lives of republican citizens:

The republican citizen plays an active role in both the formal and informal arenas of politics. Political participation is not undertaken simply in order to check the excesses of government—voting out a corrupt administration—or in order to promote sectional interests—lobbying for the producer group that you belong to—but as a way of expressing your commitment to the community. Because the citizen identifies with it, he or she wants to have a say in what it does. And he or

²⁹¹ Ibid, 58.

²⁹² Miller, *On Nationality*, 194.

²⁹³ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 58.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 59.

she also wants as far as possible to reach an agreement with other citizens so that what is done is done in the name of all of them.²⁹⁵

To me this says that Miller sees political participation as more than merely instrumentally valuable; rather, just like Rousseau, Miller connects political participation with *self-realization*, and his ultimate goal in politics is the expression of a general will.

Miller contrasts republican citizenship with the liberal model, arguing that “on the liberal view to be a citizen just *is* to accept a certain set of principles, and to regulate your private conduct within the boundaries set by those principles. This means that the liberal has nothing to say to someone whose own conception of the good is not liberal except that he must set that conception aside for political purposes.”²⁹⁶ As such, “groups who wish to influence the parameters of politics, but attempt to do so by conceptions of the good that are not already tailored to liberal requirements, are *personae non gratae* in this perspective.”²⁹⁷ Consequently, Miller believes that the liberal view fails to address the challenges of modern pluralism precisely because it excludes non-liberal political arguments, thereby alienating those citizens whose very identity may depend on expressing non-liberal views. Miller states that the republican view differs from liberal citizenship in that it makes no such *a priori* demands, but demands only that citizens try to persuade others of the truth of their claims through free and fair civil discourse. This applies to both liberal and non-liberal political arguments; on the republican view each citizen can try to convince others of the truth of his beliefs, be they liberal or not, as long as he does it through civil discourse and not through the use of force. The only groups that may be excluded from citizenship are those that exclude themselves voluntarily, such as radical religious sects who reject all forms of state authority.²⁹⁸ Republicanism does not set limits on the types of arguments that can be advanced in public, which means that even such major questions as interpreting the constitution will be up for public debate and

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 84.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 59.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

discussion in a republican system (i.e. constitutional questions are not simply left up to judges, but more will be said on this later). This is because the republican model of citizenship holds that all rights, even the most fundamental ones, are ultimately grounded in politics and public discussion. By contrast, some liberals believe that certain constitutional rights, such as the right to property, are primary or “pre-political”, meaning that they cannot be overridden by a democratic majority. Miller sums up the contrast between republican and liberal citizenship as follows:

The contrast between republicanism and liberalism is not that the liberal recognizes the value of entrenched rights whereas the republican does not, but that the liberal regards these rights as having a pre-political justification while the republican grounds them in public discussion. One institutional corollary is that liberals will seek to make the judiciary the supreme arbiters of constitutional rights – in effect the interpretation of liberal citizenship is entrusted to them – while the republican gives this role to the citizen body as a whole.²⁹⁹

Thus, in the republican model, “there will be constitutional politics and not merely, as the liberal would want, constitutional interpretation by judges.”³⁰⁰

Miller tends to describe himself as a defender of the “principle of nationality” rather than a “nationalist.” Nonetheless, the two concepts appear to be synonymous, and I will treat them as such for the purposes of this dissertation.³⁰¹ Miller states that the principle of nationality comprises three interlinked propositions: 1) a national identity is a defensible source of one aspect of personal identity, 2) nations are ethical communities that impose reciprocal obligations on members which are not owed to outsiders, and 3) nations have a good claim to be politically self-determining (though not necessarily

²⁹⁹ Ibid, 59-60.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, 60.

³⁰¹ Note: I agree with Yael Tamir, a liberal nationalist, who defends the use of the term “nationalist” as follows: “Although resorting to a less controversial and less pejorative term might have made my position more acceptable, I thought it would be wrong to bypass the concept of nationalism. Liberals who give up this term and surrender it to the use of conservative political forces, or to note the difference, to chauvinist and racist ideologies, alienate themselves from a whole set of values that are of immense importance to a great many people, including liberals.” See: Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1995), 5.

outright independent states).³⁰² Although modern nation-states are not culturally or ethnically homogeneous, Miller believes that the nation-state model can be adapted to deal with this complex reality. He also believes that while there are certain limits to what nation-states can do (limits which are set by the demands of global justice), nation-states still have a wide range of options at their disposal, and the nation remains the primary model of political organization in the modern world.³⁰³ In Chapter 1, I identified the five elements that, according to Miller, distinguish nationality from other collective sources of identity. In short, nations are imagined communities constituted by mutual belief, extended in history, active in character, connected to a particular territory, and distinguished from other communities by the distinct traits of their members. Although the nation is an imagined community often founded upon national myths that are historically inaccurate, it establishes a real common culture with substantive power and influence over its members.³⁰⁴ Ideas of nationality are consciously created and recreated by members of the national community, and nationalist ideas are diverse and have been associated with left-wing movements as often as with movements on the right. With strong echoes of Rousseau, Miller describes his defense of nationalism as follows:

I want to argue that nationality answers one of the most pressing needs of the modern world, namely how to maintain solidarity among the populations of states that are large and anonymous, such that their citizens cannot possibly enjoy the kind of community that relies on kinship or face-to-face interaction. That we need such solidarity is something that I intend to take for granted here. I assume that in societies in which economic markets play a central role, there is a strong tendency towards social atomization, where each person looks out for the interests of herself and her immediate social network. As a result it is potentially difficult to mobilize people to provide collective goods, it is difficult to get them to agree on practices of redistribution from which they are not likely personally to benefit, and so forth. These problems can be avoided only where there exists large-scale solidarity, such that people feel themselves to be members of an overarching community, and to have social duties to act for the common good of that

³⁰² Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 7.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

community, to help out other members when they are in need, etc. Nationality is *de facto* the main source of such solidarity.³⁰⁵

Miller rightly distinguishes between the types of nationalism that proclaim the superiority of one nation over others (chauvinism), and the types of nationalism that are defensive in character and recognize the equal claims of other nationalities.³⁰⁶ Like Rousseau, Miller wants to defend this second conception of nationalism, which inherently rejects expansionism, militarism, and imperialism. Also like Rousseau, Miller believes that this second conception of nationalism can only take root within a republic that is limited in size (not global), national in character, and that embraces republican citizenship and deliberative democracy.³⁰⁷ Miller juxtaposes republican citizenship with two rival conceptions of citizenship, liberal and libertarian. Although all three models of citizenship attempt to accommodate the pluralism of modern nation-states, Miller believes that republican citizenship is best equipped to deal with the challenges of pluralism. He understands liberal citizenship as presupposing a set of rights enjoyed equally by all members of society, including social, political, and civil rights. Liberal citizenship establishes rights to a certain minimum of education, income, housing, and so on that every citizen should have access to, but it does not include a direct obligation to participate actively in politics.³⁰⁸ Miller goes on to address Rawls' political liberalism in some detail, and concludes that according to this model, as long as citizens acknowledge shared principles of justice they are not required to participate in politics. Miller takes issue with liberal citizenship's lack of emphasis on direct political participation, and he is also critical of the idea put forth by liberal neutralists like Rawls that citizens should refrain from making appeals to controversial ideals of the good when engaging in public

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 31-32.

³⁰⁶ Miller, *On Nationality*, 9-10.

³⁰⁷ It is important to note that for Rousseau, the ideal republic is more limited in size than most modern nation-states. Rousseau believed that the small island of Corsica comes as close to having the ideal size and geography as possible, but while acknowledging the less than ideal conditions, he does make a serious attempt to help larger nation-states such as Poland establish republican political institutions. See: *Constitutional Project for Corsica* and *Considerations on the Government of Poland*.

³⁰⁸ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 44-46.

discourse. According to Miller, Rawls' view does not allow for arguments that rely on the truth of, for instance, a particular religious belief, even though a citizen's identity may depend precisely on that belief being true. As such, Rawls implies that all citizens must first and foremost accept liberal principles about the justification and foundation of rights, while agreeing to pursue their own particular visions of the good exclusively through private and non-political means. However, some citizens may refuse to accept the notion that fundamental questions about the justification and foundation of rights should be off the table, or that one's conception of the good is merely a private matter, which will put them at odds with the liberal political order. Miller believes that in cases such as these, liberalism's only solution will be to assert the supremacy of the liberal model, forcing all citizens to accept it.³⁰⁹ Miller concludes by claiming that "the liberal conception of citizenship does not constitute a fully adequate response to pluralism" because on this model "everyone is to be treated as a liberal citizen, and political claims and demands which do not conform to the liberal model are simply ruled out as inadmissible"; as such, "members of [non-liberal] groups will inevitably feel alienated from the political realm."³¹⁰

On the other hand, Miller states that the libertarian model of citizenship tends not to value citizenship for its own sake; citizenship is merely a means for individuals to demand goods that require public provision. Miller believes this view to be expressed in Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, the State and Utopia*, "where the state is seen as originating in the competition of protective associations to provide their customers with rights-enforcement services."³¹¹ The state is seen as having a monopoly on the enforcement of basic personal and property rights, and the citizens are regarded as parties to a universal contract which gives the state that authority.³¹² Miller argues that the libertarian conception of citizenship is ultimately unstable because there are certain public goods

³⁰⁹ Ibid, 49.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid, 50.

³¹² Ibid, 49-50.

which will always be underproduced by the market, including cultural goods and non-profitable goods such as roadways or streetlights. According to Miller, citizenship at its core includes collective goods and rights enjoyed in common that are not adequately provided for by the market; even though individuals living in the suburbs may not want to pay taxes intended to address the problems of inner city neighborhoods, the well-being of the society at large may require them to do so.³¹³ Furthermore, even though individual citizens may have no personal interest in advancing the cultural claims of certain minorities (or the national culture at large, for that matter), the common good of the community as a whole may require the use of taxpayer money for advancing common cultural projects. Just like liberal citizenship, libertarian citizenship fails to address the challenges posed by pluralism in modern nation-states; although libertarianism takes the diversity of modern communities seriously, it fails to account for common rights and goods that are enjoyed collectively rather than individually and that are not adequately provided for by the market. Miller presents the republican conception of citizenship as a superior alternative to both liberal and libertarian citizenship.

5.3 Miller's Republicanism and Deliberative Democracy

Miller argues that the republican model of citizenship requires more than representative political institutions as they exist in modern liberal democracies (where political participation is optional, judges are the supreme interpreters of the constitution, and so on). Republican citizenship requires a more participatory model of democracy—it requires *deliberative* democracy. In recent decades the modern liberal state, which functions within a system of competitive representation and embraces conventional forms of rights-based constitutionalism, has come under attack by thinkers who advocate a more participatory and deliberative approach to democracy, one that is more open and engaging than liberal pluralism and competitive representation. These thinkers refer to themselves as radical or deliberative democrats, and they call for rethinking interest-based politics in modern liberal societies. In essence, deliberative democracy combines

³¹³ Ibid, 52-53.

elements of direct democracy and representative democracy in an attempt to develop a more participatory political system that is feasible in the modern world. In this, radical and deliberative democrats draw inspiration from Rousseau's vision of the people as sovereign, and his commitment to ensuring that all citizens take an active part in making the laws that govern them. As Joshua Cohen and Archon Fung explain:

Radical-democratic ideas join two strands of democratic thought. First, with Rousseau, radical democrats are committed to a broader participation in public decision-making. Citizens should have greater direct roles in public choices or at least engage more deeply with substantive political issues and be assured that officials will be responsive to their concerns and judgments. Second, radical democrats emphasize deliberation. Instead of a politics of power and interest, radical democrats favour a more deliberative democracy in which citizens address public problems by reasoning together about how best to solve them – in which no force is at work, as Jürgen Habermas (1975: 108) said, “except that of the better argument.”³¹⁴

Deliberative democracy places greater demands on citizens than its liberal counterpart. Liberal democracy requires citizens to, at the very least, abide by the law and respect the autonomy of others and, at the very most, maintain vigilance over political elites. Deliberative democracy, on the other hand, requires citizens to be well-informed and educated, to be rational and open-minded, to engage actively in the democratic process, to think critically about the views of their fellow citizens and about their own views, and to sacrifice their own time and personal resources for the public good. As Weinstock and Kahane emphasize:

Deliberative democracy in almost all of its forms requires a more active citizenry and one with crucial dispositions, aptitudes, and virtues. Deliberative democratic citizens must be disposed to seek agreement with other citizens, possess deliberative traits that facilitate this process, and adopt a questioning, potentially critical, attitude toward their own conceptions of the good. Plainly, the development of the deliberative democratic personality requires an ambitious educational project.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ Joshua Cohen and Archon Fung, “Radical Democracy,” *Swiss Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Winter 2004): 23-24.

³¹⁵ Daniel Weinstock and David Kahane, “Introduction,” in *Deliberative Democracy in Practice*, ed. David Kahane et al. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 7.

In many ways, modern theories of deliberative democracy are inspired by Rousseau's republican conception of citizenship and his emphasis on the need for overcoming narrow self-interest in the name of the common good. Weinstock and Kahane explain:

Deliberative democracy clearly places moral demands on citizens. They cannot simply press their self-interest but must be willing to exchange reasons with their fellow citizens and to accept that the force of the better argument—the “balance of reasons”—might lead to outcomes less favourable to their interests than could have been obtained through a more confrontational politics.³¹⁶

Therefore, its proponents “must remain alive to the possibility that deliberative democratic politics will sometimes mean citizens doing less well by the standard of their narrow self-interest.”³¹⁷ Deliberative democracy depends directly on the citizens' ability to overcome their narrow self-interests and on their willingness to treat fellow citizens with the same respect they afford themselves. This echoes Rousseau's general will, a fundamentally democratic vision of sovereignty that requires all voices to be heard and always aims at the common good.

Miller defines the deliberative ideal as follows:

A democratic system is deliberative when the decisions it takes are arrived at through a process of open discussion to which each participant is able to contribute freely, but is equally willing to listen to and consider opposing views; as a result, the decisions reached reflect not simply the prior interests or prior opinions of the participants, but the judgments they make after reflecting on the arguments made on each side, and the principles or procedures that should be used to resolve disagreements.³¹⁸

He argues that deliberative democracy rests on a different conception of ‘human nature in politics’ from the liberal view. According to Miller, the liberal view “stresses the importance of giving due weight to each individual's distinct preferences,” while the deliberative view “relies upon a person's capacity to be swayed by rational arguments

³¹⁶ Ibid., 9.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 142.

and to lay aside particular interests and opinions in deference to overall fairness and the common interest of the collectivity.³¹⁹,³²⁰ Miller believes that public discussion has a moralizing effect on citizens (if someone commits themselves to a particular position publicly, it would be demeaning for them to then retreat to a more selfish posture), and he cites a number of psychological studies (dealing with the behavior of juries and the Prisoner's Dilemma) which provide empirical evidence for this claim.³²¹ Miller also believes that engaging in public discussion makes citizens feel like they are a part of the larger group and thus makes them more likely to cooperate with one another. Even those citizens who ultimately disagree with the outcome of deliberation understand how and why the outcome was reached, feel that they had the opportunity to have their voices heard, and believe that they can contribute to more favorable outcomes in the future.

Miller argues that a major weakness in the liberal conception of democracy is the vulnerability of preference-aggregating procedures to problems of social choice (standard social choice theory invites us to pick a mechanism for aggregating preferences regardless of the content of those preferences), and he claims that deliberative democracy deals with this problem more effectively because it encourages people not only to express their pre-existing political opinions through opinion polls, voting, and so on, but to form their political opinions through political participation, including public debate and discussion (because the content of people's preferences emerges in the course of deliberation, we can select the decision procedure most appropriate to the case in hand).³²² Miller also differentiates between deliberative democracy and epistemic democracy; epistemic democracy holds that there is an objectively correct answer that can be arrived at through majority rule. This epistemic view is sometimes attributed to

³¹⁹ Ibid, 10.

³²⁰ Note: If he is referring to liberal theory in general, then Miller's description of the 'liberal view' here is not entirely fair. For instance, Rawlsian liberalism is not merely concerned with 'preferences'; rather, it is concerned with ensuring that each individual has secure access to a scheme of basic liberties, equal opportunities, and the social bases of self-respect.

³²¹ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 16-17.

³²² Ibid, 22-23.

Rousseau, but Miller argues that Rousseau's view remains ambiguous between epistemic and deliberative democracy. The epistemic view sets a standard that Miller believes is unrealistically high, because in most cases democratic decision-making will deal with questions that are not likely to have a single correct answer. Instead, deliberative democracy aims at a consensus regarding substantive norms and procedures, but does not necessarily aim for a single objectively correct answer. According to Miller, "the emphasis in the deliberative conception is on the way in which a process of public discussion in which all points of view can be heard may legitimate the outcome when this is seen to reflect the discussion that has preceded it, not on deliberation as a discovery procedure in search of a correct answer."³²³

Having made the case for deliberative democracy, Miller goes on to claim that democratic deliberation is most likely to take root in national communities whose members share a common identity that transcends their group-specific identities. Simply put, deliberative democracy is best realized in a political community with a shared national identity.³²⁴ A shared national identity creates the kind of solidarity and mutual trust among citizens that makes deliberative democracy possible; citizens in national communities are more likely to look beyond their sectional interests in the name of the common good. This means that they will be more willing to hear others out, to accept the force of the better argument, and to potentially abandon a position they feel strongly about in order to reach a compromise (as long as others are willing to reciprocate). According to Miller, "among large aggregates of people, only a common nationality can provide the sense of solidarity that makes this possible. Sharing a national identity does not, of course, mean holding similar political views; but it does mean being committed to finding terms under which fellow-nationals can agree to live together."³²⁵ As such, Miller believes that political communities should as much as possible strive to promote a common national identity which will unite them as citizens in the face of their many

³²³ Ibid, 11.

³²⁴ Ibid, 158.

³²⁵ Miller, *On Nationality*, 98.

diverse private and group identities. Miller strongly opposes identity politics (sometimes referred to as politics of recognition), a perspective which holds that no single identity should be privileged in the public sphere (not even the national identity), and demands public endorsement and special treatment for sectional identities. By contrast, Miller emphasizes that only an *encompassing* national identity can create the type of solidarity that democratic politics requires, and he claims that republican citizenship asks citizens to adopt an inclusive national identity which ultimately transcends their sectional identities as women, religious minorities, and so on³²⁶ As Miller explains,

It is important for democratic politics that all perspectives should be represented in the political arena, but in reaching policy decisions, citizens should set aside their personal commitments and affiliations and try to assess competing proposals in terms of shared standards of justice and common interest. (This aspect of the model found its most extreme expression in Rousseau's demand that all factions must be banned from public assemblies if the general will was to emerge).³²⁷

In fact, the strong connection Miller draws between deliberative democracy and national identity is very similar to Rousseau's position. As we observed in the previous chapters, Rousseau believes that a common national character and love of nation constitute a necessary precondition for establishing the kind of participatory democracy that he envisions. Without this precondition, Rousseau claims that citizens would be incapable of looking beyond their narrow self-interests and committing themselves to the common good. Just as Miller argues that a community without a shared national identity would have a much harder time establishing deliberative institutions, Rousseau believes that a community in which the citizens lack a common national character would not be ruled by the general will (i.e. it would not be democratic in the participatory sense). Therefore, just as Rousseau's cultural republicanism is intrinsically linked to his nationalism, so too is Miller's conception of republican citizenship and deliberative democracy fundamentally connected to his principle of nationality. As Miller explains,

³²⁶ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 63-65.

³²⁷ *Ibid*, 65.

The principle of nationality points us towards a republican conception of citizenship and towards deliberative democracy as the best means of making political decisions. If a nation is to be self-determining, its members should aim as far as possible to achieve consensus about the policies they wish to pursue, and the only way to achieve this is through an open dialogue in which all points of view are represented. The institutions of politics should be structured in such a way as to maximize the chances for such an open dialogue.³²⁸

Ultimately, Miller argues that the principle of nationality and the continued existence of the nation-state are the necessary preconditions for preserving and promoting republican citizenship, deliberative democracy, political autonomy, and social justice. Miller sums it up as follows:

Where a nation is politically autonomous, it is able to implement a scheme of social justice; it can protect and foster its common culture; and its members are to a greater or lesser extent able collectively to determine its common destiny. Where the citizens of a state are also compatriots, the mutual trust that this engenders makes it more likely that they will be able to solve collective action problems, to support redistributive principles of justice, and to practice forms of deliberative democracy. Together these make a powerful case for holding that the boundaries of nations and states should as far as possible coincide.³²⁹

Like Rousseau, Miller believes that political communities which are national and bounded (as opposed to transnational or global) are best suited for implementing the principles of republican citizenship, including a system of deliberative democracy and social and redistributive justice. The parallels between the two thinkers are substantial, but there are also notable differences. For instance, Miller does not endorse Rousseau's ideas about the need for a Legislator, or his radical opposition to political factionalism that seems to demand an outright ban on all political parties, lobbyists, and special interest groups. Nevertheless, I argue that Miller's approach is strongly influenced by Rousseau's work and constitutes a sophisticated attempt to modernize Rousseau's republican philosophy. In the following section I consider the connection between Rousseau's republicanism and Miller's contemporary republican perspective in greater detail. I argue that the type of republican citizenship that Miller advocates has its roots in

³²⁸ Miller, *On Nationality*, 150.

³²⁹ *Ibid*, 98.

Rousseau, and that the fundamental link that both thinkers make between republicanism and nationalism points towards a distinct perspective which offers a defensible alternative to liberal nationalism, and which I refer to as *republican nationalism*.

5.4 Rousseau, Miller, and Republican Nationalism

Miller argues that our understanding of citizenship must for the foreseeable future remain within the boundaries of national political communities. He believes that genuine and meaningful citizenship is impossible to achieve on a transnational or global level, and that those who advocate for such proposals are either aspiring to utopian aims or deliberately diluting the definition of citizenship to accommodate communities larger than the nation. EU citizenship is an interesting example: despite the union's unprecedented economic integration, the vast majority of EU citizens still primarily identify with their particular nation, and many complain that EU institutions suffer from bureaucratic elitism and serious democratic deficits. According to Miller, Rousseau admirably articulates the small-is-necessary perspective on citizenship; Rousseau argues that active republican citizenship can take root only within a bounded national community.³³⁰ To be clear, Rousseau's ideal republic is much smaller than the modern nation-state (the closest empirical example to his ideal is Corsica in 1765), but during his lifetime Rousseau did advise the much larger nation of Poland on how to establish proper republican and democratic institutions, so he clearly thought that the effort was worthwhile even for larger nation-states. The republican tradition has historically emphasized the importance of cultivating public virtue and combating corruption, understood as putting private interests ahead of public responsibilities. Republican thinkers like Rousseau emphasize that this requires strong patriotic loyalty, which was best achieved in fairly small city-states.³³¹ In the *Social Contract* Rousseau blames the vastness of the state, along with the waning of patriotism and the pursuit of private over public interests, for the decline of active citizenship. According to Rousseau, when the close social bond between citizens is broken, "the general will becomes mute: everyone,

³³⁰ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 82.

³³¹ *Ibid*, 86.

guided by secret motives, expresses opinions no more like those of a citizen than if the state had never existed, and iniquitous decrees which have no other end than the private interest, are falsely passed under the name of laws.”³³² As such, in the *Discourse on Political Economy* and other works Rousseau specifically states that the first thing to be done in order to make citizens virtuous is to make them love their homeland. Miller points out that when confronted with the challenge of designing a constitution for a larger state like Poland, Rousseau stresses the importance of common nationality even more fervently, advising the Poles to actively promote the Polish national identity through the mandatory wearing of national costumes, special sporting events and festivals, and a system of education that emphasizes the importance of patriotism, common nationality, and love of country.³³³

Rousseau’s discussion of Poland in particular, a relatively large state with a distinct national character, is more applicable to modern nation-states than his discussions of smaller city-states like Geneva, and Miller believes that in the modern world “nationality has served as at least a partial replacement for the patriotic loyalty of the city-state as a foundation for republican citizenship.”³³⁴ More effective methods of communication and transportation made it possible for larger groups of people to identify with a shared cultural character that set them apart from other groups, thus moving beyond the city-state and turning the nation into the focus of identity and allegiance in the modern world. If every citizen could no longer meet face-to-face to deliberate, some other factor had to generate the kind of mutual trust and loyalty that citizenship requires. According to Miller, “common nationality has served that purpose in the advanced societies.”³³⁵ The modern conception of citizenship is no longer attached to small city-states, but at the same time it is not and has never been purely political or transnational in

³³² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “The Social Contract”, in *Rousseau’s Political Writings*, ed. A. Ritter and J.C. Bondanella (New York: Norton, 1988), 143.

³³³ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 87.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

scope. As Miller points out, “all our experience of citizenship, then, has so far been of bounded citizenship: initially citizenship within the walls of the city-state, later citizenship within the cultural limits of the nation-state. These boundaries have been actively policed. Admission to citizenship has always come with strings attached.”³³⁶

Miller states that the main rival of the republican conception of citizenship is the liberal conception, which looks at citizenship as a set of rights and corresponding obligations enjoyed equally by all citizens. Liberal citizens enjoy rights such as free speech, voting in elections, and personal security, and have the responsibility to follow the laws and to not interfere with the rights of others. As Miller observes, “central to the liberal view is the idea of a fair balance of rights and obligations: we can find this expressed in the now-classic exposition by T.H. Marshall and more recently in the work of John Rawls.”³³⁷ The republican conception of citizenship also acknowledges the importance of citizen rights, but it places more emphasis on active citizenship and the idea of all citizens taking an active part in shaping the laws that govern them. Republican citizenship is more than a legal status; it includes taking an active role in public debate and deliberation. On the republican view, to be a citizen is both to have certain rights *and* to think and behave in a certain way; to exhibit what republicans have traditionally referred to as public virtue.³³⁸ Miller identifies four main components of republican citizenship, including 1) a set of equal rights (regarding both private and public aims), 2) a set of corresponding obligations (respecting the law, paying taxes, and so on), 3) a willingness to take active steps to protect the rights of other members of the political community and promote its common interests (public spirit), and 4) playing an active role in both the formal and informal areas of politics (expressing commitment to the community that goes beyond formal political institutions).³³⁹ Miller claims that while the first two components are shared with liberalism, the third and fourth components are

³³⁶ Ibid, 88.

³³⁷ Ibid, 82.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid, 83-84.

distinctly republican. This is because liberalism is satisfied with the first two components, and although some liberals may sympathize with and even encourage the sentiments of the third and fourth components, these are not considered necessary for the liberal conception of citizenship. As such, republican citizenship is more demanding than liberal citizenship. Republicanism imposes higher costs on an individual's time because it expects citizens to actively carry out the tasks that republican citizenship requires (it is not enough to simply obey the laws and pay taxes while leaving all public matters to elected officials). Furthermore, republicanism requires citizens to take responsibility for promoting the common good, the content of which is more substantive than the liberal good (for instance, it includes the duty to participate in politics and embrace a shared national identity, but more on this in Chapter 6). This concern for a substantive common good means taking a long-term view of the community's interests and understanding that tradeoffs and compromises have to be made in the name of the common good. As such, "above all, [republican citizenship] involves being willing to set aside personal interests and personal ideals in the interests of achieving a democratic consensus."³⁴⁰ Miller adds that "as Rousseau would have put it, you ask not 'What is my particular or group will on this matter?' but 'What is the general will on this matter' which may require a very considerable effort of self-discipline."³⁴¹

In expounding the concept of republican citizenship and contrasting it to its liberal counterpart, Miller makes frequent references to Rousseau. This is because Rousseau is an influential republican thinker who also stressed the fundamental importance of national identity for citizenship. Miller further mirrors Rousseau's view when he argues that a purely political citizenship that is unsupported by a shared public culture and national identity is unfeasible. It may at times be impossible for a state to appeal to a shared national identity, such as in cases where members of the state see themselves as belonging to rival nationalities that are openly hostile to one another, but such cases, though unavoidable, must be regarded as a second best scenario by anyone who aspires to

³⁴⁰ Ibid, 85.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

republican citizenship.³⁴² Miller goes on to argue against the idea of cosmopolitan citizenship, maintaining that cosmopolitan law does not amount to citizenship as we have come to understand the term. Citizenship means taking an active part in making the laws that govern us, and meaningful opportunities for exercising self-rule will, for the foreseeable future, continue to exist only within the national community.³⁴³ Miller sums up his understanding of republican citizenship as follows:

I take citizenship, especially in its republican form, to be an achievement of immense value. It represents the best way in which people of diverse beliefs and styles of life can live together under laws and institutions which they can endorse as legitimate. It is a social practice that needs bolstering by institutional change and civic education in the liberal democracies. But it has clear empirical preconditions; it cannot simply be conjured up *ex nihilo*. These preconditions are not as severe as Rousseau believed, but they exist none the less. International peace, international justice and global environmental protection are very important objectives, and we must hope that republican citizens will choose to promote them externally. But this cannot be achieved by inventing in theory cosmopolitan forms of citizenship which undercut the basis of citizenship proper.³⁴⁴

Here Miller tries to distance himself from Rousseau by arguing that the preconditions for republican citizenship are not as severe as Rousseau believed. As I argued in the previous chapter, Rousseau's two preconditions for establishing a society ruled by the general will are freedom as self-mastery and a shared national identity. We know that Miller does not take issue with the second precondition; he also believes that republican citizenship is best suited for a political community with a shared national identity and strong love of nation. Hence, Miller might be following liberal thinkers like Cohen in taking issue with the first precondition, freedom as self-mastery or FSM, which states that citizens must attain a degree of self-realization which will allow them to overcome their narrow self-interests, and which will in turn make them capable of willing generally. Cohen and other liberals have tried to distance themselves from the demanding preconditions that

³⁴² Ibid, 89.

³⁴³ Ibid, 92-95.

³⁴⁴ Ibid, 96.

Rousseau establishes for forming the society of the general will by downplaying the importance of self-realization and self-overcoming (Cohen calls it “saintly self-sacrifice”) in Rousseau’s work.³⁴⁵ In the previous chapter, I argued that the attempt to downplay self-realization and self-overcoming in Rousseau gives us an incomplete picture of his philosophy; according to Rousseau, if citizens failed to attain a sufficient degree of self-realization, the society ruled by the general will would be impossible to establish because the citizens would be incapable of overcoming their narrow-self interests and willing generally.

Nevertheless, from his discussion on republican citizenship and deliberative democracy we know that Miller accepts that republicanism is a more demanding conception of citizenship than the liberal and libertarian alternatives. Miller does in fact believe that citizens must attain a significant degree of self-overcoming (he calls it “a very considerable effort of self-discipline”³⁴⁶) in order to look beyond their narrow self-interests and think in terms of long-term interests of the community as a whole (accepting tradeoffs and compromises in the interest of achieving a democratic consensus). What’s more, earlier in this chapter I argued that Miller sees political participation as intrinsically valuable and connected to the idea of self-realization. When Miller claims that political participation is a necessary element of the good life because deliberation has a moralizing effect on citizens, he is clearly stating that participating in the deliberative process leads directly to self-realization. So if Miller does not follow Cohen in downplaying the importance of self-realization and self-overcoming, where exactly does Miller part ways with Rousseau? He is not clear on this point, but it is possible that he disagrees with some of the practical recommendations Rousseau makes for establishing a society ruled by the general will. For instance, we know that in his discussion of deliberative democracy Miller talks about the importance of the citizens’ willingness to set aside personal commitments and affiliations in order to arrive at a political compromise that serves the common interest. Miller mentions that the most extreme expression of this model is

³⁴⁵ Cohen, *A Free Community of Equals*, 159.

³⁴⁶ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 85.

found in “Rousseau’s demand that all factions must be banned from public assemblies if the general will was to emerge.”³⁴⁷ In the modern world, this would amount to banning all political parties, interest groups, and lobbyists from politics, and Miller may find this too stringent a precondition for republican citizenship. Nonetheless, if we accept that deliberative democracy does require setting aside personal commitments and affiliations, we can look for a practical compromise that will minimize factionalism in modern democracies without banning political parties outright. For instance, firm steps can be taken to curb the influence of money in politics, to limit the disparity between rich and poor in order to prevent vote-buying and class-based factionalism, to make elected officials more accountable to people rather than party leadership, to regulate the practice of lobbying, and so on. In this sense, the distance between Miller and Rousseau may not be very great at all, and it may simply amount to a need to modernize Rousseau’s ideas and adapt them to the unique circumstances of contemporary political communities. In many ways, Miller’s project amounts to a sophisticated attempt to bring Rousseau’s republicanism into the twenty-first century.

In sum, Miller’s claim that deliberative democracy requires citizens to embrace a republican model of citizenship, as well as his claim that a shared national identity and common public culture are essential for creating the type of solidarity that republican citizenship requires, make Miller a contemporary defender of Rousseau’s cultural republicanism. Moreover, I argue that even though Miller at times describes himself a liberal nationalist, his philosophy represents an important step towards the development of a distinct republican strand of nationalism that is rooted in the works of Rousseau and stands as a defensible alternative to liberal nationalism. Miller appears to make this argument for me as he repeatedly distinguishes his *republican* citizenship (and his defense of the principle of nationality) from the *liberal* conception of citizenship (and the liberal understanding of nationality). For instance, he regularly uses terminology such as “the *liberal* alternative” and “the *liberal* objection” to differentiate his own view from

³⁴⁷ Ibid, 65.

liberalism.³⁴⁸ Notwithstanding some obvious differences, such as Rousseau’s ideas about the Legislator, it appears that Miller is a defender of what is essentially a modernized version of Rousseau’s cultural republicanism, a philosophy that combines republican citizenship with the principle of nationality.³⁴⁹ For this reason, I believe that Miller’s view could more accurately be described as *republican nationalism*; his unique perspective, firmly rooted in the works of Rousseau, should not be viewed as yet another take on liberal nationalism but a distinct alternative to liberal nationalism that deserves further consideration in its own right. Classifying Miller’s view as *republican nationalism* represents an important step in moving the contemporary debate within nationalist theory forward. By offering an academically sophisticated, philosophically defensible, and historically rooted republican alternative to liberal nationalism, the debate within nationalist theory can move beyond the general distinctions between ethnic, civic, and cultural nationalism. As discussed in Chapter 1, there is no purely ethnic or purely civic nationalism; all nationalisms have a fundamental cultural component, and all nationalisms are at some level cultural nationalisms. Nevertheless, there are still major differences and disagreements between the theorists of cultural nationalism. I have argued that one point of distinction is the difference between liberal nationalism and republican nationalism, two unique yet robust and defensible strands of cultural nationalism. In the following chapter, I examine this distinction in greater detail and I make the case for treating republican nationalism as an alternative to liberal nationalism.

³⁴⁸Emphasis on word “liberal” is my own. See pages 33, 43, 55, 60, and 107 in *Citizenship and National Identity*, pages 140-141 and 177 in *National Responsibility*, and page 193 in *On Nationality* for some examples of Miller using the words “liberal” and “liberalism” to refer to a view that is distinct from and sometimes directly opposed to his own republican perspective.

³⁴⁹Even though differences between the two perspectives certainly exist, I argue that Miller is attempting to modernize the core principles of Rousseau’s philosophy.

Chapter 6

6 Distinguishing Liberal and Republican Nationalism

Most theorists of nationalism now recognize that there is an inherent connection between the state and culture, and they acknowledge that nationality has a key cultural component. As Kai Nielsen points out, “all nationalisms are cultural nationalisms of one kind or another. There is no purely political conception of the nation, liberal or otherwise.”³⁵⁰ Tamir agrees, stating: “one thing that everyone knows but no one can quite demonstrate, says Geertz, is that ‘a country’s politics reflect the design of its culture.’”³⁵¹ As such, contemporary debates within nationalist theory are taking place within the wider framework of cultural nationalism, and many modern theorists of cultural nationalism, including Tamir herself, refer to themselves as *liberal nationalists*. Liberal nationalism is a specific strand of cultural nationalism that seeks to bridge the divide between liberalism and nationalism; it attempts to develop a nationalist theory that is neither too exclusive nor too individualistic; a form of nationalism that is compatible with the tenets of liberalism.³⁵² In this chapter, I take an in-depth look at liberal nationalism by analyzing the works of two of its most well-known proponents, Yael Tamir and Will Kymlicka. I then consider the major differences between liberal nationalism and republican nationalism, with emphasis on the republican theories of Rousseau and Miller. Finally, I argue that the current debate within cultural nationalism would benefit from treating republican nationalism as a distinct strand of cultural nationalism and an alternative to liberal nationalism.

³⁵⁰ Nielsen, “Cultural Nationalism,” 127.

³⁵¹ Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 148.

³⁵² Beiner, “Introduction,” 7.

6.1 Yael Tamir and the Right to Culture

Tamir has done much to expound the liberal nationalist view, and her 1993 book *Liberal Nationalism* is one of the most important works on the subject. Tamir believes that nationalism remains attractive in the modern world because “it captures the importance of context, of cultural affiliations, of the need for roots, for belonging, for human development and self-fulfillment, thereby illuminating a broad range of issues that liberal theory tends to brush aside.”³⁵³ Liberal nationalism assumes that there is intrinsic as well as instrumental value to living inside a national community; beyond solidarity and social cohesion, living in a national community contributes to the self-fulfillment of citizens. For this reason, questions of cultural belonging need to be taken seriously by contemporary liberal theorists; beyond a concern for individual rights and autonomy, liberals must recognize the importance of culture for an individual’s sense of identity. In *Liberal Nationalism*, Tamir’s begins with propositions endorsed by contemporary liberal theorists, including “a set of beliefs endorsing individual rights and liberties, affirming the right of individuals to equal respect and concern, and presuming that governments should be neutral and impartial vis-à-vis individual interests, preferences, and conceptions of the good.”³⁵⁴ Tamir’s contribution to liberal theory is her emphasis on the *right to culture*, which claims that individuals must be allowed “to live within the culture of their choice, to decide on their social affiliations, to re-create the culture of the community they belong to, and to redefine its borders.”³⁵⁵ The claim that individuals have a right “to live within the culture of their choice” is problematic, but I will return to this later.

Tamir believes that culture in its widest sense is what holds a nation together and preserves its distinctiveness, and she argues that in order for the nation to exist as a

³⁵³ Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 82.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

distinct social unit it must rely on the presence of a public sphere where the national culture is expressed.³⁵⁶ The demand for a public sphere in which the national culture can be expressed also constitutes the essence of the right to national self-determination, which Tamir distinguishes from the concept of political self-rule (more on this distinction later). It is important to note that although Tamir stresses the importance of group associations and cultural belonging, she has an individualistic understanding of the right to culture: culture is important because of the value that individual members of the community assign to it. Tamir claims that although they have at times been neglected in the literature on liberalism, questions of culture and belonging are deeply rooted within liberal political theory. She argues that along with its concern for such things as individual autonomy, global justice, and universal human rights, liberalism also takes the existence of nation-states for granted. In fact, liberalism already embodies many ideals which are also embraced by nationalists. For instance, the majority of liberals begin with the assumption that the world is made up of functional states inhabited by specific populations, and debates about political participation, obligations, consent, distributive justice, and social responsibility take place within this state-centric framework. According to Tamir, “these moves have made modern liberal theory dependent on national ideals and a national world order, thus leaving liberals little choice. Except for some cosmopolitans and radical anarchists, nowadays most liberals are liberal nationalists.”³⁵⁷

Tamir points out that holding citizenship in a state is indispensable for the well-being of modern individuals; stateless persons such as refugees are greatly disadvantaged because they lack the protection of a state, they lack civil and welfare rights, their movement is severely restricted, and so on. For this reason, Tamir believes that in the modern world citizenship within a state amounts to a primary good for all, pointing out that “modern states, even liberal ones, have adopted the conception of the nation-state, and therefore see themselves as communities rather than as associations based on

³⁵⁶ Ibid, 8-9.

³⁵⁷ Ibid, 139.

contract.”³⁵⁸ For this reason, questions of group association and cultural belonging are crucially important for liberal political theory and cannot be neglected by contemporary liberal thinkers. Regarding the nature of liberal nationalism, Tamir states:

We can now summarise the characteristics of a liberal national entity. This entity will endorse liberal principles of distribution inwards and outwards; its political system will reflect a particular national culture, but its citizens will be free to practice different cultures and follow a variety of life-plans and conceptions of the good. The political entity described here differs from the traditional liberal entity in that it introduces culture as a crucial dimension of political life. Its unity rests not only on an overlapping consensus about certain values essential to its functioning, but also on a distinct cultural foundation.³⁵⁹

Tamir’s liberal nationalism takes cultural and national belonging seriously, but her approach has faced some criticism; for instance, Ronald Beiner argues that it is misleading to call her approach nationalism. According to Beiner, “a more accurate description of her position is: liberalism, with an attention to the ways in which people care about national identity and wish to see it expressed in some fashion.”³⁶⁰ Beiner says that although Tamir assigns intrinsic value to one’s allegiance to a cultural group, and though this distinguishes her from ardent liberal individualists such as George Kateb who assign only instrumental value to group solidarity, seeing group membership as intrinsically valuable does not require embracing any tenets of nationalist politics. Beiner claims that Tamir’s position “is not any kind of nationalism, but rather, a form of liberalism that is not indifferent to concerns about national identity.”³⁶¹ I do not follow Beiner in disputing Tamir’s nationalist credentials; I believe that despite the skeptical reception it has received in some circles, liberal nationalism constitutes a valid and defensible theoretical strand within nationalist theory. Nonetheless, Beiner goes on to identify what he calls a decisive problem for the project of liberal nationalism, a problem which he believes must force liberal nationalists to drop either the liberalism or the

³⁵⁸ Ibid, 130.

³⁵⁹ Ibid, 163.

³⁶⁰ Beiner, *Introduction*, 9.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

nationalism. According to Beiner, “the problem, in a nutshell, is how to privilege the majority cultural identity in defining civic membership without consigning cultural minorities to second-class citizenship.”³⁶² He brings up the example of Israel as a Jewish state and argues that the non-Jewish minorities inside Israel, including the sizable Arab minority, will unavoidably be treated as second-class citizens in some sense, even if the state is not actively trying to oppress or destroy their minority culture. Contrary to what many critics of nationalism claim, it is possible to be a citizen in a nationalist polity without embracing illiberalism, violent conflict, and oppression of others; an independent Quebec or Flanders would still be relatively liberal political communities. However, an expressly nationalist political community is fundamentally different from multicultural or multinational communities; nationalist communities seek to foster and promote a single shared national culture that all citizens are expected to embrace. Beiner thinks that this could amount to reducing citizens who are not born into the majority culture to second-class status, which is why liberal nationalists like Tamir attempt to resolve the problem by embracing a form of liberal multiculturalism that recognizes cultural and group belonging as intrinsically valuable, but assigns no special value or privilege to any single culture over others. However, Beiner argues that “in Tamir’s statement of the liberal-nationalist case, the nationalist side of the equation is so watered down that the nationalism in her political theory is barely detectable. What nationalists want, typically, is not a vaguely defined ‘public space’ for the display of their national identity, but rather, control over a *state* as the vehicle for the furtherance of national self-expression.”³⁶³ Tamir ultimately goes so far as to suggest that the ideal of the nation-state should be abandoned altogether, and Beiner points out that a nationalist could not possibly endorse this claim; nationalists tend to privilege nations and the idea of a common *national* identity over other forms of group identity. Critics like Beiner argue that the liberal nationalist project ultimately fails to bridge the gap between liberalism

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ibid, 8.

and nationalism; instead, it waters down nationalism until it becomes unrecognizable.³⁶⁴ Although I don't agree with Beiner's characterization of liberal nationalism as not being nationalist enough, his critique of Tamir's approach points to a number of issues that will be considered later; for republican nationalists in particular, the notions of a shared national identity and the nation-state as a vehicle for national self-expression are absolutely crucial, and they represent important points of distinctions between liberal and republican nationalism.

6.2 David Miller and Encompassing National Identity

Although David Miller has described himself as a liberal nationalist in the past, I argue that there are major differences between his view and Tamir's liberal nationalism. In his discussion of the various forms of group identity, Miller argues that although diverse subgroups may exist within the nation, including ethnic, racial, cultural, and territorial minorities, meaningful democratic politics requires embracing an *encompassing* national identity that is shared by all citizens and that engenders trust and solidarity. Miller believes the republican model of citizenship to be incompatible with "identity politics" or "politics of recognition" because the republican model asks all people to adopt an inclusive identity as citizens which transcends their sectional identities as racial, cultural, or territorial minorities.³⁶⁵ According to Miller, the politics of recognition aims to solidify sectional identities and give them public expression, which actually limits the choices of the bearers of those identities because it forces them to accept a certain political definition of said identity. In practical terms, this means that the politics of recognition must at some point stipulate which identities should be publically privileged to the exclusion of others (for example, if disadvantaged groups in society are to have veto power in political decision-making, should women have that power, or lesbian women, or disabled lesbian women?). Furthermore, the politics of recognition strive to give public expression to sectional identities, but it is not clear *which* identity an

³⁶⁴ Ibid, 12.

³⁶⁵ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 65.

individual ought to identify with primarily (e.g. is a citizen primarily a woman, or black, or Nigerian?).³⁶⁶ Finally, not all identities can be said to have equal social value. Some citizens may consider “Islamic fundamentalist” to be their primary identity, and although they may in some ways constitute a disadvantaged minority vis-à-vis the majority of society, if their beliefs include a call to eradicate other religions they cannot expect their identity to be valued and affirmed equally in society. We can only ask for recognition from people whom we already see as members of a larger shared community, a *national* community that transcends sectional interests. As such, a militant fundamentalist cannot expect public recognition and affirmation of their identity in a secular society because the very nature of their sectional identity denies the possibility of coexistence with those who are different. According to Miller, “there is a general fallacy in regarding common nationality as implying cultural homogeneity: there can be a shared public culture which defines the national identity (including in most cases a national language) alongside a plurality of private cultures (including perhaps minority languages).”³⁶⁷ Miller believes that a plurality of *private* cultures can coexist alongside an encompassing *national* culture within the nation-state. Individual citizens may have diverse sectional identities which must not be suppressed by the rest of society, but all citizens must also actively participate in a common public culture that shapes an encompassing national identity and transcends sectional interests. So while he believes in respecting diverse private cultures, Miller clearly privileges and assigns special value to a shared national identity that transcends sectional interests.

This is significant because it distinguishes Miller’s nationalism from Tamir’s. Tamir recognizes the intrinsic worth of cultural belonging but she does not appear to privilege one type of cultural belonging over another. Although she talks about the need for the political system to reflect a particular *national* culture, she does not say enough about what exactly makes a culture national. She fails to adequately differentiate between the national culture and the various subcultures that may exist within society but have no

³⁶⁶ Ibid, 73.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, 77.

national aspirations, such as immigrant cultures. In reading *Liberal Nationalism* we cannot tell where the national culture begins, what exactly makes it national, or what is its relationship to non-national cultures. The only conclusion one can take away from *Liberal Nationalism* is that there is no real difference between the national culture of a state and the various minority subcultures that exist within the same state. In fact, Tamir suggests that traditional nation-states will eventually wither away entirely, surrendering their power to make economic, strategic, and ecological decisions to supranational organizations such as the European Community/Union, while the power to form cultural policies falls to smaller local national communities.³⁶⁸ According to Tamir, this will allow smaller national communities such as the Scots or Catalonians to achieve greater cultural autonomy under the umbrella of a larger regional organization, thereby eliminating the need for secession. Tamir says that “although it cannot be ensured that each nation will have its own state, all nations are entitled to a public sphere in which they constitute the majority. The ideal of the nation-state should therefore be abandoned in favour of another, more practicable and just.”³⁶⁹ This is drastically different from Miller’s view which holds that functional systems of social justice and deliberative democracy can only be achieved within nation-states, and that nation-states will remain the primary method of human organization for the foreseeable future. Miller also maintains that an encompassing national culture holds special value, and that the nation-state is justified in publically privileging a shared national identity over the various subcultures and sectional identities in society.

As noted earlier, Beiner suggests that privileging a shared national identity over sectional identities can reduce members of cultural and ethnic minorities to second-class status. According to Miller, this need not be the case. Miller believes that it is not in the interest of minority groups to simply advance their own particular identities at the expense of a national identity; a society without a shared national identity would lack shared standards for appealing to the common good, and there would be no reason for

³⁶⁸ Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 151.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 150.

radically different groups to work together. Politics within a community that lacks an encompassing national identity would amount to interest group politics with the gloves off; a community where radically different groups with beliefs that are potentially incompatible seek to advance their own particular agendas without a willingness to compromise for the sake of common goods that transcend sectional identities. As Miller notes, “confronting other groups with different perspectives and different demands does not entail seeing the justice of those demands; it may simply have the effect of alienating groups from each other. If citizens lack a sense of common identity that transcends the particularity of their group identities, the prospects of achieving social justice are very remote.”³⁷⁰ Miller argues that identity politics is essentially self-defeating because it looks to politics to provide affirmation of sectional identities that the political sphere simply cannot provide; no one can definitively say which identity should be primary for which group of people (Black? Woman? Nigerian?), nor can they say which identities should be privileged over others, or to what extent. Furthermore, “in encouraging groups to affirm their singular identities at the expense of shared national identities, [identity politics] undermines the very conditions in which minority groups, especially disadvantaged groups, can hope to achieve some measure of justice for their demands.”³⁷¹ In short, Miller rejects Tamir’s multiculturalism because it alienates sub-communities from the greater whole, and he believes in equality through equal citizenship in a *nation-state* rather than affording special treatment to subgroups. He says that modern political thinkers must find a way to generate a strong but inclusive political community, defend equal citizenship in the face of economic inequality, and ensure that the self-governing community is genuinely democratic.³⁷² According to Miller, accomplishing this difficult task is only possible if we embrace a robust republican conception of citizenship, and “in

³⁷⁰ Ibid, 79.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid, 109.

today's world strong citizenship can only be made to work when it is supported by a shared national identity."³⁷³

In his critique of nationalism as a theory, Bhikhu Parekh clearly distinguishes between the perspectives of Tamir and Miller. Parekh notes that although Miller claims that he wants the nation to be constituted along liberal lines, he knows that liberalism and nationalism may come into conflict, and when this happens he tends to privilege nationalism. Miller assigns considerable ontological and moral significance to nationhood; for members of the nation, national identity structures their moral world, is constitutive of their identity, and gives them a context for making intelligent decisions. For Miller, the state cannot be neutral with respect to the national culture; the national culture must be assigned special value in society and privileged over other forms of cultural belonging.³⁷⁴ Miller argues that political legitimacy comes from the political community's ability to "express the will of the national community" rather than from consent of the individual, and, according to Parekh, Miller concedes that at times "illiberal means" (which he does not specify) may have to be used to preserve the national culture.³⁷⁵ In short, this means that an encompassing national identity that transcends sectional identities must be privileged over other group identities in a way that is incompatible with multiculturalism. Unlike Miller, Tamir tends to privilege liberalism over nationalism. Whereas Miller sees the nation as a historical and *political* community, Tamir sees it as a *cultural* community bound by a common language, common values, myths, and symbols, and conscious of its distinctive collective identity. The value of national identity is tied directly to the value of cultural membership; the ability to make autonomous choices depends on the "presence of a cultural context."³⁷⁶ Over time, individuals can question these cultural contexts and voluntarily choose which culture they wish to live in. This leads Tamir to conclude that nations do not necessarily need states of

³⁷³ Ibid, 108.

³⁷⁴ Parekh, *Incoherence of Nationalism*, 303.

³⁷⁵ Ibid, 304.

³⁷⁶ Kymlicka, *Misunderstanding Nationalism*, 137.

their own; they have a right to preserve their distinct culture, but nothing more. This line of reasoning allows Tamir to ultimately advocate for moving beyond the paradigm of the nation-state; according to her, as long as the right to culture is preserved in some way, political institutions need not be strictly national, but can also be local, regional, and even global.³⁷⁷ In line with what she believes to be the principles of liberalism, Tamir also insists that national membership should be voluntary, in the sense that an individual may freely choose to reject or leave outright their national community. However, Parekh rightly notes that this is difficult to reconcile with her view that the nation constitutes and shapes one's identity.³⁷⁸ One's national membership cannot be both constitutive of their identity and therefore deeply rooted, and also malleable enough to be strictly voluntary. Parekh believes that both Miller's and Tamir's nationalist projects fail, and in Tamir's case it appears that her attempt to defend a right to culture without assigning special value to an encompassing national identity ultimately leads to the dissolution of the nation as she understands it. According to Parekh,

Tamir wants strongly bonded nations to be happily nestled within a hospitable and noninterfering larger unit, and that is impossible. If they are to live together within a single community, they must loosen up, allow internal differences and dissent, develop overlapping loyalties and affections, and cease to be the sole or even the dominant sources of their members' identity and values; in short, they would stop being nations as Tamir defines them and become relatively open and interactive cultural groups.³⁷⁹

Liberal nationalism appears to make two important claims: individual well-being requires some type of cultural belonging, and multiculturalism is desirable because homogeneity is no longer possible, and because cultural diversity may actually benefit society. As such, liberal nationalists do not believe that all cultures have a right to statehood, and since the prospect of every culture having its own state is unfeasible, diversity and pluralism are not only desirable but also necessary in the modern world. Judith Lichtenberg says that the type of commitment to deep diversity that liberal

³⁷⁷ Parekh, *Incoherence of Nationalism*, 305-306.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 307.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 308.

nationalists like Tamir and Kymlicka espouse appears attractive, and that it would be nice if it were sufficient for social unity. But if it isn't, "then we must confront hard questions about whether the state may or must privilege certain cultural practices, and disadvantage others, in the interests of social unity."³⁸⁰ While liberal nationalists like Tamir emphasize the need for a healthy cultural context as a necessary precondition for the individual autonomy and well-being of the members of a group, other types of nationalists (including the kind of republican nationalist that I believe Miller to be) would appeal instead to the importance of a common national identity that transcends sectional identities, to shared historical memories, a common destiny, and rights of national self-determination.³⁸¹

6.3 Self-determination and Self-rule

Looking back at Tamir's distinction between national self-determination and political self-rule, we see another major difference between her liberal nationalism and republican nationalism. Tamir argues that the right to self-determination stakes a cultural rather than a political claim and that it ultimately amounts to the right to preserve the nation as a distinct cultural identity. This is the crux of her right to culture argument, which she differentiates from the right to political self-rule. In her own words, she "advances a claim that is central to the theory of liberal nationalism, namely, that national claims are not synonymous with demands for political sovereignty."³⁸² This distinction leads Tamir to conclude that nationalists need not concern themselves with nation-states, and argues that nation-states will ultimately wither away. She cites Seton-Watson's definition of the state as "a legal and political organization with the power to require obedience and loyalty from its citizens," and juxtaposes it to the definition of the nation as "a community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a

³⁸⁰ Lichtenberg, *How Liberal Can Nationalism Be?*, 185.

³⁸¹ Norman, *Theorizing Nationalism (Normatively): The First Steps*, 61.

³⁸² Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 57.

common culture, a national consciousness.”³⁸³ She blames Rousseau’s philosophy for contributing to the conflation of the nation with the state, due to the fact that Rousseau identified the state with the subjects as a collective rather than with its rulers.

Rousseau believes in the holistic character of the nation-state, identifying the nation with the people (the citizens) and the people with the state (the political apparatus of an organized community).³⁸⁴ This view that the state should be the “institutional representation of the people’s will” formed the basis of the American and French revolutions, and self-determination came to be seen as “a democratic ideal valid for all mankind.”³⁸⁵ This brought about a “shift from a justification relying on democratic principles to one based on national ones, from a belief in the right of citizens to self-rule to one claiming support for the right of nations to self-determination.”³⁸⁶ Tamir disavows this shift, and she argues that the existence of a nation as a distinct social unit requires not political self-rule but merely the presence of a public sphere where the national culture can be expressed. The demand for a public sphere in which the *cultural* aspects of national life are brought to the forefront constitutes the essence of the right to national self-determination for Tamir, which is distinct from the right to democratic self-rule. Tamir believes that ensuring the ability of all nations to exercise their right to national self-determination will lead to the withering away of the nation-state as economic, strategic, and ecological decisions are relegated to the supranational level while cultural policies are decided by local national communities.³⁸⁷ Tamir ultimately concludes that once they are “sheltered” under a wider regional umbrella, all nations, regardless of their size, geographical position, or economic viability, will be able to achieve cultural autonomy without resorting to secession. She goes on to cite the European Community

³⁸³ Ibid, 59-60.

³⁸⁴ Ibid, 62.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, 60.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ibid, 151. Note: The expression “local national” here appears to be an oxymoron, but when Tamir says “national” she seems to be referring to the various subnational communities that exist within modern nation-states.

(now the EU) as an example of a successful regional organization that ensures that all nations are cooperating on an equal basis and provides more cultural autonomy to nations who may be too small to attain such autonomy otherwise.

There are many points of disagreement between these aspects of Tamir's liberal nationalism and republican nationalism. A republican nationalist would argue that her view of regional organizations such as the EU is utopian; we know that the EU has not been the democratic success that many had envisioned, with major controversies arising around the perceived unequal treatment of newer and smaller member states by older and more powerful ones, as well as the democratic deficit and lack of transparency and accountability within the EU's political institutions. A republican nationalist would also argue that nationalism has an inalienable *political* component; on this view, nationalism is both cultural *and* political, and national self-determination cannot be thought of as separate from political self-rule. Republican nationalists would classify Tamir's strictly cultural rather than political version of nationalism not as nationalism in the fullest sense, but as a liberal *culturalism* that ignores one of the fundamental aspects of what constitutes the nation. For republican nationalists, a shared and encompassing national culture must be expressed through *politics*, and through politics that take place within the confines of a sovereign nation-state. For republican nationalists it is not enough to merely express one's national culture in a localized public sphere that only has the power to set cultural policy and nothing more; instead, they believe that the national culture must be expressed together with the *general will* of the nation. As such, political self-rule and national self-determination are intrinsically linked: the reason we need a shared and encompassing national culture in the first place is because we cannot have meaningful democratic self-rule without it. Only this shared national identity and its cultural expression through politics can establish the rule of the general will, and this point constitutes the crux of the inherent connection that Rousseau makes between republicanism and nationalism. In fact, both Rousseau and Miller would argue that shared standards of the common good, accountable democratic institutions, and a robust system of social and distributive justice can exist only within the nation-state, and that they would be impossible to achieve within supranational organizations such as the EU.

As previously noted, Tamir does not say enough about what exactly makes a culture national, or where the national culture begins and where it ends in relation to non-national cultures. In her summary of the characteristics of the liberal nationalist entity, Tamir says: “This entity will endorse liberal principles of distribution inwards and outwards; *its political system will reflect a particular national culture*, but its citizens will be free to practice different cultures and follow a variety of life-plans and conceptions of the good.”³⁸⁸ But if the nation-state withers away and is replaced by some sort of localized public sphere whose powers do not extend beyond setting cultural policy while all other powers are surrendered to supranational organizations, then how will the *political system* of the liberal nationalist entity reflect a *particular national culture*? Tamir’s argument appears to be incoherent here; if culture is *not* political, then how can we expect the political system to reflect it? This constitutes the fundamental difference between republican nationalism and Tamir’s liberal nationalism: republican nationalism is inherently cultural *and* political; political self-rule goes hand in hand with national self-determination, and the national culture must be expressed together with the general will within the confines of a nation-state. Whereas Tamir tries to define national self-determination in strictly cultural rather than political terms, and whereas she rejects outright the idea of individual self-mastery (she calls her brand of nationalism “antiperfectionistic”³⁸⁹), as I noted in Chapter 4, republican nationalists embrace individual self-mastery, political self-rule, and national self-determination as three interconnected layers of political freedom. According to republican nationalists, the individual citizen must attain a significant level of self-realization in order to overcome his narrow self-interests and to will *generally* for the common good (Rousseau’s first precondition, FSM), and he must be part of a political community with a shared national identity and an encompassing national culture which fosters trust and solidarity (Rousseau’s second precondition, shared national identity and love of nation). Only when

³⁸⁸ Ibid, 163. Emphasis is my own.

³⁸⁹ Ibid, 11.

these two preconditions are met can citizens be seen as fully free and the political community as fully democratic and self-determining in relation to other nations.

6.4 Will Kymlicka's Multicultural Citizenship

Kymlicka is a liberal nationalist who believes that the narrow focus of some contemporary liberals on individual rights has exacerbated ethnocultural conflict and rendered cultural minorities vulnerable to injustices at the hands of the majority. He asserts that minority rights cannot be subsumed under the general category of human rights, and he argues that we must supplement human rights with minority rights. According to Kymlicka, “a comprehensive theory of justice in a multicultural state will include both universal rights, assigned to individuals regardless of group membership, and certain group-differentiated rights or ‘special status’ for minority cultures.”³⁹⁰ A comprehensive liberal theory of minority rights must explain how human rights can coexist with minority rights (Kymlicka ultimately argues that ethnocultural minority rights are the latest stage in the development of human rights), as well as how minority rights are to be limited by the principles of democracy, social justice, and individual liberty. Providing a comprehensive liberal account of cultural belonging is crucial for Kymlicka because individual choice depends on cultural contexts. Like Tamir, Kymlicka contends that most liberals are in fact liberal nationalists because they take for granted that cultures or nations are the basic units of political decision-making.³⁹¹ Kymlicka notes that most people have a very strong bond to their culture, and that individual choice is actually dependent on the presence what he calls a “societal culture,” defined by language and history. Kymlicka believes that societal culture is particularly relevant to individual freedom because it refers to the institutions and practices which cover the full range of human activities, including both public and private life. Societal cultures are usually associated with national groups, and individual freedom is intimately tied up with membership in these cultures. As Kymlicka points out, “the liberal value of freedom of

³⁹⁰ Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 6.

³⁹¹ *Ibid*, 93.

choice has certain cultural preconditions, and hence issues of cultural membership must be incorporated into liberal principles.”³⁹² He tells us that “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.”³⁹³ Moreover, this type of culture involves not just shared values or memories but also common institutions and practices. Societal cultures help foster the type of solidarity that is necessary for sustaining the modern welfare state, including a sense of common identity and membership facilitated by a common language and history. This sense of commonality makes it possible for individuals living in large modern states to feel solidarity with their fellow citizens and to make important sacrifices for one another in the interest of society as a whole.³⁹⁴

We can see that like Tamir, Kymlicka takes the importance of cultural belonging seriously. In *Multicultural Citizenship*, Kymlicka sets out to demonstrate that freedom of choice is actually dependent on social practices, cultural meanings, and a shared language, and that the capacity to form and revise conceptions of the good is closely tied to one’s membership in a societal culture. Deciding how to live one’s life is a matter of exploring the possibilities made available to us by our culture, and individual choice actually amounts to a range of options passed down to us by culture. If they are to provide this important cultural context for their members, minority cultures in multicultural and multinational states may need protection from economic and political interference by the majority culture. As such, Kymlicka argues that liberal thinkers ought to accept a wide range of group-differentiated rights for ethnic groups and national minorities, and that doing so will not require them to sacrifice their commitments to social equality and individual freedom.³⁹⁵

³⁹² Ibid, 76.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid, 77.

³⁹⁵ Ibid, 126.

According to Kymlicka, most contemporary liberal theorists have argued that a society motivated by the liberal principles of justice would not accord political significance to the cultural membership of individual citizens. He argues that this is a mistake and that liberal principles of justice are not only consistent with but also require certain forms of special status for national minorities.³⁹⁶ He believes that the “politics of difference” (also called “politics of recognition” and “identity politics”) need not be a threat to liberalism, and that the issues they raise can be managed peacefully and fairly through dialogue and compromise. Kymlicka concludes by saying that liberal theorists cannot pretend to simply look at people as individuals because “political life has an inescapably national dimension, whether it is in the drawing of boundaries and distributing of powers, or in the decisions about the language of schooling, courts, and bureaucracies, or in the choice of public holidays. Moreover, these inescapable aspects of political life give a profound advantage to the members of majority nations.”³⁹⁷ As such, liberals must take steps to prevent the resulting injustices, steps which might include polyethnic representation rights to accommodate ethnic and other disadvantaged groups within the larger national group, and self-government rights which ensure the autonomy of national minorities alongside the majority nation.³⁹⁸

With his comprehensive definition of what constitutes a societal culture, Kymlicka offers a clearer picture of what exactly makes a culture *national*. Kymlicka explains that the debate over minority rights is not about whether it is ever acceptable to support “communities” or recognize “difference,” but about whether to support the particular sort of community and cultural difference exhibited by *national* minorities (as distinct from social movements and immigrant groups, which Kymlicka believes are not entitled to the same special status as national minorities).³⁹⁹ Nevertheless, Kymlicka’s distinction between immigrant communities and national minorities immediately raises a

³⁹⁶ Ibid, 191.

³⁹⁷ Ibid, 194.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid, 129.

potential problem with his argument. Using the example of Canada, Kymlicka states that French Canadians constitute a national minority within Canada, which entitles them to special language rights such as court proceedings and education in their mother-tongue at the public expense. Other minority groups, such as those whose mother-tongue might be Greek or Swahili, are not entitled to these same rights because they are immigrant groups rather than national minorities.⁴⁰⁰ Kymlicka justifies this by saying that there are important differences between communities established through the process of colonization, such as the English and French communities in Canada, and immigrant communities. According to Kymlicka, “there was a fundamentally different set of expectations accompanying colonization and immigration—the former resulted from a deliberate policy aimed at the systematic re-creation of an entire society in a new land; the latter resulted from individual and familial choices to leave their society and join another existing society.”⁴⁰¹ The main point he makes is that because colonists never intended to integrate into another culture but rather intended to transplant their old one to a new land, they constitute a national minority. On the other hand, because immigrants chose to leave their homelands willingly, knowing that their success and the success of their children will likely depend on integrating into the institutions of English and/or French-speaking society, they cannot claim national minority status. Immigrants are thus expected to integrate into the larger society whereas national minorities are not, and Kymlicka claims that “the expectation of integration is not unjust, I believe, so long as immigrants had the option to stay in their original culture,” adding that “in deciding to uproot themselves, immigrants voluntarily relinquish some of the rights that go along with their original national membership.”⁴⁰² So while national minorities form societal cultures, immigrant groups do not, and while immigrants do have some claims regarding the expression of their identities, they cannot claim the same special status as national minorities. The claims of immigrants can be met by adapting the institutions and

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, 46.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 95.

⁴⁰² Ibid, 96.

practices of mainstream society so as to accommodate ethnic differences (Kymlicka calls this ‘polyethnic rights’), but they are not to be met by setting up a separate societal culture based on the immigrants’ mother tongue (this is reserved for national minorities).⁴⁰³

It seems to me that the distinction that Kymlicka makes between colonists and immigrants is incoherent. While his argument about immigrants willingly choosing to uproot themselves may apply to nations that were not created as a direct result of colonialism, there is no logical justification for granting special rights to descendants of colonists while denying them to other immigrants and their children. For one thing, colonists by and large also chose to uproot themselves willingly, just like immigrant groups (excluding refugees). For another, colonists did not merely establish their communities in the New World through peaceful means and on previously uninhabited land. On the contrary, they often committed horrid atrocities and even genocide against the Native American population in the process of establishing their communities, and in many parts of the New World the economy relied heavily on slave labour. These horrible violations of human rights were not isolated incidents but systemic practices that went on for centuries, and it is worth noting that the last federally-operated Indian Residential School in Canada closed in 1996 (*Multicultural Citizenship* was first published in 1995). With all of this in mind, it seems clear that there is absolutely no moral justification for granting any sort of special status to the descendants of colonists over immigrants and the children of immigrants. If anything, colonists appear to have a weaker moral claim than immigrants. Moreover, since Kymlicka tells us that it is the *potentiality* of societal cultures that truly matters and not their current state, and since he believes that weakened or oppressed societal cultures can enhance and regain their richness if given the appropriate conditions, there is again no logical means by which Kymlicka could argue that an immigrant group such as Italian Canadians cannot seek to establish a societal culture of their own within Canada and go on to demand the status of a national

⁴⁰³ Ibid, 97.

minority.⁴⁰⁴ After all, Italian immigrants have lived in Canada for centuries and they played an important role in making Canada what it is today. One argument to the contrary might be the fact that Italians are not concentrated inside a clearly defined territory within Canada, but if they (or any other immigrant group) ever did become sufficiently concentrated within a particular territory, Kymlicka could not logically deny them the status of a national minority. Kymlicka admits as much when he tells us that although he himself believes that national minorities have societal cultures and immigrant groups do not, "there is of course no necessity about this."⁴⁰⁵

All of this leaves us in a predicament: Kymlicka makes a strong argument for the importance of a distinct "societal culture" in the lives of all citizens, and this leads him to defend the right of national minorities to preserve their unique societal cultures from encroachment by the majority culture. But in so doing, Kymlicka leaves the door open for every immigrant community (at least in states established as a direct result of colonialism) to form their own societal cultures and demand the special status of national minorities. Since a societal culture plays such an important role in our lives (individual choice itself depends on the presence of a societal culture), and since there is no moral justification for granting special status to the descendants of colonists and not to immigrants and their children, there is no moral argument for preventing dozens of immigrant communities in a country such as Canada from seeking to establish their own distinct societal cultures. Such a turn of events would have a major impact on the integrity of modern nation-states, and republican nationalists would be deeply concerned about the implications of Kymlicka's arguments for citizenship and solidarity within contemporary political communities. I have already considered the differences between Tamir's understanding of liberal nationalism and republican nationalism; in the sections that follow, I identify the major differences between Kymlicka's liberal nationalism and republican nationalism.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 101.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

6.5 National Identity and National Minorities

The first important distinction between Kymlicka's liberal nationalism and the nationalism of someone like David Miller is their understanding of what constitutes the national identity. Miller believes that we need to actively promote an *encompassing* national identity that is shared by all citizens and transcends sectional interests and identities. This means that minority ethnic, cultural, and territorial identities along with other sectional identities such as gender and race would continue to exist and would not be oppressed by the majority, but all citizens would also be expected to embrace a common *national* identity and culture on top of their diverse sectional identities. Kymlicka believes that imposing common citizenship on minorities which see themselves as distinct peoples or nations may actually increase conflict in a multinational state, but Miller argues that we can deliberately modify the national consciousness in order to remove a minority's desire to form a distinct national society within an existing nation. Kymlicka summarizes Miller's own view as follows:

We should not 'regard cultural identities as given, or at least as created externally to the political system', but rather should have 'a stronger sense of the malleability of such identities, that is, the extent to which they can be created or modified consciously.' Since 'subcultures threaten to undermine the overarching sense of identity' needed for a generous welfare state, the state should promote 'a common identity as citizens that is stronger than their separate identities as members of ethnic or other sectional groups.'⁴⁰⁶

Kymlicka disagrees with this, arguing instead that "it is no longer possible (if it ever was) to eliminate the sense of distinct identity which underlies these groups' desire to form their own national societies. If anything, attempts to subordinate these separate identities to a common identity have backfired, since they are perceived by minorities as threats to their very existence, and so have resulted in even greater indifference or resentment."⁴⁰⁷ But as noted earlier, in a country like Canada this same argument can be applied to all sizable immigrant communities (all of whom have a distinct national identity that is

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, 184.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, 185.

presumably important to them) because there is no moral justification for granting special status to descendants of colonists and not to immigrant groups. Miller's encompassing national identity is an attempt to provide a solution to the problem of all sizable minorities and immigrant groups demanding their own distinct societal culture and national minority status. Miller concedes that if more than one distinct nation exists within a state and those nations have no hope of ever developing a single national identity that they can share in common, then secession and the establishment of multiple nation-states is a viable option. As such, Miller is the first to admit that the ideal environment for republican citizenship and deliberative democracy is a relatively unified and stable nation-state.

Miller argues that there are strong ethical reasons for making the bounds of nationality and the bounds of the state coincide, stating:

Where a nation is politically autonomous, it is able to implement a scheme of social justice; it can protect and foster its common culture; and its members are to a greater or lesser extent able collectively to determine its common destiny. Where the citizens of a state are also compatriots, the mutual trust that this engenders makes it more likely that they will be able to solve collective action problems, to support redistributive principles of justice, and to practice forms of deliberative democracy. Together these make a powerful case for holding that the boundaries of nations and states should as far as possible coincide.⁴⁰⁸

It is an encompassing national identity that creates the kind of solidarity required for democratic politics. This shared national identity is not set in stone because all national identities are 'imagined' identities, and the content of this imagination changes over time. As noted in Chapter 4, even Rousseau acknowledged that all societies change and that the chief task of the political order is to allow the expression of these changes and to adapt to them. Even though at any given moment there will be something substantial that we call our national identity, and even though we will have customs and institutions that correspond to it, the nature of this identity is not beyond critical assessment.⁴⁰⁹ This

⁴⁰⁸ Miller, *On Nationality*, 98.

⁴⁰⁹ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 127

means that the national identity can in fact *encompass* minority groups, including ethnic, cultural, and *territorial* minorities (defined as ethno-cultural minorities concentrated inside a specific territory within a larger nation-state), without granting the status of national minority to all such groups.

If we consider Kymlicka's native Canada, we see that even though its size and colonial history make it a less than ideal model for the kind of nation-state that Miller has in mind, it can still serve as an example of what Miller is trying to say about an encompassing national identity. Kymlicka notes that Canada is made up of First Nations peoples (original inhabitants), English and French Canadians (colonists), and a multitude of diverse immigrant groups. In *Multicultural Citizenship*, he discusses the various ways in which minority groups have been accommodated in Canada, including representation rights (political rights for disadvantaged groups, such as visible minorities), polyethnic rights (cultural rights for immigrant groups), and self-government rights (political self-rule for national minorities). Kymlicka differentiates self-government rights (accorded in varying degrees to First Nation peoples and the Province of Quebec in Canada) from other types of rights, explaining:

The basic claim underlying self-government rights is not simply that some groups are disadvantaged within the political community (representation rights), or that the political community is culturally diverse (polyethnic rights). Instead, the claim is that there is more than one political community, and that the authority of the larger state cannot be assumed to take precedence over the authority of the constituent national communities. If democracy is the rule of the people, national minorities claim that there is more than one people, each with the right to rule themselves.⁴¹⁰

Kymlicka acknowledges that creating overlapping political communities within a single nation-state gives rise to a sort of dual citizenship and to potential conflicts about which political communities citizens should primarily identify with. According to Kymlicka, "self-government rights, therefore, are the most complete case of differentiated citizenship, since they divide the people into separate 'peoples', each with its own

⁴¹⁰ Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 182.

historical rights, territories, and powers of self-government; and each, therefore with its own political community. They may view their own political community as primary and authority of the larger federation as derivative.”⁴¹¹ Kymlicka tells us that it might be tempting to insist that citizenship ought to be a common identity shared by all individuals, but he nonetheless claims that refusing demands for self-government will aggravate alienation among national minorities and increase the desire for secession.⁴¹² Thus, Quebec is accorded a significant amount of self-government at the provincial level, but it still remains a part of the Canadian federation. Separatists in Quebec held two independence referendums (1980, 1995) in an attempt to secede from Canada, but both attempts failed, and Kymlicka would argue that granting Quebecers the special status of a national minority convinced most inside Quebec that there was no need for outright independence. In 2006 then Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated: “Do the Québécois form a nation within Canada? The answer is yes.”⁴¹³ Harper’s argument was that Quebecers form a nation within a nation, and that they should continue to do so within a united Canada. Harper’s words in this case seem to be in line with Kymlicka’s belief that national minorities such as Quebecers can have dual citizenship and dual loyalties as members of both the Québécois nation and the Canadian state. Kymlicka notes that attempts to impose an artificial overarching national identity on existing national identities often fail miserably, as in the case of Yugoslavia, and so he argues that the only practical solution must be to make our peace with the existence of multiple societal cultures and multiple nations within a single state.

But is this how things really work in practice, even in Canada? Kymlicka tells us that members of a national community may view their own political community as primary and the authority of the larger federation as derivative, and certainly there are Quebecers who feel this way. But does the Canadian state really treat Quebec as a

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² Ibid, 182-83.

⁴¹³ “Quebecers form a nation within Canada: PM.” *CBC News*, November 22, 2006, accessed October 15, 2015. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/quebecers-form-a-nation-within-canada-pm-1.624141>.

distinct nation? The Canadian state is known as “Canada” and not the “Federation of Canada and Quebec,” official documents list everyone’s citizenship as “Canadian,” and federal policies such as Canada’s Broadcasting Act (which promotes the development of Canadian content in programming and production) clearly state that their aim is to “build and support our Canadian identity.”⁴¹⁴ To continue with the Broadcasting Act example, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is concerned with “equal rights of Canadian men, women, and children,” with “Canadian attitudes, opinions, ideas, values, and artistic creativity,” and with “a Canadian point of view.”⁴¹⁵ The Broadcasting Act acknowledges “the linguistic duality and multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society” and recognizes “the special place of aboriginal peoples within our society,” but it makes no mention of Quebeckers as a separate nation within Canada or to Canada as a multi-*national* state.⁴¹⁶ In fact, while it is true that English and French are both official languages in Canada, and while it is also true that French-speakers have a right to receive government services in their mother tongue across the country, federal government documents and communiqués hardly ever refer to Quebeckers as a distinct nation; rather, the two largest groups in the country are divided into English and French *Canadians*. Upholding cultural diversity is purported to be one of the key goals of Canada’s Broadcasting Act, but in this case “cultural diversity refers to how different groups – like ethno-cultural minorities, Aboriginal peoples and persons with disabilities – are represented in broadcasting.”⁴¹⁷ There is again no mention of Quebeckers as a distinct nation or of Canada as a multinational state; instead, Canada is described as a state with two official languages, consisting of various ethnocultural minorities (*not* national minorities), and recognizing the special place of Aboriginal peoples.

⁴¹⁴ “Mandate of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission,” *CRTC Website*, accessed October 20, 2015. <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/cancon/mandate.htm>.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.* See also Canada’s Broadcasting Act of 1991: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/B-9.01/FullText.html>.

⁴¹⁷ “CRTC Approaches to Cultural Diversity,” *CRTC Website*, accessed October 20, 2015. http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/info_sht/b308.htm.

It appears that even in Canada, a state whose vast size and colonial past make it a less-than-ideal candidate for Miller's republican nation-state, there is a clear and deliberate policy at the federal level to create and promote a single and encompassing *Canadian* identity. This identity requires the acceptance of two official languages, the recognition of a special place for Aboriginal peoples on account of their unique history (but Aboriginal peoples are still referred to as *Canadian*), and a respect for a myriad of ethnocultural subcultures that make up Canadian society. Nonetheless, Canadian identity is not a dual identity and there is certainly no official attempt to acknowledge or promote a sense of dual or differentiated citizenship for Quebeckers. On the contrary, the government of Canada is committed to fostering an *encompassing* Canadian identity that includes English and French Canadians, Aboriginal peoples, and immigrant communities under a common *Canadian* umbrella. It is unlikely that Canada or any other state would encourage national minorities to view their own political community as separate and primary, and the authority of the larger federation as secondary and derivative.

In a 2003 paper entitled "Being Canadian" Kymlicka considers the concept of a wider Canadian identity. He ultimately stops well short of endorsing an encompassing Canadian identity and suggests that the social glue that holds a country like Canada together might simply be trustworthy political institutions. According to Kymlicka:

The success of political institutions in the modern age depends heavily on the active and willing cooperation of citizens. Commentators have typically assumed that this sort of active and willing cooperation will only arise if citizens have a strong sense of identification with the country. But this assumption may be mistaken. Perhaps citizens will cooperate whenever they view political institutions as trustworthy (i.e. even-handed between individuals and groups) and effective (i.e., providing good services). The strength of identification with the country may not be the crucial variable. Many will find this an unsatisfactory account of the 'social glue' that enables diverse countries like Canada to function. It may seem too provisional or contingent. No doubt there is more to be said about the sources of social unity. However, whatever the answer to this question of social unity, it is unlikely to be distinctive to Canada.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁸ Will Kymlicka, "Being Canadian", *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (July 2003), 381-382.

We see that Kymlicka acknowledges right away that many will find this to be an unsatisfactory account of the social glue that keeps a country together, and he also concedes that there is “more to be said” about the sources of social unity. As such, the answer he offers is anything but definitive, and by suggesting that a strong sense of identification with the country may not be a crucial variable, he seems to move closer to Tamir’s view that states are unnecessary and may eventually be replaced by regional or even global political organizations. All the potential problems with such projects notwithstanding, from the actual policies of the Canadian federal government it seems clear that their goal is not to promote a regional or global identity but an encompassing Canadian identity. What’s more, although Kymlicka’s point about the dangers of imposing an overarching identity on existing nations (as in the case of Yugoslavia) is valid, the idea of promoting a dual citizenship in which two distinct nations willingly come together to form a single state without embracing an encompassing national identity has not proven particularly successful either, as the examples of Czechoslovakia or Sweden-Norway attest. Nations that are so distinct that they cannot embrace a common national identity tend to go their separate ways, and Canadian government policy is clearly intended to promote unity by promoting an encompassing Canadian national identity. As Miller argues, in order to achieve long-term stability “political communities should as far as possible be organized in such a way that their members share a common national identity, which binds them together in the face of their many diverse private and group identities.”⁴¹⁹ It still remains to be seen whether Quebec will ultimately remain a part of Canada or secede, but if Canada does stay united it will be through a shared national identity that transcends sectional identities, not through Kymlicka’s notion of a dual citizenship that treats national minorities as entirely separate peoples within a larger federal state.

⁴¹⁹ Miller, *On Nationality*, 188.

6.6 Democratic Self-rule and Political Community/ies

This brings us to a second major difference between Kymlicka and Miller. Kymlicka claims that states like Canada are made up of separate peoples with their own distinct societal cultures and special rights to self-government, meaning that there are multiple distinct political communities operating within the larger state. As such, Kymlicka believes that minority groups that can be said to form a distinct societal culture within the larger state must be granted self-government rights, even while acknowledging that such rights may lead to dual citizenship and dual loyalties. National minorities should have their own political institutions and a significant amount of political autonomy at the sub-state level (i.e. provincial level in the case of Quebec within Canada), and they should also have some form of political representation at the state or federal level. Kymlicka believes that embracing this type of multicultural and multi-*national* citizenship is the only way to preserve stability in a pluralistic world, and he warns that attempts to force an overarching and unitary notion of citizenship on national minorities is likely to lead to conflict and secession. Kymlicka's notion of multicultural citizenship is very different from the type of republican citizenship that Miller advocates. As I discussed at length in the previous chapter, Miller's republican model of citizenship presupposes a more participatory and deliberative form of democracy than can be found in modern liberal democracies. Miller is adamant in his claim that the types of virtues that are required for republican citizenship can only be cultivated within national borders, and he further emphasizes that an encompassing national identity that is shared by *all* citizens constitutes a necessary precondition for establishing a functional system of deliberative democracy.⁴²⁰ This is because Miller holds that democratic deliberation is most likely to take root within political communities whose members share a common identity that transcends their group-specific identities. Only an encompassing national identity that is shared by all citizens can create the kind of solidarity and mutual trust that makes deliberative democracy possible.⁴²¹

⁴²⁰ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 5.

⁴²¹ *Ibid*, 158.

Republican citizenship asks citizens to adopt an inclusive and encompassing national identity which transcends their sectional identities as women, racial minorities, ethnocultural minorities, and territorial minorities.⁴²² This is extremely important for Miller because he believes that deliberative democracy and politics of social justice can only be fully realized when the shared national culture is also expressed through politics (self-rule), and through politics that take place within the confines of a *sovereign nation-state*. In short, the national culture must be expressed together with the *general will* of the nation, and we cannot have meaningful democratic self-rule without an encompassing national culture that is privileged over the many private subcultures in society. Only this shared national identity and its expression through politics makes it possible for citizens to will *generally*, thus allowing them to establish systems of deliberative democracy and social justice. In the section on Tamir's liberal nationalism, I argued that republican nationalism is inherently cultural *and* political; political self-rule goes hand in hand with national self-determination, and the national culture must be expressed together with the general will within the confines of a sovereign nation-state. Tamir believes that cultural self-determination can be separated from political self-rule, which is a view that Miller and republican nationalists reject. Kymlicka does not make the same claim as Tamir because he argues that it is not enough for national minorities to be able to set their own cultural policies; rather, they are also entitled to substantial rights of self-government. However, Kymlicka believes that national minorities form separate political communities within the larger state, and that these political communities may at times be at odds with other political communities within that same state. As such, Kymlicka's view is just as unacceptable to republican nationalists as Tamir's attempt to separate cultural self-determination from political self-rule. Put simply, by arguing that the state is not made up of a single 'people' with a shared national identity but of multiple 'peoples' with distinct identities inhabiting separate political communities, Kymlicka splits the general will and removes all hope of establishing the kind of deliberative democracy that republican

⁴²² I define "territorial minorities" as ethnocultural minorities primarily inhabiting a particular territory within a larger state. Kymlicka appears to automatically equate territorial minorities with *national* minorities, but this need not be the case (e.g. the Bretons and Occitans in France).

nationalists like Rousseau and Miller are committed to. The rule of the general will is simply not possible in a state made up of separate political communities (which are at times openly antagonistic towards each other); in such states, there is no general will to speak of, and the political system amounts to a constant struggle between competing particular wills, each representing a specific faction within society.

With reference to Rousseau's model of participatory democracy, Miller argues that democratic politics requires all the diverse perspectives within society to be represented in the political arena, but he firmly states that in reaching policy decisions citizens have to set aside their personal commitments and affiliations (be they racial, ethnocultural, or territorial) and assess competing proposals in terms of *shared* standards of justice and common interest.⁴²³ In a society made up of separate political communities without an encompassing national identity to unite them in the face of their diverse sectional identities, it is extremely difficult if not outright impossible to establish meaningful shared standards of justice and common interest. Just as Rousseau argues that a community in which citizens lack a common national character could not be ruled by the general will, Miller maintains that a community without an encompassing national identity would have a much harder time establishing deliberative institutions. For instance, the common good of the community as a whole may require the use of taxpayer money for advancing shared cultural projects, but individual citizens who belong to the majority may have no personal interest in advancing the cultural claims of certain minorities (and members of a minority may have no interest in the national culture at large). As such, Miller argues that a society which lacks a shared national identity would also lack shared standards for appealing to the common good, and there would be no reason for radically different groups to work together. Why should members of separate political communities within a larger state contribute tax dollars and other goods for the benefit of a rival political community? For instance, why should the citizens of Quebec for whom 'Quebecker' is their primary identity agree to pay federal taxes that largely benefit English Canadians outside of Quebec, especially when those resources could be

⁴²³ Ibid, 65.

used to address the needs of Quebeckers instead (to say nothing of the fact that many in Quebec view English Canadians as oppressors)? What can unite these separate political communities, which are at times openly hostile to one another, if not a shared national identity? In some cases, the answer may be “nothing at all” and the state may dissolve into multiple smaller states. Miller would accept this option in cases where there is no hope of ever establishing a shared national identity that transcends sectional interests, but Kymlicka seems to believe that a larger state made up of multiple nations, all of which form distinct political communities, can survive without a shared identity.

But what then is the glue that holds these separate nations together in one state? If Quebeckers are a distinct nation with a separate political community, and if there is no encompassing national identity that unites them with other Canadians, then the glue holding the Canadian state together at the federal level must be purely political; common political principles, practices, and institutions. We know that Kymlicka rejects the idea of a purely civic or political nationalism as unfeasible and stresses that nationality always involves a richer cultural component (see Chapter 1), but he seems to believe that in cases where states are made up of multiple nations, citizenship at the state or federal level can be sustained by purely political means (no encompassing national identity, no single national citizenship). Miller rejects this outright, stating that a purely political citizenship that is unsupported by a shared public culture and national identity is indeed unfeasible.⁴²⁴ For Miller, any state in which members see themselves as belonging to rival national communities must be regarded as a less-than-ideal scenario, and if establishing an encompassing national identity in the long term proves to be impossible, then secession may be the best solution. That said, Miller stresses that “there can be a shared public culture which defines the national identity (including in most cases a national language) alongside a plurality of private cultures (including perhaps minority languages).”⁴²⁵ What’s more, the national identity changes and evolves over time; it can become more inclusive and learn to accommodate new cultures, and this process of

⁴²⁴ Ibid, 89.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, 77.

change should take place as part of a collective national conversation. Miller believes that this deliberative approach to national identity is the future of nationality, stating:

The main elements in the revitalization of nationality will be the same everywhere: an open debate about national identity and its redefinition to accommodate cultural and territorial minorities; the constitutional embodiment of the resulting principles; and the transmission of national identity through a civic education with a unitary core but a periphery that is flexible enough to serve the needs of minorities.⁴²⁶

So how would Miller's perspective deal with the specific circumstances of Quebec within Canada? Unlike Kymlicka, who treats Quebeckers as a distinct nation that forms a separate political community, Miller would promote an encompassing Canadian identity that treats Quebeckers as a territorial minority within Canada (i.e. an ethnocultural minority that has a clearly defined territory within the larger state). Canada's unique historical context means that the specific content of the Canadian national identity has to make special accommodations for Quebeckers and First Nations peoples; thus, a Canadian national identity includes both English as French as official languages (while having a single national language would be less complicated, Switzerland has four official languages and remains a unified nation), and it also includes a special respect for First Nations peoples because of the complex historical circumstances under which the Canadian state was established. In short, a republican nationalist would view Canada as one nation with a single national identity, political community, and public culture. Canada may be a nation with ethnocultural and territorial minorities who have shaped and continue to shape the specific content of its national identity, but it is a *nation* nonetheless, not a state made up of multiple nations and political communities and held together by purely political bonds at the federal level. If it turns out that Quebeckers are truly so different from other Canadians that promoting a shared national identity is impossible in the long term, then secession may well occur sometime in the future, but in order to prevent this from happening republican

⁴²⁶ Ibid, 181.

nationalists maintain that our best bet is not to treat Quebeckers as a separate people, but rather to treat them as an integral part of the larger Canadian nation.

6.7 The Sources of Political Legitimacy

Another major difference between republican nationalism and liberal nationalism can be found in their understanding of the sources of political legitimacy. Liberal nationalists like Tamir and Kymlicka believe that cultural belonging is important only because it is valuable to individual citizens, and they argue that political legitimacy must come from the consent of the individual. Miller, on the other hand, assigns substantial moral and ontological significance to nationhood, arguing that national identity structures the moral world of the nation's members and is constitutive of their identity. As such, the national culture must be assigned special value in society and be privileged over other forms of cultural belonging.⁴²⁷ Furthermore, a republican nationalist “views the issue [of political legitimacy] in less individualistic terms; political institutions are legitimate when they serve to express the will of the national community” rather than the consent of the individual.⁴²⁸ As such, political institutions are not merely concerned with the well-being of individuals; rather, they ought to express the collective will of the national community.⁴²⁹ In his own comparison of republican and liberal citizenship, Miller tells us that “liberals will seek to make the judiciary the supreme arbiters of constitutional rights – in effect the interpretation of liberal citizenship is entrusted to them – while the republican gives this role to the *citizen body as a whole*.”⁴³⁰

As noted earlier in this chapter, Tamir blames Rousseau for conflating the nation with the state by identifying the state with the subjects as a collective rather than with its rulers. Rousseau argues that the nation-state has a holistic character, and that the nation is synonymous with the people, and the people with the state. Tamir rejects the view that

⁴²⁷ Parekh, *Incoherence of Nationalism*, 303.

⁴²⁸ Miller, *On Nationality*, 194.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*, 193-195.

⁴³⁰ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 59-60. Emphasis my own.

the state should be the “institutional representation of the people’s will” and she distinguishes between political self-rule and national self-determination, arguing that the national community is not necessarily a *political* community.⁴³¹ Kymlicka’s view differs from Tamir’s in that he believes that nations (including national minorities) have a right to both cultural self-determination and political self-rule, but he argues that multiple peoples and political communities can exist within a single state (e.g. Quebecers as a separate people and Quebec as a separate political community within Canada). Republican nationalists like Miller restate Rousseau’s holistic conception of the nation-state, and they reject both Tamir’s and Kymlicka’s views because a community ruled by the general will demands that both national self-determination and political self-rule be expressed at the highest level of the state (at the federal level in the case of Canada, rather than provincial or local levels). In order for the state to have political legitimacy, the national will must be expressed at the highest level and the general will cannot be divided into multiple separate and competing wills representing smaller political communities within the state. The state itself must be the vehicle for furthering national self-expression; for republican nationalists, both the national will and the encompassing national culture must be expressed through *politics*, and through politics that take place at the highest level of the nation-state. Anything less would violate the principle of democratic self-rule as republican nationalists understand it.

6.8 The Public Good and Democratic Consensus

Whereas liberal nationalists believe that decisions about substantive conceptions of the good (especially beyond the ideal of autonomy) should be left up to individuals, republican nationalists assume that political participation and an encompassing national identity hold both intrinsic *and* instrumental value, and that they are therefore essential aspects of the good life. Because political participation and an encompassing national identity constitute fundamental preconditions for establishing the community ruled by the general will, the decision about whether they hold intrinsic value is not left up to

⁴³¹ Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 60.

individuals; rather, it is taken as a given in a republican nationalist community. Furthermore, republican nationalists believe that meaningful democratic consensus is possible and that the political community can privilege certain conceptions of the public good over others (beyond the ideal of autonomy). As Miller points out, “above all, [republican citizenship] involves being willing to set aside personal interests and personal ideals in the interests of achieving a democratic consensus.”⁴³² Although it does not necessarily aim at a single objectively correct answer, the system of deliberative democracy that republican nationalists advocate does aim at a consensus regarding substantive norms and procedures. Liberal nationalists like Tamir and Kymlicka reject this view, arguing that the fact of plurality makes it impossible to achieve meaningful consensus on what constitutes the good. As such, liberal societies must allow individuals to pursue their own conceptions of the good (within the constraints imposed by the demands of reasonable disagreement), and to revise them at their own discretion.⁴³³ By contrast, republican nationalists reject the “reasonable disagreement” limitation and hold that even appeals to controversial moral doctrines are acceptable in public deliberation; so long as the discussion itself is free, open, and civil, every citizen can have an opportunity to persuade their fellow citizens using the force of the better argument. If enough people are convinced by a particular vision of the public good and a democratic consensus emerges, then privileging that particular vision of the good over others is justified.⁴³⁴

It is important to note that the public conception of the good for republican nationalists is not set in stone; in fact, it is up for debate, discussion, and revision through the process of active participation in a system of deliberative democracy. This means that the good of a republican political community will be formed and revised through active political participation, national referenda, and so forth, but there is still assumed to exist

⁴³² Ibid, 85.

⁴³³ Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 82.

⁴³⁴ Exactly how many supporters would be enough for a democratic consensus to emerge is open for discussion, but for something as important as determining the community’s vision of the public good a democratic consensus would likely require a “supermajority” that is significantly larger than the opposition.

at any given time a substantive democratic and moral consensus on what constitutes the public good.⁴³⁵ A republican nationalist begins by arguing that an encompassing national identity and active political participation are necessary components of the good, not only for individual citizens but for the community as a whole. What's more, the actual content of the public good can be even more substantive in republican nationalist communities; those liberals who are perfectionists only go so far as to support the public promotion of the ideal of autonomy, but republican nationalists can promote other ideals as well, as long as they are supported by a democratic consensus that emerges through the process of deliberation.

For instance, a republican community may collectively decide that the public good requires promoting a belief in a higher power (a position which clearly violates the "reasonable disagreement" limitation). This does not mean that the community has to endorse any particular religious denomination; it may simply mean that encouraging belief in a higher power is considered important for society because it teaches citizens to look beyond their own narrow self-interests, to adopt a more far-reaching perspective, to act more responsibly towards their fellow citizens, and so forth. If through the process of deliberation the community determines that a belief in a higher power constitutes part of the public good, then the political community can actively encourage this belief through official documents and communiqués, national symbols such as the anthem and flag, the national system of education, state-owned media, and so on. For instance, the Canadian national anthem features the words "God keep our land glorious and free" and the official motto of the United States is "In God We Trust," words which are also featured on US coins and paper currency. These are non-denominational references to a higher power, but they are still clear references made on official national symbols, and some have taken issue with them. Because reasonable people will disagree about the existence of a higher power, it seems that there is no way to defend these references from a liberal perspective;

⁴³⁵ Republican nationalists hold that the final say on major political decisions, including questions about the public good, must be given to the people as a whole rather than to representatives or judges. Even such major questions as interpreting the constitution will be up for public debate and discussion, and the ultimate authority on these issues is the general will of the people rather than constitutional judges or politicians.

a liberal must endorse their removal from official national symbols and documents because some citizens will inevitably reject the belief in a higher power. However, these references *can* be defended from a republican nationalist perspective: if through the process of deliberation the community decides that a belief in a higher power constitutes part of the public good, the state can actively promote this belief and feature references to a higher power on official symbols and documents. On the republican nationalist view, those who refuse to believe in a higher power would not be coerced into adopting the preferred view because every citizen is an autonomous moral agent, but the dissenters would also have to accept that promoting the belief in a higher power through non-coercive means is a legitimate state policy.⁴³⁶

Dissenters may actively try to overturn this policy through the deliberative process, but they would have to do so by offering compelling arguments about why the belief in a higher power should not be considered a part of the public good. As such, dissenters would be expected to respect the decision of the community as long as it was made fairly by their fellow citizens through the process of democratic deliberation, and as long as they continued to have public avenues for voicing their own dissenting views. Dissenters in a republican community could not simply appeal to the standard of “reasonable disagreement” and demand that all religious symbols and judgments about the validity of beliefs be removed from the public sphere because reasonable people may disagree about them. After all, those citizens who consider their belief in a higher power to be an essential aspect of their identity could argue that a society which refuses to reference these beliefs is actively denying them the ability to publically express a fundamental part of themselves. Republican nationalism therefore rejects the idea of state neutrality towards potentially controversial doctrines and actively promotes a particular conception of the public good, the specific content of which is not determined or revised

⁴³⁶ By “non-coercive means” I mean that the state would actively promote this good through the aforementioned avenues (national symbols, education, media) without unfairly punishing individual dissenters. The state would encourage citizens to adopt a certain view, but it would not coerce them with threats of physical harm if they refused. Moreover, the deliberative process would have to provide an outlet for dissenters to voice their concerns and to attempt to convince others of the superiority of their own arguments.

by each citizen individually but by the community collectively through the process of political participation and deliberation.

We know that while there are prominent liberals who advocate state neutrality, there are also liberals who believe in promoting the ‘ideal of autonomy’ as the public good in liberal communities. In *Multicultural Citizenship*, Kymlicka accepts the ideal of autonomy as an integral aspect of liberalism, and he criticizes Rawls’s claim that embracing this ideal would make liberalism sectarian. Like Mill before him, Kymlicka accepts the ideal of autonomy as an integral aspect of the liberal good, thereby rejecting state neutrality.⁴³⁷ The difference between Kymlicka’s liberal good and a republican nationalist conception of the good is not that one view embraces strict state neutrality while the other does not; rather, the difference is in the *content* of the good.⁴³⁸ While the content of the good according to a liberal nationalist like Kymlicka is the broad ideal of autonomy, republican nationalists can accept a more substantive understanding of the good, one that begins with the assumption that political participation and an encompassing national identity hold both intrinsic and instrumental value (and are therefore essential elements of the good life), but one that also holds that the content of the public good can extend to include ideals beyond participation and shared national identity (the specific content is ultimately determined by public deliberation).

Although all republican nationalists accept that political participation and an encompassing national identity are integral elements of the good life, their specific understanding of these ideas, as well as additional ideas about the good (such as whether or not to promote a belief in a higher power, for instance) will be subject to debate and discussion. In liberal societies ideas about the good (apart from the ideal of autonomy) are left up to the individual citizen, and they are formed and revised at the level of the individual. By contrast, in a republican society ideas about the public good will be

⁴³⁷ Ibid, 164.

⁴³⁸ For a more comprehensive discussion see Chapter 4, and particularly the section entitled “Mill vs. Rousseau: Contrasting Liberal and Republican Perfectionism”.

defined and revised by all citizens collectively through the deliberative process. In order to revise the conception of the public good, republican citizens will have to come together at the national level and go about revising the community's definition of the public good through political participation and deliberation. Put simply, because republican nationalists believe that our conception of the public good reflects the general will of the citizens, our understanding of the public good cannot be revised by individual citizens at their own discretion. Instead, all citizens must come together and revise the conception of the public good *collectively* through participation and deliberation. A political community ruled by the general will is more than an aggregate of individuals with equal rights and equivalent legal status; citizens of a political community ruled by the general will must form a single sovereign body (Rousseau's *moi commun*), and decisions about what constitutes the public good must be made by the whole body through the mechanism of democratic politics.

The question then becomes: why do republican nationalists want to publically promote a particular conception of the good, even though modern political communities are by and large diverse and pluralistic? Critics have argued that expecting a democratic consensus on questions of the good and actively promoting one conception of the public good over others would be impractical at best, and discriminatory at worst. Nevertheless, republican nationalists believe that democratic consensus is possible (the content of which emerges through deliberation),⁴³⁹ and they argue that the political community (through the vehicle of the state) can do far more good for its citizens by adopting a shared conception of the public good and actively promoting it, than by leaving the process of defining and revising conceptions of the good entirely up to the individual. By actively privileging certain conceptions of the good over others, the community teaches us that certain ways of life are more productive than others, that certain activities are more beneficial for society than others, and that certain qualities are nobler than others, which makes faster and more meaningful progress towards equality and social justice

⁴³⁹ For a useful source on the practical feasibility of deliberation and democratic consensus-building on a large scale, see: John Parkinson and Jane Mansbridge, *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2012).

possible. To use the example of political participation, we know that many liberals encourage active participation, but ultimately they feel that the decision about whether or not to participate in politics must be left up to the individual. As Kymlicka states, because there are many different conceptions of the good, “a liberal democracy must respect such diverse conceptions of the good life, as far as possible, and should not compel people to adopt a conception of the good life which privileges political participation as the source of meaning or satisfaction.”⁴⁴⁰ But because republican nationalists believe that participation has both intrinsic and instrumental value, they would argue a) that those individuals who do not participate in politics are unable to realize their full potential as citizens and be free in the most meaningful sense (FSM), and b) that the troubling decline in political participation in many modern liberal democracies along with the disturbing rise in the influence of money in politics threaten the very integrity of the democratic system. As such, they would stress that in order to preserve democracy we must not only encourage political participation as a worthy cause, but also actively promote it as an integral element of the good life through the vehicle of the state.

To reiterate, a republican nationalist would argue that political participation is an essential aspect of the good life because a) it allows individuals to realize themselves fully as citizens and be free in the most-meaningful sense (intrinsic worth), and b) it ensures that citizens are more engaged in the political process, which in turn ensures the preservation of meaningful democracy in the face of such fundamental threats as the growing influence of money in politics (instrumental worth). Although liberal nationalists believe that political participation has instrumental value for citizens, liberals do not think that political participation has any intrinsic value, and they mostly reject the idea that political activity should be a *requirement* of democratic citizenship. By contrast, republican nationalists believe that political participation has intrinsic value and they hold that all citizens must therefore take an active part in governing themselves. According to Miller, although the republican tradition holds up the active and virtuous citizen as the exemplar of good citizenship, one need not endorse active participation in politics as the

⁴⁴⁰ Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, 299.

highest good to be a republican. However, a republican nationalist is required to embrace the more modest position that politics constitutes a *necessary* element of the good life.⁴⁴¹

In modern liberal democracies political participation is optional and judges are often the supreme arbiters of constitutional rights, but the republican model of democracy requires more than our contemporary representative political institutions have to offer. Republican citizenship requires a more participatory model of democracy that makes political participation a requirement, which is the only way to establish a meaningful system of deliberative democracy. Miller believes that public discussion has a moralizing effect on citizens and that political participation leads to self-realization (thus, it has intrinsic value), and he holds that engaging in public discussion makes citizens feel as though they are a part of a larger whole, which makes them more likely to cooperate with one another. When everyone takes an active part in public discussions, citizens who ultimately disagree with the outcome of deliberation understand how and why the outcome was reached, they feel that they had the opportunity to have their voices heard, and they believe that they can contribute to more favorable outcomes in the future. This builds trust, mutual understanding, and solidarity, which leads to a stronger and more unified political community (hence, participation also has instrumental value). Republican citizens are not only encouraged but *required* to play an active role in both the formal and informal arenas of politics, even if that means sacrificing their own time and resources, because the goal of republican citizenship goes beyond promoting sectional interests and involves actively seeking consensus and compromise in the name of the common good.⁴⁴² The belief that political participation has both intrinsic and instrumental value, and that it constitutes an integral element of the good life, represents a clear distinction between republican nationalism and the liberal nationalism of both Tamir and Kymlicka.

⁴⁴¹ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 58.

⁴⁴² *Ibid*, 83.

A liberal would likely argue that republican nationalists want to restrict the freedom of individuals by not allowing each citizen to decide whether political participation is part of their own personal conception of the good life. However, republican nationalists would counter by stressing that a community in which citizens are not engaged in politics is itself less free because it does not offer citizens adequate opportunities for self-realization, and because it is dominated by special interests and therefore not democratic in the most meaningful sense. This is the essence of Rousseau's famous statement that citizens must be "forced to be free"; by teaching citizens that political participation is an integral aspect of the good life instead of leaving each individual citizen to make that decision for himself, we are ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to fully realize themselves as citizens, and that special interests will not take advantage of political apathy and a lack of vigilance on the part of the citizenry in order to gain undue influence over the political system. In short, by actively promoting political participation as a necessary element of the good life, we are ensuring that the republican community remains fully free and meaningfully democratic, and we are therefore preserving, not infringing upon, the freedom of citizens (including the dissenters themselves).

6.9 Liberal vs. Republican Nationalism: Six Major Distinctions

To sum up, the republican nationalism of someone like Rousseau and Miller differs from the liberal nationalism of Tamir and Kymlicka in six major ways: 1) republican nationalists hold that political participation has both intrinsic and instrumental value, and they believe that participation constitutes a *necessary* (though not necessarily the *highest*) aspect of the good life, whereas liberal nationalists refuse to privilege political participation as a source of meaning or satisfaction. 2) Republican nationalists believe in promoting an encompassing national identity that is shared by all citizens, including minorities, at the level of the nation-state, while liberal nationalists claim that nearly all modern states will inevitably be multicultural and multinational. The encompassing national identity that republican nationalists endorse has both intrinsic and

instrumental value, and it must be privileged over sectional identities. 3) In order for the political community to be ruled by the general will and be fully democratic, republican nationalists argue that there must exist a single overarching political community at the level of the nation-state (rather than multiple separate political communities as argues Kymlicka, or a separation of national self-determination from political self-rule as argues Tamir). In a republican political community, both the national identity and the general will must be expressed through politics. 4) The source of political legitimacy for republican nationalists comes not from the consent of each individual but from the general (or *national*) will of the political community as a whole. 5) Republican nationalists argue that a shared conception of the good and a substantial democratic and moral consensus between citizens are possible even in a pluralistic world, and they maintain that the political community ought to actively promote a particular conception of the public good. Republican nationalists begin with the assumption that political participation and an encompassing national identity are integral elements of the good life, and that they form the fundamental preconditions for establishing the community ruled by the general will (the decision about whether or not this is true is not left up to individuals).⁴⁴³ Moreover, the content of the public good in the republican nationalist community can extend beyond participation and shared national identity. The specific content of the public good is up for debate and revision through the process of political participation and deliberation, but decisions about what constitutes the public good must be made by all citizens collectively. Finally, 6) the mechanism for political decision-making in republican nationalist communities will be different from their liberal counterparts because the ultimate interpreters of republican rights and obligations will be the people themselves rather than constitutional judges or politicians. This means that major political decisions, such as amendments to the constitution, will have to be

⁴⁴³ This means that the republican nationalist community must guarantee these preconditions by establishing rights of citizenship which ensure that all citizens are able to actively participate in politics and in the shared national culture. Republican rights will share commonalities with liberal rights, and will include such rights as freedom of speech and expression, security of the person, and so on. Nevertheless, republican rights will also go beyond liberal rights in some respects; for instance, republican nationalists endorse firmer limits on economic inequality in order to ensure that every citizen thinks only his own thoughts, and so that no citizen is wealthy enough to buy another or so poor as to have to sell himself.

approved in national referenda, and if there is disagreement between the different branches of government on a contentious issue, the ultimate decision will not be left up to constitutional courts but to the general will of the people. To achieve this, political mechanisms will need to be put in place in order to ensure that elected representatives are maximally accountable to their constituents, and if decisions are made by politicians or judges that are widely unpopular among the general public, citizens will need to have avenues available to them for challenging these decisions democratically, including demanding a national referendum on a particular issue (for example, a referendum could be called if the opponents of a decision collect a set amount of valid signatures from fellow citizens in support of the motion).

With these distinctions in mind, it becomes clear that liberal and republican nationalism represent two different strands within nationalist theory, and that they should be treated as such in the literature. Distinguishing between liberal and republican nationalism helps to clarify and further advance the current debate within nationalist theory, while insisting that these two very different perspectives fall under the same liberal nationalist umbrella muddies the debate and renders the very concept of liberal nationalism meaningless. In the final chapter, I argue for treating liberal and republican nationalism as two separate strands of cultural nationalism, and I consider the importance and relevance of republican nationalism as a distinct theoretical approach in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 7

7 Moving the Debate Forward

In the final chapter, I restate my main claims and arguments, I discuss the contributions that I hope my work has made to the current debates in the literature, and I talk about the continuing relevance of nations, nationalism, and nationalist theory in the twenty-first century. I have argued that by taking a closer look at the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who is the father of modern nationalism and an important thinker of the republican political tradition, we can fill in some important gaps in the vast bodies of literature on nationalism and republicanism. Rousseau's ultimate project was to bring nationalism and republican democracy together in a way that allows citizens to become free in the most meaningful sense by attaining self-realization, by taking part in a shared national identity and culture, and by playing an active role in shaping the laws that govern them. This is a worthy project, and one that still has its contemporary adherents, most notably David Miller. As Miller states, "the guiding ideal here is that of a people reproducing their national identity and settling matters that are collectively important to them through democratic deliberation."⁴⁴⁴ This is also a project that is deeply rooted in history, because, as Liah Greenfeld points out, nationalism not only defines modernity and the modern nation-state system, but nationalism originally developed *as* democracy, in that it embodied the modern democratic ideal that the people are the true bearers of political sovereignty.⁴⁴⁵ Both democracy and nationalism remain important ideas in the modern world, and the issues they bring up are unlikely to go away. For this reason, I hope that through developing the concept of *republican nationalism* I have managed to shed light on some of the gaps in the literature, and that I have succeeded in contributing to the important contemporary debates on republicanism, nationalism, and democracy.

⁴⁴⁴ Miller, *On Nationality*, 100.

⁴⁴⁵ Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 10.

7.1 Main Claims and Arguments

In Chapter 1 I argued that the debate within nationalist theory has moved beyond the civic vs. ethnic divide, and that all theorists of nationalism are cultural nationalists to some degree. However, I also noted that there is a great deal of diversity within cultural nationalism, and that even those theorists who identify as cultural nationalists have endorsed very different views. Most of the debate within cultural nationalism has been taking place between liberal nationalists like Tamir and Kymlicka on the one hand, and non-liberal nationalists like Roger Scruton on the other (the specific parameters of “non-liberal” nationalism have not been clearly established, but non-liberal nationalists have been alternatively referred to as conservative, communitarian, or simply illiberal). I have suggested that another strand of cultural nationalism exists, one that is neither liberal nor conservative: *republican nationalism* is rooted in the republican principles of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and it is present in the works of David Miller. Although Miller has referred to himself as a liberal nationalist in the past, I argued that the brand of nationalism that he is advocating constitutes a distinct *republican* strand of nationalist theory and a defensible alternative to liberal nationalism.

In Chapter 2, I looked at the development of republican political theory, and I tried to show that there was no single theory of republicanism to speak of. Rather, republicanism is a theoretical framework that has given rise to a number of diverse perspectives, each claiming the historical legacy of classical republican thinkers such as Aristotle, Cicero, Machiavelli, and Harrington. The main debate within contemporary republican theory has taken place between instrumental republicans like Philip Pettit and Quentin Skinner on the one hand, and civic humanists like Hannah Arendt and Iseult Honohan on the other. I identified a third strand of republican theory, one which takes the concepts of culture and national identity seriously, and one which also traces its roots back to Rousseau. I emphasized that this *cultural republicanism* is firmly grounded in the wider republican tradition, and that it ought to be treated as a distinct strand of republican political theory.

In Chapter 3 I took a closer look at Rousseau’s unique brand of republicanism. I argued that Rousseau made important contributions to republican political theory with his

ideas about the two social contracts and the problem of inequality, as well as his notions about the people as sovereign, the general will, and the moral republic. Rousseau was the first modern thinker to connect republican theory with a fundamentally democratic conception of sovereignty and with participatory democracy. In Chapter 4, I considered whether Rousseau's political theory could be classified as liberal, or whether his perspective was in fact distinctly republican. I identified two necessary preconditions for establishing a political community ruled by the general will: (1) citizens who embrace freedom as self-mastery and are capable of rediscovering a sense of *amour de soi* while using natural compassion (directed toward the national community) to channel their *amour-propre* in more constructive ways, and (2) citizens who have a shared national identity and a strong love of country, which engender fraternity and solidarity. I argued that the importance of these preconditions for Rousseau could not be downplayed without losing the essence of his philosophy, and as these two preconditions appear unacceptable to most liberals, I concluded that Rousseau is not a liberal but a distinctly republican thinker—a cultural republican. I also argued that Rousseau is the founder of modern nationalism, and that the intrinsic connection that he makes between republicanism and nationalism points towards a distinct strand of nationalist theory that I call *republican nationalism*.

Chapter 5 delved deeper into the concept of republican nationalism through a comparison of Rousseau's writings to the theories of contemporary republican thinker David Miller. While there are notable differences between them, Rousseau and Miller embark on very similar projects; in fact, I tried to show that Miller accepts the fundamental aspects of Rousseau's republicanism, and that his theory amounts to a sophisticated attempt to modernize Rousseau's philosophy. In Chapter 6, I juxtaposed the liberal nationalism of Yael Tamir and Will Kymlicka to republican nationalism, and I argued that the two approaches are sufficiently distinct to warrant separate classifications within nationalist theory. I identified six major ways in which liberal nationalism differs from republican nationalism, including: 1) Liberal nationalists refuse to privilege political participation as a source of meaning or satisfaction; republican nationalists hold that political participation constitutes a necessary aspect of the good life. 2) Liberal nationalists claim that modern nation-states will inevitably be multicultural and

multinational; republican nationalists endorse an *encompassing* national identity that is shared by all citizens, including minorities, at the level of the nation-state. 3) The liberal nationalism of Kymlicka holds that multiple separate political communities will exist within a single nation state, while the liberal nationalism of Tamir calls for a separation of national self-determination from political self-rule; republican nationalists argue that if the political community is to be fully democratic (i.e. ruled by the general will), there must exist a single overarching political community at the level of the nation-state (both the national identity and the general will must be expressed through politics at the highest level). 4) The source of political legitimacy for liberal nationalists lies in the consent of each individual; for republican nationalists, the source of political legitimacy comes from the general (or *national*) will of the community as a whole. 5) Liberal nationalists believe that decisions about substantive conceptions of the good (especially beyond the ideal of autonomy) should be left up to individuals; republican nationalists begin with the assumption that political participation and an encompassing national identity are integral aspects of the good life, and that they form the fundamental preconditions for establishing the community ruled by the general will (the decision about whether or not this is true is not left up to individuals). Moreover, the content of the public good in the republican nationalist community can extend beyond participation and shared national identity; the specific content of the public good is up for debate and revision through the process of political participation and deliberation, but decisions about what constitutes the public good must be made by all citizens collectively. 6) Lastly, liberal nationalists hold that the judiciary is the supreme arbiter of constitutional rights; republican nationalists give this role to the citizen body as a whole. As such, the mechanism for political decision-making in a republican nationalist community will be distinct from its liberal counterpart: major political decisions, such as amendments to the constitution, will have to be approved in national referenda, and if there is disagreement between the different branches of government on a contentious issue, the ultimate decision will not be left up to constitutional courts but to the people as a whole.

When laid out in this way, one would be hard-pressed to maintain that the strand of thought which I refer to as republican nationalism can be subsumed under the liberal nationalist umbrella; the two appear very different, and they are clearly at odds with one

another regarding some of their most fundamental principles. Even though Miller has described himself as a liberal nationalist in the past, it seems incoherent to argue that liberal nationalists can simultaneously hold that political participation has no intrinsic value and yet has both intrinsic and instrumental value, that modern nation-states should be multinational and yet have a single encompassing national identity, that they can be made up of multiple separate political communities and yet constitute a single overarching political community, that political legitimacy comes from the consent of each individual and yet from the general will, that decisions about substantive conceptions of the good (including the view that political participation and an encompassing national identity hold intrinsic value) must be left up to individuals and yet are presupposed and actively promoted by the state, and that both the judiciary and the citizen body as a whole can be the supreme arbiters of constitutional rights. It is therefore clear that liberal and republican nationalism represent two distinct strands within nationalist theory, and that they should be treated as such in the literature. Insisting that these two perspectives fall under the same liberal nationalist umbrella muddies the debate and renders the very concept of liberal nationalism meaningless, while clearly distinguishing between liberal and republican nationalism helps to clarify and further advance the current debate in nationalist theory.

7.2 Contributions to the Literature

There are three significant gaps in the literature that I tried to address with this project. The first gap was in the literature on republican political theory; the two major strands of republicanism represented in the literature are instrumental republicanism and strong republicanism. Instrumental republicans like Pettit and Skinner see citizenship as a means of preserving individual freedom and not a relationship or activity with intrinsic value, while strong republicans like Hannah Arendt and Iseult Honohan stress the intrinsic value of participating in self-government and realizing common goods as citizens. Nevertheless, the main debate within contemporary republican theory has been taking place between instrumental republicans and those strong republicans like Honohan who are most often classified as civic humanists. Civic humanists accept the intrinsic value of participation, but they also actively dismiss what they consider to be “more

communitarian” versions of strong republicanism which hold that politics will inevitably involve extra-political elements. I argued that along with instrumental republicanism and civic humanism there exists a third strand of republican theory; *cultural republicanism*. Along with civic humanists, cultural republicans recognize the intrinsic value of participation, but unlike both instrumental republicans and civic humanists, cultural republicans stress the fundamental importance of a shared national identity and culture, including the extra-political elements that go along with them. I tried to show that although cultural republicanism differs from both instrumental republicanism and civic humanism, it remains an integral part of the wider republican tradition.

Grounded in the 18th century writings of Rousseau and clearly present in Miller’s contemporary work, cultural republicanism holds that the virtues required by republican citizenship can be cultivated only within the borders of a nation, and a common national identity and public culture are essential for producing the kind of solidarity that is needed for a system of republican democracy to take shape.⁴⁴⁶ This common public culture should not be so all-embracing that it destroys private subcultures, but it should have substantial content and meaning for members of the national community.⁴⁴⁷ Cultural republicanism is the least prominently represented strand within republican theory; most contemporary contributors to the debate on republicanism (including republicans like Pettit and Honohan, but also liberal critics of republicanism such as Robert E. Goodin and Alan Patten) tend to vaguely refer to this third strand of republicanism as a “more communitarian” perspective that is rooted in “pre-political” culture. I tried to draw out cultural republicanism as a distinct strand of republican theory with a clear set of principles and a firm grounding in the wider republican tradition. Whereas the vast majority of contemporary republican literature neglects the importance of culture and nationality for politics, cultural republicanism sees them as inseparable elements of the political process.

⁴⁴⁶ Miller, *On Nationality*, 5.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 22-27.

The second gap in the literature is related to the first, and it shares the same historical foundation in the works of Rousseau. I argued that there exists a gap in contemporary literature on nationalism because while the debate within nationalist theory has largely moved beyond the civic vs. ethnic divide and there is now a general understanding among nationalist thinkers that all nationalisms are to some extent cultural nationalisms, more work needs to be done to delineate the distinct strands of thought operating within the framework of cultural nationalism. The most prominent strand of cultural nationalism is *liberal nationalism*, advocated by such thinkers as Yael Tamir and Will Kymlicka, and much of the literature has revolved around liberal nationalists defending the position that liberalism and nationalism are compatible against those liberals like Bhikhu Parekh and Judith Lichtenberg who are more skeptical about nationalism. Meanwhile, alternative approaches to cultural nationalism have been broadly described as illiberal, communitarian, or conservative; associated with such thinkers as Roger Scruton, they have met with little to no sympathy from liberals and liberal nationalists. With this in mind, it is no surprise that David Miller has identified as a liberal nationalist in the past; for a nationalist thinker, claiming to be anything other than a *liberal* nationalist is sure to be met with suspicion, or to be dismissed outright as a form of rightwing/conservative/communitarian extremism. I challenged this assumption by suggesting that Miller's work points towards a distinct *republican* strand of nationalist theory, one that is rooted in the works of Rousseau. In order to prove my assertion, I sought to show the stark differences between the liberal nationalism of Tamir and Kymlicka on the one hand, and Miller's republican nationalism on the other. My goal was to demonstrate that republican nationalism forms a distinct theoretical strand of nationalist theory and constitutes a defensible alternative to liberal nationalism. In so doing, I sought to move the discussion within nationalist theory forward by arguing that there is still an important debate to be had between liberal and republican nationalism, but the first step must be to classify them as two distinct perspectives.

Whereas much of the literature on republicanism neglects the significance of the extra-political aspects of culture and nationality for politics, republican nationalism combines cultural republicanism and political nationalism; it recognizes the inherent connection between culture and politics, including the importance of an encompassing

national identity and culture. And while liberal nationalism recognizes the importance of national belonging but holds that modern states can be multinational or even transnational entities, republican nationalism holds that all members of the nation must share a common identity and culture and be active participants in the democratic process so that the general will, the source of political legitimacy, can be expressed at the highest level (the level of the nation-state). In her account of the relationship between republicanism and nationalism that is drawn from the current literature, Catherine Frost states the following:

The difference between republicanism and nationalism, therefore, is that nationalism reveals that an important link runs between the political and cultural (or pre-political) life of a population, a link that plays a fundamental role in the conditions for representation in both areas. The question is whether patriotism or republicanism can assume the role that nationalism once played in terms of particularist political attachments without also coming to terms with the connection between the political and cultural aspects of membership. It seems reasonable to conclude that this dynamic will persist regardless, but neither a patriotic nor a republican approach seems prepared to respond to it, preferring to sideline the issue while addressing more classically political matters.⁴⁴⁸

This is precisely the challenge that republican nationalism answers: republican nationalism recognizes the connection between culture and politics, including the extra-political aspects of culture, while stressing the importance of republican citizenship and participatory democracy. As such, republican nationalism comes to terms with the connection between the political and cultural aspects of membership and fills an important gap in the literature on republican political theory and on nationalism.

The third significant contribution that this project makes is that it offers a fuller account of Rousseau's freedom as self-mastery or FSM. In Chapter 2 I outlined the various competing conceptions of freedom that have been represented in the literature on republicanism, including freedom as non-interference, freedom as non-domination, and freedom as political autonomy (see table in Chapter 2). However, the idea of FSM has been largely unexplored in contemporary debates on republican theory, mostly because

⁴⁴⁸ Frost, *Morality and Nationalism*, 120.

modern republicans tend to dismiss FSM as a “more communitarian” and therefore unattractive conception of freedom.⁴⁴⁹ Rousseau’s understanding of FSM is not directly related to communitarianism; instead, it is a fundamentally republican and democratic conception of freedom that I have tried to explain more fully. I argued that Rousseau’s FSM presupposes three interconnected layers: (1) individual self-mastery, where the agent is the individual and the goal is to overcome mere appetites and narrow self-interest in order to achieve one’s full potential as a man and citizen, (2) political self-rule, where the agent is the citizen body and the goal is for all citizens to actively shape the laws that govern them through a system of participatory democracy, and (3) national self-determination, where the agent is the nation-state and the goal is to preserve and promote the sovereignty of the state within an international system of rival powers. All three aforementioned layers of freedom hold intrinsic value because self-realization and freedom in the fullest sense depend on them.⁴⁵⁰ As Miller notes, referring to the intrinsic value of national self-determination and its connection to *increasing* the freedom of citizens, “self-determination for groups is valuable in much the same way as self-determination for individuals” because “the group as a whole can achieve much more than I as an individual can achieve, so by belonging I have a smaller say over a bigger range of issues than I have as a private person.”⁴⁵¹ This three-fold understanding of freedom clearly distinguishes republican nationalism from alternative approaches, including liberal nationalism (endorses self-determination and a less direct form of political self-rule but not individual self-mastery) and all forms of authoritarian nationalism (endorses national self-determination but not necessarily political self-rule or individual self-mastery).

⁴⁴⁹ Whether it is used in debates on nationalism, republicanism, or in discussions about the various conceptions of freedom, “more communitarian” appears to be a common label for concepts that are not sufficiently understood by the authors who use it. I have tried to clarify some of this confusion, and for a good summary of what the debate between communitarians and liberals is actually about, see: Stephen Mulhall and Adam Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians, Second Edition* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

⁴⁵⁰ For Miller’s defense of the intrinsic value of self-determination, see his *Citizenship and National Identity*, 164-167.

⁴⁵¹ Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, 164.

I feel that the concept of republican nationalism which I have developed throughout this project effectively addresses gaps in the literature regarding the connection between culture/nationality and politics in republican theory, the connection between republican citizenship/participatory democracy and nationalism in nationalist theory, and the general confusion about the full meaning of FSM. Much of this project has relied on the writings of Rousseau, and this is because his work provides the common thread between republicanism and nationalism. Rousseau was a major thinker of the republican tradition and the father of modern nationalism, and he was also one of the few modern thinkers to take the “ancient” conception of freedom as self-mastery seriously. As such, I have argued that a closer study of Rousseau’s contributions to political philosophy can provide valuable insights for theorizing about such important concepts as republicanism, nationalism, democracy, and freedom, and I hope that this project can serve as a step in that direction. Moreover, I believe that the concept of republican nationalism as an alternative to liberal nationalism constitutes a fruitful avenue for future research in nationalist theory, and in the following section I consider some of the important questions that defenders of republican nationalism will have to grapple with in the future.

7.3 Questions for the Future

This project sought to develop republican nationalism as a distinct theoretical framework by arguing that it constitutes a separate strand of nationalist theory and one that is clearly different from liberal nationalism, that has a firm grounding in the republican political tradition (especially in Rousseau), and that maintains a contemporary relevance in the works of David Miller. I argued that republican nationalism addresses major gaps in the literature on republican political theory and on nationalism, and I tried to show that there is merit in paying more attention to this approach in the future. Nevertheless, there is much work to be done for republican nationalism to go from a mere theoretical framework to the kind of serious approach to politics that liberal nationalism has become. There are many important questions to address about the implications of republican nationalism in the real world, questions whose scope extends beyond this project. Nevertheless, in this section I will explore three important issues that republican

nationalism raises and that need to be given more consideration in the future. In particular, I will consider whether republican nationalism upholds a sufficient degree of respect for individuals and for minorities, and what the actual practical policies that a republican nationalist might endorse would look like.

Regarding the question of upholding a sufficient degree of respect for individuals, critics of republican nationalism may claim that because political participation and a shared national identity are assumed to hold both intrinsic and instrumental value (and are thus seen as essential elements of the good life), and because decisions about what constitutes the public good must be made collectively through the process of deliberation rather than individually by each citizen for himself, republican nationalism fails to accord appropriate respect to each individual. On the republican nationalist view, there exists a substantive conception of the good that reflects the general will of the political community. This conception will include assigning intrinsic value to political participation and a shared national identity, but it may include other aspects as well. As such, republican nationalists argue that the public understanding of the good cannot be revised by individual citizens at their own discretion; instead, all citizens must come together and revise the public conception of the good *collectively* through participation and deliberation. This is because the citizens of a political community ruled by the general will must form a single sovereign body (Rousseau's *moi commun*), and decisions about what constitutes the good must be made by the whole body through the mechanism of democratic politics. Individual citizens may disagree with certain aspects of what is considered to be the public good, but in order to revise the public conception of the good they will have to make their case through the deliberative process and convince their fellow citizens using the force of the better argument. If they fail to do so, they will be free to maintain their personal dissent, but they will also be obliged to accept that the state has the right to actively promote this particular conception of the good until such time as it is revised. Dissenters would be expected to respect the decision of the community so long as it was made fairly by their fellow citizens through the process of democratic deliberation, and so long as they continue to have public avenues for voicing their own views.

Liberal critics might argue that the republican nationalist perspective restricts the freedom of individuals by not allowing each citizen to form his own personal conception of the good without interference from the state. This is an important criticism, and one that calls for serious consideration. In broad terms, a republican nationalist would respond by arguing that all laws are grounded in politics and public discussion, and that if the political community arrives at a democratic decision about the need to actively promote a particular conception of the public good, then the state can legitimately promote it. Republican nationalists would also argue that the political community can do more good for its citizens by adopting a shared conception of the public good and by actively promoting it than by leaving all decisions about the good up to individuals (especially when this means that many citizens may ultimately decide to lead lives which are devoid of meaning and purpose). Lastly, republican nationalists would challenge the claim that their perspective restricts the freedom of individuals by obliging all citizens to participate in politics, rather than leaving the decision up to each individual citizen. A republican nationalist would argue that political participation is an integral component of the public good because a) it allows individuals to realize themselves fully as citizens and be free in the most-meaningful sense (self-realization), and b) it ensures that citizens are more engaged in the political process, which in turn ensures the preservation of meaningful democracy in the face of such fundamental threats as the growing influence of money in politics. Republican nationalists contend that a community in which citizens are not actively engaged in politics will inevitably be *less* free because it will constrain each citizen's opportunities for self-realization, and because it will be dominated by special interests that take advantage of the lack of citizen participation and vigilance in order to gain undue influence in politics.

A community in which the citizens are not obliged to actively participate and maintain constant vigilance over the political process will not be fully democratic; citizens in these communities may have a wide variety of choices about where to shop or which television programs to watch, but this is not freedom in the fullest sense (it is not *moral freedom*, as Rousseau would put it). Freedom in the most meaningful sense is not about the quantity of choices but about their quality; to be free, citizens must realize themselves in the fullest sense by becoming active members of a democratic community

and by taking a direct part in shaping the very laws that govern them, not merely in shaping their shopping practices or television viewing habits. This is what Rousseau meant when he made the much-debated claim that citizens must be “forced to be free”: by obliging citizens to participate in politics, we are ensuring that more options for self-realization are available to them, and that special interests do not take advantage of political apathy and a lack of vigilance on the part of the citizenry in order to gain undue influence at the expense of meaningful democracy. By actively promoting political participation as a necessary element of the good life even though some citizens might disagree, we are ensuring that the republican community remains meaningfully free and democratic, and we are therefore preserving, not infringing upon, the freedom of all citizens (including the dissenters themselves). Nevertheless, this is only a brief sketch of a debate that has been raging for centuries, and one that has major implications for democratic theory and for our understanding of what it means to be free. A comprehensive account of the liberal criticisms of the republican nationalist understanding of freedom and the public good, and the potential republican responses to those criticisms, would require entire volumes of their own. My goal has been to bring this debate to the forefront and identify the major points of contention between the two sides, in the hopes that more work will be done on the subject in the future.

Another important question about republican nationalism is whether it accords a sufficient degree of respect for minorities. Kymlicka and other liberal nationalists take the issues of inclusiveness and accommodation of minority groups very seriously, and their goal is to develop a version of nationalism that is inclusive of racial, social, cultural, and national minorities. Chapter 6 includes a detailed account of the liberal nationalist approach to minority rights and how it compares to the republican nationalist approach expressed by Miller. Kymlicka distinguishes between minority groups such as social movements or immigrant groups, and national minorities; he believes that national minorities form separate political communities within the state and deserve special rights of representation. Kymlicka warns that imposing common citizenship and an encompassing national identity on minorities which see themselves as distinct peoples may actually increase conflict in a multinational state, but Miller argues that we can deliberately modify the national consciousness and promote a single encompassing

national identity in order to remove a minority's desire to form a distinct national society within an existing nation. Republican nationalists accept Miller's view, and while acknowledging that secession may be inevitable in cases where rival nations have no hope of ever developing a common national identity, they hold that what Kymlicka refers to as *national* minorities (ethnocultural groups with a particular homeland that form a separate political community within the state) should instead be referred to as *territorial* minorities (ethnocultural groups that inhabit a clearly defined territory within the larger state, but remain part of a shared national political community). Republican nationalists would argue that groups like the Bretons and Occitans in France are better classified as territorial rather than national minorities; they are groups with distinct ethnocultural characteristics and clearly defined territorial homelands that are nevertheless still part of a single French national community. Miller argues that such minority groups by and large want to be part of the national community rather than separate from it, and he makes a strong case for why his republican approach is better able to accommodate the claims of minority groups than liberal and libertarian conceptions of citizenship.⁴⁵² Miller's republican approach rests on the idea that meaningful democratic politics depends on a sense of common nationality that is threatened whenever special rights are granted for groups over and above what equal treatment requires, and this includes minorities.⁴⁵³ In Chapter 6 I argued in defense of Miller's view, and I noted that even in a country like Canada, which is far from the ideal republican nation-state due to its vast size and colonial history, practical government policies seem to be geared towards promoting an encompassing *Canadian* national identity rather than a dual Canadian-Quebecois identity or a multinational identity.

The final minority-related issue that I will address is the concept of the "tyranny of the majority" and potential claims that republican nationalism is vulnerable to this type

⁴⁵² For more on Miller's view about accommodating minority groups, see chapter entitled "Nationality and Cultural Pluralism" in *On Nationality* (119-155), as well as a number of chapters in *Citizenship and National Identity*, including "Citizenship and Pluralism" (41-62), "Group Identities, National Identities, and Democratic Politics" (62-81), "Nationality in Divided Societies" (125-142), and "Is Deliberative Democracy Unfair to Disadvantaged Groups" (142-161).

⁴⁵³ Miller, *On Nationality*, 153-154.

of problem. It is true that republican nationalism includes obligations which liberalism does not, including the obligation to participate in the political process and in a shared national culture. These obligations are more demanding than those endorsed by liberal nationalism, and in order to guarantee meaningful political participation in the first place, republican nationalists must establish rights of citizenship that will ensure that all citizens are able to participate in both the political process and the shared national culture. These rights will share commonalities with liberal rights (free speech and expression, freedom of conscience, voting and running for office, security of the person), and they may also go beyond liberal rights by endorsing firm limits on economic inequality in order to ensure that every citizen thinks only his own thoughts, and that no citizen is wealthy enough to buy another or so poor as to have to sell himself.⁴⁵⁴ This is because the general will includes the will of every citizen, not simply the will of the majority or any other faction, and so all citizens, including those who may be in the minority on a given issue, will enjoy the same rights (and obligations) of citizenship and the protections and assurances that go along with them. Nevertheless, the questions that are being raised here, including the issue of what type of minority group accommodation is appropriate within modern nation-states and the question of how to ensure that all voices are being heard in public discussion, are far from resolved. This debate will continue, and my hope is that the framework of republican nationalism will offer a fresh perspective on these important questions; a perspective which, when pitted against the liberal nationalist approach, can provide new solutions that move the debate forward.

Some critics of nationalism in general and republican nationalism in particular may claim that nationalist projects such as these will inevitably become hostile to outsiders and seek to assert their superiority over rival nations. However, throughout this dissertation I have made it a point to emphasize that the type of nationalism that republican nationalists endorse, and the type of nationalism that Rousseau himself endorsed, is defensive in character and limited in scope. Republican nationalism rejects

⁴⁵⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *On the Social Contract, Book II Ch. 11*, ed. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2011) 189.

all forms of military expansionism and imperialism because the larger the state becomes, the less democratic it becomes, and the less free its citizens will be. Furthermore, in recognizing the intrinsic value of culture and nationality, republican nationalists must agree to respect the value of all national cultures along with their own. Just as Rousseau states that he who wants to be free must not want to be a conqueror, so too Miller argues that:

In advancing the claims of our own national community to security and self-determination, we also recognize that other communities may make equally legitimate claims on their own behalf. The overall aim is a world in which different peoples can pursue their own national projects in a spirit of friendly rivalry, but in which none attempts to control, exploit, or undermine any of the others. Besides the barriers this erects to overt or covert imperialism, it also creates a general obligation to ensure that nation-states have adequate resources to remain economically viable.⁴⁵⁵

The last issue that I will address in this section is the question of what kind of practical policies republican nationalists might endorse, and how these may differ from policies preferred by liberal nationalists. The first obvious difference will revolve around political participation; for liberal nationalists participation is encouraged but not mandatory, whereas for republican nationalists taking an active part in both the informal and formal aspects of public life are a necessary element of the good life. What's more, because republican nationalists believe that citizens cannot be fully free unless they take an active part in shaping the laws that govern them, a republican nationalist must endorse laws that make political participation mandatory. The question then becomes what these laws will look like, and how they will be enforced. In countries like Australia, Greece, Belgium, and a number of Latin American nations, participating in elections is compulsory; all citizens are obliged to vote, and those who fail to do so without an acceptable justification are most often fined, although in some countries multiple violations can result in losing the right to vote for a number of years or having public

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid, 189-190.

services such as passports and other documents revoked.⁴⁵⁶ A republican nationalist would certainly endorse some of these measures, but which measures should be implemented and how severe the punishment should be for failing to participate is up for debate. I think that the fees for not participating would have to be substantial enough that they couldn't be ignored, especially for repeat offenders, and they would likely have to be determined based on income (like speeding tickets in Finland) in order to ensure that those with money to spare cannot simply buy their way out of democracy. I am also inclined to endorse denying select public services, such as the ability to renew a passport, to those who willingly and repeatedly refuse to participate, but republican nationalists will likely hold different views on what types of measures should be taken to ensure participation. Moreover, since political participation for republican nationalists involves more than simply voting in elections, other civic responsibilities, such as attending public events or taking part in various forms of civil service, may need to become mandatory as well (similar to the way that jury duty is mandatory in the United States). But this again raises questions about which activities should be mandatory, and how compliance will be enforced. Other than noting that all policies should be designed to promote efficient political participation without placing undue or unequal burdens on individual citizens, I cannot yet offer definitive answers to the many questions that come with these propositions. More research is needed, including empirical research that aims to determine which public policies would be the most effective in achieving the desired results, and I intend to pursue this type of research in the future.

The fact that republican nationalism sees participation and a shared national identity as necessary elements of the good life means that steps will have to be taken beyond the political system in order to effectively promote these goods. This means developing a national system of education that seeks to teach citizens from a very young age about the intrinsic value of these goods, and it also means providing incentives for both public and private institutions to promote these goods within the informal spheres of

⁴⁵⁶ “Compulsory voting around the world,” *The Guardian*, July 4, 2005, accessed January 5, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2005/jul/04/voterapathy.uk>.

public life. Moreover, the republican nationalist emphasis on participation and deliberation requires its proponents to develop political mechanisms that are more participatory than those of modern liberal democracies. This is not a simple proposition, and there are large bodies of literature on radical and deliberative democracy that deal with this very question.⁴⁵⁷ The specific policies will be up for discussion, but the rapid advances in information technology in recent decades have made the idea of active large-scale political participation in modern nation-states more feasible. Republican nationalists will want to explore these new options for participation and deliberation, but they will also want to promote existing mechanisms of direct democracy, such as referenda. On the republican nationalist view, the people as a whole must have the final say on major political decisions (rather than leaving these decisions up to judges or even elected representatives), and the referendum will be the ultimate mechanism of political decision-making in the republican nationalist community. This is a clear difference from contemporary liberal constitutionalism: major political decisions, such as amendments to the constitution, will have to be approved in national referenda, and if there is disagreement between the different branches of government on a contentious issue, the ultimate decision will not be left up to constitutional courts but to the people as a whole. As such, avenues will have to be available to citizens in order to challenge democratically those political decisions that a significant number of them disagrees with, and this would include the ability to demand a national referendum on the issue (referenda would be called if those opposing a decision are able to collect a significant amount of valid signatures from fellow citizens in support of the motion).

Republican nationalists will also endorse more restrictions on the disparity between the rich and poor, they will support eliminating the influence of money in politics by imposing controls on campaign financing and by minimizing the impact of all forms of special interest lobbying, and they will demand more accountability and transparency from politicians. Again, the policies that are implemented to promote these

⁴⁵⁷ For a good place to start, see: Daniel Weinstock and David Kahane, *Deliberative Democracy in Practice*, ed. David Kahane et al. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).

goals will be up for debate and discussion; some may feel that stricter laws on campaign financing will have the desired effect, and this view is compatible with the views of many liberals, while others may go as far as Rousseau and argue that all political factions should be eliminated completely, so that every citizen can think only his own thoughts and so that every elected official will be accountable directly to his constituents instead of the leadership of a political party. These and other questions will have to be answered before republican nationalism can become the kind of serious theoretical approach that liberal nationalism has become, and while some important work has been done on the subject by Miller and other deliberative democrats, more empirical research and practical analysis is needed. After all, many contemporary states see themselves as liberal democracies, but no contemporary state identifies as a “republican democracy” or claims to be committed to the principles of republican nationalism. As such, the ultimate goal of this project has been to begin the conversation on republican nationalism and its distinctness from liberal nationalism rather than resolve it altogether.

7.4 Contemporary Relevance: Nationalism in the Twenty-first Century

Nationalism has been a powerful political force throughout the twentieth century, and it has not lost much of its vigor. Despite the expanding phenomenon of globalization, which promises to open up borders and tear down the boundaries between peoples, nationalism remains a potent factor in world politics. Between separatists struggles in places like Sri Lanka, Turkey, and Ukraine and national rivalries which have the potential to escalate into serious conflicts (the tensions between China and Japan over the Senkaku islands, or the sectarian and geo-political tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia), no student of politics can afford to ignore the practical implications of nationalism. As long as nationalism remains a critical aspect of world affairs, it is necessary to give the academic study of nationalism, its theory and practice, the attention it deserves. The question of why nationalism still remains such a significant idea in a globalized world is a complex one, but Neil MacCormick offers a compelling answer. As MacCormick observes,

It is only through our membership of significant groupings that we can transcend the constraints of place and time... A “nation” (but not only a nation) can provide a conceptual framework that allows us to comprehend our own existence as belonging within a continuity in time and a community in space.... Consciousness of belonging to a nation is one of the things that enable us as individuals in some way in this earthly existence to transcend the limitations of space, time, and mortality, and to participate in that which had meaning before us and will continue to have meaning beyond us.⁴⁵⁸

The concept of nationalism may be so potent precisely because it speaks to an inherent human desire to transcend mortality and participate in something that is bigger than ourselves. While other groupings such as the family can have a similar significance, national identity remains essential for the self-understanding of a great many people in the modern world. As Nielsen explains,

National identity is indeed a very important identity, an identity essential for very many people to give meaning to their lives, vital for their secure sense of self-respect, essential for their sense of belonging and security: all things of fundamental value to human beings. They are things that would be a central part of a good life for people in any society. Still, however important, national identity does not exhaust their identity and should not be their deepest loyalty.⁴⁵⁹

Many people believe that national identities are constitutive of the self; they feel that national belonging holds both intrinsic and instrumental value. As such, they would want to preserve their unique national identity even if all the instrumental benefits that come with national belonging could be secured independently.⁴⁶⁰ National belonging may not be the highest human good nor is it the only form of collective belonging that has intrinsic value (belonging to one’s family, neighborhood, and church community is also valuable), but national belonging is one of the important human goods that holds intrinsic value for many individuals around the world.⁴⁶¹ As Miller points out:

⁴⁵⁸ MacCormick, “Nation and Nationalism,” 193.

⁴⁵⁹ Nielsen, “Cultural Nationalism, 120-121.

⁴⁶⁰ David Miller, *National Responsibility and Global Justice*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 37-38.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid*, 39.

A national identity helps to locate us in the world; it must tell us who we are, where we have come from, what we have done. It must then involve an essentially historical understanding in which the present generation are seen as heirs to a tradition which they then pass on to their successors. Of course the story is continually being rewritten; each generation revises the past as it comes to terms with the problem of the present. None the less, there is a sense in which the past always constrains the present: present identities are built out of the materials that are handed down, not started from scratch.⁴⁶²

National belonging is also a unique form of belonging because in a world where political decision-making still predominantly takes place in a system of sovereign nation-states, it is only through the vehicle of the nation-state that people can fully realize and preserve their freedom, and have their voices heard and their interests represented in a world full of rival states and conflicting interests. In a globalized and interdependent world, it is no longer possible to protect one's interests and escape the problems of the wider world by relying solely on one's family, village, or even city. National identity is the main focus of collective loyalty in modern nation-states because it makes individual, political, and national self-determination possible: "it provides the wherewithal for a common culture against whose background people can make more individual decisions about how to lead their lives; it provides the setting in which ideas of social justice can be pursued, particularly ideas that require us to treat our individual talents as to some degree a 'common asset', to use Rawls's phrase; and it helps to foster the mutual understanding and trust that makes democratic citizenship possible."⁴⁶³

Despite claims to the contrary, nationalism does not represent a return to pre-modern, primitive tribalism. Modern nationalism is often philosophically sophisticated, rational, and inclusive of immigrants, as long as they consent to participating in a common national culture, which includes learning the language, history, customs, and laws of the nation in question. As such, nationalism represents a complex and quintessentially modern concept that will remain a potent force in world politics for the foreseeable future. Because nationalism remains so important in the modern world, the

⁴⁶² Miller, *On Nationality*, 175.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid*, 185.

study of nationalist theory represents a crucial challenge for contemporary political philosophers. The debate surrounding nationalism has moved beyond the civic vs. ethnic divide as theorists of nationalism come to appreciate the essential component that culture plays in the life of a nation. Nonetheless, the debate within nationalist theory is far from over, as there are major differences between even those theorists who accept the theoretical framework of cultural nationalism. I have suggested that within the framework of cultural nationalism exists a clear distinction between liberal nationalism, which is established and prominent in the literature, and republican nationalism, which is still being developed but finds clear expression in the works of Rousseau and David Miller. As such, I argued that treating republican nationalism as a defensible alternative to liberal nationalism represents a fruitful new avenue of research within nationalist theory.

I end by reiterating the continuing relevance of nationalism in the modern world, and by stressing that although many are quick to point out the potential “downsides” of nationalism, it is important to also remember the very real “upsides” of national belonging in the twenty-first century. In the words of David Cannadine, responding to those who claim that nations are losing their significance in the face of globalization and supranational organizations such as the EU:

The majority of people in Europe still live their lives in the context of the national community, and continue to view their past and future in that political framework. Nations may indeed be inventions. But like the wheel, or the internal combustion engine, they are endowed, once invented, with a real, palpable existence which is not just to be found in the subjective perceptions of their citizens, but is embodied in laws, languages, customs, institutions—and history.⁴⁶⁴

Nations may be imagined communities, but they hold real meaning for their members and they wield real power on the world stage; predictions about their downfall and the impending end of nationalism as a major force in global politics have been wrong over and over again. Nations remain the most important actors on the world stage, and they

⁴⁶⁴ David Cannadine, “Penguin Island Story: Planning a New History of Britain,” *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 4693 (12 March 1993), 4.

will continue to be for the foreseeable future. As such, the study of nations and of nationalism must be taken seriously by the scholars of the twenty-first century.

Miller makes a powerful point when he suggests that critics of nationalism may want to think twice before supporting the erosion of national identities in the name of wider regional or even global identities. Miller observes that the modern welfare state and programs and institutions that protect minority rights have always been *national* projects, grounded in the belief that members of a national community owe certain goods to their fellow citizens that they could not possibly extend to all of humanity. If national identities disappear, what replaces them may not be a more inclusive and compassionate worldview, but rather a worldview that stresses the primary importance of economic profits and market efficiency. As citizens lose a sense of shared national identity and allegiance to their particular community, they become less likely to participate in common projects and pursue common goods, which would make it easier for political and economic elites to gain undue influence over politics and eliminate the types of welfare programs and economic and cultural subsidies that are seen as restricting the efficiency of global markets.⁴⁶⁵ As Miller warns,

If national identities are indeed being eroded, what is likely to take their place is not rich cultural pluralism for everyone, but the world market as the distributor of cultural resources. And this will be bad news for the non-elite, on two counts. First, they will no longer have ready access to a rich common culture of the kind that is still available in most European and other Western states through publicly funded television stations, museums, and art galleries, educational programmes, and the like. Second, their economic position will increasingly be determined by the workings of the global market, as national solidarity declines and people are no longer willing to allow redistributive policies to interfere with economic competitiveness.⁴⁶⁶

For this reason, academics of the twenty-first century should be careful about relegating nations and nationalism to the dustbin of history, as Marxists and radical cosmopolitans have done in the past. Nations remain the primary actors on the world stage, and

⁴⁶⁵ Miller, *On Nationality*, 187.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

nationalism continues to be a powerful force that merits our time and consideration. And perhaps that's a good thing.

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