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Liberal political theorists are likely to regard talk about virtue and patriotism as a dangerous thing. There is a fine line, they would say, perhaps invoking the tyrannical lesson of Robespierre, between a republic of virtue and a reign of terror. And we should beware that a love of country, for all the good that it can motivate citizens to do, can easily morph into jingoistic fervour. For such critics, patriotism ‘typically involves a grave moral error and its source is typically a state of mental confusion’ (Kateb 2006, p. 3). It can be manipulated to fuel fanatical racism, to support dubious wars in foreign lands, and to justify government restrictions of individual liberties. The ethos of ‘my country, right or wrong’ is something a liberal polity should do its best to avoid. Of all people, it is argued, political theorists and philosophers should know better than to make the mistake of defending patriotism in theory, if not also promoting it in practice.

There is certainly cause for liberal concern. In Britain, for example, the language of patriotism features heavily in the platforms of far-right political groups such as the British National Party (BNP) and the English Defence League (EDL). BNP leader Nick Griffin describes his party as ‘a patriotic democratic alternative to the old parties that have wrecked our great country’ by relegating ‘native Britons’ to second-class citizenship. The EDL’s mission statement commits its members to resisting government efforts ‘to deliberately undermine our culture and impose non-English cultures on the English people in their own land’.¹ Many would say that such extreme sentiments have been encouraged by more mainstream expressions of patriotism. Whether it is the embrace of the phrase ‘British jobs for British

¹ See ‘A Message from British National Party Leader Nick Griffin MEP’, available at: www.bnp.org.uk/introduction (last accessed 29 October 2011); and ‘EDL Mission Statement’, available at: <http://englishdefenceleague.org/about-us/mission-statement/> (last accessed 29 October 2011).

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workers' by former Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown, or current Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron's rejection of a 'doctrine of state multiculturalism' in favour of 'muscular' British liberalism, even moderate endorsements of patriotic values may have pernicious effects.²

This problem is not confined to Britain. In 2009, across the Channel, the then President Nicolas Sarkozy instigated an official national debate about what it meant to be French, which was widely criticised as little more than an excuse for unleashing anti-Muslim xenophobia. In April 2011, the French parliament introduced a ban on the wearing of the burqa and niqab veils in public places, following a similar move by the Belgian parliament in 2010. At the time of writing, the Dutch parliament is also contemplating the passing of a bill targeting Islamic veils being worn in public. But in all cases, the moves have been justified as statements, in one way or another, of civic solidarity and national values. It has been no coincidence that these bans have been pursued at a time when populist parties of the far right and extremist street movements across Europe have been gaining in strength (see Goodwin 2011; Mudde 2010). Anxiety about immigration and multiculturalism has increasingly been expressed as virulent nationalistic pride. The terrorist attack in Norway in July 2011, perpetrated by Anders Breivik, a former member of the anti-immigrant Norwegian Progress Party, has prompted much reflection and debate about these dangerous developments.

Neither is the problematic nature of patriotic expression by any means limited to Europe. In the United States, not long after 11 September 2001, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act, which dramatically expanded government powers to conduct secret searches of people's communications, homes, and medical and financial records. In May 2011 Congress approved a four-year extension of the Act, despite reports that former President George W. Bush had used the statute to institute an extensive programme of secret wiretapping. Here, arguably, was an example of patriotism being used to entrench the institutional abuse of individual liberty. This is to say nothing of how a renewed sense of American collective pride since 11 September

² See 'Speech at Munich Security Conference', 5 February 2011, available at: www.number10.gov.uk/news/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference/ (last accessed 29 October 2011).

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2001 has fed a 'blind patriotism' aligned to unconditional support for hard-line national security policies: dissenting voices have routinely been stigmatised as unpatriotic or 'un-American'. Resurgent American patriotism has also fuelled hostility towards particular cultural groups. During the so-called Global War on Terror, 'Arabs and Muslims have come under increased scrutiny, serving as targets for public and institutional scorn in which they have often fallen victim to discrimination and hate crime' (Parker 2009, pp. 97–8).

Meanwhile in Australia, the rise of patriotic flag-waving since the 2005 Cronulla Beach race riot in Sydney (when a 5,000-strong mob attacked Australians of Middle Eastern descent) has confirmed for many that a love of country may serve to disguise something downright nasty. Members of the Australian public have embraced symbols such as the national flag and the Southern Cross – the asterism that adorns the national flag – with unprecedented enthusiasm. Some attribute this to a new strain of conservative patriotism. The right-wing populism of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, which at first appeared to be an aberration, has been assimilated into mainstream political discourse, as reflected in the resurgent popularity of the Anzac military legend and the heightened policing of national borders against boat-borne asylum-seekers. Once a country whose members prided themselves on their laconic character and habit of understatement, Australia has become an effusive one when it comes to displaying its love of country. In recent years, it has become common to hear denunciations of certain opinions and behaviour as 'un-Australian', and not only with tongue firmly in cheek. With the Cronulla episode, one scholar writes, patriotism has been merged once again with white nationalism, reinforcing the historically 'beleaguered, belligerent, and exclusionary' character of Australian nationhood (Perera 2009, p. 153).

In many Western democracies, a certain notion of civic membership has shaped public responses to cultural diversity and perceived threats from outsiders. Liberal citizenship is something to be protected from subversion by certain minorities, even if this should mean illiberal outbursts or heavy-handed public policy. And yet, whatever the risks of perversion, or its appropriation by ugly nationalism, patriotic virtue must be a foundation of citizenship in a modern democratic polity. This is the central contention of this book. Liberals should not repudiate a vision of citizenship in which people share a commitment to and special concern for their country and fellow compatriots. To be

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sure, the emergence of pluralistic societies heightens the potential for conflict between solidarity and diversity. Mass immigration and claims for the recognition of minority identities have complicated the notion that members of a political community will share a civic identity that transcends their differences. Any imposition of solidarity in a multicultural society may end up as a form of strident assimilation. However, liberals should be neither paralysed by this, nor prompted into retreat. The challenge must be to retrieve a patriotism defined by reason rather than hysteria, and a model of civic virtue in which good citizenship is defined as much by negotiating differences as by conforming to shared values.

One way of proceeding is to adopt the formulation of Carl Schurz. According to Schurz, patriotism may well involve an ethos of ‘my country, right or wrong’, but loving one’s country need not require a surrender of all good sense. When he addressed the question of patriotism in 1872 from the floor of the United States Senate, Schurz was at the time a target of pungent criticism. Being the first German-born American to be elected to that august institution, Schurz’s enthusiasm for German unification led his opponents to accuse him of being more passionate about aiding the German Empire than advancing American interests. To the haranguing of a fellow Senator, who invoked ‘my country, right or wrong’, Schurz responded: ‘In one sense I say so too . . . My country, right or wrong; if right, to be kept right; and if wrong, to be set right.’ As for the charge that his German sympathies amounted to being un-patriotic, Schurz offered no remorse. There was no apology for his lingering attachments to his native land: ‘Those who would meanly and coldly forget their old mother could not be expected to be faithful to their young bride’ (in Treffouse 1998, p. 180).

Just as questions about the absorption and allegiance of immigrants were pertinent to a post-bellum America coming to terms with its melting-pot of immigrants, so they are today to liberal democracies across the West. The example of Schurz, a figure largely forgotten by Americans and unknown to non-Americans, hints at a patriotic virtue fit for a diverse polity: one in which there is no contradiction in expressing one’s heritage and in fulfilling the obligations of one’s citizenship; and in which there is no contradiction in loving one’s country and criticising it when it falls short of being just and good. This should be enough to challenge the comfortable cynicism of those liberals who believe that patriotism can only be reactionary and never reflective,

only incendiary and never inclusive, and to remind conservatives that patriotism can be critical as well as triumphant.

The argument in this book offers a refinement of a ‘liberal nationalist’ approach to citizenship and community. There has been an increasing body of political theory that has articulated the civic dimensions of liberalism. It is widely recognised that a political order based on individual liberty and public justification cannot be maintained without some measure of civic virtue diffused among the citizenry. Yet the connection between such a position and the liberal nationalist proposition that ‘liberal goals cannot reliably be achieved except in societies whose members share a common national identity’ has not been made explicitly enough (Miller 2005a, p. 113; see also Kymlicka 1995; Tamir 1993). This relationship can be made clearer by recasting the liberal nationalist argument in the language of patriotism and civic virtue. The liberal nationalist vision – of a deliberative democracy, in which citizens contribute to the public expression of a national identity – draws upon a specific conception of national culture, which can help invigorate a contemporary understanding of citizenship. Indeed, where an expansive love of country complements civic virtues such as tolerance, mutual respect and public reasonableness, there emerges a form of national attachment that might successfully reconcile solidarity and diversity. It is striking that while many political theorists of deliberative democracy emphasise the importance of citizen behaviour, only rarely have they discussed the particular social settings in which deliberative practices must take place.

Grounding patriotism in nationhood runs contrary to some of the prevailing theoretical treatment, which regards patriotism and nationalism as concepts best quarantined from one another. Many consider the two terms as belonging to distinct historical traditions of political thought, and as expressing very different ideas about membership. It is argued that the language of patriotism is drawn from republican thought, and concerns a love of common liberty and the practice of good government, while the language of nationalism descends from spiritualist romanticism and is employed to justify cultural homogeneity. In analytical terms, there is frequent insistence upon divorcing patriotic attachment from the nation, and understanding solidarity among citizens as strictly political in character (as opposed to something that is cultural or national). One notable distinction suggests that patriotic identification should be understood as a sense

citizens have of ‘belonging to a polity’ rather than ‘belonging together’ (Mason 2000). Subscribing to the former need not require citizens to believe there is any deep reason why they should associate together based on a shared history, religion, ethnicity, mother tongue, culture or conception of the good; it is enough that citizens share membership of a political community defined by civic values. This may involve identification with a love of liberty as embodied in the laws and institutions of a self-governing republic – a ‘republican patriotism’. Alternatively, it may involve a ‘post-nationalist’ allegiance to the norms, values and procedures of a liberal democratic constitution – a ‘constitutional patriotism’. Either way, the contention is that we should not presume that a national culture or nation is the rightful object of patriotic loyalty.

Neither a republican patriotism nor a constitutional patriotism offers a viable basis for solidaristic citizenship. Forms of ‘patriotism without nationalism’ ultimately rely on ‘pre-political’ sources of trust and fellow feeling. Constitutional patriotism exists as a critique of nationalist patriotism rather than a discrete alternative to it; republican patriotism underestimates how a love of political liberty draws upon the resources of national historical legacies and traditions. The sense of belonging that comes with membership of a national culture is best equipped to offer the historical identity that is required for patriotic commitment. Theoretically speaking, liberal nationalism avoids the pathological pitfalls of ethnic nationalism, which advocates of ‘patriotism without nationalism’ fear most. This is because a liberal nationalist notion of national belonging is tied to deliberative democracy. Thus understood, the content of a national identity becomes regulated by a free and open national conversation to which all members can contribute. As it currently stands, however, liberal nationalism has an underdeveloped theory of culture that places too much emphasis on the societal and normative aspects of a national culture (a culture’s institutional embodiment and its shared values, respectively) and not enough on its interpretative elements (a culture’s symbolic dimensions and self-interpretative practices). Liberal nationalists assume that a citizen who is a member of a nation necessarily has an obligation to participate in the ongoing interpretation of its culture; but why this must be so is unclear. Only with some account of why a national culture must be constituted in part by collective self-interpretation can liberal nationalists explain why citizens will be motivated to engage in the kind of national conversation envisaged.

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Of course, certain conditions are necessary for such a national identity to exist. Where a national conversation accommodates voices from different cultural perspectives, it makes certain demands of its participants and presumes certain civic virtues. The ideal citizens in a liberal nationalist political community not only participate in public debates, they regard such engagement as an obligation of national membership; they are motivated by what I call ‘cultural patriotism’. Citizens of this sort act as social critics within a national conversation, interpreting new events and developments within their society according to a national tradition. To be a virtuous citizen, thus understood, entails both political and cultural excellences, and a practice of ‘patriotic deliberation’.

If the right balance of solidarity and diversity depends on the character of citizens, then a liberal political community must have an interest in shaping this character. There are two particular areas in which the state can intervene in the process by which citizens develop their identity: civic education and immigrant integration. A liberal nationalist approach to these should be guided by the promotion of cultural literacy. In the area of education, there should be a common national education aimed at transmitting, in addition to political values and political competence, knowledge about aspects of the national history and culture. Future citizens should possess fluency in the vocabulary of their community’s national tradition. Cultural literacy should similarly inform state policies relating to immigration and integration, especially those dealing with the naturalisation of immigrants. While there should be some accommodation of diverse cultural identities, the state should encourage immigrants to acculturate into the national political community. It should cultivate among immigrants a sense of familiarity with the shared political values of the community, as well as the language, history and values of the national culture.

The three foregoing sets of claims – (1) that political solidarity in a multicultural society can be grounded in liberal nationalism; (2) that national membership requires a specific conception of civic virtue; and (3) that liberal nationalism implies a concern with institutional design – need to be placed in some context. For one thing, there is a restricted scope to liberal nationalism. It would be unrealistic to suggest that it can offer a model of national identity for all political communities. It is telling that one defender of liberal nationalism explicitly

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addresses his argument to ‘people of both liberal and pacific disposition’ (Miller 1995, p. 8). Liberal nationalists clearly do not take as their audience communities with histories of ethnic conflict and entrenched discord, where nationalism has legitimised an appeal to blood loyalty and has sanctified bloody violence. The normative proposition of liberal nationalism also involves a demanding threshold of civic and cultural competence, which perhaps only a small number of polities could contemplate living up to in practice. The kind of democratic deliberation to which liberal nationalists aspire demands citizens who are not merely versed in democratic politics and constitutional government, but who are also disposed to negotiating moral disagreements. This presupposes a highly stable and sophisticated liberal political culture that is not always readily found in reality.

For another thing, my evaluation of patriotism and national culture is conditioned by a very particular challenge of political fragmentation linked to cultural diversity and a so-called politics of recognition. I have relatively little to say about the suitability of liberal nationalism as a response to the problem raised, for instance, by the demands of national minorities for political self-determination. Although it offers a theory of patriotism and national culture, this book makes no detailed prescriptions for how liberal democracy in Canada should deal with Québécois claims for nationhood or how liberal democracy in Britain should deal with the politics of Scottish Nationalist secession (to pick two examples of minority nationalism). My particular concern is not with questions of multinational fragmentation. This is because my concern is predominantly with *multicultural* or *multiethnic* fragmentation.³ My attention is devoted to liberal democracy as it is confronted by demands for recognition from sub-national cultural groups – in particular, but not exclusively, immigrant ethnic minorities. If contemporary political developments are any indication, this is an issue that is likely to preoccupy policymakers in liberal democracies for some time to come. To be sure, various national governments have recently shifted their policies on integrating immigrants. Where once the emphasis might have been on celebrating difference, social integration policies are now defined (or increasingly defined) by

³ This distinction between multinational and multicultural/multiethnic mirrors the one Kymlicka (1995, 2001, 2007) makes in his theory of multicultural citizenship between multinational and polyethnic claims.

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the overarching importance of national citizenship. For example, governments in Britain, Australia and the Netherlands (to name a few) have introduced citizenship tests incorporating national values and language requirements for immigrants wishing to be naturalised; governments elsewhere, as I have already mentioned, have introduced bans on cultural-religious items of clothing. The challenge of social cohesion generated by mass immigration, particularly in light of post-11 September 2001 threats of ‘home-grown terrorism’, has lent a new urgency to articulating a sense of shared identity among citizens. Against this background of events, political theory can perform the important task of explaining the theoretical and normative foundations of liberal nation-building in a multicultural society.

In the most general sense, this book seeks to contribute an account that may help in ‘stabilising’ a theory of liberal nationalism. The emergence of liberal nationalism has demonstrated the theoretical possibility of reconciling nationalism with liberal principles of individual autonomy and democratic self-determination. Even so, there remains a troublesome gap between theory and practice. Those sympathetic to liberal nationalism cannot overlook the difficulties that nationalism creates for politics in the real world. As demonstrated by contemporary political epithets like ‘British jobs for British workers’, ‘America: love it or leave it’ or ‘100 per cent Aussie pride’ (to give some examples from the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia), there is always the danger that feelings of national solidarity will not be moderated by liberal discipline. According to one early critic, liberal nationalism cannot escape being ‘an irresponsible compound’. Nationalism in the final analysis is ‘an empty husk of a word which will always resist being assimilated into liberalism’ and ‘will always tend to invite its brothers and sisters and thus easily [collapse] into the lowest common denominator – shallow expressions of blood, soil and xenophobia’ (Vincent 1997, p. 294). Those sceptical of liberal nationalism would argue that, at best, there may be little that separates it from a ‘conservative nationalism’, which maintains that a national identity should be protected from outsiders and should involve an attitude of rigid adherence to a historical tradition (Cole 2000, ch. 6). Liberal nationalists concede that there is every chance that nationalism, even in its benign formulations, may in some circumstances assume an aggressive tone. ‘The deepest challenge that liberal nationalism faces’, according to David Miller (2005a, p. 120), is ‘to identify conditions under

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which our favoured form of nationalism will remain stable, or to find political mechanisms that will ensure this'.

By expanding upon liberal nationalist conceptions of national culture, civic virtue and institutional design, I hope to meet this challenge. The key to my elaboration concerns what I call the 'interpretative' dimension of national culture: the idea that a culture will be constituted in part by collective self-interpretation by its members. In this respect, this book makes a specific contribution to the body of liberal nationalist thinking. It proposes that liberal nationalism should take an explicitly *culturalist* turn and understand democratic deliberation in cultural as well as political terms. This may help to narrow the gulf between two competing ideological stands within liberal nationalist thought: 'statist nationalism' and 'cultural nationalism'. According to the former, the value of a national culture concerns how a shared national-cultural identity helps to secure the ends of a liberal democratic state: a common national culture is valuable to the extent that it is a precondition for political justice. According to the latter, the obverse obtains, and it is the state that is the means and the national culture that is the end. Members of a national group have a morally relevant interest in adhering to their culture and preserving it as a matter separate from the support that a national culture may provide to liberal political values. National self-determination, in this view, involves a people giving 'public expression to their national identity' and managing their communal life to reflect their culture. Whereas statist nationalism insists that 'citizenries of states must share a homogeneous national culture in order for their states to realise political values', cultural nationalism is concerned with 'the support which states should extend to national cultures' (Gans 2003, p. 15).

When it comes to the question of integration in a multicultural society, much of the liberal nationalist position, as it currently stands, relies on statist nationalism. The multicultural challenge can be met, liberal nationalists would argue, as a national identity will involve deliberation about its content and character – it will, to that extent, be able to accommodate some of the demands for cultural recognition by minority groups. A collective dialogue on matters of cultural difference will, by definition, exist as part of the civic life of a nation-state. Yet a liberal nationalist argument seems to make more sense if it also explains *why* citizens are motivated by their cultural membership of a nation to participate in deliberations about diversity