CHAPTER

10 Multiculturalism

Preview	274
Origins and development	275
Core themes: diversity within unity	276
Types of multiculturalism	286
Critiques of multiculturalism	294
Multiculturalism in a global age	297
Questions for discussion	298
Further reading	298

Preview

Although multicultural societies have long existed – examples include the Ottoman empire, which reached its peak in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and the USA from the early nineteenth century onwards – the term 'multiculturalism' is of relatively recent origin. It was first used in 1965 in Canada to describe a distinctive approach to tackling the issue of cultural diversity. In 1971, multiculturalism, or 'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework', was formally adopted as public policy in Canada, providing the basis for the introduction of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988. Australia also officially declared itself multicultural and committed itself to multiculturalism in the early 1970s. However, the term 'multiculturalism' has only been prominent in wider political debate since the 1990s.

Multiculturalism is more an arena for ideological debate than an ideology in its own right. As an arena for debate, it encompasses a range of views about the implications of growing cultural diversity and, in particular, about how cultural difference can be reconciled with civic unity. Its key theme is therefore diversity within unity. A multiculturalist stance implies a positive endorsement of communal diversity, based on the right of different cultural groups to recognition and respect. In this sense, it acknowledges the importance of beliefs, values and ways of life in establishing a sense of self-worth for individuals and groups alike. Distinctive cultures thus deserve to be protected and strengthened, particularly when they belong to minority or vulnerable groups. However, there are a number of competing models of a multicultural society, which draw on, variously, the ideas of liberalism, pluralism and cosmopolitanism. On the other hand, the multiculturalist stance has also been deeply controversial, and has given rise to a range of objections and criticisms.

Origins and development

Multiculturalism first emerged as a theoretical stance through the activities of the black consciousness movement of the 1960s, primarily in the USA. The origins of black nationalism date back to the early twentieth century and the emergence of a 'back to Africa' movement inspired by figures such as Marcus Garvey (see p. 185). Black politics, however, gained greater prominence in the 1960s with an upsurge in both the reformist and revolutionary wings of the movement. In its reformist guise, the movement took the form of a struggle for civil rights that reached national prominence in the USA under the leadership of Martin Luther King (1929–68). The strategy of non-violent civil disobedience was nevertheless rejected by the Black Power movement, which supported black separatism and, under the leadership of the Black Panther Party, founded in 1966, promoted the use of armed confrontation. Of more enduring significance, however, have been the Black Muslims (now the Nation of Islam), who advocate a separatist creed based on the idea that black Americans are descended from an ancient Muslim tribe.

The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed growing political assertiveness among minority groups, sometimes expressed through **ethnocultural nationalism**, in many parts of western Europe and elsewhere in North America. This was most evident among the French-speaking people of Quebec in Canada, but it was also apparent in the rise of Scottish and Welsh nationalism in the UK, and the growth of separatist movements in Catalonia and the Basque area in Spain, Corsica in France, and Flanders in Belgium. A trend towards ethnic assertiveness was also found among the Native Americans in Canada and the USA, the aboriginal peoples in Australia, and the Maoris in New Zealand. In response to these pressures, a growing number of countries adopted official multiculturalism policies, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (see p. 288) being perhaps the classic example.

The common theme among these emergent forms of ethnic politics was a desire to challenge economic and social marginalization, and sometimes racial oppression. In this sense, ethnic politics was a vehicle for political liberation, its enemy being structural disadvantage and ingrained inequality. For blacks in North America and western Europe, for example, the establishment of an ethnic identity provided a means of confronting a dominant white culture that had traditionally emphasized their inferiority and demanded subservience.

Apart from growing assertiveness among established minority groups, multicultural politics has also been strengthened by trends in international migration since 1945 that have significantly widened cultural diversity in many societies. Migration rates rose steeply in the early post-1945 period, as western states sought to recruit workers from abroad to help in the process of post-war reconstruction. In many cases, migration routes were shaped by links between European states and their former colonies. Thus, immigrants to the UK in the 1950s and 1960s came mainly

ETHNOCULTURAL NATIONALISM
A form of nationalism that is fuelled primarily by a keen sense of ethnic and cultural distinctiveness and the desire to preserve it.

from the West Indies and the Indian subcontinent, while immigration in France came largely from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. In the case of West Germany, immigrants were *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers), usually recruited from Turkey or Yugoslavia. Immigration into the USA since the 1970s has come mainly from Mexico and other Latin American countries. For instance, the Latino or Hispanic community in the USA has exceeded the number of African-Americans, and it is estimated that by 2050 about a quarter of the US population will be Latinos.

However, during the 1990s there was a marked intensification of cross-border migration across the globe, creating what some have seen as a 'hyper-mobile planet'. There are two main reasons for this. First, there has been a growing number of refugees, reaching a peak of about 18 million in 1993. This resulted from an upsurge in war, ethnic conflict and political upheaval in the post-Cold War era, in areas ranging from Algeria, Rwanda and Uganda to Bangladesh, Indochina and Afghanistan. The collapse of communism in eastern Europe in 1989–91 contributed to this by creating, almost overnight, a new group of migrants as well as by sparking a series of ethnic conflicts, especially in the former Yugoslavia. Second, economic globalization (see p. 20) intensified pressures for international migration in a variety of ways, as discussed in the final section of this chapter.

By the early 2000s, a growing number of western states, including virtually all the member states of the European Union, had responded to such developments by incorporating multiculturalism in some way into public policy. This was in recognition of the fact that multi-ethnic, multireligious and multicultural trends within modern societies have become irreversible. In short, despite the continuing and sometimes increasing prominence of issues such as immigration and asylum, a return to *mono*culturalism, based on a unifying national culture, is no longer feasible. Indeed, arguably the most pressing ideological issue such societies now confront is how to reconcile cultural diversity with the maintenance of civic and political cohesion. Nevertheless, the advent of global terrorism (see p. 314) and the launch of the so-called 'war on terror' pushed multicultural politics further up the political agenda. The spread of religious fundamentalism (see p. 305), and particularly Islamism, to western states encouraged some to speculate on whether Samuel Huntington's (see p. 329) famous 'clash of civilizations' (see p. 310) is happening not just between societies but also *within* them. Whereas supporters of multiculturalism have argued that cultural recognition and minority rights help to keep political extremism at bay, opponents warn that multicultural politics may provide a cloak for, or even legitimize, political extremism.

Core themes: diversity within unity

The term 'multiculturalism' has been used in a variety of ways, both descriptive and normative. As a descriptive term, it refers to cultural diversity that arises from the existence within a society of two or more groups whose beliefs and practices generate a distinctive sense of collective identity. Multiculturalism, in this sense,

is invariably reserved for communal diversity that arises from racial, ethnic and language differences. The term can also be used to describe governmental responses to such communal diversity, either in the form of public policy or in the design of institutions. Multicultural public policies, whether applied in education, health care, housing or other aspects of social policy, are characterized by a formal recognition of the distinctive needs of particular cultural groups and a desire to ensure **equality of opportunity** between and among them. Multicultural institutional design goes further than this by attempting to fashion the apparatus of government around the ethnic, religious and other divisions in society. In the form of **consociationalism**, it has shaped political practice in states such as the Netherlands, Switzerland and Belgium; it has also been applied in the form of 'power sharing' in Northern Ireland and in multilevel governance in post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina.

As a normative term, multiculturalism implies a positive endorsement, even celebration, of communal diversity, typically based on either the right of different cultural groups to respect and recognition, or to the alleged benefits to the larger society of moral and cultural diversity. However, multiculturalism is more an ideological 'space' than a political ideology in its own right. Instead of advancing a comprehensive world-view which maps out an economic, social and political vision of the 'good society', multiculturalism is, rather, an arena within which increasingly important debates about the balance in modern societies between cultural diversity and civic unity are conducted. Nevertheless, a distinctive multiculturalist ideological stance can be identified. The most significant themes within multiculturalism are:

- politics of recognition
- culture and identity
- minority rights
- diversity.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY
Equality defined in terms of life chances or the existence of a 'level playing-field'.

CONSOCIATIONALISM
A form of power sharing involving a close association among a number of parties or political formations, typically used in deeply divided societies.

Politics of recognition

Multiculturalists argue that minority cultural groups are disadvantaged in relation to majority groups, and that remedying this involves significant changes in society's rules and institutions. As such, multiculturalism, in common with many other ideological traditions (not least socialism and feminism), is associated with the advancement of marginalized, disadvantaged or oppressed groups. However, multiculturalism draws from a novel approach to such matters, one that departs from conventional approaches to social advancement. Three contrasting approaches can be adopted, based, respectively, on the ideas of rights, redistribution and recognition (see Figure 10.1).

The notion of the 'politics of rights' is rooted in the ideas of republicanism (see p. 279), which are associated by many (but by no means all) with

Approach	Main obstacle to advancement	Key theme	Reforms and policies
Politics of rights (republicanism)	Legal and political exclusion	Universal citizenship	• Formal equality (legal and political rights) • Ban discrimination • Prohibit ethical/ cultural/racial profiling
Politics of redistribution (social reformism)	Social disadvantage	Equality of opportunity	• Social rights • Welfare and redistribution • Positive discrimination
Politics of recognition (multiculturalism)	Cultural-based marginalization	Group self-assertion	• Right to respect and recognition • Minority rights • Group self-determination

Figure 10.1 Contrasting approaches to social advancement

liberalism. Republicanism is concerned primarily with the problem of legal and political exclusion, the denial to certain groups of rights that are enjoyed by their fellow citizens. Republican thinking was, for example, reflected in first-wave feminism, in that its campaign for female emancipation focused on the struggle for votes for women and equal access for women and men to education, careers and public life in general. The republican stance can, in this sense, be said to be 'difference-blind': it views difference as 'the problem' (because it leads to discriminatory or unfair treatment) and proposes that difference be banished or transcended in the name of equality. Republicans therefore believe that social advancement can be brought about largely through the establishment of **formal equality**.

The contrasting idea of the 'politics of redistribution' is rooted in a social reformist stance that embraces, among other traditions, modern liberalism and social democracy. It arose out of the belief that universal **citizenship** and formal equality are not sufficient, in themselves, to tackle the problems of subordination and marginalization. People are held back not merely by legal and political exclusion, but also, and more importantly, by social disadvantage – poverty, unemployment, poor housing, lack of education and

FORMAL EQUALITY
Equality based on people's status in society, especially their legal and political rights (legal and political equality).

CITIZENSHIP
Membership of a state: a relationship between the individual and the state based on reciprocal rights and responsibilities.

Key concept
Republicanism

Republicanism refers, most simply, to a preference for a republic over a monarchy. However, the term 'republic' suggests not merely the absence of a monarch but, in the light of its Latin root, res *publica* (meaning common or collective affairs), it implies that the people should have a decisive say in the organization of the public realm. The central theme of republican political theory is a concern with a particular form of freedom, sometimes seen as 'freedom as non-domination' (Pettit, 1999). This combines liberty, in the sense of protection against arbitrary or tyrannical rule, with active participation in public and political life. The moral core of republicanism is expressed in a belief in civic virtue, understood to include public spiritedness, honour and patriotism (see p. 164).

so on. The key idea of social reformism is the principle of equal opportunities, the belief in a 'level playing-field' that allows people to rise or fall in society strictly on the basis of personal ability and their willingness to work. This implies a shift from legal egalitarianism to social egalitarianism, the latter involving a system of social engineering that redistributes wealth so as to alleviate poverty and overcome disadvantage. In such an approach, difference is acknowledged as it highlights the existence of social injustice. Nevertheless, this amounts to no more than a provisional or temporary acknowledgement of difference, in that different groups are identified only in order to expose unfair practices and structures, which can then be reformed or removed.

Multiculturalism, for its part, developed out of the belief that group marginalization often has even deeper origins. It is not merely a legal, political or social phenomenon but is, rather, a cultural phenomenon, one that operates through stereotypes and values that structure how people see themselves and are seen by others. In other words, universal citizenship and equality of opportunity do not go far enough. Egalitarianism has limited value, in both its legal and social forms, and may even be part of the problem (in that it conceals deeper structures of cultural marginalization). In this light, multiculturalists have been inclined to emphasize difference rather than equality. This is reflected in the 'politics of recognition', which involves a positive endorsement, even a celebration, of cultural difference, allowing marginalized groups to assert themselves by reclaiming an authentic sense of cultural identity.

The foundations for such a politics of recognition were laid by the postcolonial theories that developed out of the collapse of the European empires in the early post-World War II period. Black nationalism and multiculturalism can, indeed, both be viewed as offshoots of postcolonialism (see p. 280). The significance of postcolonialism was that it sought to challenge and overturn the cultural dimensions of imperial rule by establishing the legitimacy of non-western, and sometimes anti-western, political ideas and traditions. Edward Said's *Orientalism* ([1978] 2003) is sometimes seen as the most influential text of postcolonialism,

Key concept
Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism originated as a trend in literary and cultural studies that sought to address the cultural conditions characteristic of newly-independent societies. Its purpose has been primarily to expose and overturn the cultural and psychological dimensions of colonial rule, recognizing that 'inner' subjugation can persist long after the political structures of colonialism have been removed. A major thrust of postcolonialism has thus been to establish the legitimacy of non-western, and sometimes anti-western, political ideas and traditions. Postcolonialism has thus sought to give the developing world a distinctive political voice separate from the universalist pretensions of liberalism and socialism. However, critics of postcolonialism have argued that, all too often, it has been used as a justification for traditional values and authority structures.

developing, as it does, a critique of **Eurocentrism**. Orientalism highlights the extent to which western cultural and political hegemony over the rest of the world, but over the Orient in particular, had been maintained through elaborate stereotypical fictions that belittled and demeaned non-western peoples and cultures. Examples of such stereotypes include ideas such as the 'mysterious East', 'inscrutable Chinese' and 'lustful Turks'.

EUROCENTRISM
The application of values and theories drawn from European culture to other groups and peoples, implying a biased or distorted world-view.

Culture and identity

Multiculturalism's politics of recognition is shaped by a larger body of thought which holds that **culture** is basic to political and social identity. Multiculturalism, in that sense, is an example of the politics of cultural self-assertion. In this view, a pride in one's culture, and especially a public acknowledgement of one's cultural identity, gives people a sense of social and historical rootedness. In contrast, a weak or fractured sense of cultural identity leaves people feeling isolated and confused. In its extreme form, this can result in what has been called 'culturalism' – as practised by writers such as the French political philosopher Montesquieu (1689–1775), and the pioneer of cultural nationalism, Herder (see p. 184) – which portrays human beings as culturally defined creatures. In its modern form, cultural politics has been shaped by two main forces: communitarianism and identity politics (see p. 282).

Communitarianism advances a *philosophical* critique of liberal universalism – the idea that, as individuals, people in all societies and all cultures have essentially the same 'inner' identity. In contrast, communitarians champion a shift away from universalism to particularism, reflecting an emphasis less on what people share or have in common and more on what is distinctive about the groups to which they belong. Identity, in this sense, links the personal to the social, and sees the individual as 'embedded' in a particular cultural, social, institutional or ideological

CULTURE
Beliefs, values and practices that are passed on from one generation to the next through learning; culture is distinct from nature.

PERSPECTIVES ON... CULTURE

LIBERALS have sometimes been critical of traditional or 'popular' culture, seeing it as a source of conformism and a violation of individuality. 'High' culture, however, especially in the arts and literature, may nevertheless be viewed as a manifestation of, and stimulus to, individual self-development. Culture is thus valued only when it promotes intellectual development.

CONSERVATIVES place a strong emphasis on culture, emphasizing its benefits in terms of strengthening social cohesion and political unity. Culture, from this perspective, is strongest when it overlaps with tradition and therefore binds one generation to the next. Conservatives support monocultural societies, believing that only a common culture can inculcate the shared values that bind society together.

SOCIALISTS, and particularly Marxists, have viewed culture as part of the ideological and political 'superstructure' that is conditioned by the economic 'base'. In this view, culture is a reflection of the interests of the ruling class, its role being primarily ideological. Culture thus helps to reconcile subordinate classes to their oppression within the capitalist class system.

FASCISTS draw a sharp distinction between rationalist culture, which is a product of the Enlightenment and is shaped by the intellect alone, and organic culture, which embodies the spirit or essence of a people, often grounded in blood. In the latter sense, culture is of profound importance in preserving a distinctive national or racial identity and in generating a unifying political will. Fascists believe in strict and untrammelled monoculturalism.

FEMINISTS have often been critical of culture, believing that, in the form of patriarchal culture, it reflects male interests and values and serves to demean women, reconciling them to a system of gender oppression. Nevertheless, cultural feminists have used culture as a tool of feminism, arguing that, in strengthening distinctive female values and ways of life, it can safeguard the interests of women.

MULTICULTURALISTS view culture as the core feature of personal and social identity, giving people an orientation in the world and strengthening their sense of cultural belonging. They believe that different cultural groups can live peacefully and harmoniously within the same society because the recognition of cultural difference underpins, rather than threatens, social cohesion. However, cultural diversity must in some way, and at some level, be balanced against the need for common civic allegiances.

context. Multiculturalists therefore accept an essentially communitarian view of human nature, which stresses that people cannot be understood 'outside' society but are intrinsically shaped by the social, cultural and other structures within which they live and develop. Communitarian philosophers such as Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) and Michael Sandel (1982) portrayed the idea of the abstract individual – the 'unencumbered self' – as a recipe for rootless atomism. Only groups and communities can give people a genuine sense of identity and moral purpose. During the 1980s and 1990s, a major debate raged in philosophy between liberals and communitarians. However, one of the consequences of this debate was a growing willingness among many liberal thinkers to acknowledge the importance of culture. This, in turn, made liberalism more open to the attractions of multiculturalism, helping to give rise to the tradition of liberal multiculturalism (see p. 286).

Identity politics is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of political trends and ideological developments, ranging from ethnocultural nationalism and religious fundamentalism to second-wave feminism and pluralist multiculturalism (see p. 289). What all forms of identity politics nevertheless have in common is that they advance a *political* critique of liberal universalism. Liberal universalism is a source of oppression, even a form of cultural imperialism, in that it tends to marginalize and demoralize subordinate groups and peoples. It does this because, behind a façade of universalism, the culture of liberal societies is constructed in line with the values and interests of its dominant groups: men, whites, the wealthy and so on. Subordinate groups and peoples are either consigned an inferior or demeaning stereotype, or they are encouraged to identify with the values and interests of dominant groups (that is, their oppressors). However, identity politics does not only view culture as a source of oppression; it is also a source of liberation and empowerment, particularly when it seeks to cultivate a 'pure' or 'authentic' sense of identity. Embracing such an identity is therefore a political act, a statement of intent, and a form of defiance. This is what gives identity politics its typically combative character and imbues it with psycho-emotional force. All forms of identity politics thus attempt to fuse the personal and the political.

Key concept
Identity Politics

Identity politics is an orientation towards social or political theorizing, rather than a coherent body of ideas with a settled political character. It seeks to challenge and overthrow oppression by reshaping a group's identity through what amounts to a process of politico-cultural self-assertion. This reflects two core beliefs. (1) Group marginalization operates through stereotypes and values developed by dominant groups that structure how marginalized groups see themselves and are seen by others. These inculcate a sense of inferiority, even shame. (2) Subordination can be challenged by reshaping identity to give the group concerned a sense of pride and self-respect (e.g. 'black is beautiful' or 'gay pride'). Embracing or proclaiming a positive social identity is thus an act of defiance or liberation.

Minority rights

The advance of multiculturalism has gone hand in hand with a willingness to recognize minority rights, sometimes called 'multicultural' rights. The most systematic attempt to identify such rights was undertaken by Will Kymlicka (see p. 293). Kymlicka (2000) identified three kinds of minority rights:

- self-government rights
- polyethnic rights
- representation rights.

Self-government rights belong, Kymlicka argued, to what he called national minorities, indigenous peoples who are territorially concentrated, possess a shared language and are characterized by a 'meaningful way of life across the full range of human activities'. Examples include the Native Americans; the First Nations, Inuits and Metis peoples in Canada; the Maoris in New Zealand; the aboriginal peoples in Australia; and the Sami people in parts of northern Sweden, Norway and Finland. In these cases, the right to self-government involves the devolution of political power, usually through federalism, to political units that are substantially controlled by their members, although it may extend to the right of secession and, therefore, to sovereign independence. For example, the territory of Nunavut in Canada, formed in 1999, is largely self-governing and has its own territorial legislature.

Polyethnic rights are rights that help ethnic groups and religious minorities, which have developed through immigration, to express and maintain their cultural distinctiveness. This would, for instance, provide the basis for legal exemptions, such as the exemption of Jews and Muslims from animal slaughtering laws, and the exemption of Muslim girls from school dress codes. Special *representation* rights attempt to redress the under-representation of minority or disadvantaged groups in education and in senior positions in political and public life. Kymlicka justified 'reverse' or '**positive' discrimination** in such cases, on the grounds that it is the only way of ensuring the full and equal participation of all groups in the life of their society, thus ensuring that public policy reflects the interests of diverse groups and peoples, and not merely those of traditionally dominant groups.

Minority or multicultural rights are distinct from the traditional liberal conception of rights, in that they belong to groups rather than to individuals. This highlights the extent to which multiculturalists subscribe to collectivism (see p. 99) rather than individualism (see p. 27). Minority rights are also often thought of as 'special' rights. These are rights that are specific to the groups to which they belong, each cultural group having different needs for recognition based on the particular character of its religion, traditions and way of life. For instance, legal exemptions for Sikhs to ride motorcycles without

POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION
Preferential treatment towards a group designed to compensate its members for past disadvantage or structural inequality.

wearing crash helmets, or perhaps to wear ceremonial daggers, would be meaningless to other groups.

Minority rights have nevertheless been justified in a variety of ways. First, minority rights have been viewed, particularly by liberal multiculturalists, as a guarantee of individual freedom and personal autonomy. In this view, culture is a vital tool that enables people to live autonomous lives. Charles Taylor (see p. 292) thus argues that individual self-respect is intrinsically bound up with cultural membership. As people derive an important sense of who they are from their cultures, individual rights cannot but be entangled with minority rights.

Second, in many cases minority rights are seen as a way of countering oppression. In this view, societies can 'harm' their citizens by trivializing or ignoring their cultural identities – harm, in this case, being viewed as a 'failure of recognition' (Taylor, 1994). Minority groups are always threatened or vulnerable because the state, despite its pretence of neutrality, is inevitably aligned with a dominant culture, whose language is used, whose history is taught, and whose cultural and religious practices are observed in public life. Of particular importance in this respect is the issue of '**offence**' and the idea of a right not to be offended. This in particular concerns religious groups which consider certain beliefs to be sacred, and are therefore especially deserving of protection. To criticize, insult or even ridicule such beliefs is thus seen as an attack on the group itself – as was evident, for instance, in protests in 1989 against the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, and against allegedly anti-Islamic cartoons published in Denmark in 2006. States such as the UK have, as a result, introduced laws banning expressions of religious hatred.

Third, minority rights have been supported on the grounds that they redress social injustice. In this view, minority rights are a compensation for unfair disadvantages and for under-representation, usually addressed through a programme of 'positive' discrimination. This has been particularly evident in the USA, where the political advancement of African-Americans has, since the 1960s, been associated with so-called '**affirmative action**'. For example, in the case of *Regents of the University of California* v. *Bakke* (1978), the Supreme Court upheld the principle of 'reverse' discrimination in educational admissions, allowing black students to gain admission to US universities with lower qualifications than white students.

Finally, multiculturalists such as Kymlicka believe that indigenous peoples or national minorities are entitled to rights that go beyond those of groups that have formed as a result of immigration. In particular, the former are entitled to rights of self-government, on at least two grounds. First, indigenous peoples have been dispossessed and subordinated through a process of colonization. In no way did they choose to give up their culture or distinctive way of life; neither did they consent to the formation of a new state. In these circumstances, minority rights are, at least potentially, 'national' rights. In contrast, as migration involves some level of choice and voluntary action

OFFENCE
(In this sense) to feel hurt, even humiliated; an injury against one's deepest beliefs.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
Policies or programmes that are designed to benefit disadvantaged minority groups (or, potentially, women) by affording them special assistance.

(even allowing for the possible impact of factors such as poverty and persecution), immigrant groups can be said to be under an obligation to accept the core values and governmental arrangements of their country of settlement. Migration and settlement can therefore be seen as a form of implicit consent. Second, indigenous peoples tend to be territorially concentrated, making the devolution of political authority practicable, something that very rarely applies in the same way, or to the same degree, to groups that have formed through immigration.

The issue of minority rights has nevertheless been highly controversial. These controversies have included, first, that because minority rights address the distinctive needs of particular groups, they have sometimes been criticized for blocking integration into the larger society. The issue of the veil, as worn by some Muslim women, has attracted particular attention in this respect. While supporters of the right of Muslim women to wear the veil have argued that it is basic to their cultural identity, critics have objected to it either because it discriminates against women or because the veil is a symbol of separateness. Second, 'positive' discrimination has been criticized, both by members of majority groups, who believe that it amounts to unfair discrimination, and by some members of minority groups, who argue that it is demeaning and possibly counter-productive (because it implies that such groups cannot gain advancement through their own efforts).

Third, the idea that 'offence' amounts to evidence of oppression has implications for traditional liberal rights, notably the right to freedom of expression. If freedom of expression means anything, it surely means the right to express views that others find objectionable or offensive, a stance that suggests that 'harm' must involve a physical threat, and not just a 'failure of recognition'. Finally, there is inevitable tension between minority rights and individual rights, in that cultural belonging, particularly when it is based on ethnicity or religion, is usually a product of family and social background, rather than personal choice. As most people do not 'join' an ethnic or religious group it is difficult to see why they should be *obliged* to accept its beliefs or follow its practices. Tensions between the individual and the group highlight the sometimes difficult relationship between liberalism and multiculturalism, discussed later in the chapter.

Diversity

Multiculturalism has much in common with nationalism. Both emphasize the capacity of culture to generate social and political cohesion, and both seek to bring political arrangements into line with patterns of cultural differentiation. Nevertheless, whereas nationalists believe that stable and successful societies are ones in which nationality, in the sense of a shared cultural identity, coincides with citizenship, multiculturalists hold that cultural diversity is compatible with, and perhaps provides the best basis for, political cohesion. Multiculturalism is characterized by a steadfast refusal to link diversity to conflict or instability. All forms of multiculturalism are based on the assumption that diversity and unity can, and should, be blended with one another: they are not opposing forces (even though,

as discussed in the next section, multiculturalists have different views about where the balance between them should be drawn).

In this sense, multiculturalists accept that people can have multiple identities and multiple loyalties; for instance, to their country of origin and their country of settlement. Indeed, multiculturalists argue that cultural recognition underpins political stability. People are willing and able to participate in society precisely because they have a firm and secure identity, rooted in their own culture. From this perspective, the denial of cultural recognition results in isolation and powerlessness, providing a breeding ground for extremism and the politics of hate. For instance, growing support for Islamism (discussed in Chapter 11), and other forms of religious fundamentalism, have been interpreted in this light.

Multiculturalists do not just believe that diversity is possible; they believe it is also desirable and should be celebrated. Apart from its benefits to the individual in terms of a stronger sense of cultural identity and belonging, multiculturalists believe that diversity is of value to society at large. This can be seen, in particular, in terms of the vigour and vibrancy of a society in which there are a variety of lifestyles, cultural practices, traditions and beliefs. Multiculturalism, in this sense, parallels ecologism, in drawing links between diversity and systemic health. Cultural diversity is seen to benefit society in the same way that biodiversity benefits an ecosystem. An additional advantage of diversity is that, by promoting cultural exchange between groups that live side by side with one another, it fosters cross-cultural **toleration** and understanding, and therefore a willingness to respect 'difference'. Diversity, in this sense, is the antidote to social polarization and prejudice.

Nevertheless, this may highlight internal tension within multiculturalism itself. On the one hand, multiculturalists emphasize the distinctive and particular nature of cultural groups and the need for individual identity to be firmly embedded in a cultural context. On the other hand, by encouraging cultural exchange and mutual understanding, they risk blurring the contours of group identity and creating a kind of 'pick-and-mix', melting-pot society in which individuals have a 'shallower' sense of social and historical identity. As people learn more about other cultures, the contours of their 'own' culture are, arguably, weakened.

TOLERATION
Forbearance; a willingness to accept views or actions with which one is in disagreement.

Types of multiculturalism

All forms of multiculturalism advance a political vision that claims to reconcile cultural diversity with civic cohesion. However, multiculturalism is not a single doctrine in the sense that there is no settled or agreed view of how multicultural society should operate. Indeed, multiculturalism is another example of a cross-cutting ideology that draws on a range of other political traditions and encompasses a variety of ideological stances. Multiculturalists disagree both about how far they should go in positively endorsing cultural diversity, and about how civic

cohesion can best be brought about. In short, there are competing models of multiculturalism, each offering a different view of the proper balance between diversity and unity. The three main models of multiculturalism (see Figure 10.3, p. 294) are:

- liberal multiculturalism
- pluralist multiculturalism
- cosmopolitan multiculturalism.

Liberal multiculturalism

There is a complex and, in many ways, ambivalent relationship between liberalism and multiculturalism. As is discussed in greater detail later in the chapter, some view liberalism and multiculturalism as rival political traditions, arguing that multiculturalism threatens cherished liberal values. Since the 1970s, however, liberal thinkers have taken the issue of cultural diversity increasingly seriously, and have developed a form of liberal multiculturalism. Its cornerstone has been a commitment to toleration and a desire to uphold freedom of choice in the moral sphere, especially in relation to matters that are of central concern to particular cultural or religious traditions. This has contributed to the idea that liberalism is 'neutral' in relation to the moral, cultural and other choices that citizens make. John Rawls (see p. 53), for example, championed this belief in arguing that liberalism strives to establish conditions in which people can establish the good life as each defines it ('the right'), but it does not prescribe or try to promote any particular values or moral beliefs ('the good'). Liberalism, in this sense, is 'difference-blind': it treats factors such as culture, ethnicity, race, religion and gender as, in effect, irrelevant, because all people should be evaluated as morally autonomous individuals.

However, toleration is not morally neutral, and only provides a limited endorsement of cultural diversity. In particular, toleration extends only to views, values and social practices that are themselves tolerant; that is, ideas and actions that are compatible with personal freedom and autonomy. Liberals thus cannot accommodate '**deep**' **diversity**. For example, liberal multiculturalists may be unwilling to endorse practices such as female circumcision, forced (and possibly arranged) marriages and female dress codes, however much the groups concerned may argue that these are crucial to the maintenance of their cultural identity. The individual's rights, and particularly his or her freedom of choice, must therefore come before the rights of the cultural group in question.

The second feature of liberal multiculturalism is that it draws an important distinction between 'private' and 'public' life. It sees the former as a realm of freedom, in which people are, or should be, free to express their cultural, religious and language identity, whereas the latter must be characterized by at least a bedrock of shared civic allegiances. Citizenship is thus divorced from cultural identity, making the latter essentially a private matter. Such a stance implies that multiculturalism is compatible with

DEEP DIVERSITY
Diversity that rejects the idea of objective or 'absolute' standards and so is based on moral relativism.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN ACTION . . .

The Canadian Multiculturalism Act

EVENTS: In 1971, the Canadian government declared its intention to adopt a multiculturalism policy. The key element of this was the 1988 Multiculturalism Act. The Act declares that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society, and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage. It recognizes the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and seeks to promote their development. The Multiculturalism Act nevertheless operates within a matrix of legislation that includes, for example, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act.

SIGNIFICANCE: The framework of official multiculturalism in Canada, of which the Multiculturalism Act is the centrepiece, is the most advanced and comprehensive anywhere in the world. It was constructed primarily in response to demands from the French-speaking majority in Quebec that they should be treated as a distinct society, and that Canada should define itself as a binational country committed to nurturing its dual identity. Quebec's other demands were more specific, and often sought to bolster the position of the French language. Over time, Canada's official multiculturalism has ensured that many of Quebec's demands have been met. Canada is thus a classic example of the use of multiculturalism to underpin political stability and civic unity through an emphasis on cultural recognition. In this view, people are likely to be more willing to participate in the wider society so long as they have a firm and secure sense of identity.

Canada's official multiculturalism has nevertheless been criticized from two main directions. Quebec nationalists argue that biases in the Canadian state in favour of the Anglophone majority run so deep that only the establishment of a sovereign state can guarantee Quebec's status as a distinct cultural community. Such thinking led to the holding of independence referendums in Quebec in 1980 and 1995, although neither succeeded. Reservations about multiculturalism have been expressed in other parts of Canada, and were reflected in the failure of the 1987 Meech Lake Accord, which proposed granting Quebec further autonomy. These reservations have been fuelled by, amongst other things, the fear that asymmetrical federalism fractures the Canadian state and weakens Canadian national identity, and the concern that biculturalism, or binationalism, may ignore other political voices, notably those of Canada's aboriginal peoples.

civic nationalism. This can be seen in the so-called 'hyphenated nationality' that operates in the USA, through which people view themselves as African-Americans, Polish-Americans, German-Americans and so on. In this tradition, integration, rather than diversity, is emphasized in the public sphere. The USA, for instance, stresses proficiency in English and a knowledge of US political history as preconditions for gaining citizenship. In the more radical 'republican' multiculturalism that is practised in France, an emphasis on *laïcité*, or secularism, in public life has led to bans on the wearing of the *hijab*, or Muslim headscarf, in schools, and since 2003 to a ban on all forms of overt religious affiliation in French schools. In 2010, France passed legislation banning the full face veil (the *niqab* and *burqa*) in public, with Belgium following suit in 2011. Some multiculturalists, however, view such trends as an attack on multiculturalism itself.

The third and final aspect of liberal multiculturalism is that it regards liberal democracy (see p. 39) as the sole legitimate political system. The virtue of liberal democracy is that it alone ensures that government is based on the consent of the people, and, in providing guarantees for personal freedom and toleration, it helps to uphold diversity. Liberal multiculturalists would therefore oppose calls, for instance, for the establishment of an Islamic state based on the adoption of *Shari'a* law, and may even be willing to prohibit groups or movements that campaign for such a political end. Groups are therefore only entitled to toleration and respect, if they, in turn, are prepared to tolerate and respect other groups.

Pluralist multiculturalism

Pluralism (see p. 290) provides firmer foundations for a politics of difference than does liberalism. For liberals, as has been seen, diversity is endorsed but only when it is constructed within a framework of toleration and personal autonomy, amounting to a form of '**shallow' diversity**. This is the sense in which liberals 'absolutize' liberalism (Parekh, 2005). Isaiah Berlin (see p. 292) nevertheless went beyond liberal toleration in endorsing the idea of **value pluralism**. This holds, in short, that people are bound to disagree about the ultimate ends of life, as it is not possible to demonstrate the superiority of one moral system over another. As values clash, the human predicament is inevitably characterized by moral conflict. In this view, liberal or western beliefs, such as support for personal freedom, toleration and democracy, have no greater moral authority than illiberal or non-western beliefs. Berlin's ([1958] 1969) stance implies a form of live-and-let-live multiculturalism, or what has been called the politics of *in*difference. However, as Berlin remained a liberal to the extent that he believed that only within a society that respects individual liberty can value pluralism be contained, he failed to demonstrate how liberal and illiberal cultural beliefs can co-exist harmoniously within the same society. Nevertheless,

SHALLOW DIVERSITY
Diversity that is confined by the acceptance of certain values and beliefs as 'absolute' and therefore non-negotiable.

VALUE PLURALISM
The theory that there is no single, overriding conception of the 'good life', but rather a number of competing and equally legitimate conceptions.

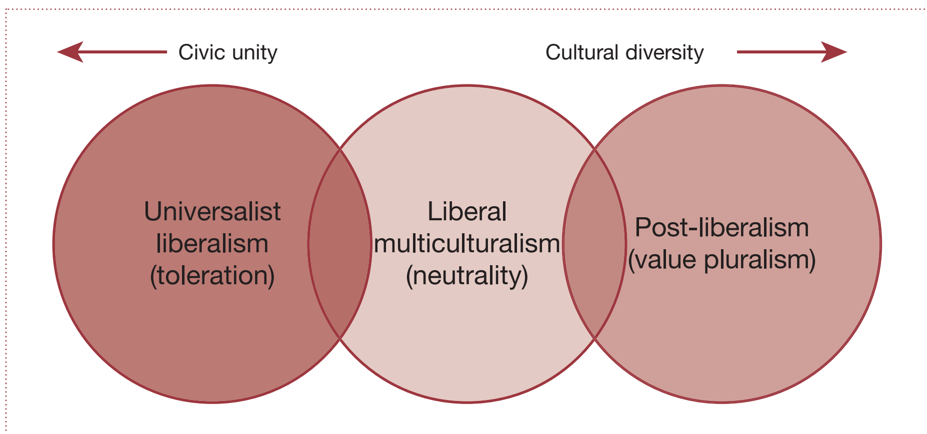


Figure 10.2 Liberalism and cultural diversity

once liberalism accepts moral pluralism, it is difficult to contain it within a liberal framework. John Gray (1995b), for instance, argued that pluralism implies a 'post-liberal' stance, in which liberal values, institutions and regimes are no longer seen to enjoy a monopoly of legitimacy (see Figure 10.2).

An alternative basis for pluralist multiculturalism has been advanced by Bhikhu Parekh (2005). In Parekh's (see p. 292) view, cultural diversity is, at heart, a reflection of the dialectic or interplay between human nature and culture. Although human beings are natural creatures, who possess a common species-derived physical and mental structure, they are also culturally constituted in the sense that their attitudes, behaviour and ways of life are shaped by the groups to which they belong. A recognition of the complexity of human nature, and the fact that any culture expresses only part of what it means to be truly human, therefore provides the basis for a politics of recognition and thus for a viable form of multiculturalism. Such a stance goes beyond liberal multiculturalism in

Key concept
Pluralism

Pluralism, in its broadest sense, is a belief in or commitment to diversity or multiplicity, the existence of many things. As a descriptive term, pluralism may denote the existence of party competition (*political* pluralism), a multiplicity of ethical values (*moral* or value pluralism), a variety of cultural beliefs (*cultural* pluralism) and so on. As a normative term it suggests that diversity is healthy and desirable, usually because it safeguards individual liberty and promotes debate, argument and understanding. More narrowly, pluralism is a theory of the distribution of political power. As such, it holds that power is widely and evenly dispersed in society, not concentrated in the hands of an elite or ruling class. In this form, pluralism is usually seen as a theory of 'group politics', implying that group access to government ensures broad democratic responsiveness.

that it stresses that western liberalism gives expression only to certain aspects of human nature.

Beyond pluralist multiculturalism, a form of 'particularist' multiculturalism can be identified. Particularist multiculturalists emphasize that cultural diversity takes place within a context of unequal power, in which certain groups have customarily enjoyed advantages and privileges that have been denied to other groups. Particularist multiculturalism is very clearly aligned to the needs and interests of marginalized or disadvantaged groups. The plight of such groups tends to be explained in terms of the corrupt and corrupting nature of western culture, values and lifestyles, which are either believed to be tainted by the inheritance of colonialism and racism (see p. 210) or associated with 'polluting' ideas such as materialism and permissiveness. In this context, an emphasis on cultural distinctiveness amounts to a form of political resistance, a refusal to succumb to repression or corruption. However, such an emphasis on cultural 'purity', which may extend to an unwillingness to engage in cultural exchange, raises concerns about the prospects for civic cohesion: diversity may be stressed at the expense of unity. Particularist multiculturalism may thus give rise to a form of 'plural monoculturalism' (Sen, 2006), in which each cultural group gravitates towards an undifferentiated communal ideal, which has less and less in common with the ideals of other groups.

Cosmopolitan multiculturalism

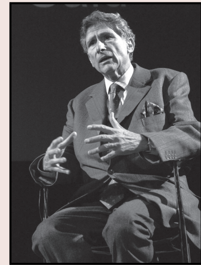
Cosmopolitanism (see p. 191) and multiculturalism can be seen as entirely distinct, even conflicting, ideological traditions. Whereas cosmopolitanism encourages people to adopt a global consciousness which emphasizes that ethical responsibility should not be confined by national borders, multiculturalism appears to particularize moral sensibilities, focusing on the specific needs and interests of a distinctive cultural group. However, for theorists such as Jeremy Waldron (1995), multiculturalism can effectively be equated with cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitan multiculturalists endorse cultural diversity and identity politics, but they view them as essentially transitional states in a larger reconstruction of political sensibilities and priorities. This position celebrates diversity on the grounds of what each culture can learn from other cultures, and because of the prospects for personal self-development that are offered by a world of wider cultural opportunities and options. This results in what has been called a 'pick-and-mix' multiculturalism, in which cultural exchange and cultural mixing are positively encouraged. People, for instance, may eat Italian food, practise yoga, enjoy African music and develop an interest in world religions.

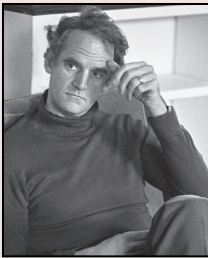
Culture, from this perspective, is fluid and responsive to changing social circumstances and personal needs; it is not fixed and historically embedded, as pluralist or particularist multiculturalists would argue. A multicultural society is

KEY FIGURES IN... MULTICULTURALISM

Isaiah Berlin (1909–97) A Riga-born UK historian of ideas and a philosopher, Berlin developed a form of liberal pluralism that was grounded in a lifelong commitment to empiricism. Basic to Berlin's philosophical stance was the idea that conflicts of values are intrinsic to human life, a position that has influenced 'postliberal' thinking about multiculturalism. A fierce critic of totalitarianism, Berlin's best-known political work is *Four Essays on Liberty* ([1958] 1969), in which he extolled the virtues of 'negative' freedom over 'positive' freedom.

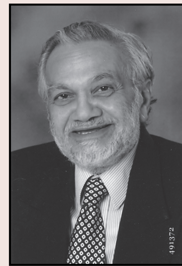
Edward Said (1935–2003) A Jerusalem-born US academic and literary critic, Said was a prominent advocate of the Palestinian cause and a founding figure of postcolonial theory. He developed, from the 1970s onwards, a humanist critique of the western Enlightenment that uncovered its link to colonialism and highlighted 'narratives of oppression', cultural and ideological biases that disempower colonized peoples. He thereby condemned Eurocentrism's attempt to remake the world in its own image. Said's key works include *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).





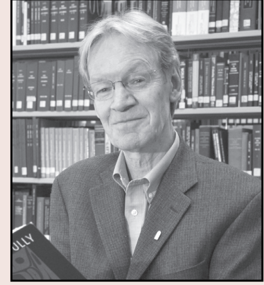
Charles Taylor (born 1931) A Canadian academic and political philosopher, Taylor drew on communitarian thinking to construct a theory of multiculturalism as 'the politics of recognition'. Emphasizing the twin ideas of equal dignity (rooted in an appeal to people's humanity) and equal respect (reflecting difference and the extent to which personal identity is culturally situated), Taylor's multiculturalism goes beyond classical liberalism, while also rejecting particularism and moral relativism. His most influential work in this area is *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (1994).

Bhikhu Parekh (born 1935) An Indian political theorist, Parekh has developed an influential defence of cultural diversity from a pluralist perspective. In *Rethinking Multiculturalism* (2005), he rejected universalist liberalism on the grounds that what is reasonable and moral is embedded in and mediated by culture, which, in turn, helps people to make sense of their lives and the world around them. 'Variegated' treatment, including affirmative action, is therefore required to put ethnic, cultural or religious minorities on an equal footing with the majority community.



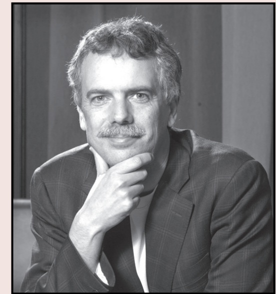
thus a 'melting pot' of different ideas, values and traditions, rather than a 'cultural mosaic' of separate ethnic and religious groups. In particular, the cosmopolitan stance positively embraces **hybridity**. This recognizes that, in the modern world, individual identity cannot be explained in terms of a single cultural structure, but rather exists, in Waldron's (1995) words, as a 'melange' of commitments, affiliations and roles. Indeed,

HYBRIDITY
A condition of social and cultural mixing in which people develop multiple identities.



James Tully (born 1946) A Canadian political theorist, Tully has championed a plural form of political society that accommodates the needs and interests of indigenous peoples. He portrayed modern constitutionalism, which stresses sovereignty and uniformity, as a form of imperialism that denies indigenous modes of self-government and land appropriation. In its place, he advocated 'ancient constitutionalism', which respects diversity and pluralism, and allows traditional values and practices to be accepted as legitimate. Tully's key work in this area is *Strange Multiplicity* (1995).

Jeremy Waldron (born 1953) A New Zealand legal and political theorist, Waldron has developed a 'cosmopolitan' understanding of multiculturalism that stresses the rise of 'hybridity'. Waldron's emphasis on the fluid, multifarious and often fractured nature of the human self provided the basis for the development of cosmopolitanism as a normative philosophy that challenges both liberalism and communitarianism. It rejects the 'rigid' liberal perception of what it means to lead an autonomous life, as well as the tendency within communitarianism to confine people within a single 'authentic' culture.



Will Kymlicka (born 1962) A Canadian political philosopher, Kymlicka is often seen as the leading theorist of liberal multiculturalism. In *Multicultural Citizenship* ([1995] 2000), he argued that certain 'collective rights' of minority cultures are consistent with liberal-democratic principles, but acknowledged that no single formula can be applied to all minority groups, particularly as the needs and aspirations of immigrants differ from those of indigenous peoples. For Kymlicka, cultural identity and minority rights are closely linked to personal autonomy. His other works in this area include *Multicultural Odysseys* (2007).

for Waldron, immersion in the traditions of a particular culture is like living in Disneyland and thinking that one's surroundings epitomize what it is for a culture to exist. If we are all now, to some degree, cultural 'mongrels', multiculturalism is as much an 'inner' condition as it is a feature of modern society. The benefit of this form of multiculturalism is that it broadens moral and political sensibilities, ultimately leading to the emergence of a 'one world' perspective. However, multiculturalists from rival traditions criticize the cosmopolitan stance for stressing unity at the expense of diversity. To treat cultural identity as a matter of self-definition, and to encourage hybridity and cultural mixing, is, arguably, to weaken any genuine sense of cultural belonging.

	Liberal multiculturalism	Pluralist multiculturalism	Cosmopolitan multiculturalism
Key themes	• Communitarianism • Minority rights • Diversity strengthens toleration and personal autonomy	• Identity politics • Cultural embeddedness • Diversity counters group oppression	• Cosmopolitanism • Cultural mixing • Hybridity
Core goal	Cultural diversity within a liberal-democratic framework	'Strong' diversity, recognizing legitimacy of non-liberal and liberal values	Fluid and multiple identities provide the basis for global citizenship

Figure 10.3 **Types of multiculturalism**

Critiques of multiculturalism

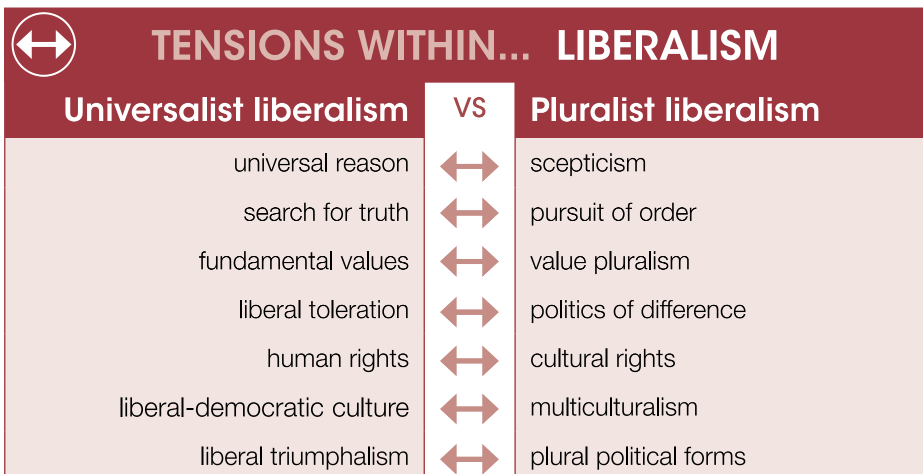
The advance of multicultural ideas and policies has stimulated considerable political controversy. Together with the conversion of liberal and other progressive thinkers to the cause of minority rights and cultural recognition, oppositional forces have also emerged. This has been expressed most clearly in the growing significance, since the 1980s, of anti-immigration parties and movements in many parts of the world. Examples of these include the *Front National* in France, the Freedom Party in Austria, *Vlaams Blok* in Belgium, Pim Fortuyn's List in the Netherlands and the One Nation party in Australia. Further evidence of a retreat from 'official' multiculturalism can be seen in bans on the wearing of veils by Muslim women in public places. Such bans have been introduced in France and Belgium, while at least four German states have banned the wearing of Muslim headscarves in schools. However, ideological opposition to multiculturalism has come from a variety of sources. The most significant of these have been:

- liberalism
- conservatism
- feminism
- social reformism.

While some liberals have sought to embrace wider cultural diversity, others have remained critical of the ideas and implications of multiculturalism. The key theme in liberal criticisms is the threat that multiculturalism poses to individualism, reflected in the core multiculturalist assumption that personal identity is embedded in group or social identity. Multiculturalism is therefore, like nationalism and even racism (see p. 210), just another form of collectivism, and, like all forms of collectivism, it subordinates the rights and needs of the individual to those of the social group. In

this sense, it threatens individual freedom and personal self-development, and so implies that cultural belonging is a form of captivity. Amartya Sen (2006) developed a particularly sustained attack on what he called the 'solitaristic' theory that underpins multiculturalism (particularly in its pluralist and particularist forms), which suggests that human identities are formed by membership of a *single* social group. This, Sen argued, leads not only to the 'miniaturization' of humanity, but also makes violence more likely, as people identify only with their own monoculture and fail to recognize the rights and integrity of people from other cultural groups. Multiculturalism thus breeds a kind of 'ghettoization' that diminishes, rather than broadens, cross-cultural understanding. According to Sen, solitaristic thinking is also evident in ideas that emphasize the incompatibility of cultural traditions, such as the 'clash of civilizations' thesis (Huntington, 1996). Even when liberals are sympathetic to multiculturalism they condemn pluralist, and especially particularist, multiculturalism for endorsing as legitimate ideas which they view as anti-democratic and oppressive, such as the theories of militant Islam.

Conservatism is the political tradition that contrasts most starkly with multiculturalism. Indeed, most of the anti-immigration nationalist backlash against multiculturalism draws from essentially conservative assumptions. In other cases, it more closely resembles the racial nationalism of fascism, or even Nazi race theory. The chief conservative objection to multiculturalism is that shared values and a common culture are a necessary precondition for a stable and successful society. As discussed in Chapter 5, conservatives therefore favour nationalism over multiculturalism. The basis for such a view is the belief that human beings are drawn to others who are similar to themselves. A fear or distrust of strangers or foreigners is therefore 'natural' and unavoidable. From this perspective, multiculturalism is inherently flawed: multicultural societies are inevitably fractured and conflict-ridden societies, in which suspicion, hostility and even violence come to



TENSIONS WITHIN... LIBERALISM

Universalist liberalism	VS	Pluralist liberalism
universal reason	↔	scepticism
search for truth	↔	pursuit of order
fundamental values	↔	value pluralism
liberal toleration	↔	politics of difference
human rights	↔	cultural rights
liberal-democratic culture	↔	multiculturalism
liberal triumphalism	↔	plural political forms

be accepted as facts of life. The multiculturalist image of 'diversity within unity' is thus a myth, a sham exposed by the simple facts of social psychology.

The appropriate political responses to the threats embodied in multiculturalism therefore include restrictions on immigration (particularly from parts of the world whose culture is different from the 'host' society) pressures for **assimilation** to ensure that minority ethnic communities are absorbed into the larger 'national' culture, and, in the view of the far right, the repatriation of immigrants to their country of origin. A further aspect of the conservative critique of multiculturalism reflects concern about its implications for the majority or 'host' community. In this view, multiculturalism perpetrates a new, albeit 'reverse', set of injustices, by demeaning the culture of the majority group by associating it with colonialism and racism, while favouring the interests and culture of minority groups through 'positive' discrimination and the allocation of 'special' rights.

The relationship between feminism and multiculturalism has sometimes been a difficult one. Although forms of Islamic feminism (considered in Chapter 8) have sought to fuse the two traditions, feminists have more commonly raised concerns about multiculturalism. This happens when minority rights and the politics of recognition serve to preserve and legitimize patriarchal and traditionalist beliefs that systematically disadvantage women, an argument that may equally be applied to gays and lesbians, and is sometimes seen as the 'minorities within minorities' problem. Cultural practices such as dress codes, family structures and access to elite positions have thus been seen to establish structural gender biases. Multiculturalism may therefore be little more than a concealed attempt to bolster male power, the politics of cultural recognition being used within minority communities to legitimize continued female subordination.

Social reformists have advanced a number of criticisms of multiculturalism, linked to its wider failure to address the interests of disadvantaged groups or sections of society adequately. Concerns, for instance, have been raised about the extent to which multiculturalism encourages groups to seek advancement through cultural or ethnic assertiveness, rather than through a more explicit struggle for social justice. In that sense, the flaw of multiculturalism is its failure to address issues of class inequality: the 'real' issue confronting minority groups is not their lack of cultural recognition but their lack of economic power and social status. Indeed, as Brian Barry (2002) argued, by virtue of its emphasis on cultural distinctiveness, multiculturalism serves to divide, and therefore weaken, people who have a common economic interest in alleviating poverty and promoting social reform. Similarly, a more acute awareness of cultural difference may weaken support for welfarist and redistributive policies, as it may narrow people's sense of social responsibility (Goodhart, 2004). The existence of a unifying culture that transcends ethnic and cultural differences may therefore be a necessary precondition for the politics of social justice.

ASSIMILATION
The process through which immigrant communities lose their cultural distinctiveness by adjusting to the values, allegiances and lifestyles of the 'host' society.

Multiculturalism in a global age

In many ways, multiculturalism may turn out to be *the* ideology of the global age. This is because one of the chief features of globalization (see p. 20) has been a substantial increase in geographical, and particularly cross-border, mobility. More and more societies have, as a result, accepted multiculturalism as an irreversible fact of life. Not only is the relatively homogeneous nation-state a receding memory in many parts of the world, but attempts to reconstruct it – through, for example, strict immigration controls, enforced assimilation or pressure for repatriation – appear increasingly to be politically fanciful. If this is the case, just as nationalism was the major ideological force in world politics during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, helping to reshape the nature of political community as well as the relationship between different societies, multiculturalism, its successor, may be the predominant ideological force of the twenty-first century. The major ideological issue for our time, and for succeeding generations, may therefore be the search for ways in which people with different moral values and from different cultural and religious traditions can find a way of living together without civil strife and violence. Multiculturalism is not only the ideology that addresses this question most squarely; it is also the one that offers solutions, albeit tentative ones.

On the other hand, multiculturalism may prove to be a once-fashionable idea whose limitations, even dangers, were quickly exposed. In this view, multiculturalism is a particular response to an undeniable trend towards cultural and moral pluralism in modern, globalized societies. However, its long-term viability is more in question. Multicultural solutions may prove to be worse than the diseases they set out to tackle. The flaw of multiculturalism, from this perspective, is the belief that, by endorsing diversity, people will be drawn together as a collection of mutually respectful and tolerant cultural groups. Instead, diversity may endorse separation and lead to 'ghettoization', as groups become increasingly inward-looking and concerned to protect their 'own' traditions and cultural purity. Multiculturalism may thus encourage people to focus on what divides them rather than on what unites them. If this is the case, the twenty-first century is destined to witness a retreat from multiculturalism, seen as a non-viable means of addressing the undoubted challenge of cultural diversity. However, what will replace multiculturalism?

One possibility is that the failure of multiculturalism will lead to a return to nationalism, whose enduring potency derives from the recognition that, at some level and in some way, political unity always goes hand in hand with cultural cohesion. The strains generated by irreversible trends within globalization towards the construction of multi-ethnic, multireligious and multicultural societies can therefore only be contained by the establishment of a stronger and clearer sense of national identity. The other possibility is that multiculturalism will be superseded by a genuine form of cosmopolitanism (see p. 191). This would require (as some multiculturalists in any case hope) that differences of both culture and nationality are recognized gradually to be of secondary importance as people everywhere come to view themselves as global citizens, united by a common interest in addressing ecological, social and other challenges that are increasingly global in nature.