

**UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN  
MULTICULTURAL  
SOCIETIES**

*Bhikhu Parekh*

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*Geneva, March 2005*

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Bhikhu Parekh

International Institute for Labour Studies  
Geneva

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## *Preface*

The International Institute for Labour Studies organizes the Public Lectures twice a year in connection with the Governing Body Meetings of the ILO. These lectures are meant to provide a global platform for opening up new perspectives on contemporary economic and social issues before an audience of international opinion-makers and policy-practitioners that include representatives of the ILO tripartite constituency of governments, business organizations and trade unions; the academic, diplomatic, and press communities of Geneva and senior international officials from the ILO and other United Nations agencies. The texts of the lectures are brought out as Institute publications and disseminated to a wider audience through the electronic and print media.

The challenge of diversity of multicultural societies has become a topic of contemporary importance in the work of the ILO. In an increasingly interconnected world of work, there are ever larger numbers of people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds who migrate to the economically advanced regions and nation states of the world. Their absorption and integration into the new work environments poses a fresh challenge to the smooth functioning of labour markets. In this regard, it is important to build a sound knowledge-base on the diversity and dynamics of heterogeneous labour markets in multicultural societies. Such a knowledge base could help in the development of appropriate policies for tackling these problems.

With a view to opening up an informed debate on the above-mentioned question, the International Institute for Labour Studies invited Lord Bhikhu Parekh, Professor of Political Science at Westminster University, London, to a Public Lecture which he delivered at the ILO in Geneva on 15 November 2004. Lord Parekh, a well-known public policy analyst, has written and lectured extensively on the subject of cultural diversity and race relations and has contributed to developing policy-oriented solutions to the problems arising in multicultural societies. He chaired the "Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain", appointed by the Labour Government, whose report was published in 2000.

The present paper: "Unity and diversity in multicultural societies" is an extended version of the lecture delivered by Professor Parekh, which has been specially prepared for the Institute by the author. The Institute is proud to present this extended version of the lecture to a wider audience of the ILO constituents. I would like to take this opportunity to summarize the main arguments advanced in this paper.

Almost all modern societies are multicultural, and their cultural diversity derives from a number of sources, such as the process of globalization, the collapse of the traditional moral consensus, the liberal emphasis on individual choices, and immigration. Since none of these is likely to disappear for the foreseeable future, modern societies are bound to remain multicultural for quite a while. These societies face the problem of integrating their members into a cohesive social whole. Since they can neither suppress diversity nor dispense with unity, they need to find ways of reconciling their apparently conflicting demands. Different societies are bound to do this differently, depending upon their traditions, history and culture.

Integration is a two-way process. Immigrants cannot integrate in a society if other members refuse to accept them. Integration therefore requires that both immigrants and the wider society should reach out to each other and respect their mutual obligations. Immigrants must commit themselves to the society in which they have chosen to settle, and acquire the cultural competence that is needed to navigate their way through its major institutions. As for the wider society, it needs to accept them as equal and legitimate members, and devise a programme of action capable of integrating them. This involves eliminating discrimination, and

creating equal opportunity, inter-ethnic spaces at local and national levels, intercultural dialogue, and multicultural education. Since societies cannot be held together by common interest and justice alone, they need to forge emotional bonds. This is best achieved by re-conceptualising the national identity such that all its members can accept it and recognize each other as belonging to single community.

**Jean-Pierre Lavié**  
**Director a.i., International Institute for Labour Studies**

# ***Unity and diversity in multicultural societies<sup>1</sup>***

***Bhikhu Parekh***

## **The challenge of diversity**

Cultural diversity is an inescapable fact of modern life. Culture refers to a historically inherited system of meaning and significance in terms of which a group of people understand and structure their individual and collective lives. It defines the meaning or point of human activities, social relations and human life in general, and the kind and degree of significance or value to be attached to them. A culture's system of meaning and significance is embodied in its beliefs and practices, which collectively constitute its identity. To say that almost every modern society is culturally diverse or multicultural is to say that its members subscribe to and live by different though overlapping systems of meaning and significance.

Cultural diversity in modern society has several sources. Many societies include different ethnic, religious, cultural and other communities, with their more or less distinct ways of life. Some of these communities were long denied collective self-expression in the name of nation building or a hegemonic ideology, and are now keen to exercise their newly won freedoms. Modern men and women, being profoundly shaped by liberal individualism, take pride in forming their own views and making their own choices. They naturally arrive at different views of life. This is reinforced by the breakdown in the traditional moral consensus, which both requires and makes space for individual choices. Globalization too exposes each society to different currents of thought, and its members respond to these in different ways.

Immigration is yet another source of cultural diversity, and it takes many forms. People move freely within the European Union. Multinationals move their staff around from one country to another. Members of the diaspora return to their lands of origin in their old age, or because these countries have now become more prosperous than when they left them, or because they no longer feel welcome in their countries of settlement. And in each case they bring with them some of the ideas and practices they have absorbed in these countries. People fleeing persecution or desperate circumstances seek asylum, and many of them are admitted. Many advanced countries are also short of skilled and unskilled labour; they recruit immigrants who are usually from the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe and who bring with them their own distinct ways of thought and life. Since none of these and other sources of cultural diversity is likely to disappear in the foreseeable future, cultural diversity is not only an inescapable but a more or less permanent feature of modern life.

Although the immigration of skilled and unskilled labour is an important source of cultural diversity in modern society, it is not the only one. Even if it came to an end, other sources of diversity would remain. We should therefore avoid the all too common mistake of racializing diversity by equating it with or attributing it exclusively to immigration. Furthermore, the diversity introduced by immigrants is not necessarily deeper or more extensive than that which already obtains in many Western societies. Some of the latter have indigenous peoples whose ways of

thought and life are quite different from those of the rest of society. More importantly, they also include individuals and groups who take quite different views from the majority on such subjects as homosexuality, gay marriage, cohabitation, relations between parents and children, the place of religion in public life, family discipline, the capitalist economy, and respect for the law. On almost all these subjects immigrants often share the views of the majority, and the moral and cultural divide between them and the rest of society is narrower and shallower than that separating its own members. We should not therefore exoticize immigrant cultures, and conclude that just because immigrants look different, speak differently and come unfamiliar countries, their moral and cultural lives are or must also be quite different from. This is not to deny that immigrant cultures often differ in important respects, but rather to point out that these and other differences should not blind us to the commonalities and that they are not necessarily more intractable than the other differences found in the receiving society.

It is sometimes argued that almost all societies in history except the most primitive have been multicultural, and that there is nothing new or historically distinctive about our age. Although this is true, it ignores some of the unique features of contemporary multicultural societies. Whatever their differences, almost all premodern societies were religious and broadly agreed on many of their basic moral beliefs and practices. Thanks to the absence of a moral consensus and the unprecedented importance given to personal autonomy and choice, we today disagree far more deeply than ever before about the best way to lead individual and collective lives and about the meaning and significance of human activities and relations.

Furthermore, in premodern societies minority communities generally accepted their subordinate status, and remained confined to the social and even the geographical spaces assigned them by the dominant groups. Although Turkey under the Ottoman Empire had fairly large Christian and Jewish communities and granted them far greater autonomy than is the case in any contemporary society, it was not and never saw itself as a multicultural society. It was basically a Muslim society which happened to have non-Muslim minorities. It followed Islamic ideals and was run by Muslims who alone enjoyed full rights of citizenship. Non-Muslims were *dhimmi*s or protected minorities, enjoying extensive cultural autonomy but few political rights. Contemporary multicultural societies are different. Thanks to the spread of the democratic ideas of equality of status and rights, minority communities demand equal treatment, including absence of discrimination, equality of opportunity, and equal right to participate in and shape the collective life of society. In recent years equal treatment has been interpreted widely to mean that the state should not be identified with a particular ethnic, religious and cultural group, and should be either neutral or even handed in its approach to its constituent communities. These and other demands that we today take for granted would have been wholly unintelligible to premodern multicultural societies. The facts that modern societies share a common industrial economy such that their members cannot lead economically self-contained lives, that they are dominated by liberal ideas of individual choice, that they participate in a common political life that cuts across communal boundaries, etc. also add to their uniqueness.

Since deep and extensive cultural diversity is a fact of modern life and is legitimized in terms of the widely shared and deeply held liberal and democratic ideas of individual choice and equal treatment, every modern multicultural society needs to find ways of accommodating diverse demands without losing its cohesiveness and unity. Different kinds of diversity raise different problems and require different responses. The demands of indigenous peoples, territorially concentrated national minorities, immigrants, etc. are quite different in nature and cannot be accommodated in the same way.<sup>2</sup> In this paper I shall concentrate on immigrants and explore the claims that they and the receiving society may legitimately make on each other and how best these can be reconciled.

## **Assimilation**

An influential body of opinion, usually called assimilationism, argues that a society cannot be cohesive and stable unless its members share a common national culture, including a common system of meaning and significance, a shared conception of the good life at personal and collective levels, and a shared body of customs, practices, habits, attitudes and collective memories.<sup>3</sup> In the absence of such a shared culture, they would disagree deeply about the meanings of different human activities and relations and the values to be assigned to them, and would simply not be able to cooperate and sustain a shared life. Some assimilationists give the argument an ontological basis, and maintain that human beings are so constituted that they find it extremely difficult, even impossible, to relate to and identify with those holding substantially dissimilar views to theirs on moral and cultural matters. In their view, this is a basic fact of human nature, an ineradicable human instinct which a society may disregard at its peril.<sup>4</sup> So far as immigrants are concerned, the choice before them is stark and simple. If they want to be accepted as full and equal citizens, they should assimilate into the national culture and show exclusive and undivided loyalty to their country of settlement. And conversely, if they hold on to their culture, retain close ties with their country of origin, and thus remain different, they must not complain if the rest of society refuses to identify with them and treats them unequally. Neither choice is cost-free, and immigrants must decide for themselves which one is better for them.

The assimilationist approach makes important points. A society cannot be held together unless its members share certain basic beliefs and values in common. If some of them saw no value in human life, if they thought that all who refused to share their religious or political beliefs were fools or evil and should be suppressed, if they did not see the point of reciprocity and fairness and insisted on living in society on their own terms, or if they denied obvious facts about the social world and rejected the empirical and scientific mode of reasoning about them, no common life would be possible with them. It is also the case that as people live together, they develop similar habits, interests, tastes, etc., sometimes spontaneously and at other times out of self-interest or in response to subtle social pressure. The assimilationist, however, goes wrong in asking for a greater degree and range of unity than is possible or necessary.

Human beings understand the world and their place in it in vastly different ways. Some are religious, others are not; the former belong to different religious traditions; and there is no rational way to resolve their disagreement. This is equally true of their moral differences. While we can hope to agree on some values, especially those that are central to any form of organized life, we cannot do so on others, such as the best way to lead the good life, ideals of human excellence, the structure of the family, and legitimate forms of sexual self-expression. Not surprisingly, almost every modern society displays and has to find ways of living with unresolved philosophical, cultural and moral differences. Since it has no cultural and moral consensus, it is not clear what immigrants are to be assimilated into, and what to do with the dissenting insiders. The assimilationist view bears no relation to contemporary reality and remains trapped in a dangerously naive nostalgia. Some assimilationists appreciate this, but insist on moulding immigrants into their own view of their society's idealized culture in the hope that this will help create a consensus around which to reorganize the rest of society. This is intellectually and morally dishonest, and is doomed to failure because immigrants are rarely willing and are in any case too small in number to play the regenerative, even redemptive, role assigned them by the assimilationist.

Assimilationism is also open to other objections. It is simply not true that human beings can only identify with those who are like them. If that were so, inter-ethnic and inter-religious friendships and marriages as well as reasonably successful multiethnic and multicultural



societies such as those in Australia, Canada and even the United States would be inexplicable. In fact, no two human beings are ever fully or substantially alike, not even spouses or parents and children. They are alike in some respects and unlike in others, share some beliefs, values and attitudes but differ in others, and learn not only to live with but even delight in their differences. The substantial degree of cultural and moral uniformity desired by the assimilationist can only be created and sustained at an unacceptable cost in individual liberty and creativity.

The assimilationists' obsession with moral and cultural uniformity springs from and leads to a deep suspicion of moral and cultural differences. For them these differences are departures from the norm, they are abnormal, deviant, sources of disorder. Once they have eliminated some of them, they turn their attention to others. And since differences are constantly generated by human ingenuity, creativity and choices, the assimilationists are forever at war with their fellow citizens. Their hostility does not remain limited to immigrants, and extends over time to other members of society, such as the followers of different religions, gays, cohabitees, single parents and, their *bête noire* the liberals. This is hardly the way to hold a society together, which they say is their basic objective. By demanding far more than what is possible, they fail to secure even what is necessary.

There are several good reasons why society should respect the cultural differences that immigrants bring with them. Their culture is part of their identity, it has profoundly shaped them and means much to them, and their self-respect is tied up with respect not only for them as individuals but also for their culture. Respecting them therefore involves respecting their culture. This does not at all mean that their culture may not be criticized, and some of its practices disallowed. No culture is self-authenticating, and it is precisely because one takes its members seriously that one enters into a critical dialogue with them about their beliefs and practices. Respecting a culture means that one does not dismiss it out of hand, that one owes it an obligation to understand it in its own terms, that one does not self-righteously take one's own culture as the standard for judging all others, and that one credits its members with enough intelligence and good sense to be able to explain why they hold certain views and to change those that are indefensible. Respect in this basic sense is owed to all cultures as part of our respect for their members, and a culture does not forfeit its claim to respect simply because some of its practices are unacceptable, for in that case no culture, including our own, would merit respect. Furthermore, when immigrants' cultures are treated with insensitivity and contempt, and when they are required to abandon them as a condition of their acceptance, they feel besieged and threatened, turn inward, close ranks, stifle internal dissent and diversity, and become defensive and defiant. This is hardly the way to create a cohesive society.

Another reason for respecting immigrant cultures has to do with the value of cultural diversity. No culture is perfect or represents the last word in human wisdom. Each articulates a particular vision of the good life, develops some human capacities and virtues, and marginalizes or ignores others. They can therefore benefit from a sympathetic dialogue. The dialogue makes them aware of their commonalities and differences as well as their strengths and limitations, and encourages critical self-consciousness and legitimate pride and humility. It also alerts each to its own internal differences and diversity, and protects it against the all too common tendency to homogenize and essentialize it. Immigrant cultures provide the wider society with a vitally necessary critical interlocutor, a partner in dialogue. Even if they are less sophisticated, they ask probing questions and hold a mirror to the prevailing culture in which it can recognize its specificity and biases. They also bring to it new forms of imagination, new ideas of beauty and goodness, new forms of resourcefulness and skills, new sources of energy and dynamism, and add to its cultural capital.<sup>5</sup>

## Integration

Since the assimilationist demand is unjust, illiberal and unrealistic, many writers and political leaders have proposed integration as an alternative social goal.<sup>6</sup> Indeed it has now become a universally favoured model in the discourse on immigration. Although the term is widely used, it is rarely subjected to careful analysis. As a result, it lacks focus and conveys a disparate body of ideas. It avoids the two extremes of assimilation and segregation, and seems to have caught on largely because of this negative virtue. Prima facie it appears to be a perfectly sensible goal, for no one wants individuals and groups to be excluded or marginalized. However when probed deeper, it is not as innocent as it seems.

Unlike assimilation, integration is primarily a socio-political rather than a cultural concept. It implies that no individual or group of individuals should be excluded from society or treated as inferior, as was the case under racial segregation in the United States. However it involves far more than inclusion and equality. It implies that those included should be incorporated or integrated into the social structure so that they become an integral and indistinguishable part. In the integrationist view, a society is held together not by a single and homogeneous national culture but by a common body of institutions, values and practices. They structure social relations, ensure uniformity and predictability, facilitate the conduct of common affairs and create a shared moral order. While members of a society may organize their personal lives as they please, their shared social life requires and can only be sustained by such a widely accepted body of public institutions and norms of interpersonal behaviour, etc. In the integrationist view immigrants should integrate if they wish to be accepted and treated as equals.

According to integrationists, integration involves three things.<sup>7</sup> First, immigrants should commit themselves to their country of settlement and give it their undivided loyalty and allegiance. They have chosen to settle in it, and it is only right that they should consider it a home which means much to them and has an intrinsic value. If they nostalgically keep looking back at their country of origin and retain close moral and emotional ties with it, their commitment to their country of settlement remains tenuous and largely instrumental in nature. They continue to think that they have another home and the possibility of returning there. And as long as they think so, they remain outsiders in their own and others' eyes and do not inspire trust.

Secondly, just as immigrants should not keep looking at another society as their frame of reference, they should not segregate or isolate themselves from their country of settlement. They should participate in its common life like the rest of its members, and find ways of becoming an integral part of it. If they held themselves to themselves and maintained only the minimum necessary contacts with it, they would not only display a lack of commitment to it but would also fail to build meaningful bonds with their fellow-citizens and develop a sense of shared community. Others would see them as wanting to live in society without being a part of it, and would understandably refuse to identify with them.

Thirdly, since society's institutions, values, practices and norms of behaviour form the basis of its unity and express its historically acquired identity, immigrants should accept and internalize them and make them part of their identity. If they took a purely instrumental view of and conformed to these for reasons of expediency and convenience, they would display a lack of sincere commitment to society and fail to inspire trust. Some integrationists argue that the new identity should inform both the social and personal lives of immigrants. Others limit it to their social relations, leaving them free to lead their personal lives according to the ideals and values which derived from their own culture.<sup>8</sup> The latter writers appreciate that the immigrants' social and personal identities, one derived from the wider society and widely shared, the other

from their own culture and distinctive to them, might not harmoniously coexist. They leave it to the immigrants to work out their complex dialectic in their own ways and at their own pace.

The integrationist approach defines integration in terms of loyalty, participation, and acculturation or adaptation. It has its virtues and is better than the assimilationist rival. It respects cultural differences and seeks to reconcile their demands with those of social cohesion and unity. It rightly insists that immigrants should commit themselves to the society in which they have chosen to settle and show it basic loyalty. The integrationist is also right to insist that immigrants should participate in the common life of society and avoid communal ghettos in order to build up common ties of interest and attachment with the rest of society and as an earnest of their willingness to become full members. Immigrants cannot expect to reproduce their country of origin in their new environment and demand to live on their own terms. Both respect for the history and identity of society and their own ability to flourish in it require that they should respect its institutions, values and norms of behaviour.

In spite of these and related insights, the integrationist approach suffers from several limitations, many of which it shares with assimilationism. Like the latter, it too sees integration as a one-way process. The onus to integrate is always on the immigrants, so is the blame for their failure to do so, and all the necessary adjustments and accommodations are to be made by them. This is a highly misleading account of the process of integration. The social and political structure of a society is the product of its history and reflects the current self-understanding of its members. As new members arrive with their distinct histories and experiences, it cannot hope to remain the same. Some of its practices and attitudes might make no sense to or have an adverse effect on them, and need to be changed. Its collective self-understanding too needs to be redefined to take account of their presence.

A Muslim immigrant, for example, might refuse to take an oath on the Bible or want time off for the Friday prayer; a Sikh boy might be averse to going to school without his turban, and so on. Unless the wider society is prepared to reconsider and, when necessary, change the relevant practices, it makes it difficult for immigrants to integrate. Again, immigrants might move out of the communal ghetto and into a middle class suburb. But if the residents of that area move out, the effort at integration amounts to nothing. Or immigrants might adopt the ways of life and thought of the wider society, but if they are dismissed as pushy, presumptuous or not knowing their place, integration not only brings no benefits but consigns them to a cultural limbo that uproots them from their own community without giving roots or even a reasonably secure foothold in another. Integration is frustrated as much by segregation as by rejection. It is a two-way process requiring both immigrants and the wider society to reach out and adjust to each other.

Like the assimilationists who are intensely suspicious of differences, the integrationists are hostile to separation, and they are sometimes equally extreme in their demands. A society is articulated at several levels, such as the political, the economic, the social, the moral and the cultural. Immigrants might integrate at some of these levels but not others. They might, for example, integrate economically and politically and play their full part as productive workers and active citizens, but might prefer to marry among themselves, confine their close friendships and social ties to their own community, or limit their cultural interests to their own traditions. Integrationists see such partial or limited integration as a sign of separateness, a refusal to integrate and become part of society.<sup>9</sup> This is also broadly true of what is sometimes called pluralist integration. The latter recognizes and accommodates differences and allows immigrants to integrate in their own different ways. However it too takes integration as its ultimate goal and largely differs only in the means to it.

In the United Kingdom and elsewhere Asian immigrants, for example, are frequently criticized, not only by conservative but also by liberal politicians and media, for refusing to integrate because of their insufficiently impressive rate of inter-ethnic marriages, the tendency to socialize among themselves, and a limited interest in the mainstream cultural activities. Worried Conservative and even Labour governments have designed policies to stop them from 'importing' spouses from their country of origin on the ground that the practice reinforces their cultural identity and discourages integration. Integrationists also feel worried if immigrants retain a strong sense of commitment to their country of origin, reproduce its political controversies, direct some of their philanthropic activities there, and so on. For them, all this is a sign that immigrants are not fully committed and are holding themselves back; they take it as an invitation to increase the pressure on them to become 'fully' integrated like the rest of their fellow-citizens.

Some integrationists do not share such an extreme and comprehensive view of integration. They appreciate that immigrants might wish to and have a right to retain parts of their cultural identity, and that integration could and should be partial and 'thin', limited mainly to society's 'common institutions'.<sup>10</sup> While they are right, they run into an obvious problem. Since integration of immigrants is the goal and since it consists in making them an integral part of society, it is not clear how one can exempt certain areas of life from the demands of integration and tolerate partially and loosely integrated immigrants. While some members of society might think that economic and political integration is all that matters, others might argue that society lacks cohesion and unity unless integration is extended to the moral, social and cultural areas of life as well. They might also argue that allowing immigrants to integrate only at certain levels is to privilege and discriminate in favour of them. The debate between these views is not merely of academic interest because it dominates much of the current controversy in Europe and large parts of Asia and Africa. Since there is no conclusive way to resolve the debate, the 'thin' view of integration appears *ad hoc*, arbitrary, even inconsistent.

Even if we could reach agreement on what areas of life are essential to integration, the partially and loosely integrated immigrants are bound to be seen as less committed to society, and hence less than full and enthusiastic members. In the integrationist view, integration defines the quality of membership, and if it is partial and limited, so is the latter. Partially integrated immigrants, who hold themselves back to varying degrees, are therefore always suspect, and seen as legitimate targets of unequal or discriminatory treatment.

Like the language of assimilation, that of integration is also vulnerable to subtle forms of racism. Since integration is the goal, one is led to ask what kinds of immigrants can be integrated with relative ease, are less likely to make inconvenient demands, and with whom the rest of society would find it easier to identify. The integrationist logic requires a society either to avoid 'difficult' immigrants or to subject them to a harsher regime of control. In Europe and elsewhere, black, Muslim, and other inferiorized immigrants are seen as a problem in a way that others are not, and far more is often demanded of them. No one cares or even notices whether American or even Japanese immigrants to Europe marry only among themselves, lead socially and culturally self-contained lives or retain close ties with their countries of origin, but great anxiety is expressed in relation to the inferiorized groups. Muslims are accused of inadequate loyalty if they fail to issue loud and unambiguous condemnations of Islamic terrorism in distinct parts of the world, but no such demands are or were made of the Irish immigrant in relation to IRA terrorism, or of the American immigrants when the actions of the American government are widely regarded as violating international law. Sometimes there are good reasons for such differential treatment, but not always, and even when there are, the role of racism is not entirely absent. We need to guard against this tendency to apply different models of integration to and make unequal demands on different racial and ethnic groups, not only because it is unjust and

racist but also because it breeds resentment among the inferiorized groups and hinders their integration.

The integrationist approach privileges unity and is deeply uncomfortable with separateness and distance. The latter is always on the defensive and in need of constant justification. The demand for integration, like that for assimilation, is insatiable and seeks to encompass all areas of life. One can always ask why immigrants want to hold themselves back, why they cannot be like the rest, why many of them wish to marry among themselves, retain ties with their country of origin, and maintain their culture if they are as sincerely committed to society as they claim to be.<sup>11</sup> The totalist and intolerant logic of integration is readily exploited by those so inclined. And as for people of tolerant and liberal persuasion, they are always at a disadvantage, both because the onus of justifying limited integration is on them and because they are arguing in a language whose basic thrust is inhospitable to their concerns.<sup>12</sup>

### **Common belonging**

I argued above that assimilation and even integration represent deeply problematic ways of conceptualizing the relations between immigrants and the receiving society. In their own different ways (assimilation far more than integration) they are open to similar objections. If we are to avoid their mistakes, we need a different conceptual framework. I suggest that the language of citizenship and common belonging meets this requirement better than any other. Immigrants are outsiders who wish to become, and whom the rest of society wants to make, insiders or full citizens. Immigrants should enjoy all the rights and discharge all the obligations of citizenship, and the rest of society needs to do all it can to ensure that they are able to do so. One might argue that this is enough and that nothing more is needed to ensure social cohesion than the practice of equal citizenship. While such a thin libertarian view has its values, it is flawed. Citizenship is not just a matter of rights, obligations and status. It involves commitment to the political community, accepting it as one's own and being willing to make sacrifices for it. Citizens share common interests and bonds and make claims on each other that they do not do in relation to outsiders. For these and other reasons, citizenship needs to be grounded in and nurtured by a common sense of belonging.<sup>13</sup>

Rather than ask how immigrants can be assimilated or integrated, we might more profitably ask how they can become equal citizens and be bound to the rest by the ties of mutual commitment and attachment. This is our general objective, and all else is derived from it. It obviously requires some form of integration in the sense that immigrants should not be excluded or marginalized, and it also requires some degree of assimilation in the sense that they should share certain basic beliefs and values. However integration and assimilation are the means not the end, and their relevance, importance, forms and degrees should be decided by their ability to serve the overall objective in the context of the constantly changing relations between immigrants and the wider society. Common belonging is a two-way process. Immigrants cannot belong to the society in which they have chosen to settle unless it is prepared to welcome them, and conversely it cannot accept them as full members unless they wish to belong, with all that this entails. Common belonging therefore can only be achieved if each party respects the terms of the relationship and discharges its obligations. I shall first discuss the obligations of immigrants, and then those of the wider society.<sup>14</sup>

Immigrants arrive of their own free choice and wish to belong to their country of settlement. A society is not a chance collection of people who happen to live together and are only contingently related to each other. It represents an intricate and complex way of life built up through struggle and sacrifice over several generations. Since their identities, lives and

personal histories are closely bound up with it, they rightly feel possessive and protective about it. They want to be reassured that immigrants value their membership of it, and understand and respect its way of life. Even ordinary clubs and associations insist on rules of membership, and rightly expect their successful new applicants to join in good faith, observe the norms, and do nothing to undermine and subvert it. This is even more the case with political societies, which have long-established historical identities and which members regard as home.

Immigrants need to commit themselves to the society in which they have decided to settle, and accept the responsibilities and obligations that this entails. This does not mean that they should sever all their ties with their country of origin, no more than a marriage requires the spouses to disown or distance themselves from their parental homes. Such a demand is unfair, impossible to meet, and unnecessary. What can be demanded of immigrants is that they should see their country of settlement as their home, whatever other homes they might also happen to have. It should mean something to them, have an intrinsic value for them, and they should give reasonable evidence of their commitment to it. Such a commitment establishes their good faith, gives them the rights of membership, and entitles them to make such demands on the rest of society as their process of settlement requires. No society can remain the same when it admits new members, especially when their number is fairly large. Every society as a matter of fact constantly redefines and reconstitutes itself in response to the emergence of new generations of young men and women who bring with them new ideas, sensibilities, aspirations, forms of self-understanding and modes of behaviour. Immigrants present a similar challenge, especially because they arrive as fully formed adults with only limited room for malleability. They may therefore legitimately ask for changes in the practices and institutions of the wider society when they can show that these bear unduly heavily on them, make demands they cannot meet, are deeply biased, not as self-evident as the society assumes, and so on. Their demands carry weight and are likely to receive a favourable response only if they have made a commitment to society and value their membership of it.

Immigrants express their commitment to society in several ways. They should cherish its integrity and well-being, respect its structure of authority and laws, and in general discharge their obligations as citizens. In principle no more and no less can be demanded of them than of their fellow-citizens. To demand more is to place a greater burden on them, to demand less is patronizing and condescending, and both are discriminatory. Although immigrants might find it politically prudent to be more explicit than the rest in their professions of loyalty and patriotic sentiment, this should not be a moral or even a political requirement.

Immigrants also affirm their commitment to society by participating in its common life, discharging their share of collective responsibility, being productive workers, not abusing the available welfare provisions, and so on. Participation in common life does not mean that they may not marry among themselves or carve out communal cultural spaces of their own. Marriages, cultural life, etc. are matters of individual choice and cannot be subjected to legal coercion and social pressure. They belong to the personal sphere of life and do not affect the shared collective life. And since their fellow-citizens are free to live their social and cultural lives as they please, denying that freedom to immigrants involves unequal treatment. As long as they participate in the common life of society and discharge their obligations as citizens, their personal and social lives are their own business.

Immigrants need to acquire the cultural competence to help them navigate through their new country's way of life. This involves learning its language, understanding and observing its rules of civility and norms of behaviour, and familiarizing themselves with its traditions, history, moral sensibilities and habits of thought. As they respect its values and norms of behaviour, they are likely over time to internalize them and make them part of their social and even

perhaps personal identity, especially if they see their point and value. And even when they do not see their point, they should respect and observe them in their social relations, for broadly the same reasons that women visitors to Muslim countries cover their heads without necessarily endorsing the practice. One may not, for example, see the point of wearing black or looking solemn at a funeral, opening the door for a female companion or holding it open for the next person, being polite to a bore at a party, or standing up for the national anthem. But these practices matter to others, and form part of good manners and even what the eighteenth century writers called small morals. There is nothing insincere, hypocritical or self-alienating about observing them, for it shows respect for society and its way of life and facilitates good relations with its members. Being new, immigrants are unlikely to master fully the complex cultural grammar of a society. But unless they make a sincere effort to acquire a modicum of cultural competence, they create serious difficulties for themselves. Their commitment to society is likely to be questioned. They are unable to communicate their aspirations and frustrations, to understand why others sometimes respond to these with incomprehension and even hostility, and to build up the pool of mutual understanding and trust that is necessary to press their legitimate demands with some chance of success. They also remain at the mercy of their more articulate 'spokesmen' and 'brokers' with their own political and cultural agenda.

### **Social policy**

Just as immigrants need to commit themselves to the receiving society and express their commitment in the ways indicated earlier, society too must make a commitment to them and express it in appropriate ways. Immigrants are new to it, and liable to much misunderstanding and negative stereotyping. They need time to acquire the necessary cultural competence, and in the meantime they lack a clear and coherent voice. Being outsiders, they are often resented by certain sections of society and made to feel unwelcome. They are also likely to be discriminated against in significant areas of life. They suffer from various kinds of disadvantage, resulting from poverty, lack of language, the trauma of transition, confusion and worry about how to adjust to the new society, anxieties about their children, mismatch between their hopes and aspirations and the reality of their new life, and so on. The wider society needs to ease their transition, and help them become full and legitimate members. This requires action at several levels.

First, discrimination against immigrants in all areas of life, especially in areas such as employment and housing that affect their life chances, should be declared unlawful and subjected to appropriate sanctions. Discrimination implies unequal treatment, and conveys to its victims that they are not accepted by the rest of society as its equal members. It also builds up anger and frustration, and can over time generate a profound sense of alienation and marginality. When the state does nothing about it, it intensifies the sense of inequality and sends out the message that it too regards them as an inferior class of citizens. Discrimination can take several forms. It can be blatant or subtle, direct or indirect as when it is built into the procedures and rules of an organization, and might be practised by individuals or institutions. It can also be formal or informal, as when shop assistants overcharge immigrants or fellow-passengers make abusive remarks and change seats. And it might be practised in some or all major areas of life. It is particularly hurtful when it is practised by the institutions of the state, such as the police, the immigration officers, the courts and the civil servants. The state is expected to treat its citizens equally, is the sole authoritative spokesman of society, and its actions guide public opinion. When its institutions engage in discriminatory behaviour, they not only reduce their victims to second class citizens but leave them no redress. A discriminatory state imposes equal obligations but denies equal rights, and forfeits its legitimacy in the eyes of those it treats unequally.

While the law can tackle formal and institutional discrimination fairly effectively by declaring it unlawful and devising an appropriate machinery of enforcement, its reach does not extend to informal discrimination. It cannot compel passengers not to leave their seats or mumble abuse when an immigrant of a different colour sits next to them, or require a bank clerk not to keep them waiting for an unduly long period of time. Although these actions are individually trivial and little more than sources of minor irritation, cumulatively they can create a regime of humiliation, wear down their victims, and build up powerful feelings of rage and hatred. There is no simple and foolproof way to deal with them. The heads of the organizations involved can be pressured to lay down standards of good behaviour and enforce them through appropriate disciplinary procedures. Immigrant and other public-spirited civic organizations can expose these practices and use their consumer power to set them right. Since these practices spring from and derive their legitimacy from the general social ethos, church leaders, government ministers, public figures, and the media have a vital role to play in reforming society's moral culture.

Secondly, immigrants suffer from several material, social, cultural, political and other disadvantages which impede their settlement. Tackling them calls for a comprehensive and well-worked out public policy. Immigrants need help with learning the language of the country, and this may require special classes at times and places convenient to them. Their children, especially if they arrive as adolescents, might need remedial classes and some form of transitional bilingual education. Immigrants tend to live together partly because of discrimination and partly for reasons of physical security, emotional sustenance, good business, pursuit of common cultural and religious practices, and so on. Such residential concentration, or what is pejoratively called the ghetto, has its economic and cultural logic and should be accepted. It not only does not stand in the way of integration but can even facilitate it, because personally and socially secure individuals are often more likely to have the confidence to reach out to the wider society and experiment with its ways of life and thought.

Residential concentration is worrying when it confines immigrants to their own community, to their own schools, to their own economy, etc. and rules out all but minimal contacts with the rest of society. It then creates parallel societies with little in common except mutual indifference, incomprehension and even perhaps hatred. There is no easy way to deal with such situations. As the experience of many multicultural societies demonstrates, immigrants tend to move out of ethnically concentrated areas when they feel physically secure, acquire cultural self-confidence, improve their skills and economic prospects, and feel sure that they will not face rejection. All this obviously depends quite heavily on government policy and the general social climate. If for some reason the residential concentration persists, ways need to be found to encourage ethnic mixing in a manner that avoids conflict and promotes common interests. Housing estates could encourage ethnically mixed tenants; schools could draw their pupils from different ethnic groups; when this is not possible, ethnically concentrated schools could explore ways of involving their pupils in common curricular and extra-curricular projects with those of mixed schools; and so on.

Since the economy plays a vital role in the integration of immigrants, we need to devise well-targeted and group-sensitive policies to liberate them from the cumulative cycle of disadvantage. Removing discrimination in employment and promotion is obviously most important, and requires an effective enforcement machinery with powers of investigation, legal aid to the victims, determined action by heads of organizations, and a programme of positive action to identify and redress the disproportionate absence of relevant groups. The run-down areas where immigrants are often concentrated need to be regenerated, and require a greater allocation of public resources and tax breaks and other incentives to attract local and national business. Training people in valuable skills, improving the educational performance of



immigrant children, helping with start-up capital, loans at lower rates of interest, advice on how to start and build up new businesses, etc. are also valuable tools of public policy. Monitoring admissions into academically good schools and institutions of higher education is also necessary, as sometimes these institutions wittingly or unwittingly discriminate against immigrants, block their upward mobility, and hinder integration among the élite.

Sometimes these and other group-sensitive policies are criticized on the grounds that they practise reverse discrimination, intensify ethnic consciousness, and militate against a common sense of belonging. Although the criticism has a point, the dangers it highlights are often exaggerated and can be guarded against. The kinds of policies I have suggested often represent a programme of positive action rather than positive discrimination with its fixed targets and quotas. They are intended to remove obstacles to equal and fair competition and tackle disadvantages, not to give arbitrary and unfair preference to immigrants. They apply not just to immigrants but to all who suffer from severe disadvantages. And if in some cases immigrants receive greater attention and help, this is only because their disadvantages are greater and are compounded by discrimination.

The argument that ethnically orientated policies intensify ethnic consciousness and work against a shared sense of community is largely misconceived. A colour-blind approach makes sense only when those involved are blind to colour and in no way influenced by it. When ethnic or colour consciousness shapes their behaviour and is a source of discrimination and disadvantage, it cannot be tackled by ignoring it. One needs to acknowledge its existence, identify its targets, remove their disadvantages, help them acquire equal competitive capacity, ease their integration into society, and create over time a genuinely colour-blind society that is so relaxed about ethnic differences as to take no notice of them. Ethnically orientated policies perpetuate ethnic consciousness if they are open-ended, homogenize ethnic communities, prefer them over the rest, set up rigid quotas, and ignore wider social and economic inequalities. They have the opposite effect and become a means of integration when they are part of a general egalitarian policy, concentrate on clearly defined groups, and justify their differential treatment on grounds of fairness, special needs, and social cohesion.

Thirdly, like those of the other members of society, a good deal of immigrant life is lived at the local level. It is here that they regularly interact with their fellow citizens as neighbours, fellow employees, shoppers, spectators at sports events, and so on. They generalize these experiences to cover unseen millions, and form an image of the wider society and their place in it. All national integration is forged out of civic integration, and all patriotism has local roots.<sup>15</sup> It is therefore vital to build up inter-ethnic bonds at the local level through neighbourhood associations, sports clubs, trade unions, local branches of national political parties, charitable associations, chambers of commerce and interfaith networks. These associations bring together different communities in the pursuit of common interests, and develop mutual understanding, habits of cooperation and trust. Civic authorities too can do much to foster civic patriotism and a strong sense of civic identity that transcends ethnic differences and sustains the larger sense of national identity. They can do so by ensuring immigrants adequate representation in their major institutions, allocating to them a fair share of public resources, involving them in common projects, sponsoring ethnic events, encouraging inter-ethnic cultural, literary and other festivals, and by so designing public spaces that they attract different groups and reflect and normalize diversity.

Fourthly, educational institutions, especially schools, play a crucial role in creating a common sense of belonging. They should prepare their pupils to live in a multicultural society by sensitizing them to the reality of differences, helping them deal with these with understanding and confidence, and cultivating such vitally necessary multicultural skills and virtues as

sympathetic imagination, tolerance, openness to other ways of life and thought, curiosity and mutual respect. They should promote intercultural literacy, foster better understanding between different cultural groups, and help them acquire a shared pool of ideas and values. While they should obviously teach and assign a central role to the history, culture, traditions, etc. of the wider society, they also need to teach the history and culture of immigrants, explaining where they come from, how they came to be members of society, and their experiences of migration and settlement.

Although multicultural education is primarily directed at the second and subsequent generations, it also has a profound and often unnoticed effect on the first generation of immigrants. Children educate their parents even as they are educated by them. This is particularly the case with immigrants, whose children are a vital link with the wider society, introducing them to the complexities and subtleties of its way of life. Multicultural education also reassures the parents that they will not lose their children to an 'alien' culture. Part of the reason why first generation immigrants sometimes resist participation in the common life of society and deliberately keep their distance from it has to do with their understandable desire to provide an alternative cultural environment for their children, stress their distinct identity, and counter the assimilationist ethos of the school. When that anxiety is allayed by a programme of multicultural education, an important reason for their segregation is removed. This should also reduce the demand for separate ethnic and religious schools that often stand in the way of a common sense of belonging. And if for some reason such schools do exist, they should be required to teach a common curriculum and encouraged to draw their staff and students from different communities. Indeed when the state explicitly commits itself to multicultural education in public schools, it acquires the right to demand it in minority schools as well.

Fourthly, as I argued earlier, a common sense of belonging is easier when both the majority and minority communities feel at ease with themselves and each other. If the minorities feel threatened, besieged, fearful of cultural extinction, they turn inward, become defensive, and tend to avoid all but minimum contact with the rest of society. This is equally true of the majority. If it feels that it is no longer in charge of its future and that its way of life is subject to forces it cannot control, it becomes defensive and intolerant and either closes its doors to immigration, which is generally not possible, or falls prey to an unrealistic and self-defeating project of assimilation or total integration.

A sensible response to this has to be at several levels. The immigration and asylum policy should be fair, transparent, coherent, publicly debated and consensually grounded. The government needs to explain to its citizens its moral and legal obligations to admit desperate refugees and to give them all the help they need to settle down. It should similarly explain why it needs immigrants, how many will be admitted, what they will do, and what benefits they bring, and follow this up with periodic reports and well-designed policies. It needs to distinguish between legitimate anxieties about immigrants and their racist rejection, and allay the former while combating the latter. If legitimate anxieties and fears remain unaddressed, and are not even allowed to be expressed in the name of political correctness, frustration builds up and takes nasty forms. Those involved also feel alienated from and turn against the political system that has no space for their views, and opt for racist and right-wing political parties. The distinction between legitimate fears on the one hand and blatant racism and xenophobia on the other is not easy to draw, especially as the latter often disguises itself in the former's respectable rhetoric. However, to draw no distinction at all or to confuse the two is to create serious problems. If the public policy on immigration and asylum is transparent, based on clearly stated economic needs and the moral obligations of the country, and if it commands the support of major political parties and leaders of public opinion, it should be relatively easy to identify racists and xenophobes and expose their falsehoods. Since the battle against them is

never conclusively won, statesmanship consists in skilfully isolating them and challenging their changing rhetoric and tactics.

Fifthly, societies are not held together by common interest and justice alone. If they were, the sacrifices that their members make for each other (including giving up their lives in wars and national emergencies) and their sense of solidarity and willingness to share their resources would be inexplicable. They need emotional bonding, that is, a sense of concern for and attachment to their community and to each other. That in turn springs from a common sense of belonging, from their recognition of each other as members of a single community. And that requires a shared sense of national identity, that is, a sense of who they are, what they stand for, what binds them together, and what makes them members of this community rather than some other. The identity of a society, like that of any organization, has a cognitive as well as an emotional dimension, and is embodied in its self-understanding, history, values, constitutional principles, political institutions, etc. as well as its symbols and images, such as the national anthem, the national flag, national ceremonies, and monuments to the dead heroes.<sup>16</sup>

If immigrants are to make an emotional commitment to society, the latter's view of its national identity needs to be inclusive and hospitable enough for them to identify with it. Its self-understanding should take full account of their presence; its view of its history should include the story of their arrival, settlement and contributions; its official symbols should symbolize them as well, and not be allowed to become the monopoly of a section of it; its national events should recognize their presence and contributions and not become occasions to display the solidarity of the rest of society against them. None of this is easy to achieve. Every society has a traditional view of its identity which it takes for granted and is reluctant to revise. And those sections of it which are hostile to immigrants seek to narrow that view yet further in order to delegitimize their presence.

The struggle over the definition of national identity is ultimately about the ownership of the country, about who belongs and does not belong to it and whose interests and claims should be accorded priority. Not surprisingly, national identity becomes a site of contestation between those who wish to widen the traditional view of it and those who either want to hold on to it or make it more exclusive. This is not something that can be officially decided by the agencies of the state or settled once and for all. The struggle to redefine national identity is often informal, unplanned, diffuse, conducted on several terrains and in different idioms, and likely to become particularly pronounced on nationally significant occasions. Such results as it achieves are registered in the appropriately revised vocabulary of public discourse, and sustained by the suitably redefined forms of national self-understanding.

Two British examples explain what I have in mind. The United Kingdom has long seen itself as a white society. Although the black presence goes back to the Romans and was significant during the Elizabethan and Victorian periods, it has never formed part of national self-definition. Thanks to the pressure of Afro-Caribbeans and white liberals during the past three decades, the dominant definition of Britishness has been considerably deracialized, and one no longer has to be white or Christian to be accepted as British. The country's history is also being increasingly read in multiracial terms, and the historical role and contributions of ethnic minorities are researched and widely recognized. The fact that some ethnic minority members now occupy high positions in public life and represent the country at home and abroad has given a new momentum to this process.

The other example relates to the national flag. In the mid-eighties, racist groups flaunted it at their meetings and sought to make it an exclusive symbol of white Britain. Not surprisingly, the ethnic minorities found it difficult to relate to it, and some even felt threatened by it. Over

time many of them began to reclaim it by displaying it on ethnic and multi-ethnic occasions. This became particularly evident at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, and was reinforced at the Athens Olympics four years later, when the medal-winning black athletes did the laps of honour draped in the Union Jack. Their action had a double meaning, which was not lost on the British public. They were saying that they belonged to Britain and were proud to do so. They were also saying that Britain belonged to them, that they were not marginal to it but its equal citizens, and that its flag and national anthem were as much theirs as anyone else's and symbolized their presence as well.

National identity is about how the nation is represented in the imagination of its people. Since literature and the arts are the paradigmatic vehicles of representation, they play a vital role in articulating, even constructing, national identity and giving it a cultural and emotional depth. Not surprisingly, literature, especially the novel, and the visual arts have made an enormous contribution to the creation of the modern nation state during the last three centuries. They highlighted the commonalities between its distant and diverse members, relieved their strangeness by interpreting their inner and social worlds to each other, subverted old stereotypes, rendered different places, generations and historical times mutually intelligible, and wove them into a single temporal and spatial narrative. When immigrants arrive, their experiences too need to be rendered intelligible to the rest of society and incorporated in a suitably retold national story. A British example, again, will illustrate how this tends to happen.

Thanks to the articulations of its great literary and artistic figures, England often evokes images of serene southern counties, manicured landscapes, church bells, quiet Sundays, dreaming spires, emotional self-discipline, the art of understatement, reserved gentlemen with their bowler hats and rolled up umbrellas, and so on. As a result of the work of ethnic minority and other writers, artists, musicians, etc., and some of the imaginative programmes on the television, England now also evokes images of mosques and temples, elderly gentlemen walking with their children to the Friday prayers in response to the call of the muezzin, Diwali celebrations in public squares, noisy multi-ethnic streets of big cities, spicy food, saris and steel bands, as well as many hybrid images reflecting intercultural experimentation. British identity is increasingly being expressed in a plurality of images, and is capacious and heterogeneous enough to allow its different communities and regions to find their representation in it. This makes it easier for them to take ownership of it, participate in a common but internally differentiated discourse on their shared public world, and to build common emotional bonds among themselves.

## **Conclusion**

I have explored some of the important ways in which a common sense of belonging can be fostered in multicultural societies. I concentrated on immigrants and showed how the diversity they bring need not pose intractable problems. Other forms of diversity can be similarly accommodated without standing in the way of a shared sense of community. Multicultural societies are not easy to manage, and there is no saying what external and internal factors might destabilize them. They are, however, here to stay, and form part of our historical predicament. Given good will on all sides, they can also become sources of great richness and vitality. If we mismanage or try to refashion them according to some nostalgic vision of a culturally homogeneous and tension-free society, they can easily become a nightmare. But we can make a reasonable success of them if we approach them with wisdom and confidence and are prepared to experiment with imaginative policies and institutional structures. Although Australia, Canada, India, Netherlands, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States have had their setbacks, they learned their lessons and provide reasonably good examples of

more or less well-managed multicultural societies. Many other societies remain fractious, deeply divided, and caught up in suicidal policies. However they too are learning their lessons, and changing their ways. Their experiences understandably provoke despair just as those of successful societies offer grounds for hope.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to the International Labour Institute, Geneva, for inviting me to deliver the lecture on which this paper is based, and to Dr. A. V. Jose and the members of the audience for their helpful comments.

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent discussion of this, see Will Kymlicka: *Multicultural citizenship* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995, ch.2).

<sup>3</sup> This is a standard nationalist and conservative view of social unity. Although often dismissed, it has subtly influenced the thought of even its liberal and socialist critics. It has also long been and continues to be a powerful force in American society. See Nathan Glazer: "Is assimilation dead?" in *The Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1993, pp. 122-136.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Thatcher repeatedly used this argument.

<sup>5</sup> For a fuller discussion, see my *Rethinking multiculturalism* (London, Macmillan, 2000, pp. 165f.).

<sup>6</sup> For a good discussion, see Will Kymlicka: 'Western political theory and ethnic relations in Eastern Europe' in Will Kymlicka and Magda Opalski, eds.: *Can liberal pluralism be exported?* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001). See also Steven Vertovec's Introduction in Steven Vertovec, ed.: *Migration and social cohesion* (Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 1999). Myron Weiner's article in this volume uses 'integration' interchangeably with assimilation and absorption.

<sup>7</sup> These three components are founding most writings on integration, though not always expressed in these terms. Although he does not use the term integration, Brian Barry's *Equality and culture* (Cambridge; Polity, 2000) has a broadly similar thrust; see ch.3. See also Ray Honeyford: *Integration or disintegration* (London, Claridge Press, 1988, pp. 37 ff.).

<sup>8</sup> This is an extension of the familiar debate between political and comprehensive liberalism about whether liberal values should be limited to the political realm or regulate all areas of life.

<sup>9</sup> Even in Canada, which takes a broad and plural view of integration, diversity and separateness are associated with disunity and fragmentation by an influential body of opinion. For a further discussion of some of the theories of integration, see my "Three theories of immigration" in Sarah Spencer, ed.: *Strangers and citizens* (London, Rivers Oram Press, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> See Kymlicka in *Can liberal pluralism be exported?* Op. cit., p.48. The integrationist would reject what he calls 'thin' integration as not really integration at all. It is not clear why Kymlicka thinks that integration can be limited to common institutions, which include educational, academic, welfare, economic and political institutions (p. 35), and does not have wider integrationist implications. Sometimes he talks of 'cultural integration' without spelling out what it entails.

<sup>11</sup> This is particularly evident in the French and German discourses on integration. In recent years it has also become quite prominent in the British discourse. MORI reported in 2001 that two-fifths of respondents felt that if they are to integrate, immigrants 'should not maintain their culture and lifestyle'. Four years earlier, the British Election Study showed that 71 per cent of white respondents believed that immigrants should 'adopt and blend into society'. See Shamit Saggat: "Immigration and the politics of public opinion", in *Political Quarterly*, special issue on migration, 2003. *The Runnymede report on the future of multi-ethnic Britain* argued that social cohesion should be based on the recognition of existing communities, that equal treatment should respect and accommodate differences, and that there was nothing wrong with looser integration and immigrant separateness in certain areas. Not only the conservative but even the liberal and socialist media felt deeply troubled by this and attacked the Report. Such a totalist view of integration has persuaded me that the language of integration, which I had myself used in the past, is best avoided.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Banton acknowledges that integration with its connotation of wholeness and unity is "very far from ideal". See his "National integration and ethnic violence in Western Europe", in *Journal of ethnic and migration*

*studies*, Vol. 25, no. 1, January 1999. In another article he calls it a “treacherous concept”. As he rightly observes, immigrants might be integrated at the local but not the national level, or vice versa, making it difficult to decide whether they can be said to be integrated or not. Banton, however, continues to use the term ‘because there is no alternative expression which is not open to even greater objections’. See his “National integration in France and Britain”, in *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1, January 2001.

<sup>13</sup> For a good discussion, see Andrew Mason: *Community, solidarity and belonging*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, ch. 5). Although he sometimes equates common belonging with integration (p.151), the general thrust of his argument is to separate the two.

<sup>14</sup> It is striking that although immigration has long been a part of European history, hardly any political theorist has discussed either of these obligations. They assume that citizens are all native born.

<sup>15</sup> Much discussion of social unity and national identity ignores this vital fact, and hence pays little attention to what can be done at the local level.

<sup>16</sup> For a further full discussion, see my *Rethinking multiculturalism*, *ibid*, pp. 230 f.

Fuente: International Labour Organization (ILO) [en línea]

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/download/1parekh.pdf>