

The Politics of Locality: Re-Locating the Liberal-Communitarian Debate

Victoria Jane Nash
Nuffield College

Trinity Term 1999

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
D. Phil. in Politics in the Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Oxford.

98, 788 words



Abstract

The Politics of Locality: Re-Locating the Liberal-Communitarian Debate

Victoria Nash, Nuffield College, D. Phil Thesis Trinity Term 1999

This thesis assesses whether communitarian critique can still inform contemporary liberal political theory. The suggestion is that although liberalism has correctly rejected calls for a politics of 'community', it has ignored one important aspect of that critique, namely emphasis on the social embeddedness of the individual. Investigation of this hypothesis proceeds in two stages. The first involves reconsideration of the liberal-communitarian debate in the light of Charles Taylor's distinction between ontological and normative issues. This reveals how the arguments for social embeddedness (or ontological holism) fit in with more traditional appeals to community. Further analysis of the idea of ontological holism emphasises the potentially philosophical or empirical character of holist claims.

The second stage of the argument ascertains whether liberal theory should heed communitarianism's recommendation of a more holist approach. Analysis of liberal texts reveals that liberal theorists already do adopt such an approach, however they do so in a piecemeal fashion, and generally without reference to supporting empirical evidence. Given the assumption that liberal theory is not expressly utopian, some attention to limiting empirical factors would seem to be required. To back up this claim a case-study of liberal tolerance is undertaken, comparing the theoretical and social psychological accounts of inter-group toleration and its development. This comparison reveals that liberal tolerance is too narrow in scope, failing to absorb some of the most virulent forms of inter-group antagonism (such as gender- or race-based antipathy). Further, social psychological study shows that *socially* intolerant attitudes may be at least as harmful as *political* ones, as they undermine the development of self-respect.

Overall, important conclusions are reached as to the theoretical changes required of liberalism if it is to adopt a more thoroughly holist approach. Attention to the operation of factors at the localised rather than national level is vital, as is attention to empirical detail. Thus the 'politics of locality' complements traditional focus on the nation-state.

Acknowledgements

I would not have been able to begin, let alone complete this thesis without the generous financial and academic support of Nuffield College, Oxford. This institution has provided me with a stimulating working environment and an unending supply of library books for which I will be eternally grateful. Amongst the Nuffield fellows who helped me most during this time, I must principally thank David Miller for his support as my college supervisor, and more importantly, for his frighteningly clear dissections and assessment of my work. As I have on several occasions also benefited from the comments of my peers when presenting papers at the Nuffield Political Theory Workshop, I should also thank Diana Gardner, Marc Stears and Karma Nabulsi for their insight, suggestions and encouragement.

Over these last three years I have been extremely lucky to receive supervision from not one but three people. Liz Frazer and Geoff Evans provided specialist knowledge and advice and for this I am very grateful. The greatest responsibility for any academic improvement or achievement that I have made must, however, lie with Adam Swift, who has dedicated more time, thought and effort to helping me with this thesis than I think I ever deserved. The thoroughness and clarity of his comments has never failed to amaze me, and I only hope that I have in some way absorbed even a little of his dedication to this subject. I should of course add that if I have made no improvement, or failed to achieve anything at all in these three years, then he is, obviously, not to blame in the slightest.

On a more personal note, it would be altogether impossible to mention all those friends who have made the last few years an entirely delightful time. Indeed, it is at their feet that I place the blame for this thing taking quite so long as it has. Among the most significant, however, is Maisie, who has proved to be an excellent partner in crime over the last year and a half. Likewise Rob, who uncomplainingly put up with me as an office-mate and house-mate for the past three years, and who has sounded out and improved upon virtually every idea I've come up with along the way. Others whose names deserve a mention include Chris Wallace for his unending supply of stationery,

also David Myatt and Matthew Frohn for teaching me both how to do the Times crossword and how to make a really good gin. Further thanks are due to George Speight, Didier Corrand, Clare Castling, Emily Man (and family) and all my friends at Browns. On a more personal level, the biggest thankyou must go to Steve Fisher, however, for enduring erratic moods, odd working hours, and sometimes less than my full attention, but ultimately for making the ‘private’ more rewarding than the ‘political’ over the last three years. I could not have completed this thesis without his support.

Amongst the many others who have helped and supported along the way I would especially love to extend my warmest appreciation to Hugh and Ruth May, and the rest of their marvellous family for welcoming me back to Cornwall just when I needed it most. Although this is really an Oxford thesis, there is a significant chunk which, like the sand in my computer, has Minack to thank for its existence.

Ultimately, the most important thanks are the hardest to express fully. It would have been impossible for me to write this thesis, to have even thought about doing so, without the support, financial and emotional, of my parents, my sister and the rest of the family in Guernsey. I have never received anything but help, encouragement and interest, and am constantly made aware of their pride in what I have done. As a tiny token of the enormous gratitude I feel, this thesis is therefore dedicated to my parents, Michelle and Derek Nash.

The Politics of Community: Re-Locating the Liberal-Communitarian Debate

Contents

Chapter One	
Introduction	p. 1
Chapter Two	
Locating the Liberal-Communitarian Debate	p. 10
Chapter Three	
The Myth of Community	p. 50
Chapter Four	
The Nature and Extent of Liberal Holism	p. 81
Chapter Five	
Liberal Character	p. 119
Chapter Six	
Group Membership, Group Conflict and Toleration	p. 158
Chapter Seven	
Conclusions: The Politics of Locality	p. 200
Bibliography	p. 251

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The value of writing a doctoral thesis on yet another aspect of the liberal-communitarian debate might seem dubious. So much material has already been written, so much already been said that it would seem to be a peculiarly unadventurous choice. Yet there is merit in this project. The claim defended here is that one half of the communitarian critique has been undeservedly neglected. Unlike the more commonly recognised appeals to the import of community, relatively little academic attention has been devoted to the communitarian emphasis on social embeddedness. This thesis attempts to rectify that imbalance.

The broadest question that this thesis seeks to answer is therefore simply whether or not communitarian critique can still inform liberal theory. The general consensus is that it cannot. Liberal theory, in sufficiently sophisticated guise, can more than adequately rebuff most communitarian criticisms as either misplaced or misguided.¹ In particular Rawls' *Political Liberalism*,² whether intentionally or unintentionally, has thoroughly re-worked areas previously vulnerable to communitarian criticism. The success of this project is demonstrated given that at least two recent analyses of this theorist's work have devoted sections to consideration of 'Rawls the communitarian'.³ Thus it would seem unlikely that further communitarian challenge could prove fruitful. This thesis, however, argues the opposite to be true. Liberal theory does indeed have a lesson to learn from communitarian critique. Not because it denies the value of community, or because it refuses to embrace the implications of social embeddedness, but because it fails to embrace social embeddedness in anything but a piece-meal fashion. Communitarian demands for a holistic approach to politics thus continue to raise some awkward questions for liberal theory.

¹ See for example A. Buchanan, 'Assessing the Communitarian Critique of Liberalism', *Ethics*, 99, 4, 1989, p. 852-882; or A. Gutmann, 'Communitarian Critics of Liberalism', in S. Avineri & A. de-Shalit, *Communitarianism and Individualism*, OUP, Oxford 1992.

² J. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, Columbia University Press, New York 1993.

³ S. Mulhall & A. Swift, *Liberals and Communitarians*, 2nd Ed., Blackwells, Oxford 1996, p. 221-2; R. Alejandro, *The Limits of Rawlsian Justice*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1998, p. 97-114.

That liberalism is still susceptible to communitarian critique is actually the least interesting possibility investigated in this thesis. Far more interesting are the implications of that critique. In particular we are concerned to determine where liberal inadequacies lie. Given recent focus by liberals on the role of political culture, social culture and socialisation, it seems odd to suggest that liberalism has failed to appreciate the inter-relation of politics and the social matrix. Yet there are two ways in which that inter-relation applies, and it remains to be seen whether liberals properly attend to social embeddedness in both such respects. Simply put, the relationship between politics and the social matrix operates at both the conceptual and the empirical level. It is entirely possible that political theory could neglect one or other of these two accounts. If claims of social embeddedness are interpreted conceptually, then all liberals have to do is ensure that they take full account of conceptual links between say personhood and language, or political values and culture. If, however, they accept the empirical relation, then this suggests that liberals must explore the limitations placed on (workable) liberal theory by the realities of social, cultural and political relations.

Thus perhaps the first important question which must be addressed concerns how far liberals do in fact demonstrate an understanding of social embeddedness, and the nature of any holist approach they adopt. The suspicion is that liberals have shown themselves far more capable of incorporating conceptual challenges than they have of dealing with the empirical alternative. Arguably this would not matter in the slightest if liberal political theory were expressly utopian. However, most liberal theory does not characterise itself in this way. There is a general presumption that liberal ideals can and should shape our political experience. Consequently, there is no *a priori* reason to disregard empirical evidence which identifies possibly limiting factors in the relationship between liberal politics and its social and cultural context.

Investigating the ways in which liberal theorists accept social embeddedness may give rise to some possibly controversial questions about the relationship between liberal political theory and empirical disciplines such as sociology and psychology. In particular, it will be asked whether or not liberals need make any substantial changes to either their normative recommendations or their methodological approach in the light of empirically-revealed limitations. In order to determine the extent of such changes, a 'case-study' will be undertaken. Only by closely comparing the details of theoretical

and empirical study can any conclusions be drawn as to the sufficiency of existing liberal arguments. Thus the second half of this thesis will be dedicated to studying the formation of crucial liberal characteristics, as this is one area of liberal theory where individuals pay particular attention to the 'social embeddedness' of the self. In particular, we will focus on tolerance, and its development within a liberal state. The suitability of this characteristic for study should be obvious. Given the central assumption that liberalism can politically unite a socially and culturally diverse body of people, tolerance is the demanding but nigh on essential characteristic required to support liberal institutions and procedures. Importantly, there is a reasonable amount of material analysing and describing this characteristic and its role in the liberal account. Thus it is relatively easy to compare these accounts with the empirically-grounded material drawn from the social sciences. The aim is to assess whether or not liberal theory accurately depicts the social factors which favour and limit the development of tolerance (and other crucial dispositions).

In studying the empirical material two particular questions should be borne in mind. The first concerns whether or not this material reveals any substantial gaps in the liberal account of socialisation. Does it refer to processes, procedures or relationships which liberal theory has failed to acknowledge? Secondly, does the research actually contradict claims explicitly defended by any of the various liberal accounts? With regard to the first question, the suspicion is that liberalism has tended to focus too much on socialising factors operating at the level of the nation state. Even recommendations made concerning the influence of the family or education generally assume that merely applying relevant policies at national level will be sufficient to iron out significant problems occurring at a more localised level. The empirical research undertaken in social psychology and sociology is, on the other hand, more suited to identifying factors operating at a highly localised level. Very often it pinpoints experiences affecting individuals in the immediate context of their daily lives. These disciplines are wary of generalising such effects beyond their immediate context, and as such are more likely to reveal the subtler socialising impact of relationships and experiences occurring at levels below that of the nation-state.

It is not true that political theory has entirely neglected the role of the local. However it has failed to deal with the issue in a thorough and methodical fashion. In recent years

there has been an increasing focus on the import of factors operating at the local level. This is observable in the quantity of literature published on decentralisation and local democracy,⁴ and also in the more directly relevant material on the value of ‘locality’ itself.⁵ Although the former draws largely on arguments from democratic theory to justify the local focus, both bodies of work also appeal to more mysterious claims concerning the value of interaction and other effects occurring specifically at the local level. It is however unclear why it should matter that members of different groups should mingle at the local level, either through political participation or in public spaces. What precisely is it that makes *local* experiences so important? The articles and texts seem simply to assume that local experiences are particularly powerful or effective; the arguments are largely intuitive rather than grounded in empirically-supported evidence. Thus it would seem to be an open question whether or not interaction at the local level is indeed beneficial from a liberal viewpoint, let alone why this might be the case. If the empirical material from sociology and social psychology can reveal any clues as to whether such arguments hold water, then this thesis will have usefully, if indirectly, clarified another rather muddled area of contemporary political theory.

The second possible outcome of examining empirical research in this field was suggested to be the support or contradiction of specific liberal claims. In particular it might lend credibility to aspects of liberalism’s recommendations for the socialisation of liberal citizens. However, once again there is a concern that the liberal account may in fact prove inadequate. Any empirical study of the conditions for toleration must look to current manifestations of intolerance. Unfortunately it is far from true that all existing intolerance is grounded in disagreement over conceptions of the good. Many of the incidences of intolerance in society are driven by more fundamental differences relating to such non-autonomously chosen factors as skin-colour, ethnic origin or class. Although on one level this might be thought to undermine the applicability of empirical research in this field of political theory, at another level it suggests that liberalism’s account of tolerance may be simply utopian. Thus questions will be raised as to whether

⁴ See for example D. Burns, P. Hoggett & G. Hambleton, *The Politics of Decentralisation*, Macmillan, London 1994; B. Barber, *Strong Democracy*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1984; D. King & G. Stoker, *Re-thinking Local Democracy*, Macmillan, Basingstoke 1996; J. Stewart & G. Stoker, *The Future of Local Government*, Macmillan, London 1989.

liberalism's characterisation of tolerance is accurate or helpful, and whether the factors supposed to guarantee its survival will prove capable of mitigating contradictory forces. In the light of the current prevalence of intolerance, further harder questions may also arise concerning liberalism's determination to respect individual autonomy. If the research shows that certain forms of vicious intolerance can indeed be minimised, but only by intervening in traditionally private areas of individuals' lives, then liberalism must face a tough choice between maximising individual autonomy and minimising intolerance. Certainly none of the empirical material presented here can determine what normative liberal policy should be, but it may well turn out rather ruthlessly to limit the available choices.

The structure of the thesis will broadly follow the order of the issues presented here. The first half of the thesis analyses the liberal-communitarian debate and investigates the ways in which it might still inform liberal theory, whilst the second undertakes a case-study to show what a more thorough embrace of ontological holism (and particularly its empirical variant) might mean for liberal theory.

Chapter Two introduces the distinction which drives the argument of this thesis. It is devoted to identifying and describing the relevant axes of debate which characterise the liberal-communitarian agenda, and draws on Charles Taylor's arguments to distinguish between 'ontological' claims about social embeddedness, and 'normative' claims about the value of community.⁶ Some of the most frequently evoked communitarian arguments are correspondingly categorised as either ontological or normative. This distinction is defended as revealing two very different ways of interpreting communitarian texts. Taylor claims that many liberals have conflated the two types of argument, and have, consequently, ignored the more powerful elements of the communitarian critique. This is the possibility to be explored in the following chapters. Certainly even brief consideration of more recent communitarian writing such as Etzioni's more overtly 'political' texts, reveals the extent to which 'community' has come to be accepted as the main intellectual contribution of the seminal critiques. In

⁵ See for example E. Frazer, 'The Value of Locality' in King & Stoker 1996; J. Gyford, 'Does Place Matter?', *The Belgrave Papers no. 3*, Local Government Management Board, London 1991;

⁶ C. Taylor, 'Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate', in N. Rosenblum, *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1989.

contrast, it is the frequently ignored ontological arguments which will be the focus of this thesis.

Before proceeding to develop and examine the relevance of an ontological critique of liberalism, it is worth assessing whether liberals have been right to reject the tenets of communitarianism when this is interpreted as a story about community. Chapter Three examines the concept of ‘community’ and questions whether or not this concept in fact bears much critical weight. Attention is drawn to the multiplicity of different senses in which this term is used. As well as referring to different types of thing, the term ‘community’ is also argued to hinder separation of normative and ontological communitarian claims through its unavoidably positive connotations. This general confusion makes it virtually impossible to decipher the full intent of communitarian criticism, particularly if we are concerned to separate out the different types of claim in this way. As such, it is recommended that we set aside the term ‘community’ and focus instead upon the specific goods, relations and processes usually subsumed under this heading. The analysis of liberal accounts of socialisation undertaken here is just one example of how such an exercise might progress. A similar rejection of the concept of ‘community’ took place within sociology in the 1960s; a brief description of this move and its benefits reveals some of the potential gains to be had within liberal political theory. This comparison is informative as sociology very clearly needed to separate out the ontological (specifically empirical) and normative aims of any research conducted. Given that we too are interested in social matrix-type claims, the resultant developments within sociology are important, particularly the move from investigation of ‘community’ to that of ‘locality’. As will be seen in the final couple of chapters, liberal political theory may also benefit from a focus on ‘locality’, where it would not from a focus on ‘community’.

Having rejected the option of pursuing ‘community’ as a useful critical tool, Chapter Four continues to defend the idea that liberalism might have something to learn from at least the ontological half of the communitarian debate. This chapter thus analyses ontological holism with a view to determining its critical value. A distinction is drawn between the empirical and conceptual nature of holist claims; the former are concerned with the empirically-demonstrated connections between individuals, institutions and the social matrix, whilst the latter comprise philosophical relations. It is empirically

ontological claims which this thesis seeks to consider. Given that liberals profess to have embraced the reality of citizens existing within a limiting and supporting social matrix it might seem unlikely that communitarian emphasis on social embeddedness could inform liberal theory in any way. This chapter therefore attempts to determine to what extent liberal theorists have in fact embraced holism, and whether they do so in a sufficiently thorough and informed manner. Two possibilities are investigated. Firstly, we need to ascertain whether liberals allow for social actions or structures which cannot be explained in terms of individual actions or beliefs, or any social goods which do not reduce to aggregates of individual goods. This will determine whether or not liberals assume the existence of any ‘irreducibly social’ phenomena. The second possibility is that liberals might not fully embrace the implications of the social composition of the individual, that is, the extent to which individuals are shaped and affected by social actions and structures. Only if liberals do accept the existence and implications of these two types of phenomena can they be said to have adopted the ontologically holist perspective. The further question concerns whether they have adopted this perspective in a full and thorough manner. The suspicion is that they have not. The final task of this chapter is to assess the coverage and detail of the holist accounts offered.

The second half of the thesis undertakes a ‘case-study’ to show what a more thorough embrace of ontological holism (and particularly its empirical variant) might mean for liberal theory. The focus of that case-study is liberalism’s reliance upon certain citizen characteristics, and the account it consequently offers of the development of those characteristics. Thus Chapter Five is devoted to analysis of this account. The intention is to reveal why liberalism should be concerned to improve the depth or coverage of its account of social embeddedness. The claim presented here is that liberals must presume their citizens to possess certain liberal characteristics in order to support the liberal state, both in theory and reality. Some plausible account must therefore be offered of how citizens can come to possess these characteristics, again, both in ideal and real circumstances. This means that liberals have to focus on socialisation, a subject which cannot avoid considering the limits and possibilities of ontological holism. The more controversial claim following on from this is that if liberal theory is not, in its aims, expressly utopian then it must appreciate the empirical limitations placed upon how we can assume such socialisation processes to work. This chapter identifies the relevant citizen characteristics and describes their role within liberal theory, before moving on to

isolate a particular characteristic, namely tolerance, which will be the focus of the empirical case-study in the following chapter.

The main purpose of Chapter Six is to provide an empirical contrast for the previous theoretical account of liberal tolerance and its development. Having come to understand why this characteristic is necessary to support the liberal state, we want to ascertain how plausible the liberal account of its nature and development actually is. Although we could clearly draw on material from any one of a number of social science disciplines, the focus of this chapter is the social psychological account of tolerance and its development. Two different issues are addressed, namely how tolerant people actually are, and how they might be made more tolerant. The intermediate step between these two questions is the issue of why people are less than perfectly tolerant in the first place. The material discussed under this heading focuses on the psychological realities of inter-group relations and thus provides an empirical comparison for liberal assumptions of how political and social relations under conditions of pluralism will operate.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis, drawing together the empirical and theoretical material of the preceding chapters. It asks, first of all, whether the social psychological evidence actually does raise any problems for liberal political theory. After all, it is not clear that any of the liberals discussed in this thesis expect existent liberal states to be perfectly liberal, or indeed, all citizens to be so. Thus, it might be wondered why on earth it should matter that social psychology reveals actual citizens to be less than ideally tolerant. This might just seem a case of stating the obvious. The argument presented in this chapter is that it is not so much the extent of current inter-group intolerance which is alarming but the nature of that intolerance. Two conclusions are drawn out. The first concerns the causes of intolerance. Although theorists such as Rawls may explicitly choose to set aside ‘morally arbitrary’ gender-based or racial differences in their work, the psychological studies of justice behaviour and group conflict show that these sorts of differences are a significant cause of antagonism between groups, both at a social and a political level. Nor does this research suggest that there is a qualitative distinction between the antagonism or intolerance caused by differences of belief and that caused by personal characteristics. The consequences of this particular finding have implications for both the liberal account of tolerance, and the focus of liberal theory more generally.

The second conclusion drawn concerns the relationship between social and political attitudes of intolerance; liberals tend to ignore the former on the basis that these do not constitute legitimate grounds for state interference. However, the suggestion is that, even if levels of political intolerance are not high enough to concern liberals in any way, the levels of social intolerance are. This possibility is discussed in relation to the roles which tolerance is expected to play in a liberal state, as discussed in Chapter Five.

Having identified the main sources of tension between the liberal and social psychological accounts, it remains to be seen what substantive and theoretical changes would need to be introduced in order to rectify the problems raised. The remaining sections of the concluding chapter are therefore devoted to these two issues.

Specifically, the liberal account of socialisation is assessed in the light of the empirical findings and some awkward questions are raised as to the degree of intervention required to reduce social and political inter-group conflict. At a theoretical level, some consideration is given to the implications of an ontologically holist approach. This culminates with discussion of the role of 'locality' in liberal politics.

Chapter Two

Locating the Liberal-Communitarian Debate

The overall aim of this thesis is to demonstrate the theoretical worth of ‘re-locating’¹ the liberal-communitarian debate. Precisely what is involved in such a ‘re-location’ will be outlined at a later stage, but before we can unravel the reasoning behind such a shift, an assessment of the current ‘location’ of the debate must be presented. As this is a somewhat ambitious task, a couple of caveats are unfortunately required. Firstly, this initial assessment is not intended as a thorough literature review but rather as an analysis of the issues focal to the liberal-communitarian debate. As such this chapter should highlight the axes along which the debate runs whilst attempting to represent fairly the most important theoretical claims of the authors concerned. It will not however attempt to reproduce all critical claims associated with the communitarian position. Secondly, familiarity with the content of the texts referred to will be assumed and, perhaps unsurprisingly, coverage will be skewed in favour of the communitarian case. Relatively little attention will be devoted to outlining the liberal target or response, but some indication will be given of the extent to which liberal theories can deflect such criticism. A more detailed account of liberalism’s embrace of some communitarian claims will be presented in Chapter Four. For the moment then, the aim is simply to locate the current direction and force of communitarian critique so that we can identify a suitable framework of analysis within which liberalism’s current stance might be evaluated.

The first section of the chapter will briefly address some common methodological difficulties associated with interpretation of the liberal-communitarian debate. Having faced and settled these difficulties we can move on in the second section to establish an appropriate analytical framework. This framework will then be applied in the third section, which will seek to characterise and categorise the content of the mainstream academic communitarian debate, addressing the seminal works of Sandel, Walzer, Taylor and MacIntyre. Justification for such a selection is simply that these theorists set

¹ The rhetorical relevance of this apparently geographical term will become apparent later in the thesis.

the terms of the debate, and their work still represents the most sophisticated, if not the most explicit, expression of communitarianism. The final section of the chapter will consider the features of the more explicit, self-professedly ‘communitarian’ texts, such as Etzioni’s overtly political *The Spirit of Community*², and *The New Golden Rule*³ or Bell’s more philosophical *Communitarianism and its Critics*.⁴

I Difficulties of Analysing Communitarian Critique

Any attempt to analyse communitarian critique must overcome several methodological difficulties. The first of these is a simple problem of identification. Whilst theorists such as Michael Walzer, Alisdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel are typically assumed to have written seminal communitarian texts, they would not choose to describe themselves as ‘communitarians’.⁵ Others who do consciously adopt this denomination, such as Amitai Etzioni, write for a more explicitly political (rather than solely theoretical) end. Indeed, Daniel Bell stands as the only self-espoused communitarian to emerge from the political theory camp. A further difficulty relates to the development of ideas within several texts by a single author. Should Michael Sandel’s republican position in *Democracy’s Discontent*⁶ be read as extending or building upon the more explicitly communitarian claims of *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*⁷, for example? There is therefore a need to justify one’s choice of ‘communitarian’ texts and corresponding arguments. The analysis laid out in this paper will focus largely on the seminal literature, with some reference made to later texts by Bell and Etzioni only to illustrate the general direction which positive communitarian claims might take. Likewise, the analysis will focus on the core ideas of early communitarian critiques, although some recourse will be made to other less central texts by the authors concerned where this serves to expand upon the points made in those critiques. This limited focus is justified by the purpose of the thesis which seeks to re-

² A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community*, Crown Publishers, New York 1993.

³ A. Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule*, Basic Books, New York 1996.

⁴ D. Bell, *Communitarianism and its Critics*, OUP, Oxford 1993.

⁵ Taylor in Rosenblum 1989, M. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, CUP, Cambridge 1982, rep. 1998, Preface p. ix-x; M. Walzer, ‘The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism’, *Political Theory*, 18, 1990, A. MacIntyre ‘A Partial Response to My Critics’, in J. Horton & S. Mendus, (Eds.), *After MacIntyre*, Polity, Oxford 1994.

⁶ M. Sandel, *Democracy’s Discontent*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1996.

⁷ Sandel 1998.

assess and apply some of the less well recognised arguments propounded in the *original* communitarian critique of liberalism.

The second hurdle to be overcome concerns the different targets of various communitarian critiques. Although all complaints can generally be taken as addressed at liberalism generally, some (such as Sandel's first criticisms) are more pointedly directed at a specific target, namely Rawls, and his formulation of a theory of justice. Other texts, such as MacIntyre's *After Virtue*⁸ choose to attack the Rawlsian position only in so far as it reflects the more broadly problematic nature of liberalism.⁹ There is thus a danger of running together two types of critique which are simply not intended or expected to be comparable. Mulhall and Swift display an exemplary awareness of this point, and avoid any confusion by analysing the positions of central communitarian theorists both individually and thematically.¹⁰ This analysis will not be repeated here, but concerned readers should refer to that text. Mulhall and Swift's overall contention, which will be maintained here, is that despite the differences of focus several common themes can indeed be seen to emerge from the texts considered.

Two further complications concern the interpretation and classification of communitarian claims. The first problem comes simply in extracting anything like a clear theoretical position from communitarian texts. It has often been observed that these texts focus far more heavily on criticism than they do on reconstruction or suggestion of alternative accounts. As Rosenblum complains;

“We know what communitarians find loathsome: preoccupation with rights, most of all, and a dreary, adversarial system of justice; also, rampant commercialism and arid utilitarianism. Their aversions are plain. But they are disinclined to propose alternatives. Communitarianism is more often an invocation than a reference to specific political forms. It's not just that the parameters of community are vague, its character at the most general level is undefined.”¹¹

The reason for such reticence, Rosenblum claims, is the romantic origins of communitarian sympathies which will not translate easily into institutional recommendations. Whether or not we accept this particular explanation, any suggestion

⁸ A. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Duckworth Press, London, 1981.

⁹ Indeed the ultimate target of MacIntyre's critique is not simply the theoretical inadequacies of liberalism, so much as the desperate state of mankind at this stage in time such that they are driven to propound such a theory.

¹⁰ Mulhall & Swift 1996.

as to how we might best unravel communitarian claims is certainly welcome. One such suggestion is explicitly raised by Charles Taylor himself in the same collection of essays.¹² Given that this suggestion is voiced by a supposed ‘communitarian’ there would seem to be good reason to attend to it closely.

In response to commentators such as Rosenblum, Taylor explains why the parameters of ‘community’ should appear vague. He claims that there are in fact two very different types of issue to be found in communitarian texts, and that there has been a general tendency to conflate these two. Thus fascination solely with the positive claims or institutional arrangements of ‘community’ actually ignores a much larger and far more important set of themes. The distinction which Taylor draws is between ontological and advocacy issues. Ontological issues concern the fundamental building blocks of a theory. They summarise the account of human nature and identity which we take as basic in order to then arrive at a particular world-view. They are ‘ontological’ because they capture our thoughts that this is just the way things *are*. Advocacy issues, by contrast, are those substantive claims which comprise a particular moral standpoint. They enable us to express how we think things *should be*. This way of dividing up communitarian claims would seem to have much to recommend it. Not only is it articulated by one of the theorists responsible for establishing the communitarian critique; it does also capture a valuable difference in the types of claim that any political theorist might be concerned to make. Taylor’s distinction will therefore be adopted as a productive analytical tool.

The other interpretative confusion which complicates our analysis of the liberal-communitarian debate concerns the distinction between philosophical and political critique. To further heighten confusion this distinction can itself apply to the liberal-communitarian debate in two ways. At the simplest level, it describes the general purpose of the arguments or the type of debate these authors take themselves to be engaged in. Communitarianism (or liberalism) is political where it is intended to support a political platform or enter into the general party-political agenda. Thus, for example, Etzioni’s recent work is explicitly directed towards gathering support for a communitarian political movement. The opposite of this understanding of political

¹¹ N. Rosenblum, ‘Pluralism and Self-Defence’, in Rosenblum 1989, p. 215.

¹² Taylor in Rosenblum 1989.

would be philosophical communitarianism where that body of work is intended solely to contribute to abstract philosophical debate rather than move directly for real-world political change. MacIntyre's *After Virtue* or Sandel's first book would qualify as philosophical communitarianism in this sense.

The second philosophical/political distinction describes the substantive content rather than the role of the relevant texts. The distinction is visible in the contrasting subject-matter of some of Sandel's communitarian critique. Sandel's arguments in *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* attacked the philosophical basis of liberalism, and in particular the incoherence of Rawls' supposedly metaphysical claims about the nature of the self. Rawls has since denied that he was making any such sort of metaphysical claims, and the debate has moved on. Sandel's later criticisms of liberalism, for example, respond to these changes in the liberal agenda by focusing on the insufficiency of liberal principles and procedures to motivate or guide citizen action in contemporary society.¹³ Aspects of the communitarian critique might thus be described as political rather than philosophical in the sense that they focus on the way that politics is actually practised rather than on abstract theoretical claims.

Whilst the conclusions of this thesis will not turn on whether or not these distinctions in fact hold, they may well be invoked in the course of the argument. Generally the focus will rest on the seminal communitarian texts and authors, thus Etzioni's populist politicised texts will not receive much attention beyond this initial chapter. This thesis is therefore concerned with philosophical rather than political communitarianism. Within that school of thought we will consider both philosophical and political claims, although the latter will probably receive most attention.

It should now be clear that none of these four potential difficulties raise any real problems for the current project. The choice of material to be covered is relatively easy to justify, and previous analysis of the texts has successfully united them despite their differing targets. The actual interpretative project to be undertaken here will largely follow Taylor's recommended distinction between ontological and advocacy claims. The suitability of this approach can only really be determined in the course of the thesis.

¹³ M. Sandel, 'The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self', reprinted in Avineri & de Shalit, 1992; Sandel 1996.

If it successfully distinguishes between different communitarian claims and helps us to ascertain whether liberalism has anything still to learn, then the approach will have been justified. As for the awkward distinctions between political and philosophical communitarianism, too much focus on this divide would only confuse discussion unnecessarily. They are not immediately relevant to this analysis, thus having characterised their relation to the material addressed they will be left aside until that point where they become more salient.

II The Framework for Analysis

The decision to adopt Taylor's distinction between ontological and advocacy claims in analysing communitarian critique is not an arbitrary or even unusual choice. It is not unusual because previous commentators of the liberal-communitarian debate have happily acknowledged the dichotomy. Mulhall and Swift explicitly differentiate between *genetic* and *normative* arguments when looking at the role of the 'social self' in political theory;¹⁴ elsewhere, in similar fashion, they distinguish between communitarian variants of asocial individualism, namely those concerning the *source* of conceptions of the self, and the *content* of certain conceptions.¹⁵ Frazer and Lacey, although they query the specific details of Taylor's account, also go on to differentiate between *social constructionism* and *value-communitarianism*.¹⁶ The adoption of this distinction is not arbitrary in so far as it reflects the central concern of the thesis. The suspicion is that liberalism has too quickly rejected communitarian criticisms in a rather wholesale manner. In particular, the concern is that liberals might still have lessons to learn from the communitarian approach, even if it can legitimately reject its substantive recommendations. Clearly, before this supposition can be investigated it must be shown that the communitarian approach and its normative conclusions can reasonably be separated.

¹⁴ S. Mulhall & A. Swift, 'The Social Self in Political Theory: The Communitarian Critique of the Liberal Subject', in D. Bakhurst & C. Sypnowich (Eds.), *The Social Self*, Sage, London 1995.

¹⁵ Mulhall & Swift 1996, p. 13-18.

¹⁶ E. Frazer & N. Lacey, *The Politics of Community*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead 1993, p. 107-112.

The previous summary of Taylor's claims was necessarily brief. Ontological claims were described above as concerning the way we think things are. Advocacy claims propose the ways things should be. Unsurprisingly there is more to the matter than this, although Taylor's account does not itself offer a great deal more detail. Expanding on the question of ontological issues, he notes that traditionally social theory has been broadly divided between atomist and holist approaches.¹⁷ The former holds that:

"...in (a), the order of explanation, you can and ought to account for social actions, structures, and conditions, in terms of properties of the constituent individuals; and in (b), the order of deliberation, you can and ought to account for social goods in terms of concatenations of individual goods."¹⁸

Whilst this distinction could be a great deal clearer than it is, for current purposes we shall interpret the two central claims in the following manner:

- You can only explain social actions or structures in terms of individual actions, positions or beliefs.
- There are no social goods which cannot be reduced to an aggregated sum of individual goods.

The holist alternative would then be understood as maintaining:

- There are some social actions or structures which cannot be explained in terms of individual actions, positions or beliefs.
- There are some social goods which cannot be reduced to an aggregated sum of individual goods.

Although it does not follow strictly from Taylor's rather inadequate outline of the issues as quoted above, a further claim is needed to make sense of holism:

- Individual actions, positions and beliefs may sometimes be explained only by recourse to social actions and structures.

In other words, this stronger claim maintains that there is no such thing as the asocial individual; what we denote as the individual can only be understood or even identified in so far as we recognise its embeddedness in a social context.

Taylor further asserts that advocacy claims also sub-divide into two broad schools of normative argument. Individualism hinges on the moral belief that individual rights and freedoms are morally primary; collectivism holds the opposite, such that a collective

¹⁷ Taylor in Rosenblum 1989, p. 159.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

good should take priority. The fundamental danger, as far as Taylor is concerned, is our tendency to conflate ontological and advocacy statements, this tendency being all the more explicable given the apparent similarity between atomism and individualism, and holism and collectivism respectively. Such mistaken assumptions would justify the beliefs that communitarianism must prioritise the common good rather than individual welfare, and that liberalism, in prioritising individual good, must adopt a ruthlessly atomistic perspective. Thus Taylor claims that previous inaccuracy led liberal critics to read Sandel's seminal text *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* as pursuing both a holistic approach and collectivist agenda. In fact, Taylor argues, only the former is true. Recognising the distinction between the two sets of issues is essential if we are to avoid criticising or praising communitarian theorists for claims they have not made. Likewise it should prevent us from assuming that liberalism is necessarily committed to an unrealistic atomistic ontology.

It should be noted however, that Taylor does accept some inter-relation between ontological assumptions and advocacy claims. Certainly the way that we think things are cannot determine how things should be. To deny this would be to fall foul of the naturalistic fallacy. However, the assumptions that we make about ontology can *restrict* the options available to us at the normative level:

“Once you have opted for holism, extremely important questions remain open on the level of advocacy; but at the same time, one’s ontology structures the debate between the alternatives, and forces you to face certain questions. Clarifying the ontological question restructures the debate about advocacy.”¹⁹

Certain normative recommendations become implausible on the basis that they just do not fit with the underlying assumptions made about how the political and social world works. This point may well seem confusing at this introductory stage; it should become clearer when invoked at later stages of the thesis.²⁰

Moving beyond Taylor's own very basic account of ontology and advocacy, two further distinctions need to be clarified before we can usefully employ this framework to

¹⁹ Taylor in Rosenblum 1989, p. 181.

²⁰ It should be noted that Taylor's position is not without its critics. Utilising a gender-based critique, Frazer and Lacey argue that our ontological or methodological assumptions can predispose us towards certain substantive commitments. For example, they claim that the atomistic construction of the Rawlsian original position cannot escape its inherently masculine viewpoint to recommend anything but a gendered, non-affective interpretation of justice. (Frazer & Lacey 1993, p. 187-8.)

analyse the liberal-communitarian debate. The first concerns the different elements of ontological claims; the second concerns the relation between ontology and methodology. Although neither of these distinctions is immediately relevant, they may be invoked throughout the thesis, and as such should be introduced here. The first distinction recognises that questions of ontology can admit of two related forms of response, namely empirical and philosophical. Mulhall and Swift, in their discussion of holism clearly distinguish between these two variants:

“The first relies upon empirical evidence and arguments. Familiar processes of socialization make it banal to observe that human beings derive their self-understandings (and much more) from the social contexts into which they happen to be born, and more interestingly perhaps, the deliverances of developmental psychology suggest that it is implausible that human beings could develop their full potential in the absence of social structures and interaction with others. The second approach, however would rely upon conceptual analyses of the kind familiar in philosophy. We may, for example, argue that no creature could count as a human being if it lacked certain rational capacities, and then attempt to demonstrate that nothing would be identifiable as a manifestation of rationality outside certain complex communal contexts.”²¹

In general terms, when we want to answer the ontological question ‘does x exist?’, we have to determine not solely whether x physically exists (an empirical question), but also whether that existing object meets all the relevant criteria to count as an ‘x’. An example may clarify this somewhat obscure statement. Putting aside thornier existential questions such as ‘does anything really exist?’ for the moment, it would appear easy to answer questions such as whether or not a particular table exists. It simply involves making an empirical observation, either seeing or touching the object in question. The philosophical/conceptual query demands a more detailed response. It asks whether that physical object fulfils the criteria which would make it a table; that is, the question becomes not ‘does the table exist?’, but ‘is it a table that exists?’. The relevant criteria might include appearance (four legs and a top), function (can be used to eat off), convention (do other people regard things like this as tables?) and so on.

Perhaps this all seems just obscure and irrelevant from a political perspective. But if we recall Taylor’s claim as noted above, the relevance should become clearer. In claiming that a human being cannot become a person in the absence of a social context, Taylor, an ontological holist, is making both an empirical and a philosophical claim. It is

²¹ Mulhall & Swift in Bakhurst & Synopwich 1995, note 1, p.121.

important to distinguish between the two types of claim because, as Mulhall and Swift go on to point out, the two are often conflated or confused.²² Whether one is a philosophical or empirical holist or both, there will still be reason to focus on the formative import of social context. But depending on which element is emphasised, the implications for political theory may differ substantially.

The first reason for this is that the philosophical element of ontological claims can introduce controversial, arguably even value-laden, assumptions.²³ This may seem less obviously true if we are concerned to determine under what conditions a table might exist, as most people would agree on the characteristics of 'table-ness'. In politics however, the role of ontology is to fix the building-blocks of political theory, and consequently it must deal with concepts slightly more complex than tables or chairs. Vitally, political theory is concerned with the conditions under which persons can be said to exist, and unfortunately the concept of 'personhood' is more obviously open to interpretation. Once we move beyond the merely biological definition which demarcates the 'human', there simply is no universally-accepted, non-problematic set of criteria which define personhood. On different accounts, personhood requires rationality, or autonomy, or capacity for evaluation, or for creativity, or all of the above. Thus ontological holists might differ in their account of the social or political context necessary for the survival of personhood simply because they disagree as to what counts as a 'person'.

This observation that philosophical ontological claims are value-laden is surprising in that ontological claims were first invoked in the introductory chapter in order to distinguish between different types of communitarian claims, at which stage they were contrasted with normative claims. This distinction implied that ontological claims were value-neutral whilst normative claims were not. In contrast, the distinction being raised here between philosophical and normative ontological claims implies that some

²² Sandel's depiction of Rawls' ontology as 'philosophical anthropology' is a case in point (Sandel 1998 p. 48-50). On the one hand Sandel is emphatic that such a conception of the self is arrived at reflectively rather than through empirical study; yet on the other, Sandel's own alternative account of the self and its inseparability from constitutive attachments seems to depend on some story of psychological development that must in part be empirically-based.

²³ The term 'value-laden' should be used with some care here. It is not supposed to imply that there is any *prescriptive* element to ontological claims. Rather it is to note that ontological claims can be particularly controversial when they concern such issues as personhood, because unlike concepts such as 'table' they

ontological claims may themselves be value-laden. This would seem to undermine the usefulness of Taylor's distinction as an analytical tool for unravelling communitarian criticisms of liberalism. However, this need not be the case.²⁴ Although philosophical ontological claims cannot be truly value-neutral, they are not normative in the sense of being prescriptive. Rather they concern the way we think things are. One may disagree that this is the way things are, but there is almost no possibility of meaningful debate between proponents of different interpretations. The assumptions are just too fundamental. Thus what matters in the distinction between ontological and normative claims is not that the former are value-neutral and the latter value-laden, but that the former are claims about the nature of existence rather than the nature of the ideal.

The second reason why it is important to note the distinction between empirical and philosophical ontological claims is that pursuing one sort of claim rather than the other would have significant implications for the content of political theory. Philosophical holism requires that we acknowledge the philosophical inter-relation between certain crucial characteristics of personhood and certain features of the social matrix. Thus as Mulhall and Swift suggest, we might believe that in order to count as a human being, we would have to possess certain rational capacities; however as rationality is only identifiable in certain complex communal relationships or activities there is a conceptual link between humanity and the social matrix.²⁵ Empirical holism, on the other hand, directs our attention towards the particular processes, relationships or institutions which actually shape our characters in so many ways. The likelihood is that any attempt to determine the full empirical details of how we are so shaped would result in an impossibly complex and detailed account. However, even if this is unobtainable it is entirely plausible that we could still learn a great deal from looking at the findings of existing studies from disciplines such as sociology and psychology. Thus whereas philosophical holism entails that we should more carefully reflect on the conceptual requirements of personhood, empirical holism demands that we look to research on how such characteristics are best engendered in the real-world.

contain a *moral* element. That is, in many cases, the fundamental features which we choose to invoke in defining the 'person' are those to which we also attribute fundamental moral value.

²⁴ Once again it does, however, reveal the inadequacies of Taylor's brief account.

²⁵ Mulhall & Swift in Bakhurst & Synopwich 1995, note 1, p. 121.

Although it is possible to separate ontological claims into these two different sorts of claim, in fact both are entailed when we ask questions such as ‘does x exist?’ or, ‘what are the conditions under which x can exist?’. Thus in so far as the political theorists studied in this thesis debate the conditions necessary for the survival and stability of a liberal individuals, they too must address both types of claim.²⁶ That Taylor’s distinction has had to be unravelled in this complex manner must make us realise that as it stands his distinction is inadequate and over-simplified. Having now ascertained the more precise definition and implications of ontological claims, we should be able to apply the normative/ontological distinction with sufficient precision.

The final distinction to be introduced here concerns the relation between ontology and methodology. The description ‘methodological individualist’ is often applied (perhaps misguidedly) to liberal theorists. This description usually means that for the purposes of methodology, individuals will be taken as the fundamental unit of explanation. Notably this does not mean that individuals are necessarily proven or believed to be the fundamental unit, in some cases it simply represents an assumption central to the chosen methodology (perhaps because it simplifies the project). In most cases however there is a direct link between a theorist’s ontological position and his methodological approach. Taking those ontological assumptions seriously would mean incorporating them into the way a theory works. It would be extremely odd, not to say incoherent, for someone who explicitly espoused a holist ontology to adopt a methodologically individualist stance. If a political theorist believes that individuals just are socially embedded in a wider social matrix, then it would make sense for her to take account of socialisation processes in constructing a theory of justice. To neglect these would be to ignore the methodological implications of the chosen ontological stance. In other words, there is highly likely to be a link between a theorist’s ontology and their chosen methodology. Assumptions about the former feed into and shape the latter. All in all, this is just a rather lengthy way of justifying the claim that a holist ontology implies and informs a holist methodology.

²⁶ Of course this statement does assume that liberals do expect liberal politics to prove applicable in the real world. If their theoretical endeavours were just utopian then empirical questions would be simply irrelevant. I take it that most liberals (and certainly the theorists studied here) do believe that liberalism is a realistic and potentially achievable ideal. Thus questions about the empirical conditions required for the survival of liberal persons or citizens are highly pertinent.

The distinction between ontological issues and substantive advocacy (or ‘normative’) issues will be maintained as a central assumption of this thesis. This particular chapter will determine whether or not communitarian themes and claims can usefully be divided along this axis. It should be pointed out in defence of this approach, that upholding the distinction between ontological claims and advocacy or normative claims is by no means unprecedented in critiques of liberal theory. A parallel can be drawn here with feminist critiques, which on the one hand point to the formative import of the family, and on the other recommend certain types of relationship as being more or less morally desirable. Susan Moller Okin, for example, explicitly chastises Rawls for failing to appreciate the full implications of the family’s role in socialising the next generation of citizens.²⁷ She asks how children can learn what truly gender-neutral justice is unless the family is itself just. Because Okin takes ontological holism seriously she thinks about the methodological importance of looking carefully at socialisation processes in a theory of justice. In particular she points out the implications of being socialised within a gendered family environment.²⁸ As well as demonstrating the effects of taking holism seriously, Okin also adopts an explicitly normative stance in her advocacy of such policies as making the economic structure more family-friendly, and crucially, the sharing of childcare between the sexes. Admirable though these normative points are, they are not strictly entailed by her ontological stance, so much as by her feminist perspective. The particular shape of these normative claims may however be influenced by Okin’s holist assumptions; this seems likely if we remember that her holist embrace of socialisation processes would encourage her to attend to the gendered nature of parental role-models, and their likely effects. This is an example of what Taylor meant by ontology ‘structuring the debate’, or ‘forcing you to face certain questions’. It is thus not Okin’s ontological stance which determines her belief that women are equal, but it is that stance which causes her to cash out that belief in terms of the special requirements of just relations between parental role-models. Ontological assumptions can alter the way we apply our normative beliefs, but not the content of those beliefs.

²⁷ S. M. Okin, ‘Justice and Gender’, *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 16, 1, 1987 p. 42-72, or *Justice, Gender and the Family*, Basic Books, New York 1989.

²⁸ Susan James takes a similar tack, considering the political significance of the family in developing the self-esteem of mothers and children. S. James, ‘The Good-Enough Citizen: Female Citizenship and Independence’, in G. Bock & S. James *Beyond Equality and Difference*, Routledge, London 1992.

What this digression shows is that other critiques of liberalism can productively be interpreted in terms of the distinction between ontological and normative criticisms. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to applying this distinction to communitarian claims.

III Analysis of Seminal Communitarian Claims

Previous analysis of communitarian themes and arguments has tended to focus on the content rather than the status of the various claims. Thus Mulhall and Swift's categorisation identifies five common themes, which are shown to run through the relevant texts with lesser or greater frequency.²⁹ Those five are:

- i) The conception of the person, specifically the plausibility of a separation between the individual and all her ends or values.
- ii) Asocial individualism, namely the claim that individuals are necessarily embedded in, and shaped by, their social context.
- iii) Universalism versus cultural particularism/relativism.
- iv) Subjectivism versus objectivism as the favoured account of morality.
- v) Anti-perfectionism versus neutrality, or the issue of whether or not particular conceptions of the good can or should be excluded from politics.

In contrast to this quite broad thematic overview, Buchanan's less analytical list identifies five quite specific communitarian criticisms:³⁰

- i) Liberalism neglects or undermines community, which is a fundamental element of the good life.
- ii) Liberalism undervalues political life, portraying it as purely instrumental, rather than another element of the good life.
- iii) Liberalism does not/cannot provide an adequate account of certain important types of obligation.
- iv) Liberalism assumes a defective conception of the self, not appreciating that the individual is embedded in, and partly constituted by, communal commitments.
- v) Liberalism prioritises justice as the most important social good, instead of seeing it merely as a second-best remedial solution.

²⁹ Mulhall & Swift 1996.

³⁰ Buchanan 1989.

The differences between these two lists immediately reveal the difficulty of analysing the content of communitarian texts. Swift and Mulhall's selection more thoroughly captures the over-arching theoretical (and largely ontological and methodological) themes that identify the communitarian position. Buchanan's notably favours instead the strong normative claims that communitarian texts are assumed to propound. Clearly neither approach tells the whole story, and specifically, neither emphasises the different status of the various claims so categorised.³¹ It is this aim which the analysis presented below is intended to fulfil. Given that our intention is to expand on Taylor's claims concerning the distinctness of different types of communitarian arguments, this analysis will not seek to review all possible communitarian claims. Instead, just five of the most important ontological and advocacy claims to be found in the communitarian critique will be delineated as examples of how a more complete review might proceed.

Ontological Claims

In earlier discussion of Taylor's article, ontological issues were determined to be those which would be accepted as ultimate in the order of explanation, which concerned our most basic assumptions about human nature and identity. The atomism/holism dichotomy was suggested as the traditional axis of debate along which opposition on matters of ontology would be pursued. In terms of the liberal-communitarian debate, the dichotomy was generally assumed to apply such that liberals adopt an atomist perspective on human relations, communitarians a holistic one.³² For the moment, we will set aside the question of whether or not this is an accurate characterisation of the liberal position, and consider instead the relationship between communitarianism and holism. Broadly, the holistic approach generates three sets of ontological claims which are to varying extents discernible in the main body of work by Sandel, MacIntyre, Taylor and Walzer. Although these claims are closely related with some notable overlap, they will be artificially separated for clarity's sake. The first set of claims describe the general concept of socially embedded personhood. The second and third

³¹ Although as previously highlighted, Mulhall and Swift do invoke the distinction in discussion of one of the themes.

³² Taylor's article on atomism certainly seems to assume that certain variants of liberalism (namely those maintaining the primacy of rights) rests on such an ontological and methodological foundation. Although quite what is meant by 'primacy of rights' is somewhat unclear, it is most likely that Taylor is addressing his critique to libertarians such as Nozick rather than egalitarian liberals such as Rawls. (C. Taylor, 'Atomism', in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, CUP, Cambridge 1985).

sets of claims simply expand on this notion, spelling out the implications of the holist position. Thus the second sub-section will focus on implications at the societal level, specifying the role of irreducibly social goods in communitarian writing; whilst the third considers the holist account of the individual, addressing the relationship implied between an individual and her ends.

i. Social embeddedness and communitarian personhood

The central assumption of the holistic approach is that individuals and society are crucially inter-related; individuals are shaped by their social context, and in turn the context is moulded by individuals. The individual can thus only be properly understood when his social embeddedness is accounted for. This is the assumption which will be unravelled in this and the two following subsections. Of all the authors to be considered here, Taylor defends this contention most explicitly in both *Sources of the Self* and in earlier articles such as ‘Atomism’.³³ He expressly denies the possibility that man can be self-sufficient, where this is interpreted in the Aristotelian sense of meaning that man cannot survive as *man*, alone. This ‘social thesis’ is as much a statement about the requirements of mental, moral and personal survival as it is about mere biological needs;

“What has been argued in the different theories of the social nature of man is not just that men cannot physically survive alone, but much more that they only develop their characteristically human capacities in society. The claim is that living in a society is a necessary condition of the development of rationality, in some sense of this property, or of becoming a moral agent in the full sense of the term, or of becoming a fully responsible, autonomous being.”³⁴

Two claims, of differing strength, can be seen as extending from this argument. The first is the simple and arguably obvious claim that a human being could not become a person without a social context. Historically rare observations of children raised in the wild attribute few recognisably human traits to them. More interesting from the political point of view is the claim that certain social, political or economic conditions may be more or less necessary in the development of such vital human capacities. If these capacities are morally or politically valued, then we might wish to award rights to individuals to protect their exercise. Taylor claims, however, that to prioritise rights is self-defeating, for these rights may prevent the state from adopting a more active role in

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

its efforts to inculcate the requisite capacities. The state may hold that national service helps to inculcate a sense of responsibility and agency, but such a requirement could be thought to clash with certain individual rights, for example. Taylor thus claims that states may face awkward tensions between individuals rights claims and the need to preserve a certain moral, social or political context. In other words, this broad claim about the social embeddedness of individuals provides a reason for political theory (and indeed states) to focus on the social matrix, and possibly to seek ways of shaping it.

A more specific claim holds that personhood is dependent upon the development of shared evaluative understandings. This is a theme which is most thoroughly explored in *Sources of the Self*, but which is also explicit in Taylor's earlier essays.³⁵ He argues that what makes us uniquely human, and particularly what makes us individuals, is our self-understanding. We have some self-understanding of ourselves, but we are also partly constituted by that self-understanding. Such self-understanding is only possible if we can understand ourselves as oriented within moral space;

“To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand.”³⁶

This claim may sound somewhat opaque, but an analogy may help clarify the point. Humans are commonly thought to be the only animals who, on perceiving their reflection in the mirror, recognise themselves. When we look in the mirror, we understand that ‘that’s me, that’s how I look’. But at the same time, we don’t just look in the mirror in order to recognise ourselves; we do so in order to see what we look like, and that image has important implications for how we see ourselves, and consequently for how we act, how we *are*. Taylor’s concept of ‘strong evaluation’ describes the backdrop of values, conceptions of worth or importance against which self-understanding is possible; the equivalent in the mirror example would be a background of understandings about what is short, what is tall, thin, fat, pretty, plain, and so on. Unless the distinctions are understood as a reference point, there can be no process of

³⁵ See Taylor 1985, introduction p. 3, and the essay ‘Interpretation and the Sciences of Man’, p. 15-57; Taylor 1989, p. 4-5, p. 27-9.

³⁶ Taylor 1989, p. 27.

self-understanding. This point is most clearly expressed in the early essay

'Interpretation and the Sciences of Man':

“In other terms, to be a full human agent, to be a person or a self in the ordinary meaning, is to exist in a space defined by distinctions of worth. A self is a being for whom certain questions of categoric value have arisen, and received at least partial answers. Perhaps these have been given authoritatively by the culture more than they have been elaborated in the deliberation of the person concerned, but they are his in the sense that they are incorporated into his self-understanding, in some degree and fashion. My claim is that this is not just a contingent fact about human agents, but is essential to what we would understand and recognize as full, normal human agency.”³⁷

As Mulhall and Swift point out, this crucial relationship between selves and self-interpretation implies that we just cannot ask what people are in abstraction from those self-interpretations. Personhood can only be understood in relation to a back-ground of evaluations within a particular community of other evaluators.³⁸ It is important to note three implications of this quotation. Firstly, the content of the relevant evaluative distinctions is not limited to simply moral values, nor is this an argument about certain relationships or attachments as constitutive. Secondly, this is not simply a contingent psychological claim; it is just as much a philosophical analysis of what personhood consists in. Thirdly, these distinctions do not have to be accepted as a whole; deliberation and disagreement is accepted. But as Taylor points out elsewhere, even disagreement assumes a common vocabulary, so there must be some basis of shared understanding of normative distinctions.³⁹

Both Sandel and MacIntyre present a similar account of socially embedded personhood. Sandel's conception of the self in particular bears many similarities to that of Taylor's. He too draws attention to the identity-constituting aspect of our conception of the self.⁴⁰ Further, his description of the overall methodological approach to the project of arriving at a conception of the self as that of 'philosophical anthropology',⁴¹ has been claimed to point to obvious similarities with Taylor's approach as outlined above.⁴² Unlike Taylor's broader purpose, however, the object of criticism in *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* is explicitly deontological liberalism, and particularly Rawls' expression of

³⁷ Taylor 1985, p. 3.

³⁸ Mulhall & Swift 1992, p. 110

³⁹ Taylor 1985, p. 39.

⁴⁰ Sandel 1982, p. 50.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

this. Consequently, Sandel's version of a holistic conception of the self has to be disentangled from his critique of the Rawlsian alternative. More details of this account will be revealed in the third sub-section.

MacIntyre's account of socially-embedded personhood focuses less on self-interpretation than on intelligibility. In fact the two concepts play similar roles. Just as personhood for Taylor necessitated a larger evaluative framework within which constituting self-interpretations might make sense, so for MacIntyre a life must possess narrative unity within which particular actions, particular values and goals will be seen as intelligible. Narrative unity is dependent upon the variety of social and historical roles which characterise an individual life, and identify its goals. Once again, it would be impossible to understand personhood in abstraction from the larger social context of relationships and practices. In order for our behaviour, our values or even our lives to be intelligible, they must be observed within a larger contextual framework. As MacIntyre argues,

“It is now becoming clear that we render the actions of others intelligible in this way because action itself has a basically historical character. It is because we all live out narratives in our own lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives that we live out that the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others. Stories are lived before they are told – except in the case of fiction.”⁴³

On all three accounts then, personhood is inconceivable unless we situate that concept within a wider framework of social relations.

ii. Social embeddedness and social phenomena

The notion of holism or social embeddedness can be broken down into more specific claims about the relationship between the individual and society. Certain of these claims would focus on the irreducibly social nature of some fundamental elements of human life, such as language and morality. Others would address the implications of social embeddedness for an account of individual experience and character. In a sense we could thus address the macro-level and micro-level implications of accepting a holist ontology. It is the former which will be addressed in the current subsection.

⁴² S. Mulhall & A. Swift 'Liberalisms and Communitarianisms: Whose Misconception?' *Political Studies*, 41, 4, 1993, p. 651.

⁴³ MacIntyre 1981, p. 197.

A relatively non-controversial claim would observe the degree to which language arises within a social context. Although much philosophical debate has sought to determine the conceptual feasibility of a private language or idiolect, the more common understanding of language is of a system of sounds or symbols which facilitate communication between persons. Quite apart from its actual use language is, in its origins and function, intrinsically social. Taylor emphasises this point if only because it forces us again to consider the relation between interpretation and a community within which the rules or conventions for interpretation are to be found.⁴⁴ Tying language even more closely to a particular social context is Taylor's contention that the connection between language, culture and experience is not arbitrary;

“The range of human desires, feelings, emotions and hence meanings is bound up with the level and type of culture, which in turn is inseparable from the distinctions and categories marked by the language people speak. The field of meanings in which a given situation can find its place is bound up with the semantic field of the terms characterizing these meanings and the related feelings, desires, predicaments.”⁴⁵

The extent to which members of different cultures do have subtly different experiences in line with their different cultures and languages should not be interpreted as implying radical problems of communication and translation; this observation is most convincing at the common sense level which acknowledges simply that certain words are indeed not fully translatable across cultures. For Taylor, common language and meaning are the most basic requirement of community,⁴⁶ in that through this people can come to understand and *share* certain norms, practices, actions and feelings.⁴⁷ It is worth noting that common meanings are not taken to necessitate common values. For Taylor at least, common meanings facilitate discussion and debate over values, but they certainly do not guarantee consensus. A linguistic community may share a common world, but such shared understandings need not necessarily extend all the way into the moral realm.

A second example of communitarian acceptance of irreducibly social phenomena does however suggest a relationship between social context and value. Walzer is the clearest

⁴⁴ Taylor 1989, p. 35.

⁴⁵ Taylor, 1985, p. 25.

⁴⁶ The term 'community' is problematic in the context of current discussion, in that although it is referred to by these authors in their supposedly ontological claims, it is generally a value-laden concept with no clear empirical meaning. The concept of community and the implications of this will be discussed in the next chapter. For present purposes I acknowledge that such reference to community may muddy the clarity of the distinction between ontological and advocacy issues, and will endeavour to avoid using the term except where it is unavoidable in order faithfully to represent the relevant theorist.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

advocate of this position. In *Spheres of Justice* he argues that goods have social meanings.⁴⁸ They attain significance and purpose depending on the conventions surrounding their interpretation. Thus the meaning and value of goods is socially and culturally determined; neither of these can be assessed in a cultural vacuum. Walzer applies this argument specifically to justice, arguing firstly that there is no single unifying principle of justice because such principles vary with both the good to be distributed and the societal context of the distribution. Secondly he holds that these many principles are derived from the various understandings of social goods which are held by people in different places at different times. There can be no such thing as purely rationally derived principles of distribution, acceptable to all, because as he notes,

“People conceive and create goods, which they then distribute among themselves. Here the conception and creation precede and control the distribution. Goods don’t just appear in the hands of distributive agents who do with them as they like or give them out in accordance with some general principle. Rather, goods with their meanings – because of their meanings – are the crucial medium of social relations; they come into people’s minds before they come into their hands; distributions are patterned in accordance with shared conceptions of what the goods are and what they are for.”⁴⁹

He further adds that none of the goods which are the medium of distributive justice can be privately or idiosyncratically valued; all must have shared meaning, indeed shared value, which recommends their fair distribution. These goods are thus social goods in the sense that their value is determined by social meanings, where this ‘social’ cannot be reduced to individual desires or choices. What people value is thus dependent upon their social context and the social meanings they find therein.⁵⁰

MacIntyre also works with the assumption that morality develops from a particular social context, and importantly for him, at a particular stage in history. His virtue-based theory of morality supposes the existence of social practices and rules, which are in turn reliant upon a firm foundation of shared meanings and understandings. Like Walzer, MacIntyre assumes that moral consensus can arise out of such shared understandings. Indeed, from his perspective such consensus is essential, for it is this which provides the

⁴⁸ M. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, Blackwell, Oxford 1983.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6-7.

⁵⁰ Social context does not *determine* what people value, in the sense that Walzer does acknowledge the possibility of dissent and disagreement. It is however unclear, at least from the arguments presented in *Spheres of Justice*, precisely how a Walzerian state could ‘be faithful to the disagreement’. (Walzer 1983, p. 313)

standards against which we can identify the virtues relevant to our time. He claims however that it is possible for our moral values and our shared understandings or practices to pull apart, a phenomenon which he believes has occurred in contemporary liberal society. This suggests that, at least in MacIntyre's view, the link between culture, morality and individual experience is not so tightly woven. However he does hold that such a cleavage is somehow unnatural, and unstable; certainly he believes it to be normatively undesirable. He argues that contemporary individualist and pluralist culture has apparently made it impossible for us to find in common social practices a set of rules according to which we can live.

“It is not just that we live too much by a variety and multiplicity of fragmented concepts; it is that these are used at one and the same time to express rival and incompatible social ideals and policies and to furnish us with a pluralist political rhetoric whose function is to conceal the depth of our conflicts.”⁵¹

One of his major concerns is therefore the need for a moral anchor, a foundation for our moral beliefs in the social practices of our society. This argument quite clearly intertwines both ontological and normative claims, but they are to a degree separable. MacIntyre's predilection for virtue-based morality does not represent a fundamental fact about human beings and their inter-twining with morality and society; instead it is just one aspect of his particular normative stance. As is clear from Walzer's case, a theorist could believe that political or moral values are embedded in a certain social context without accepting that this implied a virtue-based account of these values. Instead, what these theorists share is their common acceptance that moral or political values are embedded in a network of social relations and social meaning and that they therefore cannot be reduced to individual or abstract theoretical choices.

iii. The socially embedded individual

This aspect of communitarian holism follows on closely from the arguments delineated above. Sandel, MacIntyre and Taylor all emphasise the constitutive role of socially shared values or meanings for individual identity or personhood. Having previously addressed this issue from the societal end of the scale, it remains to ascertain what this holistic account implies for our understanding of the individual. At the heart of these theorists' respective accounts is a dissatisfaction with the liberal view of the relation between the individual and her ends, namely the view that we are ultimately separable

⁵¹ MacIntyre 1981, p. 235.

from all our ends. All three challenge this view, arguing that such an assumption fails to do justice to our deepest self-understandings. A more holistic conception of the person is presented as in part deriving its identity and perspective from the various ends or attachments it adopts. As such, these theorists query the extent to which we can, for the purposes of justice, completely set aside such crucial features.

Sandel presents the most explicit arguments attacking the liberal ‘unencumbered self’, a criticism, which in his case, is specifically addressed at the construction of Rawls’ original position. Broadly he argues that in order for us to be the sort of individuals for whom justice can be primary, we must be able to see ourselves as separable from our ends; there can be no values, aims or identifications which are so closely tied to defining our identity that they can be said to constitute that identity. Only thus could we be the sort of beings who could enter into the original position, even if this is just a mental exercise in thinking impartially.⁵²

Quite apart from the normative conclusions which Sandel works towards from this premise, several implications are drawn from the single ontological claim that individual identity is constituted partly by the ends and attachments we hold. These claims are worth separating. At least three, and a possible fourth are discernible.

- At the base level, the claim might be interpreted simply as arguing that we cannot *think* of ourselves (even for the purposes of justice) as preceding all our ends and attachments. This would be a psychological claim, and would be interesting if what was said above about the constitutive role of self-conceptions is true, but it would still be possible to deny the claim any political import, as merely representing a contingent limitation of our psychology. This interpretation does not fit well with Sandel’s claim to be undertaking an exercise in *philosophical* anthropology; as with Taylor, both philosophical and psychological elements seem to be required to fit that description.
- A more complex claim would take to heart the Rawlsian response to the above criticism, namely that we only need to think of ourselves as separable from our each of our ends and attachments in turn. Such a claim would make the stronger ontological point that we are constituted in some fundamental way by certain

⁵² Sandel does acknowledge Rawls’ contention that the characterisation of citizens in the original position is never meant to describe the actual motivations of persons in current society. (Sandel 1982, p.61).

attachments or ends, such that if we were forced to think of ourselves as separate from them for the purposes of justice, this would either simply not capture the full value of those attachments or ends, or do great violence to them. This claim is implicit in Sandel's discussion of liberalism's inability to fully appreciate the worth of political community, and seems to best reflect the thrust of his argument.⁵³ MacIntyre's theory of the 'narrative self' instantiates another version of this claim. In that account, individuals are perceived as constituted by their history and the variety of social roles they fill, and it is this selection of roles which make our lives intelligible. Without intelligibility, accountability and narrative, there is no such thing as personal identity in MacIntyre's view.⁵⁴ The arguments of these two authors contend *both* that we cannot *think* of ourselves as preceding our ends for the purposes of justice, and further this is because we *are* so constituted by those ends, and by that very self-understanding.

A third contention presented by Sandel takes a slightly different direction, pursuing the epistemological implications of the 'unencumbered self'.⁵⁵ Taking a line highly reminiscent of Taylor's arguments about shared meanings, Sandel argues that "we are neither as transparent to ourselves, nor as opaque to others as Rawls' moral epistemology requires".⁵⁶ Given that we are all constituted partly by common understandings, attachments and ends, we cannot know ourselves and the sources of our identity fully, but we can know something of those others who share with us that common back-ground. This claim and the claim above are revealed in one of the clearest statements of Sandel's ontological position:

"But to be capable of a more thorough-going reflection, we cannot be wholly unencumbered subjects of possession, individuated in advance and given prior to our ends, but must be subjects constituted in part by our central aspirations and attachments, always open, indeed vulnerable, to growth and transformation in the light of revised self-understandings. And in so far as our constitutive self-understandings comprehend a wider subject than the individual alone, whether a family or tribe or city or class or nation or

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 60-64.

⁵⁴ MacIntyre 1981, p. 190-209.

⁵⁵ Thus far, the only types of claims we have dealt with are the ontological and the normative. Clearly, epistemological claims fall under neither of these headings. This new categorisation should not concern us unduly; it is only really relevant in so far as it helps clarify Sandel's argument. Broadly epistemological claims concern not the nature of existence, or the nature of what should be, but rather the nature and extent of what we as human beings, can know. There is a link between the ontological and the epistemological in so far as how things are would seem to affect what we can know. Assuming that individuals are ontologically connected within a social matrix rather than radically separated may thus make a difference to what we can expect to know or understand about other people.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

people, to this extent they define a community in the constitutive sense. And what marks such a community is not merely a spirit of benevolence, or the prevalence of communitarian values, or even certain ‘shared final ends’ alone, but a common vocabulary of discourse and a background of implicit practices and understandings within which the opacity of the participants is reduced if never finally dissolved.”⁵⁷

There is one further position Sandel could have adopted, although he does not in fact do so. This position would be the strongest objection to the Rawlsian original position, but it is also the most plausible, and hence potentially the most damaging. The claim is that there is a vital distinction between an individual’s values or ends, and her perspective. I may consciously, and in good faith, set aside my particular set of values, but it is far harder for me to also put aside my particular perspective on the world which is not so much a composite of my ends as stained by them. As a white middle-class, reasonably educated liberal female, I may dissociate myself from my consciously-held ends, but can I so easily cast off my white middle-class, reasonably educated female way of thinking about things? In other words, we may well be constituted by our ends and attachments in the sense that they even when we try to put them aside, they affect the way that we think. We can judge our values and beliefs, but we cannot judge the judging mechanism itself.

Remarkably, this claim is not explicitly espoused by any of the other authors considered here, although Taylor’s account of strong evaluation comes closest to incorporating the idea.⁵⁸ His emphatic statements that agency and judgement cannot exist in the absence of an evaluative framework clearly draw attention to the non-neutral nature of the judging mechanisms. In a couple of elusive sentences Taylor seems to acknowledge that we can never fully unravel the assumptions and meanings implicit in our evaluative frameworks;

“The self is partly constituted by its self-interpretations....But the self’s interpretations can never be fully explicit. Full articulacy is an impossibility. The language we have come to accept articulates the issues of the good for us. But we cannot have fully articulated what we are taking as given, what we are simply counting with, in using this language. We can, of course, try to increase our understanding of what is implicit in our moral and evaluative

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ This claim is explicitly espoused by Daniel Bell, who utilises the claim to defend his idea that individuals cut off from their constitutive communities would suffer from severe emotional distress, or ‘damaged human personhood’. Whilst I am not sure I agree with this idea, there does seem to be something plausible in the claim that, even after we have deliberately set aside certain values or ends associated with a particular way of living, other behavioural traits or perspectival effects may remain. (Bell 1993).

languages....But articulation can by its very nature never be completed. We clarify one language with another, which in turn can be further unpacked, and so on. Wittgenstein has made this point familiar.”⁵⁹

Vitality, if we cannot articulate the ‘moral language’ which composes the evaluative framework within which we judge our ends or beliefs, then we cannot subject it to assessment according to the requirements of impartiality. This would seem to be a potentially powerful criticism, so it is odd that it is not more extensively addressed in the communitarian literature.

On this account then, the thesis of social embeddedness maintains primarily that personhood is impossible outside the social context. This is something that few, if any liberals, would deny. The particular details of the various accounts spell out the implications of holism acting at the societal and individual level of theory. Whether or not liberals can or do accept all these implications will be discussed in Chapter Four. For present purposes, discussion must turn to the normative claims which form the most recognisable elements of the communitarian critique.

Normative Issues

Taylor’s set of advocacy issues embraces all those substantive claims that adopt a moral standpoint. These were held to be distinct from ontological claims concerning the fundamental nature of the persons and objects comprising the focus of the theories. In so far as ontological assumptions have been argued to structure the arena of normative debate, these normative themes are clearly limited or shaped by the holistic approach in certain ways. They are, however, dependent on the prior adoption of a particular value-stance and are not derivable from the holistic assumptions themselves. It should be noted that there is a far greater variety of normative claims in the relevant literature than are described here. As such the following analysis identifies just two of the most central concerns; the intention is to provide examples of communitarian normative propositions rather than a thorough and final analysis.

⁵⁹ Taylor 1989, p. 34.

i. Prioritisation of the community and community values.

This first theme recognises communitarian concern for the preservation of the community and certain community values, practices or meanings in the face of the challenge from liberal justice and individual rights. Too much emphasis on the prioritisation of individual liberty could have disastrous consequences for those social practices or institutions which are deemed necessary to sustain certain ways of life. As Taylor was seen to argue in his essay *'Atomism'* once we accept the formative potential of the social context there is reason for politics to manipulate or maintain that context given that we value certain features of citizens which can be so shaped.

Taylor adopts the most extreme position, holding that the social thesis entails we must reject theories of rights primacy. Taylor's normative claim is that liberalism values certain features of citizens to such an extent that it should also be prepared to ensure the survival of the social structures and contexts which support those characteristics. In particular, liberalism must be prepared to accept that individual rights may be reduced in the name of community preservation. Given that none of the mainstream liberals, such as Rawls, Raz, Dworkin or Kymlicka actually maintain that individual rights are always primary, we can only take Taylor to be attacking libertarians such as Nozick. Nor is it the case that most liberal theories ignore the value of community as a desirable social context. Rather, as Buchanan argues, liberals could be regarded as cautious communitarians, who believe that individual rights are indeed the safest and possibly the most effective way of protecting communities.⁶⁰ Indeed, some liberals, most notably Raz⁶¹ and Dworkin⁶² have embraced the holistic implication that our capacity for autonomy is dependent upon the survival of an autonomy-supporting political and social culture.

The second type of argument for the preservation and prioritisation of community is found in MacIntyre and Sandel. Both argue (with Taylor) that because individual identity is constituted by the shared values, understandings and practices, it is vital to support and sustain the community which is the context of those goods. However, in the hands of these theorists the community is perceived as valuable for more emotive

⁶⁰ Buchanan 1989.

⁶¹ J. Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1986.

⁶² R. Dworkin, 'Can a Liberal State Support Art', in *A Matter of Principle*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1986.

reasons also. Community ties are perceived as valuable in their own right, being an important source of fulfilment, expression and identification. Prioritising liberal justice and rights will serve to under-value community or constitutive attachments regarding them as purely chosen or associational goods, and thus not support them fully. Sandel is concerned that these goods are misrepresented by liberalism, and that liberalism thereby ignores and excludes some of the most valuable aspects of political and social community:

“So to see ourselves as deontology would see us is to deprive us of those qualities of character, reflectiveness, and friendship that depend on the possibility of constitutive projects and attachments. And to see ourselves as given to commitments such as these is to admit a deeper commonality than benevolence describes, a commonality of shared self-understanding as well as ‘enlarged affections’.”⁶³

MacIntyre, in similar vein argues:

“For if the conception of a good has to be expounded in terms of such actions as those of a practice, of the narrative unity of a human life and of a moral tradition, then goods, and with them the only grounds for the authority of laws and virtues, can only be discovered by entering into those relationships which constitute communities whose central bond is a shared vision and understanding of goods. To cut oneself off from shared activity in which one has initially to learn obediently as an apprentice learns, to isolate oneself from the communities which find their point and purpose in such activities, will be to debar oneself from finding any good outside of oneself.”⁶⁴

This strand of argument draws another parallel with feminist critique of liberalism.

Whereas theorists such as Okin demand that justice be applied more extensively, even to family relations, other feminist critics hold that liberal justice is inherently masculine and does damage to our affect-laden relationships.⁶⁵ Like the communitarians, these theorists focus on the extent to which liberal justice supposedly ignores or under-values the potential richness and depth of our relations with others.

Sandel’s account of how liberalism undervalues community is particularly clear.⁶⁶ By emphasising this point Sandel hopes to show that the Rawlsian project is not nearly as neutral amongst different conceptions of the good as it claims to be; those persons who find their good in community and other constitutive attachments will find their welfare

⁶³ Sandel 1998, p. 181. A similar concern is expressed in Sandel 1992, p. 23-4.

⁶⁴ MacIntyre 1981, p. 240.

⁶⁵ See for example C. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice; Psychological Theory and Women’s Development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1982; or for a review and extension of the argument, I. Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1990, Chapter 4.

⁶⁶ Sandel 1982, p. 60-64, & p. 149-54.

prejudiced by a liberal state. For Sandel, the good of community lies not simply in its role as a social matrix, or as a source of valuable relationships, it also consists in the common bond that this inter-connection provides. These bonds are themselves crucial if individuals are to accept willingly the sacrifices required of them in the name of justice. As Sandel emphasises in *'The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self'*, even liberal justice must thus assume community. Given that constitutive community is recommended as the means of supporting Rawls' Difference Principle, or Dworkin's affirmative action project, what community provides is attachment and solidarity. Thus, for Sandel, there are several reasons why we should not simply prioritise liberal justice at the expense of community. Community is not simply an essentially constituting element of our identity, it is a form of political and social association valuable both in itself and as a vital support of justice.

As already noted, MacIntyre also accepts the role of community in constituting individual identity and furnishing the individual with a web of fulfilling relationships. However he also awards to community a supporting role, this time in sustaining moral rather than political values or practices. MacIntyre believes that the prioritisation of liberal justice over the good will have severe consequences for public morality. Thus whereas Sandel claimed simply that community is a better form of political and social association, MacIntyre believes that it is also a better form of moral association. As was suggested by the quotation from *After Virtue* presented in the previous section, MacIntyre believes that morality needs an anchor in common practices and tradition. Unless there is common agreement on what a good *man*, or good *x* is for a particular society there can be no normative guide for behaviour, no account of human virtue to which we could aspire. Community is held to be the sort of social association in which such consensus will arise and be sustained. Liberalism's refusal to judge or enforce what is good for the *individual* legitimates and supports pluralism which is the enemy of virtue, and hence public morality.

Although these three accounts offer subtly different reasons for awarding more priority to community and the social matrix, the broad theme that runs through all of them is the normative claim that liberalism must under-value community, and that community is in some way a good thing. Precisely what community means in this context will not be

discussed at the present stage; certainly there would seem to be some mystery in its usage which frequently covers both ontological and normative claims.

ii. Politics of the common good

Although not entirely separable from the set of normative claims identified above, the communitarian recommendation of a politics of the common good does represent one of the other most important advocacy issues. Broadly this claim targets and rejects liberalism's purported neutrality. The neutrality which liberalism aspires to is that of justification, but is consequently manifested also in neutrality of procedure. Both these forms of neutrality are challenged by the communitarian alternative. Although the reasons given for such a rejection vary amongst the authors discussed here, the suggestion is that the state cannot, nor should, aspire to be neutral.

Sandel and Taylor are perhaps clearest in their attack on liberal neutrality. Taylor presents two arguments which rule out the possibility of neutrality in either the justification or procedure of a normative politics. The impossibility of neutrality of justification is brought out in Taylor's discussion of hyper-goods in *Sources of the Self*. Taylor recognises that while individuals value many goods in their lives, some take on a greater importance than others; there is a 'qualitative discontinuity' between such higher goods and other lower order ones.⁶⁷ We regard such hyper-goods as incomparably better, as refusing of compromise, and even use such distinctions to separate and rank lower-order goods. Thus hyper-goods are

“goods which not only are incomparably more important than others but provide the standpoint from which these must be weighed, judged, decided about.”⁶⁸

The superiority of such goods is arrived at through judgements of practical reason – in Taylor's view there are no objective moral facts about the world such that we can simply stumble upon them and know them to be true. Instead we can only refine our moral perspective by living; we can see that one moral position is superior to another only by appreciating how one supersedes the other, resolving previous tensions and inadequacies. The import of this concept for liberalism comes in its debunking of liberal neutrality. If we can only ascertain the moral superiority of one hyper-good by comparing it with previous others, then all such judgements must assume a moral

⁶⁷ Taylor 1989, p. 63.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

standpoint. This suggests that although liberalism claims to rest only on a thin conception of the good, its justification relies upon the acceptance of hyper-goods such as autonomy and equal respect, which in turn are only judged superior as the result of comparison within comprehensive and complex moral frameworks.⁶⁹

With regard to liberalism's purported neutrality of procedure, Taylor argues that this too is problematic. As he emphasises in '*Atomism*', liberalism is premised upon the understanding that certain human capacities are fundamentally valuable in so far as they capture what is distinctively human about us.⁷⁰ If it is the case that liberals do indeed rely upon this premise, then they cannot also be committed to a neutral state, since they must seek to preserve the social and political conditions in which autonomy thrives. Thus some liberal policies would have to be justified not as neutral procedures but as necessarily supporting particular social structures or conceptions of the good.

There is little need to reiterate arguments which run along similar lines. We saw above how Sandel argues for a theoretical inconsistency in liberalism in so far as its procedural approach and rhetoric must undervalue community and all those conceptions of the good which derive their worth from constitutive attachments. By revealing this implicit normative bias in the liberal notion of the 'unencumbered self', Sandel takes himself to be demonstrating both the impossibility of a liberalism which is neutral in its justification, and also the undesirability of this particular bias. Thus liberalism is not neutral, cannot be neutral and should not be neutral. Taylor is more reluctant than Sandel to emphasise this latter point. The difference stems from Sandel's belief in the intrinsic good of community as a constitutive element of our identity and its provision of fulfilling social relations, a view which was discussed in the previous section. It is thus worth noting that whereas Taylor's arguments are more concerned to reveal the methodological and ontological inconsistencies of liberalism *given* its set of normative commitments, Sandel's project actually promotes an alternative vision of social and political relations which comprise the good 'community'. Taylor does not challenge

⁶⁹ Taylor also rejects the procedural interpretation of justice which apparently denies the transitional nature of practical reasoning. Although procedural justice suggests that all that matters is the form of our moral reasoning rather than the content, Taylor claims that this is just another liberal mistake. Ironically, it is only in virtue of their complex and deep moral judgements that liberals feel obliged to assert that moral judgements should adopt this procedural form. We are in effect kidding ourselves that procedural reasoning is even possible.

⁷⁰ Taylor 1985, p. 205.

liberalism's normative contentions whereas Sandel does. However, both of these arguments claim the superiority of a politics of the common good, which alone could acknowledge and unashamedly preserve that which is so valued.

These arguments might seem to belong to the ontological half of the debate, in that they appear merely to develop the implications of pursuing a holistic as opposed to an atomistic approach. However, their inclusion in this classification of normative claims is justified in that they utilise the ontological approach to show that normative claims made by the liberals might have political implications quite different from those previously suggested. In Taylor's case for example, adopting the simple ontological approach and accepting the role of the social matrix would always recommend attention to the formative institutions, but would not recommend state intervention in those institutions were we not keen to prioritise and value a certain human capacity (autonomy in this case). We could recognise the implications of the holist approach whilst simply accepting that human nature and capacities may gradually change. The two normative claims propounded by liberals, that both individual autonomy and individual rights are important, are simply subjected to analysis within a determinedly holist framework, thus the separateness of the two types of claim can still be maintained.⁷¹ Sandel undertakes a similar project with respect to liberal pretensions to neutrality; once again the two types of claim are effectively separate.

Like Sandel, Walzer and MacIntyre more actively challenge the normative claims of liberalism, rather than just investigating their coherence within an ontologically holist framework. Both offer an account of politics as necessarily grounded in the shared understandings of a society. Consequently these theorists assert the desirability of forms of government and politics which will support or instantiate those shared understandings. In so doing Walzer adopts a normative position that directly contradicts the Rawlsian project to prescribe procedures and institutions which are sufficiently abstract to apply to many societies.⁷² His argument that all social goods should be distributed according to their varying social meanings implies a role for government

⁷¹ This recalls Taylor's contention, quoted at fn 9, that ontological issues can shape the range of normative options open to theorists, even though it will not determine which particular normative position is ultimately chosen.

which is at least as interpretative as it is prescriptive. Walzer's recommendations of a politics of the common good are not grounded simply in a belief in the value of community; indeed Walzer is quite circumspect in his usage of this term.⁷³ Instead he bases his claims in a belief about the proper role of politics, and the correct methodological approach for political theory.

MacIntyre's politics is actually closely tied to the requirements of public morality. His writings are less concerned with correct political methodology than with coherent moral life. It is not simply that politics must be true to shared understandings; they must be true to a particular type of shared understanding, namely one which allows the development and recognition of virtue. Only if individuals can live their lives within certain roles and traditions which mark out their goals and ideals can there be any possibility of a rational rather than emotivist conception of the good. According to MacIntyre, it is this possibility of intelligible objective value which is denied to individuals living within a pluralistic, post-Enlightenment world. Community is valued as the network of inter-connected relations within which roles and practices are defined. Thus it is not just that community constitutes individual identity, rather, community alone can provide the social framework necessary for coherent moral life. This adherence to a virtue-based account of both morality and human good entails for MacIntyre a rejection *in toto* of modern liberal government. Although it is clear that any alternative must instantiate a politics of the common good, the precise details of the form of a redeeming modern state are not given. Liberal procedures and laws reveal the contemporary conflict and pluralism which render the notion of virtue obsolete, and the possibility of patriotism, community or a good life unachievable.

Both theorists appeal to a politics of the common good; both, albeit to varying degrees disallow the possibility of dissensus. MacIntyre rejects the notion wholly, whilst Walzer's rather cryptic comments on the need to provide suitable institutional channels to deal with any such conflict suggest that this would be the exception rather than the

⁷² Since *Political Liberalism* has clarified Rawls' position on the cultural origins of his version of liberalism, arguably Rawls is being more true to the shared understandings of his society than Walzer allows.

⁷³ Mulhall and Swift emphasises that Walzer differs from other communitarians in focusing not on the relationship between the individual and the community, but on how we should think about goods and their distribution in a theory of justice. (Mulhall & Swift 1992, p. 128 & 138.)

rule.⁷⁴ This reveals a potentially problematic tendency towards excluding or subduing sources of conflict within a society. Whether or not this is a common feature of all communitarian critiques need not concern us here. The analysis in this chapter should however make clear that a politics of the common good is recommended by these authors with the aim of supporting the structure or values of a community, which is in itself deemed desirable for a variety of different reasons.

IV Communitarianism as an ‘ism’.

Thus far the discussion has focused on the seminal communitarian texts, a justifiable choice in light of the fact that they initiated the debate, and represent highly sophisticated critical positions against contemporary liberal thought. Since the publication of such texts, ‘communitarianism’ has been adopted (but perhaps not welcomed) as an over-arching classification of this writing. Certainly, all four theorists have expressed some hesitation as to whether they accept all the assumptions commonly associated with communitarianism. Ironically, other authors have been far less reluctant to accept the communitarian mantle; Daniel Bell’s *Communitarianism and its Critics* is an explicit attempt to reconstruct and defend a communitarian position from within political theory, whilst Etzioni’s two recent texts have used elements of sociological and political analysis to erect a politicised ‘communitarian platform’ which is to be presented to academics, politicians and citizens alike. Some brief consideration of this new communitarian literature is worthwhile, if only to see the way in which the original debate has been developed and extended. Although only Bell explicitly seeks to further the communitarian agenda within political *theory*, Etzioni does draw on the arguments of the theorists considered here and thus deserves consideration. The same holist/ontological distinction will be applied to this literature, albeit with more limited success. It is notable that although both these accounts accept the holist premises of communitarianism to some degree, both are more concerned to explore and present the normative face of communitarianism.

⁷⁴ Walzer 1983, p.313.

Ontological Claims

The common element to be found in both Bell's and Etzioni's work is an unshaking belief that there is something which we can identify as a community and which should be promoted. Unfortunately, both theorists are far clearer on the latter sort of claims than on the former. Neither theorist satisfactorily addresses the fundamental problem of what a community actually is,⁷⁵ and only Bell offers an explicit account of the ontological relation between individual and community. Both at least acknowledge the basic holistic premise that we are embedded in a social matrix which will mould us in various ways. Beyond this fundamental assumption, the two authors' approaches differ significantly.

It is unsurprising that Bell should present a fairly sophisticated ontological account of the relationship between the individual and the social matrix. His stated purpose is

"...to provide a more systematic statement of the communitarian position from which one can derive certain political measures meant to stem the erosion of communal life and nurture the fragile communities that still bind us together."⁷⁶

Consequently he seeks to analyse and develop the common themes espoused by the four theorists considered here, which involves accepting their holistic ontological position. Bell's account of communitarian ontology draws unashamedly on Taylor's views as outlined at the start of this chapter. Thus he characterises this ontology as

"...the idea that we are first and foremost social beings, embodied agents 'in-the-world' engaged in realizing a certain form of life..."⁷⁷

Bell goes on to acknowledge the distinction between ontological and advocacy arguments, phrasing it in a manner which helpfully clarifies what Taylor might have meant when he himself raised the dichotomy;

"But while one's ontological stance can form the essential background for one's moral stance, I granted that the two are distinct in the sense that ontology can do no more than structure the field of possibilities in a more perspicuous way, or define the options which it

⁷⁵ Bell 1993, p. 91-2; Etzioni 1993, p. 31-32. To be fair, Etzioni does offer a much more thorough definition in the later book, largely in response to the criticism that community cannot be defined. There he describes it thus:

"Community is defined by two characteristics: first, a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often criss-cross and reinforce one another..., and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity – in short to a particular culture." (Etzioni 1996, p. 127)

Why even this definition is not satisfactory should become clearer in the following chapter.

⁷⁶ Bell 1993, p. 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p. 93.

is meaningful to support by advocacy, so another argument is required to explain why one has adopted a particular moral stance.”⁷⁸

Bell further pursues a very Sandelian line, focusing heavily on the extent to which communities can be said to constitute our identity; on this basis, communities are to be preserved and supported in order to prevent individuals from suffering the loss of crucial aspects of their selves. Thus Bell accepts both the broad holist assumption of social embeddedness and the more specific claim concerning the constituting relation between an individual and her ends.

By contrast, Etzioni does not really have a clear ontological basis to his work. His more recent book, *The New Golden Rule* is notably more informed than *The Spirit of Community* but still does not pretend to offer an ontological foundation for the normative prescription therein. Like Bell he does accept social embeddedness as a simple fact;

“In contrast to the libertarian perspective, communitarians have shown that individuals do not exist outside particular social contexts, and that it is erroneous to depict individuals as free agents. We are social animals, members in one another.”⁷⁹

Although he assumes that individuals are situated in communities, he fails to explain the particular nature of this situating relationship. Certainly he holds that individuals can be shaped by their social context; this belief underlies his argument that communities have a ‘moral voice’ which can be employed to shore up individual responsibility.⁸⁰

However, beyond this, little evidence of an explicitly-held ontological position can be found. An earlier article does make some attempt to delineate the relations between individual and community, but only serves to offer some rather mysterious claims. The nearest relation to an ontological claim is the following, classified by Etzioni as an ‘empirical consideration’;

“...while it is possible to theorize about abstract individuals apart from a community, they would have very few of the attributes commonly associated with the notion of the autonomous person. Clearly, *the individual and the community ‘make’ one another*, and individuals are not able to function effectively without deep links to others, to community.”⁸¹

Even if Etzioni clearly does accept some notion of social embeddedness as fundamental there is no sense in which he is concerned to unravel the particular implications of this

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Etzioni 1996, p. 6.

⁸⁰ See for example Etzioni 1993, p. 31.

broad claim. Thus his normative prescriptions should be viewed as largely independent of any explicitly holist stance.

Normative Claims

As regards normative conclusions, Bell's account of communitarianism is the less radical of the two, but this is perhaps due to his determination to work within the bounds of the seminal communitarian texts. His dialogic method of argument enables an ongoing debate between liberal and communitarian sympathisers to identify the most reasonable aspects of both. Bell's resultant defence of the communitarian position thus endeavours, and to a large extent succeeds, in portraying community as a not unappealing concept. Accepting Sandel and MacIntyre's ontological claims that all of us are constituted to some degree by the various communities of which we are members, he goes on to argue that governments should more actively support constitutive communities.⁸² Because Bell presents a relatively sophisticated picture of the many sorts of communities in which we might enjoy membership, his normative prescriptions do not advocate a politics of the common good, except in the minimal sense that politics must recognise and support communities. That is, Bell does not propose that politics should favour a particular set of values associated with a particular community. Rather he is just anxious that politics should not under-value community, and thus should adopt more measures to support it. Examples of specifically recommended policies would include the economic support of failing one-industry communities, or the awarding of veto-rights to community councils in order to give them some control over planning and development.⁸³

Although Etzioni has clearly read and absorbed the seminal communitarian texts discussed here, his intention is not to add to this theoretical debate, but rather to advance a 'positive doctrine' or 'communitarian paradigm' that can influence public thinking and social practice. His methodology is avowedly sociological or pragmatic rather than

⁸¹ A. Etzioni, 'Liberals and Communitarians', in *Partisan Review*, 57, 1990, p. 222.

⁸² Notably, Bell is far happier to give an account of constitutive communities than the theorists whose arguments he develops. Such communities might be grounded in the significance of place and residency, in memory of shared history, or in 'psychological community, i.e. iterated face-to-face interaction.

⁸³ Bell 1993, p. 111-113.

philosophical or theoretical.⁸⁴ As such, it is unsurprising that his normative claims are not so strictly limited to those of the type addressed in this chapter. Etzioni has a moral and political agenda which moves beyond merely advocating a politics of the common good or a renewed embrace of community, although both of these are certainly elements of his argument. Instead his project in both books is to ascertain what sociological and moral features characterise a good society, and a society with order. In particular he is keen to balance the current emphasis on liberty and rights with a renewed focus on responsibility, duty and virtue.

Community plays a significant role in Etzioni's normative thought, in so far as it is within communities that our values arise and through communities that values are transmitted. Most importantly,

“..we find reinforcement for our moral inclinations and provide reinforcement to our fellow human beings through the community. We are each other's keepers.”⁸⁵

Thus community is to be fostered in Etzioni's state not because this will better reflect our deepest self-understandings, but because it will help to preserve a certain type of moral order. Communities are intermediates between state and individual; thus although politics should not shy away from taking a more 'morally responsible' stance, the main function of government is to support and preserve communities who can undertake the most arduous educative role. Etzioni thus presents two main arguments; that we should more actively foster community, and vitally, that community should not be scared to use its 'moral voice' in supporting public morality.

Thus Etzioni advocates a range of policies aimed at re-invigorating the communities that inculcate moral values, and awarding them more power and right to shape those values than ever before. The focus in *The Spirit of Community* is upon the various types of community within which values can be transmitted. Thus policy recommendations are offered which will shore up the morally educative potential of schools, families, public institutions and the political process. Some normative suggestions are uncontroversial, such as Etzioni's ideas on encouraging team-work and sportsmanship into school lessons. Others are fairly conservative. He recommends a tightening of

⁸⁴ Etzioni 1996, Preface p. xx.

⁸⁵ Etzioni 1993, p. 31; a similar statement appears in Etzioni 1996, p. 123.

divorce laws to encourage families to stay together,⁸⁶ for example, and most notably suggests that public humiliation will be an effective way of punishing offenders.⁸⁷ *The New Golden Rule* offers a more theoretical perspective on the problem, assessing the delicate balance between autonomy and moral order. To this extent it adds depth to the ‘communitarian agenda’ focusing less heavily on the role of ‘community’ and more on the problems involved in finding a new equilibrium in such a rights-oriented, pluralistic society.

Without going into further detail, it should be clear that the work of Bell and Etzioni can be regarded as representing a gradual move away from the spirit of the seminal texts discussed above. Bell’s is only a single step away; it is an attempt to build a positive theory of communitarianism out of what are essentially negative critiques. In so doing, he provides us with a clearer idea of where we might move from the basic ontological premises espoused by Sandel or Taylor. Certainly Bell fills in the picture with some obviously normative claims, but even these remain faithful to the brief glimpses of advocated issues found in the preceding texts. Etzioni’s work is quite clearly three or four steps away from the work of MacIntyre, Sandel *et al.* His interpretation of ‘community’ no longer captures the largely ontological claim about identity-formation but is used to support a particular moral stance. Most notably, perhaps, whereas in the original communitarian texts ‘community’ was utilised largely as a critical term, in the new self-professed communitarian texts, community has taken on a more dominant role establishing itself as a normative goal of such theories.

V Conclusions

The argument presented in this chapter has been that we can usefully and non-arbitrarily distinguish between focal communitarian themes by separating ontological and normative issues. This claim was backed up by analysis of central communitarian themes which showed that they could be differentiated along these lines, and further that such a categorisation could reveal important subtleties in the critique. Even where the claims appear to be inter-twined it was argued that ontological issues can structure

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81-5.

the debate between normative propositions but will not in their own right determine which normative position is consequently adopted. This distinction was held to recognise an important difference in the status and content of such themes. As such, it is not implausible to believe that there may be greater theoretical advance to be gained from pursuing one set of claims rather than the other, and certainly the most rigorously critical approach would entail separating out the different types of claim. It is this contention that will be defended in the rest of the thesis.

Consideration of more recent communitarian literature went on to reveal the possible ways in which the previously analysed themes might be developed into a more complete positive account. Notably, Bell and Etzioni rely far more on the concept of community than do most of the seminal texts. The question to be raised in the next chapter concerns the advantages and disadvantages of this approach. We need to know whether or not a more extensive focus on the concept of community is indeed the most productive way of pursuing the issues raised in the communitarian critique of liberalism. In particular, we need to know whether such a focus will help or hinder in the project of separating out ontological and advocacy claims. The suspicion is that fascination with the concept of community has actually encouraged conflation of the two types of issue in the past. If this is so, then we may need to set aside debate about the pros and cons of community in order to reap any benefits of applying Taylor's distinction.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

Chapter Three

The Myth of Community

Merely distinguishing between different types of communitarian claim tells us nothing about the coherence or critical potential of those claims. The role of this chapter and the next is to assess this potential, ascertaining the likely usefulness of these different types of claim in informing the liberal account. Consideration of more recent self-proclaimed communitarians such as Bell and Etzioni reveals a tendency to focus on the concept of community as the central normative goal, suggesting that this would be the most fruitful line of attack. In contrast, Taylor's concern in drawing the ontological/advocacy distinction employed here seems precisely to deny such an interpretation of the communitarian critique.¹ He argues that liberals have tended to conflate arguments for the value of community with those concerning the social embeddedness of the individual. In other words, even if there are communitarian claims as to the value or desirability of 'community', they are not the only claims made, or, indeed, necessarily the most important ones. The aim of this chapter is to assess whether or not the continued focus on community is defensible, and further, whether it is compatible with a determination to identify the different roles and critical potential of communitarian ontological and normative claims.

The intuition to be investigated here is the feeling that the concept of 'community' is simply not up to the job. Once we take on board Taylor's differentiation between different types of communitarian claim, it becomes increasingly hard to see how a continued focus on the idea of 'community' can help us to understand or implement that distinction. As will be seen below, there are fundamental problems in even arriving at a satisfactory definition of what this concept means. Although the main intention of this thesis is to defend the claim that communitarian ontological arguments can still inform liberal theory, this chapter presents the broader argument that communitarian writing generally might be seen to possess more critical weight if we could only look beyond

¹ Taylor in Rosenblum 1989, p. 160.

the concept of 'community'. Potentially, both ontological and advocacy claims could benefit from a sharper focus on their particular meaning and implications.

In the course of the chapter a comparison will be undertaken between the concept of 'community' as studied in sociology and its political theory equivalent. The reasoning behind such a comparison is that sociology also had to reconsider the use of this concept in the light of a desire to separate normative and empirical claims. Further, given that sociology is explicitly concerned with the empirical study of social relations, important lessons might be learnt for the reinterpretation and revision of communitarian claims concerning the social matrix. The first main section of this chapter will set out the various applications of the concept of 'community' in communitarian thought, revealing the difficulties of arriving at a single coherent definition. This will then be compared with the similar findings of sociological critiques of 'community'. The grounds for rejecting 'community' and 'community studies' in sociology will be shown to apply equally in the political theory case. Indeed these more formalised objections reveal the full necessity of abandoning 'community' if we are fruitfully to pursue the implications of the communitarian ontological critique.

What is Community?

The simplest question is unfortunately the hardest to answer. As noted in the previous chapter, the seminal theorists have produced more criticism than they have positive recommendation. Unlike Bell's or Etzioni's communitarian work, there is no such thing as an explicit theory of community in Walzer, Sandel, MacIntyre or Taylor, which is odd given that they are commonly assumed to espouse such a theory. Any attempt at an interpretation of community will have to involve some substantial reading between the lines. Given the prevalence and clarity of their objections to aspects of liberal politics as outlined in the previous chapter, it is at least relatively easy to identify the general task which community is supposed to fulfil. Simply put, 'community' is needed to provide an alternative view of social and political relations which will take into account the situatedness of the individual.

Beyond this basic description of what 'community' *does* it is hard to achieve any clarification of what 'community' actually *is*. As will be seen below, study of the relevant literature reveals several different meanings and usages of this single term;

these are not necessarily reconcilable, and may even prove to be impossible to reconcile. The term also features in both strong normative claims and ontological ones, and quite possibly encourages the conflation of these two. Is community something we need to aim for, or something in which we are already unavoidably embedded? A further concern is whether 'community' is a value-laden, emotive term in some, or all cases of its use, or whether on some occasions it is entirely value-free. Does 'community' in one usage bear positive connotations which may spill over to 'community' invoked in other senses? These are the various questions which drive this analysis of 'community' and which may provide sufficient justification for our abandoning the term.

One possible explanation for all this confusion is that 'community' is perhaps just shorthand for the general sorts of relations or goods which an atomistic approach would under-value or ignore. It is this latter claim which will be defended here, and which would certainly explain why there is no explicit theory of community to be found in the texts studied. If this explanation is plausible, then this would further suggest that a rigorous approach to communitarian critique should begin by identifying and assessing each individual claim on its own merits, regardless of the pros and cons of 'community'.

I 'Community' and the Liberal – Communitarian Debate.

Discussion of community in politics is not limited to the liberal-communitarian debate, and much of the literature discussing it begins by commenting upon the absence of any single agreed definition for this term. Raymond Plant even goes so far as to argue that community is an 'essentially contested concept'.² Whether or not this is indeed the case need not concern us here. In line with my thesis, this discussion will focus mainly on the role of 'community' in contemporary liberal-communitarian debate; Plant's concern, by contrast is the huge range of interpretations of community within many ideological positions. Whether or not 'community' is an essentially contested concept may not be properly answered from within the liberal/communitarian debate. Generally,

² R. Plant, 'Community: Concept, Conception and Ideology', in *Politics and Society*, 8, 1, 1978 p. 79-107.

essential contestability is thought to result from fundamentally incompatible foundational theories of human nature. Thus it would have to be shown that both liberals and communitarians sustain a theory of community, but that, in either case, this theory rests on a very different account of human nature. Although a case could be made for this possibility, it will not be the focus of this chapter.³ Instead, the more modest intention is to determine whether or not ‘community’ is a suitable candidate to carry the burden of communitarian critical force. If the work of Walzer, Taylor, MacIntyre or Sandel is to be pursued and extended, should we even be looking towards a ‘politics of community’, as exemplified by theorists such as Bell and Etzioni?⁴ Certainly Sandel and Taylor have denied this.⁵ In theory, this denial alone should encourage us to look more carefully at the content of these seminal works. However, it is worthwhile denouncing ‘community’ once and for all in order to stimulate more subtle and productive analysis of the communitarian critique, especially if we are to pursue Taylor’s recommendations of separating advocacy and ontological claims.

The primary need is to clarify the various roles which ‘community’ plays in the liberal-communitarian debate. In interpreting this debate, it is often assumed that whatever the purported ills of an ideal liberal society, ‘community’ offers the supposed cure. In this sense, we can see a parallel with the nostalgic evocations of community found in the first distinctively modern sociology texts. There is a clear connection with the *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* of the sociological tradition.⁶ A quick glance at the works of Sandel, Walzer, Taylor, or MacIntyre reveals more than a few similarities. These authors are largely concerned with the atomism, rootlessness, and postulated egoism of liberal society, as contrasted with the attachments, commitments and responsibilities of community. Indeed, insofar as contemporary political theory finds

³ To make a case for the essentially contestable nature of ‘community’ in liberal-communitarian debates we might start by extending Sandel’s analysis of the ‘three conceptions of community’, grounding the distinction he draws between Rawls’ two conceptions and his own third ‘constitutive’ conception in something like Taylor’s atomistic/holistic ontological divide. Of course, the success of such a project would rest on the dubious assumption that liberals do actually adopt an extremely atomistic ontology. (Sandel 1998, p. 147-54.)

⁴ Particularly as both Walzer and Taylor are quite circumspect in their usage of the term ‘community’.

⁵ Sandel 1998, p. ix-x; Taylor in Rosenblum 1989.

⁶ F. Tönnies, *Community and Society*, trans. C. P. Loomis, Michigan State University Press, Michigan 1957.

some of its roots in early modern political and sociological thought, the resemblance of these ideas need not seem so surprising.⁷

Merely identifying a common theme does not give us a much clearer picture of what ‘community’ in any one context actually means. In ordinary parlance, the concept of community is usually taken to refer to a collectivity of people sharing perhaps a bounded location, or some common interests. In their feminist critique of communitarianism Frazer and Lacey usefully distinguish between *a* community, and *the idea* of community, that is, between communities as entities or as ideals.⁸ Communities as entities can be bound to a greater or lesser extent by ties of geography, kinship, interests or values. Community as an ideal might be typified by its instantiation of desired goods such as reciprocity, solidarity, togetherness and so on. In more recent work, Frazer has refined her categorisation to distinguish community as an entity from community as a relationship.⁹ Although this latter category broadly captures the character of communitarian ‘community’, it is worth expanding upon it to facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the concept and its role in the texts.¹⁰ Study of the seminal communitarian literature reveals that the concept of community broadly refers to at least four different types of thing, not all of which are ostensibly normative goals:

1. Community as a relationship.
2. Community as a sentiment.
3. Community as a source of identity.
4. Community as an entity.

1 and 2 are most commonly reflected in communitarian normative claims whilst 3 actually characterises the ontological claim. The fourth option fails to fall clearly in either category, and perhaps reveals some of the problems with the concept as a whole. In the examples which follow, it should be noted that no consistency of usage is implied – although each of these four interpretations will be associated with several different authors it does not follow that this is their only, or even most common, use of the term. It is an unfortunate and confusing fact that most, if not all, of the texts referred to fail to provide a single clear vision of what (a) community is.

⁷ Communitarians also write about these early evocations of community; see C. Taylor, *Hegel*, CUP, Cambridge 1975, or MacIntyre 1981, p. 242-3.

⁸ Frazer & Lacey 1993, p. 153-4.

⁹ E. Frazer, *Unity and Conflict: Problems of Communitarian Politics*, OUP, Oxford forthcoming.

1. Community as a Relationship.

This understanding of community is best seen as rejecting the liberal vision of the ‘unencumbered self’, namely the idea that individuals can detach themselves from all their constitutive attachments to others in the name of liberal justice and impartiality. The relevant communitarian objection here is that postulating such an ideal chooser fails to note that some of our relationships (to individuals, or to the community as a whole) are so crucial to our identity that they must just be taken as given. Such identity-constituting relationships cannot be sacrificed to the requirements of impartiality as if they were just a contingent feature of our existence. This is one issue discussed in the last chapter under the heading of the ‘conception of the person’. Sandel and MacIntyre are exemplary advocates of this point, with the latter arguing,

“...we all approach our own circumstances as bearers of a particular social identity. I am someone’s son or daughter, someone else’s cousin or uncle; I am a citizen of this or that city, a member of this or that guild or profession; I belong to this clan, that tribe, this nation. Hence what is good for me has to be good for someone who inhabits these roles.”¹¹

Community thus identifies the general source of many of our deepest and most defining attachments and relationships. At its simplest level this could be a relatively value-free ontological claim about the social embeddedness of persons and identity. Indeed, it was in this context that the constitutive role of community was discussed in the previous chapter. However, a stronger normative claim can also be incorporated into this understanding of community, namely that relationships are an important human good which can bring us great reward, but which are unlikely to do so if we are encouraged to consider them as consciously chosen or even instrumental. This is an important aspect of Sandel’s argument in *The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self*, as he asks:

“Can we view ourselves as independent selves, independent in the sense that our identity is never tied to our aims and attachments?”¹²

and responds, echoing MacIntyre:

“I do not think we can, at least not without cost to those loyalties and convictions whose moral force consists partly in the fact that living by them is inseparable from understanding ourselves as the particular persons we are – as members of this or that family or community or nation or people, as bearers of that history, as citizens of this

¹⁰ Frazer also expands upon this dualism, but her analysis is unnecessarily (if admirably) too complex for current purposes.

¹¹ MacIntyre 1981, p. 204-5.

¹² Sandel in Avineri & de-Shalit 1992, p. 23.

republic. Allegiances such as these are more than values I happen to have, and to hold, at a certain distance.”¹³

Thus the communitarians generate an argument as to the nature of the social environment which would form the preferred basis for a healthy political order, or which at least must not be prejudiced by an ideal political order. This environment (usually assumed to be a particular geographic environment, such as a town or neighbourhood) would be characterised by a prevalence of relationships of ‘the right sort’, where these relationships are not just partly constitutive of our identity, but are also potentially fulfilling in a deep sense, and valued as such by the individual.¹⁴ It is in this sense that community as an ideal embodies for Frazer and Lacey such goods as solidarity, fraternity and reciprocity. Community as a type of relationship thus refers to the potentially fulfilling interaction we can enjoy with our fellows, and which can supposedly be encouraged or discouraged by thinking about politics in a particular way.

2. Community as a Sentiment.

Reference here is to be made to that sense of belonging which is espoused by many communitarian (and some liberal) authors. According to this view, what marks out a community, be it a group, a neighbourhood, town, or nation, is the sense of belonging and membership that individuals experience. These are probably backed up by at least limited recognition of shared interests, values or history. Thus what matters is not the relationships in which individuals happen to be embedded, but the sentiments which can unite them. This will be instantiated in and supported by a sense of politics as concerned with the common good, as outlined in the previous chapter. In line with that previous analysis it is worth recognising that this is one of the more clearly normative elements of the communitarian critique. It explicitly appeals to the values of social solidarity, membership and mutual respect, and further holds that such sentiments should be the basis of both social and political association. In other words, it is not enough that we have fulfilling relationships with others; for the purpose of politics we need to inculcate a common sense of membership and respect, such that we care about the welfare of those others. In the absence of these sentiments justice will be necessary as a merely remedial notion, a second-best solution invoked to solve the confrontations and

¹³ *Ibid.*

inequalities that would not arise in a community bound by a shared sense of equal membership and respect.

It is interesting to note that Sandel has moved on from these claims in his seminal communitarian critique of liberalism¹⁵ to argue for a perfectionist republicanism which would supposedly be capable of restoring these sentiments to a central position in each individual's conception of the political order.¹⁶ In Walzer's view, these sentiments are clearly linked to the concepts of membership and self-respect – beyond the subjective side of belonging, there is also an objective element of recognition, and corresponding allocation of status.¹⁷

“But it is the minimal standards intrinsic to the practice of democracy that sets the norms of self-respect. And as these standards spread through civil society, they make possible a kind of self-respect that isn't dependent on any particular social position, that has to do with one's general standing in the community and with one's sense of self, not as a person effective in such and such a setting, a full and equal member, an active participant.”¹⁸

This applies to relationships at the level of the neighbourhood just as much as to those at the level of citizenship and the nation-state.¹⁹ Indeed, a theory of justice must ensure that these goods of membership and respect are distributed appropriately. According to Walzer and Sandel then, community as a sentiment refers to the sense of belonging and membership which will supposedly be lacking in a state which prioritises procedural justice and impartiality. The claim is that under the auspices of liberal society we may become,

“...less liberated than disempowered, entangled in a network of obligations and involvements unassociated with any act of will, and yet unmediated by those common identifications or expansive self-definitions that would make them tolerable.”²⁰

Thus this interpretation of our concept implies both a 'sense of community' and community as the entity within which membership becomes salient. Community thus

¹⁴ This interpretation is clearly reflected in Etzioni's ungrammatical depiction of community as a relationship of 'we-ness'. Etzioni 1993, p. 31.

¹⁵ Sandel 1998, p. 30-33.

¹⁶ Sandel 1996.

¹⁷ Walzer 1983, Chapters 2 & 11.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

¹⁹ It is notable in regard to the latter, that this sense of belonging is largely reliant on the imagination of the citizen, for the nation is just too large an expanse across which to experience relationships of solidarity in a face-to-face manner. This national sense of belonging is thus frequently supported by symbols such as national anthems and flags, by the emphasis of shared history, heritage and language, or even through identification with sports teams, politicians and armies. See, for example D. Miller, *On Nationality*, Clarendon, Oxford 1995; or B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London 1983.

²⁰ Sandel 1992, p.28.

stands as the social and political environment within which a sense of belonging or common membership might more effectively bind the members.

3. Community as a Source of Meaning, Value and Identity.

In the previous chapter, analysis of communitarian ontology examined the issues of social embeddedness and the conception of the person. This discussion considered examples of communitarian holism, detailing how communitarian authors theorise the causal relations between individuals and the social matrix or, more rhetorically, the community. The most important causal relations were held to operate between the social matrix and irreducibly social goods, such as language and values or culture, and between the social matrix and personal identity. The precise scale on which such processes are held to operate is unclear; thus Taylor's reference to linguistic communities suggests that 'community' could be coextensive with a nation or region, whilst Sandel's talk of constitutive communities renders the concept less closely tied to geography, and more applicable to small-scale social groups. In both cases however, the claim is the same, namely that the community is important as a source of meaning, values or identity.

Taylor, MacIntyre, Walzer and Sandel all emphasise the means by which values, identities and even language are formed within a particular social context or 'community', and are reliant upon the continuation of a certain social context for their survival. In at least one case the claim is even stronger than this; as Taylor states,

“Common meanings are the basis of community. Inter-subjective meaning gives a people a common language to talk about social reality and a common understanding of certain norms, but only with common meanings does this common reference world contain significant common actions, celebrations and feelings.”²¹

It is not just the case that values or meanings arise in a certain 'community'; they are actually inter-twined so that you cannot have the one without the other. Overall, the implication of these various holistic views is that it may prove self-defeating to focus on the individual to the detriment of the community. Certainly if one then adopts a more explicitly normative stance and admits that particular values, traditions or sources of identification are in themselves valuable, then the role of the community expands. In order to preserve the structures that support such cherished values and ways of life, the

²¹ 'Interpretation and the Sciences of Man' in Taylor 1985, p. 39.

liberal society may have to devote more attention to the ‘community’ and less to the individual, and to his or her rights. It would be possible to accept the ontological claims being made here without even going on to embrace the normative position. Thus, for example, one might accept Taylor’s claims concerning the social embeddedness of language, value, and consequently personal identity, but deny that it is the role of the state actively to seek the preservation of particular forms of language, culture or identity. Such a position would, at the extreme, simply accept any changes wrought as inevitable, if unfortunate. Alternatively, one might accept a resolutely normative stance as Kymlicka does, holding that certain of these goods such as cultural identity and language are necessarily to be supported by any state that aspires to recognise the equal dignity and autonomy of its citizens.²²

What has yet to be emphasised is that reference to community in this particular role may refer to a wide variety of different types of association, group or geographical space. A language community would seem to be as large as a nation or as small as a tribe; it could be geographically confined or internationally dispersed. An identity-constituting community could be small like a kin group or extensive like a nation-state; again this type of community need not be geographically located, as is the case with the gay community. More confusingly still, this interpretation of community is employed in making both normative and ontological claims. One can hold *both* that a community is a crucial support of a certain value-set, and further that the state should therefore sustain that community. ‘Community’ has the same meaning in both claims.

This third sense of community, then, evokes a vision of social and political structures or processes which are responsible for shaping and forming individuals. Without the specific context of a community there can be no such thing as personal identity, communication or normative discourse. There is no such thing as the individual in abstraction from the ‘community’ according to this reasoning. The further, more controversial claim associated with this position is that if politics is to presuppose the continuation of certain desirable characteristics or values in its citizenry, it must be prepared to heed the health of these relevant formative ‘communities’.

²² See for example W. Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, Clarendon, Oxford 1989, p. 162-181.

4. *Community as an Entity.*

Of the four interpretations of ‘community’, this is ironically perhaps the hardest to justify as referring to a particular thing. Certainly, its usage is generally parasitic upon the other three, and perhaps, were it rigorously used, it would never be separable from at least one of them. The sense in which this third sense of ‘community’ is to be understood is simple, but remarkably uninformative. This is ‘community’ just applied as a synonym for particular types of social group or structure, where that may or may not be territorially defined (but very frequently is so defined). Thus neighbourhoods, towns, churches, support networks, fan-clubs, may all variously be characterised as communities. They may all, to some degree manifest a sense of common membership or solidarity, shared interests or values. But an assumption is always being made that they do in fact display these qualities, and further, that they display them in sufficient quantities for us to assert that they are genuine communities. It is an open question whether in fact a neighbourhood bears significance for all its inhabitants, just as it is possible to ask whether membership of a fan club or other interest group facilitates more than just a communication of like ideas. They may, or they may not. Crucially though, as previous discussion reveals, there seems to be disagreement as to what constitutes a community in the first place. It would surely seem question-begging to denote a particular entity as a ‘community’ without first determining what a suitable set of qualifying criteria might be. Perhaps even more problematically, several of the elements of community outlined above appear to bear a subjective element; we can only determine whether individuals ‘belong’ to a certain group by asking whether or not they feel a sense of belonging. If all members do not feel this way, then is the group really a community? There is clearly some difficulty in identifying social entities as communities on the basis that they manifest certain observable objective criteria, for at least on one account, community is subjectively defined as a feeling. We could just assume that people feel the right way, but this would run the risk of losing the subtleties distinguishing ‘community’ from say mere ‘association’.

There does seem to be one sense in which the ‘community as entity’ view could plausibly be maintained. This is in its barest linguistic form.²³ When we talk casually about say, small isolated communities in Alaska, we may not want to make any assumptions about the nature of the relationships amongst the members. We may

merely in this sense be referring to a collection of people sharing a common, bounded territorial space. Indeed, it is the very boundedness which apparently legitimates this use of the term 'community'. This certainly brings to light another feature of 'community' (which may elsewhere have normative import), but other than emphasising this point, 'community' here seems remarkably uninformative, and from a political theory point of view, fairly useless.

This fourth characterisation of 'community' thus seems pointless, in that it apparently suggests that, for the purposes of the liberal-communitarian debate, community fails to identify any *thing* at all. Although 'community' is used to describe particular entities in the texts, this use is quite singularly uninformative. Without more explicit description, is not clear what features render the entity in question a community, and consequently the identification serves little more than rhetorical purpose.

This analysis shows that there are at least four different senses in which 'community' is employed in liberal and communitarian texts. There is a degree of overlap, certainly, but there does not seem to be just a single definition. We could pick out elements with which each account of community was concerned, namely, people, interaction, and a very narrow sense of shared interests or meaning. That some elements are shared is still an insufficient basis for holding that these four uses of 'community' are reconcilable.

There could, however, be two possible means by which reconciliation could be achieved. Firstly, each use could reflect a separate aspect of a single thing, namely community. This possibility is hard to eliminate completely but there are good reasons why it should be highly unlikely. For whilst it is not unthinkable that there might be a single ideal concept of a community instantiating both solidaristic relations and a common sense of membership, it seems less plausible that this grouping should always be the source of an individual's meanings, values or identity. For a start, 'community' used in the first sense would seem to be a value-laden term, whilst in the second sense it could well be value-free, describing an aspect of the social matrix.²⁴ Secondly, these

²³ I owe this point to David Miller.

²⁴ 'Value-laden' is understood here as 'emotive'. That is, certain words can be seen to have emotional overtones, conjuring up certain appealing images. In this sense 'community' can evoke solidarity, connectedness and nostalgia. Claiming that in other uses community is a 'value-free' term is to hold that these emotional overtones are not implicit in the definition. Thus when community is used as a

processes seem most likely to occur at different levels of social context, namely the region or nation, the locality or the group. Indeed, we might expect different elements of an individual's identity to be constituted by membership of different groups, some of which will be solidaristic such as kinship groups, others of which will be more distant and anonymous such as the nation. Are all these groups necessarily communities? Only those which are *both* identity-constituting *and* solidaristic? The former possibility would sacrifice the emotional, affective element of 'community', whilst the latter would restrict the application of this term to all but a few of the groups commonly called communities.

Certainly, the desire of theorists to equate 'community' with particular entities undermines the likelihood of identifying a single all-embracing concept of community. For whilst we can imagine an entity incorporating a couple of the other characteristics, such as a neighbourhood which may manifest a sense of belonging for its members as well as the requisite type of affective relationships, it is hard to attribute to that neighbourhood much influence in the formation of value-schemes, language and meanings. Perhaps the answer is to look to a more expansive 'community' such as the nation-state. Miller holds that it is at this level that it makes most sense to talk about community, but again requires that we restrict our definition, for it is patently impossible for all citizens even to know each other, let alone to care about each other's well-being in a personal sense, thus stretching the 'relationship' criterion of 'community'.²⁵ Obviously we can alter our definition of 'community' such that it includes some rather than others of the criteria. But as it stands, we would struggle to come up with many, if any, examples of 'community' which can incorporate all these four aspects. As soon as we consider dropping one interpretation, the controversy begins....

The second possible means of reconciling the four senses would be to claim that there is one single concept of community with several legitimate conceptions, just as some

replacement for 'social matrix' or 'social context', it should be used in such a value-free fashion. Note that a value-free term can be used in a normative claim, as when Taylor argues that because we value certain liberal traits we should be prepared to support the (formative) community on which they depend. Thus what is problematic about 'community' is not that it can be invoked in both normative and ontological claims, but that it can in some uses possess certain emotive qualities. It is just not clear whether communitarians always intend the term to have such an effect; certainly it does little to help us understand the precise nature of their claims.

theorists claim there is just one concept of liberty with many different conceptions. This is an appealing possibility if we compare ‘community as a relationship’ with ‘community as a sentiment’, as the two are quite obviously closely related. It would be harder to argue that ‘community as a source of value, identity or meaning’ is a related conception in so far as it is usually employed in a value-free ontological sense, whereas ‘community as a relationship’ and ‘community as a sentiment’ are almost always used in a value-laden or even explicitly normative sense. ‘Community as an entity’ is very different again. Thus this tack would seem unlikely to offer an easy solution, even if there might be a case for regarding the first two senses as so related.

The more important question is whether we should be so determined to reconcile all the different references to ‘community’. If ‘community’ is used in so many different senses, should we be so keen to identify each of these things as ‘community’? Might there not be more to be gained by recognising the different nature of each interpretation and consequently investigating them in turn? Accepting each claim about community as necessarily referring to such a thing as ‘community’ may well obscure the more precise details of the claim being made. In particular, using a single term in both a value-laden and a value-free sense can do little to clarify the issues at stake, and may even encourage the conflation of ontological and normative claims. It is with this possibility in mind that we turn to a parallel debate which took place in sociology; ascertaining how a related discipline dealt with the confusion of ‘community’ should provide some insight as to how the liberal-communitarian debate might best proceed. In particular this comparison should shed some light on how issues of social embeddedness can, and should, be discussed and analysed without reference to the concept of community.

II The Sociology of ‘Community’

The parallels between the use of ‘community’ in political theory and sociology are remarkably strong. As in contemporary political theory, the conceptual origins of ‘community’ in sociology can be traced to a largely critical literature, addressing the perceived ills of modern industrialised (as opposed to modern liberal) society. It is in these early origins that ‘community’ is perceived as a *normative* goal, closely

²⁵ Miller 1995, Chapter 1.

resembling communitarian evocations of community in some guises. The social and economic changes wrought by the industrial revolution provide the backdrop for early consideration of this concept, found in authors as diverse as Comte, Tocqueville, Marx and Durkheim. All were concerned with the breakdown of traditional social relations and their replacement by something very new and potentially very unappealing. As Bell and Newby sum up this theoretical tradition:

“ ‘Community’ was thought to be a good thing, its passing was to be deplored, feared and regretted.”²⁶

The most famous account of community originates in Tönnies’ writings on *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*.²⁷ The former symbolised the traditional order, a society based on loyalty, affective ties, shared moral values and ascriptive rather than awarded status. It was characterised by three central aspects of blood, mind and land giving rise to social bonds of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood. *Gesellschaft* stood in antithesis to this model, representing the new social order prevalent in the modern industrialised city. The social bonds in this environment would be purely associational, grounded in instrumental rationality and contractual relations. This may have freed the individual from the weight of traditional blood ties, facilitating autonomy and self-development, but it also stripped away many of the sources of fulfilment and value previously taken for granted. Thus we see the origins of community as a sociological concept in the sense of loss and nostalgia associated with the breakdown of a familiar order.

This theme has not been abandoned by all contemporary sociologists. Theorists such as Robert Nisbet have made the social and moral inferiorities of twentieth century society a central theme of their work.²⁸ More recently, Robert Bellah’s oft-quoted *Habits of the Heart* attempted to infiltrate the thought processes of contemporary white Americans, trying to characterise their relationships with other individuals, family and work-mates, as well as their political affiliations and values.²⁹ This text concludes in evoking a nostalgia for reinvigorated communities as a source of restored meaning and identity for

²⁶ C. Bell. & H. Newby, *Community Studies*, Allen & Unwin, London 1971, p.21.

²⁷ Tönnies 1957.

²⁸ See for example, R. Nisbet., *The Sociological Tradition*, Heinemann, London 1966, ‘The Quest for Community’ in *Tradition and Revolt*, OUP, Oxford 1970, or Maurice Stein, *The Eclipse of Community*, Harper Row, New York 1964.

²⁹ R. Bellah *et al.*, *Habits of the Heart*, Berkeley, University of California Press, Berkeley 1985.

individuals, a sentiment that is remarkably similar to those expressed in early sociological writings on community.³⁰

Thus, as in communitarian literature, the sociological concept of community stands as a normative goal, identifying a set of social relations which are a suitable object of nostalgia and affection. It is in virtue of this pedigree that 'community' is often perceived as carrying emotive weight and unspoken positive connotations. There is, however, a further similarity. Given that sociology is generally assumed to involve the study of social relations, it should come as no surprise to see that the sociological concept of 'community' is also invoked in an empirically descriptive sense. In this usage 'community' describes rather than prescribes a certain form of social relations; it is not supposed to be a value-laden term. Although sociology is not commonly analysed as assuming a particular 'ontology', like communitarianism it clearly does make assumptions about the inter-connection of individuals in society. 'Community' is thus sometimes studied as a formative social matrix, a social environment which significantly affects the character of social relations within its bounds. This interpretation of community is more commonly found in empirical sociological studies, and particularly in the discipline of 'community studies'. One further type of 'community' claim found in the sociological literature corresponds to the 'community as entity' usage outlined above. Here, particular social groups (such as organisations) are defined as communities. The parallel between sociological and communitarian uses of 'community' is thus complete.

What should be clear by now is that the communitarian and sociological uses of 'community' are similarly problematic. In both disciplines the term is employed in a normative and a descriptive sense. Likewise there are many particular interpretations of community in each subject. A similar problem regarding the emotive connotations of the term also arise in both political theory and sociology. The question is whether anything of relevance can be learnt from this comparison. The answer is a resounding yes. If we accept Taylor's distinction then both disciplines employ normative claims

³⁰ And indeed highly reminiscent of MacIntyre's concluding words in *After Virtue*;
"What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us."
(MacIntyre 1981, p.245).

about the value of 'community', and ontological claims about the formative role of the social matrix. If sociology also experienced difficulties in resolving the different meanings of 'community', let alone in consequently differentiating between these two different sorts of claims, then communitarianism might have much to learn from any solution proposed within that discipline.

An Exemplary Critique - The Myth of Community Studies.

Such a solution was offered by Margaret Stacey in her seminal article from 1969,³¹ which effectively damned the concept of community as employed in sociology. She asserted that community was a 'non-concept', failing to refer to anything useful for the progress of empirical research in this field. The subject matter of Stacey's article is, at first sight, quite different from the material with which communitarianism is concerned. Its target is community studies, a method of empirical sociological research which seeks to analyse the real rather than the ideal. Consequently, Stacey is concerned with those aspects of community which are relevant to the identification and under-taking of *empirical* research. Community studies focused on the study of small towns or wards, or sections of towns or wards.³² The precise subject matter of this research was assumed to be the 'community' found within, or coextensive with, that geographical area. Information was to be acquired as to the nature of social and institutional relations within that community, particularly information as to *how* certain aspects of society work, and how they differ from one community to the next. In terms of the purposes of valid sociological research these studies would be carried out with the intention of either testing existing propositions or exploring for hypotheses within a particular conceptual framework. Stacey's criticisms of the concept of community and its consequent role in community studies led her to doubt that either of these purposes could be fulfilled by such study.

Stacey raises two main criticisms against community and community studies,³³ which together constitute a negative response to her question;

³¹ M. Stacey, "The Myth of Community Studies", *British Journal of Sociology*, 20, 1969 p. 134-47.

³² Although the size of the study undertaken is itself a matter of controversy – Stacey notes that the size of areas which have been studied varies enormously. This is another factor which makes her sceptical as to the rigour of the application of the identifying term, 'community'.

³³ It should be noted that Stacey's objections are largely directed against the concept of 'community' as it is utilised within community studies; her rejection of community studies is parasitic upon this critique.

“Is this a particular aspect of society the workings of which it is reasonable or even possible to isolate in order to examine the ‘how’ question?”³⁴

Her first complaint is that, as in political theory, there is no consensus as to what a ‘community’ is. A brief literature summary displays a variety of usages from just the simple ‘social group’ to a ‘sense of belonging to a group’ which may or may not coincide with a given territorial area. Where it does refer to a given area, the dimensions of that area range from the locality to the nation-state. Stacey thus supports the conclusions of G. A. Hillery who, having researched the various interpretations of ‘community’ in sociological literature, reported that there was no consensus as to its meaning, given a finding of 94 different definitions.³⁵ The second criticism addresses the unjustified privileging of geography. The true concern of sociology must be social relations; only secondarily should we look to the area within which those relations are situated. The idea here is that ‘community’ reduces sociology to geographical relations.

A third objection can be added to Stacey’s two. Her rejection of community as a meaningful concept rests on the multiplicity of interpretations to be found in the literature. Yet this is not just a matter of inaccuracy, of in each case misidentifying something which might be better called by a different name. Rather we might think that the value of the ensuing research is itself affected; there is concern that the use of the word ‘community’ and the definition awarded somehow biases the findings of the project. In so arbitrarily determining what ‘community’ is, the conclusions or expectations of the researcher can be built into the study itself. In this sense then, the absence of any agreed definition of community allows the seepage of methodological bias into the supposedly value-neutral research-project. The dangers associated with this possibility are heightened by the fact that the original usage of ‘community’ in sociology carried with it heavy emotive content; this elicits a further fear that the chosen definition of ‘community’ might carry with it not just the researcher’s unwarranted assumptions, but also emotive and rhetorical weight. This problem is starkly obvious in

³⁴ Stacey 1969, p. 134.

³⁵ G. A. Hillery, ‘Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement’, *Rural Sociology*, 20, 1955 (cited in Stacey 1969). More recently Bell and Newby report six completely different types of empirical usage even before the particular details of any one author’s definition are considered. (Bell and Newby 1971, p.32-53) Note that for our purposes, it does not matter that these various sociological meanings of ‘community’ may differ from the political theory interpretations discussed here. The important similarity is that in each discipline, there is a need to distinguish between normative and non-normative senses of ‘community’. This possibility is hindered both by the multiplicity of usages and definitions and also by the emotive connotations associated with the term.

sociology given that there are agreed conventions as to how value-neutral empirical research projects in the social sciences should be carried out. However, as will be seen below, this criticism may also prove weighty even in political theory.

Thus three objections can be raised against the concept of community as it relates to community studies:

- Absence of any single accepted definition.
- Unjustified privileging of geographic relations.
- Methodological bias, and potential normativity of usage.

Stacey moves on from this critique to suggest an alternative approach which will more successfully and rigorously obtain the information that community studies purported to seek. The intricacies and implications of this approach – a move to locality studies – need not concern us here, but essentially it involves discarding the term ‘community’ and instead focusing on the particular phenomena that are of interest. Instead of assuming that there is such a thing as a ‘community’ which can be non-problematically studied, the term ‘locality’ is used to identify a set of (admittedly incomplete) social relations within which a certain social phenomenon can be observed and analysed. The import of this approach for communitarianism comes with its explicit rejection of ‘community’ and corresponding determination to focus on the precise relationships, processes or phenomena previously subsumed under a misguided intention to study the mythical ‘community’. If the objections to community outlined in this section can be shown to apply equally to communitarian employment of the term then there may be good reason for communitarianism to adopt a similar tack.

Community – A Myth?

Previously at least four different senses of ‘community’ were extracted from communitarian literature. It might be maintained that within each of these four uses, the term ‘community’ is used with perfect consistency, and that what we are seeing is no more than the elasticity of a word in the absence of a sufficiently sophisticated vocabulary. However, as Stacey’s critique demonstrates there are good methodological and substantive objections to relying on this confused term, particularly if we wish to differentiate between explicitly normative claims and value-neutral empirical ones. Even though the communitarian concept of community may in some uses be construed

differently to the concept of community in sociology, brief assessment should be sufficient to show that it too falls foul of these criticisms.

i. absence of any agreed definition.

It should be noted that there is a crucial difference between the absence of any agreed definition, and the impossibility of any agreed definition. Stacey considers only the former, and believes that this is a weighty enough criticism. The descriptions of the four differing usages of community outlined above should be sufficient to back up that more limited claim, however in political theory we might be less inclined to give up on the possibility of agreement. Certainly more rigorous and detailed analysis would be required to prove that no agreed definition could ever be reached for 'community'.

Plant undertakes this task in his article "*Community: Concept, Conception and Ideology*", and produces a persuasive case for community being an essentially contested concept. The problem is that it is not clear that the disagreements over the meaning of community in communitarian writing are of the relevant type. Plant's arguments apply to interpretations of community across the ideological spectrum, rather than just within one particular section of it. These various interpretations originate with very different accounts of human nature. This possibility makes less sense when we consider the several meanings of 'community' within communitarianism. In this case, the interpretations do not seem to rest on different accounts of human nature, so much as just refer to very different types of thing. Perhaps it is just that 'community' is expected to do too much work. It is not the case that there is no agreement as to what counts as 'community' in the texts discussed. On the contrary, these theorists do employ 'community' in comparable fashion; the problem is rather that each employs it in more than one way. The criticisms of liberalism which it embraces are too wide-ranging to be combined under one umbrella term of community. Maybe we cannot find an explicit theory of community in the seminal communitarian texts precisely because community was never intended to stand as a single anti-liberal goal. Instead, in the absence of more accurate terms, it is just frequently invoked in the description of various liberal failings.

Thus the argument is not that community is an essentially contested concept, in which case we would perhaps have to accept the impossibility of any agreed definition but continue to use the term. Instead it is just that 'community' simply refers to too many

different types of thing to ever admit of a single over-arching definition. It is just not obvious that we should even be trying to find a uniting definition in these circumstances.

ii. reduction of social relations to geographic relations.

Stacey, as a sociologist, was obviously concerned to study social relations. But political theorists are supposed to be concerned with the study of political relations. It was noted above that two of the bare shared components of our four accounts of community were people and their interaction. Thus there are two possible criticisms that might be made of the focus on 'community' in this discipline. The first holds that it illegitimately reduces political relations to social relations; the second claims that even if the concern with social relations is justified, the move to geographic relations is not so.

The first of these claims will not be substantially dealt with here. This is a criticism which has been raised against communitarianism by liberal authors, and it is an unfair one. Firstly, it is not the case that 'community' is referred to by communitarians as a solely social ideal. For theorists such as Sandel and Walzer, the political community is explicitly addressed as a major focus. They seek the political conditions under which a sense of common membership and solidarity might be maintained or established. Both do also address the social conditions most conducive to the support of such a political order, but this brings us to the second point, which is that in as far as 'community' does often favour social conditions, it does so only as part of an ontologically holistic approach. In other words, communitarians are committed to examining both politics and the individual within a larger framework of formative social structure and interaction because they believe that politics does not operate in a social or cultural vacuum. Thus even where there does appear to be an unusual degree of emphasis placed on 'community' as a set of social, rather than political relations, this is generally only intended to elucidate some set of relationships or background conditions which are held necessary to support a particular political order.

Allowing that this holistic approach does allow us legitimately to focus on social relations, is there yet an unjustified move in reducing social relations to geographic relations? This is a more complex question, mainly because it does not seem to be the case that such a reduction occurs in the case of communitarian 'community'. Different

sorts of 'community' were identified which did not necessarily make reference to a territorial unit. The requisite sense of belonging could just as easily be experienced within an ethnic group spread across a nation, or within an interest-based group communicating via the Internet. Likewise the non-instrumental view of relationships could just as easily be encouraged within a non-geographically based group, or set of groups. However, it is plausible that a territorial basis may strengthen the desired sentiments or relationships. For example, the sentiment of belonging is emphasised precisely because communitarians understand that this is a vital element of self-respect, and consequently a necessary part of recognising one's equal status and common membership.³⁶ Socially, these seem to matter most in the context where the individual lives most of his life, namely particular towns, cities or neighbourhoods,³⁷ politically they matter in relation to the national political process.³⁸ No one should feel marginalised in their immediate social environment, or in the larger political environment beyond.

Thus the relationships or processes which 'community' identifies may do most work within a particular geographic context, but they are not reducible to that context, and, vitally, may draw on relations which extend beyond it. Recent communitarian defenders such as Bell and Etzioni have been keen to point out the multi-layered and overlapping nature of different 'communities' in order to escape criticisms of reductionism,³⁹ but it has to be admitted that even their frequent references to 'community' have deflected attention away from the complex processes and relations referred to. 'Community' does evoke images of a territorially-defined inclusive group if only because of its association with traditional *Gemeinschaft*, and sadly this picture has been perpetuated by liberal critiques of communitarian texts. The term 'community' is at best imprecise and at worst misleading. The processes and relationships with which communitarians are

³⁶ Walzer gives an especially clear account of this argument. See Walzer 1983, Chapter 11.

³⁷ This is a largely empirical claim, and it might be argued that territorial relations are decreasing in importance in the information-age, where friendships can be formed over the Internet, and where geographic mobility is such a central feature of our lifestyle. I accept this qualification, and merely wish to state that for most people, the majority of their most frequent, and often most meaningful, relations are undertaken within a fairly limited geographical confine.

³⁸ There is clearly a territorial aspect to politics which links government and representation to a particular geographical space; this is the minimal point being made here.

³⁹ Or indeed to escape criticisms of the legitimisation of exclusion, intolerance and homogeneity. Once again these objections seem to be more resultant of confusion stemming from the all-embracing term of 'community' than of the theoretical implications of the theories themselves. See for example, Etzioni 1993, p. 32.

concerned do not *reduce* social relations to geographic relations, but they may have most effect within a territorial area. This is a point which these theorists do not clearly enough state, or which their usage of the term ‘community’ suggests they may not themselves always realise.

iii. Methodological bias and normativity of usage.

Stacey held that the absence of any settled definition for ‘community’ limited its potential as a suitable target for social research. This objection was extended above to draw out the two particular problems of methodological bias and normativity of usage. Given the disagreement as to what counts as a community, the researcher’s choice of subject-matter would involve a necessarily subjective interpretation and decision. This could result in methodological bias. A further danger would be that the chosen interpretation could imbue ‘community’ with a degree of positive emotive weight not legitimated by the requirements of the project. This would be a case of illegitimately normative usage.

This objection is equally applicable to the political usage of ‘community’. It was argued above that ‘community’ is used to refer to several very different types of thing. Harshly put, ‘community’ seems to come to mean simply whatever the opposite of liberal society requires in relation to the objection being made. The definition of community is largely driven by the conclusions required. There is thus evidence of methodological bias. What was not previously emphasised is the extent to which even within the four different types of usage, different authors will nuance their interpretation of community, so that there is even less likelihood of agreement or cross-textual comparison. It often appears to be used rhetorically with little thought to its particular meaning, beyond its commendatory force. A comment raised by Peter Wilmott, damning the use of ‘community’ in social policy debates, is equally applicable here;

“Those advocating a new initiative, or those attacking or defending a particular point of view, may invoke the community in support of their case, without making it clear which community they mean, in what sense they refer to it, or how far they have established what its opinions or interests are.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Wilmott, P., *Community Initiatives*, Policy Studies Institute, London 1989, p. 5.

It might be asked why normativity of usage should matter within a discipline such as political theory, which after all, does not seek to conduct value-neutral empirical research, and is concerned most of the time to present normative (as opposed to ontological) conclusions. The problem is that even normative claims still needs to be transparent and coherent, and, further, as Taylor so clearly emphasises, not all claims made are necessarily of a normative kind. The first of these requirements entails that even research in political theory should ensure that its terms are clearly defined and manifesting a single (and justifiable) meaning. The second can be better understood if we recall Taylor's distinction between ontological and advocacy claims. Ontological claims were taken to be descriptive, expressing assumptions about the fundamental nature of things, whilst advocacy claims are prescriptive, stating how things should be. This distinction could all too easily be obscured by the use of the term 'community' which, as noted above, carries certain positive emotive connotations. Indeed, it is plausible that whenever the term is used it cannot help but bring to mind a positive image. Taylor's concern in raising the ontological/advocacy distinction was to recognise and avoid further conflation of the two types of issue. This would then enable us to appreciate the true critical weight of communitarian arguments. One contributing factor in this misinterpretation might well be the traditionally value-laden connotations of 'community'. Given the history of the term 'community', normativity of usage may be unavoidable. Sociology's rejection of the term in its empirical study of social relations is thus not surprising. We should recommend communitarianism to do the same when making ontological claims, if not in all its claims.

Community is not a normative vision or 'communitarian heaven'; instead it is just one rather imprecise but oft-mentioned example of the type of relation or sentiment or inter-connectedness which liberalism under-values. No doubt the term does carry rhetorical weight, indeed it carries so much positive weight, so much normative appeal, that its use is more frequent than it strictly needs be.⁴¹ In this strongly value-laden sense, community bears two types of meaning each time it is used. On the one hand it refers to a particular relation, process, sentiment or entity, but on the other hand it stands for

⁴¹ Liz Frazer makes a similar point when she asks why communitarians choose to use the word 'community' when it is clear that there are other more precise terms which would be more suitable. Her suggestion is that community is used because it bears connotations of 'transcendence', of positive social relations existing above and beyond the imperfect details of the particular grouping which is the focus of the text. (Frazer, forthcoming.)

warmth, sociability and connectedness, the supposed opposite of all that is procedural, anonymous and cold in the liberal alternative. Thus Sandel *et al.* may well be guilty of either unconscious or deliberate methodological bias and normativity of usage, even when their focus is in fact an ontological issue. Either way, if we accept Taylor's point, this does not do much to clarify their theoretical position.

III Communitarian 'Community': A Non-Concept?

As a result of her critique Stacey declaimed community as a 'non-concept'. This is an extremely strong conclusion to adopt. Do we really have reason to assert that 'community' is more than just confused or unclear, that ultimately it fails to refer to anything at all? The very idea of a non-concept in political theory is an odd one. Unlike empirical sociology whose ultimate end must be the improved understanding of the way society actually works, one of political theory's roles is conceptual analysis. As such, the discipline would seem better fitted to analyse, dissect and re-categorise the various elements of problematic concepts such as community. If sociology were to apply itself to Hillery's 94 definitions of community, it might find sufficient common threads to rescue some sort of coherent concept. But in Margaret Stacey's eyes at least, this was not the answer. Why might she have so quickly rejected 'community' with such an air of finality? Firstly, perhaps conceptual analysis is simply not the sociologist's role; but secondly, and more importantly, even were that analysis to be successfully carried out, the initial confusion could already have polluted the use of the term. The overall thrust of Stacey's article seems to imply that it would be very hard to eradicate all taint of controversy from the word; it might retain an element of normativity, or it might be difficult to think of community as anything but enclosed or autonomous. The easier option for Stacey was to re-phrase research questions in such a way that they referred more precisely to the relations studied.

A similar question could be asked of communitarian invocations of 'community'. Do we wish to designate it a 'non-concept' in similar fashion? We could do so without denying that further clarification or standardisation of usage might be gained, simply believing instead that no real academic benefit could result from such a move. This is an attractive option. If political theorists object to the denomination 'non-concept' we

could simply say that community is perhaps a common word for two or more different concepts or ideas which are almost irretrievably inter-twined. But as far as the current debate is concerned there is merit in our discarding the concept of 'community' as an informative and useful ingredient of communitarian theory. It is a non-concept not in the sense that it fails to refer to anything, but in the sense that it refers to several different things at once; even more damagingly it also plays a heavily rhetorical role which inhibits our recognition of the actual underlying issues. Without doubt, we would more fruitfully study these distinct processes, relations or goods if we focus our attention directly upon them, rather than upon their possible connection with each other as ingredients of a single whole, namely some obfuscatory and elusive emotive ideal of 'community'. This is doubly important if we are to take Taylor's proposals to heart and seek to separate explicitly normative and ontological claims. Thus for the purposes of analysing and developing communitarian thought, we should reject community as a useful concept even if, as conceptual analysts, we are reluctant to go so far as labeling it a 'non-concept'.

Locality – An Alternative?

Stacey's resolution of the problem was to turn towards locality as a target for research. Whilst this might sound as hazy a concept as 'community', its meaning and usage in sociology is far more rigorous than that latter term. She holds that there is nothing wrong with the study of social and institutional relations within a given geographic territory so long as there is no assumption that that territory offers us an autonomous social unit. Locality, local interaction or geographic proximity may well have important effects at the sociological level, so there should be occasion for its study. But there must be an accepted limitation as to what that study can reveal. Stacey holds that, on the basis of social research, we may be able to make judgements as to the greater or lesser degree of social and institutional autonomy for any given objectively-defined locality.⁴² Within any one study we can carry out sophisticated network analysis to determine just which noteworthy relationships are contained by the locality and which extend beyond. Complex patterns of multiplex social relations can thus be compiled. Qualitative

⁴² 'Objectively-defined' because the unit of research will not appeal to prior expressions of 'what counts as local for this body of people'; rather it is likely to cover an administrative or political unit. Locality would be subjectively defined if we were to define locality in terms of people's perceptions of 'the local'. Of course this latter approach could prove problematic in that the perceptions of various people need not coincide, depending on where they live, where they work, which routes they travel and so on.

studies can address the content and nature of these relations. What these studies cannot reveal though, is the existence of any such thing as a 'community'. However, unlike 'community', the concept of locality does not bear any unspoken emotive content.

The final question to be raised, then, concerns the implications of this methodological development for communitarianism. Given that 'community' generally obscures rather than elucidates the particular arguments made, there would seem to be reason to follow Stacey's ruthless example and abandon the term. But does this then mean replacing it with the concept of 'locality'? On the contrary, no one single change will solve the problem. It was noted above that 'community' refers to too many different types of thing; merely calling all these by another single name will not solve any problems. Instead, a more subtle approach must be adopted. The first task must be to discern what role 'community' plays on each occasion of its use. Most importantly, the normative or ontological nature of the claim should be clearly identified. Only then can we be sure that the spirit of the communitarian critique is respected.

Having isolated which sense of 'community' is intended, we must then ascertain which underlying processes, relations, sentiments or entities the communitarian critiques are directing us toward. In this manner, 'community studies' became 'locality studies' or, later, 'social network analysis' and thus escaped the emotive connotations of Tönnies' account. Similar refinement of arguments and questions for future research is required of communitarian claims conventionally phrased in the language of 'community'. In the case of community as a sentiment, for example, close textual study might reveal one or several hypotheses about the psychology of justice and its reliance upon certain human motivations or sentiments. Theorists such as Sandel might be interpreted as arguing that only certain types of human relationship or bond will support justice attitudes, and that therefore, those types of relationship are desirable. Consequently, research could be conducted at both the conceptual and empirical level to determine precisely what might be required of a 'reasonable moral psychology'⁴³ in order for individuals to feel the

⁴³ This is an explicitly Rawlsian reference, relating to this theorist's explicit reliance upon an unspecified but 'reasonable' account of moral psychology. J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1973, p. 462, p. 490-6; Rawls 1993, p. 86-88.

commitment required to drive, say, the Difference Principle.⁴⁴ In particular, this would raise questions of what type of social and political association could foster the requisite motivations. Later chapters of this thesis will undertake an equivalent project with regard to certain ontological communitarian claims concerning the social embeddedness of individuals in ‘communities’. Chapters Six and Seven will seek to reinterpret some of these claims in terms of an emphasis on the empirically limiting factors which affect the development of individual liberal citizens. They will do so by drawing on social psychology and reporting particularly important influences and effects, rather than by looking to any such thing as ‘a community’ which might shape citizens in certain ways.

In some cases ‘locality’ might prove a suitable term to replace ‘community’. In recent years research in politics and political theory has embraced this latter concept,⁴⁵ although the possible benefits of locality over community in the communitarian sense have not been fully explored.⁴⁶ Stacey embraced locality because it enabled study within an objectively defined, limited, but not autonomous, spatial area. It avoided the confusion and polluting connotations of community, and focused attention on the discrete processes or relations that were to be studied. ‘Locality’ would most likely be relevant to communitarian claims when they, like Stacey’s work, concern the nature of the social matrix. Thus those claims which refer to community as a source of identity, value or meaning, might well be refined and reinterpreted in such a way that they make reference to different socialising contexts. One of these contexts will be the nation-state, but others will more localised, such as the town, the neighbourhood, the family, the workplace and the school. Each of these contexts might be described as ‘local’ to the individual. Indeed, as will be emphasised in later stages of the thesis, the communitarian focus on factors operating closest (geographically or otherwise) to us suggests that liberals could do well to concern themselves more carefully with the processes of socialization operating at levels below that of the nation-state. More generally, however, locality and the local might feature frequently in even re-workings of communitarian advocacy claims. In so far as the role of community in these arguments is usually to

⁴⁴ David Miller analyses the implications of psychological research for social justice in precisely this way. See D. Miller, ‘Distributive Justice - What the People Think’, in *Ethics*, 102, 1992, p. 555-593; *Principles of Social Justice*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, forthcoming, p. 78-81.

⁴⁵ See for example, Frazer in King & Stoker. 1996; M. Harloe, C. Pickvance & J. Urry, *Place, Policy and Politics*, Unwin Hyman, London 1990; D. Massey, ‘The Political Place of Locality Studies’, *Environment and Planning A*, 23, 2, 1991, p. 267-81; Gyford 1991.

point to the normative implications of a holist approach, communitarians are interested in the effects, the limits and the possibilities of our proximity to and relationships with other people. This suggests that some consideration of phenomena operating at an immediate or local level, as well as that of factors at the national level, will on many occasions be required

Thus the concept of locality can play a role in the project of analysing and developing communitarian claims. It will not, however, play a primary role in the way that community was commonly (mis)understood to do. More closely understanding the import of communitarian claims may yet give us reason to focus on the politics of locality not as some over-arching normative goal, but as a new level of political concern. Locality would not be the goal of the communitarian endeavor in the way that Bell or Etzioni pursue the ideal of community; rather locality would just be another context or even set of contexts, along with the nation-state, within which politics has relevance and effect. Locality could thus be a new ‘location’ in which we could ‘re-locate’ the liberal-communitarian debate. This possibility will not be fully investigated until the final chapters of this thesis. In order for this claim to be justified it would have to be shown that politically relevant effects occur at the level of the locality which do not manifest themselves nationally. Whether or not this is the case will remain an open question at this early stage.

IV Conclusions: Re-interpreting Communitarian Claims.

We have now reached a point where we can see the futility of interpreting communitarianism as a theory of ‘community’. This concept was shown to have several different subtler meanings or usages whose distinctness is obscured by their subsumption under the banner of community. Further, the term over-emphasises the role of geographical relations at the expense of social and political ones. Even more damagingly, ‘community’ carries such strongly normative overtones that it inhibits transparent and non-rhetorical communication of ideas. As already noted, it is probably partly for this very reason that the term is so over-used within communitarian literature.

⁴⁶ Although this was a project that I personally undertook in my M. Phil Thesis, See V. Nash, *Focusing*

This criticism matters even when the relevant claims are themselves overtly prescriptive, for if a term automatically carries positive overtones it can hinder closer assessment of the actual claims being made. When the claims being made are non-prescriptive, as in the case of ontological arguments, the reliance on an emotive and value-laden concept such as community is quite simply misleading.

The conclusion reached above held that the most productive means of pursuing communitarian themes would be to look beyond 'community'. This means identifying the particular relations, sentiments, entities and processes which are evoked by each communitarian claim. Only then can the theoretical and empirical requirements of these ideas be properly analysed, and the complexity of the issues be revealed. This project is justifiable on at least two grounds. Firstly, this would help to identify the specific claims raised by communitarians against liberalism. The four different sorts of claim addressed in this chapter may represent just the tip of the iceberg, with many more subtle and worthy arguments to be found when the various appeals to 'community' are dissected. In particular, such a move would help us to separate ontological from normative claims in the manner recommended by Charles Taylor. Setting aside the overtly rhetorical term 'community' should prevent us from interpreting claims about the social matrix as necessarily prescriptive.

Secondly, liberals have traditionally rebuffed communitarian critiques solely on the basis of an unfavourable interpretation of 'community'. Thus 'community' is held to imply homogeneity of values, lifestyles or beliefs; it is considered to be inherently conservative, always concerned to preserve its defining set of 'community values'; it is exclusionary, being defined as much by who is kept out as by who is included.⁴⁷ Although these objections are not necessarily inaccurate, they may well be misplaced. Until it has been shown that the subtler claims or hypotheses subsumed by a focus on community do individually deserve this criticism, such objections should be withheld. The strength or weakness of individual communitarian contentions can only be determined by addressing them on their own merits, not by assuming the worst in advance.

on Local Government: An Appeal to Locality or Community?, Oxford University 1996.

⁴⁷ See for example W. Kymlicka, Appendix One, in Bell 1993, or Gutmann in Avineri & de-Shalit 1992, p. 132-33.

It is unfortunate, in the light of the preceding argument, that recent developments of communitarian ideas have chosen to focus on 'community' to an even larger extent than the seminal theorists themselves. If the analysis presented here is correct, then there would seem little to be gained from such an approach. A further comment raised in previous discussion of Bell and Etzioni's work was that normative claims were generally favoured over ontological issues. This bias is also explicable in the light of the conclusions reached here about the emotive rhetoric of community. The argument pursued in this chapter suggests that neither of these tacks are likely to prove fruitful. Certainly there is good reason to investigate and develop communitarian ideas with a view to looking beyond 'community'.

This thesis will focus on unraveling the implications of communitarian ontological claims. It does so because these claims have been largely neglected, and also because, given all the confusion regarding 'community', they are perhaps the more straightforward to rework without reliance on some definition of that problematic term. This is not to say that communitarian advocacy claims could never be fruitfully developed, it is just that they cannot be taken any further in their current form. The concept of 'community' is just too value-laden and imprecise. Only after more careful dissection of communitarian prescriptions has been undertaken can such a project be pursued. Recent works such as those of Bell and Etzioni are significantly weakened by this flaw. The main body of this thesis will therefore be devoted to consideration of the full implications of social embeddedness. It will contend that if we are to take seriously the communitarian critique, we must address the particular processes of socialisation and character formation which occur at various levels of society. Such an interpretation and development of the communitarian critique is clearly quite different from the 'community'-based focus of the more recent self-espoused communitarianism. Over the course of the thesis it is this valuable 're-location' of the critique which will be justified.

Chapter Four

The Nature and Extent of Liberal Holism

Given the fatal ambiguity of appeals to ‘community’, it seems that any attempt to pursue communitarian ontological claims should proceed without reference to this contentious term. Indeed, any serious re-analysis of the seminal texts would do well to look beyond the term in order to determine whether other critically relevant claims have previously been unfairly dismissed. This thesis does not presume to undertake such an ambitious project, it simply suggests that contemporary liberal theory could benefit from a focus on social embeddedness. This might seem a rather strange choice of subject-matter. To a large extent liberals never rejected communitarian claims concerning the import of ontological relationships. On the contrary, liberals could argue that the communitarian critique was blatantly misguided as liberalism already embraces ontological holism. There would seem to be no argument between liberals and communitarians on this point, only consensus. On this view communitarianism would appear to be a redundant critical tool.

It is this belief which will be laid open to question in the remainder of the thesis. The suspicion is that although liberals do indeed claim to have embraced the implications of ontological holism, they do so in an insufficiently thorough manner. Thus the communitarian focus on social embeddedness might yet retain its critical value. In particular it will be shown that dealing with ontological issues in a thorough manner may well raise some very awkward normative questions for liberalism.¹ This is especially true when it comes to considering *empirically* holist claims (as against philosophical ones). The empirical realities of socialisation and character formation suggest that some possibly ‘illiberal’ or autonomy-reducing measures may have to be taken to support core liberal values and traits. This may help to explain why the incorporation of holist foundations in liberal texts is still undertaken in a relatively

¹ That is, making the ontological implications clear can raise normative questions, *given that* we are already committed to a certain normative outcome. Those implications raise such questions by pointing out possible incoherence or gaps in the line of reasoning that were not previously obvious. Clearly, were

piecemeal fashion. The aim of this chapter is to determine to what extent liberals do in fact incorporate the premises of holism. Once this has been undertaken we can go on to ascertain how liberal texts could benefit from a more explicitly ontological approach.

It seems highly unlikely that liberals could deny the social nature of goods such as language.² Thus at a very simple level, it would be wrong to characterise contemporary liberalism as a methodologically atomistic doctrine. But this does not entail that liberals *fully* embraces holism. One could be a holist to a greater or lesser extent, awarding individuals lesser or greater independence from the social matrix. Over the course of the following pages the nature and extent of liberal holism will be investigated. Both ‘ontology’ and ‘holism’ were defined in Chapter Two. In line with that definition we should recall that ontological holism was defined by two broad claims:

- There are social actions or structures which cannot be explained in terms of individual actions, positions or beliefs, and some social goods which cannot be reduced to an aggregated sum of individual goods.
- Individual actions, positions and beliefs may sometimes be explained by recourse to social actions and structures.

The structure of this chapter will follow this distinction. Analysis will be divided into two sections representing a societal and individual-level perspective on the issue of social embeddedness. The societal-level perspective considers whether any irreducibly social phenomena are assumed in liberal theory. This first section simply asks whether liberals do accept the fundamentally social nature of these goods. If they do, then these theorists must be holists in at least this minimal sense. The second section focuses on the account of the individual offered by liberal theory. Here the atomist assumption would be that individual behaviour and motives are not themselves shaped by social factors such as language or political culture in any way. Social factors such as political culture, social context or history would not be considered crucial to explanation or justification. This section will therefore ascertain whether liberals can or do take into

we not interested in normative claims at all, unravelling the implications of holism would not in itself raise any normative questions.

² There is of course a significant difference between noting that certain liberal theorists embrace holism, and that liberalism as a whole does so. The latter claim would seem to demand assessment of what ‘liberalism’ as a coherent political ideology can or cannot conceptually incorporate, rather than just textual evidence that holist claims have been made by some theorists on some occasions. As this would be a substantial project in its own right, in this thesis I shall simplify matters by assuming that if central liberal theorists accept holist premises, then this is at least good evidence that liberalism as a whole could also endorse it. This, of course, assumes the absence of any convincing contradictory argument.

account the formative effects of institutions, culture and context, and if so, what import they attach to such processes. The concluding comments will summarise the findings, offering an overall assessment of the nature and extent of liberal holism.

I Liberalism and the Irreducibly Social

In the introduction we identified a distinction between two defining elements of the holist position. Although this distinction is somewhat artificial, it does reflect an attempt to distinguish between how holism regards social phenomena and how it regards individuals. The societal-level perspective refers to holism's understanding of social processes, relations and goods. Unlike atomism, holism can allow for there being irreducibly social phenomena. That is, goods such as language or political culture cannot be explained as simply aggregates of individual actions independently executed. We first ask, therefore, whether liberal political theory can incorporate such an understanding of social phenomena. Three possible candidates for such phenomena will be considered: language, political culture and societal culture.

Language.

To a large extent, several aspects of our questions have already been answered. Mulhall and Swift's detailed analysis of Rawls' 'communitarianism' effectively highlights the extent to which this theorist has embraced holist premises at both the macro and micro level.³ On the issue of irreducibly social phenomena, Mulhall and Swift recognise both Rawls' acceptance of language as a social good, and his central reliance on the concept of political culture. With regard to the former, they identify a quote from *Theory of Justice* where Rawls dismisses as a truism the idea

"...that social life is a condition for our developing the ability to speak and think, and to take part in the common activities of society and culture. No doubt even the concepts that we use to describe our plans and situation, and even to give voice to personal wants and purposes, often presuppose a social setting as well as a system of belief and thought that is the outcome of the collective efforts of a long tradition."⁴

Although Rawls dismisses this statement of social embeddedness, he does so not because it is false but because it bears no normative relevance. Humans may be

³ Mulhall & Swift 1996, Chapter 6.

inevitably social beings in that they must use a socially-developed language and conceptual scheme, but this does not mean that this is all there is to human sociability. Rather Rawls is determined to imbue human ‘sociability’ with a more moral hue that in later work forms the basis for the concept of ‘reasonableness’. For current purposes, however, all we need note is that Rawls does accept the irreducibly social nature of language and our conceptual scheme.

This latter point is reiterated quite explicitly by Dworkin, in his well-informed analysis of the status of language, and its role in a society’s culture;

“A language is neither a private nor a public good as these are technically defined; it is inherently social, as these are not, and as a whole it generates our ways of valuing and so is not itself an object of valuation.”⁵

He goes on to point out that although we can exclude individuals from language on particular occasions (by whispering when we speak or writing in code, say), we cannot exclude people from language as whole. To try to do so would even be counter-productive, because a shared language is ultimately determined by all the millions of private linguistic exchanges we undertake on a daily basis. Once again, an important liberal theorist proves himself well able to embrace the holistic nature of language as a social good.

Political culture

The reference to a ‘system of belief and thought that is the outcome of the collective efforts of a long tradition’ in the quote from Rawls above implies that Rawls holds culture to be similarly social. This claim is supported by the explicit focus on the role of political culture in *Political Liberalism*. Although political culture is only a subset of culture as a whole, both are irreducibly social goods in exactly the same sense. Neither can be created unilaterally by individuals, or even significantly altered by them; in this sense culture is prior to the individual. Clearly in another sense they are constructed by individuals in the same way that language is, that is, they emerge as a result of interaction between individuals acting together as a social (or political) body. As Mulhall and Swift acknowledge, one could be forgiven for thinking that *A Theory of Justice* denied political culture any such social primacy, for it appeared to portray

⁴ Rawls 1973, p. 522, cited at Mulhall & Swift 1996, p. 199.

⁵ R. Dworkin, ‘Can a Liberal State Support Art?’, in Dworkin 1985.

political principles as simply the outcome of discrete individual rational deliberation.⁶ As Mulhall and Swift go on to point out, however, this apparent abstraction from public culture in fact results from careful attention to the content of our particular political culture. The construction of the original position reflects our culture's commitment to an ideal of equal citizenship, not a belief in the primacy of individual rationality.⁷ Rawls explicitly acknowledges the pivotal role of political culture in *Political Liberalism* as demonstrated in statements such as the following;

“The third feature of a political conception of justice is that its content is expressed in terms of certain fundamental ideas seen as implicit in the public political culture of a democratic society. This public culture comprises the political institutions of a constitutional regime and the public traditions of their interpretation (including those of the judiciary), as well as historic texts and documents that are public knowledge....In a democratic society there is a tradition of democratic thought, the content of which is at least familiar and intelligible to the educated common sense of citizens generally. Society's main institutions, and their accepted forms of interpretation, are seen as a fund of implicitly shared ideas and principles.”⁸

Arguably, it is this embrace of political culture which marks Rawls out most definitively as an ontological holist. Throughout *Political Liberalism*, various aspects of political culture are invoked to justify the formulation of particular principles, methods or concepts. Examples of this can be seen in Rawls' justification of primary goods or public reason. Brief consideration of each of these concepts can reveal further ways in which the irreducibly social nature of some phenomena is accepted by Rawls.

In Lecture VI of *Political Liberalism*, Rawls devotes considerable attention to the concept of public reason. This is understood as the way in which a political society can, as a whole, be said to make decisions in matters of basic justice or 'constitutional essentials'. The content of public reason is limited by what can be justified to all citizens of constitutional democracies, and as such it can appeal only to political values. Although public reason plays quite a technical role in Rawls' theory, which need not concern us here, it also represents another sense in which Rawls relies upon political culture. For as Rawls states,

⁶ Mulhall & Swift 1996, p. 206.

⁷ See for example Rawls 1993, p. 84,

“The structure and content of this conception of justice lay out how, by the use of the original position, the principles and standards of justice for society's basic institutions belong to, and help to articulate the conception of reasonable and rational citizens as free and equal. Thus we have an ideal of citizens as such persons.”

“Public reason, then, is public in three ways: as the reason of citizens as such, it is the reason of the public; its subject is the good of the public and matters of fundamental justice; and its nature and content is public, being given by the ideals and principles expressed by society’s conception of political justice, and conducted open to view on that basis.”⁹

The third ‘public’ element of public reason is the important one here. Public reason is composed of at least three voices; the voice of tradition in legal statute and political institution; the voice of judges and courts in making, interpreting and applying the law; and the voice of citizens in any political action from voting to discussing matters of justice. In this sense, public reason is the discourse which constitutes and reconstitutes political culture. Clearly, we could not construe public reason as in any simple way dependent on individual actions or desires.

Further evidence of Rawls’ holism can be found in Mulhall and Swift’s analysis of his position on primary goods. They defend Rawls against Walzer’s charge that the concept of primary goods takes insufficient account of social meanings. They argue that in fact Rawls’ method is consistent with Walzer’s recommendations, indeed, it is perhaps truer to those recommendations because it recognises just how little we have in common.¹⁰ Primary goods are citizen goods, where citizenship is perhaps the only identity or role we can all be truly said to share. The array of primary goods is arrived at by looking to the concept of citizenship dominant within public political culture. Primary goods are those goods which one needs in order to fulfil one’s role as a citizen.

“One might say that Rawls abstracts not from our culture, as Walzer supposes, but from those particular comprehensive doctrines of the good espoused within it; and he does so because that is the way to be true to our particular culture and those meanings we do indeed share.”¹¹

The relevant point in this argument is that once again Rawls awards a central role to political culture and social meanings. Primary goods are not random abstractions, nor are they rationally-chosen constructions of the individual mind. Primary goods are social goods in that they are determined by social meanings, where that latter ‘social’ cannot be reduced to individual desires or choices.

⁸ Rawls 1993, p. 13-14, partly cited in Mulhall & Swift 1996, p. 207.

⁹ Rawls 1993, p. 213.

¹⁰ Mulhall & Swift 1996, p. 207-8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

Rawls thus clearly accepts, indeed relies upon, the holist assumption that neither political values or political culture are the product of individual deliberations or actions. Liberal political culture is prior to the individual and is irreducible to individual actions or thoughts. The role of political culture in Rawls' recent work is thorough-going and extensive as should be clear from the textual examples offered. There should be little doubt then that liberalism can account for certain social phenomena in a way which does not reduce to factors at the level of the individual.

It should be noted that Rawls is not the only contemporary liberal who manifests such an awareness of social goods and meanings. The account of public reason offered above is highly reminiscent of Dworkin's analysis of integrity as a foundational feature of our conception of law.¹² Integrity is considered to involve loyalty to a set of justifiable ethical principles, such that the resultant body of law can be discerned to develop coherently from those principles;

“It supposes that the community as a whole can be committed to principles of fairness or justice or procedural due process in some way analogous to the way particular people can be committed to convictions or ideals or projects...”¹³

These principles are embedded deep in the political culture and so are supposed to be accessible to all, and usable by all. They are supposedly accepted as just and legitimate by the population as a whole, not just by the legal profession.

“Integrity, in contrast, insists that each citizen must accept demands on him and may make demands on others, that share and extend the moral dimension of any explicit political decisions. Integrity therefore fuses citizens' moral and political lives: it asks the good citizen, deciding how to treat his neighbour when their interests conflict, to interpret the common scheme of justice to which they are both committed just in virtue of citizenship.”¹⁴

In this sense broad ethical principles which ground law as integrity play a similar role for Dworkin as public reason does for Rawls. Dworkin argues that the principle of integrity offers the best explanation for the way in which we interpret, apply and develop law, and also grounds our sense of political obligation. Importantly from our point of view, integrity in law emphasises the inter-relation between political culture,

¹² R. Dworkin, *Law's Empire*, Fontana, London 1986.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 167. This quotation highlights the fact that liberals as well as communitarians cannot help but invoke the term community. Dworkin uses it to refer to the liberal state as a political community, and elsewhere offers a fairly detailed analysis of the concept as he uses it. (See R. Dworkin, 'Liberal Community', in *California Law Review*, 77, 3, 1989 p. 479-520.)

¹⁴ Dworkin 1986, p. 189-90.

public discourse and political/legal decisions. All of these must incorporate the same set of values. By so embedding the concepts of law and citizenship in a cultural and historical context, Dworkin is clearly embracing a holist ontology. Furthermore, the very idea of integrity assumes that political culture and values can exist above and beyond the actions or decisions of particular judges or politicians. It is this independently existing body of principle which serves as the pattern against which we can compare existing or proposed legislation. This body of principle is not up for grabs as it is composed of convention, practice, common understanding and justified acceptance. Dworkin thus relies upon at least one irreducibly social good in his interpretation of law as driven by integrity.

Societal Culture

Thus far the liberal examples we have found of irreducibly social goods have largely focussed on aspects of public political culture. In particular, Rawls and Dworkin were seen to invoke the particular value-content of public culture as in some way limiting, but also legitimating the liberal political stance. There is however one other important social good which is invoked by comprehensive liberals such as Dworkin and Raz, namely societal, rather than political culture.¹⁵ Both of these theorists ground their liberalism in explicitly non-neutral comprehensive moral doctrines.¹⁶ Although Raz is a perfectionist liberal and Dworkin an anti-perfectionist, the two share a similar position on the import of autonomy-supporting social structures. Both emphasise the extent to which the preservation of social diversity depends upon supporting the social structural conditions of diversity.

Raz is especially clear on the extent to which our having certain goals or pursuing certain ways of life depends on the existence of 'social forms'. These social forms are,

¹⁵ There is no reason in principle why even a self-declared *political* liberal like Rawls should not acknowledge the necessary supporting role of societal structures. Indeed, the rigid distinction drawn between the political and the private clearly recognises the import of societal structures which support comprehensive goods. It is simply that Rawls believes that the support of particular structures is in no way a matter for politics. Because both Dworkin and Raz are comprehensive liberals, both are more likely to emphasise the value of social structures defining their favoured ways of life (in both cases, autonomous lives), even if they disagree as to the best ways of supporting those structures. For an extremely clear explanation of the distinctions comprehensive/political, and perfectionist/non-perfectionist see Mulhall and Swift's discussion of versions of liberalism as espoused by Raz, Dworkin and Rorty. (Mulhall & Swift 1996, Introduction to Part III).

¹⁶ The clearest expression of Dworkin's position can be found in 'Foundations of Liberal Equality'; *Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press 1990.

“...the public perception of common social forms of action, each of which has the internal richness and complexity which makes it into a possible comprehensive personal goal.”¹⁷

In other words our goals in life depend on the existence of recognised social practices which have a public meaning and value.¹⁸ Examples of social forms would be particular religions and defining religious practices, careers, universities, even sports. Thus even our own individually chosen goals assume a socially-constructed framework of options. Just as language was argued above to be an irreducibly social good, so this framework of options or selection of social forms cannot be reduced to individually rational actions, arising instead only in the course of social interaction. Social forms or practices are created out of the accidents or conventions of behaviour and meaning that develop in day-to-day life. These accidents or conventions come to bear importance for individuals, and take on a new significance, being regarded as essential elements in a life that goes well. Importantly, these social forms or practices come both to facilitate and define the good life for participating individuals. Raz goes on to develop a normative argument which recommends that certain social forms should or should not be supported depending on their contribution to ‘good’ ways of life. Although such a perfectionist stance is not necessitated by these ontologically holist premises, it makes perfect sense in the light of Raz’s pre-existing normative commitments. It is a matter of some controversy as to whether non-perfectionist liberals such as Rawls would find it easy to maintain their position were they to adopt a similarly detailed holist understanding of liberalism’s supporting social forms. Just as Taylor predicted, embracing ontological premises can limit and structure the range of normative options available, and can do so in a very awkward way.

Like Raz, Dworkin regards the existence of certain social practices as crucial to the possibility of following certain ways of life. However, in his most explicit statement of this position Dworkin focuses on the broader social conditions which will support many social forms, rather than on those particular social forms themselves. In his essay *‘Can a Liberal State Support Art?’*, Dworkin explores the arguments that might justify state subsidy of the arts. Reluctant to embrace either a traditional ‘public good’ economic argument, or a political perfectionist defence of such action, Dworkin attempts to find a ‘neutral’ middle ground. The argument that he ultimately presents is that our culture

¹⁷ Raz 1986, p. 309-10.

provides both particular social forms of value, such as books, art, sport and so on and also the overall structural framework which makes such value possible. In order to maintain a cultural structure which includes as many different ways of life as possible, we must ensure that the cultural structure itself is rich with opportunity. This means supporting a huge variety of ways of thinking, speaking, writing, expressing or acting in order to keep our options open. In Dworkin's view, art, literature and performance all contribute enormously to maintaining this broad 'vocabulary' of experience, ensuring depth and complexity in the forms of life available to us. Although his challenge-based comprehensive liberalism perhaps gives him more reason to embrace intervention on this basis, it would certainly be thought a controversial suggestion by liberals such as Rawls. Dworkin believes that he can avoid paternalism, and perhaps even perfectionism, but Rawls would be unlikely to agree with this claim:

"If state subsidy has as its purpose protecting structure rather than providing particular aesthetic events, the charge of paternalism is defused. So is the charge of elitism, because structure affects almost everyone's life, and in such fundamental and unpredictable ways that we lack the conceptual equipment to measure who benefits most from the various possibilities and ideas they generate."¹⁹

Once again, taking ontological claims seriously raises some fairly difficult normative issues – in this case, just what extent of intervention a neutral liberalism can allow.

Whether or not this argument achieves its stated end of justifying state support of the arts within a neutral liberal state need not concern us here. Given that we are currently interested in determining how far liberals embrace a holist ontology we do not need to resolve these particular normative problems. For current purposes it suffices to note that societal culture can be recognised by liberal theorists as an important irreducibly social good in exactly the same way as political culture and language. As predicted, however, certain controversial normative issues are unavoidably raised by taking a closer look at the holistic relations between liberal political values and supporting social, political and linguistic structures. As the previous analysis shows, each of these three necessarily social goods can be accepted as limiting features of a liberal political order, but also, vitally, as valuable resources. None of the accounts presented seemed severely strained by their inclusion of such holist premises; indeed, the only strain occurs at the level of

¹⁸ This is clearly reminiscent of MacIntyre's account of 'practice', which again refers to a socially defined convention of activity supporting elements of the good life. (MacIntyre 1981, p. 175-77.)

¹⁹ Dworkin 1985, p. 232.

normative debate. Clearly liberal political theory can, and does, incorporate holist ontological premises at the macro-level, at least in so far as the work of these important theorists is a reasonable guide to what liberalism can or cannot incorporate. The Rawlsian account of the role of political culture is probably the most thorough example, but both Dworkin and Raz demonstrate that there are yet other elements of culture which could usefully be incorporated into the liberal story.

II Liberalism and the Social Composition of the Individual.

As was previously stated, adopting a holist ontological stance has implications both for one's understanding of social phenomena and of the individual. It is the holist account of the individual which will be considered in this third section. Whereas an atomist perspective would regard the individual as the ultimate unit of explanation, holism assumes that we cannot fully understand individuals without addressing the contributing social factors which cause, shape or affect individual development. The aim is therefore to ascertain whether liberals can take into account the formative effects of institutions, culture and context, and if so, what import they attach to such processes. There are many different types of effect which we could study. Theories of socialisation portray many factors as contributing to this process; amongst them, the role of the family, of education, of social and cultural groups, of the media, and of political institutions and political culture.²⁰ It would be hard to do justice to each of these factors in a single chapter, let alone present a more comprehensive picture, but some brief account of liberalism's sensitivity to these factors can be given. Thus we will consider each of these factors in turn, offering a brief account of the extent to which liberal theorists do or do not successfully incorporate them into their theories. Once again, an unfortunate implication of these attempts should be quickly revealed; facing up to the empirical realities of socialisation and moral development can severely constrain the range of feasible normative policies. They may also raise some rather awkward normative questions.

²⁰ These five are selected on the basis that they are the most intuitively familiar factors, and, perhaps not coincidentally, those which liberal theorists have incorporated in their work to some extent. Collectively, these factors may also be thought the most powerful set of socialising factors. It is still worth considering whether there might be other socialising factors of particular political relevance which are not considered

Many of these issues have only recently been explicitly addressed in liberal theory; in the case of the socialising role of the media, this has barely been addressed at all. In several cases the sharpened focus on how liberal citizens are formed has emerged as a reaction to perceived inadequacies of the Rawlsian account of individual socialisation. Rawls is the only liberal theorist to explicitly delineate an account of individual moral development and it plays an important role within his liberal theory of justice. The account that he offers is fairly sparse, and certainly is not very holistically demanding. Arguably even Nozick could accept the account of individual psychological development which merely allows that individuals acting around the growing child cannot help but influence his or her understanding of the moral world.²¹ It is in the light of this inadequacy that several other of the authors mentioned here have sought to inform the liberal understanding of how citizens are moulded. Before proceeding to analyse the five factors individually, then, we shall look briefly at Rawls' theory of moral development, in order to understand the starting point for more recent accounts.

Rawls' theory of moral development

Rawls is concerned to show that his conception of justice is stable; that is, it could persist over time and across different generations of persons. To show this he needs to provide an explanation of how individuals will come to embrace these principles; he asks how people can develop the moral sentiments necessary to support a sense of justice. Rawls' account of moral development and moral psychology thus outline the steps by which individuals might come to acquire a sense of justice in a well-ordered society.²²

In *A Theory of Justice* Rawls carefully details the course of moral development which will tend to result in the choice of his principles of justice.²³ This account proceeds in three stages, outlining the sequential development of different types of moral

here, and, more importantly, which are not considered by the liberal authors themselves. This question will be left until later chapters.

²¹ Indeed, it is not clear what an ontologically atomistic account of moral and personal development would look like.

²² This last phrase is important. Rawls is not presenting a story about transition from a non-just to a just society; rather he is detailing the features and processes of a just society (given these assumptions about moral psychology) which will ensure the stability and continuity of that society over time.

²³ Rawls 1973, Chapter VIII.

perspective.²⁴ The first stage is that of the morality of authority, which mainly describes the moral outlook of children. This is where Rawls most clearly invokes the socialising role of the family. Moral behaviour at this stage consists in the child following his parents' rules and guidelines just because they stem from his parents rather than because reward or punishment is expected. It is the child's love and trust of his parents which motivates the obedience. In this sense the parents stand as role-models for the child's behaviour.

The second stage is that of morality of association. Here the growing child's behaviour is guided by a wider variety of standards than those of parents alone. Thus the child must differentiate between the various standards which are appropriate to the several roles or relationships which she occupies at any one time. The child also learns to identify with others occupying similar roles to herself. A degree of moral autonomy is thus required, as is empathy and understanding of different perspectives. Here the socialising agents are those various groups, associations and relationships which the young child gradually enters into. The relevant associations that Rawls explicitly mentions are those of family, school, neighbourhood and peer-group. In each of these groupings children learn to co-operate with others in a mutually beneficial and rewarding manner, and they learn the importance of reciprocated fairness and trust. Thus the content of this morality is similar to the moral standards which characterise the co-operative virtues required by justice, namely fairness, trust and fidelity, integrity and impartiality.

The third and final stage of moral development is that of morality of principle. Although morality of association will probably give individuals a feel for justice, the motivation to comply with its demands on any one occasion is most likely to stem from the ties of friendship rather than devotion to principle. It is the latter which this final stage instils in the individual. We learn to love justice for its own sake rather than because it safeguards a rewarding relationship at a particular point in time. Having acquired skills of empathy, autonomous judgement and fairness at the previous stage, morality of principle requires that we use these skills and apply principles of justice even when we

²⁴ This theory of moral development is explicitly drawn from the work of two eminent psychologists, Jean Piaget and Laurence Kohlberg. Rawls acknowledges this intellectual debt but does also make some changes. See his footnote, Rawls 1973, fn 8 p. 461-2.

share no bond with the recipient of our actions. Here there is no identifiable set of socialising agents who encourage this development. Instead this morality can only arise through constant engagement in multiple roles with others over a period of time. Only thus will we come to appreciate the value of justice in supporting and enhancing co-operation with others.

Rawls relies on this theory of moral development to explain how a sense of justice might be internalised by individuals, and, similarly, how a sense of justice might be transmitted across generations. If this account of moral psychology is empirically plausible, then Rawls has gone a long way towards showing how a just society, once established, could be stable across time.²⁵ Unfortunately the issue is not quite as simple as it might seem. It is simply not clear what status the account holds. Does Rawls treat the psychological assumptions as unproblematic empirical fact, or is he rather concerned to outline a philosophically-entailed account of moral personality? Depending on which option Rawls favours, the account of moral personality may do little to convince us of the feasibility of his theory and principles.

The status of these psychological assumptions seems fairly clear in *A Theory of Justice*. As previously noted, Rawls explicitly acknowledges that he draws on the work of renowned empirical psychologists. He further acknowledges that the ‘general facts of moral psychology’ do affect the choice of justice principles in the original position. Indeed, individuals in the original position would themselves take such facts into account when choosing principles. Rawls’ defence is simply that he hopes his account of these and further psychological facts is not ‘too wide of the mark’.²⁶ This would therefore seem to be a paradigmatic case of employing *empirically* holistic claims to limit but not determine the range of normative options available.

However, matters are complicated by the fact that Rawls’ position apparently shifts between *A Theory of Justice* and *Political Liberalism*. In *Political Liberalism* Rawls is

²⁵ Although we might still question whether or not the principles of justice would themselves be sufficiently appealing to individuals to engender such principled allegiance.

²⁶ Note anyway that Rawls does not believe that his understanding of moral development determines his theory of justice, it is just that the two are compatible. In a footnote from the beginning of Chapter 8 in *A Theory of Justice* Rawls states that several of the different philosophical doctrines he considers could be supported by the standard account of moral development he offers. The superiority of justice as fairness is

far less willing to assert that his account of moral psychology is anything but a politically useful way of understanding his conception of the person. Given that there is no such thing as a universally agreed theory of human nature, we should just focus on what is plausible and suits our purposes:

“I stress that it is a moral psychology drawn from the political conception of justice as fairness. It is not a psychology originating in the science of human nature but rather a scheme of concepts and principles for expressing a certain political conception of the person and an ideal of citizenship. Whether it is correct for our purposes depends on whether we can learn and understand it, on whether we can apply and affirm its principles and ideals in political life, and on whether we find the political conception of justice to which it belongs acceptable on due reflection.”²⁷

This more guarded claim would lead us to think that Rawls’ account of moral development is now far more philosophical than its explicitly Kohlbergian predecessor. In fact, Rawls’ position on this issue is far from clear. At IV.2, considering the possible stability of justice as fairness, Rawls suggests that answering this question involves ensuring that two conditions are met. It is the first of these which concerns us here:

“...the first is whether people who grow up under just institutions (as the political conception defines them) acquire a normally sufficient sense of justice so that they generally comply with those institutions.”²⁸

This sounds like a practical question, answerable only through experience. Yet in response, Rawls refers the reader back to the earlier account of reasonable moral psychology outlined in II.7 and II.8, from which the previous quote was drawn. This account is explicitly philosophical and ideal rather than empirical. A similar tack is adopted when describing the steps required to achieve a constitutional consensus; again the justification for the claim that individuals will come to acquire ‘the co-operative virtues of political life’ appeals to the ideal moral psychology sketched in Lecture II.²⁹ However, at another point Rawls refers the reader back to Chapter VIII of *A Theory of Justice*, suggesting that he does still accept the more empirical account delineated there. The whole issue is very confused.

This discussion of ‘status’ may seem rather obscure. In fact the relevant point is fairly simple; when outlining the formative relationship operating between liberal institutions

determined not by unique fit with the psychological theory, but rather by philosophical analysis. (Rawls 1973, fn 8 p. 461-2).

²⁷ Rawls 1993, p. 86-7.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

moral psychology in *Political Liberalism*, Rawls resorts to making *philosophical* holist claims rather than *empirical* ones. Although he seems to be asking the question ‘Can justice as fairness be practically stable?’, he actually answers the question ‘What are the philosophically-entailed conditions required for people to be just?’. This approach can do little to convince us of the feasibility of the Rawlsian theory. It remains an open question whether we could be people for whom justice as fairness would prove stable and action-guiding. The relevance of this point will become clearer in later chapters of the thesis. For current purposes it suffices to note that, unlike most of the other theorists discussed here, Rawls does not unequivocally appeal to an empirically grounded account of moral psychology in justifying the applicability of his principles.

Moving beyond this slight detour, our concern in this third section of the chapter is to identify the extent to which liberalism can account for the formative effects of social institutions, processes and relationships upon individuals. Rawls is explicit on the ways in which social agents such as the family, the school, friends and acquaintances can mould individual behaviour in the process of moral development. The big question is, is this account explicit enough? Does it tell us enough about the formative role of the family or the school. Should it say something about the role of culture, either at national level or group level? It is these questions which have struck many liberal theorists writing after Rawls and it is largely to their work that we will now turn. Rawls’ arguments are sufficient to show that liberals can accept the formative role of society upon the individual, but the following discussion will reveal the extent to which they can do so.

The family

The extent to which liberals have or have not embraced the formative effect of the family is a matter of some controversy. Rawls’ position is complicated by the fact that he has dedicated varying amounts of attention to the issue in different pieces of writing. In *A Theory of Justice* he explicitly cites the family as the primary socialising context, but feminist critics such as Okin have since denounced the normative implications of the account offered.³⁰ This ongoing debate centres on Rawls’ assumption that the

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

³⁰ See for example, Okin 1987 p. 42-72, or Okin 1989.

traditional family is just.³¹ Rawls needed to assume this in order to support his account of morality of authority, which as we saw above, is inculcated within the family environment. The controversial element of this assumption is of course that the traditional family is divided along gender lines. Men are family heads, and are responsible for supporting the family through full-time work, whilst women are primary carers, and are responsible for emotional support and domestic work. Although this characterisation may sound anachronistic it is still borne out to a remarkable extent by empirical findings. Regardless of factual accuracy however, Okin is correct to query Rawls' omission of any criteria according to which the justice of the family might be judged. A blithe assumption that the family is just is too potentially permissive.

With regard to socialisation in particular, Okin worries that an unjust institutional context cannot socialise children to be just. There are two sources of injustice with which she is concerned; inequality in gender-roles as outlined above, but also inequality between families such as dual-parent against single parent; concerned and interested parents against unconcerned and uninterested parents, and so on. Both sources of inequality challenge the ideal of equality of opportunity, but gender inequality within the family may have even more sinister effect. Rawls is explicit that parents are the first role models that children have in life. Theirs are the first standards that children learn to adopt. If we are to maintain Rawls' claim, it is therefore essential that those standards be just. As Okin argues:

“...unless the first and most formative example of adult interaction usually experienced by children is one of justice and reciprocity, rather than one of domination and manipulation or of unequal altruism and one-sided self-sacrifice, and unless they are themselves treated with concern and respect, they are likely to be considerably hindered in becoming people who are guided by principles of justice.”³²

Okin's critique reveals a gap in Rawls' argument. Although Rawls explicitly accepts the holist premises that individuals are shaped by relationships, experiences and institutions, he accepts them somewhat selectively. At least in the early work, he neglects the possibility that children raised in a gendered environment may develop a skewed understanding of justice. Given Rawls' ambivalence as to whether or not the

³¹ Rawls 1973, p. 490. Earlier, Rawls does at least raise the possibility that we might question the institution of the family, but does not explicitly say we should do so because it is unjust. Rather he simply says that “other arrangements might indeed prove to be preferable.” (*Ibid.* p. 463). In *Political Liberalism*, he states that the family is just ‘in some form’. (Rawls 1993, p. xxix)

³² Okin 1989, p. 17.

family is even part of the basic structure this no doubt reflects the liberal fear of state intervention in the 'private realm'.

In later work, Rawls has reacted to feminist critique, excusing his earlier omission on the grounds that this was a personal mistake, not a fatal inadequacy of political liberalism.³³ In fact *Political Liberalism* itself almost entirely avoids the issue of gender and the family, apart from a few sentences in the Introduction acknowledging the seriousness of current gender injustice. Rawls argues that although he only considers a limited array of injustices, the resultant conception of justice can at least provide guidelines for addressing these other problems. Once again, Okin has criticised this position, arguing that this approach will not work, precisely because Rawls fails to address the peculiar nature of gender and the family. In maintaining the distinction between public and private, he removes the possibility of ever effectively reducing injustice, or indeed of moulding suitably just citizens;

“By separating out the sphere of the political, to which justice is to apply, from the personal, associational, and familial, within which there is to be great tolerance for many differing beliefs and modes of life, he seems to close off the possibility of ensuring that families (and associations) are just. He thereby leaves it unclear how the necessary sense of justice and the other political virtues are to develop, even at the most formative time of a child’s life.”³⁴

Cohen, in similar manner, asks why the family should not be included within the basic structure, given the extent to which it influences our development.³⁵

In fact Rawls has since directly addressed the question of justice and the family. A recent article on the concept of public reason explicitly rejects the distinction between political and non-political, and once again states that the family is part of the basic structure.³⁶ Rawls consequently stresses that basic rights are to be upheld within the family as within every other aspect of the basic structure. Although political principles cannot tell us how to raise our children, they can tell us when basic rights are being

³³ J. Rawls, 'The Idea of Public Reason Revisited', *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 64, 3, 1997, fn 58 p. 787.

³⁴ S. Moller Okin, 'Political Liberalism, Justice and Gender', in *Ethics*, 105, 1, 1994, p. 389.

³⁵ G. Cohen, 'Where the Action Is: On the Site of Distributive Justice', in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 26, 1, 1997, p. 3-30.

³⁶ Rawls 1997, p. 788, and then more explicitly at p. 791:

“So the spheres of the political and the public, of the non-public and the private, fall out from the content and application of the conception of justice and its principles. If the so-called private sphere is alleged to be a space exempt from justice, then there is no such thing.”

over-ridden. But, given Rawls' recognition that a liberal conception of justice may have to allow for 'voluntary' gendered division of labour in line with religious tradition, it is unlikely that Okin would be fully appeased by even this apparent concession.³⁷ That liberalism can still tolerate the continuation of religions which preach and practise discrimination against women is a highly controversial issue, both in its own right, and in its effects for future generations of liberal citizens who will be socialised in such environments.

Embracing the role of the family means facing up to the theoretical implications of such a move. Unfortunately it is the wider implications which prove most problematic for liberals such as Rawls. They can perfectly easily admit that the family exerts a vital formative influence on the moral development of young children. But it is far harder for liberals to then maintain certain of their normative claims such as the separation of public and private, or the necessity of tolerating even gender-discriminatory religions. We earlier accepted Taylor's claim that our choice of ontological premises can shape the range of normative positions available. This is precisely the problem which dogs the liberal embrace of holism. For example, it is paradoxical that on the one hand Rawls was originally keen to maintain the distinction between public and private, regarding the family as essentially private; yet on the other hand he acknowledges the public nature of the family as the primary socialising context of future liberal citizens. Even now that Rawls has supposedly rejected this dichotomy, his continuing acceptance of 'voluntary' (because religion is 'voluntary') discrimination significantly weakens the credibility of this claimed change.

A further example concerns methods of righting inequality. What the feminist critique of Rawls' theory reveals is that once we take seriously the formative effects of institutions such as the family, structural inequalities such as gender inequality appear far more pernicious. For they suggest that such inequalities cannot be eliminated all in one go simply by ensuring equality of opportunity in education and employment, or by prohibiting overt discrimination. Instead liberals must look to influence the social mechanisms such as socialisation by which these inequalities are perpetuated.³⁸ They

³⁷ Cohen would certainly not be satisfied with this concession; his attack is launched at the idea that the basic structure should even be the correct focus for a theory of distributive justice.

³⁸ To be fair, Rawls does acknowledge this point;

must succeed in changing attitudes as well as opportunities in order to stop this perpetuation. In other words, liberals can embrace the formative effects of the family, but doing so reveals some normative problems which must be dealt with. Both of these examples illustrate the normative dilemmas which arise from unravelling holist premises concerning the formation of the just liberal citizen.

If liberals are fully to embrace the vital role of families in moulding future citizens, then justice within the family is a possible matter of political concern. This in turn would raise some difficult questions for liberalism. Whether or not liberals choose to advocate intervention in family life in order to ensure justice is a normative question. As such it need not concern us here. All that needs to be shown is that although liberals can certainly embrace the formative effects of the family, doing so may challenge some of their normative preconceptions. Thus they may be reluctant explicitly to adopt these particular holist premises.³⁹ The problem lies not in the difficulties of incorporating familial socialisation itself, but in the normative questions that such incorporation provokes.

Education

Rawls recognised education as one of the formative arenas within which the ‘morality of association’ can be learnt. In school the child learns to see things through the eyes of others, namely her teachers and her peer-group, thus expanding the moral capacity for empathy. She learns to exercise autonomy, judging between the requirements of the different roles played. This is about as far as Rawls takes the matter in *A Theory of Justice* – no mention of direct education for citizenship or the content of curriculum, just a mention of the beneficial effects of mixing with others in a school environment.⁴⁰

“The question then becomes whether the fulfilment of these principles suffices to remedy the gender system’s faults. The remedy depends in part on social theory and human psychology, and much else. It cannot be settled by a conception of justice alone.” (Rawls 1997, p. 793.)

³⁹ This is not to say that liberals can consistently ignore them. All liberals must assume some story about the means by which liberal citizens are formed, and unless they choose to disregard the family as an important socialising influence they must face up to these problems.

⁴⁰ The only occasion on which Rawls does directly address the content of education is when he defends “practices of moral instruction that inculcate a sense of justice”. He argues that such instruction does not offend against individual autonomy because individuals in the original position would agree both to principles of justice and the means of bringing them into effect. In order to respect the requirements of autonomy, though, education must be transparent in its aims;

“Nor is the process of education simply a causal sequence intended to bring about as an end result the appropriate moral sentiments. As far as possible each stage foreshadows in its teaching and explanations the conception of right and justice at which it aims and by reference to which

There is a somewhat tantalising paragraph in *Political Liberalism* where Rawls attempts to defend the possibility of education for a political rather than comprehensive conception of liberalism, but the issue is quickly put aside.⁴¹ His most positive statement is that it is important for children to be taught of their constitutional and civic rights and further

“...their education should also prepare them to be fully co-operating members of society and enable them to be self-supporting; it should also encourage the political virtues so that they want to honor the fair terms of co-operation in their relations with the rest of society.”⁴²

In other words, Rawls does acknowledge the need to educate children for citizenship. That he does not expand on this claim is perhaps explained by the controversy aroused by even by this simple statement. As will be seen below, liberals certainly can incorporate a more detailed picture of education and its formative effects; it is just that in doing so, they once again have to face up to some rather sticky normative choices.

As was the case with the family, there is little mention of education in other major liberal texts. Dworkin does not address the issue, and neither does Raz. Kymlicka refers to education only so far as it mediates the operation of cultural group effects, which we will come to in a later sub-section. Ackerman⁴³ and Galston⁴⁴ both dedicate some space to the issue, and Macedo⁴⁵ has recently focused upon the topic. But it is still remarkable that so little attention has been devoted to education in mainstream liberal theory given the enormous formative import of this good.⁴⁶ Any comments that have been made have focused almost entirely on the distribution of education in the light of its effects on the distribution of goods such as income and employment opportunities. Education's role in

we will later recognize that the moral standards presented to us are justified.” (Rawls 1973, p. 515.)

⁴¹ For an extremely clear and thorough analysis of this particular issue see M. Levinson, *Autonomy, Schooling and the Reconstruction of the Liberal Educational Ideal*, D. Phil Thesis, Faculty of Social Studies, Oxford University 1996.

⁴² Rawls 1993, p. 199.

⁴³ B. Ackerman, *Social Justice in the Liberal State*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1980, Chapter 5.

⁴⁴ W. Galston, *Liberal Purposes*, CUP, Cambridge 1991.

⁴⁵ S. Macedo, ‘Liberal Civic Education and Religious Fundamentalism: The Case of God v. John Rawls?’, *Ethics*, 105, 3, 1995, p. 468-96; ‘Community, Diversity and Civic Education: Toward a Liberal Political Science of Group Life’, *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 13, 1, 1996, p. 240-68.

⁴⁶ The most thorough treatment of the issue occurs with a recent book by Eamonn Callan: *Creating Citizens: Political Education and Liberal Democracy*, OUP, Oxford 1997. See also doctoral theses by Levinson (Levinson 1996) and Clayton (M. Clayton, *Educating Liberals: an Argument About Political Neutrality, Equality of Opportunity, and Parental Autonomy*, D. Phil Thesis, Faculty of Social Studies, Oxford University 1997).

creating citizens rather than distributing opportunities has been almost entirely neglected.

Perhaps the most obvious reason for this neglect is once again the awkward nature of the issues raised. As was the case with the subject of the family we find that liberals can easily acknowledge the formative import of education. Given that liberals such as Rawls are explicitly concerned to identify the conditions under which liberal values and institutions will prove stable, some interest in education would seem unavoidable. As Macedo puts it, liberals need to think about education, and particularly, political education, for their own survival.⁴⁷ There is, however, enormous difficulty involved in any consequent attempts to establish a substantive theory of education which will fit with liberals' normative ends. As the following discussion should reveal, accepting education's socialising role 'structures' the range of normative possibilities in a rather unappealing manner.

Once liberals move beyond the basic ontological premise that education, and particularly schooling, exerts a vital formative influence on children, they must face up to the question of whether or not to intervene in that formative process, and, if so, how. Intervention is already commonly accepted on the grounds that equal educational opportunities should be available to all. Such measures non-controversially assume that the function of schooling is to educate children in academic or vocational skills. However, our holistic argument maintains that education should be a concern of liberal justice for a reason other than its influence in the distribution of employment opportunities. Education matters because it is a crucial socialising influence on children, and as such it can contribute to or detract from the development of the requisite political virtues. Thus state intervention could be justified on this further basis, holding that the function of schooling is both to educate and to develop autonomy or citizenship skills. This is where controversy arises.

Liberals can be seen as prioritising certain personal characteristics for at least two different reasons. A *political* liberal such as Rawls or Macedo would want children to develop the citizenship skills required in order to participate within a politically liberal state. Although this variant of liberalism purports to make no demands on how

individuals lead their private lives (they can choose to live non-autonomously, for example), it does demand that they be capable of autonomous judgement for political purposes, and that they respect the different life-choices of others. A *comprehensive* liberal such as Dworkin or Raz, would hold that the capacity for autonomy is crucial in order for a life to go well,⁴⁸ and would therefore hold that acquisition of citizenship skills including autonomy would also help make an individual's life go better. This distinction suggests that even within liberalism there is likely to be disagreement as to the most acceptable theory of education. In fact recent research has focused on whether or not a fuller consideration of education and socialisation reveals the political/comprehensive distinction to be flawed.⁴⁹ Thus, once again, controversy is initiated by consideration of holist premises.

This can be observed by looking at the implications of educating children to be autonomous adults. The capacity to think autonomously would seem to be a minimal requirement for citizenship, since questions of justice can only be considered by stepping aside from our personal point of view. However, as political liberalism acknowledges, not all families would choose to live autonomous lives. Certain religious sects in particular discourage individual judgement in favour of deferring to God's will, or hold that any conflicting beliefs undermine their status as the only true religion. Thus children brought up in such families may be forced to develop the capacity for autonomy against their parents' wishes.⁵⁰ Much of the literature cites a US legal case (*Mozert v. Hawkins County Board of Education* 1987) in which a group of conservative Christian parents took their county school board to court over the content of their children's reading scheme. They did so on the grounds that it contained material which contradicted their fundamentalist faith. The parents did not want to inflict their views on others, nor were they reluctant to uphold others' civil rights. They simply wanted their children to share their unquestioning faith and hence enjoy their chosen good life.

⁴⁷ Macedo 1996, p. 240.

⁴⁸ This is perhaps a rather blunt interpretation of Dworkin's 'challenge model' of ethical value, but certainly the implication of that model is that autonomy is an important contributor to the possibility of finding value in the 'performance of living'. In particular, Dworkin argues against paternalism: "...nothing can improve the critical value of a life unless it is seen as an improvement by the person whose life it is..." (Dworkin 1990, p. 85).

⁴⁹ See for example Callan 1997, Levinson 1996, S. Mulhall, 'Political Liberalism and Civic Education', in *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 32, 2, 1998, p. 161-76.

In fact the relevant reading material only served to present young children with stories about different types of children, thus stimulating their imagination and causing them to recognise the possibility of difference. But still it raises a rather sticky problem. For in this case, merely highlighting the possibility of other ways of life served to undermine the unquestionable authority which these Christians attributed to their religion. Rawls' distinction between political and comprehensive liberalism simply assumes that we can be both autonomous in the public sphere whilst choosing to be non-autonomous in the private sphere. Yet as the Mozert case demonstrates, this is a schizophrenic requirement. Being autonomous in the public sphere has what Macedo calls 'spill-over effects'.⁵¹ These effects will be likely cause children to question their parents' beliefs and way of life; and even if this actually strengthens their conviction that this is a good way of life, something will have changed as blind faith or trust is replaced by judgement. This is what the Mozert parents objected to. In fact there does not seem to be any way in which liberalism can deny or prevent this result. But as Macedo argues, maybe liberalism does not need to make excuses for this as he asks,

“How can tolerance be taught without exposing children to diversity and asking them to forbear from asserting the truth of their own particular convictions, at least for political purposes?”⁵²

Ultimately, theorists such as Macedo, Callan, Ackerman and Levinson converge in their acceptance that liberalism must develop certain individual characteristics through public education (primarily autonomy and tolerance) if it is to survive. This is an ontological conclusion. Their subtly differing normative positions are distinguished along the way by their views on such issues as whether or not parents have rights over their children's education and upbringing, whether children should be forcibly mixed in schools, and whether or not political liberalism eventually collapses into comprehensive liberalism. That so many other contentious issues are raised by one relatively simple question helps us to understand why the issue was avoided in the more central liberal texts. This recent

⁵⁰ Thus another difficult normative issue raised by consideration of education and socialisation concerns the extent of parental rights over their children's upbringing.

⁵¹ Macedo 1995, p. 471. In fact, Callan, in his recent book argues that the political education required to support Rawls' version of political liberalism is far more controversial than Rawls himself allows. He argues that in order to understand and apply the burdens of judgement for example, children must be exposed to other ways of life, must understand the ways that different doctrines prioritise values, and even be taught to question their own beliefs. This imposes the strong requirement that all children should develop the capacity for autonomy and empathy regardless of their parents' wishes or their comprehensive good. (Callan 1997.)

⁵² Macedo 1995, p. 471.

extensive coverage, and apparent willingness to face up to some highly controversial questions is a positive development.⁵³ It shows that liberals certainly can embrace the formative effects of education, and more importantly can do so thoroughly, being willing to deal with the thorny normative problems that this ontological assumption arouses.

Social and Cultural Groups

The previous section drew initially on Rawls' morality of association to explain why mixing with others is taken to be a necessary stage of moral development. Rawls does not offer many examples of the sort of associations in which children (or indeed adults) are expected to mix. In so far as he refers to neighbours and peers, it would seem that Rawls does acknowledge the importance of social integration, and the value of social relationships.⁵⁴ However, as was the case with the family, the nature of interactions within social groups has been taken to be a private matter, one which need not concern the liberal state.⁵⁵ Further, citizenship is supposed to be an identity which all, regardless of social or cultural background could acquire. Thus the socialising effect of peer-groups and cultural groups is largely ignored by liberal theorists. Recent work by liberals and critics of liberalism alike has shown this omission to be short-sighted.

Kymlicka has most thoroughly demonstrated liberalism's capacity to engage with questions of cultural identity.⁵⁶ He makes the fundamental assumption that cultural membership is essential to self-identification and self-respect.⁵⁷ Importantly that cultural identity must find expression in the societal and political culture of the nation. In other words, culture must be embedded in institutions and practices, not just memory or convention. Only thus can cultural identity receive public recognition and become a source of self-respect.⁵⁸ The picture of moral development presented by Rawls is

⁵³ Macedo admirably takes pride in liberalism's potential "tough-mindedness", and relishes the occasion to demonstrate that liberalism has "spine". (*Ibid.* p. 470.)

⁵⁴ He does so at greater length in other passages, such as 'The Idea of Social Union' (Rawls 1973, Chapter IX, section 79).

⁵⁵ Although in line with Rawls' most recent comments on rights and the family noted above, we can presume that such interaction is not 'private' in the sense that basic rights can be over-ridden.

⁵⁶ See for example Kymlicka 1989 or Kymlicka 1995.

⁵⁷ Here he shares common ground with those critics of liberalism who move on from this assumption to recommend a politics of difference, namely one which doesn't subsume group identities under the mantle of citizenship. See for example Young 1990.

⁵⁸ Kymlicka characterises a societal culture as

inadequate precisely because it does not incorporate this requirement. Kymlicka claims that liberals such as Rawls or Dworkin accept the formative import of culture but assume there to be only one culture per nation, thus do not consider that individuals could be excluded from the expression of that culture at either the political or societal level. In fact, as he goes on to point out, in most nations there are either national minorities or immigrants who do not share the dominant culture. Once this empirical reality is observed, we have to accept the possibility that some cultural groups might be deprived of the conditions of self-identification and respect. Thus questions of cultural membership become politically salient.

Kymlicka's work takes its holistic premises seriously. The account given of the role of cultural membership focuses heavily on its formative import. Although membership is a good in so far as it provides self-respect and valuable opportunities for self-development, the culture itself is also derivatively a good. For it is the cultural background which provides individuals with the concepts, value-set and perspective which enables them to make meaningful choices in the world. That is, cultural structures are, for Kymlicka, a supporting foundation of autonomy;

“Liberals should be concerned with the fate of cultural structures, not because they have some moral status of their own, but because it's only through having a rich and secure cultural structure that people can become aware in a vivid way, of the options available to them, and intelligently examine their value.”⁵⁹

This quite clearly states an ontological premise about the preconditions of autonomous judgement but adds a normative suggestion that liberals should care about supporting such preconditions. As was seen above, it is generally at the normative level that disagreement between liberals occurs. Thus we can presume that most liberals would accept the ontological account given by Kymlicka as to the relationship between culture and self-respect, and between culture and choice. But many would disagree with his conclusions that these connections provide sufficient justification for awarding group-rights, for including cultural membership as a primary good or for recognising minority cultures in the public sphere.

“...a culture which provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres.” (Kymlicka 1995, p. 76).

⁵⁹ Kymlicka 1989, p. 165.

In fact these ontological premises have proved controversial. Waldron denies the central tenet of Kymlicka's argument, namely the idea that individuals require a secure cultural structure in order to enjoy autonomous choice.⁶⁰ Instead, he claims that our structure of choices is composed from many different cultural resources; there is no one 'culture' in which all options are defined. His vision of the 'cosmopolitan alternative' is of individuals drawing on many different cultural meanings, which are derived from sources ranging from one's ethnic community to the national community, from film culture to international literature, none of which assumes the membership of a single, defining group. As Waldron says,

"To put it crudely, we need culture, but we do not need cultural integrity."⁶¹

Unsurprisingly, adopting different ontological assumptions about the formative role of cultural groups results in Waldron also postulating different normative conclusions. Although his intention is merely to stimulate discussion rather than argue for definite alternatives, Waldron does suggest that accepting this different account will significantly undermine arguments for special group rights. There is no reason on this cosmopolitan account to privilege certain groups, cultural or otherwise. Thus once again, we see that unravelling ontological assumptions can arouse discomforting normative debate.

A different perspective on the formative import of groups is developed by Stephen Macedo in a recent article.⁶² Whereas Kymlicka and Macedo looked at the role of cultural groups, Macedo considers the impact of social groups more generally. Drawing on arguments from Adam Smith, Macedo contends that political education extends beyond the lessons we learn in school to the citizenship skills we acquire in daily interaction with others. Participation in group life is likely to arouse confidence and self-respect and to encourage empathy and responsibility. This much can be drawn from Rawls' account of the morality of association. Successful association over time will promote trust and friendship, developing a commitment to co-operation for its own sake. The novel ingredient in Macedo's account is his focus on the structure of communal life rather than the content. He is not concerned to detail which types of group are most likely to encourage the acquisition of citizenship skills, rather he wants

⁶⁰ J. Waldron, 'Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative', in W. Kymlicka, *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, OUP, Oxford 1995.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁶² Macedo 1996.

to identify the most fruitful pattern of allegiance. Crucially he holds that only if we are engaged in multiple overlapping group memberships will we develop the objectivity and breadth of perspective necessary for justice;

“Groups educate toward moderation, freedom, and political stability when they form complex, pluralistic, crosscutting patterns of overlapping memberships – patterns in which the state overarches all and represents certain common interests, Under these conditions, local community and group life can be said to foster the liberal-democratic benefits of community without incurring the dangers of group-based oppression, or tribalistic exclusion of outsiders.”⁶³

Vigorous pluralism is thus defended as a structural prerequisite of citizen education. The formative effects of group life can extend beyond the capacity of particular groups to shore up individual self-respect or provide a cultural vocabulary. Group life can apparently develop individual responsibility, empathy and tolerance, just as Rawls thought. But one important caveat has been inserted here by Macedo, namely that the number of associations matters. Group life can broaden or narrow our political horizons; Macedo identifies the conditions which should ensure the former, although he does not suggest how far a liberal state should go to ensure that these conditions are met. Again, it is plausible that this ontological claim might raise some difficult normative issues, such as recommending bussing policies in education, ruling out the privatisation of public spaces or otherwise intervening in traditionally ‘private’ decisions.

Macedo, Waldron and Kymlicka clearly show that liberalism is well able to embrace the holist premise that social and cultural groups exert important socialising effects on individuals. Once again however, the possibility of controversy arises when it comes to incorporating this premise into a normative theory of politics.

Political Institutions and Political Culture.

To a large degree, the role of political culture has already been addressed in the second section of this paper. Discussion there, however, focused mainly on the supporting role it plays within contemporary liberal theory more generally; that is, political culture is seen as an irreducibly social good which is both the source of our liberal values and part of their justification. Some further comment is desirable to demonstrate the extent to which liberal theory has recently also accepted the socialising effects that political

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 255-6.

culture and institutions can exert on individuals. Nowhere is this clearer than in Rawls' writings.

Two elements of Rawls' theory highlight his commitment to the formative effects of political institutions and culture. The first is his focus on justice as applying to the basic structure of society; the second is his emphasis of public justifiability and transparency of political action. The basic structure consists of the major social, political and economic institutions in society. A theory of social justice will determine how this system should allocate the various rights, duties, goods and advantages it controls. An important question which Rawls sets out to answer is why the basic structure should be the first subject of justice. Perhaps the most obvious reason is simply that it is the basic structure which allocates primary goods, and primary goods are the focus of social justice. But Rawls gives a further reason, which is that the basic structure also shapes individual conceptions of justice:

“Now everyone recognizes that the institutional form of society affects its members and determines in large part the kind of persons they want to be as well as the kind of persons they are. The social structure also limits people's ambitions and hopes in different ways; for they will with reason view themselves in part according to their position in it and take account of the means and opportunities they can realistically expect....More generally, the basic structure shapes the way the social system produces and reproduces over time a certain form of culture shared by persons with certain conceptions of their good.”⁶⁴

In turn, the basic structure is itself shaped by the principles of justice which are inherent within the political culture.⁶⁵ Rawls thus acknowledges the mutually reinforcing formative effects of political institutions and culture. These effects ensure that we do not just act according to certain procedural norms of justice, but that we actually come to internalise them. Only if we and our institutions are shaped by a culture which lauds justice and equality can we come to be driven by these values in such a way that their stability and survival across generations can be ensured. Rawls' embrace of holistic premises is clearly thorough and sophisticated, but it also fulfils a vital theoretical purpose.

⁶⁴ Rawls 1993, p. 269. A similar statement appears on p. 68.

⁶⁵ “Think then, of the principles of justice as designed to form the social world in which our character and our conception of ourselves as persons, as well as our comprehensive views and their conceptions of the good are first acquired, and in which our moral powers must be realized if they are to be realized at all.” (*Ibid.* p. 41)

The second aspect of Rawls' work which reveals such an awareness of the socialising role of institutions and culture is his focus on public justifiability and publicity. In *Political Liberalism* Rawls expressly advocates a theory of justice which can be justified to all (reasonable) members of society regardless of the fact that they may hold conflicting conceptions of the good. This drives the various senses in which such liberalism is 'political'.⁶⁶ Publicity is the condition which ensures that all political procedures, principles and institutional operations are transparent to the public. They are open to public observation and query, and justifications are supposedly accessible to all. The primary aim of the concern with public justifiability and publicity is to produce a theory of justice and state intervention which respects autonomy and is legitimate in the eyes of all. However, as was the case above, there is a second function which is again concerned with the socialising effects of institutions and culture. If the reasoning behind procedures, principles and institutions is accessible and justifiable to all, then there is a greater chance that people will come not only to accept, but also to internalise those reasons. Importantly for Rawls, publicity will help ensure that people are aware of the socialising effect exerted upon them by institutions of the basic structure;

"But publicity ensures, so far as practical measures allow, that citizens are in a position to know and to accept the pervasive influences of the basic structure that shape their conceptions of themselves, their characters and ends."⁶⁷

Thus in his later work, Rawls demonstrates a strong awareness of the extent to which institutions and culture are responsible for socialising individuals. Dworkin's focus on law and principle in *Law's Empire* pursues a similar line; the earlier discussion of 'law as integrity' briefly outlined the superior formative effect of such a coherent and principled body of law. Where integrity is inherent in legal and political culture and institutions, individuals will be better able to identify with legal and political decisions as they will seem to originate in a single discernible set of principles. With specific reference to the concept of democratic self-government Dworkin argues that integrity is necessary to any system of law with which a citizen is to identify,

"...for a citizen cannot treat himself as the author of a collection of laws that are inconsistent in principle, nor can he see that collection as sponsored by any Rousseauian general will."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ See Mulhall & Swift 1996, p. 171-3 for an analysis of this term 'political'.

⁶⁷ Rawls 1993, p. 68.

⁶⁸ Dworkin 1986, p. 189.

To this extent citizens are also better able to internalise the principles of justice so expressed. Importantly they will also be able to expand the application of the principles:

“If people accept that they are governed not only by explicit rules laid down in past political decisions but by whatever other standards flow from the principles these decisions assume, then the set of recognized public standards can expand and contract organically, as people become more sophisticated in sensing and exploring what these principles require in new circumstances, without the need for detailed legislation or adjudication on each possible point of conflict.”⁶⁹

Both these claims are highly reminiscent of Rawls’ arguments for publicity and transparency as outlined above.

Thus desirable liberal socialisation will be facilitated where law and politics are driven by a single coherent set of principles of justice as laid out in Rawls’ ‘well-ordered society’. These two liberals thus acknowledge not only that political culture and institutions exert a formative effect on individuals, they also explore the most effective conditions for inculcating and preserving liberal values.

*Media*⁷⁰

Remarkably, this is one area where liberal theory has been slow to embrace the formative import of a commonly-recognised socialising influence. Although there has been much discussion of the relevance of broadcast media in the pursuit of expanded democracy,⁷¹ little liberal attention has been devoted directly to our concern. Disputes have raged over the publication of pornography in various media, with liberals uncertain whether they are to tolerate or censor. Likewise with racial propaganda and hate-speech. All of these debates tend to consider at some point the possibility that such publications are controversial not merely because they offend, but because they can subtly influence public culture and individual values in a negative fashion. Dworkin, for example, briefly considers this possibility in his discussion of what counts as ‘harm’ for the purposes of censorship in his essay, ‘*Do We Have a Right to Pornography?*’⁷² He argues that on some accounts, availability of pornography or sexually explicit material might be restricted on the basis that it could result in ‘cultural pollution’. This term has a fairly

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁷⁰ This heading is to cover the full variety of public media from television and radio to books, papers and theatre.

⁷¹ See for example, J. Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1991.

⁷² In Dworkin 1986.

specialised meaning, which considers the way in which a social context has value for individuals as a source of both current and future options of how to live. Cultural pollution recognises that harm can be done to a social context not simply by making it morally or aesthetically less appealing but also by damaging the prospects for human flourishing in the future.⁷³ This clearly supposes that audio and visual media can have a negative effect on individual and cultural values.

However, the media could also influence public culture and individual values in a positive manner. Within the media itself, much attention is devoted currently to the importance of representation, particularly in television, advertising and films. Steps are taken to ensure that women, homosexuals and ethnic minorities are portrayed in representative numbers and in significant roles. Presumably this might be interpreted as an extension of Kymlicka's demands for 'societal culture' for groups other than the traditional majority. That is, such measures might be thought to exert a positive formative effect on the members of those previously excluded groups, but also, on society more generally, by publicising difference and diversity in a positive light. Waldron, for example, in his defence of cosmopolitanism emphasises the extent to which we are beneficially influenced by culture in the broadest sense, where that incorporates Hollywood movies, French cinema, Chinese food and Indian novels as well as one's originating ethnic or religious community.

Surprisingly few other liberals have addressed the socialising effects of the media. Raz is alone in presenting a sophisticated account. His analysis of the justification for freedom of expression draws heavily on reasons of 'validation':⁷⁴

"Much public expression, in books, newspapers, television, cinema, etc., portrays and expresses aspects of styles or forms of life. Views and opinions, activities, emotions, etc., expressed or portrayed, are an aspect of a wider net of opinions, sensibilities, habits of action or dressing, attitudes, etc., which, taken together, form a distinctive style or form of life. An important case for the importance of freedom of expression arises out of the fact that public portrayal and expression of forms of life validate the styles of life portrayed..."⁷⁵

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 338-40.

⁷⁴ J. Raz, 'Free Expression and Personal Identification', in J. Raz, *Ethics in the Public Domain*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1994.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

Validating acts of expression fulfil three functions, all of which Raz sees as desirable. Firstly, the public portrayal of ways of life helps to familiarise the general public with ways of life different from their own. Secondly, such portrayal serves to reassure those whose ways of life are depicted that they are not alone. Finally, depiction in the public media gives the stamp of public acceptability; it stands for inclusion and acceptance. Further, free expression of this particular sort benefits both the individuals portrayed and the public at large. The former benefit from the enhanced sense of worth provided and the hope that their integration within the general population will so be eased. The general public benefit through expansion of the cultural market-place; validation and publicisation make these different ways of life seem a real and worthwhile possibility. Raz argues that this will actually facilitate cultural growth:

“...public validation is an essential element in the process of cultural transmission, preservation and renewal. It is one of the central arenas for the assertion of traditions, and for challenging traditions and experimenting with new forms of relationships, attitudes, and styles of life.”⁷⁶

Importantly Raz very briefly invokes these arguments in a different essay on the relation between liberalism and multiculturalism.⁷⁷ As well as ensuring that all public spaces should accommodate different cultural groups, Raz asks that air-space on television should be similarly shared, presumably for reasons such as those outlined here.⁷⁸

Thus, it seems that if liberals are committed to integrating the various groups that make up a ‘reasonably plural’ society, there may be very good reason for them to attend to the positive effects of portraying minorities and other groups through the public media. As with the other four issues discussed above, however, there is potential for controversy to arise over the normative implications of the ontological claim. We could accept the ontological idea that the public portrayal of different lifestyles, opinions and acts influences the behaviour and beliefs of individuals without accepting that the social effects of this influence are always desirable. The debates over pornography, hate-speech, blasphemy – especially the Rushdie affair – demonstrate just how many difficult normative questions are raised. Raz’s arguments, for example, sound very appealing when presented in defence of integrating previously excluded ethnic minorities, but they would be significantly less attractive if used to defend giving public

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁷⁷ J. Raz, ‘Multi-Culturalism: A Liberal Perspective’, in Raz 1994.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

air-time to members of Far-Right or Neo-Nazi groups on the same basis. Perhaps this issue is actually unusual amongst the five discussed in this section, in that if anything, liberals already do face up to these difficult normative questions. Ironically, it is the less problematic, more positive implications of these same ontological assumptions which have received little academic attention. In this case then, there should be nothing to stop liberals from further exploring the potentially positive implications of the media's socialising role; this is one holist phenomenon which they have tried to address, if only in considering how to limit its more damaging social effects.

III Conclusions

Analysis in this chapter has shown that contrary to communitarian supposition, liberals can and do accept the premises of social embeddedness. They have proved well able to incorporate ontologically holist understandings both of social goods and of the individual. In both cases, Rawlsian theory has generally revealed a fairly sophisticated understanding. It awards a central role to the irreducibly social framework of political culture, and at least recognises the formative import of institutions such as the family, education and political structures. Other liberals such as Dworkin, Raz, Macedo and Kymlicka display a more detailed understanding of some of these holistic relations, and also make explicit the normative disagreements that arise as a result of the more holistically-informed approach.

It is the latter point which perhaps explains the difficulty of fully incorporating holistic premises. For as previous analysis revealed, unravelling certain ontological premises can have disruptive effect. In line with Taylor, we acknowledge that ontology cannot determine a normative position. But it can reduce the options. Certainly it raises some awkward questions. We saw, for example, that if we embrace the formative effects of the family within a normative theory of justice, certain substantive questions arise as to the justice of existent, and theoretical gender relations. This in turn challenges the traditional liberal distinction between the public or political realm and the private, where state intervention is generally thought illegitimate. In other words, squaring

certain ontological premises with previously-adopted normative beliefs can prove tricky.

Thus a certain reluctance of liberals to embrace holism in every area of their theory is understandable. It is just too messy. It can challenge previously secure normative assumptions, and certainly highlights some difficult choices. Macedo was earlier quoted as relishing the occasion to show just how 'tough-minded' liberalism could be. That sentiment challenges the common interpretation of liberalism as an ideology which can always produce easily appealing answers to every political problem. Liberalism has had it too easy for too long, in Macedo's eyes. There are social, political and economic issues which liberalism has to be hard-hearted about if it is to retain its credibility. Education is one of them, according to the theorists discussed above. Gender and minority rights are others. But there are no doubt many more which could be revealed by a more thoroughly holist approach to the subject matter.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that no liberal theorist has yet embraced every aspect of holism. To produce a theory of justice which incorporated a theory of education, an account of the family and recognition of minority cultures would be a major challenge. But liberal theorists need to try to incorporate more of these factors in a properly thorough and rigorous manner, and they need to do so as a matter of course. Thus we cannot say that liberals have embraced holism to its full extent. Communitarian critics are right to point to the continued need to focus on social embeddedness. Furthermore, liberals should not embrace holism only when it suits them; they have to answer the difficult questions too. There definitely is room for theorists such as Macedo, Callan, Okin or Kymlicka to investigate the implications of the multiple causal links that run between individuals, institutions and culture. There is yet more work to be done.

Given that liberals obviously can and have embraced holism to a degree, one further question a communitarian might pose of them would be whether liberals are holist in the right way. A distinction was drawn earlier between philosophical and empirical holism. Thus we might ask whether liberals embrace both variants to a sufficient degree. Most liberals tend to avoid heavy philosophical analysis of the type 'what counts as a person', and do so by sticking to fairly uncontroversial common-sense definitions and clearly normative claims. Rawls is perhaps the exception here; as was

noted in an earlier sub-section, he does increasingly appeal to idealised philosophical accounts of the person, and of moral psychology in *Political Liberalism*. Most of the holist assumptions addressed in this chapter are empirical; that is to say, they are grounded not in a philosophical analysis of what social conditions are necessary for anything to count as a person, rather they consist of some general observations about the effects of certain social conditions in the real world. However, almost without fail, the liberal theorists discussed here approach the issue of holism from a determinedly abstract direction. No-one evokes actual empirical evidence to defend his or her claims that, say, certain types of education programme favour the development of autonomy, or that a certain level of societal expression or recognition is necessary to preserve cultural identity.

Unfortunately, this is an important omission. It was stated at the outset that empirical holism sought to answer questions about possibility; that it looked to ways in which certain characteristics, features or behaviour could be induced in the real world. As such it can inform liberal theory, and offer some clues as to how we might go about making our world a more liberal world. However, it can only do so if we actually look at the evidence before us. This means consulting research from other areas of social science. What difference could it make? Consider Kymlicka's claims about the necessity of cultural membership for the development of autonomy and self-respect. His claims are contradicted by those of Waldron. A more empirically-informed account would help us determine which account is more accurate: it would look to research in social psychology and sociology and determine just how important cultural membership is, or how disabling its lack. This would then help us to answer the normative question of whether or not it is essential to provide special group rights to protect minority cultures. Empirical research is potentially a relatively subtle tool; it could also, in this situation, help to determine how important different sorts of cultural expressions are. Does it matter more, for example, that minority groups are linguistically excluded from a public culture, than that their religion is not publicly recognised? Which most affects development of self-respect? Of tolerance? Of national identity? And so on. On each occasion, an evidence-based empirical holism might help inform some of the difficult normative questions that liberalism finds itself faced with in the light of the holist challenge.

This is not to say that all these questions could be answered merely by looking to empirical research. In the first place, empirical research may be very difficult to design or interpret – the concepts used in, say, psychology or sociology may not map easily onto the concepts we wish to study for the purposes of political theory. Secondly there are bound to be limits to what we can ascertain through such research; it may be impossible to construct intellectually respectable research projects which measure the sort of effects with which politics is concerned. Finally, even if such projects are feasible, and can be interpreted in political theory terms, there is no guarantee that all results will recommend one single normative policy over another. As will be seen in Chapter Six, empirical research in the social sciences can produce contradictory or indeterminate results. All this suggests that we should not expect too much of empirical research, but does not deny the possibility of some useful contribution. Later chapters in the thesis should demonstrate both the limitations and possibilities of this approach.

The implications of the previous analysis are simple. Liberals need to persevere with their attempts to understand the theoretical ramifications of holist ontology. They need to carry on taking social embeddedness seriously. If anything they need to take it more seriously. Given the large number of controversial normative questions stimulated by such an enterprise, they need to face facts. Importantly they need to face facts literally. More knowledge of empirical relations can help to inform these dilemmas. Given that our philosophical picture of the liberal ‘person’ is becoming ever more complex, we should sit back and analyse the accuracy of that picture. For example, we need to know whether humans really do need cultural membership to be autonomous self-respecting persons; even more importantly we need to know what sort of cultural membership counts. If membership of a national culture will suffice then the debate about group rights will prove otiose unless some further justification can be found. Only by undertaking such a project can we hope to settle the normative claims.

A further reason for investigating empirical holism more thoroughly emerges when we consider the account of socialisation presented here. Only five different factors were investigated in this chapter. As was stated at the outset, there are clearly many more operative factors than just these five. It just so happens that these are the most obvious ones, and also the ones which liberalism has attempted to address. By pursuing the empirical issues surrounding socialisation more carefully, we may come across

politically-relevant factors which have previously been omitted. Liberal theorists need to focus more closely on what actually moulds and shapes individuals in real life rather than on the conceptual requirements of personhood, or intuitive general claims about aspects of our social embeddedness. The imagination of political theorists is probably limited here in comparison to the possibilities that research from sociology and psychology has already investigated. Thus by focusing on empirical inter-relations liberal political theory may just learn something useful.

Overall liberalism has acquitted itself well in this analysis. It has proved that it can and does embrace holist ontology to quite a sophisticated extent. Liberals can certainly embrace these issues on a piecemeal basis; they need now to show that they can put these findings together to create a more thoroughly holist liberal theory. Rawls' work is half-way there; his account has been shown to be more holistically-informed than that of any other liberal presented here, except perhaps Raz. But even these two could do better. Communitarian critique would be misguided if it ever held that liberalism were an atomist ideology. It clearly is not. But communitarianism is right if it demands yet more focus on issues of social embeddedness. In this sense the communitarian critique of liberalism still has bite. In particular liberalism must investigate and incorporate the potential of empirical holism. Unlike the naive evocation of 'community', this is a fruitful lesson to be learnt from the liberal-communitarian debate.

Chapter Five

Liberal Character

Although it should now be clear that liberal theorists do accept ontological holism, especially as regards socialisation processes, it is not yet obvious why they should need to focus on such matters. Thus the role of this chapter is to demonstrate why holism, at least in the guise of an acceptance of socialisation influences, should be a liberal concern. The central claim is that liberal theory expects its citizens to manifest certain crucial characteristics. In order to ensure that citizens come to develop these characteristics, liberals need to take account of the various social and political effects which could work for or against their development. Clearly, this is particularly important if liberals hope to have any chance of guaranteeing the survival of these characteristics amongst citizens in the real world. ‘Empirical’ holism would play a role here in revealing how social institutions, relationships and structure influence the actual development of individuals; this would then structure the range of normative options open to liberals in the sense of clarifying which policies would support or undermine the inculcation of liberal characteristics.

What these characteristics are, and precisely why they are assumed, will need to be determined before we can go on to ascertain whether such a more thoroughly holist perspective really is required. For unless these characteristics can be shown to be of central importance to liberal theory, there is little reason to want to ensure their development. Liberals were criticised in the previous chapter for failing to provide strong empirical underpinnings for their holist claims. Those holist claims were largely concerned to show how certain factors such as the family or education were required in order to socialise liberal citizens in particular ways. Clearly there is little point in our assessing the accuracy and sufficiency of these holist claims if it does not really matter whether or not citizens develop the requisite characteristics. Thus, this chapter asks two quite general questions:

- What characteristics do liberal citizens need to have?
- Why do they need to have them?

In order to set up the issues for the following chapter, a third section will analyse a particular liberal characteristic, namely toleration. This analysis should reveal the essential role of this citizen characteristic in liberal theory, its implications for individual behaviour, and the supposed conditions of its development. This account will then act as a benchmark with which the psychological studies of toleration can be contrasted.

I Liberal Characteristics

Rawls' Fundamental Ideas

Rawls' account of the liberal citizen is the most obvious starting place; certainly it provides the most detailed picture of those individual characteristics which are assumed in liberal theory. Although differences can be observed between the accounts of various liberal theorists, these will be described briefly below, and are, anyway, most easily visible through comparison with the Rawlsian version. Further, as should become clear, there does seem to be consensus that a core set of personal qualities are necessary for us even to talk of 'liberal' citizens in the first place.

The Rawlsian account of liberal citizenship is grounded in his fundamental idea of the person.¹ He explicitly defends that conception of the person as normative rather than simply descriptive, and as a specifically political rather than scientific account.² There are two vital elements of moral personality, namely the capacity for a sense of justice and the capacity to frame, revise and pursue a conception of the good.³ Indeed, it is in virtue of their possessing these two characteristics that liberal citizens are declared to be free and equal and thus deserving of treatment according to liberal principles.

“Since we start within the tradition of democratic thought, we also think of citizens as free and equal persons. The basic idea is that in virtue of their two moral powers (a capacity for a sense of justice and for a conception of the good) and the powers of reason (of judgement, thought, and inference connected with these powers), persons are free. Their having these

¹ Here I draw on the account offered in *Political Liberalism*, rather than that of *A Theory of Justice*. This move is recommended by Rawls' defence of the former as a more satisfactory version.

² Rawls 1993, p. 18, fn. 20.

³ More specifically, Rawls lists four basic elements of the conception of reasonable and rational citizens. These are comprised of the two moral powers; the intellectual powers necessary for their exercise;

powers to the requisite minimum degree to be fully co-operating members of society makes persons equal.”⁴

The first of these two characteristics is the capacity for a sense of justice. On Rawls’ account, individuals actively want to act justly where possible, that is they are keen to co-operate with others under fair conditions. Thus,

“A sense of justice is the capacity to understand, to apply, and to act from the public conception of justice which characterizes the fair terms of social co-operation. Given the nature of the political conception as specifying a public basis of justification, a sense of justice also expresses a willingness, if not the desire to act in relation to others on terms that they can publicly endorse.”⁵

This desire for just co-operation is clearly a *moral* perspective; Rawls acknowledges this in denoting it as a ‘reasonable’ rather than a ‘rational’ motivation. Reasonable persons

“...are not moved by the general good as such but desire for its own sake a social world in which they, as free and equal, can co-operate with others on terms all can accept.”⁶

People are rational, in contrast, in so far as they can frame, revise and pursue a conception of the good; ‘rationality’ describes their capacity for means-ends reasoning, and for choosing and prioritising their ends. Rationality thus corresponds to the second moral power, namely the capacity for a conception of the good. More will be said of this matter shortly.

Reasonableness (and hence the capacity for a sense of justice) can be analysed as implying four more specific personal characteristics;⁷

- a) The willingness to suggest fair terms of co-operation, which would be endorsable by others, plus the willingness to abide by these terms should others do so.
- b) An appreciation that the burdens of judgement (the uncertainties and different weightings of evidence which are the sources of reasonable pluralism) limit what we can justify to others, plus an acceptance that we should only affirm reasonable comprehensive doctrines (compatible with liberal principles).

possession of a determinate conception of the good and the capacities required to be ‘normal and co-operating members of society over a complete life-time’. (*Ibid.*, p. 81)

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18-19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81-2.

- c) Citizens are and want to be fully co-operating members of society; they also want to be recognised as such (and this is an important element of self-respect).
- d) Citizens have a reasonable moral psychology (their psychological make-up is such that their moral development follows a Kohlbergian-type progression ultimately enabling the appreciation of moral principles, rather than just relying on sentiment and attachment).

These four together describe dispositions of the individual to approach interaction and co-operation in a particular (admirable) manner that is conducive to the sustenance of liberal principles. This complex account of liberal 'reasonableness' delineates the particular characteristics and motivations that liberal citizens are presumed to possess. Together they are supposed to ensure that so long as citizens inhabit an ideally liberal state, governed by a set of liberal institutions, interaction and co-operation will proceed in a manner which is just. Problems of defection or exploitation will not arise in such a situation.

To return briefly to the second moral power, Rawls defines this as

"...the capacity to form, to revise and rationally to pursue a conception of one's rational advantage or good."⁸

Thus, it broadly refers to our capacity for autonomy. Rawls further makes it clear that the reasonable and the rational are complementary ideas:

"Merely reasonable agents would have no ends of their own they wanted to advance by fair co-operation; merely rational agents lack a sense of justice and fail to recognize the independent validity of the claims of others."⁹

It is in virtue of the fact that people are assumed to be autonomous that liberal principles of fair co-operation are deemed desirable. Autonomy is also necessary if people are to be capable of affirming the principles of justice for themselves. The complementary roles of the reasonable and the rational will be further examined in the following section; for present purposes we should simply note that neither idea is considered primary, nor indeed is one derivable from the other. The ideas of the rational and the reasonable will help us to contrast the different implications of the two moral powers, and are equally important characteristics of potentially liberal citizens.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Rawls' Two Moral Powers

A more detailed analysis of liberal character must be undertaken in order fully to understand the role of these personal features invoked by Rawls. In so doing, a common thread should be seen to appear, connecting various other liberal authors with the Rawlsian paradigm. The question is whether or not these common features can be regarded as essential to any distinctively liberal account. If they are so essential, then there is good reason for liberals to offer a watertight account of how these characteristics can be ensured through socialisation. Hence we might demand a more empirically-informed holistic approach. If, on the contrary, the qualities cannot be proved essential, then we should at least be aware of their precise role in liberal theory so that we can assess the desirability of any liberal account which proceeds without assuming such citizen characteristics.

The most basic liberal characteristic was identified in the previous section. The Rawlsian 'capacity for a sense of justice' was seen vitally to include two aspects of the desire to co-operate with others. Firstly, a willingness to suggest fair terms of co-operation, endorsable by others, plus a desire to abide by these terms should others do so; and secondly, a desire to be, and to be seen as a fully co-operating member of society. In other words, Rawlsian citizens are taken to have a primary desire not only to co-operate with others for the intrinsic goods of sociability and self-respect, but to do so on *fair* terms.

In order to reveal the full import of this assumption, Rawls' theory could be contrasted with one account which attempts to proceed without it. Gauthier's aim in *Morals By Agreement* is to derive moral principles from purely self-interested motivations,¹⁰ (or as Rawls puts it, to derive the reasonable from the rational¹¹). The idea is that moral behaviour can be justified from a position of enlightened self-interest. To use Gauthier's terms, a person who is willing to comply with mutually advantageous moral constraints, given that others are expected to do so (a constrained maximiser) will enjoy opportunities for co-operation not open to an individual who seeks to straightforwardly maximise his satisfaction. And so,

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁰ D. Gauthier, *Morals By Agreement*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1986.

¹¹ Rawls 1993, p. 52.

“...under plausible conditions, the net advantage that constrained maximisers reap from co-operation exceeds the exploitative benefits that others may expect. From this we conclude that it is rational to be disposed to constrain maximising behaviour by internalizing moral principles to govern one’s choices.”¹²

Gauthier adopts and redevelops Rawls’ supposedly contractarian approach to justice from *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls has since explained that elements of that approach are misleading if they cause us to think that the principles of justice could be merely rationally derived. In *Political Liberalism* he emphasises that the account of the parties in the original position is a representative device, simply modelling the correct way to think about justice *given* our pre-existing commitment to reasonable principles of justice.¹³ Thus Rawls holds that his ‘contractarian’ account of justice only makes sense given our reasonable moral feelings. You cannot derive the reasonable from the rational. Gauthier adopts the opposite approach, arguing that the contractarian approach can only make sense if we assume rational maximisation as the primary motivation. On the Rawlsian account people will comply with principles of justice because they were initially specified as reasonable and rational. In Gauthier’s model, compliance is guaranteed because ‘reasonable’ behaviour is rationally justifiable. Although Gauthier goes on to explain how individuals can consequently find intrinsic value in participation and co-operation on fair terms, he always maintains that these moral feelings are *derived* from the rational justification of these constrained actions;

“Although rational persons who value participatory activities with their fellows will develop an affective concern for essential justice, yet the object of their concern is initially an instrumental value.”¹⁴

Gauthier is no doubt right to hold that friendships and fellow-feeling may better flourish in just non-exploitative relationships. This does not entail, however, that such feelings can only *originate* in a rationally-determined ‘just’ set of arrangements. The question that has occupied liberal critics of Gauthier’s approach is whether on his account individuals could ever be motivated to act in a truly just fashion. Barry, amongst others, has denied that this is possible.¹⁵ He claims that there is a fatal flaw in accounts such as Gauthier’s due to a simple incompatibility between the answers to two essential questions, namely:

¹² Gauthier 1986, p. 15.

¹³ See for example, Rawls 1993, p. 53, fn. 7.

¹⁴ Gauthier 1986, p. 344.

¹⁵ Brian Barry, *Justice as Impartiality*, OUP, Oxford 1995, Chapter 2.

- What is the motive for acting justly?
- What is the criterion for a just set of rules?¹⁶

The answer to the second question is supposed to be that all individuals benefit overall.¹⁷ But the answer to the first question concerns individual self-interest, albeit constrained self-interest. The fact remains however, that in so far as self-interest is at base the individual's primary goal, compliance will not necessarily seem the most beneficial course on every occasion. The most effective course may indeed be to appear trustworthy, but to default or exploit when the occasion arises.¹⁸ Thus the individual's motive may recommend a different course of action from that dictated by justice on any one occasion. Barry argues that in order to ensure that justice is stable (ruling out defection or exploitation), there must be compatibility between the two answers, which cannot be guaranteed on this account.

Thus we can observe the import of the desire for fair co-operation motive in Rawls: essentially it changes the response to Barry's first question, such that the two answers are compatible. Gauthier's constrained maximisers do manifest a desire to co-operate with others, but only because this would give rise to co-operative benefit. No importance is attached to fair terms of agreement except in so far as this might maximise such benefit.¹⁹ The instrumentality of that commitment is revealed in Barry's critique, as he demonstrates the ineliminable rationality of exploitation.²⁰

¹⁶ Barry 1995, p. 46-7.

¹⁷ Gauthier's interpretation of 'benefit' is actually quite technical, namely that of 'maximin relative benefit'. In other words, Gauthier assumes that the equal rationality of the bargaining participants is such that no bargain will be accepted unless the least relative benefit (proportional to one's stake) of any participating individual is as great as possible. This outcome is of course highly reminiscent of Rawls' maximin principle, and as such there is clearly a similarity between the visions of 'justice' observed in each theory. (Gauthier 1986, chapter V.)

¹⁸ Indeed, as Barry correctly points out, it is unrealistic to assume that individuals are in fact morally translucent; as Gauthier must assume. Certainly in reality people find it very hard to distinguish between those who are genuine and reliable, and those who are just very practised con-men. (Barry 1995, p. 37)

¹⁹ One rather unpleasant implication of this concern with mutual benefit is that it offers no reason to recommend care for those whose disabilities prevent them from contributing on near equal terms. Gauthier does acknowledge this problem, but claims that far from seeing this as a disadvantage we should welcome the chance to face up to such problems. Although Rawls does side-step the problem by assuming that all liberal citizens possess the requisite characteristics to a minimum level, we could expect 'reasonable' individuals behind the veil of ignorance to make just allocation to disabled or infirm citizens. (See Gauthier 1986, p. 17; Rawls 1993, p. 20.)

²⁰ Barry notes that the failure of this approach does not rest on the assumption that individuals are self-interested; the problem is that justice is only an indirect goal, desired only where it will tend to maximise some other goal, which in Gauthier's case, happens to be personal utility. Whenever justice fails to maximise that primary goal, the rational course would be to ignore its dictates in favour of pursuing the primary goal directly. (Barry 1995 p. 37.)

It is this fundamental motivation towards fair co-operation which Barry perceived as lacking from Gauthier's approach to justice. Without assuming the existence of such a motive, consistency could not be achieved between individual motivation and overall justification of justice. The desire to co-operate with others on fair terms, given that they will also co-operate, is termed the 'agreement motive' by Barry,²¹ and is a fundamental assumption of his own theory of 'justice as impartiality'. Only if individuals manifest this desire for universal fair agreement can the requirements of justice be justified and unconditionally accepted:

"...my argument presupposes the existence of a certain desire: the desire to live in a society whose members all freely accept its rules of justice and its major institutions. Given the existence of that desire, the reason for observing the constraints of impartial justice is that it sets out the only terms upon which there is any hope of reaching agreement. To the extent that the major institutions conform to the demands of justice as impartiality they are legitimate. This means that the members of society can justifiably demand the co-operation of others in maintaining those institutions."²²

The content of the agreement motive could be presented in various different formats. Rawls' formulation refers to a readiness to propose fair terms of co-operation that others can be expected to endorse, accompanied by a willingness to comply with these requirements given that others will also do so. Scanlon's variant phrases the motive in terms of a desire to find terms for living together which could not be 'reasonably rejected' by others with a similar motivation.²³ Barry's is outlined above. The core element of all formulations, though, is the notion of justifiable terms of agreement. People in these theories are assumed to want to interact together, but they want to do so only on certain terms.

Thus the most fundamental characteristic of the liberal individual as characterised by Rawls, Barry and Scanlon is the possession of a deep-seated motivation towards co-operation or agreement with others on fair (justifiable) terms. The second vital feature must enable individuals with such motives to overcome the primary difficulty of achieving co-operation, namely recognition of the suitable and unsuitable grounds for reaching agreement. Rawls' second element of the individual's capacity for a sense of

²¹ Barry 1995, p.164-8.

²² *Ibid.*, p164.

²³ T. M. Scanlon, 'Contractualism and Utilitarianism' in A. Sen, & B. Williams, *Utilitarianism and Beyond*, CUP, Cambridge 1982. In fact Rawls acknowledges the close connection (and subtle difference) between his formulation of 'reasonableness' and Scanlon's version. (Rawls 1993, p. 49, fn. 2) See also T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, Bellknap Press, Cambridge MA, 1998.

justice concerns the recognition of the burdens of judgement. This involves understanding how individuals can disagree about the content of comprehensive doctrines, without such disagreement ‘spilling over’ into agreement about matters of justice. In other words, if I believe another individual to be wrong about the content of the good life, why would I not simply believe him to be unreasonable, engaging in faulty processes of reasoning, and therefore disregard any of his political claims? Rawls argues that this apparent inconsistency can be resolved by acknowledging the many sources of uncertainty in contemporary life; for example, many of our moral and political concepts are vague and controversial; there are often no single agreed meanings; we accept that experience matters, that it can shape our perspective and our opinions, and so on.²⁴ What this amounts to is a recognition that the pluralism of modern society is reasonable, understandable, and importantly, ineradicable without use of oppressive means.

There are two implications of this argument. Firstly, it demands that we look at other liberal citizens in a certain way, namely a tolerant way. Rawls is neither implying universal scepticism about values (indeed he denies that scepticism motivates his case), nor identifiable objectivity. It is reasonable that individuals should differ in some of their value judgements, especially when it comes to matters of their comprehensive good and personal morality. But in so far as we recognise the burdens of judgement, we should not consequently derogate such individuals with different views as unreasonable, irrational, or ignorant. Instead they are to be tolerated. Even when we believe that others hold positions which are not only wrong, but possibly also insulting to our beliefs, we must treat them with respect. Clearly, toleration is a morally demanding disposition; it demands forbearance where the individual would prefer intervention; respect where the automatic response might be disgust. Under this description, tolerance is quite clearly a disposition required in order to implement liberal principles in potentially difficult circumstances, but it does epitomise the liberal quality of respect, invoking a distinction between what is being said and the worth of the agent saying it.²⁵ Toleration is thus the bridge between private discord and public agreement.

²⁴ Rawls 1993, p. 56-7.

²⁵ For a clear discussion of this interpretation of toleration see D. Heyd, *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton NJ 1996, Introduction.

Toleration is one crucial ingredient of the liberal acceptance of pluralism. The second implication of the recognition of the burdens of judgement concerns the resulting limits on what reasons can be invoked in matters of justice and public debate. Clearly, no comprehensive doctrine can be invoked as a reason for a particular policy or distribution. For this reason, both the character of public debate and its outcomes will adopt a particular character. Public debate must proceed along terms which are justifiable to all; thus political vocabulary must be public rather than personal, concerned with finding the common ground between an immense variety of persons and doctrines. Impartiality is thus the defining feature of liberal debate. The outcomes of such debate will tend to reflect the limiting burdens of judgement through policies such as freedom of conscience, speech and association which recognise and facilitate social diversity in a manner justifiable to all.²⁶

Barry also discusses the issues of character of reasons and the role of tolerance and impartiality, although he invokes an ‘argument from scepticism’ rather than referring to the ‘reasonableness of pluralism’ or ‘burdens of judgement’.²⁷ The interpretation of scepticism invoked here is simply the idea that any certainty in the relevant issues would be illegitimate. Therefore no personal conception of the good could be justified to others as the correct basis for a particular policy or principle. Although Rawls explicitly states that he is not grounding his principles of liberal neutrality on a foundation of scepticism, Barry argues that he does in fact do so.²⁸ Whilst the details of this particular debate are too complex to enter into here, it is important to note that both Barry and Rawls agree on one fundamental point: that there is a crucial distinction between what can reasonably be believed by a particular person and what can reasonably be put forward as a justification for society’s basic institutions and political principles. As Barry notes, this conclusion is a central assumption in the work of other

²⁶ More lengthy discussion of toleration will take place later in the chapter; at this stage we should simply note that there is controversy surrounding this issue. Liberties of speech, conscience and so on are supposed to be justifiable to both tolerant liberals, and ardent religious fundamentalists alike. Clearly though the reasoning that would convince each might differ in either case. Whereas the liberal will justify such freedoms on grounds of ‘reasonable pluralism’ and ‘the burdens of judgement’, the religious fanatic, who just thinks he is right, and that everyone else ought to be made to think the same, could only be convinced on grounds of pragmatism. Whether pragmatism will be a sufficiently strong persuading motive will depend on such factors as strength of belief, difficulties of imposing those beliefs on others, fear of political versus divine punishment and so on. In other words there is no guarantee that toleration can be justified to all people.

²⁷ Barry 1995, p. 169.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

liberal theorists such as Nagel, Scanlon and Larmore.²⁹ Like the ‘agreement motive’ then, this complex psychological characteristic is pivotal in the explanation of the mutually supportive relationship between liberal citizens and liberal principles.

Thus the second crucial element of any liberal citizen’s psychological make-up must be a recognition of the implications of social pluralism for public debate, and an application of this concept to her own thought processes in matters of justice. This personal characteristic will manifest itself in two types of behaviour; impartiality in situations where citizens are asked to establish or apply general rules or procedures; and toleration in circumstances of direct interaction, whether personal or political. The dispositions towards these two types of behaviour mark out the liberal attitude to dealing with conditions of social pluralism and perhaps personal disagreement. As such they are crucial ingredients of the liberal make-up.

There is one other element of Rawls’ sense of a capacity for justice which has not been mentioned in the fore-going discussion, which is the possession of a reasonable moral personality. The Kohlbergian account of moral development depicted in the previous chapter worked towards this ideal of moral personality. The main conclusion to be drawn from this account is that liberal individuals must be able to act on the basis of general principles, rather than, say, solely on the basis of random altruism or sentiment. For the moment we will not consider whether or not this view of moral psychology is strictly necessary to Rawls’ theory, or indeed whether it is a plausible view. We shall simply accept Rawls’ assumption that individuals can indeed act on principle in this manner.³⁰

All discussion has so far centred on the first of Rawls’ moral powers, namely the capacity for a sense of justice. The second of Rawls’ moral powers is the capacity to frame, revise and pursue a conception of the good. In other words, individuals are assumed to be autonomous. This recognises the liberal concern that individuals should find their own value in life, that it should not be imposed on them from the outside.

²⁹ T. Nagel, ‘Moral Conflict and Political Legitimacy’, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 16, 3, 1987, p. 215-40; Scanlon in Sen & Williams 1982; C. Larmore, *Patterns of Moral Complexity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, all cited in Barry 1995, Chapter 7.

Rawls characterises this capacity as rationality; it represents the ability to put into practice means/end reasoning in the broadest sense, that of living one's life by a goal that one both recognises and affirms. The question arises however, as to whether or not autonomy is a fundamental requirement of liberal citizenship. That this is the case is made clear by the function of the two moral powers, namely the capacity for a sense of justice and the capacity for autonomy: it is in virtue of their possession, that individuals qualify as liberal citizens. It is their possession of these two powers to the 'requisite minimum degree' that renders them free and equal, and thus deserving of just treatment. Rawls' repeatedly states in *Political Liberalism* that whilst individuals may be more or less autonomous, more or less reflective and in charge of their lives to varying degrees, no citizen possesses below the minimum degree of autonomy required to affirm liberal principles, and to justify his status as free and equal.³¹ It is also important to remember, however, that Gauthier would also characterise his maximising individuals as autonomous,³² Indeed, this is what his understanding of rational maximising behaviour presumes. Unfortunately, as Gauthier's account forces us to recognise, an individual could be autonomous whilst acting exploitatively. Autonomy would thus seem to be less specifically tied to justice and just behaviour than the other personal qualities outlined above.

II The role of liberal characteristics

It remains to be seen why liberals should need to presume the existence of moral powers. The fact that liberals such as Rawls explicitly state that there are fundamental liberal characteristics tells us little about what function these characteristics fulfil. Two different purposes can be identified. Firstly, these personal qualities could be regarded as ends in themselves. On this view such characteristics could play either of two roles in liberal theory; they could be normative goals that such a theory sets out to achieve, or they could play a justificatory role, as the characteristics in virtue of which we think that individuals deserve liberal treatment in the first place. Secondly, they could simply be

³⁰ Indeed, the following chapter happily accepts that individuals can be so motivated to act on principle; rather it challenges the view that Rawls, or indeed most other liberals, have provided a satisfactory account of how individuals can develop this liberal moral personality.

³¹ See for example, Rawls 1993, p. 19, p 34, p. 55.

means to a greater end, namely the implementation and support of liberal principles and institutions.³³ In this latter case, such citizen qualities could be relied upon in two ways; either to ensure that liberal principles are actually instantiated in daily action, or in order to ensure that the principles are accepted as legitimate (if citizens are not tolerant and just themselves, then they are unlikely to see liberal institutions and laws as justifiable). Thus we can distinguish between the different roles of liberal characteristics on two grounds; that is, a theorist might treat them either as ends in themselves or merely as a means to some other good.

Thus to return to Rawls' two moral powers we can see the extent to which they fulfil, to varying degrees, roles as both ends and means. Liberal principles require invocation of these powers for their justification in so far as these qualities ground Rawls' assumption that people are free and equal;

“The basic idea is that in virtue of their two moral powers (a capacity for a sense of justice and for a conception of the good) and the powers of reason (of judgement, thought and inference connected with these powers), persons are free. Their having these powers to the requisite minimum degree to be fully co-operating members of society makes persons equal.”³⁴

Why does it matter that people be free and equal? Well, this moral claim is just the most fundamentally important assumption of liberalism; it is because of this belief that we are even concerned to establish political justice. As Rawls sets up the crucial question which he sets out to answer:

“...what is the most appropriate conception of justice for specifying the terms of social co-operation between citizens regarded as free and equal, and as normal and fully co-operating members of society over a complete life?”³⁵

It is worth noting that, in general, liberals tend to regard our capacity for autonomy as the grounding justification for the liberal state. Rawls is thus unusual in invoking the capacity for a sense of justice in this context. The probable reason for his inclusion of

³² He only explicitly makes this connection in chapter XI of the book, where he tries to locate the liberal individual within his contractarian model.

³³ Here I follow Galston who distinguishes between liberal virtues as ends and as means. (See W. Galston, *Liberal Purposes*, CUP, Cambridge 1991, p. 219.) A second related distinction is drawn by David Strauss. His distinction between those virtues *logically necessary* to justify liberal theory, and those *psychologically necessary* to support liberal institutions is broadly similar to a justification/implementation dichotomy, but here I have added a further possibility, - virtues seen also simply as normative goals which seems better to capture the liberal approach. (See D. Strauss, 'The Liberal Virtues', in J. W. Chapman & W. Galston, *Nomos XXXIV – Virtue*, New York University Press, New York 1992.)

³⁴ Rawls 1993, p.19.

this factor is his concept of *full* autonomy. Citizens are fully autonomous when they not only comply with principles of justice, but when they act in this way because they recognise the principles to be just.³⁶ In other words, citizens do not treat liberal principles as restrictions upon their autonomy; instead they willingly act in a just manner. In full autonomy, individuals express both their moral capacities for autonomy and for justice, and Rawls seems to believe that this is a desirable state for the individual himself to achieve.³⁷ Strictly speaking, full autonomy is a goal of Rawls' liberal theory; it is something which individuals could be hoped to achieve, however, our potential for this quality gives Rawls reason to think that it matters that the state be liberal. Thus the liberal state is justified in Rawls' eyes both because it respects our fundamental freedom and equality, and because it can help us to achieve full autonomy.

The possibility of helping individuals to achieve full autonomy may be a justification for the liberal state, but the capacity for a sense of justice is, in its own right, clearly also a story about implementation. Rawls needs people to follow liberal principles of their own accord, both to ensure compliance, and also to legitimate the imposition of liberal authority. Indeed, it would not be ridiculous to hold that liberal characteristics are most important as means, for without the willing compliance of most citizens, liberal principles would be costly to impose and perhaps even impossible to fully implement. Paternalism and grudging compliance is certainly not perceived as the liberal ideal. Liberal principles are thus to be implemented through individuals' autonomous actions, rather than just through the imposition of laws and procedures. People are expected to be able to act on their capacity for a sense of justice in order to seek co-operation on fair terms, and to manifest tolerance in their daily interactions with different others. Rawls' hope that liberal values be implemented in this manner is visible in the frequently reiterated reference to public justifiability, the necessary transparency of political institutions and the explicit account of socialisation in *A Theory of Justice*. Through socialisation, through understanding and acceptance of publicly justifiable policies and procedures, through observation and acceptance of the way liberal institutions function – in all these ways, individual recognition and internalisation of liberal principles is

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁶ Rawls 1993, p. 77-80.

³⁷ As Galston points out, however, this does represent a change in position from *A Theory of Justice*. In that latter text, just individuals are to be engendered only because this will help to preserve a liberal

supposed to be achieved. Even the formulation of the original position itself is partly a means of reminding individuals of their duties of tolerance, impartiality and fair treatment. The original position and resultant choices are assumed to be accessible to all; all have the requisite moral resources to follow the liberal reasoning process. Individuals are thus expected consciously to affirm the principles of justice as fairness; their observation of these principles and resultant laws or procedures is not to be ensured just via fearful obedience so much as through a self-originating willingness to act in this way.

This brief analysis should give us some idea of why liberals need to assume the possession of certain individual qualities. A capacity for a conception of the good plays a central role in justifying the application of liberal principles; it is in virtue of the fact that we are autonomous moral agents that we deserve liberal treatment. Our capacity for a sense of justice adds a moral element to our status as autonomous beings, and hence gives further reason for the existence of the liberal state. Even more importantly however, it is this moral capacity which enables us to affirm and implement liberal principles; without the developed capacity for a sense of justice we would have little reason to uphold the requirements of justice beyond self-interest, fear of punishment or anarchy. Introduction of Rawls' concept of full autonomy revealed a further reason for invoking personal qualities in liberal theory. They can stand simply as a normative goal, a model of ideal human behaviour which is of intrinsic value to the individual.

Before addressing some of the criticisms that might be launched against this account of liberal characteristics, it remains to consider the wider range of individual qualities which could be thought to fulfil the roles specified here. For this purpose we should turn to two admirably thorough accounts, namely those of William Galston and Stephen Macedo.

Liberal 'Virtues'

As well as the two moral powers identified above, several theorists have stressed that there are more precise qualities recommended by liberal politics. Galston and Macedo are the most well-known of these. Both go so far as to call such characteristics 'virtues',

society; in other words, Rawls only attributes intrinsic good to the capacity for a sense of justice in the later work. (Galston, 1991, p. 219.)

but it matters little for our purposes whether we distinguish them in this way. What matters is that we identify the essential and desirable characteristics of liberal citizens. Rawls' two moral powers were seen above to fulfil three important functions. On the first count it is in virtue of these characteristics that citizens deserve liberal treatment, whilst on the second they also help them to implement liberal principles; the third role of these characteristics comes in specifying ideals of liberal character. Galston and Macedo focus more heavily on the quite specific characteristics which play the latter two roles (although not exclusively so). A brief survey of the sort of features they invoke should fill out our picture of a necessary and desirable liberal character.

Of the two, Galston presents the most straightforward account. His thesis is that far from being neutral between different ways of life and aloof of culture, liberalism must presuppose certain liberal 'purposes' or goals, which will in turn structure the relationship between liberal politics and society. With regard to the requirements of implementing liberal policies and preserving the liberal state, Galston's message is simple:

"The thesis that liberalism rests in some measure on virtue is not the palpable absurdity that the liberal polity requires an impeccably virtuous citizenry, a 'nation of angels'...The claim is more modest: that the operation of liberal institutions is affected in important ways by the character of citizens (and leaders) and that at some point, the attenuation of individual virtue will create pathologies with which liberal political contrivances, however technically perfect their design, simply cannot cope."³⁸

Whilst there are some 'virtues' generally necessary in all types of state (such as courage, law-abidingness, and loyalty), others are specific to the liberal state. Galston categorises these into those supportive of the liberal society, liberal economy and liberal politics, each sphere being characterised by different requirements. Thus, for example, a properly liberal society is marked by features of individualism and diversity. These two features can only be maintained if individuals manifest sufficient degrees of independence and tolerance. Liberal politics call for virtues which differ between citizens and leaders. The liberal citizen, unlike her civic-republican counterpart, has no duty to participate in politics actively nor to subordinate her personal interest to the common good. On the other hand, the liberal citizen does have to be capable of respecting others and restraining her behaviour accordingly; she also has to be discerning enough to elect suitable representatives and to evaluate their performance. A

further requirement is that the liberal citizen must be sensitive to the multiplicity of demands faced by a liberal government and hence must be capable of moderating her demands or accepting necessary hardships. The liberal leader, on the other hand must have such qualities as the ability to forge a common purpose, to unite diverse groups and to avoid pandering to public opinion rather than planning wisely.

Whilst devoting most attention to the liberal virtues required to implement and sustain liberal principles, Galston does also consider the possibility that liberalism might recognise some virtues as ends in themselves, in the same way that Rawls has come to regard full autonomy as an end in itself.³⁹ In defence of such a possibility Galston notes that Locke, Kant and Mill all espoused some strong conception of individual excellence in their liberal writings. Although these three do not exactly cohere they do share a common core, depicting individuals taking responsibility for their own lives, making active choices. Unlike Macedo, Galston takes this idea little further, suggesting simply that just because there is tension between the ideals, there is no reason to eliminate them from liberal politics. What Galston's account does, however, effectively emphasise is that without even postulating an ideal liberal character liberalism must assume a sufficient basis in certain crucial characteristics.

Macedo's defence of liberal virtues does not find its basis in a belief that liberalism is inherently non-neutral. Rather he is simply concerned to identify and articulate the ideals of citizenship, flourishing, community and character that can be drawn from the values of liberalism:

“We can oppose government intrusiveness and paternalism while allowing that there are attitudes and capacities that liberals ought to have and develop, and that when people do have and develop them a liberal regime will flourish. Liberal politics depends on a certain level and quality of citizen virtue, which is in many ways promoted by life in a reasonably just and tolerant, open liberal regime.”⁴⁰

Certainly Macedo would accept that citizens should possess Rawls' two moral powers.⁴¹ But these are not the only capacities which liberal citizens should manifest if

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 228-31.

⁴⁰ Macedo 1990, p. 3.

⁴¹ Macedo expresses a similar assumption at p. 202-3:

we take seriously our liberal ideals. His argument is that we can differentiate between more or less properly liberal states. Thus a state where people display a ‘live-and-let-live’ attitude towards each other is better than one in which open hostility is checked only by fear of punishment. However, mere tolerance is still less desirable than common appreciation and enjoyment of diversity. Only the latter is truly a ‘flourishing’ liberal community in Macedo’s eyes.⁴² In like manner, individuals can embrace, to a greater or lesser degree, values such as autonomy, impartiality and respect. A bare minimum may be required of citizens in a liberal state if it is to be called ‘liberal’, but this does not mean that this is all there is to the liberal ideal.

The virtues which Macedo identifies as conducive to liberal ‘flourishing’ correspond broadly to the three types of political role citizens might be expected to undertake, namely legislative, judicial and executive. Although we might think that only judges, say, have to possess judicial virtues, all of us must manifest them to a certain extent in order to implement liberal principles:

“The judicial virtues are particularly requisite in a good judge, but all liberal citizens must, to some extent, cultivate these qualities if they are to treat those who lead different lives, whose interests may be in conflict with theirs, as persons equally worthy of respect.”⁴³

Macedo further suggests that accepting these requirements in our political lives is likely to have ‘spill-over’ effects on our personal characters. Thus, for example, as we force ourselves to be sympathetic or tolerant, we may find ourselves gradually becoming more open to the idea of difference and change. This in turn, may enable us to become more adventurous in our choice of life-style, may leave more options open.

Alternatively, we could actively seek to cultivate liberal virtues; we could strive for autonomy, developing our critical faculties, our capacity for self-reflection, our sense of independence and individuality. Liberal virtues, then, are those personal characteristics which reflect more than just a half-hearted acceptance of liberal values and instead express a willing embrace of the goods that living a liberal life can bring. Although on one level, Macedo clearly does believe that there are certain qualities we need to

“Liberal justice is best understood, I have argued, as a public morality that all citizens have a duty to interpret, criticize, and support in their own conduct and against the possible transgressions of public officials. Liberal politics protects the right of persons to devise, criticize, revise, and pursue a plan of life, and it furnishes institutional settings for the activity of public justification.”

Macedo also appeals directly to Rawls’ first moral power at p. 256.

⁴² Macedo 1990, p. 265-6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

possess just in order to act as liberal principles require, at another level he holds that true liberal virtues can actually benefit the possessor. This claim is reminiscent of Rawls' evocation of full autonomy; what both positions share is the idea that liberalism can be justified by the good it can bring to individual lives, both in upholding liberal values, and in having them upheld. Thus Macedo, like Galston and Rawls invokes liberal virtues both as means and as ends; importantly, the two together demonstrate quite how extensive an account of liberal character could be. Although the rest of the paper will largely be concerned with the fundamental characteristics identified in the previous sections, a fuller account could fruitfully address these more detailed requirements, determining precisely how demanding a theory of liberal social justice needs to be.

Do Liberal Citizens Really Need These Qualities?

Thus far we have identified the necessary and desirable characteristics of liberal citizens as portrayed by Rawls, Barry and others. Although Galston and Macedo identify a variety of important liberal 'virtues', the two most fundamental requirements still seem to be that citizens must be committed to co-operation with others under conditions of justice, and that they must recognise the limitations that justice will place on their behaviour and their contributions to political debate. Liberal citizens must, it seems, manifest motives towards fairness, impartiality and toleration, even to qualify as *liberal* citizens in the first place. Of course what has yet to be shown is that any theory of liberalism must assume individuals to possess these qualities. This would be a hard task to accomplish. We might conceivably hold that any theory of liberal justice must assume people to be 'reasonable' in the minimal sense that they are committed to co-operation under fair conditions, rather than some other direct goal.⁴⁴ Certainly, Barry's arguments as to the failings of projects such as Gauthier's suggest that this is a plausible assumption.

Unfortunately, the issue is not quite so simple. To start with, some undoubtedly liberal authors present accounts of liberal politics which do not seem to assume such

⁴⁴ As Rawls notes, it may not be possible to prove that 'reasonable' motivations cannot be derived from rational ones;

"The best one may be able to do is to show that the serious attempts (Gauthier's is an example) to derive the reasonable from the rational do not succeed, they rely at some point on conditions expressing the reasonable itself." (Rawls 1993, p. 53)

reasonable motivations. Secondly, some have suggested that it is wrong to interpret Rawls as making claims about the motivations of individuals in their daily interactions; instead, they argue, these motivations describe only how people should think when arriving at principles of justice. A third complication occurs with liberal theorists such as Raz, who explicitly reject other elements of the account given above. Consideration of these problems will highlight some possible limits to the approach defended in this chapter.

The first problem concerns the fact that some liberal theorists, including Rawls himself, have analysed aspects of liberalism which appear to show that it could do without the assumption that citizens must be motivated by a desire for fair co-operation. Rawls, for example, in *Political Liberalism* describes the transition by which overlapping consensus might be reached from an initial *modus vivendi* position.⁴⁵ He claims that there will be an intermediary step where ‘liberal’ principles of toleration and civil freedoms, having grown out of fear and pragmatism, will come to be embraced in their own right. This stage is that of ‘constitutional consensus’, and differs from overlapping consensus in concerning only the political procedures of government rather than the basic structure. The point to note is that only with the development of constitutional consensus will we see the development of ‘reasonable’ liberal attitudes, whilst liberal principles of government have been in operation for a while:

“The basic political institutions incorporating these principles and the form of public reason shown in applying them – when working effectively and successfully for a sustained period of time (as I am here assuming) – tend to encourage the co-operative virtues of political life: the virtue of reasonableness and a sense of fairness, a spirit of compromise and a readiness to meet others halfway, all of which are connected with the willingness to co-operate with others on terms that everyone can publicly accept.”⁴⁶

In other words, Rawls must believe that a society can be ‘liberal’ before people come to develop the virtues previously thought to be essential. He does quite clearly hold that certain liberal principles can be accepted as a mere *modus vivendi*, and cites acceptance of the principle of toleration after the Reformation as a case in point.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 158-68.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

In a similar vein, Shklar defends liberalism precisely as a *modus vivendi*, but as a *modus vivendi* that recognises the ultimate evil of public cruelty and the value of a cruelty-free life.⁴⁸ Liberalism is thus born of the justified fear of “arbitrary, unexpected, unnecessary, and unlicensed acts of force” carried out by the enforcing agents of any regime.⁴⁹ On this view, liberalism is a theory of limited and legitimate government, of checks and balances and the social dispersion of power. In Shklar’s eyes liberalism should not be perceived as inadequate just because it originates in such a *modus vivendi* rather than any elevated ideals of character and human potential. Instead she holds that physical well-being and toleration are noble enough ends for any society.

Unsurprisingly, this portrayal of liberalism is not reliant upon personal qualities such as Rawls’ two moral powers, although Shklar does admit that citizens must be fitted for democratic activity, being self-reliant, morally courageous and respectful. Further, echoing Rawls, she does accept that liberal procedures and responsible government may inculcate certain habits and motivations. Overall, the main difference between this interpretation of liberalism and that of Rawls’ overlapping consensus is that Shklar’s account does not assume that liberalism can only proceed if individuals are motivated to co-operate on fair terms because they value fairness. A liberalism of fear can proceed so long as people value co-operation on fair terms, even if they do so only because the alternative is too horrific to contemplate.

Whilst both these examples suggest that liberal theory can function without making any assumptions about the ‘reasonable’ motivations of citizens, a distinction might be raised between liberal government and liberal society. The former need assume only that just principles are applied to a society rather than that members themselves accept the principles. This would help us to distinguish between the liberalism of Shklar and Rawls’ pre-constitutional consensus, and that of a full-blown overlapping consensus. As Rawls makes clear, his focus is more than just setting out the principles of limited and legitimate government, it is to ascertain

⁴⁸ J. Shklar, ‘The Liberalism of Fear’ in Rosenblum 1989, p. 29:

“The liberalism of fear in fact does not rest on a theory of moral pluralism. It does not, to be sure, offer a *summum bonum* toward which all political agents should strive, but it certainly does begin with a *summum malum*, which all of us know and would avoid if only we could. That evil is cruelty and the fear it inspires, and the very fear of fear itself.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

“...the most appropriate conception of justice for specifying the fair terms of co-operation between citizens regarded as free and equal, and as fully co-operating members of society over a complete life, from one generation to the next.”⁵⁰

Thus, although we can accept that liberalism can concern itself with the issue of solely liberal government, the focus of this chapter is with those theories which advocate principles for arranging a liberal society, and which therefore do require the affirmation of principles by liberal citizens.

The second possible source of criticism develops from the resolution of the previous problem. Even if we take our target as those theories of liberal justice which concern establishing a liberal society rather than just a liberal government, is there any reason to assume that individuals must affirm the relevant principles in any but the political aspects of their lives? In other words, should theorists such as Rawls be read as making any assumptions about individuals' motivations in their private interactions? Cohen considers this particular possibility in his recent article *'Where the Action Is: On the Site of Distributive Justice'*.⁵¹ Cohen's aim is to show that the basic structure is an inappropriate focus for attempts to achieve distributive justice. His preferred alternative is a direct focus on the actual distribution in society, and the actions of individuals which brought that about. In particular, Cohen objects to Rawls' acceptance of incentive effects within the conditions of the Difference Principle. This appears to allow individuals to be motivated by self-interested concerns whilst still supposedly contributing to a just distribution.

As Cohen notes, Rawls could defend this claim by arguing that the principles of justice apply only to the arrangement of the basic structure, not to any choices made by individuals operating within a basic structure which is just overall. Indeed, Cohen cites Rawls as making this very claim:

“The difference principle holds, for example, for income and property taxation, for fiscal and economic policy. It applies to the announced system of public law and statutes and not to particular transactions or distributions, nor to the decisions of individuals and associations, but rather to the institutional back-ground against which these transactions and decisions take place.”⁵²

⁵⁰ Rawls 1993, p. 3.

⁵¹ Cohen 1997.

⁵² Rawls 1993, p. 283, cited in Cohen 1997, p. 10, fn. 14.

However, such a claim is very much at odds with other arguments Rawls presents. Cohen gives three examples.⁵³ Firstly, Rawls holds that a society will display fraternity when the difference principle is satisfied; that is individuals will not want to gain at the expense of others. Secondly, Rawls argues that the worst-off in society can accept this position with dignity, because they know that no improvement could be brought about. Thirdly, Rawls explicitly states that individuals in a just society will act with a sense of justice from the principles of justice in their daily lives, and that doing so expresses their moral nature. Each of these three claims, Cohen argues, will only make sense on the premise that people's motivations actually matter.⁵⁴

Cohen himself argues that this apparent contradiction is not sufficient proof that Rawls must believe a sense of justice to apply to individual's daily interactions rather than just the arrangement of the basic structure. Rawls could resolve the inconsistencies by adjusting the three claims mentioned above. (Indeed, Cohen suggests that this is what Rawls has done in emphasising the purely political character of his liberalism in recent work.)⁵⁵ Thus, whilst we might already be prepared to accept Cohen's point, Cohen goes on to attack the concept of the basic structure itself. He holds that depending on how Rawls defines the basic structure, he either arbitrarily narrows the definition of his subject matter (by not including informal institutions which clearly influence social justice such as the family) or must include such structures which are largely constructed by individuals' customary actions and choices. Cohen believes that the latter is the only coherent option, and hence argues that Rawls is committed to accepting that individuals' dispositions and motivations do matter on a day-to-day basis.

This may seem a rather lengthy means of proving a point which is just common sense. At one level it is actually quite hard to imagine what it could possibly mean only to utilise our capacity for a sense of justice in 'political' matters. This suggests a schizophrenic divide between the way we think about people in matters of justice, and

⁵³ Cohen 1997, p. 16-17.

⁵⁴ It should be fairly clear in each of these three cases why Rawls appears to be making some appeal to people's motives. Only the second perhaps needs further clarification. Of this Cohen says:

“Why should the fact that no purely structurally induced improvement in their position is possible suffice to guarantee the dignity of the worst-off, when their position might be very inferior indeed, because of unlimited self-seekingness in the economic choices of well-placed people?... Would awareness of that truth contribute to a sense of dignity on the part of the badly off?” (Cohen 1997, p. 16)

the way we then go on to treat them through our personal choices. Even apart from the possible schizophrenia, the characteristics of tolerance and respect would seem to mean little more than how we treat people in every interaction we undertake. Admittedly the desire for co-operation on fair terms which occupies Cohen is perhaps rather trickier. People do unfortunately profess sympathetic attitudes towards redistribution whilst seeking to raise their own personal income as much as possible. But this may just mean that people do not really possess a capacity for a sense of justice; they simply conform to the expectations of decency in stating such a conviction. For this very reason it would seem desirable to ascertain what a theory of justice could and should recommend. Cohen's conclusion is an appealing start. Even if it is not clear that Rawls does require citizens to manifest a capacity for a sense of justice except in their political actions, there is good reason to argue that this capacity should be a feature that extends even into our personal choices.

The third possible criticism of the claims defended in this chapter is less a criticism than a suggestion that there might be a different way of arriving at the same conclusions. Raz, whilst every bit as much a liberal as Rawls, Scanlon, Barry *et al.*, does not accept the 'burdens of judgement' argument which justified liberal attitudes of tolerance and impartiality.⁵⁶ Essentially he holds that such 'epistemic abstinence' is incoherent in the light of our willingness to embrace the principles of liberal justice as at least justifiable, if not 'true'. We are to tolerate different others not because we cannot be sure they live less worthy lives, but because competitive moral pluralism is a condition of autonomy.⁵⁷ Raz holds that there are many valuable ways of life, each composed of virtues likely to be incompatible overall. In the light of the conflict which will inevitably arise between these different ways of life, toleration is the only way to ensure that such variety is sustained. Thus Raz's account of toleration is grounded in the value of autonomy, rather than a concept of fairness or scepticism.

Arguably the greatest difference between burdens-of-judgement type views of tolerance and autonomy-based ones such as Raz's is the potentially perfectionist implications of

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17. An example of this would be Rawls' claim that the ideal of full autonomy is a political rather than ethical goal. (Rawls 1993, p. 77-8.)

⁵⁶ J. Raz, 'Facing Diversity: the Case of Epistemic Abstinence', in *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 19, 1, 1990, p. 3-46.

the latter. As Raz himself acknowledges, his account limits toleration in two significant ways.⁵⁸ Firstly, the argument from autonomy does not require any one individual option – it only necessitates an adequate range of options. Raz suggests that this will tell against the emergence of new ways of life, as they have no immediate claim to recognition and toleration. Secondly, there is no obligation on this account to protect or tolerate morally repugnant ways of life.

That Raz adopts a different account of toleration from liberals such as Rawls or Barry should not undermine our claims that toleration and impartiality are crucial aspects of any liberal theory. It does however suggest that we should show restraint in arguing for any one particular interpretation. As a necessary personal characteristic there may be little difference in practice between Rawlsian toleration and the Razian variant, but there will probably be some. The conservative implications of Raz's account suggest that the most likely divergences will concern how far tolerance should extend. Thus, provided we maintain some sensitivity to variation, we can continue to hold that the desire for co-operation on fair terms, and capacity for toleration and impartiality are crucial liberal characteristics.

One final awkward question must be answered before we can conclude that all citizens in a liberal society must possess these vital characteristics. Do we *all* need them? Even if we allow that liberalism depends upon the widespread possession of the two moral powers for reasons of justification and implementation at least, there is no reason why we all need to possess them. Liberalism won't lose its justification if a few people choose to reject an autonomous way of life, nor will it stumble if a less noble few obey liberal laws for reasons of self-interest, or, indeed, even if they disobey those laws. Thus we might wonder why it should matter that liberals attend to issues of socialisation and character formation at all. So long as most people are fairly just, why should we care?

Both Galston and Macedo are refreshingly forthright here. Both allow that we neither are, nor can be universally perfect liberal citizens. Galston ridicules this idea right from the start:

⁵⁷ J. Raz, 'Autonomy, Toleration and the Harm Principle', in S. Mendus, *Justifying Toleration*, CUP, Cambridge, 1988.

⁵⁸ Raz in Mendus 1988, p. 174.

“The thesis that liberalism rests in some measure on virtue is not the palpable absurdity that the liberal polity requires an impeccably virtuous citizenry, a ‘nation of angels’.”⁵⁹

With specific regard to the virtues required to implement and sustain liberal principles, Galston then pragmatically states:

“When I speak of certain virtues as instrumental to the preservation of liberal communities, I mean not that every citizen must possess these virtues but, rather, that most citizens must. The broad hypothesis is that as the proportion of nonvirtuous citizens increases significantly, the ability of liberal societies to function successfully progressively diminishes.”⁶⁰

Thus liberal governments do have reason to care whether or not their citizens are successfully socialised to possess the requisite characteristics, but they need not intervene in every case of failure.

In similar manner, Macedo emphasises that his more idealistic account of liberal virtues and flourishing is a normative goal rather than a description of reality. Thus it would not matter to the same extent if no-one actually manifested any of his advocated qualities. He does, however, argue that they are not utopian, that we can approach these ideals in some of our actions;

“The liberal arrangements I have described are, of course, ideals that we often fail to live up to, but these ideals are recognizable, none the less, in our actual practices and aspirations. We do sometimes approach liberal ideals, as when we support the civil rights of blacks, women, or of any minority or oppressed group on grounds of justice, or whenever we seek and offer good public reasons for legislation.”⁶¹

Thus, once again, there is reason for liberals to concern themselves with the effects of socialisation procedures and effects. In so far as individuals will need to possess certain basic liberal qualities to a minimum level (in line with fundamental requirements of liberalism), these will have to be ensured.⁶² Beyond this, liberals will no doubt be very pleased if the development of such basic qualities does indeed lead to the growth of more extensively liberal qualities.

⁵⁹ Galston 1991, p. 216.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

⁶¹ Macedo 1990, p. 284-5.

⁶² Macedo does address these basics:

“...liberal justice is not neutral among human goods or ways of life: it exerts the positive requirement that every citizen’s ‘good’ includes certain features: a willingness to ‘live and let live’, to subordinate personal plans and commitments to impartial rules of law, and to persuade rather than coerce.” (Macedo 1990, p. 265.)

Unfortunately the status of Rawls' claims is rather less clear. Whilst he clearly assumes that all citizens possess the two moral powers to the requisite minimum degree,⁶³ it is not clear whether the theory would work if this condition were not met. *Political Liberalism* is, ironically, more concerned with philosophical justification than concrete political or empirical recommendations. It would, however, seem pointless to construct a perfect theory of justice which could never be applied to the real world. In at least one place Rawls does stress that his theory should not be read as unrealisable. In the section 'Steps to Constitutional Consensus', he sees himself as addressing the challenge that overlapping consensus amongst ideally liberal citizens is utopian.⁶⁴ There he offers an account of how the political virtues can develop, given the prior existence of liberal institutions. Thus he seems to hold that we can move from a society where very few people bear desirable liberal characteristics, to one where all potentially do. So Rawls admits that not everyone starts out as perfectly liberal, but argues that they can become so, and consequently bases the rest of his theory on this assumption. He is clearly more optimistic than either Galston or Macedo. Whether we should accept this assumption will depend largely on whether his account of liberal socialisation is plausible in the light of its ambitious ends. This account could, for example, be judged against empirical studies of the conditions which facilitate development of characteristics such as tolerance and commitment to fair co-operation. Whilst it is clearly beyond the scope of this chapter to offer any such assessment, the following chapter will offer some insight into precisely this issue.

Common sense suggests that we should follow Galston and Macedo rather than Rawls in accepting the likelihood of a less than perfect citizen body. However, we should also note their common emphasis on the need for the majority of citizens to possess at least a basic capacity for a sense of justice. As Galston pointed out, the presence of a large number of people without this capacity could significantly undermine the efficacy of a liberal society. At the very least this suggests that liberal theory should not be complacent in its approach to the socialisation of liberal citizens, and to a certain degree it might even need to pursue a more thorough understanding of the issue. This provides us with sufficient justification to assess more carefully the liberal account of the various ways in which citizens are moulded.

⁶³ For example see Rawls 1993, p. 20.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

In the previous chapter liberals were charged with paying insufficient attention to the realities of empirical holism. Although many theorists displayed a fairly sophisticated grasp of institutional and inter-personal formative processes, their arguments were without fail, grounded in an intuitive or commonsensical understanding of empirical effects. Now that we know why liberal theorists depend upon certain personal characteristics to support their theories, we can assess their accounts of socialisation to determine whether, empirically-speaking, these characteristics are likely to be supported. Before taking a look at some of the empirical material relevant to this cause, let us focus on a particular liberal characteristic, so that we can understand how the liberal and empirical accounts compare. For this purpose we now turn to a closer examination of toleration.

III A Liberal Perspective on Toleration and its Development⁶⁵

In political theory, the concept of toleration has a specific (although sometimes controversial) meaning and usage. Susan Mendus identifies two features common to most accounts of toleration: it arises under conditions of diversity, and further, this diversity gives rise to disapproval, dislike or disgust.⁶⁶ It is a further condition that the tolerator should have the power to inhibit or interfere with the offending action, practice or belief. Toleration is thus the act of refraining from so interfering despite one's disapproval, dislike or disgust. As John Horton puts it,

“...the core of the concept of toleration is the refusal, where one has the power to do so, to prohibit or seriously interfere with conduct that one finds objectionable.”⁶⁷

Horton goes on to add, however, that although this definition sounds fairly cut and dried there is no guarantee that in reality we can draw a clear distinction between tolerant and intolerant acts. Would restriction (rather than prohibition) of sale of pornographic material count as tolerant or intolerant, for example? Horton claims instead that toleration is a matter of degree. This claim is the first indication that toleration might be

⁶⁵ Although the focus here is on the concept of toleration, as differentiated from either impartiality or the other moral characteristics it should be noted that the empirical material may not allow of such precise definition. Thus the other elements of 'reasonableness' may be referred to in the following chapter where research appears to shed light on these issues too. Their conceptual inter-relation should thus not be forgotten even when thinking more specifically about toleration as in this section.

⁶⁶ S. Mendus *Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism*, Macmillan, Basingstoke 1989, p. 8.

⁶⁷ J. Horton, 'Toleration as a Virtue', in Heyd 1996, p. 28.

a somewhat controversial concept. Mendus delineates certain other ways in which toleration is a problematic concept, noting that it is unclear precisely what it demands; does it require simple forbearance or also a stronger obligation to protect or preserve the tolerated action/belief?⁶⁸ Also, do we need to differentiate between cases where we simply dislike a particular act and those where we disapprove (which implies moral justifiability)? A further question concerns the correct object of toleration; can we only tolerate attributes or behaviour of persons which are alterable, or can we speak of tolerating individuals themselves? Clearly the answer to this question has import for the debate at hand. We would expect empirical studies of toleration to address, amongst other things, the relationship between different groups where unalterable characteristics, such as skin colour, gender, or sexuality are the differentiating feature. Yet on some accounts of toleration, such features should not have to be ‘tolerated’. That is, it is not rational or even justifiable to disapprove of another person on the basis of characteristics over which they have no control.⁶⁹ We are supposed to respect persons as equally possessing moral dignity, and should seek to judge them only on the features of themselves and their lives for which they can be held responsible. According to this morally appealing (and very ‘liberal’) account of toleration, we should not have to speak of racial tolerance or intolerance. Yet as will become clear from the presentation of the empirical material in a later section, some of the biggest problems faced by a multi-cultural society derive from such a source of opposition. Thus the disparity between the conceptual implications of toleration and its empirical applications is in itself an important problem that needs to be addressed by liberal political theory, and one which will receive more attention in the remaining two chapters.⁷⁰

A more dramatic source of controversy is identified by Bernard Williams. He states

⁶⁸ Mendus 1989, p. 9-18.

⁶⁹ Clearly, this may not affect accounts of toleration which stress that mere dislike is the correct basis for application of the concept. Dislike is a much more emotive response than disapproval, and as such may not be bound by the same stringent requirements of justifiability, and particularly, moral justifiability.

⁷⁰ Rawls does at least note in the Introduction to *Political Liberalism* that his approach to liberalism might seem somewhat ‘dated’ in the light of contemporary injustices;

“Among our most basic problems are those of race, ethnicity, and gender. These may seem of an altogether different character calling for different principles of justice, which *Theory* does not discuss.”

He responds to this objection:

“The underlying assumption is that a conception of justice worked up by focusing on a few long-standing classical problems should be correct, or at least provide guidelines for addressing further questions. Such is the rationale of focusing on a few main and enduring classical problems.” (Rawls 1993, p. xxviii & xxix.)

“The difficulty with toleration is that it seems to be at once necessary and impossible.”⁷¹

It is necessary because it is the condition under which peaceful interaction between different, possibly conflicting groups will become possible. Yet it seems impossible precisely because in such circumstances of conflict or opposition, toleration is understandably hard to maintain. Toleration demands strength of will, and determination to act in a way that quite possibly goes completely against the grain. Raz (although the basis of his account of toleration is rather unusual) effectively emphasises this point:

“Toleration is a distinctive moral virtue only if it curbs desires, inclinations and convictions which are thought by the tolerant person to be in themselves desirable. Typically a person is tolerant if and only if he suppresses a desire to cause a harm or hurt which he thinks the other deserves.”⁷²

In fact this aspect of toleration reveals more than just the demands made on personal conscience; it also identifies a possible conceptual incoherence. Mendus calls this the ‘paradox of toleration’.⁷³ On the one hand we count toleration as a virtue or a duty, something which is to be approved of, and encouraged. Yet, on the other hand, if we base toleration on the concept of moral disapproval, then it implies that the object of toleration should not exist/persist. Toleration would apparently require us to deny our belief that something is objectively, and perhaps universally, wrong. This implies a degree of moral schizophrenia. Perversely, there would also seem to be some actions or beliefs which we do not in fact agree should be tolerated. Yet how are we to distinguish which of our ‘objective’ or ‘universalistic’ judgements are to be upheld, and which are to be over-ridden by the requirements of toleration? Certainly there are some clear cases, such as where abuse, murder or torture is being enacted. But there are other cases where apparently violent acts are committed in the name of cultural integrity, such as the practice of female circumcision or foot-binding. Whether or not such practices should be tolerated within a liberal state is much less obvious. The concept of toleration as based on disapproval is thus a personally and morally demanding concept. It appears to imply a degree of moral schizophrenia, asking us to tolerate what we loathe, and yet also forces us to engage in difficult moral calculations, weighing up values of cultural

⁷¹ B. Williams, ‘Toleration: An Impossible Virtue?’, in Heyd 1996, p.18.

⁷² Raz 1986, p. 401-2.

⁷³ Mendus 1989, p. 18-21.

integrity and autonomy against standards of human decency and the eradication of suffering.⁷⁴

Three approaches to resolving at least the first of these problems can be found in the literature. Williams suggests that the paradox of toleration could be avoided if toleration is undertaken in the name of some other value.⁷⁵ Autonomy would be the obvious choice within the liberal camp. The idea is that the action or belief tolerated is not tolerated because we think that it is right or even acceptable, but because we respect and value the autonomy of the agent involved. As discussed earlier, this is Raz's position. Williams notes, however, that there are difficulties associated with this approach in so far as it is hard to see why we might then have any reason to tolerate actions or beliefs which threaten or restrict autonomy. As previously stated, Raz fully accepts the perfectionist consequences of pursuing such an argument and professes no obligation to tolerate those who do not value autonomy. Williams regards this as an inevitable and undesirable feature of arguments of this type; where toleration is founded on the importance of other values, those values, like any others might be rejected. As a consequence, toleration would have to be rejected too.

It is notable that Rawls avoids this problem by not founding his account of toleration in an explicit appeal to the value of autonomy. As was made plain in the previous chapter, he construes toleration as following on from the 'burdens of judgement' argument.⁷⁶ In this way, duties of toleration arise out of the recognition that there can be reasonable disagreement in matters of the good life, or one's 'comprehensive doctrines'. This limits what can be justified to all individuals, and hence limits the potential for coercive intervention. Barry pursues a similar line, but chooses to frame his discussion more

⁷⁴ Note that disapproval suggests a degree of objectivity of judgement which mere dislike would not. Thus the paradox only arises where we take the former, rather than the latter as the correct basis for toleration. The schizophrenia is avoided because we can acknowledge that our mere dislike of another's skin colour is not a justifiable and truthful judgement, but simply an emotive response. As such, having to tolerate the individual we dislike does not undermine the integrity of our belief structure, although it may cause us distress in some other way. Yet if we try to avoid the paradox, by explicitly embracing this dislike variant of toleration, then we run into the problem outlined above, whereby toleration can legitimately be associated with racist, chauvinist or otherwise bigoted beliefs. By so removing the element of objective judgement from the account of toleration, we are left with no grounds at all on which to determine what should and should not have to be tolerated.

⁷⁵ Williams in Heyd 1996.

⁷⁶ Rawls 1993, p. 58-62.

explicitly in terms of scepticism than simply disagreement.⁷⁷ Notably, Williams concludes in like manner, claiming that toleration is sustained by a mixture of reasons, specifically scepticism about the possibility of discernible truth in values, and a Hobbesian recognition of the value of a *modus vivendi* truce. Thus the second means of avoiding the schizophrenia of values outlined above is to adopt a sceptical position, or one which at the very least admits of reasonable and ineliminable disagreement.⁷⁸ In this scenario, toleration is exercised because it is recognised that although the reasons each individual holds for maintaining her value-set seem justifiable, objective and even universal, these reasons may not seem so to others. As such, any intolerant coercive or interventionary action could not be justified to the other on terms they could not reasonably reject. Given that liberals are concerned with fairness the justifiability of intervention is crucial.

The third approach to avoiding the paradox of toleration is suggested by David Heyd.⁷⁹ He argues that toleration is very closely linked to the concept of respect, and consequently demands that we focus on the agent rather than the agent's beliefs or actions. Toleration is

“...a perceptual virtue, because it involves a shift of attention rather than an overall judgement. Tolerant people overcome the drive to interfere in the life of another not because they come to believe that the reasons for restraint are weightier than the reasons for disapproval, but because the attention is shifted from the object of disapproval to the humanity or the moral standing of the subject before them.”⁸⁰

Heyd calls this shift ‘personalisation’, a term which reappears in the context of empirical studies on toleration in the next chapter. Certainly from a psychological point of view the extent to which we can and do separate persons from their attributes or actions will be seen to be an important consideration pertaining to our capacity for toleration. As such this approach is conceptually appealing.

⁷⁷ Although as noted on p. 112, Barry argues that Rawls' interpretation of ‘reasonable disagreement’ is not really any different from his own understanding of ‘scepticism’.

⁷⁸ Clearly there is a sense in which this type of argument ultimately refers back to the worth of autonomy, at least in the formulation offered by Rawls. The import of personal autonomy is one factor in the argument for the public justifiability of any coercion or intervention in another's life. In *A Theory of Justice*, p. 214, Rawls quite clearly states that the principle of toleration is derived from the principle of equal liberty. Williams' incorporation of the Hobbesian *modus vivendi* justification is thus interesting in that, in conjunction with the scepticism condition, it appears to justify toleration and more minimal intervention, without appealing to the value of autonomy. It rests on the desirability of stability and security rather than on autonomy.

⁷⁹ D. Heyd ‘Introduction’ in Heyd 1996.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

It is worth noting, however, that there is perhaps rather less distance between Heyd's views and those of, say, Rawls, than might appear to be the case.⁸¹ Although it was suggested above that authors such as Rawls, Barry and Williams appeal to some degree of scepticism to justify their reliance on toleration, we also observed that the first two at least, also appeal indirectly to the value of public justifiability. If we unravel these value claims then we arrive at a Kantian account of human worth, the idea that individuals are to be treated always as ends and never as means. Demanding, for these reasons, that we tolerate others, of whose actions and beliefs we disapprove, implies we must recognise this equal human worth as over-riding. Thus in this sense, the Rawlsian account of toleration does also depend on a perspectival shift, although its apparent derivation from the 'burdens of judgement' account makes it plain that Rawls believes that the content of people's beliefs is also a relevant factor in our extending toleration.⁸² As such, his justification of toleration is grounded neither solely on the content of people's beliefs, nor solely on their status as free and equal persons.

Socialising for toleration.

Clearly, if we are to examine some empirical material on the origins of toleration, we should know a little about the corresponding account given in political theory. A large section of the previous chapter was devoted to assessing the various aspects of socialisation addressed within liberal theory. This section will not reiterate those comments. Perhaps the most important point to note in relation to that material, however, is that most references to such formative effects do not discriminate between the characteristics to be inculcated. In other words, the aim is simply to describe how liberal citizens can be moulded, rather than to determine how dispositions to fairness,

⁸¹ Whether or not the first supposed resolution to the 'paradox of toleration' also implies a perspectival shift is not so clear. Certainly it would depend on the value invoked. If we consider the example given, namely autonomy, we can see however that there is no real perspectival shift. Instead, the content of the belief or action concerned is assessed for its compatibility with autonomy. If it is compatible, then it is to be tolerated, but if it proves to be incompatible, then the agent may be legitimately coerced; no concern for the welfare of that individual need arise. Thus the perspective remains resolutely focused on the action or belief rather than the agent.

⁸² In so far as Rawls does hold that we assess the content of people's beliefs/actions, he does address the possibility that in some situations we should not extend tolerance to others. In *A Theory of Justice*, Chapter 35 'Toleration of the Intolerant', Rawls acknowledges that there are some circumstances where we the content of others' beliefs or actions overrides their claims to moral equality and toleration. If the actions of intolerant others are such as to threaten the liberty and security of a just society, then there is sufficient reason to restrict their freedom and act intolerantly. Importantly, any such restriction is not to be undertaken in the name of maximising liberty, for clearly it reduces the liberty of the intolerant few. Instead Rawls states that such acts are undertaken "...for the sake of equal liberty under a just

impartiality or toleration might individually arise. The only feature often considered in its own right is autonomy, as when Raz, Dworkin or Kymlicka debate the necessary supporting social or cultural conditions of choice. Thus it is very difficult to give a precise account of how liberals think toleration can be developed.

A few things can be said in quite general terms. If we accept Rawls' account of moral development, then an important part of children's socialisation comes with the morality of association, when they learn, through interaction with non-family members, that there are different roles they can adopt.⁸³ Learning to play different roles in different relationships involves learning basic rules of co-operation, and having to appreciate the different roles and view-points of others. This latter requirement involves the development of quite sophisticated skills, which are themselves the basis for toleration:

“First of all, we must recognize that these different points of view exist, that the perspectives of others are not the same as ours. But we must not only learn that things look different to them, but that they have different wants and ends, and different plans and motives; and we must learn how to gather these facts from their speech, conduct, and countenance. Next we identify the definitive features of these perspectives, what it is that others largely want and desire, what are their controlling beliefs and opinions. Only this way can we understand and assess their actions, intentions and motives.”⁸⁴

Thus Rawls can give some account of how individuals come to develop awareness and understanding of different others, a first step towards appreciating and applying toleration.

Macedo claims to interpret and extend Rawls' arguments for the 'morality of association' and 'social capital', holding that an important element of citizenship education takes place in social interaction rather than within the classroom.⁸⁵ He argues that pluralism and membership of cross-cutting groups is one of the best ways to acquire 'co-operative virtues' generally. Interaction across time breeds trust and empathy, whilst belonging to more than one group ensures that individuals never identify themselves with just one interest, and also learn to see others in a more

constitution, the principles of which the intolerant themselves would acknowledge in the original position.” (Rawls 1973 p. 220.)

⁸³ Rawls 1973, p. 467-72.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 468-9.

⁸⁵ Macedo 1996.

detached manner. Thus this lays the groundwork for the development of tolerant dispositions.

On this view, the underlying skills required for toleration are acquired in early interactions within environments such as the school, the neighbourhood and peer-group. Other influences depicted in the previous chapter relevant to toleration must include the role of culture, both social and political in raising awareness of pluralism or multiculturalism and portraying it in a positive light. Whether, on the issue of social culture, we follow Kymlicka or Waldron, we are still left with the common recommendation that different cultural groups and issues should be presented in a positive light.⁸⁶

Political institutions have an important role to play in educating people as to the need for toleration and impartiality. The allocation and upholding of civil, political and social rights makes clear to all that each right-holder is to be treated as an equal, regardless of differences of culture, ethnicity, class or religion. At base, the minimum level of toleration that a liberal society can demand from its citizens is that they recognise and respect these rights in every relevant situation. Likewise, the democratic process is in part justified by its potential to incorporate many different voices and values in a public decision-making process. Redistribution expresses a commitment to all members of society that each counts equally from a moral point of view. Each of these political procedures or institutions contributes towards education for toleration by stressing the meaning of common citizenship as an identity which over-arches individual differences. Its socialising effects are therefore both practical (in ensuring that we respect others' rights) and symbolic (in representing our fundamental equality).

There are some more specific details which can be added on to this very general account, and they come from the literature on education for citizenship. Callan, for example, takes quite seriously the difficulties of educating children to be Rawlsian citizens.⁸⁷ A particular concern of his is how children are to acquire an understanding of the burdens of judgement, which is the crucial underpinning of Rawlsian tolerance.

⁸⁶ The difference would just be that Kymlicka believes this can be achieved only by protecting cultural groups and guaranteeing them certain special rights; Waldron in contrast believes that there is no need to preserve particular cultures only to embrace diversity generally.

⁸⁷ Callan 1997.

Children must learn how to differentiate between sources of inter-personal conflict which are due to the burdens of judgement and those which are not; only then can there be reasonable agreement on fair terms. As Callan point out, however, this raises some difficult problems, particularly for the role of the family in socialisation. As was noted in the previous chapter, parents often want their children to share their own fundamental value-set, and as such they may not be able, or even willing, to help their children appreciate the burdens of judgement that arise in conditions of pluralism. Even exposing children to such arguments in schools raises controversial issues such as whether parents have rights to determine their children's educational content, or how to justify the obvious 'spill-over' effects of teaching for autonomy. Despite these problems, Callan is adamant that if citizens are to acquire the requisite skills, including toleration, then they must be educated in a particular way. Learning to accept the burdens of judgement is especially difficult;

“If acceptance has to be the complex and onerous psychological disposition I have specified, the hardness of hard cases must be brought out by investigating specific ethical questions from multiple perspectives once the child or adolescent can learn to understand something of the variety of reasonable views from the inside; the effects of contingencies of social position and experience on disparities among such views must be imaginatively explored; and the various ways in which reasonable ethical doctrines select and order values must also be appreciated as these give shape to conflicting ways of life.”⁸⁸

From the liberal non-interventionist perspective, this compares rather unfavourably with Rawls' very simple account of how children will learn to acquire the relevant skills. Unfortunately, Callan's suggestions sound rather more plausible.

Other liberal theorists have detailed other aspects of education which could tend to favour the development of tolerant citizens. Levinson criticises the English school system because it supports single-religion schools. Far from requiring education to be secular, or even civic, English authorities allow families and communities to promote certain conceptions of the good through education. This does not favour the development of toleration:

“The appropriate sense of detachment, however, cannot be adequately fostered in a school that is purpose-built to reflect the personal aims and conception of the good of children and their families...A more separate, public space must be established instead, one which provides an environment distanced from the commitments promoted by children's home

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

communities and families. Only in this way can toleration actually be achieved, because only in such a setting can children come to recognize the contingency of their own attachments.”⁸⁹

Ackerman attempts to combine both parental and educational socialising influences, arguing that in the early stages children need to be settled within a particular way of life; only at the secondary stage of education do they need to develop their critical faculties.⁹⁰

Underlying these different accounts is a common belief that you can educate for citizenship, and in particular, for toleration, and that the most important arena for such education is the school. Although the family is recognised as a key socialising influence, these liberal theorists are concerned that the family may not be suitable to inculcate key liberal qualities in children. Only education can guarantee the right degree of detachment, and, even then, can only do so with certain quite stringent restrictions on how educational institutions are run.

Overall, then, the liberal account of how toleration is to be inculcated is by no means thoroughly developed. In so far as there is consensus it seems to concern the need for education for citizenship, and the import of social interaction. Different socialising influences exert different pressures, and their effects are inter-twined. This much sounds uncontroversial. In the following chapter, some attempt will be made to look at the empirical material on conditions supporting tolerance and intolerance, and a comparison with the liberal account will be drawn. It thus remains to be seen whether an empirically holist approach can inform or criticise liberal views on socialisation.

IV Conclusions

It would seem that liberals need to attend to the facts of socialisation in order to guarantee the survival of certain crucial citizen characteristics. These characteristics play various roles in supporting, justifying or guiding liberal principles and institutions. The most important of these characteristics are (in Rawlsian terms) the desire for co-

⁸⁹ Levinson 1996, p. 148.

⁹⁰ Ackermann 1980, p. 140-60.

operation on fair terms, and recognition of the burdens of judgement. The first of these is necessary to ensure that the requirements of justice will be unconditionally accepted, and does so by assuming coincidence between individual motives and the goals of liberal justice. The second is required to overcome the difficulties of arriving at political agreement given variations in the content of individual conceptions of the good. It entails recognising that there is a distinction between what can reasonably be believed by any individual and what can reasonably be presented as a justification for society's basic institutions and principles. Tolerance is the general attitude that this recognition gives rise to, and impartiality is the formal variant of this outlook required when rules or procedures are being established or applied.

These characteristics were held to be pivotal in liberal accounts both as ends and as means. In the former case they either set the goals for liberal theory, or (if they are believed to be possessed by citizens already) provide the justification for liberal treatment of those citizens. In the latter case, such 'virtues' are seen as means to a greater end, either because they help to secure the implementation of liberal principles, or because they ensure that these principles will be perceived as legitimate. Arguably, these functions are most important as their presence or absence may determine whether or not a liberal order can actually be achieved in the real world. It is heartening though, that liberals such as Macedo and Galston explicitly state that not all citizens need to possess such characteristics in order for the liberal state to be stable. The more difficult question concerns just how many citizens need to be so 'virtuous'.

The following chapter will examine the empirical prevalence and character of a particular liberal virtue, namely tolerance. Having ascertained in this chapter what function this virtue fulfils, we are in a better position to understand why liberals are keen to discuss measures which would ensure the development of tolerance. The empirical material which follows in Chapter Six will enable us to ascertain firstly, whether or not the liberal account of tolerance is accurate; can possession of this characteristic help to overcome the problems of pluralistic conflict? Secondly, we should also be able to discover how widespread tolerance attitudes really are, and thirdly, we can compare the liberal account of socialisation with the more informed empirical account. If there are important discrepancies between liberal and empirical accounts, this could suggest that liberals have not fully considered the empirically holist

limitations which affect the development of liberal citizens and the establishment or survival of a liberal state. Should this be the case, then the argument for reconsidering the communitarian ontological critique would be supported.

Chapter Six

Group Membership, Group Conflict and Toleration.

This chapter introduces empirical research from the social sciences in order to determine how well-informed liberal theory is in matters of socialisation. As previously stated, the hope is that by setting up a ‘case-study’ of a particular aspect of liberal theory, we can assess whether or not liberalism could benefit from a more thorough embrace of social embeddedness and its empirical implications. This chapter will delineate the relevant empirical material in contrast to the theoretical discussion of Chapter Five. A comparison between the two will then be drawn in Chapter Seven, highlighting any major discrepancies or challenges to the liberal account before finally presenting the conclusions of this thesis.

The first task must be to narrow our horizons somewhat. It is clearly beyond the scope of a thesis, let alone a single chapter to consider every aspect of empirical research ever carried out on the subject of tolerance and its development. Further, socialisation processes are the subject of research in several disciplines, from sociology and psychology to education studies and political science. The first delimitation, then, must be the choice of a discipline. This choice is partly determined by the aspirations of the liberal literature. Rawls certainly claims to portray an account of moral psychology and development, and several other of the accounts mentioned in the previous chapter make similar claims without referring to this explicitly as ‘psychology’. Also, in looking at the development of tolerance towards different others we want to study the development of an attitude, both in school and beyond, and hence social psychology is the most obvious source of information.

A further narrowing of focus is required if we are not to scour an entire discipline for every toleration-related research finding, regardless of its relevance. Luckily two areas of research springs immediately to the fore; political toleration studies and group conflict theory. As regards the former, several studies have been carried out to ascertain the levels of political tolerance within western liberal democracies over the last forty

years. These provide us with a starting point, in so far as they can help us to answer the question of how tolerant citizens currently are. Liberal accounts of socialisation would not be so crucial if it were the case that we were already perfectly tolerant. Clearly we are all familiar with the intolerant, unjust and discriminatory acts which make the news on a regular basis; what these studies reveal, however, is that intolerance is not restricted to criminal acts, it is an attitude borne by quite significant numbers of the population, even when the vast majority express strong support for general liberal democratic principles. Social identity theory and group conflict material is invoked to help explain this phenomenon of intolerance. It is by no means the only explanation, indeed it does not explain all instances of intolerance, but it is the most interesting for our purposes as it also helps to explain other instances of failure to live up to liberal principles. In this context, discussion will be widened to incorporate the relationship between groups and justice more generally; social identity theory provides one overarching explanation for some of the problems and solutions which liberalism may encounter through its willing acceptance of pluralism. In particular it offers insight into certain aspects of the socialisation processes assumed to operate by liberals as discussed in Chapter Four, and will therefore enable us to assess the accuracy and sufficiency of these claims.

The aim of this chapter, then, is to investigate some of the empirical findings on the conditions which best support and develop tolerance and other liberal qualities. The material presented here is no doubt inadequate to the task; in order to produce a truly convincing and informed account it would be necessary to address a far greater quantity of research from a wider range of areas. It is perhaps odd to consider the issue of socialisation and moral development without specifically looking at the findings of educational or developmental psychology. These are big topics, and there is no scope to address them in this chapter. The most that can be hoped from the limited analysis engaged in here is that we establish the feasibility and productivity of future study. Overall it is the approach rather than the results which matter most, although the latter may provide some interesting titbits for liberal theory to chew on in the meanwhile. The material presented here from social psychology will help us begin to ascertain whether or not liberal holist assumptions are accurate, hopelessly naïve or even just misguided. It may just help us to add some detail to the liberal picture. Whatever the outcome, the

point is to show that liberalism *can* more fully embrace social embeddedness by addressing the empirical basis of its holist claims.

In order to set up the issues for discussion the first two sections address some background considerations. The first section acknowledges the methodological difficulties of using psychological research in such an inter-disciplinary fashion, but defends the approach overall. The second section endeavours to set up the problem of socialising for toleration and justice seen from a psychological point of view. Material is presented to show that people are imperfectly tolerant in our imperfectly liberal societies; thus there is need for liberals to think about how best to socialise citizens. Turning then to the basic psychology of justice we see that socialising people to be more tolerant or more just has to overcome one fundamental difficulty, namely the origins of justice in group-based relations. This suggests that it will be easier to promote justice within groups than across them, and that therefore inculcating tolerance may prove to be rather a challenge. The main body of the chapter will consider the ways in which members of groups can in fact be encouraged to extend justice and tolerance to other groups. Thus the third section will be devoted to consideration of social identity theory and the ‘Contact Hypothesis’, a theory which pronounces that interaction between members of different groups can diminish group conflict. This is the material which will provide most insight into the claims by theorists such as Rawls and Macedo that social interaction breeds empathy, distance from one’s ends, and eventually toleration. Although most discussion of this material and its implications for liberal theory will be postponed until the final chapter, a few brief conclusions will be drawn in the last section.

I Methodological Considerations.

The most brutal question to be addressed concerns why on earth we should think that empirical material can inform political theory. After all, we don’t claim to live in a perfectly just society, let alone a just world, so any research findings can only tell us about the way that processes operate in an imperfect world. Surely this information would have no role in a normative theory which is blatantly concerned with how the

world should be, rather than how it actually is? We can see the difficulty if we consider our particular problem, namely how to socialise liberal citizens. Psychological research can only inform us of the success of certain socialising influences given existing external conditions of socio-economic injustice, racism and discrimination, and given the imperfect nature of some of those influences themselves; schools and the media may not yet be properly designed for integration or civic education. Why, therefore, should liberal theorists be obliged to consider the empirical evidence which may or may not back up some of their claims?

In Chapter Two the initial distinction between empirical and philosophical holism was laid out. There it was argued that when we make any sort of claim concerning conditions of existence, we invoke two different types of claim. The first concerns the conceptual requirements; what social conditions would be necessary for a person to exist, given our concept of 'personhood'. The second asks for the empirical requirements; what social conditions would be necessary for a person to exist, given the empirical operation of socialisation processes, the range of basic human needs, and so on. In Chapter Four, contemporary liberal theory was assessed for its capacity to embrace a generally holist understanding of the individual and society. There it was concluded that although liberals did seem to manifest a strong awareness of holist issues, they were so far unwilling, or unable, to embrace them in anything but a piecemeal fashion. Two other general features were also notable; firstly, liberals seemed to be making empirically holist claims, but gave no indication of any empirical evidence justifying these claims; and secondly, these claims actually conflicted on occasion. Thus the first reason for our studying empirical evidence in this context is that liberal theory itself invokes it. It simply does so in a singularly lax fashion.

Given that holist claims were seen to structure and limit the range of normative options available to liberal theorists, it would seem extremely important to find out which empirical claims are indeed well-justified and which are not. Before this can occur, we need to identify which theorists, if any, are immune from this sort of critique. In order to be so immune it would have to be the case that any claims made about the nature of the socialisation processes required to inculcate liberal characteristics would need to refer only to an idealised society. Most of the theorists mentioned in previous chapters do not obviously do so. Both Galston and Macedo describe ways in which currently imperfect

liberal societies might become more thoroughly liberal; Dworkin, Kymlicka and Waldron all invoke contemporary examples to back up their claims such that it is hard not to assume that they refer to socialising processes which they interpret as operative in the real world. All of these may therefore have something to learn from empirical research. Only Rawls and Barry seem ambiguous as regards the status of their holist claims.¹ In these latter cases we must assume that both are keen to avoid charges of utopianism (indeed Rawls explicitly states this, as noted in the previous chapter).² Thus the best account they can give of their ideally just society must be plausible, where plausibility implies that they do not invoke any holist claims which are actually refutable, or extremely implausible in the light of all available knowledge.³ If this is the case then Rawls and Barry might still be susceptible to critique on empirical grounds in either of two ways. Either they may make claims about how we get to the ideally just state from here (as Rawls does), or empirical research may reveal some information about human nature which seems to hold true in so many cases as to be thought a fundamental feature of humanity. Indeed, these theorists will be criticised on both grounds.

The other main methodological considerations stem from the nature of the material to be considered in this chapter. Certain difficulties of interpretation arise which can somewhat hinder our desire to draw strong conclusions on the basis of the evidence found. I will briefly run through these here, although their relevance will probably only become clear at later stages in the text.

The first problem concerns the lack of any standardised usage of terms between social psychology and political theory. Thus although we are concerned to study the social origins of toleration in this chapter, the main body of literature that will be studied focuses on group conflict, and its eradication. In this context, ‘conflict’ covers

¹ Rawls generally limits his claims such that they are held to apply only to a ‘well-ordered society’, although, as was noted in the previous chapter he does consider the possibility of moving from an imperfectly liberal society to a state of overlapping consensus in *Political Liberalism*.

² Nagel’s characterisation of utopianism suggests why they should be keen to avoid this charge:

“The danger of utopianism comes from the political tendency, in pursuit of moral equality, to put too much pressure on individual motives or even to attempt to transcend them entirely through an impersonal transformation of social individuals. A non-utopian solution requires a proper balance between these elements, and that requires knowing what they are and how they interact.”

(T. Nagel, *Equality and Partiality*, OUP, Oxford 1991, p. 24.)

³ The latter is the more reasonable demand given the special nature of the social sciences which makes it extremely unlikely we could ever say ‘never’.

intolerance, but it may also cover discrimination, unwillingness to co-operate, let alone on fair terms, even violence or hatred. As such it also tells us about the origins of injustice as well as intolerance. Clearly this could be a serious problem if it meant that we ended up studying processes or effects which bore no relevance to our area of interest in political theory. If, however, it is the case that injustice and intolerance are closely linked from a psychological point of view, then this is something we need to know about. What is crucial is that we ensure as far as possible that the aim of the comparison is borne in mind at all times. Reliance in this chapter upon the group conflict and political tolerance material is justifiable in that, despite some difference in terminology, it maps most closely onto the issues raised by liberal theory.

The second methodological problem is in fact a set of problems, and arises with the difficulty of relating behaviour and attitudes. Clearly, we might measure levels of tolerance by looking at either of these. Which is in fact chosen would not matter if it were the case that people's behaviour always reflected their stated beliefs, and if both were transparent to the researcher. Unfortunately this is not always the case. It is perfectly plausible that an individual might espouse a certain belief when asked, but proceed to act in a contrary manner. There might be several reasons for this; often our actions are tainted by an element of self-interest which one would have to be strong-willed to avoid; also, there might be a difference between what David Miller refers to as 'Sunday-best beliefs',⁴ that is the beliefs that people think they should manifest, and those that do really hold, but are less prepared to admit to.

A third possibility is that there are relevant differences between situations thought of in the abstract, and as faced in reality; individuals might as a result actually modify their stated beliefs in the light of such factors. These three possibilities go some way to undermining the assumption that attitudes shape behaviour, and that therefore we can effectively gauge how people will act by studying public opinion. A recent review of eighty-eight attitude-behaviour studies claims that attitudes are in fact an accurate predictor of behaviour.⁵ Kraus argues that this is the case providing that the same degree of specificity is ensured in both attitudinal and behavioural measures of a research

⁴ Miller, forthcoming, p. 61.

⁵ S. J. Kraus, 'Attitudes and the Prediction of Behaviour', in *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21, 1, 1995, p. 58-75.

project. In other words, we should not be surprised to find discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour where the former is measured in abstract or general terms, but the latter considers a specific concrete situation.

The research covered here studies both attitudes and behaviour. Political tolerance studies look at the former, and have more recently developed sophisticated techniques for doing so which enable researchers to study the consistency of attitudes held towards different groups in society, as well as differentiating clearly between general and abstract questions.⁶ Group conflict studies observe both behaviour and attitudes, which to a degree should be encouraging in that it means conclusions can be reinforced through achieving similar results with different approaches. Overall, both behaviour and attitudes need interpretation by the researcher, and as such, both raise methodological issues before we even go on to consider their relationship. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to do anything more than show awareness of the potential problems, but the expectation is that too much controversy can be avoided by focusing on the most well-known and well-respected studies in this subject area.

The final methodological issue which might alter our interpretation of the material presented here concerns the group conflict studies. As will be seen, many of these studies consist of field study observations of members of conflicting social groups interacting under different conditions. The relevant question is which conditions most favour the development of non-conflictual group relations. The problem raised here is that there is a possibility of selection bias. It could well be the case that really prejudiced people simply avoid inter-group contact as far as possible. Thus their absence from the situations observed could make results seem unduly positive. However, as Pettigrew points out, there are ways round this problem; many field studies observe situations in which there was little choice whether or not to participate, likewise there are statistical methods which can allow researchers to assess the possibility of bias.⁷ Thus although there might be problems encountered in particular studies failing to observe these requirements, this should not affect the overall conclusions of the discipline as a whole.

⁶ See J. L. Sullivan & J. E. Transue, 'The Psychological Underpinnings of Democracy', in *Annual Review of Psychology*, 50, 1999, p. 625-50.

⁷ T. F. Pettigrew, 'Intergroup Contact Theory', in *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 1998, p. 69.

II Political Toleration and the Limited Scope of Justice

Political toleration

The first piece of information which can be gained by looking at empirical material is just how tolerant people already are. If it were the case that nearly everybody in stable western democracies were perfectly tolerant of different others then we might think that there was little need to proceed with this research project. For if people can be perfectly tolerant even in imperfect surroundings, then we should not worry too much whether the liberal account of socialisation is accurate or not. A tolerant and just populace would seem easily achieved. Unfortunately research shows that we are not dealing with a perfectly tolerant society. Quite apart from the intolerant, racist and discriminatory actions that we observe in daily life or read about in the papers, people are also surprisingly willing to express intolerant attitudes towards unpopular groups at the political level.

Most of the surveys on this subject seek to determine just how willing people are to extend political and civil rights to members of different political groups. Thus they are more concerned with tolerance in the public or political sphere than with tolerance in inter-personal interaction.⁸ This research therefore assesses, in Rawlsian terms, people's attitudes towards the basic structure of society. Importantly, it queries whether or not individuals are willing to allow all people access to the rights, institutions and procedures of the basic structure. Even the early research on this topic revealed that certain groups were frequently excluded on the basis of their possessing particular beliefs or characteristics which members of the sample found intolerable. Sullivan and Transue, in their useful review of the subject, note that one of the first national surveys of political tolerance found some surprisingly negative results.⁹ Stouffer's 1955 study of nearly 5000 members of the US population, and 1500 community leaders found that, although people expressed strong endorsement of the general principles of civil rights,

⁸ Some studies such as those by George Marcus *et al.*, or Herbert McClosky and Alida Brill focus entirely on civil liberties and civil rights issues. Others such as the classic Sullivan *et al.* study, also include questions which test personal tolerance, such as whether or not people would be happy to have their daughter date a member of their least-liked political group. See G. E. Marcus, J. L. Sullivan, E. Theiss-Morse & S. L. Wood, *With Malice Toward Some*, CUP, Cambridge 1995; H. McClosky & A. Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York 1983; J. L. Sullivan, J. Piereson, G. E. Marcus, *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*, Chicago University Press, Chicago 1982.

⁹ Sullivan & Transue 1999. Another good overview is provided by Marcus *et al.* 1995, p. 25-36.

citizens were surprisingly willing to rescind the civil liberties of groups such as socialists and Communists, atheists and travellers.¹⁰ Further, citizens were notably less tolerant than their political leaders. Thus American democracy did not appear to rest on such a strong consensual acceptance and application of democratic principles as was previously assumed to be the case.¹¹

Although later studies might not be expected to reveal such distrust of left-wing political groups or parties (given the gradual decline of Cold War and McCarthyist hysteria), they still show a level of intolerance of various groups. It was, however, necessary to change the methodological approach of the studies in order to reveal this fact; left-oriented groups ceased to be the most unpopular political groups, and hence researchers initially thought that tolerance levels had actually risen. Thus more recent studies of political tolerance measure tolerance towards the 'least-liked group', where researchers must first determine which group qualifies as such for the individual concerned.¹² Such studies consequently record intolerance towards far right groups, racist groups, religious groups and issue groups (such as pro-, or anti-abortionists), as well as the traditional communists and socialists.¹³

The degree of intolerance observed is actually quite substantial. A recent international study showed that in Britain for example, only 14% of the public sample thought that members of the least-liked group should be allowed to teach in state schools (compared to 36% of MPs, and 18% of the American public).¹⁴ Likewise, 49% of the British population sample thought that members of this group should not be allowed to make a speech in their city, let alone hold a public rally (only 34% thought that this should be allowed.) 38% of the British public sampled held that it would be acceptable for members of the least liked groups to have their phones tapped, an action which is

¹⁰ S. A. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties*, Doubleday, New York 1955, cited in Sullivan & Transue 1999.

¹¹ Sullivan & Transue 1999, p. 628-9.

¹² This methodological device was first introduced in Sullivan *et al.* 1982.

¹³ See Sullivan *et al.* 1982, p. 81. This was the range of groups suggested to people in Sullivan *et al.*'s study. Individuals were also allowed to state a personal choice if none of these options seemed apt; these choices included groups identified in other studies as subject to intolerance, such as feminists, blacks and homosexuals. (*Ibid.*, p. 86.)

¹⁴ J. L. Sullivan, P. Walsh, M. Shamir, D. G. Barnum & J. L. Gibson, 'Why are Politicians More Tolerant? Selective Recruitment and Socialisation Among Political Elites in New Zealand, Israel, Britain and the United States' in *British Journal of Political Science* 23, 1, 1993, p. 51-76.

generally thought to contravene civil rights. The British and American figures are similar for both the population as a whole and the sample of political representatives.

Marcus *et al.* in their recent study of American political tolerance review a selection of such attitudinal studies measuring how tolerant people are.¹⁵ In general these studies support the conclusions outlined above, namely that political élites are more tolerant than the general populace; tolerance is generally low towards individuals' least-liked groups, and there is a general disjunction between attitudes towards abstract norms concerning democratic and civil rights and attitudes towards concrete examples.

It is the latter point which is most peculiar. If all individuals clearly rejected civil liberties and other principles of justice, there would be no mystery about intolerance. We would certainly hesitate to call the society liberal, but might believe that this degree of intolerance reflected just the currently imperfectly liberal state of institutions and social structure. It is odd, though, that a people can so strongly endorse general principles of free expression whilst simultaneously wanting to rescind these rights from groups they dislike. Are these people really just and tolerant or not? Marcus *et al.* offer five possible explanations for this discrepancy.¹⁶ Firstly it might simply result from public failure to understand that the principles have to be applied to concrete cases. The second possible explanation appeals to deeply-held prejudices or dislikes which will trump the commitment to democratic values. The third and fourth suggestions are that people can evoke democratic principles in defence of their intolerance. Either they might think that only groups supporting democracy can have democratic rights, or that such groups have an obligation to observe and support dominant social norms and order. The fifth possibility looks to a short-term, rather than long-term factor, namely that individuals are influenced by the character of the immediate context and the information available. Thus long-standing beliefs could be over-ruled by, say, a perception of immediate threat. The matter is, of course, much more complex than these five general explanations allow; studies have also revealed important correlations between intolerance and factors such as personality, level of education, political expertise and demographic features.¹⁷

¹⁵ Marcus *et al.* 1995, p. 30-32.

¹⁶ Marcus *et al.* 1995, p. 8-9.

¹⁷ Marcus *et al.* 1995, see the chart p. 30-32.

Four out of five of these general explanations would not provide too great a challenge to the liberal perspective on how to make people more tolerant. Two would be seen as a simple failure of citizens to understand the full implications of arriving at a political consensus within a pluralistic society. Thus citizens might fail to appreciate that abstract principles have to be applied in all relevant concrete circumstances, or they might be unwilling to see compromise of traditional values or conventions, not realising that some such sacrifice could be required. These might relatively easily be resolved by introducing more focus on liberal skills in the education system. As regards a third source of intolerance, namely that borne of concern for democratic principles, this is harder to address, particularly as liberals are themselves ambivalent as to how much anti-democratic pressure can be withstood without a destabilising effect. The fourth source, what Marcus *et al.* called ‘contemporary information’ may or not be justifiable on the liberal account, depending on whether the information or context is such as to justify intolerant attitudes (is there a real threat to security?). It just explains how individuals might come to alter or over-ride their usual attitudes towards tolerance in the light of, say, cognitive perception of threat or affective reaction to the way the situation is perceived.

The important point is that none of these four factors suggest that greater tolerance is impossible, and indeed they might all be resolved to a large extent by ensuring the provision of a properly liberal education in line with the recommendations offered by Callan and others. The more problematic reason for intolerance is prejudice or dislike. Could this be eradicated through education? Certainly studies on liberal/authoritarian scales of personality have shown that higher educational qualifications are associated with more liberal views.¹⁸ Certainly there seems to be a consensus in the political tolerance literature that more education and more participation will ensure more tolerance. Consider Stouffer’s argument from 1955, for example:

“Schooling puts a person in touch with people whose ideas and values are different from one’s own. And this tends to carry on, after formal schooling is finished, through reading and personal contacts. Now, we can plausibly argue that this is a necessary, though not the only, condition for tolerance of a free market place for ideas. To be tolerant one has to learn further not only that people with different ideas are not necessarily bad people but

¹⁸ See for example, A. Heath *et al.*, *Understanding Political Change*, Pergamon, Oxford 1991, p. 174-5.

also that it is vital to America to preserve this free market place, even if some of the ideas traded there are repugnant or even dangerous for the country.”¹⁹

Sullivan *et al.* take up this assumption, having found it to be dominant in the literature in the twenty-five years or so of studies between Stouffer and themselves:

“Education and participation should create individuals with the ability to understand the interests of others and to conceive of the best interests of the entire society. This expectation can become an empirical question, readily amenable to empirical analysis. The hypothesis is that those with more education and who participate more should be personally more tolerant of disliked groups and more supportive of tolerance as a general principle.”²⁰

Surprisingly, in testing this hypothesis, Sullivan et al actually conclude that education is *not* such a major determinant of political tolerance. It is significant, but not nearly as influential as was previously thought to be the case. This is interesting as it suggests that intolerance is not so simply explicable by appealing to either ignorance or misunderstanding; it also suggests that minimising levels of intolerance might be rather more difficult than liberals would hope.

Below we will focus on prejudice and dislike as an explanation for political intolerance and other forms of injustice. Although this might seem an arbitrary choice, it is the most interesting one from a liberal point of view as it faces up to some of the harder facts of pluralism which liberals usually embrace so blithely. Far from assuming that citizens of a pluralistic society can all easily apply tolerance to different others, this discipline analyses the conscious and sub-conscious factors that mediate interaction between members of different groups. In approaching the issue from the perspective of group conflict and social identity theory we may also gain some idea of whether Stouffer’s original assumption was correct; could education be effective in reducing levels of intolerance if it ensures that different individuals and groups are forced to interact? And if not, why not? We move on to the literature on psychology of justice and social identity theory in order to find a way of answering these questions.²¹

¹⁹ Stouffer 1955, p. 127, quoted in Sullivan *et al.* 1982, p. 115.

²⁰ Sullivan *et al.* 1982, p. 14.

²¹ Stouffer’s claim was essentially a cognitive one; meeting different others and learning about them would cause individuals to consciously realise that they are not so bad that different opinions and lifestyles are important and so on. As will be seen below, social identity theory looks beyond cognitive

The limited scope of justice

This discussion of political toleration implies that there are limits to how far we will extend our principles of justice. We are quite happy to make exceptions on the basis of certain reasons or feelings as stated above, and we do distinguish on the basis of group membership.²² Psychological study shows that we do so in cases other than where we think political order or security is at stake; indeed, research in the psychology of justice has shown that to a very great degree, justice is a *group-based* phenomenon rather than a basic, universally possessed and applied motive.²³ We may all have the capacity for justice, as Rawls assumes, but the application of that capacity can be very limited.²⁴

The main body of literature that addresses the social psychology of justice endeavours to determine why justice concerns arise at all, and why they arise in the form that they do. Such is the consensus that justice considerations are governed by group membership, that in the most recent and most thorough over-view of the subject, the authors devote barely a page and a half to the idea that justice is a basic universal motive.²⁵ Indeed, the two main approaches to the question of why people care about justice both respond in group-based terms:

“Two basic bodies of theory have defined people’s relationships to groups: resource-based theories and identity-based theories. Resource-based theories suggest that people interact with others because they value the resources they gain. Identity based theories suggest that people interact with others because they use their experiences with others to help them

factors and considers the sub-conscious effects of group membership and interaction. Thus it offers a far more subtle understanding of the issues than Stouffer (and many tolerance researchers) would allow.

²² A recent article by Golebiowska showed that we tend to be less willing to tolerate stereotypical members of disliked groups than members without such features. This suggests that our prejudices towards particular groups are an important factor in our judgements of whether or not to tolerate particular individuals. (E. A. Golebiowska, ‘“The Pictures in Our Heads” and Individual-Targeted Tolerance’, *Journal of Politics*, 58, 4, 1996, p. 1010-34).

²³ See for example, *Journal of Social Issues-Moral Exclusion and Injustice* 46, 1, 1990 especially S. Opatow, ‘Moral Exclusion and Injustice: An Introduction’ and T. R. Tyler & E. Allan Lind, ‘Intrinsic Versus Community-Based Justice Models: When does Group Membership Matter?’; also Y. J. Huo, ‘Justice and Exclusion: Exploring the Boundaries of Our Moral Community’, (unpublished); T. R. Tyler, R. Boeckmann, H. J. Smith, *Social Justice in a Diverse Society*, Westview Press, Colorado 1997. For the contrasting view that justice is a basic universal motive, see e.g. M. L. Lerner, *The Belief in a Just World*, Plenum, New York 1980, or for an earlier, more general statement of his claims, M. L. Lerner, ‘The Social Psychology of Justice and Inter-Personal Attraction’ in T. L. Huston (Ed.), *The Foundations of Inter-Personal Attraction*, Academic Press, New York 1974.

²⁴ The worry is not that justice principles fail to apply in intimate relationships such as family or friendships. Most liberal theorists (contrary to the claims of both communitarians and feminists) do acknowledge that there is scope within the bounds of justice for personal partiality). Rather the concern is that these principles do not stretch far enough where they are needed, that is, in governing the public interactions of citizens.

²⁵ Tyler *et al.* 1997.

define their own identities and to assess their self-worth. Each of these basic psychological theories has led to the development of a psychological perspective on the justice motive.”²⁶

Most of the research to be considered below adopts the latter approach for reasons which we need not enter into here. Some have suggested that the approaches need not be mutually exclusive anyway, as distributive issues are often best explained by a resource-based approach, whilst procedural and retributive issues usually demand an identity-based explanation.²⁷ All we need note is that adopting such a group-based strategy has one crucial implication for justice behaviour and attitudes:

“...the underlying assumption these theories share is that justice concerns develop out of the need to guide and to provide information within groups. This assumption suggests that while there is little argument that we care about justice for ourselves and those in our immediate group, there may be limits to our justice concerns for outgroup members.”²⁸

There are certainly many occasions on which justice is withheld in relations between groups or their members. All incidents of racism, class conflict, religious intolerance, even gender discrimination are traditional examples of the way in which justice concerns are limited in scope. At its most extreme level, individuals are completely excluded from the arena within which justice concerns apply. This concept of ‘moral exclusion’, which will be addressed in its own right at a later stage, starkly emphasises the most brutal effects of the group-based approach to justice. Indeed, given that both of these approaches ground justice so firmly on the various gains to be attained from just interaction within the group, it does seem hard to understand how societal interactions can be as generally just as they are. It is notable that research in this field is much more determined to explain instances of injustice than it is to understand generally fair social interaction.²⁹

Clearly, from the point of view of liberal justice we need to determine what sort of groups foster the application of justice principles, and if these groups prove too exclusive, whether we can manipulate the group identity such that we widen the scope of justice. The liberal ideal would be that the relevant group within which justice concerns be invoked should be the ‘all national citizens’ group. Unless this can be guaranteed, then the implementation of liberal principles would seem problematic; it

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.179.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

²⁸ Y. J. Huo, ‘Justice and Exclusion: Exploring the Boundaries of Our Moral Community’, (unpublished) p.9.

would be difficult to ensure that individuals and their rights are respected if people only care about justice within their own group. Liberal pluralism may generate a particular need for liberal principles, but it also creates the most difficult conditions for the implementation of those principles. Liberal principles are supposed to transcend difference, but if justice behaviour and beliefs are themselves inherently linked to group membership, then this renders the task of liberalism still more Herculean.

III Group membership and justice.

Two different approaches to theorising justice were mentioned above. It is not immediately obvious how toleration could be fitted into such a conceptual framework. From the point of view of political theory, toleration is a disposition to look at or treat people in a particular fashion, namely one which recognises but over-rides difference. As such we could manifest tolerance in justice acts of a distributive, procedural or retributive nature. Importantly, we might be said to manifest tolerance most frequently in simple, everyday interaction with others, in terms of how we speak to them, how we react to what they say, how we regard them and treat them. Thus we might think that tolerant behaviour could potentially be explained by adopting either the resource-based (social exchange) or identity-based (relational) approach.

In fact, almost all of the research on the conditions of tolerance and reduced conflict adopts the latter approach. In the material studied here, none of the researchers acknowledges or explains this tactic, perhaps because they are simply drawing on an already established intellectual tradition. Some of the earliest studies were based on racial segregation and integration, and the resultant effects on hostility towards the opposite group. It was simply assumed in these studies that the tolerant or intolerant behaviour/value-sets grew out of ignorance, prejudice, stereotypic evaluations and insecurity, rather than from the presence or absence of valuable exchange relations. At an intuitive level this seems like a plausible assumption. Indeed, it simply seems to capture more closely the very nature of intolerance. A tentative explanation for this fact would highlight the close conceptual relationship between intolerance, difference and

²⁹ See T. F. Pettigrew, 'The Inter-Group Hypothesis Reconsidered' in M. Hewstone & R. Brown, *Contact*

identity. The emotive depth and strength of this relationship should become clear over the course of the following delineation of social identity theory.³⁰ This theory may enable us to justify the outlined assumptions about the linkage between toleration and identity. It may yet provide a response to the question of how our justice behaviour and beliefs could prove sensitive to psychological processes of identification. Specifically, it will help us to answer the question of why people might act intolerantly, and, consequently, how we can inhibit that urge. It is the answer to these questions that liberal political theory must carefully observe and absorb.

Social identity theory

Still a relatively recent development in social psychology, social identity theory rests on firm theoretical foundations. Although its origins might be traced back even to before the desegregation studies described above, it was first explored in a relatively primitive form by Tajfel in the early 1970s.³¹ Since then, however the fundamental contention of the theory has not changed. The idea is that, psychologically, there is no such thing as the pure individual. This has implications firstly, for our understanding of identity:

“Identity, specifically social identity, and group belongingness are inextricably linked in the sense that one’s conception or definition of who one is (one’s identity) is largely composed of self-descriptions in terms of the defining characteristics of social groups to which one belongs. This belongingness is psychological, it is not merely knowledge of a group’s attributes. Identification with a social group is a psychological state very different from merely being designated as falling into one social category or another. It is phenomenologically real and has important self-evaluative consequences.”³²

And also for the study of psychology:

“It is because of the socially derived, shared, accepted and conflicting notions of appropriateness of conduct, because of the social origin of their manner of changing and of relating to one another, that individual or inter-individual psychology cannot usefully be considered as providing the bricks from which an adequate social psychology can be built.”³³

In other words, the claim is that in order properly to understand the psychology both of individuals and of groups, we need to appreciate the social element of even individual

and Conflict in Inter-Group Encounters, Blackwell, Oxford 1986, p. 177.

³⁰ This is not to say that social exchange theory might not explain some instances of group intolerance, or that on resource-based solutions might not prove effective in some such cases; as was stated above, the two approaches are not to be seen as mutually exclusive in matters of justice.

³¹ See H. Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology*, CUP, Cambridge 1981, for the author’s overview of the many experiments he carried out during that period.

³² M. A. Hogg and D. Abrams, *Social Identifications*, Routledge, London 1988, p. 7.

thought. It is not the case that there was no ‘social psychology’ before the advent of social identity theory, rather it is that previous social psychology was largely reductionist, utilising a stringently individualist methodology. There is perhaps, a relevant parallel to be drawn with the communitarian methodological critique which equivalently accuses liberal individualism of failing fully to absorb the implications of social context and embeddedness. In like manner, non-reductionist social psychology acknowledges and seeks to understand and incorporate both socio-historic factors and also the uniquely social dimension of human behaviour.

Hogg and Abrams are keen to emphasise that social identity theory is just one approach to social psychology and as such there are some who would reject its initial assumptions.³⁴ In so far as one of the stated aims of this chapter is to apply the communitarian methodological critique to a specific liberal claim about the role of toleration, this approach is obviously appropriate. Both accept as fundamental the social embeddedness of the individual. More importantly though, it is an effective approach for addressing the issue of intolerance and group conflict. It is therefore worth pursuing the specific claims raised by social identity theory which explain why necessary group identifications can cause intolerance and conflict between different groups and individuals.

One of the most basic claims of social identity theory is that ‘society comprises social categories which stand in power and status relations to one another’.³⁵ Such categories include class, ethnicity, race,³⁶ sexual identity, gender, religion and nationality. These categories can be more or less inclusive, some can overlap whilst others are mutually exclusive. All individuals within a society will be members of several social categories. Categories are only identified by the existence of a contrasting other; they must serve to *differentiate* between people, rather than just *select*. The social structure of any one society is shaped by the particular range of social categories salient within it. In

³³ Tajfel 1981, p. 39.

³⁴ Hogg and Abrams 1988 p. 10-14.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14 f. I will follow the clear account offered by Hogg and Abrams in presenting this overview of social identity theory.

³⁶ This term is used throughout the paper as reflecting its usage in the relevant literature. The theorists’ reliance upon this term is largely reflective of their observations of real conflict and discrimination, and the causes thereof. The fact that the concept of race is actually ideological and imaginary matters little to such theorists, as quite clearly it matters little to the protagonists they observe. For a convincing defence

accordance with the concept of social categories two behavioural dispositions of individuals conspire to emphasise and sustain the distinctions. *Social comparison* is the process whereby we learn about ourselves and the world through observing others. *Categorisation* is the process whereby we allocate a category to other people according to dimensions which are salient to the individual at that time. Most notably, this process involves our making stereotypic judgements about the features supposedly shared by all members of the relevant social category. This is the accentuation of otherwise arbitrary features, and is the psychological source of the social phenomenon of our representing or describing groups through stereotypical (and often negative) images.

Notably, when we engage in such a process of comparison, there is an automatic tendency to focus on the comparative dimensions which will render the most positive evaluation of the self, or the 'in-group' with which the individual identifies. Tajfel's 'minimal group' experiments in the 1970s demonstrated how powerful this drive for positive comparison is.³⁷ The results of these laboratory experiments showed that mere categorisation of individuals by researchers according to obviously arbitrary factors is sufficient to initiate competitive inter-group interaction and dispositions towards favouring one's 'in-group'. Social identity theory therefore assumes that there is a fundamental individual motivation for self-esteem. This motivation will be satisfied when inter-group interaction displays a large difference between in-group (own group) and out-group (other group) along those dimensions which most favourably reflect on the in-group. Note, though, that this is not a claim about the content of conscious thought processes; the categorisation and social comparison mechanisms are thought to operate at a far deeper level, in a similar way to the perceptual processes of categorisation and comparison.³⁸ In effect these are both simplifying mechanisms, means of interpreting a complex social world of infinite variety in such a way that it becomes more easily accessible and less overwhelming.

The assumption of this self-esteem motivation plays a fundamental role in the theory of group interaction and justice behaviour. As Tyler *et al.* point out, it does so in two

of the ideological nature of race, see B. J. Fields, 'Slavery, Race and Ideology in the USA', in *New Left Review* 183, 1990, p. 95-118.

³⁷ See Tajfel 1981, or H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation Between Social Groups*, Academic Press, London 1978, Chapter 4, for an over-view of these experiments.

different ways corresponding to the two ways in which an individual can bolster his self-esteem through group membership and interaction.³⁹ Firstly, people ‘want’ to belong to positively valued groups.⁴⁰ Thus, they ‘want’ to ensure that this positive valuation is preserved, so they are likely to try and engage in favourable comparisons with other groups. This explains why individuals and groups often tend to regard other groups as inferior along some dimension, and consequently even engage in discriminatory or intolerant behaviour. According to social identity theory, this drive for self-esteem is the root psychological cause of intolerance. Secondly, individuals want to ensure that their status within the group is secured.⁴¹ This supposedly explains the finding of Tyler *et al.* that procedural justice is largely governed by relational concerns. How you are treated by your group members (on an equal basis or as an inferior?) is a guide to your position and status within the group. Thus it is suggested that those whose status is insecure will be most concerned to act justly and be treated so. The stress placed on the role of self-esteem is problematic for liberal political theory if the psychological mechanisms that support it favour an intolerant or hostile response to different others. After all, self-esteem and self-respect are generally considered to be social ‘goods’, rather than social ills. Rawls, in his characterisation of primary goods not only includes self-respect, but later goes on to argue that it is the most important primary good.⁴² Liberalism must find some way of ensuring that self-esteem can be shored up without contributing towards intolerance and hostility in social interaction.⁴³

To develop the link between toleration and group membership, we should reiterate Huo’s claim from page 171 that, whilst we may care about justice concerns within our group, there may be a limit to how far we extend those concerns to others outside the group. The above delineation of social identity theory emphasises that group identity is a crucial ingredient of individual identity. This has implications for how we regard and treat others. Our personal identity is highly differentiated and composed of many facets; our membership of several significant social categories is an important source of identity, and further, we attach great emotional significance to that membership. In any

³⁸ Hogg and Abrams 1986, p. 20; note that these authors back up this claim by reference to certain psychological studies, it is not just a speculative claim.

³⁹ Tyler *et al.*, 1997, p. 185-8.

⁴⁰ Hogg & Abrams 1986, p. 3.

⁴¹ See Tyler & Allan Lind 1990.

⁴² Rawls 1973, p. 178 f.

given situation certain distinctions of social category will be seen as salient, and when this occurs the individual will respond with that aspect of his or her own social identity. The result is that the individual will act towards the relevant others in terms of their group identity, rather than in terms of their own personal identity. Miller and Brewer thus claim that one of the most important implications of social identity theory is its justification of the process of depersonalisation.⁴⁴ We tend to regard out-group members as homogeneous or undifferentiated, identifiable only by their assumed manifestation of the attributes stereotypically associated with their group.

Earlier conceptual discussion of toleration suggested that in order to tolerate others we need to be able to see the individual as separable from his or her opinions and behaviour. Heyd's claim that 'personalisation' is required, or Rawls' implicit reliance upon the equal moral worth of individuals, both assume that such a shift of perspective is plausible, or at least possible. Even the autonomy-based resolution of the paradox of toleration implies this, in so far as it calls for some aspect of the agent to be respected above and beyond the content of his beliefs. Whilst nothing we have discussed so far suggests that this is impossible, social identity theory does appear to imply that 'personalisation' might be psychologically difficult to employ, at least where the reason for intolerance is that an individual possesses characteristics typical of a disliked group. The very process of categorisation means precisely that we do not tend to separate the individuals from their disliked characteristics, beliefs or behaviour, as liberal impartiality would have us do. Thus racial discrimination, for example, may be particularly hard to mitigate, whereas intolerance of, say, one individual's bad habits, may be easier to reduce because not bound up with questions of identity and processes of identification.⁴⁵ Notably though, as will be seen in the fourth section of this chapter,

⁴³ What would be required of liberals for them to meet this challenge will be discussed in the final chapter.

⁴⁴ N. Miller & M. B. Brewer, 'Beyond the Contact Hypothesis: Theoretical Perspectives on Desegregation', Chapter 13 in N. Miller & M. B. Brewer (Eds.), *Groups in Contact: The Psychology of Desegregation*, Academic Press, Orlando 1984.

⁴⁵ It is important to be clear about the relationship between social identity theory and intolerance. The claim is certainly not that all instances of intolerance result from the processes of categorisation and stereotyping involved in social identity formation. Rather the more limited claim is that some of the most intractable and despicable forms of intolerance or discrimination are so caused. There is one substantial difference between this sort of intolerance and that generally addressed by liberals, which is that liberals tend to focus on the tensions raised by the possession of different conceptions of the good, and hence believe that such intolerance can reasonably be overcome by separating the individual from the despised belief. Of course, beliefs and opinions may play a part in the social identity account, in so far as some groups may be categorised in virtue of their possessing such beliefs (as is the case with Protestant and

the psychological resolution of the problem of group conflict does seek precisely to address this concern, suggesting various ways in which such ‘personalisation’ or at least, decategorisation could be encouraged.

This brief outline of social identity theory presented above suggests one central reason why we might expect to find frequent occasions of intolerant behaviour towards different others. This reason combines the necessary sources of self-identity together with our need for self-esteem. Magnified through the lens of group membership, this need can express itself as a correlative tendency to derogate other groups and individuals. Such inter-group hostility is not simply the result of conscious assessment and judgement;⁴⁶ rather it fulfils a basic psychological role. Unfortunately, if it is true that we do manifest these deep-seated psychological dispositions for such fundamental reasons as ease of information-processing, and need for self-esteem, then ensuring a fully just and tolerant disposition may prove very tricky indeed. Even adopting the ‘personalising’ perspective arguably necessary for toleration is psychologically challenging. The bleakest picture that one can paint of the above theory is that it shows intolerance and inter-group conflict to be the ‘natural state’, and contrary to Rawls’ hopes, justice to be an unnatural one. The later sub-section on ‘the contact hypothesis’ will investigate some of the psychological studies dedicated to observing and improving the conditions of inter-group interaction. In doing so, it should present a rather more cheering picture of the numerous ways in which co-operation and respect can be inculcated. Before moving on completely from social identity theory however, it is useful to show the explanation that social identity theory can provide for other types of injustice. We noted above that the main effect of a group-based account of justice was that individuals beyond the group might find themselves excluded. The concept of ‘moral exclusion’ has recently been introduced to explain varying degrees of injustice in terms of social identity.⁴⁷

Catholic opposition.) It is just that on the social identity account, these characteristics are *not* regarded as so easily separable from individual identity; there is less of a gap for tolerance to fill.

⁴⁶ This is not to say that individuals are not responsible for the intolerant or discriminatory behaviour they display towards the other group. On the contrary, individuals are responsible for any such particular actions and judgements in the face of contradictory evidence and justice norms. What individuals are obviously not responsible for is the psychological capacity for such unjust behaviour, or the feeling of hostility itself.

Moral exclusion.

Susan Opatow originally defined this concept,

“Moral exclusion occurs when individuals or groups are perceived as outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and conditions of fairness apply.”⁴⁸

She claims that underlying this concept is the assumption that we have beliefs about the sort of beings who should be treated justly. If this is the case, then the implication is that in contrast to the Rawlsian-type justification, we do not all think that all persons are deserving of just treatment in virtue of their capacity for autonomy. Instead we apparently replace this criterion with a far more specific one based on the characteristics of a particular group or set of groups, where our choice of characteristics may be influenced either by identity-based interests or by resource-based ones. Whichever approach is favoured, the result is the same; for purposes of justice, people must bear certain group-defined characteristics if they are to qualify for just treatment.

Such a delimitation would not have morally unacceptable conclusions if the relevant group-defined characteristics were the traditional liberal-defined ones, whereby the relevant group is ‘all citizens’ and the relevant feature is equal moral worth. Given that we do not live in a Hobbesian state of heavily enforced compliance, clearly some people do think this way. Unfortunately, not all of them do. The suggestion of moral exclusion appears more relevant when we observe that it admits of degree; not all requirements of justice stand and fall together. According to Opatow⁴⁹ and Huo,⁵⁰ the less personally demanding the requirements of justice, the more likely we are to widen the scope of moral inclusion. Thus the concept of moral exclusion can offer a more subtle understanding of how social identity theory translates into just and unjust behaviour. Specifically, it will help us to determine which types of intolerant behaviour or belief reflect the greatest distance between groups for moral purposes. This in turn, will enable us to predict how easy it might then be to eradicate such hostility. Notably, in its most

⁴⁷ See for example *Journal of Social Issues-Moral Exclusion and Injustice* 46, 1, 1990.

⁴⁸ Opatow 1990, p. 1.

⁴⁹ Opatow’s three-fold definition of moral inclusion is derived from an empirical study of the scope of justice and its forms, namely looking to what people think comprise justice behaviour, and how far they are prepared to extend each form. The three forms of moral inclusion and respective forms of exclusion are thus not necessarily conceptually rigorous, but they are supposed to reflect the real judgements and delimitations that people make.

⁵⁰ Y. J. Huo, ‘Justice and Exclusion: Exploring the Boundaries of Our Justice Concerns’, in R. Vermunt (Chair), *Procedural Fairness and Unfairness: Theoretical Positions, and Effects on Judicial treatment and Norm Violation*, Symposium conducted at Fifth International Conference on Social Justice Research, Reno NV, 1995, results reported in Tyler *et al.* 1997, p. 214-5.

drastic form, moral exclusion reflects a lack not just of toleration but also of the disposition to co-operate with others on fair terms. If some non-group members are just considered to be beyond the moral pale, then they are perceived as not the sort of people we want to co-operate with on fair terms. We do not think them deserving of just treatment. Thus moral exclusion has import for discussion of liberal dispositions beyond toleration.

On Opatow's account, at its most drastic extreme, moral exclusion identifies a situation where considerations of fairness are simply not applied to others outside the relevant group. Justice behaviour may not extend beyond this moral boundary. The resultant behaviour towards those outside the group can range from simple discrimination and intolerance, to full-scale genocide. Arguably the latter requires a belief on the part of the perpetrators that the victims are so far from the relevant moral boundary as to be less than human. But this is no more than a drastic extension of the psychological process whereby in discriminating against different others we perceive members of those groups as stereotypically inferior, even 'mean' or 'dirty'. Bar-Tal describes the various means of 'delegitimisation' whereby individuals are categorised in extremely negative social categories such that they come to be perceived as sub-human, monsters, evil threats or transgressors of social norms.⁵¹ In so doing it becomes easier to regard them as beyond moral boundaries; this is a phenomenon observed sometimes during war when soldiers are required to carry out what might otherwise be regarded in their minds as acts of atrocity.⁵²

The middle ground of moral exclusion concerns the unwillingness of those defining the moral boundaries to extend a share of community resources to those considered beyond the boundaries. Once again, this would not seem to be so politically problematic if the relevant boundary were the nation-state; it is commonly thought that apart from charitable aid-provision, our duty to share and redistribute community resources stops at the national boundary. But what if the relevant boundary were at a level lower than that of the nation-state? This might also be politically institutionalised, as when foreign

⁵¹ D. Bar-Tal, 'Causes and Consequences of Delegitimisation: Models of Conflict and Ethnocentrism', in *Journal of Social Issues* 46, 1, 1990, p. 65-82.

⁵² Bar-Tal seems to imply that the processes of social identification can to a degree be harnessed by human agents, such as by politicians or army leaders in times of war, whereby the enemy is portrayed as 'sub-human'.

guest-workers are entitled to only a reduced level of welfare support. A more arbitrary less formalised version of exclusion would perhaps exclude people on the basis of class, income, skin colour or manner of dress. A growing trend in the US, and specifically Los Angeles, is charted by Mike Davis,⁵³ who describes how housing developments, estates, even localities are gradually 'privatized' and protected such that only white middle-class employed families could occupy them and make use of their resources. The concept of 'Fortress LA' emphasises the lengths to which city authorities and wealthy residents have gone in order to exclude the poor, the homeless, and the non-white population from using public facilities, from even walking through the same streets or shopping malls. Unfortunately such a trend is not restricted to the United States. This form of moral exclusion also highlights the possibility of two different effects of the act of categorisation; individuals making restricted distribution decisions may act unjustly out of partiality (favouring those within their moral boundaries) or intolerance. Which is the main cause will depend on whether the main reason for skewing the distribution is a desire to favour one's own, or a belief that others are inferior, or less deserving, because of their way of life.

Opatow's third form of moral exclusion refers to an unwillingness to make sacrifices in order to foster the well-being of others. Initially this sounds as if it would not normally be considered as an injustice, since such sacrifice is normally considered to be supererogatory. However, it is possible that the demands of a redistributive tax system might fall under such a description, in which case the recently growing calls for reductions in welfare costs in both the UK and US, might be regarded as an example of such moral exclusion. Unfortunately it is not clear precisely whether this is what Opatow intends by this third distinction.

The value of Opatow's analysis comes in its recognition of the fact that moral exclusion allows of degree, and that intolerance and discrimination are just two possible forms of that.⁵⁴ Just because we do not run around killing people outside our immediate group does not imply that justice is not psychologically group-based. Rather it shows that we

⁵³ M. Davis, *City of Quartz*, Vintage Press, London 1992, p. 160-9.

⁵⁴ Huo has undertaken an empirical study looking at the prevalence of the various types of moral exclusion. Her results showed that people are most willing to deny resources to members of disliked groups, are next most likely to deny them procedural rights, but are least willing to deny them respectful, fair treatment. (Huo 1995, cited in Tyler *et al.* 1997, p. 214-5.)

define the relevant group differently depending on the demands of the justice claim involved. Huo explicitly defends the idea that moral exclusion is a fundamental implication of our thinking about justice in group-based terms.⁵⁵ Deutsch further claims that we all have the potential to exclude others from our moral community, but depending on success in certain aspects of our personal psychological development, some more so than others.⁵⁶ Thus if we are keen to pursue the liberal ideal of an inclusionary rather than exclusionary approach to justice, it seems that we must look to the factors that determine how we define salient social groups. It is with this analysis that the next section is concerned.

IV Tolerance and Intolerance Between Groups

The Contact Hypothesis

The body of research surrounding the contact hypothesis rests on implicit assumptions about the effect of group identification on individual action; specifically, the hypothesis is proposed as a solution to the problems of inter-group conflict and possible moral exclusion which arise as a result of the features of social identity theory.⁵⁷ That is, the various degrees of hostility ranging from simple distrust and fear, to intolerance and discrimination, to actual violence, are all interpreted as symptomatic of the ‘group’ element of the interaction.

As previously stated, the research projects which initiated the contemporary study of the conditions of group conflict and group toleration began with post-war studies of racial desegregation. A combination of civil rights pressures and economic constraints meant that several towns and cities in the American North were forced to offer desegregated housing projects. These projects provided the first quasi-experimental field-study

⁵⁵ Huo (unpublished).

⁵⁶ M. Deutsch, ‘The Psychological Roots of Moral Exclusion’, in *Journal of Social Issues* 46, 1, 1990, p. 21-26.

⁵⁷ The contact hypothesis is only likely to ameliorate group interaction if social identity theory is the correct explanation for inter-group conflict. If the disharmony is better explained by resource-based (social exchange) theory as mentioned on p. 170, then a more appropriate response would be to make more resources available, or ensure that their distribution is thoroughly fair. Although this possibility will not be further addressed here, it does strengthen support for liberal redistribution. As Tyler *et al.* note however, the success of such a strategy will face limitations in the natural scarcity of resources. (Tyler *et al.* 1997, p. 216.)

sources of evidence for the psychological study of inter-group conflict and interaction. Within this framework of historically entrenched group-based hostility an optimistic hypothesis was to be tested; the simple idea was that such hostility, intolerance and discrimination could be eradicated if contact between groups was arranged. The intellectual origins of ‘the contact hypothesis’ are conventionally traced to Gordon Allport for his 1951 study, *The Nature of Prejudice*,⁵⁸ but there are several other early statements of this hypothesis.⁵⁹ The prevalence of such studies suggests that the contact approach is at least intuitively appealing, especially when the existent situation is marked by segregation as well as hostility. In many ways these initial studies were no doubt as important for symbolic reasons as much as for academic ones. The aim of such research was to identify the conditions under which racial intolerance and conflict could be reduced or even eliminated; thus they publicly reflected an intellectual embrace of liberal principles. It is worth emphasising that the studies’ ‘political’ role did not stop with such symbolism; research by Deutsch and Collins associated with the study named below was influential in determining Newark’s anti-segregation housing policy. Even more importantly, their research was drawn upon in the compilation of the social science statement that accompanied the brief to the Supreme Court for the famous 1954 case, *Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka*. It was as a result of this case that segregation in public schooling was finally outlawed. The ‘contact hypothesis’ and relational model of inter-group conflict thus has a history in the empirical politics of liberalism if not in political theory.

The central element of the ‘contact hypothesis’, as it is now known, is that inter-group tensions can be reduced by facilitating contact between members of those groups. Over the last fifty years, this simple claim has been complicated by the addition of several further stipulations. Brewer and Miller list five such constraints:⁶⁰

- 1) Contact between the groups must occur in circumstances which award equal status to the participants of both groups.⁶¹

⁵⁸ G. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Wesley-Addison, London 1951.

⁵⁹ Such as L. Festinger & H. H. Kelley, *Changing Attitudes Through a Housing Project*, University of Michigan Press 1951, or M. Deutsch & M. E. Collins, *Interracial Housing: A Psychological Evaluation of a Social Experiment*, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 1951.

⁶⁰ Miller & Brewer 1984 p. 2.

⁶¹ The literature generally deals with relations between only two groups at a time. This appears to be more due to ease of measurement and interpretation than to any fundamental difference in a two-plus group situation.

- 2) The contact situation must encourage or even ensure that a relationship of mutual interdependence arises; that is, the groups should need to co-operate in the achievement of a joint goal.
- 3) The characteristics of the interacting group members must be such as to challenge previously-held negative stereotypic beliefs about them.
- 4) The contact situation must facilitate proper acquaintance rather than just mere contact; that is, the association should reveal sufficient detail about the member(s) of the disliked group that she comes to be recognised as an individual rather than simply as a person with stereotypic group attributes.
- 5) The social norms of the contact situation should be such as to promote rather than deny group equality and egalitarian inter-group association.

Note that the status of these supporting conditions is still unclear. Pettigrew argues that one of the faults of the contact hypothesis is that it resembles more a laundry-list of conditions than a coherent, cohesive testable theory.⁶² A further problem is that it is not clear whether individual conditions are necessary or sufficient for non-conflictual interaction.⁶³ There is thus reason to desire more systematic study of the hypothesis and its limiting conditions in the future. Nonetheless, a closer consideration of the five limiting conditions as they stand is valuable in the light of the current project, as they can perhaps tell us something about the nature of the social interaction which would promote tolerant and co-operative inter-group relations in a pluralistic liberal society.

The first condition concerns the relative power and status differential between the interacting groups. Inequality is an integral element of social identity theory. As outlined above, power and status differentials partly determine, and certainly maintain, the dimensions along which groups divide. Early contact-based studies grew out of a recognition of the vast extent of inter-racial inequality in the US; most such studies were therefore concerned not only to reduce immediate antipathy, but also to establish whether integration might in the longer term reduce status inequality. The Deutsch and Collins research incorporated in the Social Science Statement invoked in the Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka case argued that segregated schooling had negative effects

⁶² Pettigrew in Hewstone & Brown 1986, p. 171.

⁶³ Pettigrew 1998, p. 69-70. Note that Pettigrew does not include the third condition described here as a condition; it might better describe the aim of the hypothesis. Instead Pettigrew adds a fifth of his own, namely that interaction should have 'friendship potential' – because this will operate on each of the various mechanisms by which the contact hypothesis is supposed to work. (*Ibid.*, p. 75-6.)

on the self-esteem of black children, with important ramifications for achievement in education and employment.⁶⁴ This is just one example of how status differentials might be maintained through segregation and possibly eliminated through contact.⁶⁵

In terms of social identity theory, the persistence of large power and status differentials means that individuals in the dominant social groups will be reluctant to integrate with members of the inferior ones for fear of undermining their sense of self-esteem. This obviously helps to entrench the differentials. A further factor concerns the sort of self-sustaining structural effects invoked by Deutsch and Collins. The dominant social group has apparently good reason not to associate with the inferior group. This creates conditions of segregation. Such conditions when institutionalised help to ensure that the perceived 'inferior' characteristics of the inferior group are maintained across the next generation, such as poor educational achievement, and low-status employment.⁶⁶ Unless some means can be found of mixing different groups on a basis of equal status, perceptions of superiority and inferiority will just be reinforced. From the point of view of political theory, this observation clearly has some important implications for such issues as state-run education, and residential policy. Self-selected segregation may meet the conditions of autonomy, but, under the fore-mentioned conditions, it may serve to severely undermine the liberal commitment to equality, a point which will be developed later.

The housing project studies were unusual in that they relatively easily achieved interaction on equal terms; all were equally tenants. In many other real-life contact situations this would have been far less common with most black individuals employed in low-status jobs, such that their public face was perceived as inferior. Quite apart from the difficulties of actually achieving interaction on equal terms, equality of status is more complex than it might first seem. Miller and Brewer note that equal status at the structural level may not correspond to equal status at the psychological level; pre-existing status differentials can carry over into new, supposedly equalised situations.

⁶⁴ Deutsch and Collins 1951.

⁶⁵ The issue of status inequality can obviously be addressed in other ways; important targets would be ensuring equal rights or presenting suitable role models in the various media and positions of influence.

⁶⁶ See D. S. Massey & N. A. Denton *American Apartheid*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1993, for a thorough over-view of the detrimental effects of residential and educational segregation.

Further, they add that even attempting to equalise status between the two groups can exacerbate the situation:

“Simply eliminating status differentials within the setting runs the risk of arousing social competition aimed at re-establishing pre-existing status differences, especially on the part of the initially high status group. True equal status interaction under these conditions is more likely to be a consequence of inter-group acceptance than its cause.”⁶⁷

This conclusion suggests that where successful results have been induced by apparent equalisation of status, there may be other relevant factors which explain those results. It also suggests that we should be sceptical about the apparently optimistic results of some of the early contact studies.⁶⁸

The second recommendation was that the contact situation should involve interdependent co-operation, suggesting that the imposition of a joint goal can over-ride group-based tendencies towards conflict. In terms of social identity theory, this approach is supposed to work by ensuring that out-group members are perceived in a more positive light, both because they may come to be seen as individuals with differing characteristics rather than homogeneous group members (personalisation) and also because a superordinate identity may be established, subsuming group differences. Sherif's studies in the Robber's Cave experiments demonstrated that mere interdependence would be insufficient to reduce hostility.⁶⁹ Only co-operative task interaction would achieve this; competitive group interaction proved counter-productive. Previously unacquainted boys took part in a summer camp at this location, and were initially divided into two separate groups, with separate camps and different names. They were then encouraged to take part in team-based competitive games and projects, with the result that hostility between the two groups escalated. Sherif then

⁶⁷ Miller & Brewer 1984, p. 292.

⁶⁸ It is worth noting just how impressive the results of such early studies appeared. Quoting from the Deutsch and Collins (1951) study, Cook notes that of those White tenants who had lived in desegregated housing for the test period, over half were prepared to endorse a policy of equal and unrestricted access for Blacks to such housing in the future. This compares with only 5% of White tenants inhabiting segregated housing projects. One major methodological difficulty was avoiding potential pollution from self-selection factors, namely the possibility that only those white residents who were not especially hostile towards Blacks would agree to take up tenancy. This would have detracted from the authority of claims that the period of extended contact between the groups served to improve attitudes between the opposing groups. Cook notes however, that such self-selection was unlikely to be a significant pollutant, in that, due to economic hardship, little choice was allowed in allocation of state housing. See S. W. Cook, 'Towards a Psychology of Improving Justice: Research on Extending the Equality Principle to Victims of Social Injustice', in *Journal of Social Issues* 46, 1990, p. 150.

⁶⁹ M. Sherif, O. J. Harvey, B. J. White, W. R. Hood, & C. W. Sherif, *Inter-Group Conflict and Co-operation: The Robber's Cave Experiment*, University of Oklahoma Book Exchange, Oklahoma 1961.

tested the simple contact hypothesis by putting the boys together for meals and recreation. The result was actually a worsened state of hostility. Only when the boys were required to take part in co-operative projects, such as re-establishing the camps' water supply, the success of which was equally desired by both groups, did the hostility subside. This finding holds particular import for advocates of local democracy and participation; unless individuals are involved in a co-operative rather than competitive project, and unless it actually succeeds, relations may become more rather than less conflictual.

In their review of the literature in this field, Brewer and Miller note that a further restriction must be placed on the applicability of this condition. Apparently the task structure and outcomes can have a significant effect on the likelihood of decreasing inter-group conflict; failure of a co-operative endeavour, for example, can often reduce inter-group attraction. Other findings suggest that even if inter-group relations are improved within the contact situation, these effects do not always generalise to other settings.⁷⁰ One further criticism made by these authors is that, once again, too much attention devoted to reducing the salience of group categories (here by systematically ensuring a proper representation of both groups), can serve to emphasise the salience of category membership rather than decrease it. Notably in the eyes of other theorists such as Hewstone and Brown, this apparent criticism is actually an advantage, as they hold that the 'personalisation' approach is theoretically flawed, and instead favour a heightening of group salience in contact situations.⁷¹ More consideration will be given to this theoretical debate at the end of this section. For present purposes it suffices to note that manipulating contact situations involving interdependent co-operative projects may prove a successful tactic, but it is not quite as simple a solution as would first appear to be the case.

The third condition under which contact may resolve inter-group tensions concerns the potential of participating individuals to disconfirm rather than confirm existing stereotypes. This relates both to the character of the individuals concerned and the circumstances in which their characteristics are manipulated. On the Miller and Brewer

⁷⁰ See for example S. W. Cook 'Interaction in Multi-Ethnic Contexts' in Miller & Brewer 1984, or J.-C. Deschamps & W. Doise 'Crossed Category Memberships in Inter-Group Relations', in Tajfel 1978, p. 148-9.

⁷¹ Hewstone and Brown, Chapter 1 in Hewstone and Brown 1986.

model, the ideal is that if sufficient information can be obtained about out-group members, then the corresponding rejection of stereotypic beliefs will contribute both to the personalisation of the relevant individuals, and also, consequently, to the acceptance of the out-group as a whole. Vitaly though, there are two stages involved even in the personalisation of particular individuals, and it is not clear that both of these are easily accomplished, never mind the next stage of extending the process to the out-group as a whole. Those two stages are, first, differentiation amongst out-group members, and, second, their personalisation. The first requires that individuals within the out-group are regarded as distinct rather than as homogeneous group members; the second is the more stringent requirement that we then respond to those different individuals in terms of their personal identities rather than their group identity. That is we must come to see them as individuals in their own right. As Miller and Brewer note, differentiation can occur without personalisation.⁷² In a situation where a co-operative project is undertaken, for example, we come to distinguish out-group members on the basis of the tasks they carry out. This does not, however, necessitate that we come to regard them as persons, with individual personal characteristics.

If stereotypic perceptions are to be eradicated, perhaps the most obvious requirement is that the knowledge gained of the out-group members be positive. In their study, Festinger and Kelley noted that even where contact had occurred, a favourable change in attitudes did not necessarily follow.⁷³ They concluded that unless psychologists could somehow control the nature of contact to ensure that it was a positive experience, negative stereotypes could be reinforced rather than destroyed. More recent research acknowledges that there is unlikely to be any way of ensuring that such positive interaction experiences are the norm. One response is to moderate the contact hypothesis such that not all contact is considered effective. Wright *et al.* suggest an extended contact hypothesis such that the most favourable possibility is public recognition of even just a few cross-group friendships.⁷⁴ Supposedly these highlight the positive characteristics of the individuals concerned in a manner not guaranteed by simple inter-group interaction. It is also claimed, in line with Hewstone and Brown's

⁷² Miller and Brewer 1984, p. 288.

⁷³ Festinger and Kelley 1951, Chapter X.

⁷⁴ S. C. Wright, A. Aron, T. McLoughlin-Volpe & S. A. Ropp, 'The Extended Contact Effect: Knowledge of Cross-Group Friendships and Prejudice', in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 73, 1, 1997, p. 73-90.

critique of Miller and Brewer, that such friendships are perceived by onlookers in primarily inter-group terms, so any stereotype-reducing effect will be applied straight to the group rather than just to the individual. This suggestion reinforces a suggestion of Raz's reported in Chapter Four, namely that if we care about integrating minorities in liberal society we should ensure that they are portrayed in a positive light in films, television, books and so on. Although Raz was largely concerned with ensuring affirmation of different ways of life, it seems as if the effect of seeing successful interaction between members of different groups, whether dramatised or real (as in sport) might beneficially effect inter-group relations.

Other means of reducing stereotypic perceptions of out-group members might include attempts to demonstrate that similar beliefs are held by both out-group and in-group,⁷⁵ attempts to show that friends are held in common,⁷⁶ attempts to impose a super-ordinate identity⁷⁷ or cross-cutting, rather than uni-dimensional categorisations.⁷⁸ According to relevant literature reviews and the research studied, the latter two appear to be the more successful approaches, which is useful given that both would have immediately obvious political application.⁷⁹ Both of these directly attack the central mechanism whereby social identity requirements arouse hostile inter-group relations. That is, they undermine the salience of existent categorisations, either by focusing on a more relevant overarching category, or by confusing the dimensions along which group members are to be assessed. In the former, the categories are subordinated under a new salient 'recategorization'; in the latter 'deategorization' is the aim, as group-members become seen more as individuals rather than members of any one category. Both of these

⁷⁵ See V. L. Allen & D. A. Wilder, 'Categorization, Belief Similarity and Inter-Group Discrimination', in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32, 6, 1975, p. 971-7.

⁷⁶ See for example, S. Hansell, 'Co-operative Groups, Weak Ties and Integration of Peer Friendships', in *Social Psychology Quarterly* 47, 4, 1984, p. 316-28.

⁷⁷ See for example S. L. Gaertner, J. F. Dovidio, B. A. Bachman & M. C. Rust, 'The Common In-Group Identity Model: Recategorization and the Reduction of Inter-Group Bias', in *European Review of Social Psychology*, Vol. 4, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester 1993, p. 1-21; S. L. Gaertner, M. C. Rust, J. F. Dovidio, B. A. Bachman & P. A. Anastasio, 'The Contact Hypothesis – The Role of a Common In-Group Identity on Reducing Inter-Group Bias', in *Small Group Research* 25, 2, 1994, p. 224-49.

⁷⁸ See for example, A. Marcus-Newhall, N. Miller, R. Holtz & M. B. Brewer, 'Cross-Cutting Category Membership with Role Assignment: A Means of Reducing Inter-Group Bias', in *British Journal of Social Psychology* 32, 2, 1993, p. 125-46; J-C. Deschamps, 'Inter-Group Relations and Categorical Identification', in H. Tajfel, *The Social Dimension: European Developments in Social Psychology*, vol. 2, CUP, Cambridge 1984; or Deschamps & Doise 1978.

⁷⁹ See M. B. Brewer & N. Miller, *Inter-Group Relations*, Open University Press, Buckingham 1996, Chapter 5; Brewer & Miller 1984, Chapter 13; or Hogg & Abrams 1988, Chapter 3.

strategies are effective means of distracting attention away from group-based categorisations, whatever the characteristics of the participating individuals.

Gaertner *et al.* note that there are two means of achieving reduction of conflict through recategorisation; either the salience of an existing super-ordinate identity can be increased, or new common factors can be introduced such as shared tasks or common fate.⁸⁰ The latter strategy was proved effective in Sherif's early studies.⁸¹ The former strategy is subtly different in that it does not necessarily deny the importance of sub-group identities; thus it would appear to model the concept of citizenship embraced by liberals such as Rawls, or even Kymlicka, whereby the common identity of citizenship is seen to unite all individuals without requiring that they sacrifice their particular group loyalties or identities. As such the results of Gaertner's research are of great interest for liberal theory. The research was carried out both in a laboratory and more natural situations, such as a business environment and a school. The results of the latter are of especial interest here in that that experiment sought to test the effect of common citizen identity on inter-group relations.⁸² Their findings showed that those students who did describe themselves as *American-Chinese*, *American-Hispanic* and so on, showed less bias towards members of other ethnic/racial groups than those students who defined themselves without the 'American' descriptor.⁸³ What these findings cannot tell us is how to make such existent over-arching identities salient for students. Under laboratory conditions this could be achieved by simple measures such as seating arrangements, group names, and task allocation. Clearly these are not the sort of tactics which can be used to make common citizenship salient in the population at large. There is reason to hope, however, that civic education might at least be a start.

The cross-cutting identity approach as originally studied by Doise and Deschamps⁸⁴ drew on findings in social anthropology that societies marked by 'segmental' rather than 'pyramidal' identities were marked by less conflict.⁸⁵ That initial project and their

⁸⁰ Gaertner *et al.* 1993, p. 6.; Gaertner *et al.* 1994, p. 226.

⁸¹ See for example Sherif *et al.* 1961.

⁸² Gaertner *et al.* 1994.

⁸³ There was a similar finding associated with students who did not describe themselves in these terms, but who expressed a feeling that students in the school were members of different groups but were still 'playing on the same team' (*Ibid.*, p. 232-3).

⁸⁴ Deschamps & Doise 1978.

⁸⁵ R. A. Levine & D. T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism*, Wiley Interscience New York 1972, cited in Deschamps & Doise 1978.

subsequent studies sought to examine the behaviour of school-children in sets of games, attempting to manipulate the salience of various categorisations. The studies reported in the 1978 article examined the children's interaction and statements when arranged simply in two teams as opposed to when allocated cross-cutting identities running across the teams (girls/boys, red/blue). Results showed that the latter method better absorbed conflict, and served to de-accentuate categorical differences rather than simply stimulate new ones. The Marcus-Newhall *et al.* study does back up the results of that project and subsequent research by Doise and Deschamps, and demonstrates that this approach also holds amongst an adult sample.⁸⁶

Both of these approaches are clearly relevant to the liberal project. The construction of a superordinate identity corresponds to the prioritisation of citizen identity; toleration between different groups is supposed to be ensured by a common recognition that we all share an identity and corresponding equal status as citizens, and thus intolerance would fail to respect this shared membership. Unfortunately, current social perceptions of citizenship identity are such that toleration is not guaranteed; the precise problem is that sub-group identities such as race or religion over-ride the requirements of citizenship on several occasions. Thus the second approach is also relevant; any other means of diffusing conflicting social identities could help to support the super-ordinate citizenship identity. Together, both strategies have implications for education. In schools, the 'jigsaw classroom' technique unites children across different groups in the pursuit of common goals,⁸⁷ whilst education for citizenship is already on the liberal agenda, as discussion in Chapter Four revealed.

The fourth precondition of beneficial inter-group contact demands that there be the possibility of personal acquaintance in the relation. This is necessary in order that interaction may reveal enough (positive) personal detail about the out-group members such that stereotypical beliefs about them can be eradicated. If, for example, contact were to be achieved in a work-based scenario, then it is entirely possible that the project could be successfully completed without any resultant change in attitudes. There must be sufficient time for familiarity to be established, so that perceptions beyond, say, mere

⁸⁶ Marcus-Newhall *et al.* 1993.

⁸⁷ See E. Aronson, N. Blaney, C. Stephan, J. Sikes & M. Snapp, *The Jigsaw Classroom*, Sage, Beverley Hills 1978. This method involves uniting members of previously conflicting groups as members of the same teams which then pursue common goals requiring the co-operation of all members.

judgements of efficiency or good workmanship can be developed. This suggests that features of a successful contact situation would include duration across time and in different contexts, plus informality and open communication. Merely being exposed to different others on an occasional and formal basis is not sufficient. Notably, this criticism can be applied to contact theory research itself; Pettigrew criticises many research projects as being too short-termist, and therefore unable to capture the possibly more positive effects of their approach which would arise if the contact were more sustained and enduring.⁸⁸

The fifth and final condition should be of particular interest to liberal political theory. The claim here is that certain types of group norms (which partly define group identity) are more likely than others to facilitate an inclusionary perspective towards other groups. Specifically, egalitarian norms will engender a disposition towards moral inclusion rather than exclusion;

“Apart from structural features of the environment, the shared values that participants bring to or acquire in the contact situation will be of critical importance. When norms favouring inter-group equality and expression of individuality are salient, adherence to such values provides an alternative source of positive self identity that may replace social category identity.”⁸⁹

Thus in some cases, the content of the norms which help to compose group identity can largely determine general attitudes towards other groups. Cook notes that whilst most people espouse a belief in equality, there is huge variation both in the importance that people attach to it and the scope across which they apply it.⁹⁰ He thus argues that one promising way to reduce the extent of moral exclusion or inter-group conflict is to focus on means of inculcating more extensive justice-based beliefs, and, perhaps more practically, also to encourage individuals to assess the consistency between their various beliefs, and their beliefs and actions.

The appeal to egalitarian norms plays a role in this debate at two levels. At the first, very basic, level, we would expect individuals who have grown up manifesting a strong commitment to extensive social-equality based norms to be the sort of individuals who would not be so susceptible to identity-based conflict or intolerance. That is, their

⁸⁸ Pettigrew 1986, p. 186-88, and 1998, p. 76.

⁸⁹ Miller & Brewer 1984, p. 295.

⁹⁰ Cook 1990, p. 155.

perspective on inter-group interaction might be quite different from that of someone lacking such a perspective. If we invoke again the notion of super-ordinate citizenship identity, then this identity might be most weighty for those individuals possessing the egalitarian outlook. The second level at which egalitarian norms can play a role is highlighted by Cook.⁹¹ Much of his research on conditions under which multi-ethnic groups can develop less conflictual modes of interaction took place in real social settings, so his results are particularly impressive. He found that cross-ethnic friendships were relatively easily established given sustained inter-racial contact over a reasonably long period of time. However, these friendships only then had the potential to develop generalized positive inter-group attitudes if the individuals involved could be made to see that a more 'egalitarian' social policy would benefit their new-found friend. In other words, in-group individuals had to realise that there was an imbalance between their regard for their friend and their acceptance of inegalitarian race-relations policies. For Cook, then, egalitarianism is one means of encouraging individuals to generalise attitudes from the individual to the group. Thus these norms can also enhance inter-group relations even when the individual holding those norms generally regards their scope as limited.

The Contact Hypothesis is thus not a simple one-step rule that can be applied in any situation where group conflict or moral exclusion is observed. The above five conditions more accurately isolate the limiting factors on the possibility of positive interaction, but as noted before, their relationship is uncertain, and therefore in the eyes of some psychologists the credibility of the whole is somewhat undermined. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this paper to determine which conditions are necessary and/or sufficient, there would seem to be good reason for political theory to consider carefully the implications of each condition. Such discussion will be undertaken in the final chapter. Before progressing, two possible methodological limitations of the Contact hypothesis should be detailed.

The first concerns assumptions made in the above delineation of the Contact Hypothesis. Generally, that account followed the approach adopted by Miller and Brewer (MB from this point), but as was mentioned on a couple of occasions, there is an alternative reading, exemplified by Hewstone and Brown's critique (HB from now

⁹¹ Cook 1984.

on). Although the former approach has thus far been the dominant one within the discipline, the debate could have important consequences for the measures adopted by liberal political theory in any attempt to encourage toleration. Whereas the MB approach assumes that inter-personal contact will improve inter-group relations, the HB approach assumes that the two are qualitatively different, and that only if *group* identity is made salient in the contact situation can relations be improved.⁹² In other words, they directly reject the notion that an improvement in group relations can only be brought about via a process of ‘personalisation’ of out-group members. They hold that in order for the contact to ameliorate group relations, the stereotypical image of the out-group *as a whole* must be rejected. Their concern is that the result of any positive inter-individual encounters with out-group members will simply be perception of those individuals as ‘exceptional’. Only if group-membership can somehow be rendered salient will those positive characteristics come to be associated with the out-group as a whole. The results of Cook’s research on the role of egalitarian norms suggests one way in which inter-group relations could be made salient within what were primarily inter-individual encounters.

The conventional MB approach holds that decategorisation (eliminating stereotypical assessment of individuals according to their social category) is essential if group relations are to be improved; this requires both differentiation and personalisation. The HB critical alternative does not entail full decategorisation, it merely requires a disassociation between the categories and the traditional positive/negative dichotomisations. Thus HB’s preferred resolution of the problem requires continued differentiation between groups, but along multiple axes. They seem to envisage a situation where groups come to be perceived as having particular strengths and weaknesses along several dimensions, a mixture of which may be relevant in any one situation;

“Mutual recognition of superiorities and inferiorities would characterize this mutual in-group differentiation and would be reflected in group stereotypes. Each group would view itself positively and hold positive stereotypes of out-groups, consistent with those groups’

⁹² In inter-personal relations, the individuals involved interact with each other as individuals with unique personal identities; in the inter-group alternative, individuals interact primarily in terms of their group identity, sharing the value perspective of their group, and regarding out-group individuals as defined by the stereotypical attributes of their group. The question then becomes whether or not, on experiencing pleasant characteristics of some individual members of the out-group, we then generalise these to the group as a whole, or merely come to see those individuals as not properly members of the group.

stereotypes...Thus each group is seen as it wishes to be seen, and desired differences are highlighted.”⁹³

Quite how this is to be achieved is uncertain; the HB approach is largely critical rather than offering substantive alternative strategies. What is clear is that unlike the MB approach, they appear to regard *inter-group* differences as ineradicable; instead they hope to eradicate the entrenched stereotypical assumptions of superiority and inferiority that attend traditional categorisations.⁹⁴

The question which this raises for political theory is whether or not group identifications are to be accepted as a social fact, or whether instead categorisation can be reduced as a social force. Pettigrew, in his summation of the two approaches, notes that it is certainly true that some studies have shown emphasis of group identity and cohesion to have a positive effect on group relations; this occurs largely where such cohesion serves to raise the consciousness of both in-group and out-group of the unfairness and unjustifiability of the situation.⁹⁵ Vitally, though, Pettigrew concludes that the two approaches are best seen as working *in tandem* over a longer time-sequence. Whilst an initial focus on inter-personal attraction is important, in order for this initial contact to be more widely successful, later phases must make group membership salient, in order to bring about change at a wider social, and institutional level. It is in this light that he interprets Cook’s results:

“In other words, using the vivid case of the well-liked out-grouper as ‘the foot in the door’, Cook achieves generalisation to the out-group itself by deliberation making group categorization salient in order to personalize prejudice and discrimination. Widespread anecdotal evidence suggests that this laboratory procedure is not an uncommon occurrence in modern society, and the method reveals how closely entwined the inter-personal and inter-group levels are in practice.”⁹⁶

⁹³ Hewstone & Brown 1986, p. 35.

⁹⁴ Gaertner *et al.* note in their research that it may actually be undesirable to remove sub-group identity when we impose a superordinate identity, because this could inhibit the spread of benefits to members of the sub-group not included in the original re-categorisation. Only if group identity remains salient at some level will the group as a whole achieve acceptance, rather than just the initial select few. (Gaertner *et al.* 1994, p. 245.)

⁹⁵ Pettigrew in Hewstone & Brown 1986, p. 183.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186. Pettigrew clarifies this position in his most recent article (Pettigrew 1998, p. 80); “There are three strategies to enhance generalization: decategorization, salient group categorization and recategorization. Thinking of these strategies acting sequentially removes the apparent contradiction between them. Since similarity attracts, initial stages of inter-group contact benefit from not making group membership salient. Later, as anxiety and threat subside, group membership must become salient to maximise the generalization of positive effects beyond the immediate situation. Then recategorization becomes possible if the participants adopt an all-encompassing group identification.”

This resolution of the dilemma is clearly reassuring in that it means we need not discard the results of the studies discussed here.

The final caveat again comes from Pettigrew. He notes that there are many other structural and contextual factors which will influence the success or failure of the Hypothesis. The most important of these concerns the structural and institutional make-up of society. No amount of positive inter-personal contact will ever ameliorate group relations if the resource allocation processes or legal structure of the nation are skewed towards one group or another. Where categorisations are entrenched and multiply reinforced (that is, ethnicity coincides with class or status, that coincides with economic role...), it is unlikely that mere contact, however promising, will accomplish much towards resolving inter-group tensions. As Pettigrew puts it;

“If the optimal situational conditions of contact theory can be met, it usually signifies that the important structural issues, from power to resource allocations, have already been equitably worked out. Put differently, contact theory – like most social psychological processes – does not typically have causal primacy.”⁹⁷

In other words, there is need for liberal institutions and principles to improve levels of social inequality before liberal dispositions such as toleration can be introduced.⁹⁸ But when they are established, the two can work together in tandem to develop more harmonious relations between different individuals and groups;

“Within this context, social psychology makes its essential contribution to social change theory by specifying those micro-processes that translate institutional alterations into individual change and back again. For inter-group relations, face-to-face contact is one, but just one among many of those micro-processes.”⁹⁹

The important thing for liberal theory to remember is that these micro-processes can be helped along the way by appropriate political actions. Although the full implications of this research will be discussed in the final chapter, a few brief comments are needed to tie together the various issues discussed here.

⁹⁷ Pettigrew in Hewstone & Brown 1986, p. 191.

⁹⁸ This indicates that Rawls is at least on the right track in his account of the development of political virtues in the move to constitutional consensus in *Political Liberalism*. More will be said of this in the final chapter.

⁹⁹ Pettigrew in Hewstone & Brown 1986, p. 191.

V Conclusions

The role of this chapter was to consider some of the empirical evidence on the issue of how best to make people more tolerant and more just. In particular it sought to answer the question of how people might be socialised to be tolerant such that they could more fully fulfil the ideal of liberal citizenship. The first question which consequently had to be asked was ‘how tolerant are people?’; the research on political tolerance showed that although there seemed to be generally strong support for liberal principles of equal civil liberties, individuals were surprisingly willing to withhold these liberties from certain groups of the population. In the light of this finding, the second question asked had to be a simple ‘why?’. Although very limited answers to these two questions have been given here, further analysis in the final chapter should reveal why liberals need concern themselves with these findings on the real nature and extent of intolerance

The research suggests that the most problematic cause of intolerance for liberals is prejudice. Although liberals might like to think that prejudice is just another form of irrationality, confusion or misinformation, the empirical literature on the subject does not support this view. As previously noted, Rawls confidently stated in *Political Liberalism* that other forms of injustice, such as sexism and racism, could be dealt with by applying his principles of justice in the relevant areas. In doing so, he appeared to imply that these attitudes are similar to the intolerance that arises from conflicting conceptions of the good. What the research covered in this chapter reveals is that this is simply not the case. Understanding why such prejudices arise and how they differ from liberal characterisations of intolerance reveals two weaknesses of the liberal account. Firstly, in order to understand prejudice it is necessary to appreciate the implications of social identity theory; this body of research reveals how group conflict engages considerations of individual identity, comparison and self-esteem. Thus it is quite unlike principled disagreement, which is the reason liberals usually evoke to explain intolerant behaviour. As such it is not clear that there is room for one of the major sources of intolerant and unjust behaviour within the liberal account. It is as if liberal theory aims too high. What the group conflict studies reveal is that we have not even got to the stage where tolerating different comprehensive doctrines is the most vital moral requirement; we are still at the stage of reacting negatively to people because of their arbitrary

characteristics or stereotypical features which they may not even possess, let alone be responsible for. Thus the liberal account of tolerance is naïve and narrow. The second liberal weakness is the assumption that we can make society more just by simply applying the principles of justice in a more thorough fashion, and educating people to be liberal citizens. According to these studies, existing forms of conflict and intolerance may prove rather harder to eradicate than was previously thought to be the case, especially if divisive social categories continue to be salient (through persistent self-segregation, status differentials, socio-economic difference, or unequal media representation, for example). Thus the liberal response to the problem of intolerance may require some reconsideration.

Although these are the most concrete findings of the research discussed in this chapter, several other important issues have been raised. The implications of the social psychological theories of justice are particularly interesting, in that they appear to suggest that the capacity for a sense of justice may actually have a limited scope. Extending justice concerns across the breadth of a nation state may prove difficult to ensure unless the liberal state can also inculcate the requisite sense of common group membership.¹⁰⁰ A further valuable point was raised by the literature on moral exclusion. This appeared to show that justice admits of degree; we may not apply all principles in the same way. Again this could be a problematic issue for liberalism, unless it can find a way of influencing people to the contrary. Unfortunately this field has only recently developed and the empirical findings are scarce, therefore there might be reason to maintain a degree of scepticism about this suggestion. These are just two of the other possible considerations which are raised for liberals by the material covered here; there are no doubt many more which would be revealed by a more thorough investigation of these two bodies of work.

Given that we initially set out only to determine whether liberal theory could learn anything by embracing the findings of empirical research, we have reached a fairly satisfying conclusion. Study of empirical research into political tolerance and group conflict reveals not simply that liberal theory can refine its account of socialisation, but

¹⁰⁰ One cannot help but think of Sandel's concerns that

"As the scale of social and political organization has become more comprehensive, the terms of our collective identity have become more fragmented, and the forms of political life have outrun the common purpose needed to sustain them." (Sandel in Avineri & De Shalit 1992, p. 28.)

that it has a rather limited understanding of what sort of inter-group conflict is problematic in the first place. More than tolerance may be required in order to ensure harmonious and just relations under conditions of pluralism. Both of these points will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions: The Politics of Locality.

Initially this thesis set out to answer the question of whether or not communitarianism could still inform liberal theory. Given the findings of the previous chapter, it would seem that it could. Before this conclusion can be stated with certainty, however, more careful analysis of the issues raised is required. The hypothesis defended here has been the idea that, in considering the communitarian critique, liberal political theory should take more account of 'communitarian' social embeddedness and dwell rather less on the pros and cons of 'community'. In particular liberal theory needs to consider whether any limitations might be placed on the range of feasible normative options by the inter-relation of social structure, political institutions and individual identity. A 'case-study' was undertaken in the previous chapter, intended to highlight some of the ways in which a more explicitly empirical focus might uncover any such limitations. It simply remains to draw out the implications of that study by comparing liberal theory's account of tolerance and its development with this empirical counterpart.

The most fundamental question simply asks what, if anything, is problematic about the behaviour and motivations studied in the group conflict and political tolerance literature. If the evidence appears to back up the liberal account in all aspects, little further discussion would be required. However, assuming that the empirical material considered does reveal certain contradictions or inadequacies in the liberal account, some reassessment of that account must follow. The remainder of this concluding chapter asks what sort of changes are implied; specifically, it considers the possibility of both substantive and theoretical alterations. Substantive changes would affect the particular assumptions which the case study was concerned to investigate, namely the liberal account of toleration and its inculcation. Theoretical changes would concern the focus or method adopted in liberal theory more generally. Thus before we can conclude that communitarianism can still inform liberal theory, we need to ascertain the answers to three more specific questions.

- 1) What, if anything, is problematic about the behaviour and motivations studied in the psychological literature on group conflict and political tolerance?
- 2) Given that such behaviour and motivations challenge certain aspects of liberal theory, what substantive changes are required to overcome these difficulties?
- 3) Can all the revealed inadequacies be eradicated by introducing substantive change, or does this material also imply that liberal theory would benefit from altering its theoretical approach?

I Implications of the psychological literature on tolerance and group conflict.

The empirical material delineated in the previous chapter challenges liberal writing on the issue of tolerance and its development in at least two ways. The first major challenge concerns the *nature* of liberal tolerance, the second, the *extent* of tolerance. Each will be addressed in turn.

The nature of tolerance.

In Chapter Five conceptual analysis of the behavioural and attitudinal requirements of liberal toleration was undertaken. As a phenomenon, it was claimed to arise under conditions of diversity or social pluralism; this pluralism provokes disapproval, dislike or even disgust on the part of individuals faced with others living their lives according to very different sets of values and beliefs. Toleration is therefore the deliberate self-restraint of an agent, who could otherwise interfere with, or coerce those different others, such that they then cease from the offending act or belief. Thus far, these theoretical conditions clearly reflect the empirical conditions within which group conflict and moral exclusion are studied.

The liberal account of toleration is invoked to deal with the possibility of conflicting values, beliefs or opinions. As such it is assumed to operate at the cognitive level; it is a reaction to consciously perceived and assessed differences. Such differences are likewise assumed to be autonomously acquired rather than arbitrarily possessed characteristics; as such the agent can generally be held responsible for them, and there is

presumed to be distance between the agent and his or her beliefs or values. Thus it is plausible that liberals such as Heyd, Williams and Raz should suggest interpretations of toleration which assume the possibility of cognitively distinguishing between the value of the agent and the truth or value of the disliked characteristics.

In comparing this account of toleration with the social psychological findings, some important discrepancies arise. The two which are most immediately obvious concern firstly the lack of consistency in individuals' tolerance behaviour and beliefs, and secondly, the psychological tendency to conflate the agent with their beliefs or characteristics. With regard to the first of these, political tolerance studies such as those of Sullivan *et al.*, or Marcus *et al.* reveal a fairly universal commitment to the value of civil liberties but a remarkably common willingness to deny such liberties to certain disliked groups. Although we would not expect people to be perfectly tolerant we would at least hope to see coherence in people's stated attitudes. But it appears that even individuals who are generally just and tolerant in their treatment of all other groups may refuse to extend this outlook to a particular group or groups. This potentially backs up the social psychological theory that justice is a group-based phenomenon; however we should note that in some cases, this intolerance might be justifiable from the liberal perspective. Some of the groups which most frequently received intolerant responses in the surveys could be seen as anti-liberal,¹ and as was earlier acknowledged, even Rawls allows that some groups do not deserve tolerant treatment.² Other reasons evoked to explain the apparent inconsistency offer no challenge to the liberal account of socialisation; they simply reflect the existent imperfections in, say, individual reasoning or the education system. As such, liberals would probably be justified in expecting inconsistency in attitudes, and intolerance of certain groups to decrease as the quality of liberal education and institutions improves. However, if we turn to the social psychological theory of group interaction offered, we find that one cause of such intolerance may be far more intractable than liberals would hope. Rather than explaining interaction between different groups as easily mediated by tolerance, both

¹ Such as Fascists and Communists, for example. This point will be considered in greater detail in the next sub-section.

² Since *A Theory of Justice* Rawls has stressed that only reasonable comprehensive doctrines can be incorporated within an overlapping consensus; however, as he himself goes on to note, he gives a 'deliberately loose' account of the criteria for such a doctrine in order to avoid arbitrarily excluding some. As such, although we would presume that doctrines undeserving of liberal tolerance would be excluded, we cannot be absolutely sure. See Rawls 1993, p. 59.

social identity theory and social exchange theory combine in group conflict theory to suggest that competition is the more natural state.

The second obvious discrepancy which is revealed concerns the relative complexity of the two accounts. As was stated at the time, group conflict theory explains more than just intolerant behaviour; the relevant 'conflict' can be expressed as simple dislike or distrust, partiality towards one's own group rather than impartiality towards all, even prejudice and overt discrimination. It might thus seem too clumsy a tool to reveal much of interest about the psychology of tolerance. On the contrary, however, the breadth of explanation offered by group conflict theory is beneficial. It reveals that tolerance is not a stand-alone attitude. Instead tolerance and intolerance are closely tied to other attitudes such as trust, distrust, liking and dislike; even more importantly they are linked to perceptions of identity and self-esteem. Group conflict theory reveals that judgements of who to tolerate or who to favour are closely bound up with sub-conscious processes of self-identification and self-preservation. As such, opposition may arise between rational awareness that liberal principles of behaviour or attitude should be extended to all groups, and sub-conscious pressure to regard certain groups as inferior and excludable. Psychologically, tolerance, as an inter-group attitude is complex and personally challenging, even if conceptually it is relatively simple.

When we consider the more precise details of the social psychological account three further, more insidious, contrasts with the liberal account are revealed. Firstly, the liberal account of toleration fails to capture the way we perceive and assess different others. Secondly, given the apparent prevalence of gender, sexuality and racial discrimination, the liberal fascination with conflict arising from different conceptions of the good seems somewhat idealistic. Intolerance and discrimination is frequently aroused by the possession of morally arbitrary characteristics, rather than autonomously acquired beliefs or values. The third implication is that, due to their psychological character, deep-seated prejudices grounded in gender, race or ethnicity, religion or class may be harder to eradicate through application of liberal principles than theorists such as Rawls suggest.

The first of these difference arises in so far as, on the liberal account, a conceptual distinction is raised between attributes of the person and actions or beliefs separate from

the person. The requirements of liberal impartiality and fairness require that we set aside both sets of features when reacting to other individuals as equal moral agents. As delineated in Chapter Five, the accounts of toleration offered by Heyd, Williams, Mendus, Rawls and others all suppose that we can distinguish between the worth of the moral agent, or autonomy, and the attributes or characteristics disapproved of. In other words, the individual is seen as separate from his attributes. In contrast, social identity theory and group conflict theory emphasise that such separation may well be difficult to achieve. Psychologists such as Tajfel, or Hogg and Abrams claim that in many situations, we identify others as belonging to a certain group (an out-group rather than an in-group) by their possession of certain stereotypical features. Their categorisation as out-group members is then sufficient to determine the appropriate reaction to those individuals. To put this point more bluntly, social identity theory claims that on many occasions we will fail to distinguish between the person and their salient attributes or beliefs. The person just is seen as comprised by those features.³ More worryingly still, the process of categorisation does not take place at a conscious level, hence it could be quite hard for an individual to recognise his or her bias, let alone set it aside as demanded by liberal impartiality and tolerance. This is not to say that it is impossible to recognise when we are biased; clearly there are other ways in which a biased individual can be made aware of his prejudice, most obviously through the criticisms of other more just persons and the institutionalisation of certain principles.

This discrepancy recalls the liberal-communitarian debate over the conception of the self. Group conflict theory might be seen as holding that it is hard for us to see ourselves and others as ‘unencumbered selves’, precisely because psychologically we often perceive others as defined by certain salient characteristics. The political liberal rebuff of the communitarian critique, as described in Chapter Two, relied on the claim that we only need to see each other as ‘unencumbered’ for the purposes of justice, and further, that this entailed only that we should see each end, value or attribute as separable in turn. The social psychological research effectively re-states the communitarian criticism in response to this liberal defence, holding that whilst such impartiality is highly desirable, it could prove rather tricky to achieve in practice.

³ This occurs even when individuals are distinguished by their *beliefs*, rather than contingently possessed personal characteristics. Group conflict theory is thus problematic for liberal accounts of toleration as it suggests that we may find it very difficult to react to each other as equal moral agents, even when we should be able to distinguish between persons and their beliefs.

Unlike communitarianism, social psychology does not engage in normative argument; certainly it would refrain from claiming, as Sandel does, that the unencumbered self and corresponding attitudes of tolerance and impartiality are unsuitable and undesirable normative ideals. What might be learnt from this discipline, however, is that psychologically speaking, we can accept ourselves and others as defined by our possession of certain characteristics, but, for the purposes of justice, the relevant characteristics must be shared citizenship characteristics rather than skin colour, gender or religious persuasion. The aim of liberal socialisation should therefore be to ensure that we categorise each other primarily as citizens, rather than as members of any other sub-group. The psychological methods recommended to decrease the salience of old exclusionary categorisations and heighten the salience of new inclusionary ones will be discussed in a later section. To reiterate the communitarian criticism, psychology thus holds the concept of an ‘unencumbered self’ to be misleading, but reveals which ‘encumbering’ characteristics may suit the liberal ideal.

According to Mendus’ account, it is not rational or justifiable to disapprove of another person on the basis of characteristics over which they have no control.⁴ From a liberal point of view our particular personal characteristics are morally arbitrary; what matters is that we all equally share the same political identity and status in recognition of our equal moral worth. This implies that we cannot legitimately disapprove of another on the basis of their skin colour, gender or sexual identity; hence neither can we be said to ‘tolerate’ those with different personal characteristics from ourselves. However, much of the empirical research outlined in the previous chapter attempted either to explain or to resolve conflict between groups differentiated on the basis of such personal attributes. The implication of this highlights the fourth distinction, namely that, empirically, much inter-group conflict runs along dimensions not justifiable from a liberal perspective. In the empirical literature, divisions of race, ethnicity, and gender are amongst the most commonly studied sources of group conflict, largely because they are the most obvious candidates, but also because they are the most deeply entrenched in the social structure. Liberal toleration may draw very heavily on its principled heritage in post-Reformation wars of religion, but in doing so it ignores the deeper nature of contemporary cleavage. The implication of this observation for liberal theory is simple; it suggests that, at least until we reach a more nearly perfect liberal society, tolerance alone will be insufficient

response to inter-group conflict. Either we should extend this term to include non-discrimination, or we should be prepared to extend the set of desirable and necessary liberal traits.

Thus one of the most significant sources of conflict and potential injustice between groups stems not from divergent conceptions of the good, but from morally arbitrary natural characteristics. This reveals an initial disjunction between liberal hopes for toleration and empirical reality. It is not just that some people are not tolerant enough, it appears that they have not even fully adopted the liberal perspective according to which shared equal citizenship status is more important than morally arbitrary genetic make-up. It would seem that in order for liberal toleration to be the norm, these attribute-based variants of group conflict and intolerance would simply have to be eliminated.

The fifth and final discrepancy between liberal and social psychological accounts of the nature of intolerance concerns the intractability of group conflict. The accounts presented by psychologists and social identity theorists explain why these traditional societal cleavages are so persistent even within the framework of broadly liberal societies. Unfortunately these explanations imply that liberals will find it rather harder to eradicate inter-group conflict than their theories allow. Firstly, psychologists such as Brewer and Miller note that categorisations convergent along several dimensions will be especially vicious and are likely to have extremely strong salience for members of the groups concerned.⁵ At least one of those categories will be salient in almost any interactive situation. If, for example, as in the USA, race is traditionally associated with level of educational achievement, with economic status, with income level, with cultural difference, then the categorisation will be seen as salient in any situation referring to just one of these dimensions. Further, each of these various effects has to be mitigated before the under-lying racial categorisation can be rendered less salient.

Secondly, even once such inequalities of power and status cease to be institutionalised via the implementation of de-segregation policies and equal-opportunity programmes, it may take a very long time for all these prejudicial factors to be eradicated at the *social* level via attitudinal change. Thus even if political institutions and procedures adopt a

⁴ Mendus 1989.

⁵ Brewer & Miller, Chapter 13 in Brewer & Miller 1984.

more explicitly neutral approach, inequalities of status and power at the level of civil society could prove remarkably persistent, sustaining the salience of existent categorisations. An example of this might be the self-segregation of wealthy white home-owners in the US, or monopolisation of TV, film and media roles by one group; these largely private non-political choices effectively maintain barriers between social groups. If the social stratification system appears to be fairly rigid, then for low-status groups at least, the likelihood is that existent categories will always be perceived as salient in so far as they apparently act as a barrier to individual success.⁶ In other words, the implication for liberalism is that merely introducing egalitarian policies at the *political* level is no guarantee that traditional *social* structures of category-based inequality and conflict will instantly evaporate. More direct attention to eradicating the specific conditions which sustain category salience would be required in order to accomplish this; this may entail attending to effects operating at the local rather than the national level. These conditions and other relevant socialising factors will be addressed in the following section.

To conclude this section we should consider one pessimistic conclusion which might be drawn from the group conflict material: that we will never achieve a society of properly liberal citizens. This would clearly present a significant challenge to theorists such as Rawls who do assume that such an outcome is feasible. Of course, this is a difficult assumption to disprove as it could always be claimed that any implications we draw from empirical research now would fail to apply under idealised liberal conditions because the current social conditions are so different. Despite this, the literature suggests that one rather tentative claim could be made. The claim is that, given the relationship between group membership and self-esteem, so long as there is social pluralism, there will be group differences. And so long as there are group differences, there will always be pressures towards group conflict. Even if entrenched social inequalities could be removed (which, as we have seen, will be very tough), the pressures towards group conflict might be so strong as to still engender conflict and intolerance. In their review of the literature on prejudice and group conflict, Hogg and Abrams conclude, in regard to our liberal aim of harmonious pluralism,

“The essential point is that while prejudgement and social generalization are inevitable, prejudice and stereotyping are not. The latter can be reduced, but only by directly

⁶ *Ibid.*; also, Hogg & Abrams 1988, p. 56-7.

addressing their material and ideological bases. To the extent that a society comprises social collectivities which mediate relatively positive social power over other groups, we have conditions under which no one group oppresses another. While this may be an admirable end-point or goal, its stability over time is of course an entirely different matter. The intrinsically competitive nature of inter-group relations sponsors forces for differentiation which militate against enduring stability and ensure a dynamic relationship or struggle between groups for social advantage.”⁷

These authors thus believe that so long as there are social groups, there will be group conflict. The various approaches of the contact theorists outlined in Chapter Six recommend ways in which such tendencies can be alleviated, but the claim is that fundamental pressures of self-identity and self-esteem make it unlikely that conflict can be entirely eradicated. Tajfel’s experiments on minimal groups support this conclusion, revealing, as they do, just how quick individuals are to assume and allocate group identities. It does at least seem plausible that dispositions towards constructing and defending a group identity as an aspect of self-identity are psychologically fundamental. Even if we cannot come close in real life to the ideal liberal conditions under which socialisation processes such as Rawls’ operate, some research in the imperfect world thus seems to identify psychological mechanisms so fundamental and reliable that they are as close as we can come to finding glimpses of ‘human nature’. Given the emphasis placed upon the conditions of social pluralism, liberalism must give some account of how such group identity pressures are to be contained even within the ideal liberal state. Before we can determine how essential this is, we need to ascertain how damaging such conflict could be. This issue will be addressed in the following section.

Overall then, the empirical research considered in the previous chapter qualifies the liberal account of toleration in several crucial ways. Most importantly it suggests that liberals are short-sighted both in their characterisation of tolerance as an action, and in their limited focus on tolerance rather than also the eradication of prejudice and discrimination. The import of these claims is ambiguous depending on which liberal theorist is adopted as a target. Rawls, for example, would have no place in his idealised theory for individuals who could not recognise the equal moral worth of all other citizens; this would immediately rule out the problem of racial or gender-based discrimination. As such, Rawls is perhaps exempted from criticism. On the other hand,

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.86.

we might think that the plausibility of his account is somewhat undermined by the observation that we have not even got to the stage where his account of toleration is applicable; the conflicts of pluralism in our society do not arise solely, or even largely, from different conceptions of the good so much as from different skin-colour, ethnic origin, class and gender. Other liberal theorists, who are less explicitly concerned with the ideal liberal society should certainly take heed of these claims, even if they are prepared to accept that we are not, and never will be perfectly tolerant or just. Any progress towards a more properly liberal society can only be ensured by making people less prejudiced, as well as more tolerant.

The extent of tolerance

It would seem that the liberal understanding of the nature of tolerance is somewhat simplistic; a more accurate and useful account would have to be broadened to include other non-discriminatory attitudes, and would perhaps acknowledge the psychological difficulties of achieving such a perspective. However, as well as helping us to understand tolerance behaviour and attitudes, empirical research can help us to ascertain just how tolerant people are, and whether, as a liberal society, we are generally tolerant enough. It would also help us to consider whether other negative inter-group attitudes are widespread, and if they are, whether these are damaging to the liberal ideal. These are the questions which will be addressed below.

It is no great surprise that people are not perfectly tolerant, just as we are familiar with the unfortunate prevalence of certain types of discrimination. This does not, however, stop us from believing that we live in an admirably liberal society, where individual rights are legally enshrined and protected, and a degree of redistribution helps those at the bottom end of the scale. We assume that most people rarely or never question the legitimacy of these institutions, and that the minority who are discriminatory and intolerant will not destabilise the political consensus. Does the research presented in the previous chapter severely challenge these assumptions?

In some ways it does, and yet in others it clearly doesn't. Our liberal state certainly isn't crumbling, but maybe it is, in some important ways, not quite as 'liberal' as we think it is. This is the possibility that will be investigated below. Of course, this is really just the first part of the question. We need to know *both* that contemporary western democracies

such as Britain are not properly liberal in certain significant ways, *and* that the solution to this inadequacy is not already contained within liberal political theory writing. To ascertain whether this is the case, three different types of potential failing will be considered. Two of these failings draw on the expected function of the liberal characteristics with which we are concerned. These functions were outlined in Chapter Five. There, certain moral capacities were argued to be essential in the implementation and justification of liberal principles. In the light of the research outlined in Chapter Six we can now ask whether or not it matters that these characteristics or motivations appear to founder in a real pluralistic context. The further failing to be discussed raises a new issue, not previously considered in this thesis. It arises in the light of a more informed psychological understanding of the relationship between individual self-respect, group identity and group conflict. Arguably, it is this potential failing which raises the greatest problems for liberal theory.

Before this analysis can be undertaken, a further distinction must be drawn between the political and social manifestations of intolerance and group conflict. As previously noted, group conflict studies observe a huge variety of behaviour and attitudes, not all of them necessarily of *political* import. Clearly violence and political intolerance would count as public or politically relevant phenomena, but dislike and distrust, no matter how extreme, would normally be regarded as purely private or social, beyond the realm of legitimate state concern.⁸ Yet as was noted in the previous section, some psychologists believe not only that these attitudes are widespread, but that they are probably ineliminable given the relationship between group membership and individual self-esteem. Even if this is the case, we need to ascertain why this should present any challenge to liberal theory, given that much of the purported ‘conflict’ is really no more than private expression of antipathy. Obviously liberal theorists might want to consider evidence of political intolerance or trampling of rights, but surely they have no need to ensure that we all actually *like* each other, merely that we do respect each other’s rights and liberties? The arguments given below will offer reasons why even the manifestation

⁸ Simply put, the claim is that the group conflict and political tolerance material shows that different groups bear antagonistic attitudes towards other groups, some of which may be expressed at a political level (through wanting to deny fundamental rights to those groups) whilst others are expressed only socially (say, through not wanting to have a member of that group at the dinner table, or to date your son or daughter). The distinction is thus between attitudes manifest at a political level, and those operative only in social situations. The latter are generally assumed to be beyond the realms of legitimate state interference.

of ‘social’ attitudes such as distrust and dislike can prove problematic for liberal theory, and present a case for regarding the alteration of these attitudes as a legitimate political issue.

Thus there are three ways in which the revealed levels of inter-group conflict and intolerance might challenge liberal assumptions, both as to how liberal a society we already possess, and as to how we might achieve a yet more liberal one. Firstly, persistent political intolerance and inter-group conflict might inhibit our ability to implement liberal principles successfully, and might even eventually destabilise a liberal state. Secondly, the prevalence of such attitudes could undermine the justifiability of liberal institutions and principles, and thirdly, it is possible that the liberal primary good of self-respect might be weakened by the daily manifestation of these intolerant and discriminatory attitudes. Each of these will be addressed in turn.

i. Destabilisation of the liberal order

In Chapter Five, we examined the various characteristics which liberal citizens are assumed to possess for the purposes of contemporary liberal theory. There it was claimed that the two most vital features were desire for co-operation with others on fair (justifiable) terms, and recognition of the suitable and unsuitable grounds for reaching ‘reasonable’ agreement.⁹ In Rawlsian terms these two comprise the most important elements of a ‘capacity for a sense of justice’. The further assumption was that individuals should have the capacity for autonomy. The role of these characteristics or ‘moral powers’ was analysed in order to ascertain why most liberal theorists assumed their presence, and what might happen if they turned out not to be particularly prevalent in real liberal societies. The conclusion drawn was that these characteristics fulfil four different functions in liberal theory, either as ends in their own right, or as means to some further end. At the time it was argued that the latter role seemed to be most indispensable; these citizen qualities are relied upon by theorists such as Rawls to explain how liberal principles can actually be instantiated in everyday actions, and also how the principles can come to be accepted by the citizen body as legitimate. In other words, moral capacities such as tolerance, impartiality and desire for co-operation on fair terms are required in order to ensure firstly, that liberal principles are implemented, and secondly, that they are seen as justifiable despite the inevitable restrictions on

autonomy. This section will address the first function, the following will consider the second.

The argument presented here recalls Galston's claim that although you do not need a 'nation of angels' in order to support a liberal state, unless a sufficient proportion of the citizen body manifest liberal virtues, liberal institutions will not be able to function.¹⁰ In the context of the research presented in the previous chapter, our concern would thus be that levels of explicit political intolerance are too high, and perhaps also, natural tendencies towards injustice or partiality too great. In other words, we might just think that insufficient numbers of citizens do possess basic liberal virtues of tolerance, impartiality and fairness. Why should this matter? From the point of view of implementing liberal principles, the worry is that without some voluntary co-operation liberal institutions will struggle. Certainly rights and liberties can be protected by policing and threatened legal penalty, but if we are not to create a heavily interventionary police state then a certain degree of responsibility will have to be assumed by the citizen body. Furthermore, the more taxation that is spent on security and policing, the less there is to redistribute. As Galston puts it,

"The net social value of a law is equal to the social benefits it engenders minus the social costs of -enforcing it. As the individual propensity to obey the law diminishes, so does a society's ability to pursue collective goals through the law."¹¹

However, it is not clear that this is the correct source of anxiety in the current case. We are certainly not facing a situation in which the majority, or even a substantial minority of the population are acting in a lawless fashion. Law-abidingness is not at issue. The evidence we have suggests only that at the political level people are not perfectly tolerant, whilst at the social level, many inter-group encounters are fraught with tensions and negative attitudes. What exactly will either of these do to undermine the implementation of liberal principles?

The absence or prevalence of political tolerance could be a problem, but this depends on the type of intolerance experienced. As was pointed out earlier, even theorists such as Rawls allow that not all individuals or groups need be tolerated if their values or goals threaten the very stability of the liberal order. Looking back at the survey material

⁹ See Chapter Five, p. 126 for example.

¹⁰ Galston 1991, p. 216-7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

gathered, we see that some of the groups to whom individuals were reluctant to extend basic civil rights such as freedom of speech or privacy on phone-lines, were indeed anti-system, or could be seen as such. The Sullivan *et al.* study from 1982, for example, measured the least tolerant responses towards groups including fascists, communists and the Ku Klux Klan, all of whom could be seen as subverting the liberal order.¹² Marcus *et al.*, in their study, found that similar groups raised an equally strong intolerant reaction (compared to other less obviously anti-liberal groups such as feminists, pro-abortionists and pacifists).¹³ Are these levels of political intolerance destabilising? Arguably the opposite, as we could interpret these apparently intolerant reactions to be simply the concern of committed liberals seeking to protect their society and state.¹⁴

A greater source of worry should be the levels of intolerance towards groups whose values or goals do not threaten the stability of the liberal state. In the studies mentioned above, some intolerance was recorded towards groups such as feminists, pro-lifers, and pacifists. In the Sullivan *et al.* study from 1982, some respondents also identified blacks and homosexuals as their 'least liked group'.¹⁵ Although these groups would certainly deserve political tolerance on the liberal account, we cannot say that the observed degree of intolerance towards them is seriously destabilising, as it does not appear to be that prevalent in the studies reviewed. Unfortunately there is a methodological problem here which means that we should not draw too heavily on the conclusions of the political tolerance studies. The recent trend (since Sullivan *et al.* 1982) has been to ascertain which single group qualifies as an individual's 'least-liked group'. This then enables researchers to discover how tolerant individuals will be when faced with a really hard case. The studies measure how intolerant people will be rather than who they are intolerant towards. Unfortunately for us, these studies make it impossible to measure real levels of intolerance towards groups who do not qualify as the 'least-liked' but who might still provoke an intolerant reaction. Thus it is hard for us to present more than

¹² Sullivan *et al.* 1982, p. 81.

¹³ Marcus *et al.* 1995, p. 68.

¹⁴ Of course, even this type of intolerance could prove disruptive if expressed in other more violent or antagonistic ways. Also, should these popular demands for repression and exclusion be met by the state, terrorism might be adopted as the only remaining form of expression for those anti-system groups, thus increasing rather than decreasing the likelihood of instability. There are pragmatic as well as principled reasons for political toleration even of those who seek to upset the system. See for example, V. Wright, *The Government and Politics of France*, Unwin Hyman, London, 3rd Ed. 1989, p. 239.

¹⁵ Sullivan *et al.* 1982, p. 86.

conjecture as to whether or not levels of intolerance towards different groups will destabilise a liberal state. A rather better guide could be the level of support enjoyed by extremist or Far Right parties whose political platform rests on their denial of basic rights to certain minority groups. The recent 'unprecedented rise' of extremist far-right parties in Western Europe, could, in this light, be seen as cause for concern.¹⁶

Political intolerance can exert a destabilising effect on a liberal state in so far as it directly threatens the liberal ethos and publicly queries the desirability of awarding rights and liberties to all citizens equally. Those who consequently seek political position on this basis desire the opportunity to actually change this allocation and thus represent a real threat to the implementation and stability of liberal institutions and principles.

The further question remains whether, in this context, we need concern ourselves with intolerance and distrust expressed at a social level, even if these attitudes are as commonplace as the group conflict studies suggest. Whilst it would be ridiculous to hold that it matters politically whether or not I reject homosexuals, pacifists or communists as neighbours or friends, it is not unreasonable to think that such intolerance could have politically relevant effects. Such attitudes could, for example, be manipulated by extremist parties raising support for anti-system policies. Further, as psychologists such as Hogg and Abrams stress, these social attitudes are in large part responsible for maintaining cleavages at a social level, such that inequalities in status, employment, education or opportunity structure persist and undermine the formal equality expressed at the political level.¹⁷ Thus negative social attitudes may inhibit the full implementation of liberal principles of equality of opportunity. Denton and Massey, for example, describe the damaging effects of informal residential and educational segregation such as the reduction of opportunities to meet more successful or influential others, and the damage caused to self-esteem by social marginalisation.¹⁸ Whether or not this is sufficient reason for liberals to take interventionary political action is an essentially normative decision, and one on which liberals may disagree. Indeed, this is

¹⁶ H. Kitschelt, *The Radical Right in Western Europe*, University of Michigan Press, Michigan, 1995, p. 1. Clearly it is not just the number of parties which matters, but also the level of support received. Kitschelt notes that these parties received an average of over 6% of the vote in the 1980s, in Denmark, France, Finland, Italy, Norway and Switzerland. (*Ibid.*, p. 59.)

¹⁷ Hogg & Abrams 1988, p. 26-29.

¹⁸ Massey & Denton 1993.

another example of how taking ontological arguments seriously can force new contentious normative issues out into the open.

ii. **Undermining of justifications for the liberal state**

As stated above, the second instrumental role of liberal characteristics such as tolerance or the desire for fair co-operation comes in underpinning the legitimacy of the liberal state. Liberals such as Rawls, Barry and Scanlon emphasise the importance of ‘reasonable agreement’, ‘public justifiability’, ‘the agreement motive’ and conditions that can’t be ‘reasonably rejected’. In each of these cases, citizens are assumed to have a basic motivation to co-operate with others on terms that could form the consensual basis for stable and peaceful co-existence. The justification that can be offered for the resultant restrictions or state action is that they would be agreed to by such ‘reasonable’ people.¹⁹ This is what guarantees the legitimacy of the liberal state. However, what matters is not so much whether citizens are all actually reasonable, and hence whether they do perceive liberal institutions and laws as justifiable, but whether, *if* they were reasonable, they *would* do so. In other words a degree of paternalism is justifiable if it can be shown that citizens would agree to these measures were they reasonable persons. Thus it is unlikely that liberal theory would be at all harmed by an empirical demonstration of the number of people who are unreasonable in some way (say by failing to adopt a tolerant perspective).

The political tolerance studies reveal the extent to which some citizens do, in fact, disagree with some liberal principles, at least in their application to certain groups (even if their underlying motives are not necessarily illiberal in all cases). In Rawlsian terms, these surveys suggest that not all citizens accept the justifiability of the claim that

“...each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.”²⁰

However, we can presume that some of those rejecting the rights of individuals belonging to anti-system groups believe that the right to equal liberty is forfeited by those who are not committed to ‘reasonable’ liberal principles.²¹ In other words these ‘intolerant’ citizens are not denying the justifiability of liberal principles overall. It is

¹⁹ See Chapter Five, p. 121-2, for the definition of ‘reasonable’ as used in this liberal context.

²⁰ Rawls 1973, p. 60.

²¹ As does Rawls, however he is rather more equivocal about what constitutes an ‘unreasonable’ comprehensive doctrine. See fn. 1 above and fn.82, p. 151, Chapter Five.

simply that people will disagree as to who or what should be tolerated in order to ensure the security and stability of the liberal order. This type of political intolerance should therefore not give us reason to fear that many individuals perceive the state as illegitimate.

Other types of political intolerance may imply that individuals are 'unreasonable' and that they reject the fundamental principles at the heart of the liberal state. The actions of those in anti-system parties, for example, clearly express a belief that certain groups are inferior and undeserving of rights and liberties. Fortunately, as noted above, liberals can perfectly easily accept the existence of an unreasonable few without altering their convictions as to the justifiability of the liberal state. There is one further possible source of anxiety however. More careful consideration of the group conflict material suggests that there is a degree of hypocrisy in what liberals demand of their citizens in order to justify the liberal state. That is, the psychological tolerance and group conflict studies are problematic for liberal theory because they reveal a strange feature of liberal requirements of justifiability; that some people are actually unconvinced as to the justifiability of the liberal state matters relatively little.

The group conflict research points to the competitive and antagonistic nature of inter-group relations. It highlights the extent to which individuals, as group members, can react to non-group members with dislike, distrust, even disgust, solely on the basis of their supposedly stereotypical characteristics. These attitudes may be sufficiently strong to ensure that they will be expressed at the political level, say through support for nationalist, extremist or religious parties. However, they may not. In the latter case, we can imagine a situation where a person could, on the one hand, agree to award full civil and political rights to Asians or religious fundamentalists, and yet, on the other, refuse to let his daughter marry a member of those groups. This seems to imply that at the political level the equality of Asians or the religious fundamentalists is accepted, but at the social level it is denied.²² All that liberalism requires to be 'publicly justifiable', though, is that reasonable citizens accept the fundamental moral equality of persons for the purposes of political decision-making. Nothing is said about what we must think of

²² It might be objected that I can dislike someone without thinking them inferior. Whether this is true or not at the conceptual level, it is just the case that social identity theory assumes such negative attitudes to be grounded in a need to feel superior. See Hogg & Abrams 1988, p. 23.

persons in private. Is this hypocritical, or even schizophrenic? The answer is that it depends upon the type of judgement being made. In the case of religious fundamentalists, the judgement of political equality and social inferiority is coherent because in the political context we judge them on the basis of their being autonomous individuals (equal moral persons), whilst in the social context we are judging them on the content of their particular autonomous beliefs. The two are consistent because there is perceived to be distance between the moral agent and their beliefs. In the social scenario we are not judging the person as a whole, only their beliefs. However, there is no obvious parallel in the case of socially negative attitudes towards Asian people. Once again we could consider them political equals because they are autonomous moral agents, but in the social context dislike or distrust would have to be explained as being caused by their ethnic identity or certain stereotypical characteristics associated with that identity. This is difficult to square as we tend to believe that physical characteristics are just part of the person; there is no distance between a person and his or her hair or skin colour, gender, or even sexuality. These are just contingently possessed features. Thus it seems odd to consider someone a political equal but a social inferior, when in both cases the criterion on which we judge them is the same, namely personhood. In fact, it seems at least a little confused, if not downright hypocritical.

The implication of this is simply that the liberal method of justifying the liberal state is better suited to conditions in which differences of opinion separate people rather than differences in personal characteristics. It is hard to justify support for liberal principles of political equality when social relations are marked by assumptions of superiority and inferiority. Liberals such as Rawls can claim to avoid such difficulties by the fact that they are concerned only to determine the conditions for political consensus where people are divided on issues of belief rather than on matters of race, gender or sexuality.²³ Thus, to an extent this discussion cannot really undermine that particular liberal account. However, at the very least it does suggest that liberal interpretation of 'public justifiability' is somewhat confused once we allow for these other sources of conflict. It would seem that on this criterion, people are allowed to be hypocritical, being politically 'reasonable' but socially 'unreasonable'. Or rather, the extent and nature of their social 'unreasonableness' casts significant doubt on the authenticity of their political 'reasonableness'.

The implication of the discussion above is that the limiting assumptions made by theorists such as Rawls render it difficult to apply the concept of public justifiability to real-world politics. The ideal is still an admirable one, but its simplicity is really its failing. In cases where the citizen body is divided by cleavages of race, class, gender or sexuality, the nature of the negative attitudes aroused are such as to make it hard for us to believe in the authenticity of any stated beliefs in the equality of persons at the political level. This need not commit us to holding that the legitimacy of the liberal state is thereby undermined, rather it just forces us to appreciate the distance between the concept and the reality of 'reasonableness'. This gives liberal theory some reason to attend more carefully to social attitudes, and their development, or at least to qualify their definition of 'reasonableness'.

iii. Undermining of self-respect

The previous two issues raised by consideration of the empirical material suggest that there is room for more focus on inter-group attitudes, even when these are social as opposed to specifically political. In the first case, intolerant and prejudiced social attitudes can feed political intolerance, inhibit the implementation of liberal principles and perhaps even create political instability if sufficiently prevalent.²⁴ As regards the second issue of justification, it seems that unless social prejudice along traditional lines of class and race can be eradicated, political 'agreement by reasonable citizens' is a less than perfect criterion on which to ground the legitimacy of the liberal state. However, even if political problems consequently arise, it is not clear that either of these problems gives sufficient reason to call for state intervention in the formation and expression of social attitudes. In this third section, one further reason will be offered which is significantly more persuasive in this matter than the previous two. Once again, we will see that it is the theoretical implications of the psychological material rather than simply the revealed empirical imperfection which is problematic on liberal terms.

Rawls explicitly states not only that self-respect is a primary good, but that it is the most important primary good.²⁵ He goes on to give a detailed account of the institutional and

²³ For explanation of this point see Chapter Five, p. 147, especially fn. 70

²⁴ Certain institutional conditions may heighten this possibility; proportionally representative systems as opposed to majority systems offer greater potential for extremist or nationalist groups to gain influence.

²⁵ Rawls 1973, p. 440; Rawls 1993, p. 319. Note that Rawls' texts are referred to here not because he is the only liberal to address issues of self-respect but because he is perhaps the most explicit on this matter.

structural bases of that good, which include membership of a supportive ‘community of shared interests’,²⁶ ‘publicly affirmed distribution of fundamental rights and liberties’,²⁷ being a fully co-operating member of society and being recognised as such,²⁸ and possession of an effective sense of justice.²⁹ According to this account, political institutions can, and should, work with social structure to ensure that each individual has the conditions within which to develop self-respect. Self-respect is about believing in one’s own choice of direction, and taking responsibility for those choices. This is supported socially through the acceptance and understanding of one’s fellow group members. The state’s role is to ensure that rights, liberties, resources and opportunities are distributed in such a way as to support individual autonomy, whilst awareness of equal status is supposed to result from this just distribution of political rights and liberties rather than say differentials in income or power.³⁰ Beyond the acknowledgement that group membership is a vital component of self-respect little is said about the social conditions in which this sense will flourish. Instead it is the role of the liberal state in ensuring a just basic structure which is emphasised.

Ironically, the research covered in the previous chapter backs up Rawls’ claim that group membership is necessary for the development of self-respect, but goes on to suggest that the effect of inter-group relations on the larger scale may be such as to undermine that sense. In Chapter Six, the basic premises of social identity theory were outlined, and the relationship between group identity and self-esteem was stressed.³¹ It was claimed that there is a fundamental motivation for self-esteem which will be satisfied when inter-group interaction proceeds along dimensions which will reflect most favourably on the in-group. As outlined on page 176 this motivation can be expressed in two different ways, the most important of which for our purposes is the drive to belong to a positively valued group. It is in trying to maintain this positive valuation that we tend to regard other groups as inferior, identifying them with a conveniently negative stereotypical image. The drive to maintain individual self-esteem can only achieve its aim at the expense of undermining the self-respect of others. Thus,

²⁶ Rawls 1973, p. 442.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 544.

²⁸ Rawls 1993, p. 81-2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

³⁰ Rawls 1973, p. 544.

this well-received psychological theory and the studies supporting it suggest that although group membership does indeed play an important role in supporting self-respect it does so by encouraging inter-group conflict, rather than by promoting 'social union'.³²

Perhaps even this conclusion would not matter greatly, were it not for the fact that according to the group conflict material, and in particular, Tajfel's minimal group experiments, this motivation plays a role in most, if not all, inter-group interactions.³³ Of course this is not to say that in every inter-group situation this tendency will manifest itself in overt dislike or discrimination, let alone political intolerance. Rather it is just that the group element of such interactions will subtly alter our perception of the situation and in many cases may be expressed through differential treatment of out-group members and more negative attitudes towards them (as proved to be the case in Tajfel's experiments). Where this motivation does manifest itself in behaviour it will communicate hostility, superiority or dislike to the other group. Obviously these attitudes will do little to enhance the self-esteem of members of that other group, who may retaliate with similar responses in order to protect their own self-respect. This research suggests that we should not be surprised to discover that inter-group conflict is a common occurrence. Not every group suffers as much discrimination or dislike as racial minorities or homosexuals, but many groups will be the victim of some form of derogation or biased treatment. Under conditions of pluralism, self-respect would thus seem likely to face daily pressures in the shape of these inter-group negative social (and sometimes even politically expressed) attitudes. Political expression of these attitudes may be especially damaging to self-respect as it publicly symbolises the perceived inferiority of one group. Systems such as apartheid are institutionalised expressions of group superiority and inferiority. Liberal principles would clearly deny such systems any legitimacy. Unfortunately it is less obvious that liberal theory has any grounds on which it can object to the social variant of these attitudes. Or more accurately, it might disapprove, but would not intervene.

³¹ See Chapter Six, p. 176. The term self-esteem does seem to be used in an equivalent manner to 'self-respect' in the psychological literature, and as Rawls himself uses them interchangeably I shall follow that example.

³² Hogg & Abrams give a particularly clear account of these claims and their acceptance within the discipline. See Hogg & Abrams 1988, Chapter 1, or Tyler *et al.* 1997, p. 184-88.

This is still no reason for us to recommend state intervention in the formation and expression of social attitudes. For this claim to be acceptable we would have to show that Rawls is right to prize self-respect so highly; liberals could just decide that maybe developing self-respect matters less than keeping state intervention to a minimum. Another possible response to the group conflict material would be to argue that generally people manage to develop a sense of self-respect despite the pressures of social identity and that therefore there is little reason to change the way things are. This is probably true. All that we can say in defence of our claims is that the levels of intolerance and discrimination between certain groups are sufficiently high as to present a real challenge to the normal development of self-respect for members of those groups. Attitudes and behaviour towards women, ethnic minorities, members of some socio-economic groups and homosexuals most quickly spring to mind, but there are other social groups who are also very frequently face demeaning treatment and attitudes.

It would also be odd for liberals to respond to these criticisms by rejecting self-respect as an important concern. Certainly, Rawls is not the only liberal to prioritise self-respect as one of the most important goods that a state should endeavour to secure for its citizens. Indeed, such a prioritisation is almost implicit in the focus on autonomy, tolerance and individual choice of lifestyle. As Kymlicka sums it up,

“Now no one disputes the importance of securing the social preconditions of self-respect.”³⁴

Margalit’s work focuses specifically on this issue, arguing for the fundamental importance of respect, self-respect and the absence of humiliation within a ‘decent’ state.³⁵ He actually strengthens Rawls’ claim, arguing:

“It is clear that the spirit of a just society cannot tolerate systematic humiliation by its basic institutions. This is especially true since the good to be distributed, in the form of social conditions that enable people to have self-respect, is at the top of the just society’s priority list. If humiliation means damaging people’s self-respect, then it is clear that a necessary condition for the just society is that it should be a society that does not humiliate its members.”³⁶

³³ Hogg & Abrams 1988, p. 56-7; Tajfel 1978.

³⁴ Kymlicka 1989, p. 61.

³⁵ A. Margalit, *The Decent Society*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1996.

³⁶ Margalit 1996, p. 273.

Both Kymlicka and Margalit also echo Rawls' point that autonomous individuals need the social confirmation of others in order to have confidence in their choices and values, again highlighting the link between group membership and self-respect.³⁷

Notably Margalit expresses some doubts as to whether even a Rawlsian society would necessarily avoid humiliation and ensure the development of self-respect. He points, for example, to Rawls' tolerance of what goes on within the practice of religion. Many women are excluded from certain ceremonies or positions of responsibility, which reflects their status as lesser members of that religious community. More generally, Margalit reinterprets this argument in terms of inclusion or exclusion from 'encompassing groups'. Political liberalism explicitly avoids consideration of how social (as opposed to political) relations are conducted within or even between such groups. Margalit argues that this may be acceptable if all we concerned with is political justice, but if we are at all interested in decency, then such avoidance is short-sighted. Whilst Rawls could retort that he is not interested in decency, the fact remains that even if he doesn't use this term, he at least prioritises self-respect not only as a primary good, but as the most important primary good.

Margalit's criticisms are obviously ontologically informed, referring as they do to the effects of social institutions and relations on individual development. Yet, as is the case with most liberal ontological claims, his views are general and intuitive rather than grounded in any empirical evidence. However, as outlined earlier in this section, the material considered in the previous chapter definitely backs up these concerns. Levels of respect and self-respect are heavily influenced by such intra- and inter-group attitudes. Psychologically, development of self-respect seems to be central to the phenomenon of group-membership; ironically, group conflict, intolerance and discrimination are largely driven by this motivation. Although Rawls might wish to focus on the institutional means of inculcating self-respect, social identity theory and the Contact Hypothesis studies back up Margalit's claim that social interaction and

³⁷ Kymlicka 1989, p. 61; Margalit 1996, p. 124-5. Indeed, Margalit argues that this is not just a psychological relationship, it is also a conceptual one.

"The attitude of others is built into the very concept of the value of humans which the bearer of self-respect is supposed to adopt with regard for herself." (Margalit 1996, p. 125.)

group membership issues can work to counteract any positive institutional effects.³⁸

Thus consideration of concrete empirical evidence can help us to distinguish between contradictory ontological claims, and adjudicate as to which is most accurate.

This last section reveals that liberals should be concerned with the negative effects of inter-group conflict, even when these attitudes are expressed in social rather than political encounters. It is not simply that we want people to like each other more, or to feel more positively about diversity, rather it is that, as liberals, we want to ensure that everyone has equal access to the various bases of self-respect, whether these be social or political. It seems that the conditions of pluralism may not favour this, and certainly it is not as easy as liberal texts like to suggest. On these grounds some reconsideration of liberal tolerance and its development is recommended; the next section of this final chapter will delineate what sort of changes might be required.

II Substantive Recommendations.

The above conclusions show that the psychological research introduced in Chapter Six does reveal important inadequacies in the liberal account, both in the way that political tolerance is characterised and prioritised, and in the extent to which the damaging effects of social intolerance are neglected. In the light of this claim, we can proceed to examine what substantive changes are recommended if liberal theory is to resolve these inadequacies. Two possibilities will be considered.³⁹ The first is that broadly, liberal theorists have produced a fairly adequate account of how individuals can be socialised to become tolerant citizens. It is just that the details need tweaking to allow for the more sophisticated understanding of tolerance and inter-group attitudes as revealed by Chapter Six's overview of the empirical material. The second possibility is that quite simply, a more interventionary approach is required, and that relying on people's own autonomous actions will prove counter-productive.

³⁸ Further discussion of the role of institutions in developing liberal qualities will be undertaken in the following section.

³⁹ The changes that could be introduced to the liberal concept of tolerance will not be discussed here as the main implications should already be clear. Of greater concern is the thoroughness and coherence of liberal assumptions about socialisation processes, which has yet to be discussed.

The accuracy of liberal assumptions about socialisation.

In Chapter Four, we identified the main types of socialising influence referred to by liberal theorists. In theory these should be sufficient to ensure the development of the requisite liberal dispositions described in Chapter Five. It was noted there, however, that few details are given as to how a particular disposition such as tolerance is to be inculcated. The best account we could give suggested that the most important influences would be liberal institutions and procedures, education and social interaction. The first is supported by Rawls' and Dworkin's focus on transparent and justifiable government, the second by detailed studies such as those of Callan or Levinson, whilst the third draws on Rawls' morality of association and Macedo's civic education. Having looked at some of the empirical material which studies how best to ameliorate inter-group relations, we are in a position to assess the thoroughness and accuracy of that liberal account.⁴⁰ Two aspects of that account allow of obvious comparison: the first is the contention that liberal institutions can themselves socialise individuals to develop the requisite liberal qualities; the second is the recommendation of interaction with different others, whether in school or social environments.

i. Effect of Institutions on Liberal Dispositions

The crucial claim is that liberal institutions can be established in advance of the development of requisite liberal dispositions such as toleration. These dispositions will tend to be developed by the sustained successful working of the political institutions over a period of time. Rawls and Macedo thus assert that it is possible for citizens to develop ever more liberal dispositions when exposed to the successful functioning of liberal institutions in their society.⁴¹ This claim we can assess against the findings of social psychology as delineated in the previous chapter.

There are two aspects of the research previously outlined which can offer some insight into this question. One of the five delimiting conditions of the contact hypothesis advocated the development and spread of egalitarian attitudes. The suggestion was that groups of individuals espousing values of equality and individualism would be more able to embrace benevolent inter-group co-operation. This would be possible because

⁴⁰ Our conclusions are limited in that the material considered only addresses one aspect of socialisation.

⁴¹ See for example, Rawls 1993, p. 163; Macedo 1991, p. 259-60.

adherence to such values would offer an alternative means of supporting self-identity in the absence of group conflict. In extending their circle of co-operation and interaction, egalitarian individuals would see themselves as living up to their group norms rather than betraying them. Cook's research extended this finding to show that where egalitarian norms are manifested, the likelihood that an individual can generalise from positive inter-individual interaction to inter-group relations will be greater.⁴² These conclusions suggest that if individuals can be encouraged to internalise general liberal norms of respect for equality and autonomy then they might also come to develop more specific dispositions such as that of toleration. This brings the arguments of Rawls and Macedo one step closer to their goal, but it does not go quite far enough. The further claim that would have to be supported by social psychology would be that the successful operation of liberal institutions is sufficient to inculcate in individuals an appreciation of equality and autonomy. This claim cannot be fully answered on the basis of the material presented here.

The effect of institutions and social structure on the development of toleration can also be partly assessed by referring back to Pettigrew's over-view of contact theory. His conclusions emphasised the inter-relationship between social structure, institutions, group identity and individual behaviour. Vitally, he argued that contact theory could only successfully resolve the problems of group conflict or moral exclusion if structural inequalities of power and resource allocation had already been worked out. He also claimed that the micro-level effects of individual and group interactions are both influenced by institutional change, and also influence the process of change in turn.⁴³ The suggestion is that only if society is not riven by deep structural inequalities, or marked by a rigid social stratification structure, can the contact approach achieve any positive results. Without a substantial reduction of social inequality and unfairness, social categories will retain their salience, and thus reduce the likelihood of peaceful inter-group interaction. Hogg and Abrams note that other methods of decreasing inter-group hostility, such as education, may also prove ineffective if experiences outside the classroom are marked by prejudice, discrimination and inequality.⁴⁴

⁴² Cook 1984.

⁴³ Pettigrew in Hewstone & Brown 1986, p. 191.

⁴⁴ Hogg and Abrams 1988, p. 86.

This does imply that unless liberal institutions are in place, it is even less likely that tolerance and other liberal dispositions will be developed. Thus Rawls and Macedo would seem to be on the right lines. The requirement is, however, even stronger than this. It is not simply the case that liberal institutions must allocate resources fairly and pursue equal opportunities policies; rather they must have actually eliminated many of the substantive inequalities between social groups before the conditions for successful group interaction can arise. This is a far more taxing requirement, and one which liberals cannot necessarily meet just by imposing liberal institutions and procedures on a society. One of the most important points to be learnt from this study of group conflict theory is that the inter-relations between individuals, social structure and institutions are far more complex than political theorists would like to think. Imposing liberal institutions may once and for all change the allocation of resources and award protection to individual autonomy. But it will not alter individual dispositions universally if important social cleavages remain. These cleavages will remain as long as certain divisive features remain salient, that is, if there are differentials of status, achievement, employment, public representation and so on. These in turn will be hard to eliminate so long as people think in terms of 'them' and 'us', and previously mentioned problems such as supporting individual self-respect and implementing full equality of opportunity will continue. The process of change will be slow, as alterations are required in micro-level relationships such as inter-group contact and also in macro-level institutional and procedural norms. Liberals need to think more carefully about how we can make society more liberal, and the way to do so is to focus on some of these complex and previously disregarded social mechanisms, whose effects may well be most visible at the local, rather than national, level.

Perhaps the most accurate way to portray the interaction between liberal institutions, social structure and individual dispositions is as a chicken and egg relationship. Clearly, we cannot change inter-group attitudes overnight merely by imposing liberal institutions on a society; a change in social structure is needed. But neither can a truly liberal social structure arise unless individuals restrain their discriminatory and stereotyping tendencies. There is thus a sense in which Rawls and Macedo are correct to assume that liberal institutions are a necessary precondition of the development of liberal dispositions. But their accounts are also incomplete in that they do not acknowledge the negative effects of moving from a non-liberal society marred by inequality and inter-

group hostility. Past inequality may leave a legacy of inter-group hostility and intolerance which the mere imposition of institutions alone cannot destroy. Another implication of this chicken-and-egg dilemma is that liberal procedures and institutions may not be seen as legitimate if people do not manifest the requisite liberal dispositions. As stated in the previous section, we must simply accept that a degree of paternalism is necessary for us to even reach the stage where we can become properly liberal citizens.

Psychologists such as Pettigrew, Hogg and Abrams, Miller and Brewer, and all the other ‘contact theorists’ discussed above, hold that inter-group contact is an important means of reducing inter-group conflict precisely because institutional and distributive change *alone* cannot achieve this result. Accounts which attempt to plot the possible progress of liberal society ‘from here’ such as those of Rawls (during the ten relevant pages of *Political Liberalism*), Macedo, and others by implication, are thus not incorrect in their favouring of institutional change, but they are incomplete. Some focus on social structure and micro-level processes such as group interactions is necessary to complete their account.

ii. Interaction

Rawls, Macedo and Callan are just some of the theorists to appeal to the value of interaction with different others. Rawls draws on the concept to explain how children might come to understand the existence of other perspectives, and consequently develop the capacity for empathy and awareness of the need for rules of justice regulating conduct.⁴⁵ Macedo believes that pluralism and membership of multiple cross-cutting groups helps to breed responsibility and distance from one’s own ends.⁴⁶ Callan appeals to the importance of learning about different viewpoints in order to understand the full implications of the burdens of judgement.⁴⁷ Quite clearly these are the sort of claims which group conflict theory is well qualified to judge. The most obvious comment is that simple interaction is not enough; the number of conditions attached to the Contact Hypothesis should make this plain. The flip side of this observation is perhaps the more important point for liberals to note; under certain conditions, interaction between conflicting groups can actually worsen relations, thus exacerbating tensions and

⁴⁵ Rawls 1973.

⁴⁶ Macedo 1996.

⁴⁷ Callan 1996.

increasing intolerance or prejudice. As Sherif discovered, contact between groups characterised by competition rather than co-operation may heighten hostility;⁴⁸ likewise if the contact situation does not facilitate equal status between the groups, the conflict may worsen.⁴⁹ It is extremely important, therefore, that liberals note the recommendations of contact theory in order to ensure both that their socialisation accounts are well-informed, and that society itself might become more perfectly liberal.

The five conditions which were previously identified as qualifying the contact hypothesis required that the contact situation must award equal status to participants of both groups; that it should encourage a relationship of mutual interdependence; that it should facilitate acquaintance rather than just brief contact; that the norms guiding the situation should promote group equality and finally that the characteristics of the participants should disconfirm, rather than confirm, negative stereotypical beliefs. Given that merely guaranteeing more opportunities for meeting different others or simply promoting interaction are not necessarily productive approaches, it is worth considering in what ways liberal theory could act to ensure interaction of the right sort.

The first condition, that of equal status, is perhaps the hardest for liberals to ensure; although citizenship is a status equally possessed by all, group conflict theory highlights the problem that in many situations citizenship is not perceived as the defining feature of participants. Inter-group hostility arises when members of one different group are regarded by another group as universally possessing certain unattractive stereotypical group characteristics. In other words, in-group members cannot but see out-group members as inferior. Evocations of 'equal citizenship' are, in this situation, unlikely to convince. Thus this first condition requires not just that participants share a nominally equal status, but that that status is recognised and accepted by the group-members themselves. As was noted in the previous chapter, this requirement is fraught with difficulty – previous status differentials can remain psychologically salient long after the original social, political or economic inequalities have been removed, also, obvious attempts to equalise status may antagonise the dominant group rather than successfully harmonise relations. This condition does however find some support in previous

⁴⁸ Sherif 1961.

⁴⁹ Miller & Brewer 1984; Festinger & Kelly (1951) also report a heightening of hostility on the grounds that contact can reinforce stereotypical images when the experience of out-group members coincides with previously-held negative expectations.

political policies. The logic of providing non-means-tested benefits such as Child Benefit appealed in part to the equalising effect of standing together in the Post Office queue, where all would be united in common simply as ‘parents’ rather than members of a particular class or group.⁵⁰ Similar arguments (amongst others) lie behind the provision of a public health service or education system; each of these is supposed to ensure that people are reminded of their equal status, are treated as equals, and are seen to be treated as equals. The latter policy is supported further by the fact that children, especially at early ages, are relatively unaware of the salience of group membership. Thus ensuring that children from different ethnic, social, economic and religious groups are integrated in schools from the very beginning of their education could be a crucial step in reducing group conflict and raising tolerance levels.

Another political policy which might find some support in the equal status condition is affirmative action. Although such policies have usually proved controversial in practice, one of the most persuasive justifications for the policy recognises that ‘reverse discrimination’ may be necessary in order to reduce the sense of injustice and frustration felt by excluded groups whilst also raising their public status.⁵¹ As was observed in the previous chapter, if members of a certain group are only ever encountered in low-status or even demeaning employment, then most encounters with those individuals will not help to integrate the different groups successfully. Ensuring that members of the low-status group can attain high-status positions is one way of breaking this mould, and in many cases affirmative action has proved the only way of ensuring that representation is achieved.

Other forms of interaction recommended by this first condition of the contact hypothesis include such situations as enjoyment of sports and leisure activities, and participation in local or national democratic bodies, whether they be school governing boards, local councils or a national parliament. One caveat should temper undiscerning enthusiasm for participation though. Given that we are concerned to emphasise equal status in these interaction situations, some attention must be paid to the norms and language used. As studies of the supposedly inclusionary British City Challenge

⁵⁰ T. H. Marshall, ‘Citizenship and Social Class’, in T. H. Marshall & T. Bottomore, *Citizenship and Social Class*, Pluto Press, London 1992, p. 33-4.

⁵¹ See for example R. Dworkin ‘Bakke’s Case: Are Quotas Unfair?’ in Dworkin 1986, especially p. 294.

projects demonstrated, people from traditionally marginalised groups can be made to feel even more excluded or inferior if they cannot understand the overly formal language or jargon used, or if requirements of dress, behaviour or procedure are unfamiliar and intimidating.⁵² Equal status thus implies more than merely formally equal recognition: it requires the possibility of involvement on terms accessible to all.

The second condition requires that the contact situation should involve co-operation rather than competition, ideally successful co-operation. Again this recommendation has certain implications for liberal views on socialisation; in particular, sport and education are once more suggested as suitable spheres for integration. The feeling of playing on the same team is obviously literally encouraged by the experience of team-sports. Research on the benefits of cross-cutting group memberships has developed from the focus on co-operative situations. Given that competition can worsen hostilities, as Sherif's studies demonstrated, and that co-operation can improve relations, there is reason to demand that, in competitive situations, competing teams are composed of members of more than one group. Studies on the issue have shown that a cross-cutting membership or categorisation structure can better absorb conflict and de-accentuate differences both within and between groups. This strategy of combining co-operation and cross-cutting group membership has already been incorporated into a highly successful educational technique known as 'the jigsaw classroom'.⁵³ This has been proved extremely effective in integrating children from different social and ethnic groups, and is certainly an approach which a liberal pedagogy should consider.

Once again, though, this condition also warns liberal theory about certain types of contact which will not prove fruitful, and which should therefore not be promoted. If local politics is continuously divided along issue cleavages which reflect underlying group differences, then any drive to increase participation will only serve to heighten group tensions. As such 'more participation' is not necessarily a good thing, at least from the point of view of integration and tolerance. This is one reason why policies intended to reduce conflict would benefit from an awareness of the particular character of local disputes and problems. Another issue which liberals should consider concerns

⁵² S. Davoudi & P. Healey, 'City Challenge: Sustainable Progress or Temporary Gesture?', in *Environment and Planning C*, 13, 1, 1995, p. 79-95.

⁵³ Aronson *et al.* 1997.

the ways in which competition can arise. Scarcity of resources, whether this means inadequate provision of public goods and facilities, shortage of jobs, or even lack of space can all exacerbate conflict, largely because such scarcity stimulates competition.⁵⁴ Obviously liberals are committed to policies of equal opportunities, redistribution and ensuring sufficient provision of basic goods, but this point does emphasise why living in an imperfectly liberal society in the meanwhile may escalate conflict between groups, such that consequent improvement in socio-economic distribution could fail to improve relations.

The third condition of the Contact Hypothesis states that the contact situation should be such as to facilitate acquaintance; that is, contact should not be too brief, and ideally should be repeated over a period of time, further the nature of the contact should allow participants to get to know each other. Only thus will it be possible for the interacting individuals to come to see other as persons rather than just as group members, and react accordingly. Both Cook and Pettigrew expand on this condition and are emphatic that longitudinal studies are the only way to observe the full potential of contact between members of conflicting groups.

From the point of view of liberal theory, this limiting condition suggests that we should not expect too much from infrequent or random encounters, or indeed from regular interaction which does not involve personal communication. This does debunk some suggestions that merely passing through the same public spaces, or sharing a common residential area will be sufficient to integrate different groups and support pluralism. Certainly these factors may help; casual encounters and shared space are certainly more conducive to the development of familiarity and acceptance than segregation or exclusion. There is also something to be said for ensuring that neighbourhoods and localities retain common facilities such as parks, schools, restaurants, shops and banks; the drive for expansion and cost-cutting which can destroy or drive out these common meeting-places does little to preserve familiarity and regular contact between neighbours, and will also increase the marginalisation of those without money to travel

⁵⁴ It has been shown, for example, that support for Far Right parties is often higher where unemployment among young males is greater, or amongst groups heavily dependent upon support from the welfare state. See Kitschelt, 1995.

out to such facilities.⁵⁵ On its own, however, random contact will do little to ameliorate inter-group relations or raise levels of tolerance.

Once again, schools, sports and leisure activities are recommended as suitable environments for getting to know people better. Some of Cook's most successful studies focused on mothers of pre-school children required to attend child-rearing classes; this demonstrates the suitability of interest groups, residential groups such as neighbourhood watch and civic action programs for encouraging engagement. Employment is another situation which can (but may not always) manifest 'acquaintance potential'. People cannot be forced to make contact with different others, let alone frequent and personal contact.⁵⁶ The most that liberal theory can do to promote such contact is to ensure that common facilities are provided and open to all; it could intervene in some planning decisions to ensure that local areas are not left without crucial meeting-places and public spaces. Likewise there would be good reason to promote an active citizenry; Macedo's vision of individuals participating in many different social and political groups would provide individuals with multiple opportunities to meet and engage with different others, even as adults. More directly this condition gives further reason for liberals to attend to the character and quality of education; group-membership is less salient at this stage and friendships form easily in this environment.

The fourth condition is one which liberals should have few problems accepting. The requirement is that the norms of the contact situation should promote group equality and egalitarianism rather than deny it. Social norms are important in two different ways. Firstly, we would expect those expressing commitment to equality to be less prone to intolerant or discriminatory attitudes. Secondly, as Cook showed, individual readiness to accept egalitarian arguments will make it more likely that positive attitudes towards an out-group member will be generalisable to the whole group. On the other hand, no matter how positive the experience for individual participants, if social norms support discrimination and deny equality then an improvement in relations is unlikely.

⁵⁵ See for example, M. Geddes, 'Poverty, Excluded Communities and Local Democracy', *Commission for Local Democracy Research Report no. 3*, CLD Ltd, London 1995; J. Boswell, *Community and the Economy*, Routledge, New York, 1990, p. 38-9.

⁵⁶ Although this is possible to the extent that some opportunities to avoid contact with others could be removed. As regards education for example, a state could ban private schooling and demand that all children attend comprehensive schools. This is rather a special case as education cannot be opted out of,

Institutionalised discrimination is therefore doubly oppressive; not only are individuals denied equal opportunities, rights or status, they are also denied the possibility of gaining much support from a probably ambivalent majority. Fortunately, this argument should work to liberal advantage. Given that liberal political culture espouses a commitment to norms of egalitarianism, there should be no risk that inequality and prejudice could be perceived as legitimate. In all cases of positive inter-group interaction, liberals would hope this to be supported by public values rather than undermined.

This expectation is reasonable if we assume contemporary society to be perfectly liberal; unfortunately this is not the case. Social norms can arise at levels below that of the nation-state, and may most damagingly do so when they arise within discriminating groups. Thus, for example, the logic and values of gang mentality amongst young males of certain cultural or ethnic groups may tell against the possibility of successful integration. Likewise, those affluent middle-class, educated people who choose to separate themselves from the rest of the city through purchase of segregated estate housing and employment of private security may also cultivate and spread an inegalitarian attitude amongst themselves.⁵⁷ The latter may not even think they are being intolerant, but the effects of separation and segregation are such as to breed distrust and dislike, natural precursors to intolerance, and damaging enough in their own right. These are the people that liberalism has to convince. Such normalisation of inequality and intolerance will severely impede our ability to get to a perfectly liberal society from here.

The implications of these points for liberal theory are unclear. Liberalism already propounds a commitment to equality and to the internalisation of egalitarian values on the part of its citizenry. As such, both legislation and education are expected to develop, enforce and reinforce just values. Cook, in his research findings, recommends two course of action, namely trying to inculcate more egalitarian and just attitudes in people generally, and to encourage consistency between espoused values and particular

unlike most other activities, where people could avoid inter-group contact simply by avoiding the activity concerned.

⁵⁷ In his study of Los Angeles Mike Davis implies that this trend of middle-class separation and prejudice is especially damaging because the individuals concerned have the support of the police and local trade

actions.⁵⁸ As was observed in the review of political tolerance surveys, inconsistency between general attitudes towards justice and specific reactions to particular groups is surprisingly common. Taking a psychological perspective on these questions Cook recommends employing cognitive approaches to achieve these ends. Whilst it would be impossible to incorporate most of these methods into either education or other politically manipulable forms of socialisation, two do stand out as potentially useful strategies. On the issue of changing or strengthening justice principles, Cook claims that television can be an effective means of changing values, through the transmission of suitable stimuli. Although this may sound sinister, if we turn to the seminal research on this issue, it only requires exposing individuals to programmes in which core values are described and frequent contradictions or inconsistencies noted. Such programmes aim to encourage individuals to examine their own beliefs and self-images for possible inconsistencies.⁵⁹ The second strategy to receive Cook's backing concerns the effect of both peer-groups and influential public figures in shaping individual attitudes; this suggests that liberals should be less shy in standing up for their values, both in education and the media.

The fifth condition of the contact hypothesis is almost entirely beyond liberal control. This requires that the characteristics of participating group members must be such as to disconfirm previously negative stereotypical beliefs. Given that there are bound to be some members of groups who do manifest these stereotypical characteristics, contact theory holds that group conflict will most successfully be eradicated where initial inter-group does not include these individuals. Once an amicable relationship has arisen between some members, these positive attitudes may be generalised towards other group-members, even if they possess these negative characteristics. Even if liberal politics cannot manipulate this contact condition to encourage inter-group harmony, it is worth noting some of the rather depressing implications of this claim. Individuals want to be tolerated and treated with respect and justice no matter what their arbitrary characteristics or autonomously held beliefs. In some cases these characteristics or beliefs may be negatively regarded by other groups, and come to comprise a

and business. Thus these social norms are reinforced and even legitimised in the eyes of the dominant group. (Davis 1990, Chapter 4.)

⁵⁸ Cook 1990, p. 155-57.

⁵⁹ S. J. Ball-Rokeach, M. Rokeach & J. W. Grube, *The Great American Value Test*, Free Press, New York, 1984, p. 72-3.

stereotypical image of one group's identity. Thus, for example, gay men are often portrayed as effeminate or camp. For some gay men these characteristics may comprise part of their own self-identity, and be a source of fulfilment. Yet contact theory suggests that if the intolerant or discriminating groups encounter many effeminate gay men, then this will strengthen rather than reduce prejudice. In other words, if gay men want to enhance the social acceptance of their group then they should hide or deny their stereotypical characteristics, no matter how insulting or humiliating this may be to some individuals.⁶⁰ Although this is clearly undesirable from a liberal perspective, it might explain why confrontational campaigns for acceptance of certain groups can actually prove counter-productive if the population is very biased.

Before summing up the implications of this research for liberal accounts of socialisation it is worth just recapping the process by which group conflict is supposed to be mitigated. This should reveal a few more general points which could be incorporated into liberal theory. Pettigrew, in the most recent review of the literature holds that there are three stages to eradicating group conflict: decategorisation, salient group categorisation and recategorisation.⁶¹ In the first stage, initial contact will be most productive if individuals can be encouraged to perceive each other as individuals rather than group members. In the second stage, group membership must become salient if the positive effects are to be generalised to all members of the groups beyond the contact situation. Only in this way will previous prejudices come to be cast aside – the alternative is that we see the newly made acquaintances as exceptional, and therefore warmer feelings towards them would not generalise to the larger group. The final stage is recategorisation, by which Pettigrew means that we could come to adopt an overarching common group identity. This is clearly the liberal ideal; common citizenship identity is the goal, and equal citizen characteristics are the ones which should be salient in all public interaction.

Whilst there are, as we have seen, strategies open to governments which might help reduce group conflict, the outcome of interaction is entirely beyond political control. Most of these strategies aspire to provide the conditions in which decategorisation may

⁶⁰ Golebiowska's study backs up this point; she studied tolerance reactions to male actors depending on whether they were portrayed as gay with stereotypical characteristics or gay without these characteristics. (Golebiowska 1996.)

⁶¹ Pettigrew 1998.

occur. The other two stages are far harder to induce through political means. Some of the conditions for decategorisation can be facilitated through the provision of multiple public arenas where children and adults can meet and interact with different others. This requirement justifies policies from provision of good public-funded schools, to promotion of civic and democratic participation, to intervention in planning decisions which threaten to move lifeline facilities from local areas.⁶² Given that sport and education are such ideal contexts for integrating children and young adults there is good reason for governments to ensure that both of these are properly funded and supported. Decategorisation can also be stimulated by the undertaking of common co-operative projects and the adoption of cross-cutting roles; both of these conditions can easily be met in sport and education, and may voluntarily arise in other forms of participation, including employment. It is vitally important that governments address the issue of status as far as they can; affirmative action may be one way of raising the status of previously excluded groups but other actions are also needed, such as proper representation of these groups in and on the various media. These suggestions clearly support the holist recommendations of liberals such as Callan, Macedo and Raz.

In order for the wider group to benefit from particular inter-group relationships, group identity must be made salient. Here it is more difficult to see how state policy could help, although it does suggest that we should not shy away from focusing directly on issues of inter-group conflict and publicising attempts to resolve them. Likewise children must be directly taught of the evils of racism and other forms of discrimination whilst also being instructed on the variety and value of different ways of life.

Recategorisation is the vital issue for liberals; as previously stated, the liberal model of pluralism assumes difference but also harmony. Political consensus and social stability are achievable so long as individuals react to each other as equals, and as citizens; this is the categorisation which must be made salient. Hence liberals must address the ways in which a superordinate identity can come to be accepted by individuals. Research has already shown that, once adopted, such an identification can significantly reduce inter-group conflict, even if sub-group identities are still important to the members involved.

⁶² It also suggests that there is reason to attend to the design of public spaces and buildings. Architects such as Frank Gehry, who designed the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and 'Disney Hall', the new concert hall in L.A., deliberately reject designs which appeal to one cultural or class tradition, and which are intended to be welcoming and accessible to all, rather than exclusive. For discussion of Gehry's work in this light see C. Jencks, *Heteropolis*, Academy Editions, London 1993.

Unfortunately there is little explicitly psychological research available as to how a super-ordinate identity comes to be salient for individuals, although other disciplines may well yield more studies.⁶³ For the moment, we must assume that citizenship education is crucially important as a means of inculcating awareness of a common identity, and perhaps should also not belittle the role of goods which create a common identity such as national sports teams or events, television and music.⁶⁴

Some alteration of the liberal account of socialisation is certainly recommended if only to refine it in the light of more thorough understanding of how these processes work. Liberals can continue to recommend interaction as a means of developing tolerance so long as they recognise that not all interaction will be beneficial, and that the most productive encounters will occur under specific contact conditions. One clear substantive recommendation is that liberals should focus on education as the most effective arena within which to encourage integration of different groups and to develop uniting super-ordinate identity. As regards liberal claims that institutions can socialise individuals to become more liberal, the research covered seems to back this up, but also suggests that attention to more localised effects is required. Liberals cannot smugly sit back and expect liberal institutions to work miracles if social cleavage structures remain intact at the local level. Individual attitudes and behaviour will prove resistant to change if daily experience reinforces rather than contradicts expectations of bias and antagonism.

How much contact, how much intervention?

It should be noted that the main thrust of these arguments must be towards *supporting heterogeneity*. Contact means mixing, meeting and learning, it demands that groups be encouraged to mingle and familiarise rather than remain segregated and distant. The onus is therefore on liberal theory to promote difference, contact and common experiences. The question is, how far need liberal states go to encourage integration?

⁶³ Political scientists have famously studied the effect of war on the formation of a common identity. See for example, J. Dryzek & R. E. Goodin, 'Risk-Sharing and Social Justice: the Motivational Foundations of the Welfare State', in *British Journal of Political Science*, 16, 1, 1986, p. 1-34.

⁶⁴ Political theorists have certainly made such claims; it would be interesting to see whether these would be backed up in empirical study. See Miller 1995, Chapter 2; D. Miller, 'In What Sense Must Socialism be Communitarian?' in *Social Philosophy & Policy*, 6, 2, 1986, p. 69-71; W. Kymlicka, 'Social Unity in a Liberal State', in *Social Philosophy & Policy*, 13, 1, 1996, p. 105-136.

Earlier consideration of the empirical material suggested that social (rather than just political) intolerance and discrimination could inhibit our ability to implement liberal principles and to support the development of individual self-respect. This suggests that liberals should attend to the means of reducing both socially and politically intolerant or discriminatory behaviour and attitudes. The question is, will the policies recommended above be sufficient to accomplish this, or is a more heavy-handed approach required?

The most extreme step would be to forbid self-segregation. Separation, whether due to exercise of prejudice or simple aspiration, be it by race, class or religion, can have extremely negative effects.⁶⁵ Commonly acknowledged costs of segregation include access to inferior quality education and services, low home values and consequent economic vulnerability, limited access to job opportunities outside the area, high mobility costs and high levels of crime.⁶⁶ Separation more easily sustains inequality and thus also ensures the survival of socially salient categorisations. It is unsurprising that moral exclusion is so closely linked to the inequalities which mark social, geographic and economic exclusion. Where our identities are defined instead by multiple group identifications there is less danger that one such identification will trounce all others and over-ride the claims of citizenship. This would seem to justify the move towards prohibiting self-segregation, but unfortunately the issue is not quite so clear-cut.

If this policy were pursued then the fortress-like whites-only estates of Mike Davis' Los Angeles would become a thing of the past. At the opposite end of the scale the urban ghetto might also be watered down. Clearly to prohibit self-segregating actions would be a drastic action and would normally be regarded as a massive infringement of personal liberty. The right to freedom of movement is usually taken to entail the right to purchase and occupy property as we choose. Such a policy would also seem to offend

⁶⁵ There is an extensive literature on the issue of residential segregation in sociology and social geography, much of which looks specifically at racial segregation and its effects. See for example, Massey & Denton 1993; S. Smith-Rex, *The Politics of Race and Residence*, Polity, Cambridge 1989; R. A. Smith, 'Creating Stable Racially Integrated Communities' in *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 15, 2, 1993, p. 115-40; J. Goering, A. Kamely & T. Richardson, 'Recent Research on Racial Segregation', *Urban Affairs Annual Review*, 32, 5, 1997, p. 723-45.

⁶⁶ See for example Massey & Denton 1993, Chapter 6, or G. A. Tobin, 'Epilogue: The Costs of Housing Discrimination and Segregation: An Inter-Disciplinary Social Science Statement.', in *Divided Neighbourhoods*, Sage, Beverley Hills 1987. Note that some of these costs affect even white, middle-class residents who leave the inner-cities, in that they are excluded from the cheaper inner-city areas, and face higher travel costs as well as exclusion from the cultural and recreational opportunities found in big urban centres.

against minority cultures who desire the support of being surrounded by like people. It would even seem to threaten the intrinsic benefits of pluralism, inhibiting our enjoyment of experiencing different areas and lifestyles, as when we wander through Soho's Chinatown, or streets laden with Turkish shops and restaurants. If Kymlicka is correct, such actions would rule out the possibility of minority groups achieving the conditions for autonomy and self-respect. On all counts it would seem misguided to target segregation where this arises from purely personal decisions, no matter how unfortunate the side-effects.

It is, however, worth distinguishing between different types of segregation. All segregation is, essentially, is the separation of groups. It can be achieved deliberately, as when the affluent middle-classes escape to cordoned-off estates, or it can occur accidentally, as people reach the economic threshold enabling migration to the suburbs. Vitally segregation can arise against the best wishes of those involved. Some of the most desperate inner-city areas are populated almost entirely by those who are too old or too poor to leave. As the area declines, it suffers the exodus of anyone with money and at the same time, perhaps, anyone with influence or hope. As the vicious circle bites, crime and neglect escalate, forcing out even those who are reluctant to leave. Inner-city deprivation is certainly no myth; a recent report on the state of British cities declaimed the brutal reality of life in many of our harshest city areas, and Britain is certainly not alone in this.⁶⁷

It is the latter sort of segregation which is most damaging, and which most obviously permits, indeed, even demands, government intervention. What this means is not that liberal government has a duty to forbid self-segregation, but rather, that it has a duty to ensure that, at the very least, it does not arise where it is not chosen. This means supporting inner-city areas by trying to keep crime and unemployment low, offering incentives and tax-breaks for firms and industry to set up nearby, ensuring the provision and quality of public facilities and education. It means mixing residential use with business use, encouraging the development of mid-price housing alongside the low-cost housing and state-owned properties. In other words, it means focusing on the character and problems of particular local areas, and implementing policy creatively to prevent

⁶⁷ See "United We Stand, Divided We Fall", leader on state of British cities, following publication of Lord Roger's 'Urban Task Force' Report. *The Observer*, June 27th 1999.

migration before it starts as well as to reverse it when it occurs. There may also be less paternalistic ways of discouraging self-segregation. Planning restrictions may work as a stick to deter, but carrots are also needed. Since many people move seeking security, much attention should be devoted to ways of reducing crime, ideally ways which address the specific problems of the area and offending groups, rather than just by putting more police on the streets. These links between crime, unemployment, socio-economic migration and polarisation, injustice and intolerance demonstrate the complexity of the problems which holism can reveal. Liberals claim to pursue justice, but all too often this means distributive justice; it is not clear that merely juggling resources will solve such deeply inter-twined problems as these. As critics of liberalism have argued, this is perhaps too narrow a focus.⁶⁸

The larger question here is how far we are prepared to go to promote tolerance and justice between different groups. If contact is so important in diminishing inter-group conflict and thereby raising levels of tolerance and justice, then should we allow people to separate themselves off from other social groups? We might be reluctant to prohibit self-segregating residency choices, but would we be prepared to abolish private schools or bus children from ethnic minorities to schools displaying little ethnic diversity? Are we willing to advocate quotas for firms such that each group be represented in proportional numbers? Would we forcibly integrate historically separate groups and neighbourhoods in order to ameliorate inter-group relations? There is no doubt that most of these actions would severely infringe individual autonomy, and might even prove counter-productive anyway. This is a difficult issue, but one which Macedo would perceive as an opportunity for liberalism to show its 'spine'. As was shown in Chapter Four, taking holism seriously can leave liberals with some pretty awkward decisions. The effects of social structure, institutions and other individuals combine together to make it easier or harder for liberals to maintain certain of their principles or ideals. As Taylor so rightly stated, holist claims can structure and limit the range of normative possibilities open to theorists. And that is precisely what we have here.

⁶⁸ Iris Marion Young, for example, argues that there are at least two other major justice issues ignored in the focus on distributive issues, namely oppression and domination, referring to the inhibition of self-development and self-determination respectively. (Young 1990, p. 37.)

The social psychological research revealed that pluralism may not be as easy to manage as liberals would like to assume. In particular, the psychology of group interaction is such as facilitate the development of intolerance or antagonism, and even to encourage various degrees of exclusion from justice. This, in turn, makes it much harder for the liberal state to ensure that each individual faces the necessary conditions for the development of self-respect, or that liberal principles such as equality of opportunity are implemented at the social as well as political level. The range of normative options open to liberals is thus limited in so far as they must attend to the empirically-proven ways in which people can be made more or less tolerant, more or less just, even though some of these methods conflict with conventionally awarded liberties and rights. Clearly liberals do propose some means for the development of tolerance, as Chapter Four revealed. But the lessons of the Chapter Six are that there are other pertinent processes and effects which need to be taken into account. In particular liberals need to take a stance on interaction and contact: how can it be promoted, encouraged, should any actions be prohibited, and so on. Likewise, some stance must be taken on education, given its vital role in socialising future citizens; should we demand comprehensive schooling only, or is private and separate education a parent's right? Should a liberal pedagogy be formulated and universally applied, perhaps in line with Aronson's methods? These are controversial normative questions which cannot be answered here; it remains for liberal theorists to determine how interventionary or non-interventionary they should be. The one certainty is that in arriving at such decisions, liberals should heed the full empirical implications of their choices, and take responsibility accordingly.

III Theoretical Recommendations

Thus far, the conclusions drawn have focused on the substantive implications of the research. Unsurprisingly, as well as recommending some specific changes to the concept of toleration or accounts of socialisation, this thesis has theoretical implications for liberal theory more generally. One of the main questions which this thesis set out to answer was whether or not liberal theory could still be informed in any way by communitarian critique; given the implications of the empirical material already discussed, this certainly seems to be the case. Having drawn a distinction between

ontological and normative critique it was suggested that the former might prove to be the most coherent and productive form of attack. Applying this critique to contemporary liberal theory in Chapter Four revealed that, although liberals claim to have embraced ontological holism, they do so in a relatively piecemeal and uninformed manner. There was thus deemed a need to explore the ways in which a more explicitly empirical approach to certain crucial holist issues might inform the liberal account. This in itself is a substantial methodological innovation and it is worth reiterating the justifications given.

In fact, it was argued earlier that many liberals implicitly appeal to empirical premises in their arguments already, but that they do so without choosing to consider the empirical evidence which actually supports or contradicts their assumptions. Chapter Four revealed the extent to which liberals have incorporated holist assumptions particularly in their accounts of how citizens will be shaped by institutional, cultural and social effects. These assumptions are largely grounded in common sense judgements about how the world seems to work. They are thus grounded in empirical generalisations, although there is no direct consideration of the actual evidence supporting or contradicting those positions. In many cases, incorporation of these premises raised some rather awkward normative issues for liberal theory: considering the effects of growing up in a gendered family environment raised questions of how we distinguish the public and the private for the purposes of justice; likewise addressing the requirements of educating children to understand the burdens of judgement potentially undermines Rawls's political/comprehensive dichotomy. In the light of these challenges and the possibly dramatic changes they could induce, there would seem to be good reason to ensure that the holist generalisations so relied upon are indeed accurate. This is one justification for turning to empirical studies of the relevant areas.

A further justification was presented in the form of liberalism's explicit claim to have accepted the limiting factors of social embeddedness. If liberals such as Galston, Kymlicka, Macedo, and even Dworkin are concerned to help us reach a more perfectly liberal society, then accepting social embeddedness means that they must address the currently limiting factors which could quicken or impede that process. Given that each of these theorists addresses current problems, presumably in an endeavour to help us make society more liberal, it would be reasonable to demand a more factually-informed

understanding of how the relevant problems can or cannot be solved given the way that we know social processes and relationships to work. Even liberals such as Rawls, who are largely concerned only with the limiting factors of social embeddedness in a perfect liberal society, can learn from some empirical evidence. If the motivations underlying group conflict theory really are as fundamental as they appear to be, then stability, even in the well-ordered pluralistic society might be very hard to guarantee. Likewise, equality of opportunity and the development of self-respect seem to require the eradication of entrenched social cleavages and prejudices, and the negative attitudes they give rise to.

There is thus good reason for liberals to accept the necessity of considering whether or not empirical evidence backs up their claims concerning the effects of a liberal society on the citizenry. This claim holds both for liberals explicitly concerned with making existent societies more liberal, such as Macedo, Galston or Kymlicka, and for those who focus on the character of the ideal liberal society such as Rawls. Whilst we should not assume that the social sciences can solve any of liberal theory's problems, they may be able to inform and structure the debates such that we can be sure we are facing a *feasible* range of normative options every time we engage in these arguments. It should be noted that this argument does not entail a naïve belief that social science can always provide definitive results or even agree upon the interpretation of those results. In many cases, social science will have little to contribute to political theory debates. What the argument does imply, however, is that there is a need for closer alliance between the theoretical and empirical branches of the social sciences. Psychological or sociological studies could be framed so that they more accurately investigate effects or motivations comparable to those assumed in liberal political thought. A prime example here would be autonomy; the nearest equivalents to this concept in social psychology are self-efficacy and self-direction, and these are interpreted in a wide variety of ways by the researchers concerned.⁶⁹ As such, it is hard for us to learn very much about the empirical conditions required to support autonomous behaviour as the empirical and political concepts simply do not always align closely enough.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ For a review of this literature see V. Gekas, 'The Social Psychology of Self-Efficacy', in *Annual Review of Sociology*, 15, 1989, p. 291-316.

⁷⁰ This is a shame because some of the most renowned studies on self-direction appear to back up claims presented here about the impact of social structure on the psychological functioning of the individual. Kohn's international research on class and self-direction, for example, has revealed a link between higher

i. Social relationships and social structure

The empirical research invoked in this thesis attempted to examine the realities of inter-group tolerance and the conditions which tends to favour or disfavour development of that and other justice-related dispositions. Survey data revealed people to be less tolerant towards various social and political groups than would be hoped. Consequent investigation of the psychological literature on justice revealed a consensual acceptance of justice as an inherently group-based phenomenon which might explain some cases of the apparent ‘moral exclusion’ visible in the survey results. A group-based concern for justice was shown to result in tendencies towards excluding other social groups from considerations of justice at various levels, or even to outright conflict. The recommended means of addressing this problem focused on the conditions of positive inter-group contact. Vitally, this approach involves consideration of two factors largely alien to liberal theory: social structure and processes operating specifically at the local level. Whilst these are clearly specific features of the type of literature addressed in this thesis, it would be fair to generalise that much, if not all, of the empirical research relevant to liberal theory would draw on these two factors. This change of focus from the solely political to the political and the social, and from the solely national to the national and the local, represent the other major theoretical implications of this thesis.

If liberals are concerned to understand how institutions, social relationships and social structure are inter-linked, then this will necessarily involve looking closely at the latter. Recalling our earlier defence of the communitarian focus on social relations, there it was argued that the focus is justified by a desire to understand which relationships or social conditions are necessary to support a particular political order.⁷¹ The same argument applies to liberals just in virtue of their parallel determination to accept the realities of social embeddedness.

In this thesis we have investigated the effects of social structure and relationships upon the development of tolerance and other liberal dispositions. The particular aspect of

status jobs and greater degree of self-direction, due to complexity of role-set (interacting with many different others), degree of control over one’s work, difficulty of tasks and so on. Interestingly such research also backs up claims made here about the benefits of interaction with different others. See for example, M. L. Kohn & C. Schooler, *Work and Personality: An Inquiry into the Impact of Social Stratification*, Norwood, New Jersey, 1983, or M. L. Kohn & K. M. Slomczynski, *Social Structure and Self-Direction: A Comparative Analysis of the United States and Poland*, Blackwell, Oxford 1990.

⁷¹ See Chapter Three, p. 70.

social embeddedness upon which we have focused has been group membership, and we have addressed the issue from a social psychological perspective. Thus it has been the content and character of relationships which has been studied. This was largely determined by a desire to compare elements from the liberal account of socialisation with similar subject matter from a more empirical discipline. It is worth noting though, that we could just as easily have approached the issue from a different theoretical direction, again in line with other claims made by liberal theorists. In particular we could have addressed the structure rather than the content of crucial social relationships. Several liberal authors invoke the concept of 'social capital' to explain how certain structures of social interaction can encourage the development of valued liberal dispositions.⁷² This would thus present a sociological perspective on the matter of how best to mould and shape suitably liberal citizens, which again would lay itself open to empirical testing. Indeed Robert Putnam seminally undertook empirical studies of regional government and civic character in Italy which largely ground the claims repeated by Macedo and Frazer.⁷³ The theory is that civic values of cooperativeness, tolerance, disposition to trust others and so on, are favoured by social structures with multiple overlapping and cross-cutting loose ties, rather than by those with strong, but enclosed networks of bonds. If true, this would support some of the conclusions drawn within this thesis, namely that tolerance and justice are more likely to be fostered where there is heterogeneity and inter-group contact, and in particular when there are inter-dependent and cross-cutting relationships between members of different groups.

More broadly, these claims have been investigated within sociology in a rather more technical manner, namely through social network analysis.⁷⁴ Granovetter's seminal paper '*The Strength of Weak Ties*' is sometimes quoted precisely for its empirical justification of this position.⁷⁵ It is, however, rather misleading to refer to only one piece of empirical research when there is such a wealth of material expanding upon, verifying

⁷² See for example Rawls 1993 p. 157, Macedo 1996, p. 256-8. Liz Frazer also appeals to the strength of loose or weak ties in building values; see Frazer (forthcoming). The term 'social capital' is often credited to James Coleman, from J. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory*, Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1990, Chapter 12.

⁷³ R. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1993.

⁷⁴ For a useful summary of the central principles and aims of this discipline, see B. Wellman, 'Network Analysis – Some Basic Principles', in R. Collins (Ed.) *Sociological Theory 1983*, Josey Bass Inc., San Francisco 1983 or B. Wellman & S. D. Berkowitz, *Social Structures – A Network Approach*, CUP, Cambridge 1988.

⁷⁵ M. Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 6, 1973, p. 1360-80.

or criticising Granovetter's claims. In particular it has been argued that weak ties are of more use to the wealthy than the poor, because their weak ties to other groups are more likely to connect them to influential people;⁷⁶ a further qualification comes with study of the sort of goods which are transmitted by different sorts of ties – apparently information travels across weak ties better than advice or value judgements.⁷⁷ Both of these claims would have important implications for liberal theory if incorporated into accounts of how best to integrate different groups, how to provide marginalised groups with opportunities for advance and how to transmit liberal values. Indeed, Massey and Denton, in their study of American residential segregation draw heavily on the implications of social network analysis to help explain why separation of black and white neighbourhoods can have such detrimental effects.⁷⁸ They emphasise the role of social contacts in learning about employment opportunities (following some of Granovetter's later work) and also in winning influence, or even political power. Spatially marginalised group such as ghettoised blacks, the elderly and the poor have very limited and enclosed social networks; they lack easy connections to the rest of society. If it is true that such an absence of multiple, overlapping ties really does prejudice individuals in terms of finding job opportunities, gaining political influence or even just enjoying cultural and social interaction, then this suggests that liberal principles of equality of opportunity are far from fully implemented. Study of social networks could thus aid political theory by determining the extent of integration and the effects of separation.

Thus looking at social structure and social relations from a sociological perspective could prove just as productive as the social psychological approach adopted here. Social relationships, whether in their structural properties or their relational content, are perhaps the most important holistic consideration for liberals to take on board, in so far as they will limit (but not determine) citizens' capacity to be shaped by liberal principles, education and other manipulable forms of socialisation.

⁷⁶ See for example M. Granovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited', in Collins 1983; S. D. Greenbaum, 'Bridging Ties at the Neighbourhood Level', *Social Networks*, 4, 4, 1982 p. 367-84.

⁷⁷ See for example G. Weimann, 'The Strength of Weak Conversational Ties in the Flow of Information and Influence', in *Social Networks*, 5, 3, 1983 p. 245-67.

ii. Locality

If social relationships are the most important focus of any approach to politics which takes social embeddedness into account, then locality must be the level at which such relationships and their effects are typically observed. Whilst social psychology and sociology may obviously generate generalisable principles of effect, it is the conjoining of particular effects in particular areas which shape the limiting effects of social embeddedness for any one section of the population. The realities of social embeddedness will be very different for someone living in the inner-city versus someone living in the suburbs or the country; likewise those living in areas of high affluence may experience different effects from those living in poorer areas. Other relevant factors will include employment levels, heterogeneity of population and integration of different groups, even quality of local public facilities. Each of these various factors and many others not mentioned may exert certain sociological or psychological effects that counteract effects of common influences such as education and media. A simple example of how these factors can undermine liberal socialisation processes might be Kitschelt's claimed relation between levels of economic marginalisation and support for far-right political parties.⁷⁹ One of the claims presented in this thesis has been that inter-group conflict may be extremely hard to eradicate despite the imposition of liberal institutions if differences between groups, such as status or socio-economic differentials, do not also disappear. Thus all these different conditions should be regarded as limiting factors in the drive towards creating a more liberal society. If we are to achieve that latter goal, then liberals must accept that injustices operating at more localised levels, (not necessarily distributive ones either), need to be eradicated. Doing so will probably involve identifying specifically local sets of prejudicial factors and resolving the matter accordingly.

As was noted in the introduction to this thesis, the concept of locality has found favour in political theory in recent years.⁸⁰ A renewed discussion of the pros and cons of local

⁷⁸ Massey & Denton 1993, p. 162-7.

⁷⁹ Kitschelt 1995.

⁸⁰ It is surprising that there was previously neglect of local factors in contemporary liberal politics. Post-modern critics of liberalism have been quick to point out some of the geographic inequalities and injustices referred to here, but they have chosen to focus on the city as the uniquely ignored 'location' of liberal politics. Although liberals certainly do need to attend to the unique problems and potential of cities, to focus solely on these areas would be very short-sighted. Taking the realities of social embeddedness seriously means doing so for all citizens, in all areas. (See Young 1990; D. Harvey, *Social*

democracy has raised awareness of the local in an indirect manner, whilst the nature of 'locality' has itself been explicitly invoked as a suitable focus for political theory.⁸¹ This latter suggestion is not without some difficulties. One of the most pressing concerns is uncertainty as to precisely what qualifies as a 'locality'. As mentioned in Chapter Three, two different types of definition might be given: one which claims locality to be an objectively recognisable entity, perhaps coextensive with a local government jurisdictional area; and one which claims it to be subjectively determined by individual perceptions of what is 'local', which may differ from one individual to the next. Clearly these two definitions need not coincide in practice. As such, locality might seem as slippery a concept as 'community'.

Luckily, contrary to the example set by the papers referenced in the footnotes, the concept of 'locality' invoked here does not require reification. Liberals do not have to claim that there is such a thing as 'a locality', and then proceed to investigate the pressures operating within it acting for and against citizenship. Instead, taking holism seriously just entails that governments take note of the *localised* effects of national policies and social structure.⁸² Thus in this context locality is a relative term rather than a particular place. It refers to the level of experience between the national and the individual, and this experience should be a matter for political concern.

Across a whole society, levels of unemployment may seem acceptable; likewise the level of tolerance or intolerance shown towards different groups. But particular areas of a nation may suffer from higher than average levels of deprivation or conflict, and particular groups may suffer from higher than average levels of intolerance and discrimination. Indeed, the social and economic disparities between different areas of a nation are generally so great that it is very hard to gauge the full social effects of policy except by considering local disparities. Whole towns have been devastated by the effects of industrial decay or capital migration. Many cities are split into

Justice and the City, Edward Arnold Ltd, London 1973; A. Merrifield & E. Swyngedouw, *The Urbanization of Injustice*, Lawrence and Wishart, London 1996.)

⁸¹ See for example Burns *et al.* 1994, King and Stoker 1996 (especially chapter by Frazer), Stewart and Stoker 1989, Harloe *et al.* 1990.

⁸² In many respects this employment of the words local and locality mirror Jon Elster's usage. Indeed, many aspects of Elster's recommendations on local justice would be supported by the approach adopted here. There is some difference, however, as Elster focuses on the 'local' in response to the degree of influence he perceives autonomous, non-political institutions to wield over individual lives; here, the

neighbourhoods along divisions of wealth, class, ethnicity or race and employment status. Peripheral or inner-city estates are marginalised, displaying a miserable combination of sky-high unemployment and crime rates. Rural areas are threatened by cost-cutting reductions in the public transport system and cutbacks in local authority spending which threaten to close vital local facilities. There is an increasingly large gap between rich and poor, both financially and geographically, and quality of life certainly does seem to depend on where one lives. There is certainly room for more attention to local differences and requirements.⁸³

In particular this thesis suggests that there is good reason to focus on policies which will encourage the integration of different groups, whether this be through invigorating public spaces, guaranteeing the provision of public facilities, controlling migration of business, capital and population or simply introducing cross-cutting team-work into classrooms. Several of these suggestions echo claims made by liberals and communitarians alike. Some are specifically invoked in defence of the concept of locality itself. It is reassuring to discover that unravelling empirical evidence can actually strengthen rather than undermine theoretical claims. But that is the position we find ourselves in. We can say with certainty that civic participation within multiple cross-cutting social and political groups, as advocated by Macedo, is a feasible and productive way of developing citizenship virtues. In similar manner we can agree with Liz Frazer that the separation of housing developments from the rest of the wider area will do little to heighten trust and civility. Raz's emphasis of the value of media representation of different groups and lifestyles is also borne out. Against Rawls we can accept the claim that the 'morality of association' is a valuable stage in personal development, but we would temper that claim with a warning that not all interaction is necessarily a positive socialising experience. Likewise we can accept the claim that liberal institutions must precede development of liberal virtues, but again should modify this to note that substantial social change is also required. These are just some examples of the ways in which empirical material can be employed to assess the accuracy of holist claims. Many other theorists could probably gain from consideration of the

focus on locality follows on from the broader intention to take all aspects of social embeddedness seriously. See J. Elster, *Local Justice*, CUP, Cambridge, 1992.

⁸³ Gyford is just an observer who claims that the degree of localised difference we see in Britain today necessitates a much greater degree of local government autonomy. (Gyford 1991).

material laid out even in this thesis, never mind from the study of social science research considered more widely.

To conclude, if all citizens are to be equally influenced by liberalising factors such as education, media and political culture, then attention must be paid to the character of the local areas in which people live. Some substantive changes in the character and conditions of those areas (such as amelioration of inter-group relations) may be required before socialisation can prove effective. In drawing this conclusion, we acknowledge and share one of the justifications given for focusing on locality in contemporary politics. Whether this also entails that we should recommend the re-empowerment of local government is a separate normative issue and one which will not be addressed here. What these conclusions do suggest is that liberalism cannot afford to retain its bias towards national-level government and policies. It must be prepared to adopt a more specifically multi-level approach. Certainly the most important principles, institutions and procedures will operate at the national level, but if liberal theorists are committed to helping us approach the liberal ideal then they have to accept that social structure and relationships affect individuals primarily at the local level. So long as these structural and relational effects limit the success of certain liberal policies and ideals, the local must appear on the liberal agenda.

Thus we can see why a re-focusing on the liberal-communitarian debate brings us to a politics of locality. The communitarian critique retains its critical potential in so far as liberalism has yet to fully embrace the messy realities of a holist approach. Taking social embeddedness seriously entails a willingness to accept the limiting effects of social structure and relationships on the content and application of a non-utopian political ideal. This in turn means that liberals must recognise and deal with social effects exerted at levels below that of the nation-state. The politics of locality is recommended not as an alternative to national political institutions, culture and principles, but as an addition. Only if liberalism is prepared to recognise the necessity of such a re-location will it be capable of theorising an achievable as well as desirable liberal order.

Bibliography

“United We Stand, Divided We Fall.” in *The Observer*, 27th June 1999.

Ackerman, Bruce. 1980. *Social Justice and the Liberal State*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Alejandro, R. 1998. *The Limits of Rawlsian Justice*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Allen, V. L. and D. A. Wilder. 1975. “Categorization, Belief Similarity and Inter-Group Discrimination.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32(6):971-7.

Allport, Gordon. 1951. *The Nature of Prejudice*. London: Wesley-Addison.

Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.

Aronson, E., Blaney, N., Stephan, C., Sikes, J., Snapp, M. 1978. *The Jigsaw Classroom* (2nd ed). Beverley Hills: Sage.

Avineri, Shlomo and Avner de-Shalit. 1992. “Communitarianism and Individualism.” . Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bakhurst, D. and C. Sypnowich. 1995. “The Social Self.” . London: Sage.

Ball-Rokeach, S. J., M Rokeach, and J. W. Gruber. 1984. *The Great American Value Test*. New York: Free Press.

Barber, Benjamin. 1984. *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Barry, Brian. 1995. *Justice as Impartiality*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bar-Tal, Daniel. 1990. “Causes and Consequences of Delegitimation: Models of Conflict and Ethnocentrism.” *Journal of Social Issues* 46(1):65-82.

Bell, C. and H. Newby. 1971. *Community Studies*. London: Allen & Unwin.

Bell, Daniel. 1993. *Communitarianism and its Critics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Bellah, R., R. Madsen, W. M. Sullivan, A. Swidler, and S. M. Tipton. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Bock, Gisela and Susan James. 1992. *Beyond Equality and Difference*. London: Routledge.

- Boswell, Jonathan. 1990. *Community and the Economy*. New York: Routledge.
- Brewer, M. B. and N. Miller. 1996. *Inter-Group Relations*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Buchanan, Alan. 1989. "Assessing the Communitarian Critique of Liberalism." *Ethics* 99(4):852-82.
- Burns, D., P Hoggett, and G. Hambleton. 1994. *The Politics of Decentralisation*. London: Macmillan.
- Callan, Eamonn. 1997. *Creating Citizens: Political Education and Liberal Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Caney, Simon. 1992. "Liberalism and Communitarianism: A Misconceived Debate." *Political Studies* 40(2):273-90.
- Chapman, J. W. and W. Galston. 1992. "Virtue." in *Nomos*, vol. XXXIV. New York: New York University Press.
- Clayton, Matthew. 1997. "Educating Liberals: An Argument About Political Neutrality, Equality of Opportunity and Parental Autonomy." , Faculty of Social Studies, Oxford University, Oxford.
- Cohen, G. A. 1997. "Where the Action Is: On the Site of Distributive Justice." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 26(1):3-30.
- Coleman, J. 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Cook, S. W. 1990. "Towards a Psychology of Improving Justice: Research on Extending the Equality Principle to Victims of Social Injustice." *Journal of Social Issues* 46(1):147-162.
- Davis, Mike. 1992. *City of Quartz*. London: Vintage Press.
- Dayoudi, S. and P. Healey. 1995. "City Challenge: Sustainable Progress or Temporary Gesture." *Environment and Planning C* 13(1):79-95.
- Deschamps, J-C. 1984. "Inter-Group Relations and Categorical Identification." in *The Social Dimension: European Developments in Social Psychology*, vol. 2, edited by H. Tajfel. Cambridge: CUP.
- Deschamps, J. C. and W. Doise. 1978. "Interaction in Multi-Ethnic Contexts." in *Differentiation Between Social Groups*, edited by H. Tajfel. London: Academic Press.
- Deschamps, J-C. and W. Doise. 1978. "Crossed Category Membership in Inter-Group Relations." , edited by H. Tajfel.

- Deutsch, Morton. 1990. "The Psychological Roots of Moral Exclusion." *Journal of Social Issues* 46(1):21-26.
- Deutsch, M. and M. E. Collins. 1951. *Interracial Housing: A Psychological Evaluation of a Social Experiment*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Dryzek, J. & Goodin, R. E. 1986. "Risk-Sharing and Social Justice: the Motivational Foundations of the Liberal State." *British Journal of Political Science* 16(1):1-34.
- Dworkin, Ronald. 1985. "Bakke's Case: Are Quotas Unfair?" in *A Matter of Principle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dworkin, Ronald. 1985. "Can a Liberal State Support Art?" Pp. 221-233 in *A Matter of Principle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dworkin, Ronald. 1985. "Liberalism." in *A Matter of Principle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dworkin, Ronald. 1985. *A Matter of Principle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dworkin, Ronald. 1986. *Law's Empire*. London: Fontana Press.
- Dworkin, Ronald. 1989. "Liberal Community." *California Law Review* 77(3):479-520.
- Dworkin, Ronald. 1990. "The Foundations of Liberal Equality." *Tanner Lectures on Human Values* :190-306.
- Elster, Jon. 1992. *Local Justice*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Etzioni, Amitai. 1990. "Liberals and Communitarians." *Partisan Review* 57:215-227.
- Etzioni, Amitai. 1993. *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda*. New York: Crown Publishers Inc.
- Etzioni, Amitai. 1996. *The New Golden Rule*. New York: Basic Books.
- Festinger, L. and H. H. Kelley. 1951. *Changing Attitudes Through a Housing Project*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Fields, B. J. 1990. "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the USA." *New Left Review* 181:95-118.
- Fishkin, James. 1991. *Democracy and Deliberation: New Directions for Democratic Reform*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Frazer, Elizabeth. 1996. "The Value of Locality." in *The Future of Local Government*, edited by D. King and G. Stoker. London: Macmillan.

Frazer, Elizabeth. forthcoming. *Unity and Conflict: Problems of Communitarian Politics*. Oxford: OUP.

Frazer, Elizabeth and Nicola Lacey. 1993. *The Politics of Community: A Feminist Critique of the Liberal-Communitarian Debate*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Gaertner, S. L. , J. F. Dovidio, B. A. Bachman, and M. C. Rust. 1993. "The Common In-Group Identity Model: Recategorization and the Reduction of Inter-Group Bias." *European Review of Social Psychology* 4:1-21.

Gaertner, S. L., M. C. Rust, J. F. Dovidio, B. A. Bachman, and P. A. Anastasio. 1994. "The Contact Hypothesis - The Role of a Common In-group Identity on Reducing Inter-Group Bias." *Small Group Research* 25(2):224-249.

Galston, William. 1991. *Liberal Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gauthier, David. 1986. *Morals by Agreement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Geddes, M. 1995. "Poverty, Excluded Communities and Local Democracy." *Commission for Local Democracy Reports* 3.

Gekas, V. 1989. "The Social Psychology of Self-Efficacy." *Annual Review of Sociology* 15:291-316.

Gilligan, Carol. 1982. *In a Different Voice; Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Goering, J., A. Kamely, and T. Richardson. 1997. "Recent Research on Racial Segregation." *Urban Affairs Review* 32(5):723-45.

Golebiowska, E. A. 1996. "'The Pictures in our Heads" and Individual-Targeted Tolerance." *Journal of Politics* 58(4):1010-1034.

Granovetter, Mark. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6):1360-80.

Granovetter, Mark. 1983. "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited." Pp. 201-233 in *Sociological Theory 1983*, edited by R. Collins. San Francisco: Josey-Bass Inc.

Greenbaum, Susan. D. 1982. "Bridging Ties at Neighbourhood Level." *Social Networks* 4(4):367-84.

Gutmann, Amy. 1992. "Communitarian Critics of Liberalism." in *Communitarianism and Individualism*, edited by S. Avineri and A. De Shalit. Oxford: OUP.

Gyford, J. 1991. "Does Place Matter?" *Belgrave Papers* no. 3 .

- Hansell, S. 1984. "Co-operative Groups, Weak Ties and Integration of Peer Friendships." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 47(4):316-28.
- Harloe, M., C. Pickvance, and J. Urry. 1990. *Place, Policy and Politics*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Harvey, David. 1973. *Social Justice and the City*. London: Edward Arnold Ltd.
- Heath, Anthony, Roger Jowell, John Curtice, Geoff Evans, Julia Field, and Sharon Witherspoon. 1991. *Understanding Political Change*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Hewstone, M. and R. Brown. 1986. "Contact and Conflict in Inter-Group Encounters." . Oxford: Blackwell.
- Heyd, David. 1996. "Toleration: An Elusive Virtue." . Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Hillery, G. A. 1955. "Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement." *Rural Sociology* 20.
- Hogg, M. A. and D. Abrams. 1988. *Social Identifications*. London: Routledge.
- Horton, J. 1996. "Toleration as a Virtue." in *Toleration - An Elusive Virtue*, edited by D. Heyd. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Huo, Y. J. 1995. "Justice and Exclusion: Exploring the Boundaries of Our Justice Concerns." in *Fifth International Conference on Social Justice Research*, edited by R. Vermunt. Reno, NV.
- Huo, Y. J. unpublished. "Justice and Exclusion: Exploring the Boundaries of our Moral Community." .
- Huston, T. L. 1974. "The Foundations of Inter-Personal Attraction." . New York: Academic Press.
- James, Susan. 1992. "The Good-Enough Citizen: Citizenship and Independence." in *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity*, edited by G. Bock and S. James. London: Routledge.
- Jencks, Charles. 1993. *Heteropolis*. London: Academic Editions.
- King, D. and G. Stoker. 1996. *Rethinking Local Democracy*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Kitschelt, H. 1995. *The Radical Right in Western Europe*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

- Kohn, M. L. and C. Schooler. 1983. *Work and Personality: An Inquiry into the Impact of Social Stratification*. New Jersey: Norwood.
- Kohn, M. L. and K. M. Slomczynski. 1990. *Social Structure and Self-Direction: A Comparative Analysis of the United States and Poland*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kraus, S. J. 1995. "Attitudes and the Prediction of Behaviour." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 21(1):58-75.
- Kymlicka, Will. 1989. *Liberalism, Community and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, Will. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kymlicka, Will. 1996. "The Rights of Minority Cultures." . Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, Will. 1996. "Social Unity in a Liberal State." *Social Philosophy and Policy* 13(1):105-36.
- Larmore, Charles. 1987. *Patterns of Moral Complexity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lerner, M.J. 1980. *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Lerner, M. L. 1974. "The Social Psychology of Justice and Inter-Personal Attraction." in *The Foundations of Inter-Personal Attraction*, edited by T. L. Huston. New York,: Academic Press.
- Levine, R. A. and D. T. Campbell. 1972. *Ethnocentrism*. New York: Wiley Interscience.
- Levinson, Meira. 1996. "Autonomy, Schooling and the Reconstruction of the Liberal Educational Ideal." , Faculty of Social Studies, Oxford University, Oxford.
- Macedo, Stephen. 1991. *Liberal Virtues: Citizenship, Virtue and Community in Liberal Constitutionalism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Macedo, Stephen. 1995. "Liberal Civic Education and Religious Fundamentalism: The Case of God v John Rawls." *Ethics* 105(3):468-496.
- Macedo, Stephen. 1996. "Community, Diversity and Civic Education: Toward a Liberal Political Science of Group Life." *Social Philosophy and Policy* 13(1):240-268.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. 1981. *After Virtue*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press.

- MacIntyre, Alasdair. 1994. "A Partial Response to my Critics." Pp. 283-304 in *After MacIntyre*, edited by J. Horton and S. Mendus. Oxford: Polity.
- Marcus, G. E. , J. L. Sullivan, E. Theiss-Morse, and S. L. Wood. 1995. *With Malice Towards Some*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Marcus-Newhall, A., N. Miller, R. Holtz, and M.B. Brewer. 1993. "Cross-Cutting Category Membership with Role Assignment: A Means of Reducing Inter-Group Bias." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 32(2):125-46.
- Margalit, Avishai. 1996. *The Decent Society*. Tr. Goldblum, N. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Marshall, T. H. (& Bottomore, T.). 1992. *Citizenship and Social Class*. London: Pluto Press.
- Massey, D. 1991. "The Political Place of Locality Studies." *Environment and Planning A* 23(2):267-81.
- Massey, D. S. and N. A. Denton. 1993. *American Apartheid*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- McClosky, H. and A. Brill. 1983. *Dimensions of Tolerance*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Mendus, Susan. 1988. "Justifying Toleration." . Cambridge: CUP.
- Mendus, Susan. 1989. *Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism*. London: Macmillan.
- Merrifield, A. and E. Swyngedouw. 1996. "The Urbanization of Injustice." . London, : Lawrence and Wishart.
- Miller, David. 1989. "In What Sense Must Socialism Be Communitarian?" *Social Philosophy and Policy* 6(2):51-73.
- Miller, David. 1992. "Distributive Justice: What the People Think." *Ethics* 102(3):555-593.
- Miller, David. 1995. *On Nationality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, David. forthcoming. *Principles of Social Justice*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Miller, N. and M. B. Brewer. 1984. "Beyond the Contact Hypothesis: Theoretical Perspectives on Desegregation." in *Groups in Contact: The Psychology of Desegregation*, edited by N. Miller and M. B. Brewer. Orlando: Academic Press.

- Miller, N. and M. B. Brewer. 1984. "Groups in Contact: The Psychology of Desegregation." . Orlando: Academic Press.
- Mulhall, Stephen. 1998. "Political Liberalism and Civic Education." *Journal of the Philosophy of Education* 32(2):161-176.
- Mulhall, Stephen and Adam Swift. 1993. "Liberalisms and Communitarianisms: Whose Misconceptions?" *Political Studies* 41(4):650-6.
- Mulhall, Stephen and Adam Swift. 1995. "The Social Self in Political Theory: The Communitarian Critique of the Liberal Subject." in *The Social Self*, edited by D. Bakhurst and C. Sypnowich. London: Sage.
- Mulhall, Stephen and Adam Swift. 1996. *Liberals and Communitarians* (2nd Edition ed). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Nagel, Thomas. 1987. "Moral Conflict and Political Legitimacy." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 16(3):215-40.
- Nagel, Thomas. 1991. *Equality and Partiality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nash, Victoria. 1996. "Focusing on Local Government: An Appeal to Locality or Community?" M.Phil. Thesis, Faculty of Social Studies, Oxford University, Oxford.
- Nisbet, R. 1966. *The Sociological Tradition*. London: Heinemann.
- Nisbet, R. 1970. "The Quest for Community." in *Tradition and Revolt*, edited by R. Nisbet. Oxford: OUP.
- Nozick, Robert. 1974. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Okin, Susan Moller. 1987. "Justice and Gender." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 16(1):42-72.
- Okin, Susan Moller. 1989. *Justice, Gender, and the Family*. New York: Basic Books.
- Okin, Susan Moller. 1994. "Political Liberalism, Justice and Gender." *Ethics* 105.
- Opatow, S. 1990. "Moral Exclusion and Injustice: An Introduction." *Journal of Social Issues* 46(1):1-20.
- Pettigrew, T. F. 1986. "The Inter-Group Hypothesis Reconsidered." in *Contact and Conflict in Inter-Group Encounters*, edited by M. Hewstone and R. Brown. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Pettigrew, T. F. 1998. "Inter-Group Contact Theory." *Annual Review of Psychology* 49:65-85.

Plant, Raymond. 1978. "Community: Concept, Conception and Ideology." *Politics and Society* 8(1):79-107.

Putnam, Robert D. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rawls, John. 1971. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Rawls, John. 1993. *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rawls, John. 1997. "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited." *University of Chicago Law Review* 64(3):765-807.

Raz, Joseph. 1984. *Ethics in the Public Domain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Raz, Joseph. 1986. *The Morality of Freedom*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Raz, Joseph. 1988. "Autonomy, Toleration and the Harm Principle." in *Justifying Toleration*, edited by S. Mendus. Cambridge: CUP.

Raz, Joseph. 1990. "Facing Diversity: The Case of Epistemic Abstinence." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 19(1):3-46.

Raz, Joseph. 1994. "Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective." Pp. 170-191 in *Ethics in the Public Domain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rosenblum, Nancy. 1989. "Liberalism and the Moral Life." . Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Rosenblum, Nancy. 1989. "Pluralism and Self-Defence." in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, edited by N. Rosenblum. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Sandel, Michael. 1992. "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self." in *Communitarianism and Individualism*, edited by S. Avineri and A. De Shalit. Oxford: OUP.

Sandel, Michael. 1996. *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy*: Belknap.

Sandel, Michael. 1998. *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (2nd ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scanlon, T.M. 1982. "Contractualism and Utilitarianism." in *Utilitarianism and Beyond*, edited by A. Sen and B. Williams. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scanlon, T. M. 1998. *What We Owe to Each Other*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Bellknap Press.

Sen, A.K. and B. Williams. 1982. "Utilitarianism and Beyond." . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sherif, M., O. J. Harvey, B. J. White, W. R. Hood, and C. W. Sherif. 1961. *Inter-Group Conflict and Co-operation: The Robber's Cave Experiment*. Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma.

Shklar, Judith. 1988. "The Liberalism of Fear." in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, edited by N. Rosenblum. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Smith, R. A. 1993. "Creating Stable Racially Integrated Communities." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 15(2):115-40.

Smith-Rex. 1989. *The Politics of Race and Residence*. Cambridge: Polity.

Stacey, Margaret. 1969. "The Myth of Community Studies." *British Journal of Sociology* 20:134-47.

Stein, Maurice. 1964. *The Eclipse of Community*. New York: Harper.

Stewart, J. and G. Stoker. 1989. *The Future of Local Government*. London: Macmillan.

Stouffer, S. A. 1955. *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties*. New York: Doubleday.

Strauss, David. 1992. "The Liberal Virtues." in *Nomos - Virtue*, vol. XXXIV, edited by J. W. Chapman and W. Galston. New York: New York University Press.

Sullivan, J. L., P. Walsh, M. Shamir, D. G. Barnum, and J. L. Gibson. 1993. "Why are Politicians More Tolerant? Selective Recruitment and Socialisation Among Political Elites in New Zealand, Israel, Britain and the United States." *British Journal of Political Science* 23(1):51-76.

Sullivan, J. L., J. Piereson, and G. E. Marcus. 1982. *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Sullivan, J. L. and J. E. Transue. 1999. "The Psychological Underpinnings of Democracy." *Annual Review of Psychology* 50:625-50.

Tajfel, H. 1978. *Differentiation Between Social Groups*. London: Academic Press.

Tajfel, H. 1981. *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology*. Cambridge: CUP.

Tajfel, H. 1984. "The Social Dimension: European Developments in Social Psychology." , vol. 2. Cambridge: CUP.

Taylor, Charles. 1975. *Hegel*. Cambridge: CUP.

- Taylor, Charles. 1985. *Philosophical Papers, vol. 2: Philosophy and the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, Charles. 1989. "Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate." in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, edited by N. Rosenblum. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, Charles. 1989. *Sources of the Self: the Making of Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tobin, G. A. 1987. "Divided Neighbourhoods." in *Urban Affairs Annual Reviews*. Beverley Hills: Sage.
- Tonnies, F. 1957. *Community and Society*. Tr. Loomis, C. P. Michigan: Michigan State University Press.
- Tyler, T. R., R. Boeckmann, and H. J. Smith. 1997. *Social Justice in a Diverse Society*. Colorado,: Westview Press.
- Tyler, T. R. and E. Allen Lind. 1990. "Intrinsic Versus Community-Based Justice Models: When Does Group-Membership Matter?" *Journal of Social Issues* 46(1):83-94.
- Waldron, Jeremy. 1993. "Theoretical Foundations of Liberalism." in *Liberal Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Waldron, Jeremy. 1995. "Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative." in *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, edited by W. Kymlicka. Oxford: OUP.
- Walzer, Michael. 1983. *Spheres of Justice*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Walzer, Michael. 1990. "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism." *Political Theory* 18(1):6-23.
- Weimann, G. 1983. "The Strength of Weak Conversational Ties in the Flow of Information and Influence." *Social Networks* 5(3):245-67.
- Wellman, Barry. 1983. "Network Analysis - Some Basic Principles." in *Sociological Theory*, edited by R. Collins. San Francisco: Josey Bass Inc.
- Wellman, B. and S. D. Berkowitz. 1988. "Social Structures - A Network Approach." . Cambridge: CUP.
- Williams, Bernard. 1996. "Toleration: An Impossible Virtue?" in *Toleration - An Elusive Virtue*, edited by D. Heyd. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wilmott, Peter. 1989. *Community Initiatives*. London: Policy Studies Institute.

Wright, S. C. , A. Aron, McLoughlin-Volpe, and S. A. Ropp. 1997. "The Extended Contact Effect: Knowledge of Cross-Group Friendships and Prejudice." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 73(1):73-90.

Wright, Vincent. 1989. *The Government and Politics of France* (3rd Ed.). London: Unwin Hyman.

Young, Iris Marion. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

