Part III

Policies and politics of diversity
A mere sketch of the modes of governing diversity is provided here. One way to manage the subject is by level of analysis. The state-wide goals of governments provide a macro-perspective; how governments regulate associational life provides a meso-perspective; and how they manage individual citizens, metics, migrants and refugees provides a micro-perspective. Governing diversity may also be approached by focusing on the ‘substance’ of the relevant diversity. The governing of national, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity is briefly indicated in this chapter, and, for the sake of brevity, examples are mostly confined to Europe.

**Macro-perspectives**

Governments may try to eliminate or manage diversity (McGarry and O’Leary 1993; O’Leary 2001; O’Leary and McGarry 2012). Eliminationists ‘right-people’ the state, through extermination, expulsion or homogenization. Or they ‘right-size’ the state’s territory. Or they try to do both – see Table 22.1. Exterminist and expulsionist responses to diversity have figured heavily in Europe’s past, and have not gone away. The motives for such extremism have often been expressed in ideals of national, ethnic, linguistic or religious purity (Semelin 2007), or justified by alleged security imperatives (Naimark 2001). To govern diversity excludes these appalling options.

Homogenization, however, is a coherent response to diversity, with normative defenders. ‘Voluntary’ assimilation has exponents. Policies of assimilation aim to make people alike: under acculturation, group B is expected to conform to the culture of another group, A, and then be fully admitted to it: B + A = A’, where A’ is an expanded version of A; under fusion, B and A merge to form a new group C: A + B = C. Nineteenth century Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe acculturated into German and British identities; in colonial Ireland, the Old English fused with the Gaelic Irish to form Irish Catholics – the fusion resulted from both groups being excluded from citizenship by New English Protestants. Acculturation and fusion may occur without government promotion, but usually require long-time horizons – they are projects across generations.

Assimilation is promoted by ‘nation-builders’. France’s Third Republic is the European paradigm. Not only did it make peasants into Frenchmen, but also Poles, Russian Jews, Italians
Table 22.1 Macro-strategies for the regulation of national, ethnic and religious differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. END Eliminate diversity</th>
<th>B. MeND Manage diversity</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. GENOCIDE</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. CONTROL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals: Purity and security</td>
<td>Goals: Preserve hierarchical dominance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Means: Right-peopling through exterminating ‘others’</td>
<td>Means: Organize the dominant, disorganize the dominated (e.g. settler colonialism, Herrenvolk democracy, hegemonic control, ethnic democracy; established churches, tithes and taxation of subordinated sects or other religions; linguistic privileges)</td>
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<tr>
<th>2. HOMOGENIZATION</th>
<th>2. ACCOMMODATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Goals: Security, solidarity, coordination, efficiency</td>
<td>a. <strong>Centripetalism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means:</td>
<td>Goals: Co-existence based on moderating the majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. <strong>Assimilation</strong> (fusion or acculturation); often accomplished through ‘Jacobin’ democracy; religious or cultural uniformity</td>
<td>Means: Separation of powers (functional and territorial) and ‘vote pooling’</td>
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<td>or</td>
<td>Or</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. <strong>Integration</strong> (public homogenization with privatization of differences); implicit ideal of normal majoritarian democracy; laicism, secularism</td>
<td>b. <strong>Consociation</strong> [corporate versus liberal forms]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Goals: Co-existence based on equality of partner groups and equal stakes in security</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. EXPULSION</td>
<td>Means: Inclusive power-sharing, autonomy, proportionality and veto-rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals: Purity and security</td>
<td>3. ARBITRATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means: Right-peopling through ‘cleansing’ territory</td>
<td>Goals: Co-existence based on equality of partner groups, security; state equidistant from all religions, as mediator</td>
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<td>4. TERRITORIAL MONISM</td>
<td>Means: Mediation or adjudication (permanent or transitional); may include territorial adjustments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goals: Purity, security or avoiding the costs of accommodation</td>
<td>4. TERRITORIAL PLURALISM</td>
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<td>Means:</td>
<td>Goals: Management of diversity through territorial power-sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Decolonization</td>
<td>Means:</td>
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<td>b. Down-sizing partition</td>
<td>a. Particular deals: federacies [manage their own religions and languages]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Uniform administrative ‘rationalism’: eradicating particularistic differences and historical homelands</td>
<td>b. State-wide: union-state, federal state [regions manage their own cultures]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Extra-state: cross-border institutions and external representation of multiple nationalities (or ethnicities or religions or languages) sanctioned</td>
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and Spaniards became French citizens and French (Horowitz and Noiriel 1992; Weber 1979). Assimilationists emphasize the virtues of solidarity and efficient co-ordination around one culture, one language and one citizenship; they believe that equality is best accomplished through removing the salience of ethnic, linguistic and religious difference: ‘we have no minorities, only citizens’.

Integrationists do not compel the fusion of peoples, though they do not oppose it, and, indeed, may celebrate its voluntary emergence. They confine acculturation to the public
domain – particularly the joint acquisition of a common public language through education. They have no objections to many cultures; indeed, ‘inter-culturality’ is their current slogan – in contrast to multiculturalism, which they demonize as segregation. But ‘privatizing’ cultural, ethnic, racial, linguistic and religious difference is the integrationist creed. The territorial recognition of ethnic or cultural difference is rejected, as is using public resources to subsidize ethno-cultural or religious differences. Publicly funded religious school systems are frowned upon. A simplified taxonomy of integrationist governing strategies found in Europe is presented in Table 22.2.

In decolonizing, many European regimes (e.g. Great Britain, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy and Russia) down-sized their empires, reducing their ‘core states’ to rumps, thereby making the peoples they governed less diverse. But they often encouraged immigration from their former colonies, and thereby reversed previous patterns in the flow of peoples, and, in consequence, became more diverse at home. Some European polities, by contrast, were forcibly down-sized, by losses in war, notably Germany and Hungary. Others were forced to negotiate their reductions; the United Provinces accepted the departure of Belgium; Sweden had to accept the departure of Norway; Serbia may be getting used to the exit of Montenegro and Kosova. The United Kingdom was a reluctant decolonizer in Ireland, partitioning the island, creating and keeping Northern Ireland and negotiating the Irish Free State’s secession after war. All these shrinkages had homogenizing effects, tempered by subsequent new waves of migration.

Governments that overtly accept and manage diversity may not necessarily be more tolerant of difference, or more humane, than those who pursue homogenization. Through ‘control’ (Lustick 1979) they may disorganize subordinate nationalities, ethnicities, religious communities or linguistic groups for extractive purposes. They may be suffused with hierarchical, racist, religious or caste-based notions of the pure and the impure. Serb-dominated governments exercised control over Albanians in the twentieth century (Ron 2003); and Northern Ireland governments exercised control over Irish Catholics and nationalists between 1920 and 1972 (O’Leary and McGarry 1993). These regimes had few homogenizing ambitions. The post-Soviet treatment of Russian minorities in the Baltic states have often been feared as reverse examples,
of natives controlling settlers (Lieven and McGarry 1993). Fortunately, however, there are benign forms of diversity-management, including

(i) multiculturalism (Kymlicka 2007; Vertovec and Wessendorf 2009a,b);
(ii) centripetalism (Horowitz 1989; Reilly and Reynolds 1999);
(iii) consociation (Lijphart 1977; O’Leary 2005); and
(iv) federalism, devolution, home rule, autonomy, that is, multiple modes of territorial pluralism (McGarry and O’Leary 2009, 2011; Requejo 2005).

These four accommodationist ways recognize, publicly as well as privately, differences in language use, in religions, in ethnicity and sometimes in nationality. They modify the symbols, institutions and practices of the state so it does not overtly or solely express the ethos of the historically dominant group. We can think of (i)–(iv) as distinct policies on a spectrum of policy choices, and of movement from (i) to (iv) as a shift toward more accommodationist and less integrationist approaches to governing diversity. Differently put, dominant groups prefer (i) and (ii), whereas national minorities tend to prefer (iii) and (iv).

Multiculturalism has ambiguous meanings, but as a governing strategy it is generally adopted toward immigrants, and may be conceived as temporary, pending integration or assimilation, or as permanent. Its key themes are recognizing collective identities beyond those of the existing nation and its historically constituted minorities (if any), ensuring that those from all recognized cultures are represented in key public institutions and supporting group self-organization to enable autonomous cultural reproduction. There is little uniformity in multicultural practice, but variations on this strategy have been adopted for immigrants and refugees in Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and the UK, though all are currently under challenge from anti-immigrant movements (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2009a). Centripetalism, as its name suggests, promotes political convergence on the centre, assumed to be a site of moderation. As a governing strategy it seeks to incentivize politicians from the majority or dominant bloc to become more moderate to attract the votes of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. It has few obvious successes in divided places (McCulloch 2013), did not work in Bosnia and has no other clear European illustrations, but it may have some merits in new states before collective identities have hardened.

Consociations are inclusive power-sharing arrangements in which executive, legislative and security power is organized to achieve a cross-community consensus of representative politicians from the consociated partners. Principles of proportionality, group autonomy and veto-rights apply throughout the state and sometimes associational life. ‘The most important element of cultural autonomy in consociational democracies is usually the right of each group to establish and run its own religious or linguistic schools’ (Lijphart 2000: 231). The Netherlands, Belgium, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Macedonia have been or are consociational; the current negotiations over divided Cyprus include consociational components. This governing strategy can work well with ethnic, linguistic or religious groups who have a common national identity. On its own it rarely works with groups divided by national allegiance or colonial divisions, but it can be combined with territorial pluralism to ensure a more workable and inclusive political pluralism (McGarry and O’Leary 2009). Consociations may recognize the ‘personal law’ of religious communities. Liberal consociations are less likely to recognize religious law that clashes with standard bills of human rights (e.g. over divorce or the equality of women and men), whereas corporate consociations delegate authority to the designated legal systems of each community. Both types of consociation are likelier to permit religious exemptions than other kinds of governments, e.g. regarding military service or in following other presumptively universal laws (e.g. permitting
Sikh males to wear turbans rather than otherwise mandatory motorcycle helmets, or to carry their ritual daggers despite laws against the carrying of dangerous weapons in public places (see Shachar, this volume). Liberal consociations protect the rights, representation and influence of ‘others’ (who identify with no religion, are of mixed or hybrid origins or who belong to micro-religious minorities that are not large enough to benefit from standard ways of achieving power-sharing and proportional representation) and insist that the rights of women cannot be compromised by rights of religious autonomy.

Variations in territorial pluralism are extensive. Confederations, federations, decentralized union states, decentralized unitary states, autonomy and asymmetric autonomy arrangements all have their distinctive characteristics, which may be illustrated by the European Union, Switzerland, Denmark, Italy, the Aaland Islands, and the United Kingdom, respectively. The modes of governing diversity all combine elements of territorial self-rule and shared rule. Belgium and Switzerland combine federal and consociational principles, as, arguably, do the European Union and Bosnia (McCrudden and O’Leary 2013).

The macro-goals of governments in Table 22.1 are not mutually exclusive. Governments may homogenize some groups but manage others. They may also manage different groups in different ways, e.g. multiculturalism for migrants and federalism for national peoples. Within the UK, Northern Ireland has internal consociational arrangements and cross-border institutions both with Ireland and with Great Britain (and its devolved and dependent governments). Scotland and Wales have different powers under different devolution statutes. Variations on control, integrationist and multiculturalist approaches are applied to immigrants throughout Europe. Guest-workers are controlled, with variations in their de jure and de facto rights. Some ethnic (Northern Ireland nationalists, Basques) and religious groups (Muslims) have been securitized, i.e. subjected to much greater surveillance and application of emergency powers than others.

Meso-perspectives

Governments shape associational life as well as inter-group and inter-personal communications. When intent on homogeneity, they may oblige all major organizations to assimilate or to integrate citizens. They may promote ‘national’ political parties, and ban ethnic or religious parties, as Turkey has done throughout most of its modern history. Local, city and regional governments and enterprises, public or private, may be encouraged to resemble the relevant governmental unit’s full spectrum of diversities among citizens.

Governments have sometimes sought to homogenize religious differences: to make all citizens or subjects conform to one religion – or to one sect within one religion. Statutes of uniformity, fines and taxes, and exclusion from office and contracts, encouraged the recalcitrant; and criminal sanctions and, in extremis, death applied to those who did not conform. The analogue in governmental regulation of religious diversity to policies of ‘integration’ in ethnic relations is the attempted separation of the state (or the public realm) from religion: the de-theification of the state, the disestablishment and disendowment of particular religions and the privatization of religious differences. The integrationist today seeks a religion-free public realm and seeks to ban expressly religious political parties. Just as the integrationist state proclaims itself ethnically neutral, leaving cultural differences to the private sphere, so public space is to be formally freed from religious creeds or clerisies. Some argue that liberalism arose from the effort to privatize religious differences and fear the extension of multiculturalism to religion (e.g. Barry 1991, 2001). Under the sharpest version of separating the state and religion, public forums, executives, legislatures, courts, militaries, hospitals, schools and their symbols and ceremonials are formally prevented or discouraged from displaying any religious identifications. Organizations of the
godly, by contrast, are left to compete for souls or roads to nirvana in the marketplace of religious ideas and practices. Provided they obey the criminal and civil law, they are to be left alone, free to proselytize, but not to public officials, or in political and public institutions. Public officials must leave their creeds at home while performing their duties.

The ideal of the separation of religion and state faces similar challenges to the integration of ethnic differences. Critics claim that the state (or public space) is not neutral. Every secularism represents the residues of the previously established religion (or defines religion by those standards). Since religions vary in the extent to which their adherents are expected to port their beliefs into the public realm (or indeed to distinguish public and private realms), impartiality is impossible. The state cannot be equidistant from all religions because all religions are not equally distant from the state: many religions are mission committed to having the right rule determined by the right faith; many maintain versions of natural law deemed to supersede the obligations of positive law; and so on. While separating church from state is the ideal of liberal intellectuals in much of Europe, it is remarkable how rarely the full programme has been implemented (Stepan 2001: 213–54). Banning religious parties in Europe would require the outlawing of Christian democratic parties, currently contributors to the largest bloc in the European Parliament, and the leading party in Germany.

In managing religious diversity, control has arguably been the most frequent and recurrent political strategy. An official religion was privileged; whereas other religions ranged from being ‘tolerated’ near-equals to those that survived at the margins of the law, while yet others were expressly outlawed.2

After the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, throughout what had been Latin Christendom penal laws and civil disabilities were applied to Catholics by Protestant states, and to Protestants by Catholic states (MacCulloch 2003). Even within the same religion, doctrinal codification and uniform ritual were regularly attempted in the interests of one sect. Neither equality nor equal respect for difference applied.

Outlaw or pariah status for excluded religions slowly gave way to tolerance in Europe. Emancipation, in the sense of entitlement to citizenship and public office, took longer: Jews were not emancipated in most parts of Europe until the nineteenth century. Even today, five European Union member states which are not majority Roman Catholic have established churches: Greece, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Great Britain. The Church of England (Anglican) has the monarch as its Supreme Governor, whereas the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) is Scotland’s national church without an official head (the Moderator of its General Assembly is not an official head), but whose constitution is specified in the Act of Union and updated by act of parliament of 1921 (which proclaims it free of state interference).3 The Scandinavian Lutherans, the Greek Orthodox, Anglicans and Scots Presbyterians have government-sponsored churches, supported by general taxation, but are no longer empowered to oppress other Christians.

‘Arbitration’ is a distinct way of regulating diversity in associational life. Key decisions and adjudications are made by a person or institution deemed sufficiently impartial to make credibly binding determinations. Emperors, kings and sultans often presented themselves as such. Constitutional and supreme courts frequently present themselves as equidistant from the rival religions or ethnicities in their jurisdictions and as suitably placed to adjudicate cases in which values and beliefs clash.

Amid territorial pluralism, it matters which tier of government exercises sovereignty over ethnic or religious matters (or whether the relevant powers are jointly held, and if so in what way). The federal government may be constitutionally obligated to separate church and state (not to endow or establish any religion), whereas the regions may be free to have established religions, or to allow particular religions to shape law and public policy. A federal constitution, by contrast,
may recognize an official religion that binds the federal government but leaves the regions free to determine religious matters in their own domains. In a union-state, such as the United Kingdom, quasi-federal management of religion prevails. In the Union of Great Britain of 1707 the Church of Scotland was recognized as Presbyterian in form and as the national church of Scotland, and its autonomy was respected. By contrast, the Church of England and the Church of Wales (both Anglican) were established and endowed; so was the (Anglican) Church of Ireland when the Union of Great Britain and Ireland came into force in 1801. In 1869 the Church of Ireland was disestablished, and Ireland thereafter had no established church, the position inherited by Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State in 1921–2. Between 1914 and 1921 the Church in Wales (as it was called) was disestablished and disendowed. So two parts of the successor UK (Wales and Northern Ireland) have no established church, whereas two other parts (Scotland and England) have different official Protestant churches.

Micro-perspectives

Two key sets of regulatory rules deeply affect the politics of diversity. One is the rules, rights and duties governing citizenship and residency. Here the key political issue is whether the state permits dual or more allegiances. The European Union’s constituent units accept the duality of European and member-state citizenship, but many have seen the former as entirely derived from the latter, and not all have permitted their citizens to hold two passports. Citizenship also covers a bundle of rights, which may sometimes be differentiated according to ethnic origin, linguistic community or religion. Some governments make the acquisition of citizenship easy – if not cheap; others do not. Governments vary in the rights they grant residents. Europe has permanent and temporary residents, tax-haven metics and guest-workers, with intermittent efforts to make these codes consistent with the freedom of movement proclaimed by the Union. Governments also vary in how they respond to asylum seekers. Governments may apply different policies to different components of the same group, e.g. by granting citizenship to some while deporting others.

The other set of rules comprises electoral laws – including those rules that govern party organization and funding. Which electoral formulae are chosen (proportional or otherwise), and the districts, tier or constituencies within which they are applied, have major effects on the ease with which minority candidates will be elected. A review of the major electoral formulae and their repercussions for national minorities may be found in O’Leary (2010). Whether affirmative action or quotas are applied by parties to increase the nomination of minority candidates profoundly shapes the opportunities for individuals from minorities to become elected representatives.

The scale and substance of diversities

States, in principle, at one limit are completely homogeneous – everyone in the nation is monolingual in the same language, believes they have the same ethnic descent and conforms to the same religion. At the other limit is the hyper-diverse state, \( N^4 \), where \( N \) is the total population and each individual within it differs from every other individual in the four dimensions of nationality, language, ethnicity and religion. The homogenous state, of course, would have no problem in governing diversity, but no such entities exist. The hyper-diverse state is even more implausible – there are no ‘groups’ of any kind in this imaginary world. In the real world the degree of politically relevant diversity is always a lot less than \( N^4 \) but never zero. Numbers and proportions matter, but their demographic salience is not well understood. They are always
mediated in a democracy by the effects of electoral, party and constitutional arrangements. Not all potential groups mobilize, and not all cleavages are equally salient to individuals. Very small groups quickly acculturate or fuse. When there is ‘super-diversity’, e.g. in immigrant or ‘cosmopolitan’ cities, rapid conformity to one lingua franca, at least, may be quickly expected.

Do we know whether some forms of diversity are more difficult to manage than others? There is no scholarly consensus. Social constructionists seem to believe that cleavages based on nationality, ethnicity, language and religion are equally fluid, malleable and capable of rapid change. This conviction is ideological, not empirical. After all, it takes time, even for the most apt, to learn new languages. One can change oneself, but not the DNA of one’s parents. Or the nation(s) into which one was born. Serious religions differ from Paris fashion shows; they are for all seasons. This is not a plea for primordialism, merely for common sense: bargaining over resources is easier than bargaining over identity change. The rigidity of identities may or may not matter in governing diversity, but beliefs held about other groups, and how they shape politics and life-chances certainly shape governability. Are diverse identities believed antagonistic or complementary? Is there polarization or heterogeneity? It matters whether group encounters are framed by native–settler (antagonistic) or homeland–immigrant (negotiable) relations (Esman 1994); it matters whether life-chances, equality of status and opportunity are shaped by nationality, ethnicity, religion and language. Broadly speaking, though the hypothesis cannot be proved here, managing linguistic diversity may be easier than managing religious diversity; religious diversity may be easier than managing ethnic diversity; and ethnic diversity may be easier than managing national diversity. Bi-lingual and multi-lingual states function (Laitin 1992); though life is easier with a lingua franca. Religious diversity may be managed in conditions of shared ethnicity – though religious civil wars occur. Ethnic diversity may underpin competitive nations, but different ethnicities can have a shared and complementary nationhood. Multiple nations competing over the same affirmed homeland, by contrast, is a known, though not certain, recipe for conflict and war. Multi-national states exist, as do multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual states, and exploring their conditions of survival remains a key enquiry in political science (Anderson 2012; McGarry and O’Leary 2009).

This précis has so far avoided defining the national, ethnic, religious and linguistic – or the complexity of their inter-relationships. Notoriously, for example, there is no scholarly unanimity in defining the ethnic or the religious. Broader definitions of ethnicity often include religious markers and religiosity and treat some religious groups as ethnic groups (e.g. Glazer and Moynihan 1975: 18). Caste and race are sometimes included within conceptions of ethnic groups as those ‘defined by ascriptive differences, whether the indicium of group identity is color, appearance, language, religion, some other indicator of common origin, or some combination thereof’ (Horowitz 2001: 17–18). Yet, many religions have claimed to be universal, supra-ethnic, open to all humanity. Moreover, many religions preceded the nation-state, while others have remained disconnected from it. Historians have identified functional linkages between imperial cosmopolitanism and monotheism in late antiquity (e.g. Fowden 1993), hinting that multi-ethnic empires benefit from universal religions, but there have been numerous polytheistic multi-ethnic empires, as Rome was before Constantine’s conversion (see Heather, this volume).

Religions vary in their relations to languages as well as ethnic groups. For centuries the Catholic mass was celebrated in Latin, the language of Rome, and not in Hebrew or Aramaic, the language of Christ and his apostles. The ‘critical’ versions of the New Testament were written in Greek, the lingua franca and language of government of the Eastern Roman Empire (Millar 2006). However, while religions may aspire to be pan-ethnic and multi-lingual, even if worship or prayer occurs through one sacred language, ethnic groups may contain multiple religious differences or cleavages. Kurds include Sunni (including Sufi) and Shiite (including Alevi)
Muslims, Yezidis, Jews and a variety of Christians, as well as nonbelievers. The typical Kurd is a Sunni Muslim, but no significant Kurdish nationalist party since the 1920s has confined its constituency to this group. Religiously diverse ethnic groups and supra-ethnic religions therefore suggest that there are good reasons not to conflate the ethnic and the religious. In certain famous cases, however, e.g. Jews and Sikhs, it seems difficult to parse the two categorizations.

Formulae to differentiate the ethnic and the religious do not always succeed. That is not just because it may really matter which god(s) you do not believe in (as with ‘Catholic’ and ‘Protestant’ atheists in Northern Ireland). Many religious convictions are inherited, if not with one’s mother’s milk then perhaps with one’s relatives’ and schoolteachers’ whips. Equally, beliefs about ancestry may matter more than the truths about the origins of particular groups revealed by DNA evidence. The prevalence of endogamous marriage may be a necessary condition of the reproduction of an ethnic group qua ethnic group, yet it may be difficult to tell whether such marriage is maintained by ethnic norms, religious taboos, their conjunction or through mere happenstance (the low availability of other types of partner), or complex permutations of these and other possibilities. Ethnic groups may have particular (ethnic) gods, in which case the relevant religion is a distinctive expression of that group’s culture. Yet ethnic groups may adhere to universal religions, in which case their religious culture is at least partly assimilated with that of others. We cannot, however, say the same about the rest of such groups’ culture without investigation. Anthropologists insist that all (or most) cultures are borrowed and hybridized. If ethnic groups adhere to universal religions, they may ethnicize their relationship to that religion, and declare that they have an elect, special or chosen relationship to the universal deity or doctrine; and that belief may be functional for group cohesion or survival (Smith 1992).

Occidental social science has certainly shared one presumption in the last two centuries. It expected both ethnicity and religion to wither away – through the consolidation of nation-states or of cosmopolitanism, and through secularization. They would cease to be problems for governments. Today it is not possible to sustain such convictions amid both ethnic and religious revivals. Some claim certain religions have been gathering in strength, notably Islam (Gellner 1992); others claim to identify a ubiquitous spread of ‘fundamentalism’ (Marty and Appleby 1991, 1994, 1995).

But if it is not always easy to differentiate the ethnic and the religious – especially given the propensities to ethnicize the religious and to sanctify the ethnic – we should nevertheless distinguish them analytically. Etymologically, ethnicity comes from the Greek ἔθνος (just as nation is from the Latin natio), which simply meant a group (or herd) of common descent. Its recent widespread usage in numerous languages is explained by the discrediting of racism and racial science (and the word ‘race’), which characterized the era of European and Japanese imperialism, and culminated in (but was not confined to) the atrocities of the Nazis. Its currency reflects the search for a neutral term that avoids presuming that descent-based human groups are in a ranked hierarchical order of normative (or evolutionary) significance, or that all such groups are clearly differentiated by typical differences in physical appearance (phenotypes).

To describe the ethnic, or ethnic groups, and to treat them as a question of government, entails no commitment to ontological ‘groupism’ – the belief that (only) groups exist and are holistic agents. But it does, however, require the recognition that humans may act and think in group-focused ways (at least on some occasions), and that they may judge and treat individuals as being ‘representative’ of groups. Such recognition should not be confused with full-blown methodological holism. The most famous methodological individualist of the last century, Max
Weber, had no difficulty in including ethnic groups within the ambit of social science concepts, and there are no compelling reasons not to follow him:

We shall call ‘ethnic groups’ those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or of both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. Ethnic membership (Gemeinsamkeit) differs from the kinship group precisely by being a presumed identity.

(Weber 1978: 389)

Weber’s definition is as good as many available, though there is no need to limit the sources of belief in common ancestry to shared phenotypes, customs, colonization or migration. Weber also helps distinguish nations from ethnic groups. A nation may be based on an ethnic group, or it may be based on the fusion or alliance of several such groups, or it may claim (often implausibly) to have no ethnic foundations. Nations are political collectivities: they have institutions of political self-government or they are politically mobilized to achieve national self-determination. Ethnic groups, by contrast, need not seek self-government – once they do, they are nationalizing themselves. Differently put, nations are politically self-conscious; ethnic groups need not be (Connor 1994 passim, especially ch. 4): ‘The essence of the nation … is a matter of self-awareness . . .’. Connor has argued that the nation necessarily has ethnic foundations:

It is this group-notion of kinship and uniqueness that is the essence of the nation, and tangible characteristics such as religion and language are significant to the nation only to the degree to which they contribute to this notion or sense of the group’s self-identity and uniqueness.

(ibid.: 104)

Not all agree. Nations certainly have (or seek) homelands; ethnic groups need not, partly because their members may have left their homeland of origin. Nations are modern (understood as post-sixteenth century) political phenomena, integrally linked to the discourses of national self-determination and democracy, whereas ethnic groups are perennial, recorded throughout human history (Connor 1994; Gellner 1983; Hall 1998). Differently put, nations are legitimated through nationalism, whereas ethnic groups have no such universal discourse of justification. ‘Ethnicism’ is not a doctrine – ethnic groups are particularist, though the globally diffused charters of ‘minority rights’ (and the idea of ‘cultural rights’) are now available for their use and defence.

In one respect, defining religion is just like defining ethnic groups or nations. As anthropologists say, we must distinguish etic (i.e. outsiders’) from emic (i.e. insiders’) accounts of the phenomenon. The emic approach to defining religion has clear problems. Unless the relevant believers are relativists they will usually regard most of the rest of the world as followers of false prophets or false religions, i.e. as not properly religious. They may insist that others lack a correct ontology, epistemology, theology or account of revelation, and may have explanations for why the rest of us are not (yet) believers. There are, however, monistic and pluralistic emic perspectives. In the former, there is one true religion (extra ecclesiam nulla salus as the Catholic catechism still has it). In the latter, many pathways and destinations somehow share a common core. By contrast, ethnicity and nationality are necessarily pluralistic in emic conceptions; debates over where boundaries should be drawn occur, but the multiplicity of the groups is inherent in popular accounts.
Conclusion

This exploratory note has suggested that the governing of national, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity may be approached as both common and distinct subjects. The propensities to discriminate unjustly, by nationality, ethnicity, language and sect, and to trigger thereby violence and civil war, are critical subjects of politics. Governments intent on eliminating differences behave in broadly similar ways. Questions of status, recognition, representation and access to decision-making (shared and autonomous) pose similar problems for accommodationist governments and those intent on control. So do the questions of the extra-state allegiances of citizens and resident subjects.

Where the regulation of religion most obviously differs from the regulation of ethnicity and nationality is on substantive matters, notably, today in many states, on matters of science, especially science which shapes policy on women’s rights. Science, both its procedures and outcomes, challenges (and sometimes renders ludicrous) religious claims to knowledge, in ways which seem much less true of the claims of ethnicity and nationality (though myths on these subjects are also challenged by scientific inquiry and discovery). Governments often have to choose whether to be guided by science or by religion(s). Liberal states, even those with established religions, are generally guided by science, and have generally beaten back religious claims to alternative knowledge. All governments regulate relations between men and women (and their children). Liberal states insist on the equality of women, and have granted women significant rights over the control of their own bodies and rights of and in divorce. In freeing women from patriarchy, they have generally legislated against most of the world’s religions. A similar pattern may be repeating itself regarding the rights of gay people. Liberal states insist on education systems, and educational curricula, in which every religious dogma may be questioned in the market place of ideas, and, where freedom of expression is strongly protected, they may also insist on the right to ridicule religious beliefs, even though it may not be prudent, and even though marches and demonstrations may be regulated (O’Leary 2006). It is rare for liberal states to extend the freedom to ridicule to ethnic (or racial) relations. Where inter-communal tensions are high, however, prudent liberal states enforce rules against expressions of religious hatred that are likely to lead to breaches of the peace. The policing of diversity, however, has to be addressed elsewhere.

Notes

1 For a discussion of the banning of religious (and ethnic) parties, see Bogaards (2008).
2 Many states face the difficulty of accepting historically formed religions, but then being called upon to outlaw (or to free forcefully those persuaded by) new ‘cults’. The latter are alleged to practise brain-washing, to be embezzlement schemes or not to be authentic religions. The difficulty, of course, is that no religion can be free of accusations of brain-washing, embezzlement or inauthenticity.
4 One author fears that this strange conviction is widespread, whence the anxious title of his book (Brubaker 2006).

References

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