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Chapter 12

Cultural insecurity and political solidarity: French republicanism reconsidered

Sophie Guérard de Latour

Is multiculturalism "un-French"?[1]

The nature of social movements and their political impact underwent a profound transformation in the 1960s and 70s. Debates over minority identities and cultural domination led not only to new policy measures such as anti-discrimination laws and the promotion of diversity, but also to the elaboration of new paradigms of political justice.[2] The latter have often been grouped under the generic term "multiculturalism".[3] It is now widely acknowledged that, of the major Western democracies, France has been one of the most resistant to this normative change, whether at the level of policy-making or political theory.[4] This is often considered to be a consequence of France's republican public philosophy. In the past three decades, faced with the rise of identity politics and the *droit à la différence* (right to difference) movement, a new republican consensus has emerged in France. Its main aim has been to defend the specificity of a "French model of integration", particularly with respect to immigrant and ethnic minority populations.[5] This republican revival has been led by a group of philosophers and public intellectuals that have come to be known as "official republicans".[6] They have emphasised the importance of the nation as a vital form of cultural mediation and a prerequisite to citizenship. They have also repeatedly argued that multiculturalism is a threat to civic harmony and that political mobilisation by minorities is dangerous.

One of the more recent examples of the mobilisation of France's republican public philosophy was in 2002 when the far left (*la gauche populaire*) adopted it as part of a broader strategy of political reorientation.[7] In the presidential elections of that year, the leader of the far-right Front National party caused a political shock by reaching the second round at the expense of the Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin, and it was in this context that members of the *gauche populaire* reiterated their republican credentials. They argued that, not only had the Socialist Party "lost touch with the people" because of its adherence to neo-liberalism, it had also been converted to political liberalism by supporting minority rights for women, asylum seekers, homosexuals and others, all of which had contributed to the left's growing detachment from the working class.[8] This attack on the moderate left renewed the republican critique of multiculturalism in a number of ways. First, it was explicitly anti-elitist. It was not the political identity and "communitarianism" of minorities themselves that was called into question, but the negligence of the (Socialist) political elite. The latter were accused of "betraying their social base", for instance by concerning themselves more with the rights of foreign rather than French workers.[9] Second, it stressed egalitarianism. The defence of minorities had contributed to the left's "rightward drift" because it served to focus attention on cultural issues at the expense of apparently insoluble socio-economic problems.[10] Finally, it incorporated the idea of "cultural insecurity" alongside egalitarianism. Critics from the *gauche populaire* claimed that the moderate left's acceptance of multicultural diversity meant that it was no longer committed to the common culture required to build civic and national identity. Worse still, the defence of minorities had contributed to a general stigmatisation of the working class who were perceived as racist, xenophobic, sexist and homophobic. Deprived of a common identity and confronted

with an overwhelmingly negative image of themselves, the 'indigenous' French working class ("*Français de souche*") had become a psychologically vulnerable and poorly-represented minority. Their cultural insecurity was reflected particularly in spatial segregation: cast out into distant neighbourhoods, they were being excluded from the dynamic and positive effects of globalisation that were transforming the modern metropolis.[11]

This left-wing critique of multiculturalism raises a number of difficult empirical questions. For instance, further research would be required to demonstrate a causal relationship between multicultural policies and the declining Socialist vote amongst the French working-class. These, however, are questions that belong in the realm of the social sciences. My aim here will be of a more philosophical nature. I want to analyse the normative project that lies at the heart of this critique of multiculturalism. I intend to examine critically the claim that multiculturalism is essentially anti-republican because *it does not take seriously enough the importance of a community of citizens to realise civic equality*. For the partisans of the *gauche populaire*, multiculturalism has undermined the nation by making individual rights and cultural diversity into a new political horizon. Its ultimate goal is to detach citizenship from "archaic" national particularism. But this does not constitute social progress; on the contrary, they argue that multiculturalism creates new kinds of insecurity. It damages the symbolic power of the nation; its emphasis on difference loosens the bonds of a common culture; and it excludes the most vulnerable social groups from a political space that is supposed to guarantee equality and justice within French society.

Seen from the perspective of contemporary philosophical debates surrounding citizenship and cultural diversity, such an interpretation is highly questionable. For a start, not all normative theories of multiculturalism endorse cosmopolitanism. Many stress the importance of national cultures over the rights of foreigners and thereby come close to adopting a position commonly known as "liberal nationalism", in which the aim is not to transcend the nation but to create more equitable relations between different groups within a multinational nation.[12] Moreover, not all theories of multiculturalism are explicitly opposed to policies of integration directed at immigrant populations. Rather, they criticise these policies in their most 'assimilationist' form and seek to reformulate them so that they are more acceptable to foreigners and immigrants.[13] Finally, it is important to remember that diversity and equality are not mutually incompatible policies; the vast majority of scholars of multiculturalism see their theoretical insights as a way of combatting new forms of social injustice and inequality by exposing their cultural foundations.

If nothing else, these observations suggest that there is no intrinsic theoretical incompatibility between the defence of minority rights and republican ideals. It is not surprising, therefore, that a new generation of neo-republican philosophers have tried to introduce more liberal ideas into French political culture in an effort to curb its more dogmatic and sectarian tendencies.[14] In this chapter, I would like to extend this project by proposing a liberal neo-republican reading of the philosophy of Emile Durkheim, one of the founding fathers of French republicanism. Durkheim is especially relevant here since he was a major theorist of social integration, an issue which is at the heart of the left-wing critique of multiculturalism. One of Durkheim's main contributions to this question was the theory of social solidarity he developed in *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) as a way of reconciling social unity and the rise of individualism in modern society. His analysis rests on the close connection he saw between "social facts" and "moral facts".[15] In this interpretation, integration is intimately related

to the way in which certain norms emerge amongst groups and the way in which they coalesce around strong collective representations. Of course, these insights also had a normative function for Durkheim: his scientific analysis was a way of legitimising the republican nation-building project of the Third Republic.[16] One might argue that, in the light of technological, economic, social and political change, this contextual specificity has rendered his insights obsolete. But Durkheim's sociology continues to influence contemporary debates, particularly with respect to the relationship between French republicanism and minorities. It thus provides a useful starting point for a liberal reinterpretation of republicanism, while still retaining the distinctive national and historical character of French republicanism. In what follows, I want to propose three ways in which the French "model of integration" can be reworked using Durkheim. My aim is to identify a middle ground between a communitarian and an anti-communitarian interpretation of Durkheim's thought that takes the community of citizens seriously without undermining minority rights.

A Rousseauist account: national identity, transcendence and civic virtue

The insistence of republicans on the importance of integration and, more recently, "cultural security" is not simply a French idiosyncrasy. It has deep roots in a classical republican tradition that views politics as a civic act**.** In this view, freedom is a public good rather than a private good since it is derived entirely from the responsibility that all citizens have in a republic to choose their collective destiny. Republican freedom is therefore closely tied to membership of a political community that guarantees a sense of "security" through an egalitarian ethos based on mutual respect.[17] Classical thinkers were already aware of the importance of patriotism as a form of collective identification and the basis of political belonging.[18] Contemporary republicans have remained attached to this model, although they have adapted it to the context of the nation-state, which has become the foundation of popular sovereignty in the modern age.[19] One of the great achievements of the multicultural critique of the nation has been to question the extent to which citizenship should be inextricably tied to a dominant national culture. Using historical examples, it has highlighted the authoritarian practices that have underpinned national assimilation in modern Western democracies and the subsequent marginalisation or obliteration of minority cultures.[20] This, in turn, has undermined the widely-accepted distinction between a *civic nation* and an *ethnic nation*. National integration does not depend on universal political principles alone; it also relies on ethno-cultural characteristics such as language, customs and national symbols in order to create a sense of shared community amongst citizens.

For liberal philosophers of multiculturalism, the process of national assimilation in a multicultural society is problematic because it embodies a new and pernicious form of "state communitarianism" and "tyranny of the majority" that imposes the norms of a dominant ethno-cultural group in the name of civic universalism. But French "official republicans" hold the opposite view. The work of well-known sociologist Dominique Schnapper, for instance, provides a good example of the ways in which the sociology of Durkheim has been deployed to defend republicanism against the claim that it necessarily leads to an overbearing "state communitarianism".[21] Schnapper accepts that the public sphere is ethnically-orientated, but she rejects the normative conclusions of multicultural theory:

> It is true that the state is never truly neutral and that a common culture, elaborated and guaranteed by public institutions, dominates particularistic cultures. But is this not the price to pay so that all citizens can participate fully in national society (*la société nationale*)?[22]

From a normative point of view, the argument of a "price to pay" provides an instrumental justification for national integration policies. A majority culture is imposed on minority cultures as a condition for the realisation of a civic project, apparently without the need for any reference to the intrinsic value of a specific national culture (such as the "genius" (*génie*) of the French language). And yet, Schnapper also recognises that, because of the sociological characteristics of the modern nation-state, no civic project can exist without "a link, that can only be 'communitarian' or 'ethnic' in nature".[23] It is at this point that Schnapper invokes Durkheim: she uses his theory of social solidarity in order to defend the positive and non-exclusive character of her proposed republican "community of citizens".

In *The Division of Labour*, Durkheim presented an original reading of the modernisation of social relations that ran contrary to the widely-accepted idea that community had disappeared.[24] In opposition to Ferdinand Tönnies's model of the movement from *Gemeinschaft* (community) to *Gesellschaft* (society), Durkheim argued that the shift from rural and agricultural society to urban and industrial society did not automatically entail the atomisation of social relations, nor did it imply the dissolution of social bonds. Solidarity had not disappeared from modern society; it had simply changed from a "mechanical" solidarity based on similarity to an "organic" solidarity based on difference. Whereas traditional communities were held together by imitation, shared ancestry, a respect for common values and the reproduction of similar modes of life, modern society was marked by a division of labour that had created ever-closer relations of interdependence. For Schnapper, the originality of Durkheim's communitarian conception of modern society lies in the pivotal role played by politics. This was, according to her, neglected by previous theorists of nationalism who had emphasised the role of technological, economic and ideological factors.[25] For Durkheim, on the other hand, the state was the "social brain" (*cerveau social*) of a society governed by the division of labour.[26] In his analysis, the state is the unified expression of new collective norms and ensures that citizens have the possibility of developing their individual personalities with a view to integrating themselves more effectively into society.[27] Durkheim thus imagines the nation-state as a privileged means by which citizens can break away from their cultures of origin and their traditional lifestyles: even if national integration imposes a majority culture on all citizens, it remains fundamentally liberating.

Schnapper uses Durkheim's model of social modernisation in order to demonstrate that there is a qualitative conceptual difference between a nation and an ethnicity. She argues that the former is founded on organic solidarity. It embodies a "principle of potential inclusion" that seeks to "transcend particularistic, biological, historical, economic, social, religious or cultural forms of citizenship" and "define the citizen as an abstract individual, above and beyond his context (*déterminations concrètes*)".[28] By contrast, ethnicity is founded on mechanical solidarity. Its tendency is to exclude difference – above all, ethnic difference – in an effort to preserve its specificity. This distinction allows Schnapper to maintain that, "unlike ethnic identity", the nation is not founded on a "cultural identity".[29] Even if the cultural heritage of a nation plays an important role in unifying citizens, it is not the nation's sole raison d'être but simply a condition for the elaboration of a common civic project. National cultures, then, are communitarian but not exclusive.

But, while Schnapper's distinction between two different forms of solidarity makes it possible for her to defend an open and plural vision of the nation-state, she nevertheless believes political claims by minorities to be illegitimate. This is because they represent a regression towards a more mechanical form of solidarity that Durkheim could not have predicted:

> Durkheim did not analyse the relationship between the two types of solidarity in dialectical terms, nor did he imagine that there could be a return to particularistic solidarities and identities; he did not foresee that "mechanical" integration could emerge at the expense of "organic" integration, or that ethnic passions could once again get the better of civic principles.[30]

The danger of minority claims is clearly stated in this passage: they will rekindle "ethnic passions" and undermine the "civic reason (*la raison civique*)" that lies at the heart of Schnapper's sociological conception of the nation. It is for this reason that Schnapper criticises proponents of multicultural politics such as the philosophers Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka. In their attempts to combat the assimilationist and exclusionary effects of national integration, they "risk contributing to social fragmentation by juxtaposing closed communities without any mutual interaction".[31] For Schnapper, the republican state should not "organise and subsidise particularism", but instead work towards "the unity of a common political space governed by abstraction and the formal equality of citizens, whatever their social, religious, regional or national origins".[32] Moreover, ethno-cultural diversity should be handled in the same way as religious diversity – through a single principle of neutrality in the public sphere and the "flexible application of republican citizenship".[33]

The limits of Schnapper's reading of Durkheim's theory of solidarity lie in her conception of republicanism, which is strongly marked by a Rousseauist sensibility that seems ill-adapted to the exigencies of modern democracy. In Schnapper's view, integration into a national culture can be justified on the grounds that it allows citizens to "transcend particularism". Even if the "transcendental" reality of the nation is still contaminated by residual ethnocultural traits, the nation itself does not institutionalise particularism as long as it creates a political space that facilitates the movement from simple socialised subject to fully-fledged citizen. To put it in Rousseauist terms, it is necessary first to belong to a nation in order to gain access to the civic rationality that underpins the general interest. This, in turn, subdues "ethno-religious passions" created by particularistic allegiances and factionalism. Hence why Schnapper sees the demand for cultural or minority rights as regressive: as citizens become ever more concerned with their individual rights, they turn away from the shared civic project that conferred citizenship on them in the first place.[34] Multicultural policies actively contribute to this fracturing of the community of citizens and the attrition of civic responsibility:

> Civic responsibility can transcend particularism, but, the more it weakens, the greater the possibility of a resurgence of ethno-religious passions. Believing in the rationality of man requires a good deal of will and optimism.[35]

Schnapper's response to multiculturalism is, therefore, to recreate a community of citizens founded on moral republicanism.[36] The implication is that national integration depends on the virtue of individual citizens – in other words, their personal ability to steer clear of private interests and rise to the level of the general will. But there are two major objections to this kind of moral republicanism. First, it relies on an unusually demanding conception of freedom that seems more appropriate to the classical than the modern age insofar as it emphasises moral

self-control and the promotion of civic virtue. Second, it is clear that the burden of virtue falls disproportionately on minorities. The duty to integrate into a shared national culture is more easily fulfilled by the majority – who have defined the contours of the nation – than by minorities. These two objections suggest that mobilisation by minorities is not, in fact, a sign of "archaic" forms of solidarity. Rather, such mobilisation is the expression of a desire for justice and equality in modern society. This is the interpretation that forms the basis of Jean-Fabien Spitz's neo-republican reading of Durkheim, to which we will now turn.

A neo-republican account: non-discrimination and non-domination

Spitz's book, *Le moment républicain en France* (2005), is an attempt to incorporate into French political theory the insights of Quentin Skinner, Philip Pettit and other Anglo-American theorists of neo-republicanism who have defended the relevance of a republican idea of freedom against the dominant doctrine of political liberalism. These thinkers do not endorse the classical republican ideal of freedom since they feel it demands too much self-control and self-abnegation for citizens in modern democracies and conflicts with the sociological realities of pluralism. However, respecting the diversity of values and ways of life people are likely to endorse in modern democracies does not mean that their freedom can be limited to "non-interference" alone, as many traditional liberal thinkers have claimed. Instead, neo-republicans argue that freedom can be framed in terms of "non-domination", or the absence of vulnerability to the arbitrary actions of others. In contrast to the marked scepticism of classical liberalism towards authority, Anglo-American neo-republicans maintain that the state and collective norms are essential in order to protect citizens from hidden forms of domination. Spitz adapts this analysis to a French context. His aim is to show how a republicanism of non-domination has long existed in French political culture. To this end, his reading of the texts of the founding fathers of the Third Republic stresses their conception of civic solidarity, which he sees as well-suited to modern society and yet capable of protecting civil society from intrusion by the republican state. Given his historical approach, it is not surprising that he is also drawn to Durkheim, who plays a central role in Spitz's liberal reinterpretation of French republicanism.

It is interesting that, even though Spitz and Schnapper both discuss Durkheim, they diverge sharply in the way they address the problem of difference and pluralism. Spitz does not associate the theory of "organic solidarity" with a model of integration that can transcend particularism; instead, he stresses the strong relationship between the emergence of minority demands and the legitimisation of solidarities founded on the principle of difference. In his words:

> Durkheim was convinced that the desire to be recognised for our differences and specificities – and the desire for rights to protect the expression of these differences – cannot exist except in a society in which the differences between individuals have become very clear as a result of the division of labour.[37]

This argument is incompatible with the view that mobilisation by minorities represents a step backwards towards communitarian and conservative forms of solidarity. On the contrary, it suggests that any such mobilisation is a natural part of the evolution of society and the individual norms implicit in the division of labour. The clearest expression of this evolution is a desire for justice and an unprecedented demand for equality. It is worth clarifying here that, for Durkheim, organic solidarity does not simply refer to a functional process; it embodies a new form of solidarity characterised by a new relationship to the individual. As he puts it: "as all

other beliefs and practices take on less and less of a religious character, the individual becomes the object of a sort of religion".[38] In other words, it is justice – defined as the imperative to respect humans in the abstract – that becomes the overriding "common faith" of modern man. Spitz interprets this to mean that "in the absence of collective beliefs and a strong collective conscience, solidarity can only be built on a feeling of not being discriminated against and of being treated according to our merit".[39] Equality of opportunity is therefore an extension of Durkheim's religion of the individual, and opens society to all individuals, regardless of their social and ethnic origins.

For Spitz, the originality of Durkheim's approach lies in its republican inflection. In contrast to utilitarian economists of the late nineteenth century – especially Herbert Spencer – Durkheim believed that the liberalisation of social relations was not an entirely spontaneous process since it could take pathological forms such as the "anomic (*anomique*) division of labour" or the "constrained division of labour". Spitz blurs the boundaries between the two pathological forms in his analysis, but it is the latter that is most relevant to a discussion of minorities. For Durkheim, the division of labour is "constrained" when the allocation of social tasks no longer takes place spontaneously according to the capacities and talents of the individual, but instead falls back on preconceptions inherited from earlier forms of solidarity. In these circumstances, individuals are assessed on the basis of their similarity to their group of origin and thereby excluded from tasks that might correspond to their skills.[40] Although Durkheim does not deal specifically with the case of ethnic discrimination, there is a clear parallel and Spitz uses it to reinforce his argument about non-domination. More generally, this reading of Durkheim strongly suggests that mobilisation by minorities does not automatically mean a worrying return to "ethnic passions" that might undermine civic life; rather, the problem lies in the social conditions that limit equality of opportunity. What unifies members of ethnic minority groups is not a straightforward mechanical solidarity, but the fact of forming "a class of vulnerability".[41] Whether or not specific individuals have been the target of discrimination, their membership of a minority group makes them vulnerable to domination. This naturally leads to a stronger collective identity and greater bonds of solidarity amongst minorities. The result is that individual demands for non-discrimination are expressed through a collective attack on domination and a rapid politicisation of identities that were hitherto consigned to the private sphere.

Spitz argues that, for Durkheim, the role of the republican state is precisely to combat social pathologies that give rise to forms of domination. It does this by creating rules and norms that protect citizens from the arbitrary exercise of power:

> The pathologies of a society of individuals arise simply because the implicit rules of society are inadequately formulated and insufficiently implemented. The Republic is the solution [to this problem].[42]

Durkheim did indeed see the Republic as a "solution" to the pathologies of modern society. He saw the state as a regulatory body that does not impose rules from outside but merely codifies norms that emerge naturally from the division of labour. In the same way that the brain depends on other organs, the modern state depends on unconscious, spontaneous processes of social regulation. The only difference is that the complexity of modern society requires superior forms of social integration. These can only be guaranteed by the state, the purpose of which is to strengthen existing patterns of liberalisation within society. Not surprisingly, Spitz concludes

that the metaphor of the state as "social brain" is a sign that Durkheim's republicanism is fundamentally modern. The state does not exist to counteract the atomising tendencies of modern individualism and recreate a collective civic virtue. Its role is to reinforce and rationalise the rules that will ensure equality of opportunity and allow individuals to pursue their greatest happiness:

> The state is not a power which constrains, controls, and represses individual differences since, on the contrary, its function is to articulate the constitutive rules which allow for their true fulfilment. […] The state's first function, then, is to create the conditions of maximal mobility and differentiation and to remove any obstacle which goes against a genuine or spontaneous specialisation of functions.[43]

Thus, where Schnapper invokes Durkheim to condemn minority and identity politics, Spitz deploys the work of the French sociologist to rather different ends. He maintains that Durkheim's argument about the pathologies of the division of labour is a sociological critique of the processes of discrimination that have undermined equality of opportunity in modern societies. Because discrimination has weakened the sense of justice that binds together the citizens of a republic, it has also weakened social solidarity. The state must therefore intervene in order to correct this tendency, specifically through anti-discriminatory policies, to which the majority of French official republicans are hostile.

One of the great benefits of reading Durkheim's republicanism in this way is that it gets away from a tired opposition between diversity and equality. Spitz shows clearly how minority rights are entirely consistent with the normative structures that gave rise to citizens' rights in general. In both cases, the aim is to protect individuals against the arbitrary exercise of power and domination – whether in the form of socio-economic exclusion or racism, xenophobia, sexism or homophobia. There is no need to set "whites (*petits blancs*)" against minorities, as left-wing critics of multiculturalism have tried to do. When correctly understood, multicultural policies do not sacrifice the security of the former in order to defend the latter since non-domination is a common rather than competitive good.[44] If the republican state supports ethnic minorities by accepting the validity of their collective mobilisations and by giving them a place in the public sphere, it is to reinforce civic bonds. The state has a duty to integrate citizens, but this cannot be achieved merely by the imposition of a unified national culture in the name of civic virtue. The state should instead elaborate rules that reduce forms of domination within society, especially where this domination relates to cultural preconceptions inherited from older forms of solidarity. Ultimately, Spitz's reading of Durkheim's theory of solidarity opens the possibility of a convergence between different struggles for minority rights: as long as solidarity amongst minority groups is founded on non-domination, it is by definition moving towards integration with a national culture. In time, all citizens will perceive themselves as equally vulnerable and they will all work together to demand just laws that can protect them from domination.[45]

A liberal-communitarian account: towards an inclusive national imaginary

Spitz's reading of Durkheim is, to my mind, an improvement on that of Schnapper. It expands the concept of republican political emancipation to encompass minority politics, not as a symptom of a backward-looking insularity, but as a legitimate form of expression within a modern democracy. This means that the republican state can only promote integration and emancipation by encouraging the mobilisation of minorities. Above all, Spitz's reading avoids

casting minority politics as an irreconcilable clash between a majority culture and minority cultures. Instead, it suggests that we should analyse multiculturalism in much the same way that Durkheim analysed socio-economic inequality in his day, not as a problem of competition over the distribution of "salaries" but as the sign of a common experience of "alarming moral misery (*alarmante misère morale*)".[46] Durkheim was as concerned with the mobilisation of workers as he was with socialist doctrine, and he saw them as the embodiment of new collective representations that had emerged from the social relations of the modern age. The workers' movement was, in his view, a form of moral indignation at the collapse of old networks of solidarity. Its demands reflected the need to replace these old networks with modern social norms fully adapted to the complexity of modern society, a task undertaken by the diverse formulation of socialist reforms.[47] In the same way, we can see contemporary minority politics as the answer to the moral indignation created by social exclusion and ethnic discrimination, to which new social policies – such as anti-discrimination programs – are the only adequate response.[48]

Spitz's account nonetheless remains reductive in that it never acknowledges the communitarian dimensions of Durkheim's republicanism. In opposition to the philosopher Mark Cladis – who sees in Durkheim's thought "a communitarian defence of liberalism" – Spitz insists that "Durkheim rejects… anything that might appear to resemble an embryonic communitarianism (*communautarisme*)".[49] This argument rests on Durkheim's distance from his positivist contemporaries in the late nineteenth century who suggested that it might be necessary to reactivate collective consciousness in order to combat the nefarious effects of individualism. By contrast, as Spitez recalls, Durkheim was convinced by the morally positive nature of individualism and developed a theory of social integration based on this conviction. From the point of view of inter-cultural relations, the anti-communitarian interpretation of Durkheim's theory of solidarity would imply that republican policies towards minorities should limit themselves to anti-discrimination measures that can liberate individuals from their respective communities. But this means that state support for minorities remains instrumental and provisional: there is no attempt to give identity-difference a positive value in society, merely an attempt to reduce discrimination on the grounds of identity. The main aim is to make difference visible and predictable so that it does not compromise equality of opportunity. Yet this strategy is still underpinned by a concept of equality that is blind to difference, insofar as it guarantees the same opportunities to all, regardless of their cultural specificity.

If we want to go further in elaborating an effective form of republican multiculturalism, we need to take into account the fundamentally communitarian nature of modern society. This requires an examination of an aspect of Durkheim's thought that Spitz neglects. We have already seen how the originality of Durkheim lies in his argument that the individualisation of modern society does not result in greater atomisation, but rather in the reconstruction of new forms of solidarity. In his reading, Spitz discusses organic solidarity and the resulting interdependence that is a consequence of the division of labour. But he minimises the importance of mechanical solidarity that continues to unite members of a modern society. Spitz recognises that there still exists "a common belief in justice" but goes no further than Durkheim who, in the *Division of Labour*, maintained that "the religion of the individual" remained individualistic and had no significant potential for solidarity:

> If this religion is common to all, in that it is shared by the community, its object is individual. If it turns all minds towards the same end, this end is not social… It is from society that it derives its

> force, yet it does not attach us to society but to ourselves. As a result, it does not constitute a veritable social bond.[50]

Durkheim, however, returned to this question in later years alongside his growing interest in religion. In his work on suicide, and above all in the article he wrote during the Dreyfus Affair – "L'individualisme et les intellectuels" (1898) – he reiterated the importance of the "cult of the individual" as a way of preserving social bonds in modern society.[51] Durkheim subsequently referred, not to "religion", but to the "cult of the individual", which allowed him to bring out the cultural and symbolic dimensions of moral individualism. As with all religions, individualism draws its authority, not only from a belief system, but also from the practices that unite believers around common rituals and symbols. These practices make it possible for individuals to recreate their sense of attachment to the community, which then expresses itself as an unconditional respect for all things sacred. This is the concept of "social symbolism" that Durkheim developed at length in his *Elementary forms of religious life* (1912).[52]

The consequence of this argument is that mechanical solidarity, which corresponds in modern society to the sense of justice, can only operate within a specific culture. Or, to put it another way, the respect for man in the abstract presupposes the sharing of concrete and historically-situated symbols. As Cladis has shown, this sociological reformulation of republican patriotism lies at the heart of Durkheim's defence of those who supported Dreyfus (*dreyfusards*).[53] Where conservatives attacked the *dreyfusards* for putting individual rights above the nation (in this case, embodied in the French army), Durkheim responded that they were actually the true defenders of the nation:

> The individualist who defends the rights of the individual simultaneously defends the vital interests of society; for he prevents the criminal impoverishment of the last remaining reserve of ideas and collective sentiments that are the very soul of the nation.[54]

The key point here is that the *dreyfusard* ideal of justice is not simply an abstract ideal; it is derived from a historical reality, namely the political traditions inherited from the French Revolution. And, since the latter is a national political cult with its symbols, saints and martyrs, it provides a focal point for the renewal of civic solidarity.

If we take seriously this communitarian defence of individual rights, we can look at the issue of difference in a new way. Let us assume that civic solidarity is dependent on a certain cultural context and national symbolism; the question, then, is whether the symbols on which this solidarity is based are inclusive or exclusive. Seen this way, the repeated references by ethnic minorities to memory and historical injustice are not simply ways of 'distracting' attention away from socio-economic exclusion. On the contrary, they suggest that solidarity has two sides – mechanical and organic – which Durkheim refuses to separate. While it is certainly the case that individualism constitutes the foundation of differentiated solidarity, this does not negate the fact that citizens are morally bound together by a common belief in justice, which is coterminous with their membership of the nation. But, in the absence of a shared history – for instance, a shared history of immigration – this membership can only be partial. The historian Gérard Noiriel has demonstrated how, despite a long history of immigration in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there are very few traces of immigration in French national memory.[55] As a result, immigration has never been considered an integral part of national identity, even though it is a vital component of contemporary French society.[56] This symbolic exclusion

explains why a good number of French citizens of foreign origin have struggled to find a "legitimate" place in the economic, social and cultural life of their own country.[57]

A republican defence of minorities cannot, then, be limited to the principle of non-discrimination alone. It also requires a positive recognition of ethno-cultural difference, with a view to pluralising national cultures and acknowledging the diversity of the civic community. This form of pluralism still remains within a republican logic since it emphasises political freedom and maintains that the rights of the individual are inseparable from membership of a political community and its networks of solidarity. It nevertheless allows us to work towards "an intersubjective understanding of citizenship", as well as recognise existing processes of social exclusion. In the words of the political theorist Cécile Laborde:

> one may enjoy the formal rights of citizenship and yet, by virtue of one's perceived or assigned cultural or religious identity, be arbitrarily excluded from the imaginary construction of the *patrie.* Thus, in a republican view, people's civic standing can be affected by discursive constructions of collective identity. They can be denied citizenship by being denied symbolic membership in the nation.[58]

The benefit of reading Durkheim alongside a neo-republican ideal of non-domination is that it allows us to bring together the fight against discrimination and a radical revision of the concept of national identity. This, again, highlights the limitations of the critique of multiculturalism by the *gauche populaire*. Multicultural policies do not undermine the nation and neglect the interests of the working-classes; rather, they make it possible to redefine the contours of the national imaginary so that all citizens, regardless of their origins, can belong to and participate in the nation.

Great thinkers are those whose work resists easy interpretation. In this chapter, I have evaluated three different readings of Durkheim's theory of social solidarity. I have tried to show how the theoretical insights of one of the founding fathers of French republicanism can be used to prevent republicanism from becoming a dogmatic and exclusive form of state communitarianism. In the first instance, the concept of organic solidarity, understood as non-domination, suggests that political claims by ethnic minorities do not represent a regression back to mechanical solidarity, but a legitimate pattern of mobilisation in modern society, motivated by nothing more than a desire for justice. But we must also accept that the latter is deeply anchored in a nationally-determined "cult of the individual". This cult needs to be enriched by the cultural diversity of the community of citizens: this is the only way we can ensure that it does not become exclusive and discriminatory. Reconsidering Durkheim in the light of neo-republican theories thus allows us to capture more precisely the intimate connections between freedom as non-domination, civic equality and collective identity. In so doing, we can see that French republicanism, far from being intrinsically hostile to multiculturalism, has the potential to take seriously both the community of citizens and competing minority claims.

Translated from the French by Emile Chabal.

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[1] Jeremy Jennings, "Citizenship, Republicanism and Multiculturalism in France", *British Journal of Political Science* 30, 4 (2000): 589.

[2] The term minority refers to a wide variety of groups (women, disabled persons, lesbians, gays, transexuals, bisexuals etc.), as well as racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities. In this chapter, I focus my attention primarily on ethnic minorities, even if I have chosen to retain the term "minority" in order not to exclude other forms of difference.
[3] Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Amy Gutman, ed., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (London: Harvard University Press, 2002).
[4] The Multiculturalism Policy Index (http://www.queensu.ca/mcp) places France near the bottom of the list of those countries that have adopted multicultural policies. See also Pierre-André Taguieff, *La République enlisée. Pluralisme, communautarisme et citoyenneté* (Paris: Editions des Syrtes, 2005).
[5] Cécile Laborde, *Critical Republicanism: The Hijab Controversy and Political Philosophy* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 187-192.
[6] The term "official republicans" does not refer to a specific group or school of thought. Rather, it is used by the political theorist Cécile Laborde to describe a specifically French political philosophy of republicanism which is the subject of her book *Critical Republicanism*.
[7] Laurent Baumel and François Kalfon, eds., *Plaidoyer pour une gauche populaire: la gauche face à ses électeurs* (Paris: Editions Le bord de l'eau, 2011). It includes contributions by Laurent Bouvet, Christophe Guilluy, Rémi Lefebvre, Alain Mergier, Camille Peugny.
[8] Laurent Bouvet, "Le sens du peuple", *Le Débat* 2, 164 (2011): 136-143.
[9] Bouvet, "Le sens du peuple", 139.
[10] On this point, the critique of the *gauche populaire* is in accordance with the argument in Walter Benn Michaels, *The Trouble with Diversity: How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2006).
[11] Christophe Guilluy, *Fractures françaises: Pour une nouvelle géographie sociale* (Paris: François Bourin Editeur, 2010).
[12] Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism: Studies in Moral, Political and Legal Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).
[13] Peter Balint and Sophie Guérard de Latour, eds, *Liberal Multiculturalism and the Fair Terms of Integration* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013).
[14] Jean-Fabien Spitz, *Le moment républicain en France* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005); Laborde, *Critical Republicanism*.
[15] Emile Durkheim, "Détermination du fait moral" in Emile Durkheim, *Sociologie et philosophie* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2004).
[16] For the historian Claude Nicolet, Emile Durkheim "is one of the rare – perhaps the only – thinker to have elaborated a science of and for the Republic" (Claude Nicolet, *L'idée républicaine en France (1789-1924)* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), 312). The normative dimensions of Durkheim's sociology explain its recent rehabilitation in the fields of political and moral philosophy. See for instance Mark Cladis, *A Communitarian Defense of Liberalism. Emile Durkheim and Contemporary Social Theory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); Will Watts Miller, *Durkheim, Morals and Modernity* (London: UCL Press Ltd., 1996).
[17] See Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des Lois*, XII, 2 (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1979), 328 and Philip Pettit, "Civility and Trust" in Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 261-270.
[18] "If we cherish our own citizenship and our own freedom, we have to cherish at the same time the social body in the membership of which that status consists" (Pettit, *Republicanism*, 260). See also Maurizio Viroli, *For the Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
[19] Sophie Guérard de Latour, "Reworking the neo-republican sense of belonging", *Diacrítica* 24, 2 (2010): 85-105.
[20] Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), chap. 4 "Human Rights and Ethnocultural Justice".
[21] Dominique Schnapper, *La communauté des citoyens: sur l'idée moderne de nation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994); *La relation à l'autre. Au cœur de la pensée sociologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1998).
[22] Schnapper, *La relation à l'autre*, 445.
[23] Schnapper, *La relation à l'autre*, 445.
[24] Emile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998).

[25] Schnapper, *La relation à l'autre*, 388.
[26] Emile Durkheim, *Leçons de sociologie* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2003), 89.
[27] Schnapper summarises Durkheim's position in Schnapper, *La relation à l'autre,* 445.
[28] Schnapper*, La relation à l'autre*, 449.
[29] Schnapper, *La communauté des citoyens,* 140.
[30] Schnapper*, La relation à l'autre*, 398.
[31] Dominique Schnapper, "La République face aux communautarismes", *Etudes*, 2 (Feb. 2004): 184.
[32] Schnapper, "La République face aux communautarismes", 184.
[33] Schnapper, "La République face aux communautarismes", 188.
[34] Dominique Schnapper, *La démocratie providentielle: essai sur l'égalité contemporaine* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002).
[35] Schnapper, *La relation à l'autre*, 492.
[36] Alain Renaut and Sylvie Mesure, *Alter ego. Les paradoxes de l'identité démocratique* (Paris: Aubier, 1999), 162.
[37] Spitz, *Le moment républicain,* 265-266.
[38] Durkheim, *De la division*, 147.
[39] Spitz, *Le moment républicain,* 297.
[40] Durkheim, *De la division*, 370.
[41] Pettit, *Republicanism.* 122.
[42] Spitz, *Le moment républicain,* 283.
[43] Spitz, *Le moment républicain,* 284-285
[44] Pettit, *Republicanism*, 125. See also "freedom as non-domination […] is a common good to the extent that no member of a vulnerable group – no woman or black and, ultimately, no member of the society as a whole – can hope to achieve it fully for themselves without its being achieved for all members: no member can hope to achieve it fully for themselves except so far as membership of the group ceases to be a badge of vulnerability" (Pettit, *Republicanism*, 259).
[45] Pettit, *Republicanism*, 125.
[46] Emile Durkheim, *Le suicide* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1995), 445.
[47] Emile Durkheim, "Sur la définition du socialisme" in Emile Durkheim, *La science sociale et l'action* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1987), 226-235.
[48] Sophie Guérard de Latour, *Vers la république des différences* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 2009), chap. 3.
[49] Spitz, *Le moment républicain*, 241.
[50] Durkheim, *De la division*, 147.
[51] Emile Durkheim, "L'individualisme et les intellectuels" in Durkheim, *La Science sociale et l'action*.
[52] Emile Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2003), 330.
[53] Cladis, *A Communitarian Defense of Liberalism*, 24, 61.
[54] Durkheim, "L'individualisme et les intellectuels", 274.
[55] As Noiriel points out, one way of preserving the memory of migration might have been to transform the selection centre in Toul that recruited the majority of migrants in interwar France into a museum celebrating the contribution of European migrants to the construction of the French nation (rather like Ellis Island in New York). Instead, the building has been destroyed.
[56] Gérard Noiriel, *Le creuset français. Histoire de l'immigration XIX-XXe siècles* (Paris: Seuil, 1988).
[57] Gérard Noiriel, *État, nation et immigration. Vers une histoire du pouvoir* (Paris: Belin, 2001), 11.
[58] Laborde, *Critical Republicanism*, 247.