

1 • Introduction

1.1 The presumption

In the Autumn of 1991, I returned from a sabbatical year in Florence spent writing the final full draft of *Real Freedom for All* to set up and direct the Chaire Hoover d'éthique économique et sociale. As I reconnected with local political debates, I was stunned to discover how the autonomy gradually conferred to Belgium's linguistically distinct regions was leading to ever more pressing demands to split up the national social security system. One of the Chaire Hoover's very first activities, jointly organised with our colleagues at the KuLeuven's Centrum voor economie en ethiek, was precisely devoted to the ethical issues raised by these demands.

In the Autumn of 1998, I returned from a sabbatical year at Oxford and Yale part of which I spent writing the first draft of a (still uncompleted) book on the future of Belgium, and moved back after a quarter of a century to the city in which I was born. As I reconnected with local daily life, I was stunned to discover how much the population of the city had changed. Over 10% of the Brussels population is being replaced every year, with a net outflow of about 2% towards Flanders or Wallonia and a net inflow of about 3% from abroad. One outcome is that some people have now been living side by side for years without sharing one common language (despite their being all plurilingual). Another is that, even when there is at least some rudimentary competence in a shared language, communication between the various components of this increasingly diverse population is minimal. When in the square at the end of my street the Eurolobbyists have finished their lunches and vacated the benches, they are soon replaced by clusters of Armenian and Aramean men tirelessly chatting and playing cards, while elderly Belgian women walk their dogs

Cultural diversity against economic solidarity¹

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¹ This essay draws extensively on the contributions to the Francqui Prize Conference "Cultural Solidarity versus Economic Solidarity" (Brussels, 28/2-1/3/2003) and the discussions they gave rise to.

in the alleys. Peaceful coexistence, but between the various sets, I never saw one word being exchanged. They do not visit the same cafes (if any). They do not frequent the same churches (if any). They do not attend the same cultural activities (if any). They do not work for the same sort of employer (if any). And their children are unlikely to go to the same schools. With the partial exception of the local supermarket, the square is the only place where they meet. Is this level of interaction sufficient to sustain lasting support for the comprehensive solidarity system involving them all which we now have? I ask myself that question whenever I happen to witness one group vacating the square, while one of the other ones is slowly moving in.

These two experiences motivate the presumption of a tension between cultural (in particular linguistic) diversity and economic solidarity, which I proposed by way of background for the conference. But is there really such a trade off between cultural diversity (and its protection) and economic solidarity? And if there is one, what principles should guide us in the institutional choices to be made? These are the central questions that were put to the participants.

Have I made much progress on these questions as a result of the conference? Yes I have. I shall make no attempt to provide anything like a balanced summary of the contributions, but simply indicate how pondering about much of the useful food for thought provided by the authors of the papers, the commentators and other participants, led me to detect some complexities in the questions themselves and gain new insights about how they should be answered.

1.2 Cultural diversity

The very notion of cultural diversity is far from unproblematic. What is a “culture”? Something like a set of ways of thinking and behaving that is shared by, and distinctive of, a group. But some ways of thinking and behaving are shared by the whole of mankind, and even within the most homogeneous groups, some differences, whether structured or random, between the thoughts and practices of its members will come up if one looks hard enough. Hence there is unavoidably a great deal of fuzziness about whether two groups have two distinct cultures or different variants of the same one. Yet, race, religion and above all language may provide pretty neat borders between cultures, not at all (in the case of race) or not mainly (in the other two cases) because they constitute or determine as such the various aspects of the distinct thoughts and practices, but because (and to the extent that) they significantly affect the structure of inter-

action and hence the flows of information, education, persuasion, imitation between people.

The notion of “diversity” is no less problematic. To start with, suppose one is only thinking of diversity along one dimension, say colour. It would seem that if in one society three colours are present and in the other five, the latter is more diverse than the former. But what if in the former the three colours are about equally represented, whereas in the latter one of the five colours accounts for 95% of the population? Both the number of types and the extent of spreading among the types certainly matter to our intuitive notion of diversity. But how should these two considerations be combined? Diversity indexes have been developed that articulate these considerations in different ways. For example, the *fractionalisation* index used by Seekings (this volume, section 2) expresses diversity as the probability that two randomly selected members of a population do not belong to the same type, while the *fragmentation* index used by La Ferrara (this volume, section 2) is given by

$$F = 1 - \sum_i s_i^2$$

where s_i is the share of type i in the population. Both indices are non-decreasing functions of the number of types and of how equally individuals are distributed among a given number of types. But the combinations they consist in are not quite equivalent. For example, fractionalisation is maximal (= 1) when each member of the population belongs to a different type, whether the population counts 2 members or 2 billion, whereas fragmentation is 1/2 for a population of two members belonging to two distinct types and converges to 1 as the number of (single-individual) types rises to infinity.

Next, what if the range of colours is broader in the society with three colours than in the society with five colours, all quite close to one another? This is a central issue in the measurement of biodiversity. The concern is not quite the same if the species on the verge of disappearing is one of many that are closely related (though distinct, using the criterion of inter-fertility) or is the only remaining member of a whole genus. Criteria of diversity that incorporate genetic distance (or a proxy for it) have been proposed by Weitzman (1992) and others. Such criteria are usable beyond biodiversity as long as some reasonable measure of distance can be devised. For example, Kruskal & al. (1992) proposed an index of lexical distance among a large number of Indo-European languages which could be used in an analogous way. If some meaningful notion of distance is available, one might be tempted to side-step types altogether. Rather than trying to compound the number of types, the distances between types and

the spread of individuals among types, one might wish to go straight for the average distance between individuals.

Here as elsewhere, there is no true definition of diversity, but a number of definitions more or less suited to the purposes at hand. For those who view linguistic diversity as intrinsically valuable, for example, the best way to define it may well be in terms of average inter-individual distance in the relevant space, while for those who offer linguistic diversity as the explanans for the lack of social cohesion, the notion of type (here of a distinct native language) may be essential and distance between types far less important than their number and shares in the total population. This undermines the hope of being able to make grand statements about “diversity”, but should not worry us unduly. In many relevant cases, the partial ordering produced by the intersection of the three dimensions just discussed (number of types, concentration, distance) should be sufficient to enable us to say, without much hesitation, that diversity is increasing or decreasing, and in some relevant cases that diversity is greater in one place than in another.

Far more important, for present purposes, is the distinction between locally co-existing diversity — for short, *local diversity* — and territory-based diversity — for short, *territorial diversity*. Local cultural diversity is the sort of diversity that exists, say, in a town, typically as a result of recent immigration but sometimes also as a result of more ancient immigration, with distinctness perpetuated by religious differences, as in contemporary Northern Ireland or in the Jewish ghettos of medieval cities. Territorial diversity, by contrast, is the sort of diversity that exists between different geographical areas of a particular political entity, such as Belgium or the European Union, typically as a result of its incorporating territories in which people have been speaking “forever” different languages, and hence developed distinct cultures.²

² This distinction is factually quite close to the distinction between national minorities and immigrant (or ethnic) minorities used by Kymlicka (1995) and Banting & Kymlicka (this volume). But there is no strict conceptual equivalence. The local diversity in Brussels, for example, stems from the presence of both national and ethnic minorities, while sufficiently massive, or ruthless, or unresisted migration (of Jews into Palestine, of Sahraouis into Algeria?) can produce territorial diversity.

For present purposes, this distinction is of great importance, as the tension each of these two types of cultural diversity may generate with economic solidarity is partly different in nature, as we shall see, and the justification for its preservation arguably quite different in strength. Moreover, as suggested long ago by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1961: ch. 9), there is a tension between the two. Maximum local diversity means that everything can be found in each place — Castilian Tapas, Malaysian Mathays and Kentucky Fried Chicken —, and hence that there is no difference left between places, no territorial diversity. On this background, multicultural policies (MCPs), i.e. policies aimed at respecting, protecting or promoting cultural diversity, must be classified using the same distinction. For the very same policy can, and often must, be diversity-reducing in the local sense and

diversity-maintaining in the territorial sense, and conversely. Thus, an MCP may be successful in preserving cultural diversity in one of the two senses. Cultural diversity in both senses may be bad for economic solidarity. And yet the MCP concerned may conceivably have no impact, or indeed a positive impact, on economic solidarity, because of its unavoidably negative impact on cultural diversity in the other sense.

1.3 Economic solidarity

What is *economic solidarity*? It will be defined here as the existence of institutionalised transfers from the lucky, in particular the rich, to the unlucky, in particular the poor. Some of the contributors to this volume use it to refer to the “fellow-feeling” between the lucky and the unlucky. Solidarity as a set of feelings might be one cause or condition of solidarity as a set of transfers. Indeed, the most obvious conjecture as to why cultural diversity may pose a threat to solidarity transfers is that it undermines solidarity feelings. But this need not be the only mechanism, as we shall see.

The *degree* of economic solidarity, as understood here, may not be quite as elusive a notion as the degree of cultural diversity. But its measurement is nonetheless tricky. Simple indicators like the average rate of income tax or the share of social transfers in GDP are only very imperfect proxies, for example because a reform that increases the tax or contribution burden on the poor would show up in an increase in economic solidarity so measured. A more attractive measure of solidarity in this sense — used by both Seekings (this volume) for the cases in which it was available and by Banting and Kymlicka (this volume) as their most direct indicator — is the reduction of the Gini index of inequality as a result of taxation and transfers. It is certainly an instructive indicator but needs to be handled with care, for four independent reasons.

Firstly, much of the measured difference between pre- and post-tax-and-benefit Gini indexes simply reflects income shifts along the life-cycles of the same people, rather than redistribution between different people. Even a system consisting entirely of generous but actuarially fair pensions systems — and hence involving no *ex ante* inter-individual redistribution (or “solidarity”) whatever — would show up as a powerful reducer of the Gini index, at least as long as the data base consists (as is almost unavoidably the case) of snapshots of the income distribution, rather than of lifetime expected incomes.

Secondly, even if we had an exact measure of the impact of the tax-and-benefit system on Gini indexes for lifetime incomes, this

may still be a very imperfect indicator of the level of solidarity as a dispositional property of the redistributive institutions. If a powerful redistributive set up operates on the background of an exogenously given distribution of primary incomes that happens to be very equal already, it will be reflected in a smaller Gini reduction than a weaker redistributive set up that operates on the background of a far more unequal pre-tax-pre-transfer distribution. A better criterion, it would seem, would consist in applying the batteries of redistributive policies existing in various countries to the same distribution of primary incomes, possibly yielding different rankings in terms of degree of “solidarity” depending on which particular primary distribution is chosen.³

Thirdly, the comparison between Gini coefficients measures the impact of the tax-and-transfer system only in a purely arithmetic sense. Anticipation of the taxes and benefits is most likely to lead to a higher pre-tax-and-transfer Gini index than the one that would counterfactually prevail if there were no taxes or transfers. In the absence of a reliable and sufficiently redistributive pension system, for example, comparatively poor people would be under greater pressure to earn more during their active life than would otherwise be the case, and after retirement would derive a private income from the savings thereby made possible. Consequently, the size of the arithmetic difference between the pre- and post-tax-and-benefits Gini indexes is likely to overestimate the actual impact of the tax-and-benefit scheme on income inequality.

Fourthly, once a longer term perspective is adopted, the distribution of primary incomes cannot be regarded as exogenous for reasons that go beyond behavioural adjustments to the anticipation of taxes and transfers. As one considers the next generation, a more strongly redistributive system can be expected to generate a more equal distribution of primary income, for example as a result of less unequal health and schooling. In a steady state, therefore, not only will a more powerfully redistributive system seem to display less “solidarity” if it happens to operate on a more equal distribution of primary incomes, but it will have a systematic tendency to display less “solidarity” (so measured), precisely as a result of inducing a more equal distribution of primary incomes. A better measure would need to take this trans-generational impact into account.⁴

The upshot of all this is that comparisons of levels of solidarity across countries must be performed with extreme caution, even when reliable data are available to compute the pre- and post-tax-and-benefit Gini indexes. Assessments as to whether solidarity has increased or decreased in a particular society can generally be made more easily because of the constancy of a number of parameters, but

3. This sort of microsimulation exercise has been developed within the framework of the Euromod project. See <http://www.econ.cam.ac.uk/dae/mu/emod3.htm>, and Callan and Sutherland (1999) for an illuminating illustration.

4. Moreover, once the effect on the distribution of primary incomes is taken into account, it makes sense to look at transfer schemes as part of a package that also includes a country’s labour market institutions and language policies: tolerance for racial discrimination, basic education of very unequal quality combined with free higher education for the “best”, or an uncompensated privilege given to the mother tongue of a subset of the population, for example, may deeply affect primary income inequalities. See François Grin (this volume) on the distributive consequences of imputing the costs of use and learning to the non-natives of the privileged language. Paradoxically, the Gini index reduction that can be ascribed to the explicit redistributive mechanisms may make the level of solidarity look quite high precisely because the solidarity implemented by the whole set of institutions is quite low.

even then vigilance is in order. An increase in the level of “solidarity”, as measured by the rate of reduction of the Gini coefficient, may have nothing to do with the adoption of more generous redistribution policies, but simply be the mechanical reflection of an increase of primary inequalities, themselves conceivably the outcome of solidarity-unfriendly reforms adopted at an earlier stage.

2 • Local diversity against economic solidarity?

2.1 Three mechanisms behind the tension

Local cultural diversity can plausibly be conjectured to have a number of relevant immediate effects. First, it structures channels of interaction so as to form distinct subunits of more intense internal communication, whether as a result of the language barrier, of the network created by different religious practices, or of the associated geographical segregation.⁵ Secondly, because of different traditional points of departure or because of this skewed communication, cultural diversity tends to make agreement less evident about what social justice is, or at least about what social solidarity requires.⁶ Thirdly, it makes mutual identification, the emergence of a “we-feeling” less spontaneous, and hence also the trust in reciprocation: the belief that others will not free ride and would do their share too if roles were reversed.⁷

All three of these effects can in turn plausibly be conjectured to affect both of the distinct mechanisms that are commonly assumed to determine the shape and extent of economic solidarity as defined.⁸ First, cultural diversity makes it more difficult for the better off to find redistribution to the worse off legitimate: it undermines the “civic solidarity” whose importance for sustainable economic solidarity is stressed, among others, by Dominique Schnapper (this volume) and Peter Kraus (this volume). Secondly, cultural diversity makes it more difficult for the worse off to articulate their demands successfully. As recalled by Banting and Kymlicka (this volume), cultural diversity has been shown by Stephens (1979) to be negatively correlated with the strength of labour organisation. And La Ferrara’s (this volume) findings about the negative impact of racial and ethnic heterogeneity on participation in the production of a public good can be used as further supportive evidence. Whichever of these two mechanisms is supposed to play the main role, the thesis of an overall negative net effect of local cultural diversity on economic solidarity is obviously also con-

^{5.} Geographical segregation is likely to be fed by both language barriers (through the structure they impose on the flow of information regarding available housing) and religious differences (through the attraction exercised by proximity to religious buildings). And it is also likely to help maintain them, for example through enhancing the opportunity to use the language and the pressure to practice the religion.

^{6.} Miller (this volume) explores some evidence relevant to this effect, namely international comparisons of people’s revealed sense of justice, and concludes on a sceptical note. Even if there is little inter-cultural variation in the basic considerations that enter judgements of justice, however, the finer structure of legitimate solidarity (“Who counts as needy?”, etc.) may vary significantly within locally diverse communities, and conceivably, as suggested by Anne Phillips (this volume) for reasons that owe more to differences in their recent histories and present conditions than to differences in their remote cultural roots.

^{7.} See the discussion of the role of trust in particular by Miller (this volume) and by Soroka & al. (this volume), to which I return.

^{8.} In Yael Tamir’s (this volume) account, as spelt out by Fabio Waltenberg (this volume), the extent of “solidarity” is determined neither by identification by the better off nor by demands by the worse off, but by the awareness of exposure to risks against which the better off and the worse off in a nation can insure with one another’s help. But genuine (ex ante) national solidarity can then only be an incidental and modest by-product of inter-class insurance.

sistent with the common observation of a positive correlation, among affluent countries, between (local) ethnic homogeneity and the strength of the welfare state.

In addition to these first two mechanisms focused on or taken for granted in several contributions to this volume — dwindling legitimacy in the eyes of the better off, dwindling cohesion among the worse off —, I would like to suggest a third one, which does not readily reduce to either of the first two, applies specifically to linguistic diversity and arguably puts under growing pressure at least some generous welfare states. I shall formulate it by using a specific illustration. The rate of employment in the population of working age (18 to 64) residing in Brussels is 64% among Belgian citizens, and 33% among non-EU citizens.⁹ There is not doubt that a persistently low connection with (officially) paid work in the immigrant community has something to do with the relative generosity of Belgium's welfare state (comparatively high child benefits, early retirement schemes, unemployment benefits without time limit, etc.). Whether fed by tacit discrimination or by poor skills (including poor language skills), the relative exclusion of non-EU immigrants from the labour market tends to be self-perpetuating, as the scarcity of work contacts, joined with the intra-community nature of family, neighbourhood and religious ties, prevents them from acquiring the language skills which would enable them to get into the mainstream of an increasingly service-based and hence linguistically demanding economy. This in turn prevents geographical de-segregation through social mobility, and hence a growing homogeneity of neighbourhoods and schools, which carry over the poverty of local language skills into the next generation. This explosive situation is arguably the unavoidable joint product of sharp local cultural (and in particular linguistic) diversity and generous economic solidarity. To remove it, one or the other, it seems, should yield.

On the background of all three of these mechanisms, multicultural policies, aimed at respecting or promoting cultural diversity, for example by allowing or encouraging different communities to have their own schools, holidays, neighbourhoods, associations, etc., can be expected to be bad for economic solidarity, even simply by virtue of their contribution to the perpetuation of cultural diversity. Over and above this indirect effect via diversity itself, they may also have a direct "corrosive" effect, by virtue of the resentment generated among the least advantaged in the autochthonous population by what they perceive as privileges granted to immigrant groups.¹⁰ And they may have a "crowding out effect", by taking some of the progressive militant energy away from redistributive fights¹¹.

⁹ Computed from 1999 data. See Decker & al. (2000: 15), Table 5. If naturalised Belgians of non-EU origin were counted with the non-EU citizens, both rates would go up (because the average rate of employment is lower for this category than for other Belgians but higher than for non-EU citizens), but I suspect the former more than the latter.

¹⁰ See Brian Barry (this volume). Banting and Kymlicka's "corrosive" effect is conceived more broadly and covers both the indirect effect through the diversity maintenance and the direct resentment effect.

¹¹ See Banting & Kymlicka (this volume). Their "misdiagnosis effect" I cannot imagine to be of much significance beyond what can be construed as an aspect of this "crowding out effect".

2.2 Seekings's challenge

The conference hosted three major challenges to the view that local cultural diversity and hence the corresponding diversity-nurturing multicultural policies are bad for economic solidarity, and thereby to this first aspect of the general presumption that formed the focus of the conference.

First, there is the spectacular performance of South Africa, compared, say, to Brazil, neatly highlighted by Jeremy Seekings (this volume). Both countries have a very high level of gross inequality and have recently become democratic. All reasonable measures of cultural diversity, including specifically of local cultural diversity, would seem to uncontroversially rank South Africa higher than Brazil. Yet South Africa's tax-and-transfer system appears to achieve a far greater reduction in the Gini coefficient than Brazil's. Indeed, South Africa's level of economic solidarity, so measured, seems to tower far above anything achieved in other less developed countries: about 25% compared to between 0 and 7%, the more remarkable as the very nature of the scheme through which the bulk of this is achieved suggests that an exceptionally large proportion of this estimated shrinking of the Gini index reflects a genuine reduction in inter-individual inequality, rather than just a spreading of income over the life cycle.

What is the secret behind this spectacular challenge? A non-contributory old-age pension scheme for all women over 60 and all men over 65 without a formal pension, first restricted to whites, then extended to all, then differentiated in discriminatory fashion, and finally reunified — all under the apartheid regime. This is no doubt a case in which other institutions — discrimination and its aftermath — make gross inequalities greater than would otherwise have been the case, and equating the Gini reduction achieved by South Africa's welfare state with the extent of its institutionalised economic solidarity would therefore amount to overestimating the latter. Moreover, the gradual expansion of centrally funded social assistance programmes under Cardoso's second term and since Lula became president suggest that the gap between levels of economic solidarity, as measured, in Brazil and in South Africa should have declined in recent years relative to what shows up in Seekings's estimates. Nonetheless, this is arguably a case in which greater local cultural diversity goes hand in hand with greater economic solidarity, when comparing two countries, both federally organised and recently democratised, with similar levels of development and of gross inequality.

In response to this interesting challenge, let us first note that part of Seekings's persuasive analysis is perfectly consistent with our initial presumption, understood, as it should, as a *ceteris paribus*

hypothesis. Brazil's open-list electoral system and constitutional arrangements that give effective veto powers to small states may systematically hinder ambitious inequality-reducing federal initiatives in a way in which South Africa's more centralized political set up does not, and it may therefore prevent the advantage provided by greater cultural homogeneity from showing in a higher level of economic solidarity. But another part of Seekings's analysis presents a tougher challenge. In his account, the key step that led to the comparatively high level of economic solidarity was the reunification of its old age assistance scheme in the final years of the apartheid regime. This step in turn became possible as a result of the establishing of strong intra-ethnic solidarity being followed by an attempt by the ruling ethnic group to deflect both domestic revolt and international opprobrium through universalising this solidarity. In these very special circumstances, ethnic diversity therefore seems to have fostered, rather than undermined, economic solidarity. Is it not crucial, however, that the ethnic diversity involved here should be a salient racial distinction, rather than consist in cultural differences?

2.3 Soroka, Johnston and Banting's challenge

The second challenge comes from Soroka, Johnston and Banting's (this volume) study of trust and support for the welfare state in unequally heterogeneous areas of Canada. Their main findings can be summarised as follows. Trust in the government does seem to affect support for the health care system and the public pension system, but there is no evidence of an impact worth mentioning of cultural diversity on trust in government. On the other hand, there is evidence of a negative impact of ethnic diversity on interpersonal trust (see in particular their Table 1), which in turns appears to affect positively support for the health care system and social welfare. But "this does not add up to a strong, consistent relationship between the ultimate independent variables — ethnicity and ethnic context — and the ultimate dependent variable — support for the welfare state. Indeed, the impact is decisively small: ... moving from 100% majority to 50% majority leads to a decrease in aggregate support for unemployment and welfare of about .0025%."

These results are in sharp contrast with US studies showing a negative relationship between racial diversity and support for the welfare state and with common conjectures about the impact of increased migration in Europe. Why this difference? Some of the explanations suggested by Soroka, Johnston and Banting reconcile these results with our initial presumption. In their conclusion, they mention, for example, that "in comparison with continental Europe,

social spending represents a smaller proportion of the Canadian GDP”, implying that support for a more generous welfare state would be more difficult to sustain in the presence of considerable cultural diversity. They also mention that “in comparison with countries such as Australia and the United States, Canadian social policy relies less on means-tested benefits” and hence more on contributory benefits, which tend to be less genuinely redistributive.

Soroka, Johnston and Banting further mention that the mildness of the impact of cultural diversity on support for the welfare state may be due to “the high level of geographic concentration of immigrant minorities in certain regions and especially certain urban areas”. If interpersonal trust, and thereby support for the welfare state, is undermined by co-habitation in the same neighbourhood (or sub-local diversity), then local diversity is compatible with high level of support provided it is combined with a high level of segregation. This may tell part of the story, but not all, as “the impact of [even sub-local] diversity on support for the welfare state is in the same direction as in other countries, the magnitude of that impact is decidedly small. The final (and most hopeful) conjecture they make is that in Canada appeal is being systematically made to an over-arching, trans-ethnic national identity. Whereas the first two suggestions imply that Canada has yielded to the tension by settling for a lower level of solidarity, the last two imply that Canada has managed to neutralise the tension either by structuring diversity geographically or by framing it ideologically in such a way that it does not erode popular support for redistribution.

2.4 Banting and Kymlicka’s challenge

The third challenge is to be found in Banting & Kymlicka’s attempt to test the claim made by Todd Gitlin (1995), Brian Barry (2001) and others that multiculturalism policies (MCPs) undermine the welfare state. They classify countries according to how developed their MCPs are in the three dimensions of national minorities, indigenous groups and immigrant minorities — only the latter being centrally relevant to the present discussion of local diversity — and examine whether this ranking correlates with changes in economic solidarity, as measured by changes in the share of social spending in GDP, in the rate of child poverty, in the level of income inequality and in the reduction of the Gini coefficient through the tax and transfer system. Within the small sample consisting of the four Anglo countries in the context of which the above-mentioned critique of MCPs is being made, the opposite seems to have happened: the more MCP-intensive countries (Canada and Australia), as far as immigrant minorities are

concerned, fared better than the other two in terms of economic solidarity trends. If the sample is expanded to include a larger set of OECD countries, no pattern can be detected either way.

For some of those who believe that there is a structural tension between cultural diversity and economic solidarity, this will come as no surprise. According to Dominique Schnapper (this volume), both multiculturalism policies and welfare policies stem from the same “providential” dynamics of the contemporary democratic state, which drives the latter to accommodate an ever expanding set of sectoral demands. No wonder, therefore, that they might be positively correlated, at least in the short run. But this is consistent with multiculturalism policies slowly undermining the welfare state, in part because they hinder a reasonably rapid reduction of the cultural diversity that keeps being amplified by immigration, in part because of the crowding out and resentment effects mentioned above. On this interpretation, there is a sense in which multiculturalism policies, unlike welfare policies, undermine the very basis of the providential state, and hence of both welfare and multicultural policies. Because of the time required for these sociological processes to work themselves out and be politically exploited, this effect is most unlikely to show up immediately, even though the weakening of the fellow-feeling between all citizens, the decreasing ability of the worse off to join forces and the growing rate of dependency among linguistic minorities make the providential set up increasingly vulnerable. Of course the longer the prophecies of doom fail to show up in figures of the sort collected by Banting and Kymlicka, the less plausible the underlying analysis becomes. For the time being, however, this analysis remains plausible enough for those who believe in a tension not to feel unsettled by Banting and Kymlicka’s reassuring findings.

2.5 Is there a tension, and what should be done?

Reflecting on these three stimulating challenges (and on other contributions to the conference) has helped feed the following four convictions.

Firstly, how weak or strong the tension is depends very much on the fine grain of the institutions of economic solidarity. By this, I do not mean that, as persuasively suggested by Soroka, Johnston and Banting, a welfare state can accommodate cultural diversity more easily if it relies on contributory benefits, as strengthening the relative importance of the insurance component of a welfare state amounts to reducing the extent of the genuine (ex ante) solidarity it realizes. Even

solidarity proper can be organised in a way that is more or less inimical or conducive to participation in paid work, and each of the three tension-generating mechanisms sketched at the start will be held in check by an employment-friendly welfare state.

In the South African case, for example, it is not irrelevant that the benefits, which reach all generations in extended households, are being given to the elderly and hence, despite their being formally means-tested, involve no dependency trap for the younger adult members of the household, who can earn any additional income without the benefits being scrapped. In advanced welfare states, the maximal strain arises, for a given level of generosity, when basic economic security is implemented strictly through means-tested benefits, which are withdrawn as soon as a member of the household performs a declared paid job and which may prove difficult to recover once that job is lost, owing to opaque and possibly discriminatory rules. It does not follow that one should go for a punitive workfare state, which would amount to reduced solidarity (solidarity is not only a matter of income). There is another version of the “active social state” that consists in spreading solidarity to low-income working households, whether through wage subsidies, through varieties of earned income tax credits or (my preferred variant) through the provision of a universal income floor (non-means-tested child benefits and a modest citizen’s income for all adults).¹² In the same vein, it should make a difference whether the right to unemployment benefits is made conditional upon attending language courses for those who do not master the local language, not only because of the direct effect of teaching but because of the opportunity to meet people from outside their own community. Much of the strain can arguably be removed if the welfare state is made, not less generous, but less clumsy, so as to facilitate access to a job to the less skilled, and in particular the less linguistically skilled.

Secondly, it is no less important to look at the fine grain of cultural diversity and of diversity-maintaining policies. David Miller (this volume) interestingly conjectures that “segregation”, though worse than “integration”, should be better than “alienation” as far as trust, and hence solidarity is concerned. In the same vein, Soroka, Johnston and Banting (this volume) suggest that the geographical clustering of immigrants (of the same origin) may be better for interpersonal trust, and hence for support for the most redistributive aspects of the welfare state, than a more even spreading. Note, however, that the only tension-generating mechanism concerned by these suggestions is the first one, the one that operates through the perceived legitimacy of welfare state transfers. It is hard to see, however, how segregation could fail to strengthen the other two mechanisms — respectively related to the

¹² See Van Parijs, Jacquet & Salinas (2000) for a detailed comparison of the various versions of this non-punitive “active welfare state”.

mobilisation potential of the worse off and to exclusion from economic participation — more than it weakens the first one, especially, as regards economic participation, when the linguistic dimension is important. If MCPs induce a deepening of geographical segregation (or slow down desegregation), therefore, my own conjecture is that they aggravate the tension. But whether they do or not depends on their fine structure.

To illustrate, take the teaching of, or in, the immigrants' mother tongues, an MCP that can be sensibly justified both as a way of showing respect and appreciation for an important aspect of the immigrants' identity and, in some cases, as a way of formalising and strengthening the children's competence in a major world language such as Arabic, Turkish or Hindi. The most obvious way of doing this consists in offering this option in those schools in which there is sufficient demand for a particular language, owing to a high proportion of pupils with a particular origin. In countries (such as Belgium) where school choice is free, the provision of such courses will create an incentive for parents of the relevant origin to send their children to those schools. As a result, whatever degree of ethnic mixing had been achieved in the school system will be reduced, and given that children's acquisition of the local language depends more on interaction with their peers than on formal teaching, the long term threat posed to social cohesion (through the causal chain of poor linguistic competence, low productive skills generally, low probability of landing a good job, low chance of social and geographical mobility) is quite considerable. In countries in which school choice is strongly constrained by districting, the threat will be slower to show but deeper, as the provision of immigrant language courses will not only create an incentive to change schools, but also to move, thus fostering segregation not just in schooling but also in housing. Much of this effect can be switched off, however, if instead of being organised as part of the curriculum of a particular school, the courses were open to pupils from different schools, which, in an urban context, is often a realistic option.¹³ A small organisational difference that would not show up in any index of MCPs of the sort usefully proposed by Banting and Kymlicka (this volume) is therefore arguably of crucial importance for the strains these may help perpetuate or amplify for a generous welfare state.¹⁴

Thus, paying close attention to the fine grain of both welfare and multiculturalism policies should enable us to reduce the tension, to make a more generous level of economic solidarity sustainable with a given level of cultural diversity, or to accommodate more cultural diversity without jeopardising a given level of solidarity. In addition, public policies that cannot be subsumed under either the welfare

13. Forcing the autochthonous pupils of a school to attend the immigrant language classes when offered would no doubt be even more counterproductive than introducing it as an optional subject. On the contrary, managing to convince some of them (and their parents) of the interest they may have in learning languages such as Spanish, Arabic and Turkish would be a welcome achievement, providing it is not so successful that it reduces significantly the opportunity and incentive for immigrant children to learn the local language.

14. There is a hint at the importance of considering the fine grain of MCPs in Banting and Kymlicka's (this volume) remark that some critics of MCPs seem to understand the latter in a narrow sense that entails separateness. But separateness need not be in the explicit content of the policy for it to emerge from its implementation. In my example, it could be said that separateness is greater in the variant of the policy that will, I argue, end up producing less separateness: teaching Arabic as an optional part of the curriculum of nominally multi-ethnic schools looks far less "separatist" than gathering in one place kids from various schools who (or whose parents) share the wish (for them) to study Arabic.

state or MCPs can yield a further contribution. The fine structure of the electoral system, as discussed by Seekings (this volume), might provide one example. Another, particularly salient in Belgium at the moment, is the extension of voting rights at local elections to all non-citizens, and not only to citizens of other member states of the EU, as is currently the case. This will arguably strengthen the weak channels of communication across communities by giving more reasons and pretexts to talk, more opportunities for friendships, connivances and solidarities. It will also increase the electoral incentive to look after neglected urban neighbourhoods, thereby counteracting their ethnic homogenisation. Especially in a context in which some (EU) foreigners get political rights straight away, it will replace humiliation as second-rank citizens by recognition as full participants in the local community. As mutual identification, joint responsibility for the common good, pride (and shame) of place keep being constructed through this and other means in mixed communities, starting from the most local level up, the challenge posed to economic solidarity by persistent cultural diversity — for example in the form of maintenance, from generation to generation, of immigrant languages and religious practices — will arguably lose some of its sharpness.

One general conviction that underlies all three of these remarks is that the key strategy for sustaining generous economic solidarity despite growing local cultural diversity is based on sufficiently intensive interpersonal contact through school, work and other channels across the boundaries that tend to form around culturally distinct communities. It must, however, be conceded that the more contacts of these sorts there are, the stronger the tendency for local cultural diversity to be eroded — and hence to wither away or to grow less (as a result of continuous immigration) than it would otherwise have done. As the point is sometimes put, the “intercultural” saps the “multicultural”. This process affects most vigorously small communities of immigrants of a given origin belonging moreover to a language group with relatively few speakers worldwide and hence with little prospects of access to broadcasts, newspapers, websites, etc. in their own language. But the negative impact of contact on the extent of cultural diversity can be expected to hold far more generally, as a result of interaction, including intermarriage, and of exposure to common circumstances, information and other influences. Is this a problem?

I do not believe so. If local cultural diversity gets eroded in this way, so be it. Its preservation is not an aim in itself, but, when it occurs, a by-product of accepting and respecting immigrants as full members of the community. Concern for the social cohesion required to sustain generous and inclusive economic solidarity must have precedence over the preservation of local cultural diversity wherever it happens to

emerge as a result of immigration. Even if this results in the local presence of some cultures being squeezed out altogether, no unfairness, or lack of respect, is thereby being inflicted on anyone, providing the background assumption is one of reciprocity (however counterfactual): had the roles been reversed, had the (current) autochthonous been migrating into the homeland of the (current) immigrants, they could not have claimed or expected more by way of protection of the local cultural diversity which they would have been causing by moving there. The statement of this proviso brings me straight, as we shall see, to the crux of the second dimension of my question, the one that relates to territorial cultural diversity.

3 • Territorial diversity against economic solidarity?

3.1 Laponce's law and the linguistic territoriality principle

Do territory-based cultural, and in particular linguistic diversity and the policies required to protect them pose a threat to the maintenance and development of generous solidarity, and, if so, what must be done about it? Let us first note that, for reasons which Jean Laponce (1984) was one of the first to explain clearly, *laissez-faire* is not a real option, in a high-mobility high-communication context, if territory-based diversity is to be maintained. The discontinuation of top-down attempts to eradicate regional languages, as illustrated by post-revolutionary France, English policy in Ireland or Franco's in the Basque countries and Catalonia, constitute a necessary, but by no means a sufficient condition for the secure persistence of linguistic diversity. For there is also a bottom-up mechanism that works more slowly, but no less surely, as mobility and contact across language borders cease being marginal.

This mechanism can be analysed as the potentially explosive interaction of two simple micro-mechanisms. One is *probability-sensitive learning*: the speed at which knowledge of a non-native language expands depends on the probability with which people can expect to have to interact in that language, both because they are thereby motivated to invest more effort in learning it and because there is no better aid to the learning of a language than the opportunity to hear, speak, read and write it. The other micro-mechanism is *maximin communication*: when multilingual people gather and need to communicate with one another without mediation, the language that tends to be

picked is not the best language of the majority, or the language whose average knowledge is greatest, but the language whose minimal knowledge is greatest.¹⁵ The outcome is that, whenever speakers of a more powerful language come into significant contact, typically through migration, with natives of a weaker language, asymmetrical bilingualism develops systematically, and the weaker language is gradually replaced by the stronger one in a growing number of contexts. In my wording of what I proposed to call Laponce's *law* (Van Parijs 2000b): the nicer people are to each other, the more savage the fight between languages.

To counteract this spontaneous tendency, there is no real option but to implement the so-called *linguistic territoriality principle*, i.e. a set of legal constraints that increase, sometimes dramatically, the incentive/ opportunity to learn the local language and/or impose the use of the local language even in interaction contexts in which it is not the maximin language, and hence not the language that would make communication easiest. The pattern of measures required to prevent the deadly collaboration of probability-sensitive learning and maximin communication from slowly but surely displacing the local language may vary considerably, depending on specific socio-linguistic circumstances. And indeed what can be observed to work more or less effectively varies a great deal from Québec to Flanders or the Basque countries, and from one unilingual nation state to another.

Needless to say, the concrete implementation of this territoriality principle — which can be interpreted as a set of territorial-diversity-preserving (though local-diversity-containing) MCPs — raises a number of tricky issues that are familiar enough in countries in which it has been introduced more or less recently at sub-national level, such as Belgium, India, Canada or Spain. How many distinct languages should be recognised? How are the recognised standard languages to be codified? Where should the borders be fixed? What rights should be granted to people caught on the “wrong” side of the border, and for how long? I shall leave these problems aside for the moment, and simply assume that legal measures can be taken to ensure that anyone wishing to settle is effectively made to feel that (s)he must muster the courage and/or humility to learn the local language, and by the same token to ensure that territorial linguistic (and hence cultural) diversity is preserved. Is there a tension between territory-based diversity thus maintained and economic solidarity?

3.2 Laitin's seemingly bad news

A minimal condition for solidarity across ethnic groups is the absence of inter-ethnic violence. As regards the achievement of this

¹⁵ For a more precise characterisation of this twofold mechanism and some qualifications, see Van Parijs (2004).

minimal condition, I expected David Laitin to bring good news for the advocates of the territoriality principle, as his earlier work (Fearon & Laitin 2000) showed that a great many cases of civil violence were the making of *sons of the soil*, i.e. of autochthonous populations that felt invaded by people from another ethnic and often linguistic group moving in spontaneously or in organised fashion from another part of the same multi-ethnic state, without trying to integrate into the local population, and in particular without bothering to learn the local language. On this background, a firm implementation of the territoriality principle might have been expected to have a pacifying impact.

Quite to the contrary, Laitin's (this volume) main message to the conference was that there was a strong positive correlation between the concession of language rights — consisting, presumably, in a significant number of cases, in the implementation of some version of the linguistic territoriality principle — and the occurrence of inter-ethnic violence. Laitin's claim, however, is not that the former causes the latter, but only that both are the consequence of the weakness of states. Hence, his analysis is consistent with the view that the concession of (the right sort of) linguistic rights, in particular of the territorial variety, is a way of taming inter-ethnic conflict, just as the strong correlation between the occurrence of flu and the absorption of flu medicine is consistent with a favourable healing impact of (the right sort of) flu medicine. Moreover, on the background of his own "sons of the soil" thesis, it may be worth distinguishing, among linguistic rights concessions, between "territorial" and "personal" ones, as only the former can be expected to contribute to pacification, whereas the latter should rather be expected to do the opposite.

Strengthening the state without any linguistic concession, as (implicitly) advocated by Laitin, is arguably a surer way of stamping out ethnic conflict. But this is hardly ever a real option in the countries concerned, and even when it is, it is by no means sure that the strengthened state can be trusted to strive for pan-ethnic solidarity. Consistent with Laitin's findings, therefore, a set of diversity-protecting linguistic rights and duties, structured along not too controversial borders (if achievable), remains a promising way of promoting ethnic peace, itself a precondition for lasting solidarity.

3.3 Pagano's seemingly good news

Moving beyond this precondition for solidarity, Ugo Pagano (this volume), building on earlier work (D'Antoni & Pagano 2001), seems to be bringing further good news by arguing that there are good economic reasons for expecting high levels of territorial linguistic diversity to prompt high levels of economic solidarity.

The point of departure — and part of the explanandum — of their intriguing argument is the contrast between the United States and the European Union taken as a whole. At the present moment, the level of economic solidarity can safely be said to be higher in the latter than in the former. Yet, it is obviously also the European Union that exhibits the higher level of territorial linguistic diversity, firmly preserved by national boundaries that have gradually come to coincide, in accordance with John Stuart Mill's expectation, with linguistic boundaries. D'Antoni and Pagano (2002) neatly explain why optimal economic performance requires this to be the case. Industrial development relies crucially on specialised skills. But heavy investment in these skills will happen only if enough insurance is provided in case local demand for them happens to vanish. One way of providing such insurance is by unifying linguistically a large area within which one can then move at comparatively low cost in search of another employment for the same skills. An alternative way of providing such insurance is through a developed welfare state. With a territory cut up into smaller linguistic areas, and hence with a higher average cost of moving in search of another use for one's skills, the optimal welfare state is bound to be quite a bit larger in the European Union than in the United States.¹⁶

Before happily concluding that, far from being antagonistic, territorial diversity and generous solidarity are complementary, it is important to realise that what is shown to be optimal, under conditions of less cultural homogeneity, is greater social insurance, not greater genuine (*ex ante*) solidarity. That Europe should have a larger truly redistributive welfare state can therefore be explained by this argument only to the extent that it forms an unavoidable by-product of a strong social insurance system, as administrative simplification and political dynamics push the transfer systems of each nation state beyond what fits under the umbrella of the insurance principle. Now imagine these national solidarity systems immersed in a common market, in which capital and commodities move freely, while people remain essentially stuck within national borders as a result of language differences. Considerations of competitiveness will put the truly redistributive (or "compassionate") aspect of the welfare state under growing pressure, as mobile capital and consumer demand will tend, other things being equal, to move to those places where redistributive taxation weighs less. Next add to the story that the upper layers of the skilled labour force also becomes highly mobile trans-nationally as a result of becoming competent enough in English, the world lingua franca. Not only will the genuine solidarity component of the welfare state be under further pressure, as the (redistributive) tax elasticity of domestic human capital supply increases. But even the insurance component of the welfare state is

¹⁶ What D'Antoni and Pagano (2002) and Pagano (this volume) are thinking of is essentially the cash transfer system. But the argument can plausibly be stretched to explain why the optimal level of public funding of higher education should be higher in Europe than in the US — and indeed why this is actually the case. This is just another way of collectivising part of the risk involved in the expensive acquisition of potentially remunerative skills.

17. This pressure of market competition on decentralised polities helps account for the negative correlation between federalism (vs unitarism) and economic solidarity pointed out, for example, by Banting and Kymlicka (this volume), itself consistent with Seekings's (this volume) ascription of Brazil's poor performance in terms of economic solidarity to its federal organisation. However, the comparatively poor performance of federal states may also have much to do with the effective veto powers of the components being more likely to constrain the centre than would be the case in a unitary state. The veto power of the poorer components may of course also prevent the dismantling of economic solidarity in the rare cases (such as Belgium now) in which federalism replaces a unitary system under which a comprehensive welfare state had developed.

18. Bowles and Choi's (this volume) fascinating paper suggests that this sort of upward leap is something evolution has particularly badly equipped us for. If love (in particular within-group economic solidarity) could only evolve in conjunction with hate (or violent hostility to foreign neighbours), any such scale-lifting operation must involve a fight against our instincts. This may well be the case. Fortunately, however, evolution has also equipped homo sapiens not only with the ability to communicate, and gradually improve the quality of communication, with alien human beings, but also with the ability to develop, once communication gets going, an inclusive sense of justice that will end up requiring (no doubt counter-instinctively) an impartial treatment of insiders and outsiders. See Cohen and Rogers (1998) for a discussion of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis's views on the social policy implications of evolutionary models.

weakened as the high skilled can rely more on the trans-national diversification of options open to them.¹⁷

3.4 Why the EU can expect to start doing worse than the US

On this background, is there any reason to believe that linguistically more diverse Europe will retain a significantly higher level of economic solidarity than the United States. The frightening truth seems to be that the opposite is the case, on two logically independent grounds. The first one is captured by Pagano's (this volume) statement that linguistic homogeneity and economic solidarity are not only substitutes but also complements. As solidarity becomes more difficult to organise, for the reasons just sketched, at the level of individual nation states immersed in a common market, one might hope that a larger political entity, operating on a scale closer to the one at which the market is operating, could take over the task.¹⁸ Indeed, in the US, the bulk of the net redistribution accomplished by the tax-and-transfer system is the work of federal, not of state programmes. But the political sustainability of such programmes, commonly looked down upon by Europeans, seems far more problematic in linguistically diverse Europe than in the linguistically (more) homogeneous United States. Why?

Three related but distinct mechanisms can be expected to be at work, the first two of which are simply the mirror images, in the case of territorial diversity, of the first two mechanisms discussed above in connection with the tension between local diversity and economic solidarity. Firstly, the sense of a common identity that facilitates support for generous solidarity arises less spontaneously, and is harder to engineer, when the population is linguistically, and hence culturally more diverse. Secondly, the strong entity-wide organisations, whether political or civil, that are needed to push vigorously for redistributive measures at that level are also more difficult to get off the ground when linguistic diversity makes trans-territorial communication between the worse off and their representatives more laborious and more expensive.

There is, in addition, a third mechanism that applies specifically to territorial diversity, and whose strength was particularly palpable in the recent debates around Belgium's social security system alluded to in Mark Eyskens's (this volume) opening speech. In a multilingual polity in which language groups match fairly clearly defined territorial boundaries, there is a strong democratic impulse to keep many policies decentralised to a linguistically homogeneous level, at

which policies can be discussed and explained in the language people are most familiar with. This is in principle compatible with the bulk of economic solidarity being organised at the central level, as it still is, for example, in Belgium.¹⁹ But a tension unavoidably arises between centralised solidarity and decentralised competences in other fields — say, education, town planning or environmental policy —, as some of the benefits and costs of sound or sloppy policy in these other areas are exported upwards to the central level. The need to allocate to the decentralised authorities responsibility for the consequences of their actions in these other fields will therefore further contribute to preventing more centralised, and therefore economically less vulnerable, solidarity from being sustained at as high a level as would be the case with less territorial linguistic diversity. Combined with the first two, this third mechanism contributes to turning homogeneity and solidarity into complements and hence to making solidarity particularly hard to achieve and sustain precisely under those conditions — territorial diversity — in which it is, according to D’Antoni and Pagano’s (2002) argument, most needed.

As if the news were not already bad enough, there is a second reason for expecting Europe to gradually perform even worse than the US in terms of solidarity, one that does not derive from the general contrast between linguistic heterogeneity and homogeneity, but specifically from the fact that US homogeneity is achieved in the language that is quickly spreading as the lingua franca of the educated within the European Union. One of the effects of this spread is a drastic asymmetric reduction, for the highly skilled and their families, of the adjustment cost of settling in Anglophone countries. The cost of settling in other countries, whose language remains to be learned, does not decrease to anything like the same extent, at least as long as the territoriality principle is in place. One can therefore systematically expect on this basis — and one can actually observe — a growing net flow of human capital from non-Anglophone to Anglophone countries. This serious competitive disadvantage in a knowledge-based economy implies that the pressure to reduce redistribution from the highly skilled and therefore more affluent members of the nation — by reducing general taxation on high earners and/or inventing all sorts of more targeted tricks (a lax and generous “expatriate” or “non-resident” status, for example) to exonerate the more mobile from the general regime — will be particularly strong in those countries whose language is not the lingua franca. Even if, despite the three mechanisms mentioned above, solidarity could be lifted to the central level to the same extent in Europe as in the US, this asymmetric difficulty for Europe to retain its human capital would exert an additional pressure on the level of economic solidarity it could sustain. Unless the European Union is willing to give up its “soul” — i.e. to stop protect-

¹⁹. As illustrated by the Belgian case, the creation of two unilingual areas (and one bilingual one) in the 1930s led to the growing separation of two distinct public discussion spaces and subsequently to demands on both sides for the devolution of powers to entities matching these spaces, and finally, in the 1990s, to the transformation of the country into a full-fledged federal state. No logical entailment, but a natural dynamics.

ing its territorial diversity —, it will be under ever stronger pressure to give up its “heart” — i.e. to redistribute even less to the less well endowed.²⁰

3.5 Can the tension be alleviated?

For Europeans who attach importance to solidarity, who may indeed see a generous level of solidarity as the most important distinguishing feature of the European social model, the above analysis, if correct, constitutes a major challenge.²¹ One obvious response consists in giving up the territoriality principle. By making things linguistically as easy for the high skilled of the world when they settle on the European continent as when they settle in the UK or the US (in terms of administrative procedures, schools, courts and even political life), one will go a long way towards cancelling the linguistic competitive advantage. In the process, however, one will also trigger a powerful mechanism which may look innocuous enough at first but will soon, through the explosive interaction of probability-sensitive learning and maximin use, displace local languages in an increasing number of contexts. The various obstacles to supranational solidarity listed above will thereby gradually be eroded, especially as competence in English spreads downward in each national society: direct communication, life or online, without the expensive and cumbersome mediation of interpretation and translation, is of decisive importance if not only the rich and the powerful, but also the powerless and the poor are to communicate, network, cooperate, mobilise effectively across borders. However, as a by-product of the same process, the very survival of local languages, starting with the smallest and most vulnerable, will soon become a real issue.

Let us not rush too quickly into the question of what should yield: economic solidarity or cultural solidarity, here in the form of protection of territorial linguistic diversity. For in this case, as in the case of local diversity, there are various ways in which the tension can be alleviated. For example, the linguistic obstacle to the building of pan-European solidarity can be significantly lowered, consistent with the territoriality principle, through the spreading of a common second language, as consistently advocated, for example, by Jürgen Habermas’s (1995: 307; 2001: 18) as the linguistic precondition for the emergence of a European public forum. The ability to operate competently in two or more languages is not the expression of exceptional gift, but a matter of socio-linguistic conditions which currently exist in some European countries and could to a large extent be generalised to all.²² This need not be enough for a European macro-welfare state, but may suffice for the sustainability of effective legal

²⁰ See Van Parijs (2000a) for a detailed argument.

²¹ No doubt further complications need to be brought in, such as fiscal competition between affluent ground floor countries (which reduce the economic affordability of generous solidarity), or the greater grip of big money on the electoral process (which reduces the political capacity of doing the economically affordable).

²² See, however, Justine Lacroix’s (this volume) critical remark on Habermas’s position. Along the same lines, Kymlicka (1999: 121) argues that “democratic politics is politics in the vernacular. The average citizen only feels comfortable debating political issues in their mother tongue. As a general rule, it is only elites who have fluency with more than one language, and who have the continual opportunity to maintain and develop these language skills, and who feel comfortable debating political issues in another tongue within multilingual settings.” The scepticism as to the possibility of politics in a language different from the mother tongue seems to me based on experience in a socio-linguistic setting very different from the one that is relevant here, which is rather akin to the exceedingly common situation in which people speak a variety of mutually unintelligible dialects in their homes and conduct national and even regional or local politics in the national standard language.

constraints, co-ordination procedures and simple transfer schemes that would prevent a race to the bottom.

What about the systematic disadvantage that derives from the linguistically driven human capital drain to the Anglophone “ground floor of the world”? One offsetting consideration is that while the ground floor has the advantage of being an attractor for productive talent, it has the disadvantage of being asymmetrically visible from the “hills”, in the sense that what is said or done in Anglophone countries is immediately visible, understandable and usable in the rest of the world, while the reverse is not true. If the residual disadvantage of non-Anglophone countries remains sizeable, one could think of duly circumscribed “linguistically free zones” in which the constraints of the linguistic territoriality principle are waived, i.e. in which it is possible to settle for good without being required to know anything but the *lingua franca*.²³

3.6 Territoriality at the cost of solidarity?

Suppose, however, that even with the best combination of the above strategies some tension remains. If the pursuit of generous economic solidarity requires relaxing the territoriality principle to such an extent that the erosion process is put into motion, can I just say, as I did in connection with local diversity: “So what?” I do not believe so, and shall briefly try to indicate why.

Seen from where I live — from my balcony I can literally see the headquarters of the European Commission at the end of the street —, it is pretty clear which way we are heading in terms of trans-national, or trans-lingual, interaction at EU level: equality in the most formal contexts, and English just about everywhere else. Many people in Europe lament this, and have some reason to do so, especially among those whose mother tongue used to be the one most used in trans-national EU communication (French), among those whose mother tongue is the most widespread in the EU (German) and among those whose mother tongue is the most widely spread, as a native tongue, among all Western languages (Spanish). But the growing dominance of English is irrepressible, not as the achievement of a British or American plot, but again, as the unplanned outcome of the powerful interaction of probability-sensitive learning and maximin use. Nonetheless, the fact that the language picked as the *lingua franca* is, on both a worldwide and a European level, the native language of a subset of the population concerned raises serious issues of linguistic injustice.²⁴

²³. In addition, but possibly less realistically, one must make as much use as possible of the two general strategies called for to tackle the worldwide trans-national mobility of the tax base: lift redistribution to the largest possible scale and nurture patriotism at whatever lower scale redistribution keeps operating. There will then still be an economic cost to pay for not being part of the ground floor, but part of the benefits that accrue to the ground floor (as a result of the whole world feeding them with a proportion of their best minds) will be spread over the hills, thereby reducing the migratory pressure of the less desirable less skilled, while *amor patriae*, including in its solidarity dimension, will contribute to retaining in their countries a number of those highly skilled whose material self-interest would otherwise induce them to leave.

²⁴. In Van Parijs (2004), I discuss more systematically the three main forms taken by this injustice, and what can and must be done about them.

Arguably the deepest among these is the unequal respect shown to the various languages and the associated identities as a result of one of them being given, for morally arbitrary reasons, a massive privilege. What can be done about it? One component of an adequate response is of a ceremonial nature. When Valéry Giscard d'Estaing opened the European Convention, he is reported to have pronounced "Mesdames et Messieurs" in all eleven official languages of the EU. This may not seem much, but makes you feel good when your language has its turn, especially when your language is modest and occasionally despised. But one should not expect too much saluting of this sort, especially as the number of official languages increases and hence the cumbersomeness of maintaining parity between them. Moreover, if not backed up by anything else, ceremonial assertions of equality will soon smack of hypocrisy. What else could there be? I can think of only one serious possibility: to enable each recognised language to be safely "the King" in a portion of the Union's territory, by allowing the community of its native speakers to firmly enforce the linguistic territoriality principle within those confines.

This key role I am led to give to the territoriality principle in the presence of territorial diversity is consistent with, indeed implied by, the off-hand way in which I handled local diversity at the end of part 2. It is because of the respect expected through the implementation of the (symmetrical) territoriality principle that a blatant lack of symmetry can be accepted without embarrassment at the local level. Especially once aware (and aware that others are aware) of the deadly grip of Laponce's law, accepting the operation of the territoriality principle provides the only means I can think of for showing real respect for speakers of vulnerable languages. If David Laitin's "sons of the soils" story has wide application, an intelligent implementation of this principle may also provide us with an effective tool for reducing resentment, tension, and even violence between peoples. But the justification I am suggesting is more than purely instrumental: what justifies the rules that induce immigrants to learn the local language is not that the locals would be indignant if they had themselves to adjust linguistically to the newcomers, but that this indignation would be legitimate. Similarly, the territoriality principle is an instrument for maintaining linguistic and thereby cultural diversity, deemed so important in Europe that it has been chosen to provide the substance of the European Union's motto ("Unity in Diversity") and arguably beneficial as regards aesthetic enjoyment, scope of experimentation or brake on migration. But what justifies it does not reside in these putative good consequences of diversity — its objective is by no means to maximise diversity —, but in the respect it shows for the existing diversity.

This leaves us with what I see as the most crucial, and one of the most difficult questions in this whole area. The linguistic territoriality principle is, and will be ever more, required to protect territorial diversity. Although there are various ways in which the tension can be alleviated, it is difficult to deny that it creates difficulties, even in the long term, for the maximal achievement of economic solidarity. To what extent, if any, does justice require us to sacrifice the prospects of generous economic solidarity in order to sustainably protect territorial diversity? Even after digesting the rich and varied food for thought provided by the conference, I have no neat answer to this question. More work ahead, therefore, but none, I expect in the light of all I heard, that should shatter my confidence in the following simple picture of what a just world would look like.

A just world would be one in which all six billion of us can move freely, but shall not do so that much for two reasons: a worldwide unconditional basic income at the highest sustainable level and the universal implementation of a linguistic territoriality principle.

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