Nagle, John: Multiculturalism's Double Bind. Creating Inclusivity, Cosmopolitanism, and Difference. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009. 197 pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-7607-2. Price: £ 55.00

These are hard times for multiculturalism. Across Europe, right-tilting politicians are blaming it for weakened national identity and even terrorism. Meanwhile, many on the left worry that it displaces class politics or reifies group identities or encourages a depoliticized celebration of interchangeable, easy to consume "ethnic" customs. Liberals of all stripes spot a threat to individual rights and freedoms. As for multiculturalism's academic proponents, John Nagle argues that they tend toward two camps, "institutionalist" and "normative," with neither one overly focused on actually-existing multiculturalism. Against this backdrop, Nagle's project of examining multiculturalism in the UK ethnographically, using the London-Irish as his anchor, is very welcome.

As a "command centre" of international finance with high levels of in-migration spanning the class spectrum, London is a "global city." Its government's self-marketing as contender for "world cultural capital" embodies the "double bind" of Nagle's title: "the global city promotes culture as a means to enhance intercultural dialogue, cosmopolitan diversity and knowledge of various minority groups … [making it] difficult for groups, within the state-sponsored multicultural model, to challenge the idea that they belong to discrete, bounded and unchanging cultural forms and communities" (15). Indeed, for the global city to exhibit "hyperdiversity and excitement" such groups must preserve distinctive "cultural practices" (36). Compounding the double bind, official multiculturalism pits groups – or, more accurately, their "ethnic entrepreneurs" (17) – against one another in a competition for state resources and recognition.

Nagle's decision to focus on the London Irish is useful, throwing into relief the effort entailed in multicultural claims-making. Irish organizations seeking a slice of the multicultural pie must convince not only public officials that they constitute a distinct cultural group in Britain, but many potential constituents as well. The task is complicated by the shared language and "race" of white British and Irish people, and also by how socioeconomic disadvantage and prejudice legitimize claims on public resources and recognition. When members dissent about whether they are part of "a victimized ethnic minority grouping," Nagle says, "the appearance of consensus, at least, has to be manufactured" (49).

Drawing on social movement theory, Nagle argues that a combination of factors created favourable "political opportunity structures" for those seeking official recognition for the "Irish community" in 1980s London (60). On the one hand, a Labour-led London government offered material support and recognition to minority groups, including the London-Irish. Equally important as this positive opening was widespread grievance at how British "anti-terrorist" legislation made Irish people a "suspect community" (55). For some London Irish, prejudice and discrimination, extending from the security state to mundane encounters, amounted to anti-Irish racism. One activist interviewed by Nagle remarked that the task was to remind people "that we had been colonized and oppressed *just like the black groups*" (62, emphasis added).

While the historical racialization of the Irish has a critical antiessentialist potential, these comments reflect an official multiculturalism rooted in post-War attempts to "manage putative problems" relating to non-white migrants from former British colonies (52). This created a context where, as Nagle's informant also said, black "was the colour of the discriminated groups" (62). Here, Nagle argues, "rather than breaking down the 'black/white binary', to gain inclusion with state-sponsored multiculturalism the London-Irish confirmed its salience" (63).

This example nicely illustrates Nagle's contention that policies emanating from different administrative levels – local, citywide, and national – can marshal different and even conflicting paradigms. Moreover, repressive and ameliorative state apparatuses work together to constitute the very minority groups that then compete for state recognition and resources – although, Nagle points out, such groups may also form alliances. London-Irish activists challenged their exclusion from "black Britain" by shifting the framework to argue that discrimination is grounded in a shared "reproduction of the colonial experience" (68). Here again, Nagle's work usefully documents how mobilizing agents work to make ethnic groups even as their work is articulated in response to historical conditions – including, in this case, a repressive security state.

Nagle shows that activist attempts to create consensus were only partly successful. While some London-Irish maintained they had suffered significant collective discrimination, others saw anti-Irish prejudice as context specific or denied its existence altogether. In the 1990s, attempts to marshal solidarity or claim material resources on the basis of discrimination or disadvantage were further complicated by the Irish economic boom, the peace process, and the successful marketing of Irishness via such phenomena as Riverdance, Irish theme bars, and – as Nagle discusses in a chapter on multicultural spectacles – St. Patrick's day parades: Irishness became a "global identity and brand" (176).

By tracing this shift in the "othering" of Irishness from a suspect identity to an appealing one, Nagle demonstrates that claims to cultural distinctiveness need not amount to a hardening of identity. However, such inclusiveness can come at the cost of silencing aspects of history or politics. For example, after years of lobbying, a London-Irish Cultural Centre was created in 1995 backed by substantial municipal funding. Aiming at as wide a base as possible, the Centre is secular and politically "neutral" (88) – which, in this context, means avoiding the politics of Irish nationalism. Even "rebel songs" – celebrations of resistance to British rule in Ireland – are off limits in music classes. This suggests that, although the Centre sees "cultural preservation" as its core remit, a certain policing of "culture" is involved. Unfortunately, Nagle does not much discuss these politics apart from noting that some London-Irish nationalists saw government funding for such ventures as a state-sponsored mechanism for neutralizing critique. On the other hand, the Centre's approach

is successfully inclusive in the sense that many, perhaps a majority, of those attending and even teaching classes and events are non-Irish.

Nagle's work thus highlights another tension for those seeking recognition from the gatekeepers of state multiculturalism. Enduring notions of authenticity and the added force given by claims of prejudice and socioeconomic disadvantage sit uneasily with a "multicultural numbers game" (127) that encourages a relaxed approach to inclusion – in Nagle's words: "the paradoxical presence of primordial and instrumental discourses which simultaneously envelope visions of ethnicity in state-sponsored multiculturalism" (127).

Nagle illustrates this paradox very effectively in a chapter on census activism, where he documents organized lobbying for an "Irish" box on the British census and subsequent campaigns to maximize the number marking it. A leaflet issued for the 2001 census urged: "Feel Irish? Be Irish!" (125). (With web search, I quickly found similar efforts in relation to Britain's 2011 census.) Both the census campaigns and subsequent arguments over results demonstrate that what is being "measured" is, at every level, a politicized version of reality, starting with how central statistical legibility has been to state strategies for managing, even producing, people, and populations at home and in colonial states. In multicultural policy, it is inseparable from resource allocation. Activists' enthusiastic embrace of ethnicization reflects both incorporation into and claiming of some space in that regime – but as Nagle points out, the key question is what it is possible to do with any ground taken.

In his final chapters, Nagle addresses the backlash against multiculturalism, pointing out that problems now being blamed on multiculturalism, including interethnic conflict and alienation, were a generation ago attributed to a *lack* of multiculturalism. His own guarded assessment befits an anthropological exploration of the opportunities that state-sponsored multiculturalism offers "on-the-ground" and his refusal to take an all-or-nothing stance is salutary. Yet, bringing the benefit of a contextual analysis more explicitly to bear on some of the "bigger picture" normative questions, even if speculatively, would have made this project a little bolder. We get hints of this potential here and there, as when Nagle points out the demands that state multiculturalism makes on minority groups to be open and accommodating even as the dominant "host" group is excused from any such self-transformation. But Nagle might have sharpened his critical commentary. For example, does the Irish case have any lessons for British Muslims, the new "suspect community" in Britain? Also surprising for an anthropological study of multiculturalism, the culture concept is left relatively unexamined.

The major contribution of this work is its ethnographic approach to questions that are often discussed as policy matters or theoretical speculation. Occasionally though, I felt Nagle let a catalogue of cultural studies concepts – heterotopia, hybridity, cosmopolitan habitus, and the like – shape his ethnography more than the reverse. I also would have liked a little more detail on how lived multiculturalism felt – particularly for those who do not comfortably fit its categories. Finally, there are more than a few minor writing errors in this book – possibly a reflection of cutbacks in the publishing industry – although the writing itself is generally clear. However, none of these quibbles detract from the central value of Nagle's work: an ethnography of the state from the perspective of those affected by and engaged in its official policies.

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Niezen, Ronald: Public Justice and the Anthropology of Law. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 254 pp. ISBN 978-0-521-15220-4. Price: £ 16.99

How do cultures that are incredibly diverse, if not incommensurable, blend, meld, and, at some significant level, occasionally become one? History tells us that this phenomenon occurs with considerable frequency: tribes become nations, opponents become fellow citizens, and separate religions become shared systems of belief. Yet if the process, or processes, are widespread, how shall they be characterized, and how shall we know coalescence is actually occurring when the end result remains subject to perpetual alteration? Indeed, what theory of culture best accounts for these moments of convergence and in what ways do such events test our general theories of social life?

Ronald Niezen approaches these issues from the standpoint of legal anthropology. He argues that as legal accords are formulated in transnational contexts they actually have the effect of leading diverse groupings – what Niezen calls "publics" – to newly shared orientations and values. Focusing mainly on issues of human rights, he argues that as courts and international agencies are called upon to assert cultural rights one can see that the "unstable conception of culture that pervades the social sciences" needs to be replaced by one that considers how "soft law" – that which lacks enforcement but does articulate new standards – helps to propagate emergent values by means of "international norm diffusion." Through their intervention across existing bounds, international organizations become the main venues for that "conceptual diplomacy" that crosscuts states and ethnic groups. These "legal agencies themselves become the producers and promoters of significant categories of belonging, in which rights claimants subsequently create community, formulate history and invest pride – all through the mirror and moral persuasion of public visibility."

Niezen's apparatus for supporting this view comes from a few theoretical sources and a limited number of proffered examples. Theoretically, he finds fault with Gabriel Tarde's idea that even though nations become structurally similar their internal differences are not necessarily diminished. For Niezen, Tarde fails to appreciate the role of the media in "the practical leverage of soft power," when, for example, indigenous peoples and their former colonizers begin to couch their assertions in shared terms and concepts. His vision of social process is invariably upbeat: "Publics have an abiding sense of fairness," he says, "with inclination to indignation when rules of fairness are violated." Thus, when NGOs or the United Nations formulate rights accords they are not hobbled