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Book Reviews

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in so doing managed to provide students and professionals in the field with a valuable overview of pressing issues and concerns in contemporary philosophy of education.

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Amy Gutmann *Identity in Democracy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 2003.
264 pp. 0-691-09652-x, \$27.95 (pbk).

Amy Gutmann's *Identity in Democracy* is a broad-ranging and nuanced contribution to political theorizing about group identities or 'identity politics'. Gutmann sees identity groups as having a political importance masked by traditional political science's emphasis on interest groups. Interest groups are formed around what a group of individuals independently desire; identity groups involve mutual recognition among members, and attachment to the group as an independent value. 'Democratic politics is both interest and identity driven'. But interest and identity interact in complex ways. African-Americans, an identity group, can organize a specific political organization to promote their interests. And sufficiently stable and long-standing interest groups, such as a local Democratic Party organization, can serve as a basis for an identity group.

Gutmann is concerned primarily with socially significant identities, such as gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion and nationality; but, in accord with her view of interest, she does not limit identities to unchosen ones. Her use of 'identity group' most commonly refers to organized groups or organizations with a strong identity basis or focus ('ascriptive associations', also called, somewhat misleadingly, 'organized identity groups'), indigenous groups (such as the Pueblo in the USA), the National Association of the Deaf, and the Boy Scouts. Gutmann is also concerned with the interests of what one might ordinarily think of as identity groups themselves – women, gays and lesbians, and ethnic groups – but to a generally lesser extent. (For example, there is no discussion of affirmative action.)

Gutmann's book provides a rich value framework for assessing both identity groups and ascriptive organizations. Although she sometimes implies that 'democratic justice' fully expresses the appropriate standard of evaluation, her particular discussions yield a broader range of political and social values that either type of group can express or contravene: opportunity, personal freedom, civic equality, social discrimination, a sense of belonging, personal support, and personal meaning. Using either the narrower or the broader standard, Gutmann compellingly defends a position somewhere between

Brian Barry's *Culture and Equality*, in which these identity groups are of little value and serve to divert attention from social injustice, and Iris Young's *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, which builds a notion of justice around those very identities.

In a general way, Gutmann argues that ascriptive associations can, on the one hand, promote justice by advocating for the rights and legitimate interests of socially stigmatized, stereotyped, and subordinated groups, in part by counteracting false and demeaning views of those groups. On the other hand, ascriptive associations (and some identity groups) can also subvert justice or violate other important moral and political values by constraining the freedom of non-members to associate with members, by discriminating against subgroups of their own members, by constraining the liberty of their own members, by discouraging an identification across different identities, and by promoting a narrow civic identity. Sometimes Gutmann implies that ascriptive organizations are valuable only as instruments of justice, and that in a just world there would be no such groups. More frequently she argues that identity groups themselves, and to some extent ascriptive associations, can have value even when they do not promote justice, as long as they do not contravene it, as sources of personal meaning, support, and mutual recognition. Perhaps because of her primary focus on organizations rather than identity groups themselves, Gutmann does not, however, mention other values identity groups arguably support: perspectives (e.g. of women, blacks, immigrants) on a society's history, or on larger questions of human meaning, and the like.

Gutmann focuses on four types of issues of political evaluation specific to ascriptive organizations or identity groups. She argues convincingly that an overall disjunction between voluntary and ascriptive groups is 'far too crude for evaluative purposes'. In chapter 1, she argues (drawing on the Martinez case concerning Pueblo Indians) that ethnocultural preservation or tradition should not take precedence over civic equality (based on gender). More generally, Gutmann argues, cultural groups have a very weak claim to political sovereignty. Part of her argument, against Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor, is that ethnocultures (even of national/territorial minorities) are seldom all-encompassing or 'comprehensive'. Members of minority cultural groups, even territorially based ones, generally have multiple identities as part of larger democratic societies. But historical injustices against cultural groups (e.g. indigenous groups in the USA and Canada) do provide a distinct ground for government support of those groups' cultural practices.

Chapter 2 touts the value of freedom of association and the expressive purposes that voluntary associations serve to their members. Still, drawing on cases of the Boy Scouts (with respect to gays) and the Minnesota Jaycees (with respect to women), Gutmann argues that free association can involve unjust

exclusions, as measured by the impact of the exclusion on civil equality (in turn affected by how public the good sought is and what other opportunities for affiliation are available to the excluded persons). She delineates two distinct stances the state should take toward unjustly discriminating groups in light of the value of freedom of association: prohibit the discrimination, or allow discrimination but withdraw state support from the group. Gutmann argues that the courts were wrong to allow the Scouts to discriminate against gays, but that if they did, they should have dissociated the state from that discrimination.

Chapter 3 defends the often justice-fostering value of ascriptive organizations such as the NAACP and the National Organization for Women. Members of those groups are those most likely in the larger society to be concerned about justice for members of the corresponding identity groups (though ideally this would not be so), and members of subordinated groups play a vital symbolic role in refuting stereotypes and suspicions of inferiority. A strongly justice-seeking organization of this kind will both seek alliances with other ascriptive organizations, and fight for justice for groups other than the primary identity group corresponding to the organization. Gutmann cites the NAACP as a model in this respect, though its being so suggests that it should not really be thought of as an identity group or ascriptive organization at all, but as an interest group with a commitment to racial justice, especially for African-Americans.

Gutmann shows how such an organization can contravene justice by considering the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), which, Gutmann convincingly argues, wrongly (initially) opposed cochlear implants for deaf children in a misplaced desire to sustain a deaf culture and identity.

In chapter 4, 'Is Religious Identity Special?' Gutmann argues that religious identity lays legitimate claim to public recognition in democracy, only in regard to its expressing a persons' ultimate ethical commitments, which can also be secular in character. A 'two-way protection' is needed, accommodating individual conscience (religious or secular) but only within a framework of democratically determined laws. This amounts to less than strict separation of church and state, but does involve substantial separation.

This brief review does not do justice to Gutmann's rich discussions of many other important issues: benefits and drawbacks of religious organizations and arguments, the relation between ascriptive identities and appropriate forms of a sense of justice, the free rider problem, and many more.

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