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The Multicultural Park
HANS INGVAR ROTH
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The Multicultural Park –
A Study of Common Values at School and in Society

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Hans Ingvar Roth
The Multicultural Park
– A Study of Common Values at School and in Society

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Contents

Foreword ..................................................................................... 5
Introduction ................................................................................ 7
1. The 'Multiculturalism' Debate ............................................. 9
   School and the Multicultural Society ...................................... 10
   The Challenges of Multiculturalism ...................................... 12
   Previous Sub-Debates on Multiculturalism ......................... 22
2. Common Values in the Multicultural Society ................... 36
   Common Values and Fragmentation .................................... 37
   The Multicultural Park ...................................................... 39
   The Advantages and Limitations of the Metaphor ............... 41
   The Norms of the Multicultural Park .................................. 49
   Group-Transcending Situations ........................................... 53
   Value Conflicts in the Multicultural Park ......................... 56
   The Value Community: Opportunities and Limitations ........ 59
   Virtues in a Multicultural Society ...................................... 62
3. Education in the Multicultural Society ................................ 71
   Education in the Multicultural Park .................................... 72
   The Park as an Area of Conflict ......................................... 74
   History: Shackle or Springboard ....................................... 75
   The Holocaust .................................................................... 76
   Multicultural Teaching ...................................................... 81
   Breadth and Depth – an All-Round Education .................... 83
   Empathy ............................................................................ 86
   The Virtuous Circle ......................................................... 87
   Identity-Enhancing Education .......................................... 89
   Self-Esteem ........................................................................ 93
   Independent Schools as a Critical Reaction ....................... 95
   Independent Schools as a Necessary Supplement .............. 100
   Education as Social Adhesive .......................................... 101
4. National Symbols in the Multicultural Society .................. 104

Appropriate National Symbols ................................................... 104
National Symbols with a Multiplicity of Interpretations .......... 107
Clear Symbols ............................................................................ 112
Swedish Majority Society and Multiculturalism ......................... 114
Group-Transcending Symbols in Sweden? ................................. 116

Conclusion ................................................................. 121
Notes ............................................................................................. 123
Bibliography ................................................................................ 138
Foreword

This book is based on a revised version of a lecture given as part of the Inter-Nordic Conference on Common Values held by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Lund, Sweden, on 24 November 1996. I wish to thank my fellow participants at that meeting for their constructive reactions to my lecture. The essay subsequently grew into a report when I was engaged by the Swedish National Agency for Education to carry out work for the Agency's project, 'School and the Multicultural Society'.

I would especially like to thank Directors of Education Sverker Härđ, Mai Beijer and Per Bergdahl at the National Agency for Education for contributing invaluable viewpoints. Thanks also to Professor Göran Bexell, Professor Amy Gutmann, Dr Leena Huss, Dr Paul Levine, Dr David L. Miller, Harald Runblom, Reader, and Erik Åsard, Reader, for constructive discussions relating to the writing of this book. Dr David L. Miller and Professor Will Kymlicka have played an important role in my overall thinking on multicultural topics.

For this English-language version I have made certain adaptations and additions, in particular the completely new section 'Virtues in a Multicultural Society' in Chapter 2.

Thanks to Christina for her support and encouragement along the way. This book is dedicated to her.

Hans Ingvar Roth
Uppsala
Sweden
June 1999
Introduction

The year 1997 saw intense debate concerning the role and tasks of schools in the multicultural society. One of the points of discussion in this debate was a research report published by the 'Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations' at the University of Stockholm.1 A total of 95 schools were chosen at random across the whole of the country; the researchers concentrated their attention on years 6, 8 and 9 at compulsory school (i.e. pupils aged approximately 12, 14 and 15 respectively), and on students in years 2 and 3 at upper-secondary level (i.e. aged on average 17 and 18 respectively) following both academically and vocationally oriented study programmes. Students were asked to describe their attitudes towards phenomena such as democracy and multiculturalism. One of the aims of the study was to ascertain what level of awareness the young people had of the Holocaust. The findings of these investigations into young people's attitudes were the subject of lively debate during the summer of 1997, and in political circles this debate was taken very seriously. It was seen as a matter of great concern that a relatively large number of young people expressed their ambivalence towards democratic ideals, and especially that some students had but sketchy knowledge of the Holocaust. The information presented in the report of the research group has since been played down, and two of the researchers involved maintain that the findings have been decidedly over-interpreted in the mass-media.2

What does however emerge clearly is that the school system has found itself increasingly centre-stage in debate on the multicultural society. It has been frequently voiced that schools have a special responsibility to provide a civic education in which a central place is given to ideals such as democracy and the respect for ways of
thinking which differ from one's own. Indeed, many commentators see this kind of civic education as essential in a multicultural society. However, schools, or the education system as a whole, cannot be expected by themselves to live up to all the demands for the kind of civic education required in a multicultural society; if the school system does not work in tandem with other actors, such as parents, associations, etc., then it will prove difficult to solve many of the problems posed by society's increasingly multicultural nature.³

Similarly, the demand has been expressed that schools should do more than has hitherto been the case to reflect the cultural diversity of the country. Class, gender, ethnicity and previous educational background should not be allowed to restrict people's opportunities to acquire an education.⁴ The pursuit of this objective may, for example, imply that the respective cultures of different groups should be included in the subject matter taught.

In what ways, then, should we ensure that multiculturalism influences school education in Sweden? What is meant by the term 'common values' or 'value community'; and how should schools be organised in today's multicultural context? Can multicultural education be reconciled with the centrally determined controlling guidelines laid down in Sweden's new national curriculum? What national symbols can be considered to be especially suitable in a multicultural society? These are some of the areas which this book will be looking at; they are important questions, and it is my hope that the following will provide impulses for a wider discussion of the role and tasks of schools in the society of the future.⁵
Sweden has developed into a multicultural country. This phrase is now used so frequently in social debate that it has all but taken on the character of a cliché, although different debaters may be in disagreement as to how strictly the concept of multiculturalism should be defined. For some commentators, multiculturality refers to the fact that as a result of the immigration of labour and refugees since the end of World War Two, Sweden now has a greater number of ethnic and religious cultures. In others' view, multiculturalism also refers to the fact that group identities based on gender, region, age, class and sexual disposition have become more 'visible' in recent years.¹

A further subject of disagreement is the question of the attitude society should adopt towards the multicultural situation. How should education be organised in a society which has become increasingly multicultural? In the USA school education has been such a central feature of discussion that, although the concept of multiculturalism can be given a much broader definition and content, the term 'the multicultural debate' generally refers to issues which are directly concerned with education. A representative example of this phenomenon is provided by the book 'We Are All Multiculturalists Now', in which the American researcher Nathan Glazer primarily focuses on the education system.² In particular, a connection is made between the multicultural debate and the teaching of History in American schools.
There are a number of reasons why school education has been at the focus of debate on multiculturalism; this chapter begins by looking at some of these reasons.  

School and the Multicultural Society  
We can begin by saying that the school environment can be viewed as a microcosm of society, where, for the first time in their lives, pupils learn to interact within a framework of organised activity which continues over a long period of time. It is an environment in which value conflicts can arise relating to what should be taught, the role of teachers and parental influence; these conflicts can be particularly inflammable in cases where they are reflective of cultural differences.

School also has an important identity-forming function; it is at school that young people develop the way they see themselves in relation to the society in which they live. In nationalistic unitary states, education has always been seen as an important tool for inculcating a sense of national identity in pupils, with History being the most important school subject in this respect. Educational policy can, in other words, be seen as one of the issues which the nation state regards as being of the highest importance. In Sweden, the close ties between the Protestant church and the political establishment meant that the subject 'Christian Instruction' (which was the only kind of religious education offered) was given the central place in civic education. It was not until the 1960s that 'Christian Instruction' was superceded by the more objective 'Religious Education', which also covered other religions and philosophies.

The physical school environment can, moreover, also be seen as an important identity-marker for pupils in later stages of their lives. School is a delineated territory where young people meet and interact in an intensive manner during a number of their most formative years; in other words the school environment becomes a continually recurring reference point, which adult citizens invoke in different ways when describing their childhood and youth. Everybody has been to school – and most people also feel qualified to
put forward their opinions on issues relating to education.

It is also important to emphasise the consequences a successful school career can have in the young person’s later life. Pupils who have never felt at home at school and have also not achieved good academic results at school often encounter difficulties in their working life: in other words, social segregation can grow out of the marginalisation, the feeling of being an outsider, which the pupil has experienced at school.⁴

School is also charged with the special responsibility of countering racism and xenophobia in the multicultural society, in that racism and xenophobia are rooted in stereotypical notions, i.e. in a lack of knowledge and understanding. Since school is one of the most important arenas where attitudes are influenced and knowledge conveyed it has a heightened responsibility to rectify hastily formed generalisations and stereotyped conceptions concerning people from different cultures. This task is especially important in the age range 8 – 12, when children’s reflective faculty develops.⁵ Obviously, this kind of education can also be provided by the family and via the media, but compulsory school is a place where attitude-shaping and the communication of knowledge are kept in focus explicitly and over a long period of time; schools are therefore seen by many people to provide the platform where children from different cultures can meet in an active way and acquire a greater respect for each other’s differences. An illustrative expression of this is given by the UNESCO member Attiya Inayatullah, who says that it should be an aim of education to inculcate:

'a respect for cultural pluralism in which cultural tolerance is not based only on a passive acceptance of the right of other cultural groups, including minorities, but implies further, an active and empathetic knowledge of those cultures resulting in mutual respect and understanding'⁶.

School is thus very closely identified with the shaping of attitudes, the conveying of knowledge, the forming of an identity and socialisation – functions which justify giving school education a central
place in the debate on multiculturalism. In a society where different groups have incompatible normative systems, school is well equipped to serve as a screen onto which value conflicts can be clearly projected.

**The Challenges of Multiculturalism**

When a society becomes more and more ethnically and religiously multicultural, this represents a challenge to the values of the majority culture. When taking a questioning look at a society’s school education we can observe factors such as civic education, clothing, symbols and eating traditions. Value conflicts in these areas are not restricted to the school system; they have been brought to the fore in other public and social contexts as well, although they have received the most attention in school situations.

In several Western states, such as France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Sweden and the USA, the multicultural debate has in a number of respects been rather similar; one question that has appeared in all these countries is how the concept of civic education should be interpreted in a multicultural society, and the main issue revolves around which values should be considered as inalienable and which it is possible to compromise on. However, since the composition of the population and the history of these countries are different, the school debate has differed from country to country. France, the Netherlands and Great Britain have had completely different points of departure compared to Sweden, since they have a history as colonial powers. The USA has also occupied a different position, since it is by tradition a country of immigrants. Moreover, the slavery system which operated in the USA, and the widespread social problems faced by the black population, have affected the debate in America in particular ways which are not seen in other traditional ’immigration countries’ such as Canada and Australia.

- **Clothing**

The problems which have received special attention in the debate
on multiculturalism at school have differed from country to country. The kind of specific question which comes under the spotlight is partly determined by the chance occurrences of history. The questions have subsequently taken on a symbolic role in the debate, in that they are seen to embody on a more general level the problematic nature of the multicultural society. In France – a country characterised by a strong policy of assimilation – one clothing-related question has been more in focus than in other Western European countries: the veil debate. Clothing which is overtly religiously determined has, in official quarters, been seen to be a provocation against French national identity with its clearly stated religious neutrality. The school system and the army have traditionally been considered to be among the most important institutions for fostering national identity, an identity which, ideally, should be neutral from a religious point of view.

A widely held view in France is that school, as a public institution, should express the religious neutrality of the French state, and that this should also extend to the clothes pupils wear. It should however be noted at this point that there has been no corresponding debate relating to the symbols used by Christians: it is permitted for pupils to wear a crucifix around their neck, and this naturally adds a problematic dimension to the claim that the debate in France is concerned solely with the religious neutrality of the school system.

The veil debate, or hijab debate, started following the much-publicised murder threat issued against the author Salman Rushdie in 1989, a fact which may partly explain the intensity with which the debate has been carried on. Many French people voiced their anxiety that Islamic fundamentalism might spread in French society. In November 1989 a number of Moslem girls arrived at school in Creil, a suburb of Paris, with veils wrapped around their faces. Those who wanted to prevent the girls from wearing veils argued that this kind of clothing is religious in too conspicuous a manner, and that it represents values relating to women’s subordinate position which run completely counter to the values for which the French school
system stands. The principal at the school in question invoked a law from 1937 forbidding religious symbols in school; the issue was taken all the way up to the Minister of Education and the French supreme court. The result of the whole process was that the question of pupils' clothing was left to the jurisdiction of individual school principals – a ruling which in practice has meant that many Moslem girls have been forced to leave their veils at home. However, recently it has been possible to discern a readiness to compromise; the generally negative approach has, in certain cases, been modified into an attitude which is sensitive to differences in situations, so that the specific teaching context in question is allowed to affect the position adopted (for example when the subject being taught is Physical Education).

Sweden has not seen such an intense 'veil debate' as France, although a similar debate has been carried on with reference being made to the French example. The question of clothing has however been in focus with regard to a specific school subject, namely Physical Education: religious groups such as Moslems have found it difficult to accept certain features of Physical Education in Swedish schools. Some Moslem parents are opposed to the idea of their daughters taking all their clothes off in the changing room in the presence of other girls, and dislike the fact that many girls wear tight-fitting sports clothes.

A completely different question relating to pupils' clothing is the visible presence of neo-nazi groups in school. Should clothes displaying swastikas really be tolerated in a school system which has as an explicit objective to prevent the spreading of racist viewpoints among pupils? A further objective for schools is to work to ensure that the school environment is safe and that pupils feel secure there – yet many find it creates a threatening and provocative atmosphere if pupils with nazi sympathies are allowed to wear swastikas during lessons and break-times. To a large extent this debate is about the limitations of the freedom of public expression; if school is part of public society, how should we view the right of freedom of expression in the school environment?
It is possible to envisage justifiable limitations on the kind of clothing pupils are allowed to wear, in both private and state schools. Pupils in Sweden do not wear school uniform – one possibility would be to introduce school uniforms in the aim of bringing pupils to identify with their school and its history. Introducing school uniforms can also have the obvious advantage of counteracting clothes snobbery, at least within the school’s walls. At the same time, school uniform represents a restriction of pupils’ freedom of choice; and school uniforms can also bring to mind an authoritarian and rigidly hierarchical school system. What it is important to note in the debate on clothing at school is that different central values can be seen to be in conflict with each other – for example generous freedom of expression contra a safe and secure school environment. The debate is in essence often about trying to establish the varying motives for and forms of freedom of expression, and looking at how this freedom can be limited in different ways in order to protect other important values.11

• Celebrating End-of-Term

A central subject in debate in Sweden in recent years has been the religious content in end-of-term celebrations. It has been suggested that schools should remove the religious elements from the ceremonies used to mark the end of term, so that pupils from minority groups do not have to feel excluded. It is of course well-known that different cultures may differ greatly with regard to the calendar used and festival days/public holidays. In connection with the end of the winter term in 1996 the Schools Administration Board in Uddevalla in Western Sweden decided to ’rid’ the end-of-term festivities of religious content, so that no pupils would feel obliged to absent themselves from the compulsory conclusion of the school term because of their religion or world view. In explaining its decision the board explained that Sweden is now a multicultural country, although the decision nevertheless aroused strong reactions, and opponents countered that a multicultural society is about respecting and highlighting different religious elements, not disregarding
them. Many religious minorities may end up feeling even more excluded from a society where religious traditions are not taken seriously. A secularised society, completely purged of all religious festivals, is thus not a desirable alternative. For many non-believing Swedes, features with Christian origins, such as the psalms traditionally sung to mark the end of the school year, have an important symbolic function – in this case, they are seen as announcing the beginning of summer – which may at least in part explain the strong reactions provoked by the Uddevalla decision. Festivals which symbolise the passage from season to season were, in the religiously underpinned society of the past, often interwoven with some kind of religious content. It is important in this context to underline that festival days which stem from a religious origin can very well come to assume an importance which transcends group distinctions (see the example of Thanksgiving, described in Chapter 4).

It is possible to propose different models for attempting to solve the problem. One possibility is to make provision for different religious groups to celebrate end of term in their own churches. However, many people think it is important that all pupils should mark the end of term with a joint celebration, if they have been attending the same school together. Another proposal then is to distribute the end-of-term celebrations among the groups in a fair manner: one year the school has an 'Islamic' celebration, and another year the end-of-term celebration is more Christian in content. The problem nevertheless remains as to what can provide the content for joint festivals/celebrations in a relatively new multicultural society; symbols and public holidays are, after all, products and reflections of a history, and when new groups arrive in a society like Sweden, one complicating factor is that these minorities do not have any history in common with the majority population.

• Multicultural Education

The multicultural questions one especially associates with school
are concerned with the content of subjects, teachers' teaching strategies, and the organisational form adopted by schools. How should school education be planned in the new multicultural situation, and on what arguments should one's reasoning be based? How different should independent schools be allowed to be (for a discussion of independent schools in Sweden, see below)? Which values and subjects should be included in every study programme, every kind of education? These issues are often formulated as questions which are addressed to the majority culture and its institutions, although the questions could equally well be put to all groups in society, including minorities.

The multicultural debate is also associated with problems concerning the fact that various groups are inadequately represented at school. If school education is to be provided to all it is important that pupils and teachers constitute a representative sample of the population of the country; quite simply, justice demands that no groups be excluded from those concerns which are considered to be public or the business of everyone in society. It is, moreover, a frequently held pedagogical viewpoint that teaching and learning benefit if the teachers come from varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds, since this allows varying perspectives to meet each other in mutual dialogue, and pupils are thus given, at an early stage, an insight into the importance of pluralism for the development of knowledge. Multiculturalism can also enhance cultural autonomy in the sense that it enables pupils to acquaint themselves with a sample of 'life-options' or different possible ways of living.

Multiculturalism has begun to present its challenges at a juncture when the conception of school as an 'authority where knowledge is provided' has been subjected to severe questioning, for reasons ranging from the pedagogical to the issue of school democracy. It is now common to view the pupil as an active seeker of knowledge and skills, a member of the 'community of learning' which we call school or the education system. This viewpoint is diametrically opposed to the authoritarian and patriarchal values nurtured by certain fundamentalist groups; it is also incompatible with our
'domestic' tradition of learning where the imparting of knowledge is seen as a rigidly controlled dialogue, directed by the teacher from the front of the classroom.

One constantly recurring theme in the multicultural debate is the problem of what should be common to all children's education and what should be more group-specific. An answer to this question naturally has consequences for independent schools: if certain aspects of education can be seen as culture-specific, then by definition the system has room for independent schools. The question of what is to be common and what is specific (or 'private') in school education relates to both values and fundamental knowledge: which values, and what basic knowledge and skills, are indispensable for every pupil? In other words, what should comprise a community of values and knowledge in the multicultural society.

This question is sometimes linked to the concept of citizenship; the question then becomes, what should constitute a reasonable civic education in modern-day Sweden. The debate on the content of civic education is not, however, a debate which takes as its sole point of departure the fact that Sweden has become a more pronouncedly multicultural society; it is also concerned with the fact that modern Swedish society is characterised by internationalisation, dependence on technology, and the large-scale flow of information. These characteristics place special demands on the civic education provided. This book will primarily be looking at civic education in the light of Sweden having become a multicultural society as a result of the immigration, since the Second World War, of labour-immigrants and refugees, but this is by no means to say that what is relevant in civic education from this point of view is not valid in other perspectives. Indeed, many people would surely agree that such traits as are an asset in a multicultural society – openness, flexibility and the ability to see things in a larger context, for example – are also suitable attitudes in a society characterised by large-scale information flows and a rapidly changing employment market.
The Debate on the Position of Minority Languages

One element in the debate concerning the content of multicultural education is the question of the visibility of national minorities in school education; Sweden has not solely been viewed as a multicultural country as a result of the immigration of labour and refugees during the period since the end of the Second World War. The country can also be said to be multicultural in another sense, as a result of the presence of various historical minorities. In recent years, debate as to which groups should be given special attention in this latter respect has been intense; the debate has primarily revolved around the question of which minority languages should be given a more official position at school and in society. The fact that a linguistic minority receives official recognition as a historical, national minority can, among other effects, lead to that group’s language and culture being accorded more space and attention at school and universities. Other measures of support may, for example, consist of the group being granted the right to pre-school education for their children in their own language.

Over the last two years certain official reports have provided the point of departure for the discussions concerning the official status of minority languages in Sweden. In late 1997 two reports were published by the Minority Languages Committee (Swedish Government Official Reports, SOU 1997:192/193). The first of these reports calls for Sweden to ratify the ‘European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages’. In its report the Swedish Minority Languages Committee recommended that the Swedish government should ratify the charter drawn up by the Council of Europe with regard to three languages: Finnish, Saami (Lappish) and Romany. This entails, for example, that the national curriculum shall lay down the requirement that pupils at comprehensive and upper-secondary school level are to be provided with a certain degree of knowledge of these groups’ language, culture, history and religion. The syllabuses of the subjects Swedish, History, Religious Education and Civics are to be formulated so that they accommodate this requirement; and there is also an ambition to provide special edu-
cation about the country’s linguistic minorities within the framework of certain courses at universities and university colleges.

The main arguments given by the Committee for its decision to limit the title of official minority language (which gives the regionally concentrated groups in question the right to special university education, and to communicate with public authorities and courts of law in their own language) to just three languages – Saami, Finnish and Romany – were that these languages are seen to be distinct, and that the linguistic groups in question have a long historical presence in Sweden. The language spoken in the Tornedal region in northern Sweden was adjudged by the official inquiry to be a dialect of Finnish, and Yiddish was deemed not to have had a sufficient history of continuous presence in Sweden to merit designation as an official minority language. A majority of the committee members adopted the standpoint that it cannot be proved that Yiddish has been spoken since before 1870 with any degree of continuity in Sweden. The committee also pointed out that only a very small number of people in Sweden speak Yiddish today (little more than 4,000), which would make it difficult to effect certain support measures.

The committee established a set of criteria which a group had to meet in order to qualify for recognition as a national minority. In addition to a distinct linguistic identity and a long history of continuous presence in Sweden, these were that 'the group should be distinguished by a marked degree of cohesion and not have a dominant position in relation to the rest of the population and further, the members of the group should have some kind of self-identification: both the individual members and the group as a whole must be prepared to preserve their identity.' Some of these criteria are somewhat diffuse, and this vagueness or lack of clear definition may lend itself to use for political purposes. Concepts such as historical continuity and separate linguistic identity clearly include grey areas which, in the final analysis, may allow political values to determine the verdict as to which groups are to be given official minority status.
The proposal in the report met with severe criticism from certain quarters; it was claimed that Yiddish and Tornedal Finnish (Meän Kieli) should also be included as official minority languages. The critics of the committee's report said that these two languages also have a long history of continuous presence in Sweden, and that they similarly do have a distinct linguistic identity. In addition, they maintained that official recognition of the minority status of these groups' languages would be of major symbolic importance, given the history of discrimination which both Jews and the people of Tornedal have experienced in different ways.

Certain critics of the Minority Languages Committee have also argued that the sign language used by deaf people should be granted minority language status, since in a number of respects sign language resembles the other minority languages – it is spoken by a non-dominant minority; it is a language with a distinct linguistic identity, and the deaf can be said to have a culture and traditions of their own. Many commentators claim that recognition of sign language as an official minority language would greatly strengthen the status of the language. However, the judgment of the Minority Languages Committee was that sign language already has a reasonably strong position in Swedish society, and that official recognition would make no difference. This stance has naturally not placated the critics (an interesting question in this context concerns the position of the Swedish language in an increasingly internationalised Sweden: English has established itself as the natural *lingua franca* for use in contacts with the rest of the world, and is frequently the everyday language used in the worlds of research and business. There is a risk that the Swedish language may, in the long term, find itself becoming a minority language in its own country).

The discussions concerning minority languages bring to the fore, as we have seen, a number of burning questions, the answers to which can differ enormously depending on people's political convictions and allegiances. The questions of principle which have been brought into particularly pronounced relief are as follows:

- On the basis of what criteria should the choice be made as to
which groups’ language and culture are to be given official support?

- What kind of special position should be given to historical, national minorities in relation to other minority groups (groups which may have a large number of members and a strong desire to preserve their culture)?

- How should group members’ sense of speaking a separate, distinct language be weighed against ‘objective’ assessments of linguistic differences?

- What consequences does the symbolic importance attaching to official recognition have?

These are not simple questions – a fact which may in itself provide an explanation for the disparate reactions aroused by the reports of the Minority Languages Committee. The different possible answers arise from normative judgements regarding the cultural rights of minority groups, as well as from assessments of the actual conditions for the linguistic and cultural survival of minorities.

In 1999 it is expected that a bill will be put before the Swedish parliament: a paper has been submitted by the government to the Law Council, in which the government recommends that official minority language status should be awarded to Finnish, Saami, Yiddish, Torndal Finnish and Romani Chib. It appears in other words that the government has paid heed to the criticism directed against the standpoint of the Minority Languages Committee, in extending the number of languages to be granted official status as minority languages from three to five. This will, among other things, affect the standing of linguistic minorities in the school system – a development which can be seen as an expression of the fact that the multicultural aspects of school education are increasingly finding their echo in official life in Sweden.

**Previous Sub-Debates onMulticulturalism**

The Swedish debate on multiculturalism grew up out of a series of debates concerning the role of school in society. One such debate is the question of freedom of religion, which has been discussed, with fluctuating degrees of intensity, throughout this century. Swe-
den acquired a Freedom of Religion Act in 1951, and the new constitution adopted in 1974 enshrines the right to religious freedom. Debate on this subject has revolved around what kinds of school are justifiable under and compatible with the principle of freedom of religion.

The Jewish Hillel School which opened in Stockholm in 1955 provides an example of a school which sets out to cater to the religious and cultural interests of the Jewish minority by providing specific religious and language education. In other respects the education provided by the school has been comparable with the curriculum used in compulsory state-run schools. It should however be emphasised that reasons of 'mental hygiene' played a determining role in persuading decision-makers to award the school state-funding in the early 1960s. The persecution of the Jews in World War Two was seen as justifying the special position accorded to the Jewish community in this matter; the grounds of freedom of religion could be seen as justifying other religious groups' requests for state-funding in order to open schools of their own, but the decision-makers of the time did not view such requests as reasonable.\(^\text{16}\)

Recent years have seen four main school debates in Sweden – on internationalisation, mother tongue education (for children with a native language other than Swedish), independent schools, and the role of Christian ethics in school education. Although all these have clear connections with the multicultural debate, in their initial phases the debates did not include the broader perspective of what education should be like in a multicultural society. In the light of this fact it can be seen as justifiable to call the multicultural debate a 'corollary' debate which has become established more and more as the central question in education policy.

**Internationalisation of Education**

In most Western countries, including Sweden, recent decades have seen an increasingly international and global content in school education, in which, for example, history is not only looked at from
a narrow national perspective. A large part of the Swedish debate on the internationalisation of education should above all be understood against the background of the discussions surrounding Sweden’s joining the European Union, a situation which creates a need for better knowledge of foreign languages and increased awareness and understanding of the countries in the EU region.

It is symptomatic that a term such as internationalisation has seen more frequent use than an expression like multiculturalism. Certain reports and enquiries have, however, studied the broad concept of international education, and part of the remit has been to focus on questions such as cross-cultural and multicultural education. The global perspective means that teaching, in a different way from what was previously the case, has to take account of our increasingly internationalised world; the education provided has to move in an outward direction, it has to embrace the world beyond Sweden and prepare pupils for contacts across cultural and national boundaries. Familiarity with foreign languages and improved knowledge of the world outside the country’s borders are thus seen as tools which increase Swedish citizens’ chances in international trade and on the global employment market. It is also assumed that an internationalisation of school education will promote international solidarity between peoples. The following passage is representative of this standpoint:

Working in a global dimension facilitates an unprejudiced examination of one’s own culture and a comparison with others. The global dimension thus entails the ability to see both good and bad aspects of one’s own and other people’s culture – and only then can mutual respect and tolerance grow.

An 'introverted' perspective, in which the multicultural situation within Sweden itself is seen as one of the starting points of which teaching must take account, has been accorded very little place in the official reports on the internationalisation of education. It often seems as if those who speak of the 'international perspective' see internationally-oriented education as being addressed to pupils who
all have the same cultural background and whose cultural horizons all require the same kind of broadening. That being said, a tendency towards change in this respect can be distinguished, and one frequently hears commentators pointing out the need for increased knowledge of different minority groups in Sweden. A multicultural education which entails increased knowledge of cultures other than one's own can provide a better understanding both of Swedish society and of the rest of the world.

It can be mentioned here that the term 'intercultural education' is often used in education debate in place of the term 'multicultural education'. One possible explanation for this is that the word intercultural expresses that the education in question is about relations between different cultural perspectives. Knowledge and insights are achieved when people interact on the basis of mutual dialogue. Intercultural dialogue highlights the similarities and differences between different cultures. However, the term interculturality may give the impression that dialogue primarily occurs as the product of a meeting between distinctly different cultures. The risk here is that individual and cross-boundary aspects of a teaching situation become undervalued. Dialogues take place, after all, between individuals, who may have a large number of common interests even though they are, in different ways, also affected by their cultural backgrounds. 'Multicultural education' can be seen to be a more generally inclusive term than 'intercultural education'. This latter term (and equally the word 'interculturality') emphasises that the teaching situation should involve several cultural perspectives. A further question then remains to be asked, namely whether a dialogue should be held between pupils who come from more or less homogeneous and distinct cultures.

- **Teaching of Mother Tongue**

During the 1960s and early 1970s foreign children in Sweden, and children from minority groups resident in Sweden, were successively given greater opportunity to receive instruction in their mother tongue. However, this was the result of a voluntary policy adop-
ted by the municipal authorities (which are responsible for the provision of school education in Sweden) – that is, until a reform conducted in 1976/77 placed municipal authorities under the obligation to provide mother tongue tuition and a study guide in pupils’ native language. Mother Tongue Studies was seen as an optional subject which would be available to pupils in all grades of school.

The reform was to a large extent triggered by the ‘immigration and minorities policy document’ of 1975, which had freedom of cultural choice as a stated aim. Linguistic identity is of course intertwined with cultural identity, and freedom of choice as to the language one speaks is often seen as an integral part of the freedom of cultural choice. For many ethnic groups, the struggle to ensure the survival of their language constitutes a central part of their ethnic mobilisation. An interesting question is also to what extent Sweden’s relations with Finland have played a crucial role in the development of Mother Tongue Studies. Since World War Two the Finnish group has been the largest immigrant group in Sweden, and the Finnish government has often expressed its concern for the educational situation of the Finnish-speaking population in Sweden.

Purely educational reasons were also put forward to justify the reform, which placed pupils’ language learning in focus. It was observed during the 1960s that pupils who had been forced to change languages and had done so unwillingly often experienced serious problems both in their language development and in their overall academic development. The advocates of mother tongue tuition pointed out that pupils who learn their mother tongue properly find it easier to develop mastery of the majority language.

The psycho-social effects of mother tongue tuition are often highlighted in the literature; if a pupil’s mastery of language is insufficient, then he/she is not fully able to express him/herself when interacting with other people. The result of this may be that the pupil feels insecure and starts developing low self-esteem. An important point in this respect is naturally the pupil’s contact with his/her parents; this relationship is generally conducted in the ‘mother ton-
gue', or native language. The linguist Leena Huss is a specialist on minority education; she maintains that pupils are helped to develop a positive self-image if their school offers them education in and using their mother tongue. The discontinuity which exists between their home environment and their majority-culture school can thereby be palliated.

There are also other possible justifications for providing mother tongue tuition, other than freedom of cultural choice, the boost to language learning and academic performance, and psychological security: one can point to social integration, and argue that minority groups will identify more with the social institutions of the majority if they find that their own separate linguistic identity is accepted and supported. At the same time, speakers of minority languages may then feel more motivated to learn the majority language. The pupil’s meetings with the mother tongue tutor can also function as an aid in achieving integration into society: the pupil has an opportunity to ask detailed questions, in his/her own language, about the majority society.

A further justification which has been put forward in recent years is that a pluralism of language competence in Sweden may favour the country’s commercial and trading relations with other countries, the assumption being that greater success is achieved if one can speak the language of the trade partner in question instead of using a *lingua-franca* such as English (we can see here how the debate on mother-tongue tuition intersects with the debate on the internationalisation of education).

In recent years Mother Tongue Studies has been fighting an uphill battle; the municipal authorities have been forced to make cut-backs, and this has hit those aspects of mother tongue tuition which are non-obligatory and not required by law. The whole debate on the subject of mother tongue tuition has been very animated; there is disagreement as to the integrative effect of the tuition given and its importance for language learning in general. A further subject which has aroused discussion is the question of how mother tongue tuition should be organised for minority groups of different
sizes and with different historical connections to Sweden. The Fin­
nish language has a separate position as a result of the large size
and long history of the Finnish population in Sweden (although
Sweden at present has no specific minority legislation in the lang­
uage area, this situation is due to be changed – see 'The Debate on
Minority Languages', above). A deal of the positions put forward
in the debate have been markedly populistic, and certain voices
have been heard to question the reasonableness of providing mother
tongue tuition in times of financial cut-backs. In other words, the
debate on mother tongue tuition has been characterised by a mul­
titude of angles of approach, in which educational and multicultu­
ral aspects have not been the sole guiding principles.

• Independent Schools

In spring 1991 the Swedish government, which at the time had a
centre-right majority, ruled that the country’s municipal authoriti­
es should allocate school-education resources, not only to state-run
schools, but also to what are called independent schools, i.e. schools
whose managers are physical or legal private persons. The budget
proposition of 1992 put forward the standpoint that true freedom
in the area of education can only be achieved if the municipal auth­
orites’ monopoly on the provision of school education is broken.
Society’s citizens should be allowed, to a greater extent than had thitherto been the case, to make their own choice with regard to
school, hospital and doctor. A new system of financing was intro­
duced whereby the funding per pupil (which was previously paid
by the state to the municipal authority in which the pupil attended
school) was now to be paid to the individual school where a pupil
chose to receive his/her education, in order to make this freedom
of choice possible.

Independent and private schools are not a new phenomenon
in the history of education in Sweden. The late nineteenth and early
twentieth century was a period of special growth for private schools
in the major towns and cities. Some of these schools, such as the
Palmgren School and the Whitlock Co-Educational School in Stock­
holm, were progressive for their age, introducing mixed-sex classes at an early stage. These schools also used new educational approaches – for example, the founder of the Palmgren School, Karl Edvard Palmgren, placed great emphasis on the importance of practical work for pupils' physical, intellectual and moral development. Handicrafts were a central part of the timetable at his school.

However, the 1960s saw a pronounced decline for private schools, and the only independent schools which continued through this period unscathed were certain of the foreign-language/ethnic schools, such as the Estonian schools, the French School in Stockholm, and the Hillel School. Schools based on alternative pedagogical philosophies, such as Steiner schools, also continued to receive public funding.

A gradual change of political direction was perceptible towards the end of the 1980s; the concept of freedom of choice became a more central term in the debate on education policy, and in the early 1990s the centre-right government pushed through its independent schools reform (the Swedish term translates as 'free school', and was chosen since it was thought to be more neutral in its associations than terms such as 'private school'). The social-democratic government which has been in power since 1994 has emphasised the importance of Sweden having a coherent school system which provides an equivalent education to all children and young people, although at the same time they have underlined the importance of there being stimulating competition between varying kinds of school.

In their relationship vis-à-vis independent schools the municipal authorities have generally speaking adopted a rather negative attitude towards those whose separate identity is based on religious or ethnic criteria. A recent study (1997) showed that when the National Agency for Education referred applications for funding for independent schools to municipal authorities for evaluation, in almost half of the cases the response of the municipal authorities was to reject the application. The municipal authorities frequently base their refusal on the standpoint that schools are to be a cultural
meeting-place and that one of their aims is to counteract social seg­
regation.\textsuperscript{2} What the advocates of independent schools have cause
to fear is the possibility that this kind of reason is put forward to
camouflage motives which in actual fact have more to do with fi­
nancial considerations and administration. It could be argued that
the very fact that various groups in society wish to establish inde­
pendent schools of their own is a sign that talk of school as a cul­
tural meeting-place does not correspond to reality: what pupils from
minority groups have to deal with instead is a school which is im­
bued with the values of the majority culture.

A development strategy based on competition and individual
freedom is a standpoint often voiced in the debate on independent
schools. Greater freedom of choice in the area of school education,
it is maintained, leads to a raising of educational standards as a result
of different philosophies and educational methods being pitted
against each other. In the initial stages of the debate the ethnic and
multicultural perspectives were relegated to second place; the pri­
mary aim of the reform of the framework for independent schools
was not to create space for ethnic or religious diversity – rather,
the objective was to provide parents and children with the freedom
to choose schools offering alternative pedagogical methods, such
as Montessori schools. However, what was said, in very general
terms, about diversity and freedom of choice did make it possible
for different religious groups to set up their own schools, and in
autumn 1993 the first independent Moslem school opened, in
Malmö. Other schools with a defined religious profile followed in
its footsteps – for example, Christian independent schools have
started up in several locations around the country. There are also a
large number of Finnish schools spread throughout Sweden. An
important part of the work of ethnic/foreign-language schools has
always been to promote active bilingualism in their pupils; in
schools where the teaching is carried out in Finnish or Arabic, the
timetable has been extended by several lessons a week in the aim
of achieving this goal.

In 1997 the number of independent schools in Sweden was over
Many of these are small schools. The majority of the independent schools have their raison d'être in alternative educational methods, and just over a fifth are for children of a specific religion. The foreign-language/ethnic schools are in a clear minority.

Criticism of the independent schools reform has taken various forms; some critics maintain that the reform may have the effect of amplifying trends towards social segregation, since privileged, and well-informed, social groups can distance themselves from the normal state school system and open their own 'elite schools'. Another kind of social segregation can arise if socially marginalised groups create their own independent schools; such groups' estrangement from the society around them can in this case be increased if children are given an additional reinforcement of their separate identity by going to a separate school. Criticism of these kinds may have its roots in experiences in the USA in the early part of this century, where the principle of 'separate but equal' was applied up until 1954, when the Supreme Court ruled, in the case Brown v. Board of Education, that the school system should no longer be segregated. Until then black and white children had attended different schools, a situation which was claimed to be acceptable as long as the education provided in the separate schools was of equal value. The fact was, however, that the education provided was not of the same standard – the motto 'separate but equal' was nothing but a hollow defence in favour of maintaining the status quo in society's inequalities.

The struggle during the first half of the twentieth century to establish an integrated, universal school form in Sweden, which led to such a school being established in law in 1962, obviously also provides relief to today's debate on independent schools in Sweden. The comprehensive school reform had the expressed objective of providing all pupils in Sweden with a qualitatively equivalent education. At the same time, it can be pointed out that a study completed by the National Agency for Education in 1997 concluded that the fears expressed with regard to the segregational effect of independent schools are exaggerated – indeed, certain of these
schools can be seen to function as a successful springboard to integration. However, the report does mention that there is cause for concern with regard to the quality of teaching in certain Moslem/Arabic schools.

A central question in the current debate on independent schools is that of the limits to freedom of cultural choice. The School Education Act explicitly states that independent schools must work in a way that corresponds to the general objectives and the value base which underlie the education provided in 'normal', state-run comprehensive schools. Neither may the content of the education be alienated from the levels of knowledge which it is the duty of comprehensive schools to enable pupils to achieve. Independent schools are required to provide an acceptable education, which does not, however, have to be identical to the education provided in state schools. Independent schools may have a specific religious colouring, but this colouring may not run counter to the basic values on which Swedish society rests – so it is not, for example, permitted for an independent school to dispense an education imbued with racist values or antidemocratic attitudes.

• Values at School and Christian Ethics

The one education debate which from the outset focused on the ethical problems of the multicultural society was the debate on ethics at school. During the last period of centre-right government the question of the place of Christian ethics at school was made the subject of intensive debate. For above all the Christian Democratic party and its leader Alf Svensson the question was made a central component of their political identity and profile; Svensson participated in frequent animated discussions with various debaters of social matters. In the Christian Democrats’ position, the call for Christian values was also necessitated by problems in society such as youth crime.

The criticism against this call for Christian values took various shapes. A general criticism, which echoed many of the critical reactions to Svensson’s comments, was put forward in a leader article
in the Catholic magazine Signum. The author of the article said that society needed to use preciser terms than the expression 'Christian ethics' in a context entailing as much responsibility as the national school curriculum. As far as their content is concerned, 'Christian ethics' may include principles equally acceptable to non-Christians. Indeed, it was a frequently articulated criticism that the principles highlighted by the Christian Democrats as the value base on which school education must build – such as respect for the dignity and integrity of all human beings – are not an exclusively Christian preserve; they are, rather, general human moral insights which find expression in many different religions and cultures. It is also possible that the more controversial ethical standpoints adopted by the Catholic church, such as opposition to abortion, can be found in cultural environments other than that of Catholic Christianity.28

Certain debaters, who approached the debate from the angle of utilitarian or consequential ethics, also attacked the ethical principles put forward by Svensson and his party, arguing that an ethics of duty based on an idea of human dignity is morally unreasonable. One of the most controversial critics from the latter group, the philosopher Torbjörn Tännsjö, maintained that the Christian Democrats' moral doctrine was a 'woman trap', by dint of the party's anti-abortionism and emphasis on the traditional nuclear family.29

All that being said, the debate did not primarily revolve around the question of which ethical principles should be enshrined in the new national curriculum; most people were in agreement that the central values were those such as tolerance, democracy, generosity and justice. Instead, the debate was really about the extent to which these principles should be defined as Christian or limited to the Western humanistic world view. Indeed, the viewpoint was raised in the course of debate as to whether a Christian perspective on ethics is in fact compatible with a humanist perspective.30 This perceived discrepancy was concerned for example with whether humanism's confidence in and focus on the individual human being's reason can be reconciled with a world view which has as
its centre the traditions of the church or a belief in revelation.

The criticism which more than any other influenced the formulation finally given to the values on which school education rests was the position that fundamental ethical principles such as the inviolability of human life are not the sole preserve of Christianity or Western society; they are equally important elements in other religions and cultural identities. However, this principle has been actively nurtured in the Christian and Western humanist traditions, and it was considered that there were grounds for highlighting this historical fact in the curriculum. The final formulation adopted by the government removed the expression 'Christian ethics', although it was instead emphasised that schools' work should be guided by an ethical perspective which has been nurtured by the Christian tradition and Western humanism.

The four debates presented in the preceding are all clearly related to the debate on multiculturalism – a debate which can be said to concern a more general, all-embracing complex of problems of which concepts such as tolerance, cultural and national identity, integration and citizenship are constituent parts. When explaining the need for a multicultural education which embraces cultures other than solely the majority culture, it can be pointed out that increased knowledge of other cultures than their own will help pupils to find their way better in our increasingly internationalised world; in addition, providing space for mother tongue tuition in the normal time-table can be interpreted as an important component of a multicultural education policy, since language is such a central part of cultural identity; the debate on whether or not there is a place for independent schools in Sweden ties in with questions concerning the relationship between freedom of cultural choice on the one hand, and objectives such as social integration on the other hand. Which teaching areas can be seen as being of a more private, culture-specific nature, and which should be seen as a matter of public responsibility? The issue of the basic values which underlie and should imbue school education is directly connected with the concept of civic education in a multicultural society: what values
and attitudes should be encouraged in pupils in a multicultural teaching situation?

It can, then, be said that the relatively new Swedish debate concerning multiculturalism at school has picked up on and brought together a number of different issues and approaches which were previously ventilated in debates of a more limited scope; in their initial phases these debates focused on other questions than the problems and opportunities of the multicultural society – a fact which in itself reflected the majority culture’s implicit assumption that the population was, more or less, characterised by cultural homogeneity.
The concept of common values, or a value community, is often used in debate concerning the multicultural society. The question that arises is how people from differing religious and ethnic cultures are to be able to agree on certain universal ethical norms. As has been mentioned, debate on education policy in recent years has concerned the question of which basic values should be seen as providing the foundation for the education provided in schools.\(^1\) What norms and values should be included in the civic education provided? What abilities and capacities should be promoted in pupils, given the social situation we have today?

In the first section of the Swedish national curriculum it is underlined that schools have an important task to discharge in conveying and cementing values such as 'the inviolability of human life, the freedom and integrity of the individual, the equal worth of all human beings, the equality of the sexes, and solidarity with the weak and disadvantaged.' Mention is also made of the value of cultural diversity. (Swedish national curriculum, Lpo 94, pp 5-6).

How such values are to be understood in exact, concrete terms is, of course, an intricate question. How can we strike a reasonable balance between advocating certain such fundamental values while at the same time advocating cultural pluralism?

Many of those who criticise the multicultural society say that the defenders of such a society have particular problems in explaining what can provide cohesion to hold the multicultural society to-
gether. The assumption here is that a culturally homogeneous society is less afflicted by the question of what common values can unite its citizens, since there are shared traditions and cultural patterns which provide a clear value community. This chapter sets out to present a critical discussion of how the concept of common values can be understood by the advocates of a multicultural society. The main general problem to be considered is the question of which values can set reasonable limits for cultural diversity. The chapter also focuses on the more specific question of which particular problems characterise the multicultural social situation in Sweden.

**Common Values and Fragmentation**

Increasing multiculturalism can be seen as a challenge to certain patterns of thought and values which, with varying degrees of implicitness, imbue the majority culture. The Finland-Swedish philosopher Lars Hertzberg writes that "our thought and value communities are expressed in our everyday doings, and in the normal run of events we don't give them conscious verbal expression." However, he continues, a group of people are required to articulate and describe their common values more clearly when the community is subjected to various internal and external challenges.

We can choose to regard the increasing multiculturalism of Swedish society as an 'internal challenge' to the value community of the majority Swedish culture. In such a 'crisis situation', explains Hertzberg, a group is forced to face up to and answer questions such as: what can we compromise on, what has highest priority, what are we going to have to do differently? In other words, the members of the group have to clearly decide which values they regard as inalienable, and which they are more prepared to compromise on and accept changes to.

It is important to emphasise that the question of how important a community of values is to a society can be formulated in different ways, and on the basis of different implicit assumptions. One frequent point of departure in this debate is that multicultural societies have a heightened need for a clearly defined set of common
values; if this is not present the consequence may be disaggregation or fragmentation. It is obviously of interest to inquire what is meant by this; such terms are often used in a clearly negative, emotionally charged way. The term 'fragmentation' seems to be generally used to connote a lack of direction, stability and social identity.

The problem here is how to view cultural pluralism as a phenomenon which promotes, or at least does not threaten, the realisation of these values. The citizens of a society may have a varying understanding of exactly what these ideals entail. For example, there is disagreement as to how strictly the term 'direction' should be interpreted; in an individualistic, liberal society where the citizens are generally sceptical towards collective projects (especially such as are run or controlled by the state) the only acceptable notion of the direction to be given to society might be that people are able to pursue their own way through life with a minimum of intervention from the state or any other collective entity. Certain philosophers of the communitarian tradition, such as Charles Taylor, maintain on the other hand that a state of fragmentation has been reached when the individuals in a society are more and more absorbed in their own private projects, with collective projects being conspicuous merely by their absence. In this case, the word 'fragmentation' refers to a situation where the members of society are not linked by an overall sense of solidarity and social community.

The question of how necessary a community of values is in a multicultural society is sometimes formulated from the perspective of the majority culture; from this angle, disaggregation or fragmentation refers to a fragmentation of the majority’s values and patterns of living – in other words, a situation where the multicultural reality means that the norms of the majority culture are called more and more into question. The value hegemony of the majority is perceived to be under threat. In the American debate writers such as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. have stood up for what they deem to be the American majority culture’s sacrosanct knowledge and values. Radical diversity is seen to be 'an enemy within' which
needs to be combated, by means such as accentuating and highlight ing, more vigorously than has hitherto been the case, the cultural pillars supporting society in the USA such as the democratic ideals. On this basis the project to be undertaken by the majority culture is to identify and interpret the sacrosanct values of their own culture, and with their help to limit the amount of space afforded to cultural diversity.

The fragmentation phenomenon is often formulated in broader terms than the national perspective; the danger is perceived as being a more general dissolution of the Christian/Western cultural heritage. Fragmentation does not however have to be interpreted as a collapse of the majority’s cultural perspectives; it can also be viewed as an absence of the kind of common ground which we assume to be essential for most of the citizens of a society, including the members of different minority groups. It is in this latter, more neutral understanding of the concept that we will be using the term in the following.

The Multicultural Park
Let us begin with a metaphor; it is not an unusual procedure to use metaphors when discussing the problems and opportunities presented by the multicultural society. An analysis of the debate in North America shows that terms such as ‘mosaic’, ‘kaleidoscope’ and ‘salad bowl’ are often used in describing the multicultural society. These terms also embody an objective generally held by the advocates of cultural pluralism: that different cultures should be allowed to continue to exist, as parts of the mosaic – all the different component parts making up a positive whole.5

In this book we will be working with a completely different image than those incorporated in the metaphors just mentioned: our basic image is of a park, which different people visit regularly. The park is our metaphor for a multicultural society. What characterises a park is that it consists of a delimited area where people with different interests can seek recreation in the form of different leisure activities. Some people visit the park to read or rest; dog-owners
walk their dogs; some people sit in the park café, where they eat and drink, and talk to each other. The park may also have an area used as a football pitch or for other sports, and perhaps even a place where people can meet to play chess. There are any number of possible activities to which the park might play host. A park is characterised by having its faithful, regular visitors, some of whom always come to follow the same pursuits, while others move more freely from activity to activity. We will probably find a certain number of activities which all visitors to the park have participated in, at some time or another, such as using the café or sitting on the grass. What we can assume that all the park-visitors have in common, irrespective of whether they involve themselves in one or more activities, is an interest for the environment of the park itself.

The more we observe the park, the more we will find ourselves able to distinguish separate, specific group identities among the visitors. If we see certain people entering the park, we will be able to guess with a fair degree of certainty that they are on their way to play chess; others, we will recognise, are probably on their way in to play football or table-tennis. Some park-goers have a more clearly defined group identity than others – one person always plays chess, while another sometimes plays chess, sometimes plays football, and sometimes spends his time in the park reading. We can describe this latter example as a multicultural person, in that he or she switches between the different group identities represented in the park. As time goes by the different park-goers will probably endeavour to develop some kind of joint action to deal with certain projects, such as keeping the park clean and safe. With regard to the 'overall governing' of the park, each visitor will endeavour to assert their own specific interests in the aim of exerting an influence on the shared environment.

The kind of park environment, or society, we will primarily be concentrating on is an environment where the various constituent groups on the whole accept each other’s presence in the park. The question to be addressed is thus how these groups can form a com-
mon 'park identity', and how they can co-ordinate their separate activities. A different, and in many cases unfortunately more realistic problem is presented by environments where several groups are in complete disagreement as to who has the right to be in the park (or society) at all.

**The Advantages and Limitations of the Metaphor**

There are good reasons for using the park as a metaphor for the multicultural society. On a general level, an image of this kind can have an illustrative, explanatory value beyond that of a theoretical account. The use of an analogy or metaphor can also help us grasp certain concepts which are of central value in dealing with the complex of ethical problems which are often associated with the multicultural society. This complex of problems includes questions such as 'How should the relations between the different activities (cultures) be managed?' and 'In what ways can one solve value conflicts relating to the way the park (society) is structured?'

The metaphor also expresses the fact that in the debates on multicultural society, it is assumed that the various cultures share certain common values. While it is true that people have made their way to the park (society) for different reasons, from the standpoint of their varying perspectives they can agree that the park (society) is of considerable value to all those who visit it (i.e. all citizens), not least because it enables them to continue to practise their respective activities (maintain their respective cultural identities). The park, like society, is a vulnerable collective entity, the continuing existence and development of which requires the different groups to work together. In contrast to the other frequently-employed metaphors in debate concerning the multicultural society - such as mosaic, salad bowl, kaleidoscope - the park represents a microcosm in which different people's interests need to be co-ordinated with each other. The metaphors salad bowl, mosaic and garden are also static in a way which the park is not (and the salad bowl is hardly an aesthetically attractive image for the multicultural society). While the image of a garden is more aesthetically satisfactory, it leads to
the idea of a gardener, a person or authority who to a greater or lesser degree controls how the garden is cultivated. Comparisons with an orchestra or theatre do, in contrast to the other metaphors, suggest the idea of a multicultural microcosm: the different musicians and actors contribute to the creation of a meaningful whole in the same way as the different cultures which make up a multicultural society together can form a positive integrality. However, as compared to the park metaphor these images have a number of obvious shortcomings – an orchestra is directed by a conductor and follows the notes in the score, and a theatre is led by a director and follows the script of a play, while a park and its activities are not steered in the same hierarchical way in line with a given theme. The park is far more ‘horizontal’, spontaneous and open in character, while the metaphors of orchestra and theatre conjure up associations of a structure which is hierarchical and ‘manipulated’, and which produces results which (to a greater or lesser degree) are predictable owing to the form of a piece of music or the story of a play. The often-cited ‘melting-pot’ metaphor is less static and more open than the orchestra image; however, it does not represent a microcosm in the same way as the park does, and neither does it embody cultural pluralism.

The metaphor of the park also brings out the importance of practical participation in the development of a group identity. A person’s identity as a chess player is quite simply achieved by his or her often playing chess with other visitors to the park. To receive a particular cultural identity it is also necessary to participate on a practical level in that culture’s activities, such as the celebration of festivals or public holidays. In other words, to belong to a park the visitors must involve themselves in one or more of the activities carried on in the park, and in the same way the citizens of a multicultural society must be provided with a fair opportunity to identify with one or more of the constituent cultures, if they are to be able to feel at home there.

Moreover, a park-goer is not only to be described as a member of, for instance, a croquet club; he or she is at the same time a
member of the park as a whole. Similarly, we can say that a person is not only a member of a particular family or church/association, but is also, at the same time, a member of a society. This fact places special demands on the kind of education which that person should receive; it is not enough for him/her solely to be provided with knowledge of their own culture’s activities and of what is required of those who participate in them. As a member of the society he/she should also be given the opportunity to cultivate the kind of attitude required of those who participate in political life, such as a democratic attitude.8

Parks were in a very literal sense a significant arena for the civic education of American ‘urbanists’ in the early 20th century. These urbanists strongly expounded the virtues of the city as an environment which could promote and symbolise ideas of the common good – one means of enabling a city to fulfil this role was the creation of meeting-places such as squares and parks. The parks would not only provide the inhabitants of a city with opportunities for recreation, but would also function as a kind of school for civic education. Certain urbanists claimed that a child could learn more about life during a week spent at a playground than in a year of attending Sunday school.9

There are of course limitations to how far the park image can be applied to the multicultural situation – the metaphor should not be taken too far. When we speak of the constituent cultures in multicultural societies we are generally referring to ethnic or religious cultures which cannot be chosen in the way that the activities available at a park can. The ethnic group to which one belongs is a collective identity one is born into, and a religious identity is not usually something one chooses at a particular point in time on the basis of certain consciously evaluated reasons and values.

The park metaphor can be regarded as being especially appropriate for illustrating the problems faced by territorial minorities in a multicultural society – most of the park’s activities take place in a certain location. However, many of the problems besetting multicultural societies do not only affect territorial minorities, but also
concern groups whose members are spread over different locations throughout society. This being said, territorial and non-territorial minorities can be likened to each other in so far as both kinds of group have certain cultural interests which their members endeavour to promote, such as, for instance, preserving their language. If a group is characterised by geographical concentration this can of course be an advantage for the group’s cultural survival, since territorial concentration makes it more possible for the minority to maintain intensive communication between its members. The group may also be able to leave a tangible imprint on the physical landscape and architecture of the area concerned.

It should however be said that in a modern communications society, geographically scattered minorities have good chances of establishing thriving communication and thus maintaining a strong sense of cultural community. Multi-lingual mass media and improved airline connections have made it easier for the members of an ethnic minority to remain in contact with each other and their cultural identity. Indeed, in an open society territorial minorities may experience difficulty in preserving an isolated and traditional culture, since the world around them constantly makes its presence felt. The different groups in a communications society affect each other in different ways, and the members of the groups are obliged to negotiate in those situations where their customs are in conflict with the customs of other groups.

Another criticism which suggests itself is that the park metaphor does not take account of the fact that modern-day societies are no longer closed nation-states, but interact with each other in numerous different ways. The park metaphor can give rise to the notion that a society, like a park, is a clearly delimited area within which the citizens/park-goers can themselves govern what takes place.

Nevertheless, the park is useful as a metaphor which functions on several different levels; it can illustrate relationships between different groups in a given society, yet can also be used to describe the relations between different societies, with the world as a whole
being viewed as the park. At this level we may encounter disagreement as to what is to be seen as the shared park environment – for example, what obligations has one state to discharge towards another with regard to environmental policy? Equally, we can apply the park metaphor on a more specific group level in the aim of illustrating the relations between the members of that group. In the light of these comments the park metaphor can be said to be a particularly realistic comparison that is applicable to many modern societies; the idea of the park expresses the idea of geographical closeness and mutual dependence between different groups or activities. In other words, the groups are unable to isolate themselves from each other: they must reach an awareness of the fact that they share the responsibility for managing the park environment in which they carry on their activities.

A further interesting comparison can be used with respect to the idea of the 'multicultural personality', where involvement in a number of different activities is seen as providing a foundation for personality development; this is echoed in the park metaphor, since many people attend the park to follow several different pursuits.

Yet another criticism which can be raised against the park metaphor is that the park, in a way which does not at all correspond to the reality of the multicultural society, represents a pluralism of complementary activities all of which the park-goers can view with a generally positive attitude. Consequently, the advocates of a multicultural society may gain unfair extra mileage by using the metaphor in their argumentation.

It can be fairly argued that the facts that the various activities in the park complement each other (and that the practitioners of the different activities for the most part only ask for limited areas in which to pursue their interests) do not accurately reflect the general value conflicts which can arise between the different cultures in a multicultural society – the park metaphor can, in other words, convey an idealised picture of the multicultural situation.

On the other hand, there may be positive conceptions and perceptions of the multicultural society which the park metaphor is
not well suited to express or reflect. One positive image often used in descriptions of multicultural situations is the idea of dynamic cultures which cross-fertilise each other in different ways. A large number of the champions of a multicultural society maintain that activities open to all, such as science and the arts, can in various ways be enriched thanks to the cultural diversity prevailing in a multicultural society. Pluralism entails opportunities for continuous cultural exchange, and society gains from the fact that different perspectives are brought face to face and compared in a process of open and dynamic dialogue. The activities carried on in a park, on the other hand, can be perceived as being carried out in separate locations, and, as in the case of chess, to be bound by more or less unchangeable rules. Many of the pursuits carried out in the park are static and non-communicating projects – in other words, they are not open to influence from each other: the participants in the respective activities tend to carry on as they always have done, within the framework set by the activity in question (although it could be countered that many sports and games, for example, have seen considerable changes in their content, form and aim throughout history).

The afore-mentioned reservations do not cancel the pedagogical and 'heuristic' value of the park metaphor for exploring the ethical problems encountered by the multicultural society. In both cases, the park and the society, what is at issue is that the representatives of different groups are seeking to defend and promote their interests vis-à-vis the other groups, and attempting to work together to shape the park (society) in such a way that it is an environment that they all can share. The subsequent question remains, as to whether the different cultures constituting a multicultural society can be seen to co-exist in a relationship of positive complementarity in the same way as the activities in a park.

It can also be maintained that different park-goers will have a different understanding of what a park is. For some people the park is simply an attractive setting for the specific activity which is the real reason for their visiting the park; these people regard the oth-
er activities with no more than a slight interest, and with annoyance if they come into conflict with their own activity. For other park-goers the park is more than just an attractive backdrop for their respective activities – they see the park as a positive whole in which the various activities complement each other and offer visitors to the park a broad wealth of choice.

Many critics deem the use of the park metaphor to be inappropriate, since the presumed conflicts in the park are not particularly realistic, and because they can be seen to trivialise the serious complex of problems associated with certain multicultural societies. This criticism does not however only apply to the park metaphor; the use of any comparisons or metaphors in politically charged contexts runs the risk of being exposed to this kind of objection. It is important to emphasise in this respect that this kind of metaphor is conceived as an intellectual tool which can help us identify and articulate the issues in what is a complex set of problems.

All being said, the park is a suitable metaphor for the multicultural society for several reasons. On a literal, non-metaphoric level too, the park can illustrate the segregation problems which have existed in certain multicultural situations during the twentieth century. In the American South and in the South Africa of the apartheid regime there were segregated parks where whites and blacks were not given the opportunity to personally get to know each other. Increasing integration of park environments may be a sign that an ethnically diverse society is moving towards greater unity and integration. The multicultural park can in many ways be seen to illustrate the ideal to which a multicultural society can aspire, where different groups meet within the framework for joint activities, and where they are also able to pursue their own, more culture-specific interests. The park metaphor can be used to embody the frequently held position that democracy presupposes the existence of some kind of sense of community and confidence between the members of the society in question – although this does not mean that there must be a common ethnic identity in order for people to be able to identify with the park or society. What is necessary is a value com-
munity, in the sense that all park-goers (or citizens of the society) at least share values such as the desire to safeguard the park environment and each other’s safety. The park-goers (or citizens) also implicitly share a regional identity in the sense that they identify with the park environment itself, and also an associative identity, by which is meant that they identify with several of the park’s clubs/associations/activities and projects.

Using the park as a metaphor also has the advantage of arousing positive associations from the outset – there is, in other words, a specific point in comparing society to a park. The idea of a society is something which most of us view in a positive light (unless we are anarchists or extremely radical neo-liberals), notwithstanding the fact that we may well have divergent views as to which matters and activities are a common concern and which are of a more culture-specific nature. This leads us on to a further reason for choosing the park as a metaphor for a multicultural society – there are differences from park to park as to which activities are considered to embrace the whole of the park-going community, and which are seen as specific to certain groups. There is no single ‘correct’ park environment which provides us with a model for how and where the boundaries are to be drawn between common (or public) and culture-specific (or private) projects. We can say that every park, every society, should endeavour to provide a safe environment in which the participants feel confidence, but over and above this fundamental requirement there is scope for any number of local variations. The park metaphor is flexible and can extend to a multitude of interpretations, which means it can be adapted according to the kind of society being described.

We can for example use this flexibility to illuminate one of the central problems in Sweden. Swedish society has a long history of being a well-organised park where things are never out of control, and where innovation and change are often regarded with scepticism and uncertainty. In many respects a nation-state such as Sweden can be likened to an old park, the shaping of which has for a long time been governed by definite ideas as to what activities
should be seen as joint concerns, and which should be seen as more
group-specific. When new visitors orient themselves in the park for
the first time they find that the flower beds and lawns are arranged
and cared for in accordance with an organisational structure which
has been in place for a long time. Many of the rules and social codes
characterising the behaviour of the established park-goers are diffi­
cult to comprehend and see the reason for; it is only after spend­
ing a lot of time in the park that a new visitor is able to grasp their
tenor. Consequently, the question we can ask ourselves as the new
millenium approaches is, what can we do to succeed in viewing our
society as a pluralistic and dynamic park in which the varying per­
spectives of different individuals and groups can find expression.

The Norms of the Multicultural Park

- Inter-Group Norms

An observer who has studied the park over a length of time will be
able to conclude that the activities in the park are governed by att­
itudes and rules, which park-goers, on occasions, infringe.

To begin with, we have the norms or rules which extend to all
users of the park. The norms may cover such things as not subjec­
ting fellow park-goers to physical threat, and not doing anything
to make it difficult for certain groups to carry out their specific ac­
tivities. An example of the latter may be a rule which aims to pre­
vent those who play football from extending their pitch so far that
the chess-players get hit by stray balls. Other common norms might
be that all park-goers are expected to contribute to keeping the park
in good condition, and to avoid leaving litter or damaging the flo­
wer beds. We can express this by saying that all park-goers partici­
pate in the joint project of protecting the park environment, irre­
sppective of whether they come to the park to play chess or football.
These rules belong to what we can term the park’s inter-group or
inter-activity norms. This ’code’ also includes general directives
governing how people are to treat each other in the park. Whether
park-goers practise sport or chess, they are not to threaten, slight
or cheat each other. In other words, all the park-goers are hereby participating in the joint project of acting in such a way as to ensure that the park environment is safe, anxiety-free and civilised. The two kinds of inter-group norms are thus concerned with the relations of park-goers with each other, and the shared physical environment in which they pursue their interests. We can express this by saying that this universal moral code consists of rules which are intended to make it possible for all users of the park to carry on their specific activities.

If we shift this analysis to society, we can maintain that there are certain fundamental norms which everyone is expected to observe, irrespective of the social roles or cultural identities with which they identify. This kind of norm can be things such as not killing other people, not causing suffering, and not threatening other people’s dignity or integrity. A further norm may be that in the event of conflicts of interest, citizens shall use methods of negotiation which meet certain demands in terms of fair treatment and impartiality, rather than using methods characterised by violence, threats, or arguments coloured solely by narrow self-interest.¹³

The above-mentioned norms are sometimes called fundamental norms or fundamental values, and many of them are incorporated in international declarations and agreements, such as the UN Declaration on Human Rights. It is a frequently held position that norms of a more specific nature, which develop as people participate in increasing numbers of social contexts, should not conflict with these general norms. The fundamental principles function as critical correctives which are brought to bear on human beings’ various activities. The immutable, irrevocable core of these principles consists of principles such as the right not to be tortured or subjected to arbitrary violence. However, some of the norms are relatively abstract – for example the respect for each individual’s human dignity and integrity – and need to be given interpretation in concrete situations if they are to provide firm guidance.
• Group-Specific Norms

In using the park as a metaphor we have had as a basic assumption that a park consists of different activities with which the park-goers identify, to a greater or lesser degree. The activities are governed by rules which the park-goers have to adhere to if they want to be able to join in. The norms for certain sport activities are relatively unchanging and clear, while other activities take place within the framework of rather more indefinite and changeable norms – for instance, using the park benches for reading.

Those rules which govern particular activities in the park can be termed the park-goers' group-specific or activity-specific norms. These ethical codes, in contrast to the general, inter-group norms, are particularistic and specific in character, and they apply only to those wishing to participate in the activity in question. The specific activities are also subject to rules which apply across the spectrum of activities, such as that players shall not cheat. A further feature the activities have in common is that they can justify their existence on the basis of common values such as recreation, creativity and social interaction.

Certain visitors to the park only go there sporadically, and do not identify to any pronounced degree with any activity. The behaviour of these park-goers is governed by the general rules applying to all users of the park, for example that they should not leave litter. The greater the extent to which park-goers participate in the specific activities, the greater the responsibility resting on them to involve themselves in the park on a wider level.

Applying our park metaphor to a multicultural society we can say that the different cultural circles in the society are governed by specific rules and values which have grown up as a result of the different groups' experiences. For example, the different religious groups have varying customs as regards festival days and food traditions. This kind of rule can be termed group-specific, or culturespecific, norms. As we have pointed out, among the groups in a multicultural society we can also find inter-group, or group-transcending rules, such as striving to counteract suffering, and respec-
ting each other's integrity. The groups making up a multicultural society can be said to be engaged in ensuring that their society is safe and civilised, in the same way as the park-goers want the park to be a secure environment.¹⁴

A common feature of the different cultures is that they correspond to universal human needs, in the same way that the activities in the park meet people's general need for recreation. In this context, we can understand cultural identities to be the ways in which different groups seek to satisfy their social, religious and sexual needs. Most people regard the satisfaction of such needs as essential if they are to feel fulfilled in life. If different people satisfy a central or basic need in a similar manner, then this provides a basis for a collective identity.

It is interesting to note that many of those elements which can be considered the most central and universal of human requirements - social relations, sexuality, religion - are exactly those on which there are vigorously rivalising interpretations. These different interpretations find expression in cultural customs which in certain situations may come into conflict with each other. In other words, the aspects which the different groups have in common (and which we might thus expect to have a unifying effect) are those which can lead to dramatic cultural conflicts.

Human beings are to a large extent influenced by their collective identities, even if, by dint of their individual aptitudes and circumstances, they give these group identities specific expression. The way in which a person confronts, and formulates an 'honest answer' to, the universal conditions of human existence is an utterly personal matter. In this light, oppression of a person's cultural perspective can be deemed to be a violation of his/her dignity and integrity - since respect for other people's dignity and integrity includes showing consideration to their particular cultural identity (the cultural features on which they have based their self-identification and the way these cultural features have been incorporated into an individual identity). We can thus see that advocating multiculturality in society does not need to be incompatible with the formulating
of conceivable universalistic norms. The oft-cited principle of respecting other people’s dignity and integrity provides instead the basis for accepting a multicultural society in which different people respect each other’s cultural differences.

**Group-Transcending Situations**

If we return to the park, we can see that in addition to the more specific activities it can also contain various inter-group activities. We have already mentioned one such inter-group project – the work of ensuring that the park is a safe and clean environment – and it is possible to conceive of other group-transcending, ‘cross-boundary’ activities. These activities may differ with regard to how many people take part in the projects, and in what form and to what extent the participants meet each other. Park-goers who only make their way to the park on rare occasions do not provide a basis for collective projects of a substantial nature.

Patronising the café can, in a broad sense, be seen as an inter-group activity. Most people enjoy having tea or coffee and a snack while taking a break, irrespective of whether their activity is skating, football, boule or chess. Common rules of conduct are required in this situation if the café is to be able to function, and develop in a positive direction. A meeting place such as a café can also help the park-goers to gain increased understanding of each other’s activities, and can provide a location in which further inter-group initiatives can be started. For certain people, the café is their main destination when coming to the park – no more than occasionally do they make their way to other spots or activities in the park. These café-habitués can be said to have developed a very specific group identity, namely that of café regulars.

We can imagine inter-group activities or projects in a multicultural society taking place in an analogous fashion. Irrespective of people’s cultural background there are in fact activities and projects which the members of all groups can understand the value of, such as taking care of the environment they all share, or establishing common education in matters which are of interest to most of
the constituent groups. Within the framework of such inter-group contexts we see the growth of common (although hotly debated) rules and guidelines whose function is to ensure that the collective projects are carried through. These projects may differ from each other as to which groups participate, and the various ways in which the participants contribute to the work.

The greater the number of activities and areas which are seen as domains of shared responsibility, the greater is the need for a widely accepted base of common values, in the form of common rules of conduct. The groups need to communicate with each other, and they have to jointly work out common rules to ensure that the collective projects are completed. We can say that if we wish to answer the question as to how much unity, how broad a community of values, are needed in a multicultural society, then we need to think about what can be considered to be reasonable collective projects in which it is expected that all citizens should, in some way or another, take part.

One joint project might be to regulate certain social relations via legislation. For example, two cultural groups may over time come to realise that the legislation governing marriage and family relations should be the same for both groups, since 'mixed' marriages are taking place between members of the respective groups. If in this situation different systems of family law come into conflict with each other, then sooner or later the groups will find themselves forced to draw up legislation acceptable to the members of both groups. Exactly which rules apply in the area of family law is a matter which also has significant consequences for society as a whole, since the rules affect the distribution of ownership, for example through the laws governing inheritance. If the different groups wish to be able to act in a common economic market, then they need to agree on the principles which are to define ownership.

The different groups in a multicultural society may however disagree as to which projects should be considered as collective, and how they should be carried out. This problem is concerned
with the question of what things should be considered as public or as private matters, and how the functions of the state should be defined. Some groups view the state as being ideally a minimal structure, the primary function of which is to guarantee the physical safety of citizens and their property – the state, in their eyes, should be a kind of 'night watchman', no more. Other groups tend towards a fuller (or 'thicker') definition of society's functions and duties; such groups often advocate a strong public sector whose function is to ensure the achievement of objectives established for social policy – an example of this standpoint would be the social-democratic welfare state.¹⁷

There is sometimes a risk that too many collective projects are set up too quickly in a multicultural society. It may be that certain groups are not yet ready to take part in joint projects because of strong conflicts or traumatic war-time experiences. In this kind of situation it is important to identify less ambitious collective projects which, in a step-by-step fashion, can lead to increased mutual understanding and interaction between the cultural/ethnic groups in question. The present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina in many ways provides an illustration of this difficult problem. In a war-torn area such as Bosnia, where people's ethnic identities have been affected as a result of the violence and disruption of the war, it is necessary to locate common denominators in domains which are 'unsullied' by the ethnic conflicts, as a basis on which broader mutual understanding can be built. Areas which are suited for this kind of initiative are, for example, environmental and health-care projects.

On a more general level we can say that when different people involve themselves with dedicated commitment in an ethnic or religious group, there is always a risk that this specific group identity will become over-dominant. A particular group may develop 'expansionist' tendencies, and become insensitive or indifferent to other groups' wishes and requirements. Involvement in a project of a more inter-group character may in such a case function as a counterweight to the specific self-interest present within the group. Inter-group activities and contexts also represent the platforms
where citizens can meet and carry on negotiations about the society (or park) as a shared environment, especially with regard to situations where incompatibility of interests has come to the fore.

**Value Conflicts in the Multicultural Park**

In a society characterised by extensive cultural diversity one especially important task is to create confidence-inspiring contexts within which political dialogue can take place. If this is to be achieved, focus must be directed on the attitudes which it can be assumed it is important for the participants in that dialogue to adopt and apply – for example, openness, a willingness to listen, and independent and critical judgement (see the examples mentioned in 'Virtues in a Multicultural Society', below). It is probably safe to say that a population can live with relatively pronounced value conflicts, provided the inhabitants are prepared to listen to and be influenced by each other.

However, there are situations where dramatic value conflicts can arise between different religious minorities and a secularised majority population. The prime reason for conflicts of this nature becoming dramatic is when the religious groups consider that a custom is an inseparable element of their cultural identity. The fact that a religious minority can view a custom such as the hotly debated issue of religious slaughter as indispensable may arise from deeply rooted ideas about the food habits their religion requires of believers.\(^{18}\) It is also conceivable that the idea that a custom is absolutely indispensable might be engendered as a result of the group feeling alienated from the rest of society in different ways. The group may, for example, feel marginalised in projects which its members find important. This situation is not least the case with regard to the employment market. The group will then find an 'intrinsic value' in strongly highlighting those elements of its separate identity which can be used as a means of exerting pressure vis-à-vis other groups.

In many instances dramatic value conflicts between different groups are above all an expression of unsatisfactory social condi-
tions. When this is the case cultural differences are underlined, and the emphasising of the particular culture's distinctive features functions as a kind of compensation for the group's social and political marginalisation. We can also conceive that a group will define the concept of cultural integrity in a very uncompromising way in cases where cultural survival is a static phenomenon limited to a particular geographical location; cultural integrity then comes to imply that the members of the group in question have to live in a social climate which is completely dominated by the specific culture. The culture becomes a 'protected area', in which traditional customs are to be protected against both internal and external criticism. Certain members of the group may also attempt to gain control over the group's national symbols, and may in addition propose a definition of their culture which involves a denigration of other groups' culture. This expansionist, hierarchical and totalitarian cultural view may generate considerable uncertainty and anxiety in those who propound it, since they must constantly be on their guard for any tendency to call it into question.

If however the members of the group in question give their support to the universalist principle of respect for their cultural integrity, then they must by extension also recognise other groups' right to live out their own specific cultural identities (in the same way as football players and chess players have to recognise each other's right to a place in the park to carry out their activities). In this case the groups will understand that they have to reach agreement as to the extent to which different individual elements of cultural identity can be given a place in the life of the society the groups share (and, if necessary, as to which separationist measures should be considered). In this scenario the inter-group projects set the limits for what can be considered to be acceptable 'no-go areas' or reasonable forms of expression for separate cultural identities. If the groups recognise the value of wider-ranging social interaction and freedom of movement between the different activities in the park, then they will find themselves obliged to adjust and adapt their norms when they come into conflict with those of other groups. It
is precisely this form of general value community that is essential if the groups are to be able to live together.

It has frequently proved the case that when the politics of identity have been brought into the debate, the result has been that an element of implacability and disinclination to seek possibilities for compromise has made its presence felt. Conflicts of interest relating to different resources and material interests assume the guise of issues of cultural identity. Criticism of a person’s standpoint in such a conflict can in other words easily be construed as an attack on their identity or character. This means that a lot can be at stake in conflicts of interest, since conflicts of a concrete nature concerning, for example, access to certain cultural or material resources are ’translated’ into conflicts of identity. When, moreover, personal identity is closely linked to a collective entity such as an ethnic or religious group the individual may often feel that they have very limited possibilities to adopt an open, flexible approach in a conflict of values: each member of the group sees themself as defending something that goes beyond them as individuals, i.e. a historical, collective identity. The feeling of having a place in the present and roots in the past, which a strong sense of ethnic identity can give the individual, comes in many cases at the cost of restricted freedom of individual movement.

Value conflicts frequently occur in societies characterised by religious diversity, especially where the religions in question have incompatible universal messages. There are several ways to approach conflicts of religious values. Some writers see one way forward in drawing a distinction between what is central and what is peripheral in the teachings and doctrines of different religions. We could perhaps say that in Islam, the central teachings concern the image of God and the ideal of human attainment, while the specific rules concerning prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and clothing are of subsidiary importance. These writers are implying that a religious minority should be willing to consider compromise on those customs which are of a peripheral nature, should they come into conflict with the values of the majority culture.
However, for believers who see their customs as directly sanctioned by God, there is no room for compromise; the customs are seen as inseparable elements of a religious integrality, where everything that is dictated by or addressed to God marks out a territory where no compromise is possible. A further aspect which it is important not to neglect is that customs may have a central symbolic function for the believer. The historian Christer Hedin has pointed out that customs are endowed with considerable importance in certain situations because they have become symbols for the fundamental tenets of the religion. Adhering to a custom – which may have arisen under temporary circumstances no longer prevailing – becomes a means for the individual believer to prove his veneration for and faithfulness to God. Continued observance of the custom also places the believer in a community where other believers, throughout the ages, have expressed their reverence in the same way.

The Value Community: Opportunities and Limitations

We have noted above that the question of how necessary a set of common values is in a multicultural society can be formulated in different ways, depending on one’s point of departure. There are cultural frames of reference in a society which, in one way or another, influence what is seen as a reasonable answer to this question. One such frame of reference is constituted by the importance accorded to political culture. In a society such as Sweden, where general, comprehensive solutions have been a common phenomenon in all areas of politics, we can assume that the expectations regarding common values will take on a particular form. Swedish political culture, with its centralistic, state-oriented perspective can create expectations that the value community in society should be substantial, unequivocal and universally applicable, in a way that is analogous with many political programmes which have been implemented in the past. This centralistic perspective has not least found expression in the area of education. According to the historian Harald Runblom uniformity in school education has been a
constant in Sweden from the 17th century almost up to the present. The implementation of the reform of native language tuition in the 1970s can also be seen as exemplifying the tradition of uniformity in education (the same solution was applied to the Finnish-speaking minority, a group with hundreds of thousands of members, as to groups with no more than a few hundred members). All in all, says Runblom, it can be seen that in the field of education Sweden has scarcely lived up to the official policy of pluralism promised in the 'freedom of cultural choice' policy document of 1975. In contrast to countries like Denmark, Sweden has generally been keen to emphasise the importance of the state in the provision of school education. Denmark, on the other hand, has shown a greater willingness to allow a system of independent schools where emphasis is given to parents' responsibility for the education of their children. The first Moslem independent school in Denmark dates as far back as 1978.

The over-emphasis on uniformity often encountered in public life in Sweden also raises its head in a small number of places in the report of the Schools Committee, entitled 'Clash or Meeting' ('Krock eller möte'), from 1996. In the introductory section it is maintained that schools where the vast majority of pupils are from an immigrant background have especial possibilities and problems, and that some of the problems probably require specially tailored solutions. At the same time the report states that multicultural education should be seen as a dimension to be incorporated into all teaching, and that efforts should be made 'as far as possible to avoid separate solutions, since separate solutions have a tendency to shift the problem onto certain groups which are pointed out as needing help or support'. This latter statement would seem, to a certain extent, to cast the former in a problematic light – in certain acute cases there may in fact be specific groups which really need specific, targeted support measures, and this need should carry more weight than a fear of 'pointing out' the groups in question. Indeed, the choice of the expression 'pointed out' seems somewhat strange in this context – it gives the impression that it is best to do every-
thing possible to avoid recognising that certain pupils really do need special support.

A focusing on extreme examples in the multicultural debate, such as female circumcision, may incite strident calls for the identification and application of a strict set of fundamental values. We hear argumentation such as 'If we don’t draw up clear boundaries for what is permitted and what is not, our society’s sense of sharing a community will start dissolving.' Once such arguments have been voiced, we frequently see unrealistic demands being made on the advocates of multiculturalism; to be able to defend their vision of a multicultural society, the advocates are expected to identify clearly and exhaustively all the values which should provide the limits for cultural diversity within the society.22 The principle applied seems to be 'all or nothing'; the openness and ability to accept change which one usually associates with the quest for knowledge are stifled.

At the same time, we should remember that the debate on multiculturalism can stimulate us to reappraise our fundamental ethical and political concepts. The Israeli philosopher Yael Tamir maintains that the 'multiculturalism debate' can lead us to reflect in new, unbiased ways on questions such as the concept of democracy and the content of certain rights.23

The centralistic perspective on common values in a multicultural society can easily overlook the value-pluralism associated with multicultural society. Different cultures are in a position to realise different values which it is not always possible to bring to realisation conjointly, or to rank in relation to each other. The community values of an agrarian culture are not easy to realise in more 'anonymous' urban environments, while values such as individual autonomy can be realised in completely different ways within the framework of a large-scale urban environment than in the small-scale setting of an agrarian community. The value community as seen from the multicultural perspective cannot be described in the form of a set of 'super-principles' which produce a judgement one way or the other in cases of value conflict. The value community
must instead take into consideration the fact that there are a number of values which cannot be compared with one another and are associated with different cultures, values which it is not always easy to bring to realisation at the same time.

When different groups meet each other in a relatively new multicultural society particular problems arise with regard to the creation of a new value community. The groups have limited experience of each other, and a lengthy period of mutual acquaintance is required before a clear, broad-based value community can develop. For the groups to come to the insight that certain projects should be pursued as joint initiatives, such as common legislation on certain matters, there generally needs to be an extended period of interaction between them. However, that being said the formation of new societal constellations may entail certain advantages compared to multicultural societies of older standing, in that the collective identities have not in the same way been shaped on the basis of long-running conflicts between different groups.

Virtues in a Multicultural Society

The concept which most frequently crops up in discussions on the ethical problems facing the multicultural society is the concept of tolerance. This particular ethical problem is formulated as a question of drawing boundaries – in other words, what are the limits to tolerance in a multicultural society? A frequent position is that tolerance does not have any absolute or unconditional value, but needs instead to be qualified and subjected to restrictions if it is not to be self-invalidating. The project here consists in attempting to identify the values which provide reasons for tolerance, and thereby to present an answer to the question as to what the limits to tolerance should be. If, for example, one adopts the position that a reason for practising tolerance is respect for the integrity of the human being, then it is scarcely tenable to tolerate subversive groups which in different ways pose a threat to the free formation of opinions and the physical and mental integrity of different people. Karl Popper has called this problem 'the paradox of tolerance'. In his
famous book 'The Open Society and its Enemies' Popper says:

'Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.'

All the same, certain difficulties are implied if the concept of tolerance is taken as the chief point of departure for this ethical discussion. Tolerance has occasionally been associated with a not-too-enthusiastic acceptance, an almost passive and patronising attitude which runs counter to positive notions of the wealth of variety present in the human race and the possibilities for development this opens up. A definition of tolerance frequently found in academic debate is that tolerance means consciously choosing not to prevent actions or life-styles which one actually dislikes and which it would be in one’s power to prevent. What is distinct about this characterisation is that it is more or less based on the standpoint that the tolerance problem is a problem which primarily concerns the dominant majority culture, i.e. the group which has the knowledge and the power to prevent certain life-styles from flourishing. While the perspective prevailing in the majority culture is politically important in this context, since to a large extent the majority population determines the legislation adopted by society, the ethical problems of the multicultural society are equally the concern of the minority cultures in that society. Consequently, the discussion should not be limited to looking at how 'tolerance policy' should be formed according to the majority culture’s perspective. By being more careful and nuanced in our language use, so that we do not only talk of tolerance in the sense outlined above, we provide space for a broader spectrum of attitudes and perspectives which go beyond the single question of how the majority culture should act or react when encountering the different minority cultures.

In everyday language the word tolerance is used in a more general sense, where 'tolerance' is seen as the direct opposite of a dogmatic and fanatical attitude. In this light, the extent to which
one meets the customs of other cultures in a positive way is more of an open question. The possibility of using the term 'tolerance' in this kind of more general sense is examined by the philosopher André Comte-Sponville in his book 'Petit Traité sur les Grandes Vertus' ('A Small Treatise on Big Virtues'). His viewpoint is that the word tolerance 'as used both in everyday language and in the language of philosophy, has become the word which denotes the virtue which contradicts fanaticism, sectarianism and authoritarianism – in short, it is the opposite of intolerance.' It would however, says Comte-Sponville, often be more accurate to talk of 'respect' or 'recognition' rather than use the word 'tolerance' – this being what we often tend to mean when using the word without closer reflection. Despite these observations, Comte-Sponville continues, it is nevertheless not reasonable to reject tolerance out of hand as a virtue. With certain qualifications of the kind mentioned above tolerance, in the form of a kind of self-restraint, is still worthy of a place in our moral thinking. Comte-Sponville explains that it is a small virtue, well suited to us humans with all our imperfections. It is better than nothing, and definitely better than its opposite. Tolerance can be termed a provisional stage, and as a virtue it has the same kind of role to play as politeness in collective social life. In other words, it is only a beginning, but it is a beginning nonetheless. A similar perspective is expressed by the political philosopher John Gray, who says that our best chance of attaining lasting peace lies in reducing the demands we make of each other and learning to put up with our differences; only then can we understand what it is we have in common.

It is also important to emphasise that a culture is a complex phenomenon, where different features produce different attitudes or reactions. One might respect, or even feel very positive towards, a certain feature of a traditional culture, such as the strong bonds of social community between its members, while at the same time one is much less certain with regard to the group's religious customs, and adopts an attitude of tolerance towards them rather than positive approval. If tolerance is considered as a reasonable balance
between total rejection and total acceptance of a feature in another culture, then it is debatable whether tolerance should be seen as merely a temporary, provisional stage. Human life is often characterised by value conflicts of varying degrees of thorniness on different matters, and expecting people to adopt a balanced, restrained attitude in the form of tolerance may in many cases be the most reasonable moral strategy.

Returning to the discussion of the concept of tolerance, we can see that to a considerable degree tolerance is about maintaining or respecting limits. We can say that tolerance is about 'leaving things in peace' if they are things for which we cannot muster much positive respect or appreciation. On the other hand, the opposite, intolerance, has strongly negative associations; as long as a particular custom does not cause any tangibly negative consequences for its practitioners or the rest of society, the custom can be left in peace. The central concept here can be said to be 'respect for people's integrity'. Tolerance demonstrates that paternalistic impulses are to be put aside with regard to the customs in question. A cultural 'protected area' is thereby created, facilitating respect for the integrity of individual group members. Such customs might be connected with clothing, for example, or the place of religion in daily life.

Certain Moslems react negatively to the fact that girls wear tightly fitting clothes during Physical Education at school, and certain non-Moslems react negatively to the fact that Moslem girls are required to wear a veil. A secularised citizen may also wonder as to the dominant role religion plays in the daily life of the believer. A religious believer, on the other hand, may have equally serious misgivings about the absence of religion in the daily life of secularised people. With time, both parties may come to the realisation that it is not in fact possible to persuade the other of the reasonableness of their own life-style. The groups may then come to tolerate each other's customs and modes of living, as long as they feel that the other party is not attempting to force its own life-style onto them, and is not doing anything to make it difficult for them to continue
living life as they choose to. We can term this mutual strategy a boundary-respecting line of conduct. The implicit demand made of both parties is to 'take a step back' and leave the other culture in peace. Boundaries, in other words, are to be maintained and respected; a certain distance is seen as being the desirable state of affairs for both parties, and they must understand the value of a) respecting each other's integrity, and b) avoiding any serious conflict.

However, in a multicultural society there are issues and activities where the above-mentioned strategy is not always the most reasonable line to adopt, even though it should always be available as a possible alternative in the background; there are social matters which call for the participation of most of the groups in society − for example:

- the drawing up of legislation governing family matters in environments where members from different groups marry each other;
- the establishment of a common code of criminal law;
- ensuring the operation of common rules in the economic market;
- joint projects on health-care and environmental protection;
- common education in matters which are seen as areas of joint responsibility.

It would be possible to list many more examples, and to vary those given above, depending on the social contexts and cultural constellations we wish to consider. In cases such as these it is difficult to imagine that a boundary-respecting strategy can be the only one deployed; it needs instead to be supplemented with a flexible-boundary strategy, where the dialogue is guided by the principle of give and take − in other words, the key expression here is willingness to compromise. The different parties have to be prepared to change their ingrained habits and cultural customs, otherwise they will be unable to establish common participation in the different collective projects in question.

We might for example imagine that deeply religious parents
might agree to their children being exposed to other religions and life-views than Islam at school, and that they at the same time gain understanding for their desire that more time should be devoted to describing Islam and presenting it in a more nuanced light than has previously been the case. This is just one possible example among many, but it illustrates in a clear fashion the problems which can occur when different groups have widely differing opinions as to what the pupils from the groups should learn at school. For some members this problem is not a concern, since they are firm in their belief that separate education should be provided to the children of differing groups. However, for those group representatives who see a value in common education across the group boundaries the question is a serious problem, and they are required to be open and alert when dealing with the 'borderlines' of their own and other cultures if the ideal of a common, shared education is to be achieved. In other words, they are required to apply a 'flexible-boundary' approach, where they are open to the possibility of changes in where and how boundaries are drawn.

Multiculturalism in Sweden presents various challenges which the majority society and the minority cultures have to come to terms with together. In certain cases, as we have seen, customs or norms which are more or less incompatible come into conflict, without the respective groups' cultural perspectives allowing any room for compromise. In such situations it is important that citizens, in their meetings with their opposite numbers, can mobilise virtues or attitudes such as empathy, generosity, 'discretion', restraint and realism. At the same time, their own self-image has to be underpinned with self-esteem, self-confidence and accurate self-awareness, since these qualities enable them to stand up for those things which concern the innermost elements of their cultural identity, i.e. the things they regard as indispensable and not open to compromise. A strong degree of group identification also presuppores that the group members can ascribe a certain intrinsic value to their group community – i.e. commitment to the welfare and interests of the group does not solely arise from instrumental motives.
In situations where co-operation and mutual adjustment are both possible and desirable, other attitudes and approaches are required than those described above. Citizens should in these cases emphasise personality traits such as openness, curiosity with regard to perspectives different from their own, and an ability not to invest their standpoint with a misguided sense of prestige, if the aim is to bring about common participation in various collective or public projects. The ability not to attach prestige where it is not called for, and the 'ability to formulate excuses' are of especial importance in cases where a majority population has in the past been involved in discriminating against a minority. A recent example of this is provided by the millions of white Australians who presented an apology to the original inhabitants of the country, the Aborigines, for the adoption policy practised from the middle of the 19th century up until the 1960s. Fair-skinned Aborigine children were taken away for adoption by white European families, or were placed in various institutions. It has now been declared that a day of commemoration is to be held every year on 26 May, as an act of apology and redress. In a similar vein, in 1998 the Swedish government issued an apology to the country's Saami (Lappish) population for the unfair treatment to which the Saami people have been subjected by the Swedish state in the past.

At the same time, it is important that the minority which was discriminated against does not let itself become dominated by a 'victim mentality'. Despite the fact that a group such as the black population in the USA has been subjected to discrimination for hundreds of years, many black activists have put their efforts into highlighting the positive aspects of the history of black America, in order to foster the kind of self-respect which can lay the foundations for interaction and co-operation across the racial boundaries. Important features of black history are jazz music, black American literature, and the civil rights movement. The history of black America is also a history filled with the stories of people with the courage to stand up for their beliefs, their rights; and the foremost figures in the civil rights movement, such as Fannie Lou Hamer
(1917-1977) and Martin Luther King (1929-1968), provide inspiring examples for the younger generation.

On a general level we can say that the members of minorities which have a history of being discriminated against have to fight to develop courage and strength enough to prevent them from becoming paralysed or embittered by the history of the injustices committed against them (see also 'History: Shackle or Springboard', below). And it is important that members of a minority group who have achieved social success show solidarity with the less privileged members of their group, and for example take the role they can play as a positive example seriously. The black American military officer and politician Colin Powell, for instance, has travelled around visiting black schools throughout the USA, explaining to black youngsters how important it is to get an education.

If a cross-boundary, inter-group project is to be able to develop it is important that the citizens of the society adopt an open, imaginative and creative attitude, which can provide a contribution to the task of identifying new activities and possibilities for joint projects. Such inter-group initiatives can play their part in bringing the different cultures closer to each other where previous attempts to co-ordinate joint projects have proved unsuccessful. If for example a minority native to the country and the Moslem minority have previously only encountered each other in charged circumstances, such as the debate on independent schools or disagreement over the proposed building of a mosque, then there has probably been little chance to sow the seeds of constructive communication; if, on the other hand, the groups have a record of contact with each other with regard to non-controversial projects, such as sports activities, it is more likely that they will be able to find the way to reasonable compromises when more sensitive issues come up for debate.

If we summarise the discussion this far, we can see that multiculturalism presents our modern society with a number of challenges, and forces us to appraise how we should view civic education. One particular such challenge arises from the fact that the members of a society may find that certain elements of their respective
cultural identities are not compatible with each other. The project they then have to undertake is to develop a 'boundary-respecting strategy' aimed at creating cultural 'protected areas'. A further challenge arises in cases where joint activities are possible and desirable, but place the groups under pressure to rethink the cultural demarcations existing between them. In these cases, what is required is the development of various 'boundary-changing strategies' which can bring the groups closer together. In a number of cases the inter-cultural relations have been infected as a result of wrongs and discrimination committed in the past; in this kind of situation it is especially important to create new group-transcending projects which can partially divert attention from these previous subjects of conflict. In other words, the task is to shape a 'group-transcending strategy'. The challenges facing a multicultural society are thus a), to develop a subtle mode of co-ordination whereby members from the different groups attempt to 'parry' each other's activities; and b), to develop forms of collaboration and interaction which work as smoothly as possible.

What we can note is that our description of the multicultural situation, or complex of problems, justifies our emphasising certain very familiar attitudes or virtues, such as openness, generosity, and the ability to see when it is misplaced to invest occurrences and phenomena with prestige. The multicultural society does not, in other words, call for any 'new', special virtues of its own; the question is rather, in what ways should the traditional virtues and attitudes be accentuated or expressed in the multicultural context. It is also important that the various virtues and strategies balance one another – for example, openness should not be taken so far that one's own cultural identity risks being eroded away. Self-esteem and loyalty to the specific group to which one belongs should work in tandem with an open-mindedness which is able to transcend the boundaries of that specific group. The multicultural project thus consists of a complicated, delicate procedure of striking a balance between on the one hand marking one's separate cultural identity, and on the other, openness vis-à-vis new influences.
Education in the Multicultural Society

This chapter looks at one of the most central arenas available to the multicultural society for overcoming and reconciling value conflicts and social differences: school. It should however be underlined that, just as school provides an excellent environment for promoting mutual understanding and tolerance, the education sector is at the same time a sphere where value conflicts can take on very tangible expression, since different groups may have very different conceptions of what education should be aiming to achieve.

School is in many ways an arena of society whose activities are subject to tension from several quarters; it is part of everyday life for schools to have to strike a balance between what are often irreconcilable demands stemming from parents, pupils and 'society'. In the Swedish context, it is seen as a function of school to contribute to social integration – but at the same time schools are required to assess and grade the performance of individual pupils, which encourages the development of competitive thinking.\(^1\) School is also charged with 'reactive' functions, in as much as it is to reflect the common values and cultural heritage of 'society'; and at the same time it is to be independently active, in the sense that it is to foster pupils' ability to think critically.\(^2\)

It is important to emphasise that our discussion of multicultural education primarily focuses on the general attitudes which should imbue school education and colour the curriculum, text books, teaching strategies and organisational structures of schools. We will
not, in other words, be dealing with more specific questions such as how multicultural education should be given concrete expression and put into practice in the different classes of comprehensive and upper secondary school – this task is primarily the duty of teachers and educationalists, who have the requisite detailed knowledge of pupils' varying abilities at the different ages. The subject we will be concentrating on is History (in a relatively broad sense) since this subject has had a prominent position in international debate on multiculturalism.

**Education in the Multicultural Park**

The visitors to the multicultural park will soon realise that there are different educational situations linked to the various activities. Some of these situations are formal in character, such as when a swimming teacher organises swimming lessons for children who are new to the park. Other educational situations are of a more informal nature, such as when people who watch games of chess gain an incremental understanding of the rules and strategies of chess. This activity-specific education is primarily given by people who have a long experience of practising the activity in question. There are a number of explanations for this: firstly, we can assume that these actors have an especially high level of interest and commitment, since they have been practising the activity over such a long period; they can also be assumed to have a depth of 'insider' knowledge which cannot be acquired anywhere else in the park.

In addition to the activity-specific education, education of a more 'cross-activity' nature may also be available in the park. To be able to identify with and feel committed to the park it is not enough to have certain skills, such as being able to play football or chess. The park-goers also need a more general education, so that they know what activities are available in the park – what the history and current situation of these activities is, and roughly what they are about. People's multicultural knowledge relating to the activities in the park over and above their own special interest(s) is obviously not as extensive and detailed as the skill and understanding park-goers
gain from active involvement in the respective activities; the aim of the cross-activity education is to provide park-goers with general knowledge of the history of the park, and to explain how the various activities have come to occupy the place they do.

The group-transcending education in the park may also include elements aimed at promoting park-goers' tolerance and respect for each other, as well as information about what can be done to make the park safer and cleaner in the future. The education may also include specific knowledge and skills concerning activities which many park-goers will have been involved in at some time or another, such as arranging a barbecue or taking care of the cafeteria. Certain kinds of knowledge or proficiency are common to all park-goers, irrespective of the specific activity they practise: a feeling for language, the ability to draw logical conclusions and an ability to imagine varied combinations of hypothetical situations are all skills which can be seen as indispensable whether one is learning to play boules or chess.

If we take our analogy of education which is provided in common to all park-goers, and apply it to a multicultural society, we can see there is a value in providing civic education, which teaches all citizens about cultures and religions other than their own. History or Religious Education seen as subjects to be taught to all can provide outline information on how different groups and religions have developed, and what kinds of relations they have had with each other over time. One and the same topic of history may be of general interest to all citizens, at the same time as it can be given a more group-specific importance (see the section on the Holocaust, below).

What all citizens have in common, irrespective of what their cultural background is, is the need to be able to express themselves both orally and in writing, and the ability to reason logically. Fundamental skills such as proficiency at reading and writing and the ability to conduct an argument in public are also preconditions for being able to participate in political life. In addition to the skills enumerated, in a democratic society it is necessary that citizens learn
to show tolerance towards opinions that differ from their own, and that they develop a democratic temperament (see also 'Virtues in a Multicultural Society' above). Those who wish to act together on an economic market also need to be able to speak the same language and to be acquainted with the legislation that regulates economic transactions.

In the more group-specific education citizens can be provided with more detailed knowledge of their own ethnic culture and its customs, and of the content and rituals of their religion. For those who are actively involved in such activities, this increased knowledge has a pronounced identity-promoting effect.

The Park as an Area of Conflict
A park may have a long history of different conflicts between certain of its visitors. The chess players may have been involved in conflicts with the football or boules players, if the latter have had a tendency to want to extend their playing areas at the expense of the space used by the chess players. Perhaps the chess players have acted in a superior manner towards the other park-goers, since they feel that chess is a particularly sophisticated pursuit which demands intelligence and tactical skill of its practitioners in a way which the other activities do not. In addition, perhaps the chess players are supercilious on the grounds that they see themselves as the park’s pioneers, the group who were the first to start using the park. This they have seen as a reason for claiming a special right to have a determining say in the organisation and steering of the whole of the park; they have worked in and for the park for much longer than the other groups, and think that this position gives them certain proprietorial rights. This snobbery has led to their feeling apart and aloof from the other park-goers, and in turn this has caused the members of the other groups to feel irritation towards the chess players. In other words, the multicultural park is characterised by serious conflicts.

In such a situation it can be justifiable to arrange inter-activity education which aims to increase the park-goers' sense of commu-
nity and to promote peace in the park. With time the chess players will be obliged to reduce their emphasis on their special position and power, as they become aware that the other park-goers are equally entitled to visit the park. The common education or information provided in the park should go on to highlight the positive qualities of the other activities, and make it possible for their practitioners to involve themselves in influencing how the park is shaped and run.

**History: Shackle or Springboard**

The groups which have been discriminated against might, in the early phases of the new, multicultural educational initiative, call attention to the injustices committed by the chess players and the suffering which these injustices have caused the members of the other groups. However, if the emphasis given to past wrongs is too strong there is a risk that no sense of mutual understanding and community will have the chance to develop in the park. Giving vent to one’s bitterness vis-à-vis a discriminating party should have a particular function, namely to get that party to listen and think. Emphasising historical injustices can be seen as a moral reprimand, the intention of which is to bring about a change in the offender’s mentality. However, if the injustices committed are dwelled upon constantly, the atmosphere will not be conducive to the development of a new, constructive line of thinking and interaction. The emphasis on reprimanding the offender leaves no space open for reflection and positive change; the other party is afforded no opportunity to divest themself of their old role and to be viewed in a new light – instead they are constantly classified in terms of previous history.

What we are obviously looking at here is a question of degree. Wrongs committed in the past should not be forgotten, but neither should they be so present that the groups concerned are rendered unable to move nearer to or tolerate each other. If the aim is to promote mutual understanding in the multicultural environment, then teachers need to highlight the values and historical experiences
which all pupils can in some way identify with. It is important that teachers underline all the positive examples of peaceful co-existence between different peoples which can be found throughout history; although at the same time, there are certain negative events or conflictual situations which are of such importance that they should be a constant presence in teaching, a subject which all pupils learn about and discuss – one straightforward reason for this being that we thus can ensure that they are not allowed to happen again. A telling example of this kind of phenomenon is provided by the Holocaust.

The Holocaust

Human history has witnessed a large number of genocides. In the Convention on Genocide which came into force in 1951 genocide is defined as acts which are 'carried out with the intention of wholly or partially annihilating a national, ethnic, racially determined group as such' (Article II). The question of which examples of genocide to choose for teaching purposes can be a controversial issue, since the selection made can be interpreted as a judgement that the chosen examples are of greater import than any others. Describing and analysing genocides throughout history is a difficult, but nevertheless utterly necessary task, which requires the teacher to mobilise resources of empathy, skilful use of language, and the ability to formulate the ethical issues involved in the examples looked at. In addition, acute sensitivity is called for if the class includes pupils who come from either the offended or perpetrating groups.

The example of genocide which is most frequently highlighted as the most extreme form of expression taken by human evil is the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. During the Second World War over 6 million Jews were murdered, including over 1.5 million children. In addition, the National Socialists murdered 500,000 gypsies and members of others groups, such as homosexuals. Most of these crimes were committed in extermination camps in Poland, and concentration camps spread throughout Germany and the countries
occupied by the Third Reich. The Holocaust is often described as the culmination of antisemitism in Europe, antisemitism being a tendency which has manifested itself in different ways throughout history (mention can for example be made of the mistreatment of the Jews in connection with the crusades of the 11th century and latter part of the 13th century, and the persecutions committed at the time of the Black Death in the mid-14th century).

Many different interpretations of the Holocaust have been propounded. Over the last ten years historians have been particularly engaged in examining what it is that distinguishes the Holocaust from other examples of genocide through the ages. Many of the aspects they have looked at, such as the systematic, extremely well-organised and widespread violence, are elements present in other genocides. Nazi Germany demonstrated many of the typical characteristics of the totalitarian state: the government authorities strived to ensure they were constantly present in citizens’ daily lives, and the individual was completely subordinated to the interests of the state. A high degree of faith in and obedience to authority, intolerance towards the holders of divergent opinions, and an extreme violence cult were also prominent features of Nazi Germany. The question then is, what other features make the Nazis’ persecution of the Jews unique from a historical point of view.

One common approach to this question is that the Holocaust has to be analysed in the light of the specific racial ideology which characterised Nazi Germany and its warfaring in World War Two. The race principle was uppermost in Hitler’s philosophy, which saw the history of the world as a struggle between different races in which the Aryan race (and more specifically the Germans) were depicted as being the highest group in the racial hierarchy. The Jews were seen as the lowest of all races, and the aim of Nazi policy was to identify, expel and exterminate all Jews. What happened was that a particular, defined group was lifted out of society (and this was a group which had thitherto been relatively well integrated in many areas of society), taken away, and wiped out in death camps, in a manner and to an extent which are without parallel in history.
The total humiliation of the Jewish population by means of obliging them to wear the Star of David on their clothes is also generally seen as a specific feature of the Nazis' persecution of the Jews.9

It should however be pointed out that many of the researchers who have written about the Holocaust have in no way set out to detract from the sufferings of other peoples at the hands of other perpetrators of persecution and genocide. Historical abuses such as the brutal European colonisation of America, the extermination of Tasmanians in Australia in the 19th century, the mass murder of Armenians in Turkey between 1915 and 1917, the political and ethnic purges of the Stalin régime, the slaughter of civilians under Pol-Pot in Cambodia 1975-79, and the ethnic cleansings in Bosnia and Rwanda/Burundi in the 1990s are all occurrences which must not be forgotten.10 However, we can nevertheless still view the Holocaust as a case apart, and indeed a great deal of the research carried out into the Holocaust aims at explaining this standpoint. The Nazis' final solution confronts us with the antithesis of such cornerstones of Christian and Western humanist ethics as respect for human integrity and dignity.

One of the aims of research into the Nazis' pogrom against the Jews is to find better ways of extending and conveying knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust. One shortcoming of many of the history books written in Europe since the war is that they have tended to look at the Holocaust as only one of all the elements of the Nazis' politics of violence during World War Two. The historian Stéphane Bruchfeld has carried out a survey of Swedish textbooks, and found that with no more than a few exceptions the Holocaust is dealt with in a very cursory manner. Similarly, the analysis of the roots of racism is very brief and superficial.11 Such omissions and insufficiencies on the part of the authors of textbooks may make it easier for 'revisionists' to spread claims such as that the Holocaust did not take place, or that the figures for the number of people killed have been grossly exaggerated. In another context, Bruchfeld says that the revisionist denial of the Holocaust could at worst enable antisemitic and neo-nazi groups to gain a stronger
footing in society.

'If the Nazis' crimes did not take place then it is once again possible to admire Hitler and Nazi Germany [...] And most importantly of all: if doubt and uncertainty as to what the historical truth is becomes widespread among the public, resistance to nazism and fascism will be undermined and neutralised.'

This leads us on to the central reasons for teaching young people about a genocide such as the Holocaust. Schools have a moral duty to teach and inform about events like the Holocaust, among other reasons in order to prevent something similar from happening again. It is also an expression of respect for the victims if we make sure we do not forget what happened; in this regard, monuments and museums have an important part to play alongside what is taught in school. The Holocaust Museum in Washington DC, which opened in 1993, is a very good example of an institution which has reached a large number of school pupils in American society, above all because the museum has succeeded in highlighting the individual human destinies behind the frightening statistics.

A further angle propounded by writers and philosophers is that studying the Holocaust has a symbolic function, in that it represents one of the most flagrant manifestations of human evil throughout history, just as education is charged with conveying knowledge about the good sides of human nature and how they have found expression in the form of peaceful co-existence between different peoples, so education must also provide pupils with an insight into the 'anatomy of evil', among other reasons because evil has reared its head in so many blatant ways throughout our history.

The reasons detailed above for including phenomena like the Holocaust in the school timetable are very general, they apply to all contexts of school education; on a number of grounds there is considerable value in all pupils learning about the Holocaust and the persecution of the Jews in the Third Reich. At the same time, there are additional special reasons why specific groups should study the Holocaust in detail. For the Jewish population this kind of
study is an important element in understanding the Jewish identity; moreover, studying the Holocaust can promote solidarity and a sense of community with the Jewish culture along a time axis stretching from the past into the future. For the German nation study of the Holocaust is important as a stimulus for constructive self-analysis, in the aim of building up a new national identity unsullied by the country’s Nazi period. The Holocaust is of special importance to Europeans in their identity as such, since it is seen to constitute a clear rupture in the development of the modern liberal, Western world: it is an anomaly which, from a modernistic perspective, cries out for an explanation. How could such a thing happen in Europe, with all our continent’s cultural characteristics? However, this question can easily provoke the critical observation that Europe’s cultural baggage has contained elements of antisemitism and racial ideology.

Certain of the trademarks of modern society – rigidly organised bureaucracy, large-scale industrial production, the zealous desire to classify which dominates in sciences such as biology – made it possible for the Holocaust to take on the shape it did, with normal, ordinary German citizens taking on the role of employees at the extermination camps. Some researchers, such as the British sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, author of the book ‘Modernity and the Holocaust’, maintain that certain aspects of Western society’s ‘modernity’ can be seen as providing the backdrop to the particular characteristics of the Holocaust. According to Bauman, ‘The Holocaust was a unique encounter between the old tensions which modernity ignored, slighted or failed to resolve – and the powerful instruments of rational and effective action that modern development itself brought into being. Even if their encounter was unique and called for a rare combination of circumstances, the factors that came together in that encounter were, and are still, ubiquitous and “normal”’. Modern technology could be used, among other things, to dehumanise the victims and thereby ‘distance’ normal German citizens from the acts of violence. Bauman’s observations point up a central issue relating to the teaching of a genocide such as the
Holocaust: one important task lies in illuminating the circumstances under which ordinary citizens risk being affected by 'hate propaganda' spread by a totalitarian movement.

**Multicultural Teaching**

Highlighting the historical experiences of a neglected cultural group can be said to be one of the primary objectives of multicultural education. Multicultural education must afford space to other perspectives as well as that of the majority culture – other cultural perspectives within society must also 'have their say'. The education underlines that several groups belong to and make up society, and that all these groups are entitled to have their story told.

In most countries we can find several examples of minority populations whose voices have been marginalised, neglected or misrepresented in school education. In a society which is relatively new to the multicultural situation, such as Sweden, school education bears a very clear stamp of the perspective of the majority culture. The majority language – Swedish – protestant Christianity, and the customs and traditions of the majority culture have in many respects provided the very foundation for school education. It is for example not very long since the Finnish-speaking children in the Tornedalen region in northernmost Sweden were forbidden to speak Finnish during school breaktimes – Finnish-speaking pupils were not allowed to use their mother tongue at school until 1957. Other minority languages were also almost completely unrepresented at school. The Estonian schools constituted a small-scale exception to this state of affairs. The special 'Saami' or Lapp schools also provided a small amount of instruction in Saami, or Lappish.15

The subjects which have been particularly under the spotlight as a result of the new multicultural situation are subjects such as languages, religious education, history, civics, literature, and artistic subjects such as art and music. However, any school subject may find itself a focus of multicultural debate – for example the subject Biology may become a topic of conflict between groups who agree with and groups who are opposed to Darwin’s theories. The Crea-
tionists, for example, are negative towards Darwin on the grounds that his theory of evolution is an assault on the view of creation embodied in the Bible. Certain fundamentalists even advocate a view of knowledge which is diametrically opposed to the rationalism in 'core subjects' such as Mathematics and Logic.

It is only natural that it is subjects in the fields of the humanities and social studies which are at the focus of the multicultural debate, since the central concern of these subjects are human beings' social, cultural and political conditions and relationships. This opens the door for varying interpretations depending on cultural perspective. History, in the broadest sense, constitutes a clear example of a multicultural subject. The questions dealt with by the subject often revolve around the relations – be they relations of peaceful interaction or of conflict – between different identity groups through time. The subject can also look at those 'cultural products' which have been generated by meetings between different cultures. The conceptual structures and theoretical perspectives are not unequivocal in the way that they are in Mathematics; the interpretive frameworks vary according to the observer's life view, ideology and perception of reality. In some cultures the individual personality is accorded a decisive role in the events and developments of history, while other cultures emphasise collective and structural factors. What is actually taught as History may therefore overlook various minorities, if the teacher only looks at the conditions and experiences of the majority, or if only one single philosophy of history is allowed to supply the structure and range of the subject as taught in school.

The factor that makes the school subject History a central issue in the multicultural debate is that different identity groups make use of different versions of history in their self-identification. Disagreements as to 'what actually took place' in history can thus take on a very charged nature, since the versions of history which are in conflict are concerned with nothing less than the constitution of the groups' conscious identities. The subject History has a particular political relevance, in that the way the subject is planned and
taught can be used to bring out events and phenomena which can reinforce or call into question a country's social identity. It is for this reason that History has been seen as having an important part to play when different countries have set about building a nation, and this also explains why the subject features so centrally in the multicultural debate.

Though they might not be central to the multicultural debate in the same way as History, other subjects may still be of special interest in this context, by dint of the examples teachers choose to illustrate the topics they are teaching. The question here concerns the way in which the subject matter and questions of a given school subject are explained with the aid of examples which most pupils are familiar with. A subject which is based on a universal conceptual system, such as Mathematics, can be taught using a relatively limited spectrum of examples taken from the customs and experiences of the majority culture. In an interim report from the Schools Committee there is a discussion of the teaching of Mathematics in a multicultural situation; the report points out how contextually limited the teaching of Mathematics can be, citing the experiences of one Maths teacher: 'If you’ve never been fishing it’s difficult to understand the relationship between the float, sinker and hook. A child who’s never seen a fence around a detached house finds it harder to calculate the length of a fence than a child who has grown up in an area where people live in detached houses.'17 Pupils may also have experience of different counting systems. We can say that what multicultural teaching endeavours to do is follow one of the basic 'official' guidelines for teaching practice, namely to take as a departure point the pupils’ own experiences and frames of reference.

**Breadth and Depth – an All-Round Education**

If we agree that Sweden is a multicultural society then we cannot direct our attention exclusively on the history, religion, language and culture of the majority. For a number of reasons the subjects taught at school must be made accessible to other groups as well as
the majority population. One thing that is striking is that what we might term a 'multicultural' approach to education in subjects like History and Civics can be justified on the basis of completely non-controversial considerations relating to the academic standard to be achieved by pupils. If we have established all-round competence, a breadth and depth of knowledge and awareness as an ideal, then to attain this in, for example, the study of social development we need to examine different groups' perspectives. This is familiar from the approach to teaching History known as 'History from below' or 'grass-roots history'. This approach endeavours to spotlight the social conditions of the ordinary people who throughout history have made up the bulk of the population. The history of Sweden is not only the history of the burghers in the towns and the farmers in the countryside – it is also the history of women, children and the labouring classes. This is why, in subjects such as social history and in the study of the history of women in society, the effort has been made to supplement and call into question the traditional teaching of history, which has often focused on political history seen from the perspective of the power elite.

In the same way, the ideal of breadth and depth provides grounds which justify, or rather call for, the study of different minority peoples in Sweden, such as the Saami (Lapps) and the Finnish-speaking group in the Tornedalen region in northernmost Sweden. Cultural and religious life in Sweden do not consist solely of the works and products of the Swedish majority population – the literature, art and music of our country's minority groups are equally a part of the same whole (see also 'The Debate on The Position of Minority Languages' above). Furthermore, the eurocentric tendency which characterises the way cultural history is taught needs to be supplemented by a broader perspective which makes the original cultures of immigrant groups more understandable, and thereby explains these groups' relationships with the new society. To make it possible to understand different artistic features in a given society it is also necessary to relate them to the artists' socio-economic situation, and not only to their 'inner' cultural life. The ques-
tion is, in other words, what relations of dominance have helped shape the cultural identity in question, and in what way have these relationships been expressed in the group's literature, art and music?¹⁹

A clear example of the neglect of minority cultures in the American context is provided by the 19th-century historian Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis of the importance of the 'frontier', the frontier reached by the new settlers. He presented his views in a lecture to the American Historical Association in 1893; his thesis was that the American citizen was created along the various prairie frontiers: according to Turner, reaching out for something new, moving out onto unbroken virgin ground, came to be a characteristic of the American mentality. The various groups which had immigrated to America, maintained Turner, were liberated from their origins, and in the frontier areas were able to enter something new, something they shared with the other frontier pioneers – an identity as an American. Jackson Turner's 'melting pot' idea was generally accepted in the early 20th century, and his thesis was quite radical for the day, since it questioned the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon cultural heritage. However, viewed from other perspectives Turner's line of thinking seems less watertight: where are the Indians who were persecuted, driven off and cornered by the land-hungry migrants from the American east coast? The picture of untouched, virgin territory, or terra nullius, which was successively taken over by the white Western European immigrants completely overlooks, in other words, those groups who were the original inhabitants of the areas subjected to step-by-step colonisation.²⁰

In a society like Sweden where there is a majority culture which still imbues society in a multitude of ways, there are obviously strong grounds for this culture being given a prominent place in the teaching of subjects such as History and Civics – the majority culture, with its long history, has left deep impressions in society, and to understand the social developments of the present day it is necessary to have a thorough knowledge of the central elements of the majority group's culture, such as Protestantism, which in its turn
can be seen as having its place in a wider, European framework. The history of Sweden, in contrast to that of, say, the USA or Canada, is not a multicultural history, in the sense that there were a multiplicity of ethnic groups present 'from the outset', making their influence felt in the development of the country (although at the same time, it can be pointed out that Sweden's cultural history has been profoundly influenced by impulses generated by cultural exchange with countries such as France and the German-speaking nations).

In a relatively homogeneous park where only a few different activities take place, 'education' and the symbols employed in the park will bear the stamp of the dominant cultures' history and values. However, the park-goers might nonetheless benefit from multicultural education, if different park environments are dependent on each other. One important reason for providing multicultural education in a relatively homogeneous society is thus to meet the requirement for a functional, orientational knowledge that enables people to navigate in and appreciate the world beyond their own society, in the same way as park-goers benefit from being able to find their feet in other parks as well as their own.

**Empathy**

Cultures can be described in different ways. The perspective of empathetic involvement, of striving to understand a culture on its own terms, can provide a defence against the risk of using a simplifying method of description, where other cultures are viewed 'at long range' and described in stereotypical and ethnocentric fashion. The empathetic approach to describing other cultures attempts to describe them as objectively as possible, by steering clear of superficial and simple angles of observation and description. This approach is typical of disciplines such as ethnology and social anthropology, where the ambition is as far as possible to 'get inside' the perspectives and experiences of the group being studied. By definition this empathetic approach to obtaining knowledge cannot be applied in the same way to history, since the objects of stu-
dy are no longer in existence. However, that being said we can still see the teaching of History as a means of fostering an empathetic attitude on a more general level; using relics, texts and witness accounts pupils can attempt to gain an inside picture of the historical circumstances of other groups than their own.

Stimulating pupils to 'get inside' a minority culture and imagine what it is like to see the world through its eyes is an important task for schools. A new report from the World Commission on Culture and Development, called 'Our Creative Diversity', has the following to say:

>The more unfamiliar the environment and way of life, the more instructive it can be in revealing the very essence of a culture: the culture of the Inuit may thus hold a special fascination, say, for European children because of the extreme conditions Inuits have to face. Care must of course be taken to avoid the mere romanticization of otherness: learning does not necessarily lead to tolerance. What counts is the critical discovery of the functional nature of different cultural patterns in the study of human societies.\(^{23}\)

This passage also emphasises the moral reasons for empathetic, multicultural teaching: by learning to see other cultures from the inside pupils can learn about them in a manner which promotes attitudes such as curiosity and tolerance. In other words, empathy can help pupils in both their academic and their ethical development.

**The Virtuous Circle**

Multi-faceted, 'empathetic' descriptions can also provide the basis for comparative studies. Adopting a comparative perspective can open the way to greater depth in the descriptions of a given case, since new aspects present themselves as a result of comparisons with another case. Relating and comparing the majority culture to other cultures may in other words lead to pupils from the majority culture becoming aware of neglected aspects of both their own culture and the unfamiliar minority cultures they are studying.
The Swedish national curriculum states that 'Consciousness of one’s own and involvement in the shared cultural heritage provide a basis for a secure sense of identity, which it is important that pupils develop'. This kind of consciousness, of understanding, can arise when the majority relates the features of its own culture to those of the different minority cultures. It is possible, as the American philosopher Martha Nussbaum has put it, to gain greater self-awareness by seeing oneself through the 'lenses' of other groups. Group members are enabled to learn what is local and specific in their own culture's customs, and what is of more universally human expression.24

To summarise, we can say that the concept of multicultural teaching in subjects with a historical content does not present any problems with regard to the national curriculum's objectives of providing an objective and all-round education.

This perspective is also given expression in the report of the Schools Commission, entitled 'Clash or Meeting' ('Krock eller möte') which was mentioned before, although the report uses the expression 'intercultural education' instead of 'multicultural education'. The report says:

The strength of intercultural education is the fact that it has access to several different angles on a problem or phenomenon which young people encounter and wish to understand. Intercultural education gives pupils a more multifaceted view of reality.25

In the same way that the visitors to a park learn to understand the park's history and the role played in that history by the different constituent groups, so pupils who are taught in the spirit of multicultural education learn more about their society by finding out about other cultures as well as their own. Entering into and incorporating several different perspectives in addition to that of the majority culture is absolutely necessary if we wish to avoid a form of teaching and education which is limited and superficial. This approach requires that we do not view education as a zero-sum
game, where space accorded to the specific perspective of a minority culture automatically entails neglect of the majority culture. Showing increased interest for a minority culture can instead result in a deeper understanding of the majority culture, which in turn may lead to a reinforcement of the majority’s identity and self-esteem – and this is a development which may be of subsequent benefit to the minority. In other words, when this stage has been achieved the virtuous circle has been set in motion.26

Identity-Enhancing Education

In the USA several groups have felt themselves to be discriminated against, both socially and culturally, by members of the majority white population. One of the prime objectives of multicultural education has therefore been to highlight the groups who have been discriminated against, so that for example History and Literature are taught in such a way that they reflect, better than was previously the case, the respective historical experiences of the different groups in question. As we have seen above, there ought not to be any reason for this to be seen as a controversial undertaking: multicultural education, where the teaching takes in more than solely the perspective of the majority culture, is absolutely necessary from an academic viewpoint, if objectivity and breadth and depth of knowledge are guiding principles in education. It is also important from a pedagogical point of view that teaching relate to pupils’ own experiences and frames of reference. And it is also important for ethical reasons to give classroom space to these experiences and frames of reference, if it is an objective to enable pupils to feel truly involved in what is taught at school. The multicultural approach to teaching is especially important in contexts where different groups feel they have been subjected to discrimination in the most central areas of society; multicultural teaching can help the members of such groups improve their self-confidence, which in turn can lead to improved academic performance at school.27 Multicultural education can also facilitate communication between the groups in
society, communication which can produce results in the form of greater mutual understanding and sense of community.

It is however more controversial if multicultural education is primarily aimed at strengthening a particular ethnic group’s self-esteem, since there is a risk that the demands for objectivity and an increase in the breadth and depth of pupils’ knowledge will slip out of focus. Comparing one particular culture with another can, when undertaken from such an angle, have as its main intention to denigrate the other culture and present one’s own in a biasedly favourable light. History is given what amounts to a ‘therapeutic’ role, namely to bolster pupils’ self-confidence.28

A much-debated example of this cultural approach is provided by the American historian Martin Bernal, in his book ‘Black Athena’, which was published in the late 1980s.29 Several historians have reacted by saying that Bernal has set aside the ideal of objectivity in his eagerness to promote greater self-respect in the black population. Bernal claims in his book that there is strong evidence to support the theory that ancient Greek civilisation stemmed from Egyptian and African roots. The eurocentric nature of education in the USA, maintain Bernal’s supporters, therefore embodies a distortion of reality since it omits to provide pupils with knowledge of the true origins of antique culture.30 Bernal’s ideas have been used in different ways in the radical education philosophy often termed ‘Afrocentrism’. This philosophy insists that only black Americans can understand the situation of blacks in the USA, and that they are thus best suited to teaching subjects such as Afro-American History. Afrocentrism also aims to bring about a complete restructuring of education, by focusing strongly on the actual experiences of the particular group being taught. As many philosophers have remarked, Afrocentrism is merely Eurocentrism ‘turned upside down’. Instead of attempting a radical review of what can be done to generate self-respect in the pupils concerned, Afrocentrism is merely a faithful copy of the Eurocentric attitude, the only difference being that Africa is given the role of the most important continent.31 Both Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism are the antithe-
sis of reasonable multicultural education – instead of accommodating all the cultures belonging to a society, the predominant focus is directed onto one group’s own perspective.32

The view of culture embodied in Afro- and Eurocentrism can also be questioned on the grounds that it does not see cultural achievements as the property of all mankind; instead, cultural expressions are seen as things that are 'owned', and which nourish the self-confidence of the group that created them. A project which represents a diametrically opposed approach is UNESCO’s programme for the protection of cultural monuments. Under UNESCO’s direction over 400 sites all over the world have been identified as having universal historical value, such as the old town of Jerusalem and the Taj Mahal in India.33 UNESCO is aiming to promote a sense of cosmopolitan, global identification, to encourage people to feel fascination, joy and pride with regard to buildings and milieux in cultural spheres other than their own. As the Norwegian social anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen puts it, it is an immensely ambitious project which aims to give the people of the world a common history, albeit the choice of sites has in some cases been questionable.34

A further consideration is that cultural achievements are often attained when members of a group 'step beyond' their particular cultural community and function as individuals able to move across cultural boundaries. Cultural progress is thus often easier to locate at the junction between different cultures than within rigidly delimited cultural territories. One of the most famous Afro-American writers, Ralph Ellison, whose novel 'Invisible Man' is seen as one of the classics of post-war American literature, said that his inspiration came not only from black American writers, but also from white authors ranging from Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud to T.S. Eliot and Ernest Hemingway.35

One of the attitudes nurtured within Afrocentrism has been that 'white European culture' is an oppressive culture from which the black population needs to liberate itself (in other words, instead of the scenario described earlier, where Afrocentrism was about claim-
ing Africa to be the true creator of cultural achievements previously described as being European, what is now at issue is gaining freedom from certain elements of European culture). However, those who make this kind of claim often forget that elements of European political and intellectual history have now and then been used by black freedom fighters in their struggle against colonial rule. The freedom fighter Toussaint L'Ouverture, for example, who fought for the freedom of the black slaves in Haiti, gained political inspiration from writers like Rousseau and Mirabeau.

When discussing Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism it is worthwhile bearing in mind that there has been a long and lively debate among historians concerning the various aims of History as a school subject. The relatively new debate on multiculturalism can gain by referring to certain concepts which historians and philosophers have used when describing the actual and ideal objectives of the teaching of History. Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of 'monumental history' can be an aid in describing the ways in which Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism have presented history. In Nietzsche's terminology, a 'monumental history' is an account of history which sets out to turn the spotlight on imposing figures, heroic personalities in a nation's history who can inspire following generations to strive for new achievements. Nietzsche also defined a category of historiography called critical history, which is an approach to history which works to point up injustices and untruths. If we adopt Nietzsche's terminology, we can say that whenever a monumental approach to historiography is applied, it should be counter-balanced by an input of critical history. In addition to the monumental and the critical approaches to history Nietzsche also defined what he called an 'antiquarian' history, which on occasions can take the shape of a naive, subserviently romanticising view of the past. According to the Swedish historian Bengt Ankarloo we can not only apply Nietzsche's concept of monumental history to pioneers and great leaders, such as Booker T. Washington, but also, for example, to ethnic groups – i.e. an approach wherein the ethnic collectivity is monumentalised instead of prominent personalities. We can
point out here that Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism apply a monumental approach to the writing of history, without the necessary corrective of a critical history.

**Self-Esteem**

We might find it fruitful to look a little closer at the concept of self-esteem. It is a characteristic of both the Eurocentric and the Afrocentric perspectives that pupils' self-esteem is nurtured as a result of localising them within a defined cultural community. Exactly how clearly defined this community is is open to question in the name of the ideals of objectivity and all-round knowledge: the labels European and African identity span over a broad spectrum of cultural identities, which often differ considerably from each other in a number of respects. Hand in hand with the 'hierarchical' standpoint of Euro- and Afrocentrism there is a homogenising tendency which omits to illuminate the cultural differences which have always existed between different groups of people on the African and European continents.

There are especial risks associated with the views of culture expressed by the advocates of Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism. A pupil's self-esteem may become fragile and hollow if he or she clings too tightly to the feats of various illustrious forebears from the ethnic group in question; pupils start to see themselves as charged with acting as a kind of guardians of the history of their group. They feel they must guard and protect their ethnic culture's history at all costs, and any attack against the group's 'official' version of its own history is thus interpreted as an attack against their individual, personal identity and self-respect. (See also 'Value Conflicts in the Multicultural Park' above.)

A sense of security and self-esteem can however rest on several different pillars, depending on the different contexts in which the pupil moves. A pupil may indeed feel secure and self-confident as a result of belonging to a particular group, the self-confidence stemming from knowing the customs and history specific to his/her culture; however, he/she may, at the same time, further strengthen
their self-esteem and self-confidence by identifying with a more widely inclusive community – the society or 'park’ – which embraces a number of groups that interact with each other. This source of self-esteem is undermined if the pupil and his/her ethnic group are not included in the society's central activities; the pupil is then forced to have his/her ethnic group as sole channel for involvement and self-respect. The group becomes a place of refuge and protection from the uncomprehending outside world.

It is important to underline here that in the final analysis it is the pupil’s own involvement and commitment which provides the foundation for his/her self-esteem. Different group contexts can provide arenas for the pupil’s own activities, and the greater the number of arenas or group communities in which pupils participate, the less fragile is their self-confidence. In the multicultural park a chess player, for example, may have a sense of security and self-confidence which grows from knowing that he/she can make a positive contribution, not only within the framework of chess-playing but also in his/her role as a park-goer in a broader sense; perhaps he/she will volunteer to help with gardening or other tasks of caring for the park environment.

That being said, it is inevitable that certain group communities will have a more important position than others. This is partly for practical reasons – a strong identification presupposes that the individual will concentrate their commitment on that particular group’s activities; and partly for reasons of cultural autonomy – the individual quite simply experiences certain group communities as being more in tune with his/her own values.

From a liberal point of view it is possible to raise objections to the practice of primarily describing people in terms of their ethnic, 'racial' or religious identity when analysing political contexts – people have many group identities, with ethnic and religious groups being just some among the many, even if they do have a central place. However, what this kind of objection often overlooks is that people’s ethnic and 'racial' identities frequently are of especial political significance, since members of certain ethnic groups have
been subjected to discrimination throughout history. It is therefore not surprising that multicultural education in the USA has focused on ethnic or 'racial' group identities.\textsuperscript{41} Ideally, however, one could say that it would be better for people to relate to a number of different group identities when describing themselves — although in an imperfect world where people may be exposed to discrimination as a result of belonging to a particular group, this identity plays a predominant part in the way the members of that group characterise themselves.

**Independent Schools as a Critical Reaction**

If we return to the multicultural park we can imagine a scenario where a certain group of croquet players are pushed aside in different ways by the other groups who use the park. The croquet players have been forced to practice their activity in one of the worst areas of the park, an out-of-the-way patch that is somewhat the worse for wear. In the 'common park education' they are only given a brief mention with negative undertones, and they do not have much chance to meet the other groups in inter-group contexts. In time, the croquet players will organise their own education programme, and withdraw from the common park education since they feel marginalised there.

In the croquet-players' school newcomers learn the specific rules of the game of croquet, but they also learn something about the rest of the park via the experience of the older croquet players. In the independent croquet school the players do not need to feel afraid or insecure. In their small-scale, delimited school environment they can interact with each other in a relaxed fashion, and are not exposed to taunts from the pupils of the other park-going groups. However, the croquet players will not receive much depth of knowledge about the other activities in the park, and neither are they given any stimulus to get involved in activities other than their own. On the few occasions when the croquet pupils venture beyond their own little patch they may well feel confused and even afraid. The outside world is unfamiliar and threatening to them. Sometimes they
will react to these feelings with suspiciousness or aggression, and the other groups will either keep away from them or answer in the same coin.

This image illustrates some of the problems and opportunities associated with different independent schools in the multicultural society. This kind of school can in many cases be seen as a critical reaction to the state school system. It is not that the minorities have anything in principle against the idea of a common school for all, it is just that, at present, the state school system is seen as being beset with major problems.

The pupils who decide to attend a minority school, whether its profile is based on language, ethnic or religious identity, often do so because they feel that their cultural needs are not met within the framework of the state school system. Their group’s language, religion and culture are perhaps only afforded very small space in a ’normal’ school. In the more personal environment of the independent school pupil’s social needs are also better taken care of, since they do not have to be confronted with intolerant ’majority’ pupils. The small-scale nature of the school may contribute to helping pupils feel more secure than in a larger-scale state school. In a recent (1997) study of independent schools carried out by the National Agency for Education, emphasis is given to the fact that pupils and parents describe the environment at their independent school as being secure and reassuring.42

However, the independent school milieu can in certain cases be associated with certain risks. If an independent school has as its very foundation the fact that the state school system has not paid sufficient attention to the minority in question, then the critical reaction will be a central element of the independent school’s identity – it is as if all the school does is a critical response to the whole of the majority society, and this kind of identification may come to imbue the pupils’ image of themselves in their relations with the pupils of other schools. If the independent school is culturally homogeneous with regard to both pupils and teachers, then there will be reduced interfacing with the rest of society, which is something
that may have a negative effect on overall social identity.

Those subjects which are especially well suited to being taught within the framework of universal multicultural education, such as History and Civics, also risk being presented in a way that is too strongly influenced by the experiences of the particular minority group in question – independent schools are often established to correspond to a particular group perspective. It is unavoidable that the spirit or mental climate which this perspective gives rise to will colour the pupils' everyday school life, so it is a critical question as to whether this spirit or atmosphere is confrontational and separatist, or whether it contains elements which put the emphasis on mutual understanding and the creation of community with other groups. Conveying the ethical elements of civic education is to a large extent about getting across certain values, which can be achieved by means of project work, and invoking varying frames of mind – in other words, the ethical aura of a school can be gauged on the basis of the atmosphere or culture which imbues the school's practical work.\textsuperscript{43}

An independent school can also be established by a group which systematically seeks to distance itself from the rest of society, perhaps because of certain features of the majority culture which run completely counter to the group's religion or ideology. Independent schools established by such groups can also be said to represent a critical reaction vis-à-vis the society around them: it may be that the group in question considers that the state schools are too lax with regard to discipline and authority, or that they make it impossible to convey certain religious values.

One frequently cited example is that of the Christian group known as the Amish church in the USA, who have attempted to set up a school education curriculum of their own which is free of the normal features of conventional high-school education. It is a particular characteristic of the Amish people that they do not make any direct efforts to influence the rest of the society around them. Moreover, they are anxious to avoid becoming a burden to society – they have always endeavoured to be a self-sufficient popula-
tion with a life-style based on a traditional agricultural economy.

Negotiations between the Amish people and the American state resulted in a compromise in the judicial decision known as Wisconsin v. Yoder 1972, under the terms of which it was agreed that Amish children could be exempted from American high-school education at the age of 14. The Supreme Court said that although compulsory education up to the age of 16 is very much in the interest of society, if the children of the Amish people were forced to follow the compulsory high-school curriculum there would be a risk that the specific Amish culture might be lost. The alternative would be that they would be forced to move to more tolerant areas, and this would represent a curtailment of their freedom of religion and right to choose their own life-style.

The two forms of independent schools where the independent school is seen as a critical reaction to 'mainstream' society are problematical from the perspective on multicultural education of which this book is an expression. Independent schools of this kind often encourage cultural and social segregation in society. The pupils find it difficult to identify with activities of an inter-group nature in the multicultural society, and they may also find it hard to understand the value of the cultural diversity entailed by a multicultural society. On the other hand, we can say that the first-mentioned form of independent school, where the school's raison d'être is a reaction to social and cultural imbalances, is an important warning sign, pointing out that society and the state have a special responsibility to change the common school education provided so that it accommodates the cultural needs of different minorities. Independent schools can also function as a reminder that the state comprehensive school needs to improve at creating environments which are more personal in character, in which pupils feel secure and well cared for.

It is particularly important to highlight the importance of a common school education for all in a multicultural society when other multicultural meeting-places are conspicuous by their absence. If immigrants and members of different minority groups generally
encounter difficulties in finding employment or gaining access to social life, ethnically or religiously segregated schools may further heighten the sense of outsidership. That being said, however, we should be aware that segregational factors may be at work in state comprehensive schools. If society is characterised by a marked degree of housing segregation between different groups, for example, then the state schools, their population reflecting that of their locality, will inevitably likewise be characterised by pronounced segregation.46

Several different kinds of measure have been proposed in the aim of combating school segregation. One very controversial suggestion from the USA is a 'bussing policy', where pupils from problem areas with high unemployment and criminality levels are placed in schools in other areas which do not have such a pronounced problem profile. This bussing policy is aimed at creating schools which are more diverse or multicultural in nature, with children from problem areas being given the chance to attend school in an environment where pupils have a higher level of motivation for study. This policy has been the target of severe criticism, on the grounds that it is a clear example of social engineering which takes no account of reality. Parents in better-off areas are primarily interested in what is best for their children, and they scarcely wish to see their children attending schools where a considerable number of the pupils may have social problems.47 This consideration will be uppermost in parents' minds, even though many of them are undoubtedly in favour of the idea of a multicultural society free from discrimination. It is also possible that they are positive to the idea of multicultural schools which provide high-quality education and have any social problems well under control.

A 'bussing' policy can be seen as a form of quota policy, where the objective is that schools in the more problem-free areas should take in a certain number of pupils from problem areas – areas which in many cases have a high proportion of immigrant residents. One reasonable criticism which can be directed against such a policy – and against a quota approach in general – is that these are emer-
gency measures whose value is above all of a symbolic nature. What is really needed, however, are long-term strategies which get to the root of the problem and represent a concerted effort to combat segregation between different groups, especially in respect of housing and the employment market. Another measure is to work to create attractive multicultural schools which can attract pupils from different groups of the population – i.e. 'model' multicultural schools offering various kinds of specialist education programmes.

**Independent Schools as a Necessary Supplement**

Independent schools do not necessarily have to be seen as a critical reaction to some or other imbalance in the state education sector. They can also be viewed as a necessary supplement in areas for which conventional schools, although in other respects fully satisfactory, are not equipped. In the multicultural park we suggested that the older practitioners of the different activities would be the best suited for teaching boules, croquet or chess to newcomers to the park; the common park education dispensed to all park-goers often only aims to give a presentation of the different activities and to describe their history and their current role in the park. In an analogous way the Religious Education taught in state schools is aimed at presenting and discussing the content and forms of expression of the different religions of the world, their history and their current status. We can then conceive of independent schools, or specialist classes within the framework of conventional state schools, where minorities' native language is taught them by native speakers, and where a 'deeper' and more empathetic education in their religion is provided by people who are thoroughly acquainted with that religion and who have the initiated commitment needed to give a full and vivid account of its content.48

The education provided at a multicultural comprehensive school can be roughly viewed as falling into two categories of subject: firstly, those subjects for which cultural diversity can represent an input of new knowledge (and also of new ethical viewpoints), for example History if we want the subject to be taught in as broad a
way as possible; and secondly those subjects which are more culturally neutral, such as Mathematics and Physics, and which can serve as 'neutral' meeting ground for pupils in the multicultural society. This kind of subject does not have a multicultural profile in the same way as History; and the natural sciences do not have the culture-specific character that is associated with languages and religious education. These subjects are, then, well suited to providing arenas for constructive meetings between pupils from different groups in the multicultural society.

The critical reactions to the conventional state school may, as has been mentioned, take on a resigned and segregational expression, with the independent schools established not doing anything to strive for new forms of group-transcending collaboration; the majority culture’s insensitivity to the needs of the group in question is seen as a good reason for not working towards a common school to provide education to all. However, independent schools can also play an active part and attempt to persuade the state school system to change its attitudes and make itself more open to the needs of society’s minorities. One particular reason for continuing to have independent schools as an alternative form of school education is that they can function as a means of pressurising state comprehensive schools. If we use the political scientist Albert Hirschman’s terms ‘voice’ and ‘exit’, we can say that there exists no real possibility for ‘voice’ if the door is closed49 – in other words, ‘voice’ presupposes ‘exit’. Independent schools should continue to be allowed to exist as an alternative and as a means of exerting pressure for those groups which are not satisfied with the work of the state schools.

*Education as Social Adhesive*

Multicultural education provided to all pupils in society can have as one of its primary tasks to promote interaction and tolerance between different groups in the multicultural society. The values which are generally seen as valid values for everyone in society – tolerance, respect for different opinions, respect for other people’s
dignity and integrity – are part of what we can call the value community of Swedish society, and transmitting these common values is a central aspect of civic education. One question which civic education should address, and which indeed should be present in all teaching, is, in what ways have these principles been interpreted throughout history, and what practical conclusions have people drawn from them? If we adopt a historical perspective, we can see that up until not very long ago, basic political rights were restricted to men of a certain economic standing.

The stance taken by this book is that advocating multicultural education is in no way incompatible with the set of values enunciated in the Swedish national curriculum for comprehensive school education; this value community can very well provide the foundation for a multicultural perspective in school. On the basis of a fundamental principle such as ‘respect for human dignity’ it can be argued that different people’s differing linguistic and religious identities should be given a place in education. Making the history of different minority groups visible can also have an integrative function, since the groups in question thereby do not have to feel ‘left out’. Teaching which promotes pupils’ identity thus in no way contradicts the objective of an education which creates a sense of community.

The importance of cultural heritage is given prominence in the Swedish national curriculum. This document (known as Lpo 94) says that in a deeper sense education, bringing children up, is about passing on a cultural heritage to the younger generations, and this objective can refer just as well to the cultural heritage of minority groups as to that of the majority culture. At the same time it is emphasised in Lpo 94 that schools are to nurture pupils’ ability to think critically. How can this objective be combined with the previously-mentioned objective of passing on a cultural heritage? The answer is that transmitting cultural heritage means making pupils well acquainted with their cultural traditions, but does not mean that they should be persuaded to accept all the elements of their cultural background passively and without critical reflection. Pu-
Pupil should be enabled to gain a clear picture of their cultural origins, and a clear picture entails that their cultural background is subjected to a critical, thorough-going examination, by means among other things of comparing it to other cultures. The clear-sighted, realistic and empathetic study of history can represent a common cement which can unite pupils from different cultural groups. A sense of community can be created in different ways, and one important way towards this goal is to encourage pupils to examine history together in a critical and unprejudiced manner.\textsuperscript{50}

The ideal of objectivity and all-round depth in the knowledge provided at school speaks in favour of multicultural education, where the experiences and cultural perspectives of different groups are afforded space in subjects such as History and Civics (i.e. the subjects we can call multicultural ‘profile subjects’). The triad of all-roundness, empathy and comparison are, as we have seen, three of the cornerstones of multicultural education; minority cultures are to be brought to all pupils’ attention in a fashion that entails ‘sensitive comparison’ with the majority culture.

The national curriculum also underlines how important it is to encourage pupils to participate and to develop a sense of social responsibility – which again leads to the question as to what can best serve as a cement to bind together all the constituent groups in a multicultural society. What can we do, in a multicultural teaching situation, to promote a broader-based sense of social community? What, in concrete terms, is it that pupils should participate in, get involved in together? Many researchers in the sphere of ethnicity and culture highlight how important it is for social identity for there to be shared speeches, myths, symbols and festivals; if the citizens of a country do not have certain festivals which they all celebrate together, or if they do not have common ‘myths’ to relate, then that society’s social identity may be undermined. The following chapter looks at the question of which cross-cultural, group-transcending symbols can be seen as the most appropriate in a multicultural society.
National Symbols in a Multicultural Society

We have hitherto concentrated on the importance of common values and the role of education in fostering social identity in a multicultural society. The aim of multicultural education is to foster the ethical base and intellectual proficiency which can be considered necessary for all members of a society. This chapter will be looking at a further central basis for identification – national symbols. The concept of national symbols is used here in a relatively wide sense – such a symbol can be anything from political speeches or public holidays to statues and monuments. A national symbol is something which constitutes a constantly recurring reference point in citizens’ lives, and can be said to ‘represent’ their social identity to the rest of the world.

The main question we will be looking at in this chapter is what requirements we can make of a reasonable and successful national symbol in a multicultural society. In conclusion, there is a discussion of the possible solutions available to Sweden with regard to the creation of this kind of all-inclusive, group-transcending symbol.

**Appropriate National Symbols**

What are the characteristics of a successful national symbol in a multicultural society? The American historian John Higham has attempted to map out what factors make a national symbol successful. His primary point of departure is American society – the spe-
cific question he asks is, what characterises a reasonable national symbol in a multicultural society like the USA.¹

Firstly, the symbol must be such that it is instantly recognisable to the citizens of society – it has to be familiar or unequivocal, such as for example the American or Swedish flag. It may naturally take time for a symbol to become well-known and familiar, but with time it will become apparent which symbols have been able to establish themselves in the awareness of the general public. Secondly, the symbol must be able to arouse a sense of historical continuity. A public holiday or festival does not have to refer back to a distant point in time, but it should in some way place the present in a historical context. It is an oft-cited fact that different symbols or myths give a group of people a position in a historical context, and this helps give their lives a feeling of structure and belonging. The symbols or festival occasions awaken a story or episode of history with which the individuals in the society can identify. Religious groups are at a special advantage since religions generally have a core set of ‘stories’ or narratives which place the followers of the particular religion in a clearly delineated historical context. For Jewish people, for example, the Old Testament plays a decisive role in their collective identity.²

A third characteristic is that the symbols need to have a moral core which most groups in the society can identify with. One of the main functions of public holidays and national monuments is that on certain occasions the citizens can be gathered around them, and that the symbols are able to express common values which the citizens associate with the society or situation they live in.

A further characteristic, which Higham considers in a more implicit way, is that the symbol should be associated with experiences which are of a concrete, ‘local’ nature: the symbol has to express the life-experience of the members of the group in question. It is not enough for a symbol to refer to abstract ideals such as justice or freedom – it must also be characterised by a strong element of tangibility. We can add to Higham’s list, and say that symbols need to have aesthetic qualities which make them attractive to the ma-
ority of the population. This requirement is closely related to Higham’s analysis that a symbol must have the power to establish itself in the awareness of the general public.

The five characteristics mentioned above relate to national symbols in general, be they for monocultural or multicultural societies. A sixth characteristic which is specific to the multicultural society is that the symbol needs to be sufficiently flexible to allow of varying interpretation. No one group should have a monopoly on the exact meaning and implication of the symbol; the symbol should be able to extend 'outwards' to most of the constituent groups of society. This flexibility also makes it possible for the symbol to be given new interpretations as time passes. In other words, the symbol should have dynamic strength. The political scientist and anthropologist James C. Scott gives as an example of a symbol with a flexible and dynamic character 'The Vietnam Memorial' in Washington DC. According to Scott, 'a great part of the memorial's symbolic power is its capacity to honor the dead with an openness that allows visitors to impress upon it their own meanings, their own histories, their own memories. The memorial virtually requires participation in order to complete its meaning.'... 'The scene of many people together at the wall, touching the names of particular loved ones who fell in some war, has moved observers regardless of their position on the war itself.'

As Higham says, it is no easy task to find symbols or myths which can satisfy several of these requirements at once. This is especially the case in a multicultural society, where the citizens may have widely differing perceptions of the aesthetic qualities of different symbols. The citizens may also hold different views as to what the most important social ideals are, which heightens the problem of finding a symbol which expresses a set of values common to all groups in society. It should be possible to find symbols which reflect life experiences of a local nature while at the same time expressing moral content of a more universal character.
National Symbols with a Multiplicity of Interpretations

The need for cross-cultural symbols or institutions which allow of flexible interpretation and are therefore inclusive in character is especially acute in a multicultural society – the different groups view society in the light of differing cultural perspectives or 'filters'. Like the visitors to a park, the citizens of a society have varying notions of how society (the park) should be used. If the objective is to promote a sense of social community, then society cannot only use symbols which represent the specific ideals of a particular group; if social identity is to be strengthened society must have national symbols which most groups in society can in one way or another come to see as their own. In other words, the symbols need to be flexible and have cross-cultural currency.

The USA provides an interesting example of a multicultural society, since the country has in different ways succeeded in creating symbols, festival days and political speeches which address all groups. The Gettysburg Address held by president Abraham Lincoln on 19 November 1863 is an important speech in the history of the USA. Four months after the battle of Gettysburg Lincoln gave a speech in memory of those who had fallen during the American civil war, in which he said that the war had been fought for the principles of liberty and democracy. The most famous passage in the speech is where Lincoln pledges that the government of the country is to be of the people, by the people, for the people. There are further examples of political speeches throughout the history of the USA which have had an important function in addressing and bringing together the different groups in society. Franklin Roosevelt’s inaugural speech on assuming the presidency in 1933 is one such example; Roosevelt preached in favour of the ideal of active citizenship, saying the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. President John F. Kennedy’s inaugural speech, in which he said that the citizens of America should not ask what their country can do for them, but should rather ask what they can do for their country, also expresses an idealistic and activistic view of citizenship in the USA. Another political speech which has become at least as
famous as the afore-mentioned is Martin Luther King’s 'I have a dream' speech, which he held on 28 August 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. Using biblical wording King put across his vision of a USA where all people, irrespective of the colour of their skin, would have the same rights and duties.⁴

When we look at the group-transcending festivals and public holidays in a multicultural society such as the USA, we can roughly speaking distinguish between two kinds of festival. Firstly, public holidays with a common theme, which different groups celebrate separately – the starting point for the groups’ differing celebrations is roughly the same, but the festival is given a group-specific expression. A good example of this kind of cross-cultural festival is the Christmas celebrations of the black American population, Kwanzaa. The Afro-American festival, which runs from 28 December to 1 January, was established in 1966 in order to provide an alternative to what was seen as the over-commercialised Christmas of the majority population. During the Afro-American festive season black families meet and exchange gifts, and also emphasise their African origins and the feeling of community between all black families in the new country.⁵

Another alternative to the Christian Christmas is provided by the Jewish equivalent, Hannukah, which originally was a small-scale Jewish festival in December. Hanukkah was originally an eight-day-long festival which commemorated the re-dedication of the temple in Jerusalem in 164 BC; among orthodox Jews there are those who criticise the use of Hanukkah as a Jewish Christmas, saying that the current form taken by the celebrations has been forced onto the Jewish population for commercial purposes, and by Jewish children’s wish not to be left out of something which is a very significant part of the lives of their non-Jewish peers.⁶

The second kind of cross-cultural festivals are constituted by events in which most groups in society participate in some shape or form, at the same time as the celebrations leave space for group-specific interpretations. In contrast to the kind of festivals described above, it can be conceived that as a result of the joint partici-
pation, this second kind of public holiday contributes to creating a greater sense of social community between the different groups in society (and the example of Christmas given above is also a festival of the majority culture, which minority groups have adapted to – to a large extent because of the strong position of Christmas in American society).

The American public holiday of Thanksgiving, held on the fourth Thursday in November, is an illustrative example of a group-transcending festival which also to a certain extent accommodates a flexibility of interpretation. Thanksgiving Day, which dates back to 1621, has its origins in a Christian impulse: the Christian pilgrims from Plymouth held a harvest festival to give thanks for their first harvest in their new country. One of the central themes of Thanksgiving Day is to commemorate the fact that the Indians helped the pilgrims to survive, by showing them where they could fish and hunt, and where they could farm. The pilgrims were at first suspicious of the Indians, but this suspicion vanished after the Indians had showed how willing they were to help. To thank the Indians for their assistance, the pilgrims invited them to a thanksgiving festival. The content of this festival has been 'broadened' since then, and it is now perhaps the most cross-cultural public holiday in the USA apart from the 4th of July. People can identify with Thanksgiving Day from differing religious and cultural perspectives. It is also an open festival in a literal sense, since different cultural groups make it the occasion of a celebratory meal in line with their own eating traditions (although turkey with cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie are compulsory items on the menu).

The Statue of Liberty which was erected in 1886 at the entrance to New York harbour, near Ellis Island, can also be seen as a national symbol which addresses all groups in society. For countless immigrants the statue has embodied an ideal of freedom and the dream of a better future in the new world. For many Americans, the statue has functioned as a symbol of how freedom can live side by side with order and stability.

Certain constitutional principles can also be seen as national
symbols. The philosopher K. Anthony Appiah gives as an example of an inclusive and partially group-transcending principle the position that the state should be separate from the church. American Protestants can support this principle as one of their own standpoints on the grounds that religion is a private concern between the individual person and God, while representatives of other religions can embrace the principle on the grounds that they do not wish the state to be governed by a given religious majority. Atheists are committed to the principle because they simply want to be left alone.  

In this regard, we can mention a number of other illustrative examples of group-transcending myths or festivals, from countries other than the USA. In New Zealand there is a public holiday called Waitangi Day, which is celebrated on 6 February in commemoration of the Waitangi Treaty of 1840, signed between the Maori people and the British colonial population. The treaty granted the Maoris certain land rights, and the same fundamental rights and duties as the British population. The British crown, on the other hand, was recognised as having the right to govern, including the right to make laws. This treaty has played a prominent role in the Maori people's struggles for their rights, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Waitangi Treaty has given the Maori people an advantage which sets them apart from many other native populations and historical minorities around the globe: the Maoris have been able to cite a historical treaty, which has given them a basis that the colonial population has not been able to ignore (although it was not until the 1970s and 80s that the European majority population really began to take the treaty text seriously; in 1975 a Waitangi tribunal was established with the aim of returning land to the Maori people).

Waitangi Day has a deep symbolic importance for the Maoris, and has often been the occasion of demonstrations where different groups of Maoris have expressed their political demands. One might speculate that Waitangi Day could become a central public holiday for the whole of New Zealand, with a cross-cultural, group-
transcending content – it is laid down in the Waitangi Treaty that New Zealand has two sovereign peoples which recognise each other as having certain fundamental rights.\textsuperscript{10}

The Norwegian social anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen, who has studied the cultural and political conditions prevailing on the multiethnic island of Mauritius, has looked at the question as to how well the heterogeneous population of the island has succeeded in the task of creating group-transcending stories. Mauritius, which gained independence in 1968, is a multiethnic island where the majority of the population is of African and Indian origin. In their national stories the people of Mauritius have highlighted events such as the abolition of slavery and the arrival of the first Indian plantation workers, in the aim of building a history which has a cohesive effect. At the same time, Hylland Eriksen maintains that an event from the more recent past – the riots surrounding the transition to independence in 1968 – has provided the foundation for the most important common ‘myth’ in Mauritius. In the course of the street fighting between the different ethnic groups a dozen or so people lost their lives. This sequence of events is now used as a warning example by those politicians and citizens who advocate compromise and harmony as the guiding principles in the island’s political life. According to Hylland Eriksen the story of these race riots has become group-transcending, with each ethnic group having its own version to tell. Hylland Eriksen maintains that:

'People are different and have different experiences, but by means of such group-transcending, inclusive myths everyone can feel a sense of ritual community with each other [.] And all the different versions of this myth of the race riots end with the moral lesson that the road of compromise is the only practicable road for the heterogeneous Mauritian people. This example can perhaps be said to show that a mythical community does not need to point back to events in the distant past – it is enough that the events recounted are open to a multiplicity of interpretations, that they take place in a time which is different to the present on a qualitative level, and that the myth is the bearer of a general and abstract message.’\textsuperscript{11}
Hylland Eriksen's comments give rise to the following reflections: what must be borne in mind is that the polysemantism, or 'plasticity', of the national symbols, myths and festivals cannot be taken beyond a certain limit; if they are to function as a cement, a uniting factor, then it is necessary that the symbols have an ethical resonance shared by all groups in a society. In the case of Thanksgiving Day there is an obvious moral core in the form of a message of thankfulness and reconciliation – a message with which most groups in American society can identify.

A multicultural society thus needs to strike a balance, in that the national symbols common to all of society have to be unequivocal and constant to some extent on the one hand, while also accommodating variety of interpretation and changeability on the other hand. The 20th-century English philosopher Alfred North Whitehead has expressed this situation in an illustrative fashion: he writes that if a society is to retain its vitality it must prevent its symbols from becoming either too rigid or too diluted. All rules and symbols, he explains, should be called into question and subjected to revision in 'an enlightened spirit'. Those societies which do not succeed in combining reverence for their domestic symbols with a flexible interpretation of the symbols' content risk either losing all their strength or falling into anarchy.12

**Clear Symbols**

The need for clear, unequivocal national symbols or festivals is especially palpable in multicultural societies where the different minorities and cultural groups only have limited experience of each other. According to the English sociologist Tariq Modood, different minority groups need something clear and unequivocal with which they can identify, so that they are not left in uncertainty as to what their national identity consists of.13 Modood cites, in a critical light, the famous 'cricket example' put forward by the English Conservative politician Norman Tebbit: Tebbit maintained that an immigrant cannot be seen as English or British if he/she does not show national loyalty by, for example, supporting the national crick-
et team (it can be added that cricket was an especially bad example for Tebbit to take, since the sport has often been associated with the British upper classes in the former colonies of the British Empire).

Tebbit's kind of demand for national loyalty arises in precisely those situations where society has not succeeded in creating clear, group-transcending symbols. This may be the case because the country has been shaped by a majority population over a long period of time. The identification markers are 'diffused' within society, and are to a greater or lesser degree a part of citizens’ implicit knowledge – so as a result new groups in society experience orientation problems. In other words, in order to be able to demonstrate one's identification with and loyalty to the country, it is necessary to have lived there and interacted with the majority population over a long period of time. As a contrast to British society Modood mentions the USA, where citizens' fidelity to and reverence for the constitution and the American flag are seen as clear signs of national loyalty – the symbols are easily distinguishable, and people can demonstrate their loyalty and identification without having lived in the country for a lengthy period. However, one could perhaps say that in actual life the American identity has certain cultural markers in terms of social codes which take rather a long time to identify for a newcomer, although the official, national symbols are generally regarded as being clear and succinct.

To sum up, the creation of a social identity in a multicultural society can be said to rest on four corner-stones: firstly, a group-transcending ethical code, which among other things sets boundaries for cultural diversity; secondly, group-transcending projects which the members of the different groups in society can involve themselves in – for example, education; thirdly, national symbols which simultaneously are an expression of a group-transcending ethic, and allow a degree of freedom in the way the different cultures interpret them; and fourthly, a regional or geographical identity, in the sense that the citizens identify with the society’s physical environment. A multicultural society which lacks this kind of soci-
al identity can, in our terminology, be described as a fragmented society.

We can note that several writers in the 'multiculturalism debate' have tended to give more absolute answers to the question of what social identity in a multicultural society should consist of – for example, a common ideological identity. However, proposals of this kind run the risk of imposing on citizens an alleged social identity which does not take into consideration the actual ideological and cultural pluralism which exists in societies like Sweden. If we view social identity as being built on the four corner-stones mentioned above then we can instead allow a relatively large degree of ideological pluralism, without there being any need to view the social community as being threatened or weakened.

**Swedish Majority Society and Multiculturalism**

In Swedish society, which is still characterised by a relatively homogeneous majority culture, the majority group has special advantages with regard to the ability to influence social life in general. There are three principal factors to be taken into account here: firstly, democratic decision-making is frequently understood as adopting the majority's decision, with all that this entails for the specific demands of different minorities. Although we can conceive of there being special group rights in the political area – for example group representation in matters which especially concern a particular minority – it is nevertheless the case that majority democracy is still the most widespread interpretation given to the concept of democracy (at the same time, we should remember that a majority population may harbour within it different group identities, depending for example on region, class, gender, and that different minorities may well support each other in matters which are of joint concern).

The second factor which it is important to underline is that society's central institutions have a long history, throughout which the majority culture has in varying ways imbued the structures and working of the institutions. In varying ways a state institution ex-
presses a history in which the leading role has been played by the majority population. A further complication in Sweden's case is that our political culture has, over a long stretch of time, been characterised by centrally dictated uniform solutions (see also 'The Value Community: Opportunities and Limitations' above).

Thirdly, a majority often has special advantages as far as the conditions of material ownership are concerned, and this also has consequences for that group's cultural domination – the more ownership is concentrated within a certain group, the easier it is for that group to affect cultural life in general. By considering these three factors we can remind ourselves to be realistic in the implementation of a multicultural policy; even if many citizens say that they are in favour of increased multiculturalism, with various minorities being given space in social and public life, the Swedish majority will retain its over-riding cultural importance. This state of affairs can be illustrated with the help of the park metaphor: a large group has been using the park for a long period of time. Groups arriving at the park for the first time, and minorities already using the park, will face a situation where in various ways, the park bears the stamp of the presence of the majority group – for example the appearance of the flower beds, the way the park is looked after. The whole lay-out of the park may be especially well-suited to the activities most favoured by the majority.

One of the important challenges for multicultural policy is to create areas in social life where different groups can give expression to their cultural identities. For example, the definition of ownership can be adapted to suit the requirements and circumstances of a native population or territorial minority. One frequently adopted approach aimed at preserving a certain minority culture is to make it difficult for the majority to buy land in the area where the minority lives. In other words, the minority is granted special ownership rights. There is a local law in the Åland islands (the group of islands situated mid-way between Sweden and Finland, which belong to Finland but where the population speak Swedish) by which members of the Finnish-speaking majority in Finland do not
have the same legal right to buy land in the islands as the Ålanders themselves.¹⁵

**Group-Transcending Symbols in Sweden?**

There are various indicators that within Swedish society there is an increased awareness of the importance of public holidays and festivals in modern-day multicultural society. Immigrants who have been granted Swedish citizenship may now choose to attend a 'citizenship ceremony' which symbolically marks their integration into Swedish society. Sweden’s Nation Day, 6 June – a festival which has its origins in the ascent to the Swedish throne of Gustav Vasa in 1523, is a festival which has grown in political importance, although one can question how important it is to the public at large. The fact that from different quarters there is a desire to highlight concepts such as citizenship and national festivals in a multicultural situation can be seen as the expression of an endeavour to delineate more clearly what it is we should all have in common in a multicultural country such as Sweden. Against the background of the increasing internationalisation taking place in Sweden – as exemplified among other things by the country’s membership of the European Union – the general level of interest in the content and expressions of national identity has also increased, as witnessed by the long series of books and articles over recent years which have dealt with the topic of Swedish identity.¹⁶

The question that arises is, how can Swedish national identity be made more accessible to different minorities? What can provide the 'cement' which can hold us together irrespective of our original cultural background?

A minority group can strengthen the extent of its identification with a society if it can make the national symbols of the society its own. One way of achieving this is to create new symbols which take account of cultural diversity. Minorities can also attain a heightened sense of identity as a result of reinterpretation of the old, established symbols. The project in this respect is to make these symbols more 'inclusive', by emphasising a more universal moral
message, in the way that Thanksgiving Day does in the USA, for example. The USA has witnessed severe tension between different ethnic groups throughout history, yet it is still possible to locate a series of positive events and symbols which have been able to function as a social adhesive in America’s multicultural society.

What equivalent to Thanksgiving Day can we find in Sweden? It is a much more complicated task to locate group-transcending, cross-cultural memorial days or festivals in the Swedish context, for the simple reason that it is difficult to find examples of individual events or encounters between different cultural groups which can symbolise tolerance and mutual understanding. Group-transcending festivals often reflect some eye-catching story or occurrence where different groups have worked together in a constructive manner. The basis for the cross-cultural symbols is something which has been ‘lived’ rather than something which has been created consciously at some particular point in time. At the same time, we have reason to be thankful that ethnic polarisation and segregation in Sweden has not seen the same historic dimensions as it has in the USA, even though this is the main reason why we have not seen any conspicuous or unexpected events of mutual understanding and peace between ethnic groups, such events providing the foundation for group-transcending festivals and public holidays. One possible project in this regard could be to identify historical events which are capable of symbolising something which is important to several groups in society, even though the events do not in themselves consist of constructive meetings between separate ethnic groups throughout history. The events might instead have a group-transcending content in the form of a political and moral message with which most groups can identify – for example a particular group’s struggle for liberation or justice.

We can add here that Sweden has had an undramatic twentieth century compared with its Nordic neighbours. Sweden was not occupied in the Second World War, and was not involved in any direct military action. The Finns often point out that the common endeavour of defending Finland during World War Two was a
turning point: the Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking segments of the population were united in this struggle, and by joining forces in this way Finland’s national identity was put to the test and emerged strengthened and cohesive. National identity was dominated by what is termed liberation nationalism – different groups fought for the same cause, i.e. Finland’s sovereignty. The same thing applies to the experiences of the Danish and Norwegian populations during World War Two.

Similarly, it is difficult to find political speeches which can be used for multicultural purposes in Sweden. In contrast to the USA, Sweden has no tradition of charismatic speech-making where the speeches made by political leaders have a universal, group-transcending content (whereas in the USA, talking directly to the people has always been a common feature of presidents’ everyday work). The dominant tradition in Sweden has been that of consensus-oriented meetings, and this has influenced the style of political rhetoric. There are good grounds for saying that the more situation-specific speeches made by Swedish politicians have not had the same literary and rhetorical quality as several of the famous American speeches. One of the few exceptions is provided by a speech made in 1928 by then-prime minister Per Albin Hansson in which he laid out his vision of a welfare state where Sweden should be made into a home for all its people (Olof Palme proved himself to be a master of emotionally-charged public speaking, for example in his famous and controversial Vietnam speech held in the Swedish town of Gävle in 1965). The term Hansson coined, ’Folkhemmet’, or ’the people’s home’, is still in use, primarily as a social-democratic metaphor for a centralised welfare state, although in the past the term was associated with a tradition of value-conservatism.

It is legitimate to ask oneself how relevant the image of ’the people’s home’ is in today’s multicultural Swedish society. Perhaps this term is too closely associated with an assimilationist, unitary state to be able to function as a cohesive metaphor for use by different groups in the country. The home as a metaphor for society
may, in addition, be seen as somewhat hackneyed. A special complica-
tion arises from the fact that the 'traditional' Swedish welfare state to an important extent no longer exists in reality - a situation which many commentators say makes it difficult to speak of Swedish society as a 'home' for all its citizens.\textsuperscript{20} The image of 'home', although it can be associated with the idea of security, also suggests the idea of one particular family order, which does not exactly conjure up the phenomenon of cultural diversity. An approach characterised by consensus-seeking conversation is sometimes presented as a typically Swedish way of tackling things, an expression of a culture based on mutual understanding. This cultural identity is seen by many as having an important contribution to make to the international community, where Sweden is seen as well equipped to play a mediating role in peace negotiations since our approach to negotiation is based on listening, empathy and effectiveness.\textsuperscript{21}

The park can be proposed as a partially group-transcending metaphor for a multicultural society like Sweden. One element of Swedish national identity which is often highlighted is Swedes' closeness to the countryside and the environment.\textsuperscript{22} At the same time as it is seen as typically Swedish, this resonance, this identification with nature, is a feature which knows no ethnic or national boundaries. The countryside or the environment is something we can all identify with, irrespective of our ethnic, national or religious background. In other words, the park is open to everyone who is willing to identify with the park environment and take their part of the responsibility for looking after it. This is not to say that the park is an exclusively Swedish national symbol: the park can function as a metaphor or symbol for multicultural societies in general.

In summary, we can say that Sweden has special problems in carving out a national identity which makes use of symbols that different groups can adopt as their own. This situation is partly a result of various historical circumstances; there is no simple way available to us of pointing to specific events or political speeches in our history which could have a cohesive effect and bring together
the different groups in society. The Swedish nation is also currently experiencing an identity crisis, the roots of which are two major social changes: our accession to the European Union, and the increasing problems besetting the welfare state. It is possible that these two factors may prove advantageous when it comes to building up new, cross-cultural identities and symbols in a multicultural society. We find ourselves at a completely new starting point where what is needed is for all parties to display new thinking and a wish to move forward, if we wish to establish an acceptable direction for our society to take.
Conclusion

In this book the multicultural park has above all had three primary functions: the metaphor has been used as a pedagogical illustration, as a heuristic aid in discussing various ethical problems arising in a multicultural society, and as a symbolic expression of a shared social identity. We can ask ourselves, can the school system, or the education system as a whole, be viewed as a multicultural park? In a certain sense, yes: pupils from different environments are able to meet each other in an environment they all share, and where they come together to study multicultural subjects such as History, and culturally neutral subjects such as Mathematics. These two kinds of subject can be viewed as the school system’s group-transcending activities. The group-transcending activities can also include a civic education, in which pupils receive training in tolerance and democratic thinking (i.e. education in central elements of society’s value community). Pupils’ education can also embrace more culture-specific subject matter such as languages and religion: this education corresponds to the separate activities pursued in the multicultural park. The education sector, and society as a whole, can in other words be described as a multicultural park where different activities and actors strive to attain peaceful co-existence.

If the multicultural park is used as a model for the school system, then we can see that to a large extent teaching is about making pupils familiar with more cultural perspectives than simply their own, which is of value not least from the point of view that it provides pupils with better knowledge of the world around them. We have seen that we can defend multicultural education on the basis of generally accepted educational guidelines which are stated in the Swedish national curriculum, for instance objectivity and all-roundness. We can also cite moral principles, such as respect for human integrity and dignity, when arguing in favour of multicultural teaching at school; principles such as this dictate that schools should show consideration for pupils’ separate cultural identities. Further, multicultural education can be said to have a cohesive or integrative
function – since it aims to ensure that no group feels neglected by the education system. A positive acceptance of the idea of multicultural education is thus in no way incompatible with values such as objectivity and social community – indeed, multicultural education is all about taking such values more seriously than has hitherto been the case.
Notes

Introduction

1. Lange/Lööw et al., 1997.
2. Ibid.
5. Seen from a global, and temporally broader, perspective, the 'multicultural identity discourse' during the post-war years can also be traced to the colonial peoples' struggle to liberate themselves from the colonial powers. An important task for different colonies was to liberate themselves from certain elements of the colonising country's culture and to create their own national identities which embodied or reflected their own native traditions (see West, 1993, p 35). The intensive debate occasioned by the American political scientist Samuel Huntington's thesis that future wars, following the disappearance of the East-West conflict, will be fought between differing broad cultural spheres or civilisations has been a further factor leading to the concept of culture (broadly defined) being made a subject of social debate (Huntington, 1996). Huntington sets out to divide the world into nine 'civilisations', and he argues that in the future, lines of conflict will be drawn between the Christian Western world and a number of Moslem and Confucian countries. Huntington's theories have met with strong criticism on a number of points - such as that he ignores the considerable diversity which exists within the civilisations he delineates, and that he pays too little attention to more geopolitical and economic causes of conflicts (see Rashid, 1997; and Karlsson, 1997). Huntington also appears to believe that ethnic and religious conflicts are primarily a post-cold-war phenomenon; it is however important to highlight all the religious and ethnic conflicts which took place prior to the end of the cold war (see Smith, 1996, p 196).
Chapter 1

1. For an account of different meanings of the term 'multiculturalism' see Kymlicka, 1995a.


3. The debate on multicultural education in the USA has also extended to the role of higher education in the multicultural society. The last two decades have seen intense debate in the American university world between the representatives of different minority groups and the advocates of a more traditional kind of university education. The position of the minority groups has been that the content of many university courses, especially in the humanities and social sciences, is dominated by 'Dead White European Males' (DWEM); instead of reflecting the variegated cultural diversity of American society, university study programmes have primarily concentrated on the prominent figures in the culture of the white majority, such as Plato and Shakespeare. According to minority spokesmen this situation is a result of the fact that many university lecturers are themselves middle-aged men of European origin who have a special interest in giving their own culture a central place in university courses. The conservative response to the criticisms raised by the minority groups is to claim that the minority policy followed at American universities has led to a lowering of academic standards, and that fundamental criteria for assessing knowledge have been set aside in favour of narrow political interests. It is interesting to note in this context that the champions of 'traditional' university education often seem to be claiming to have a monopoly on concepts such as objectivity and rationality; the 'traditionalists' maintain that they represent realism and credibility, and that neglecting their approach to education will undermine minority students' ability to integrate themselves into society (we will have occasion to return to these questions at a later point in the book). The debate on multiculturalism in the university environment obviously intersects with the debate on multiculturalism in school education, since the questions of principle involved are the same - i.e. What values should govern education? How should education be organised in the light of the fact that our society has become more multicultural?

Apart from its teaching duties, it is a central task of the university system to produce knowledge which has a high level of general applicability coupled
with a high explanatory value. In addition, many people view universities as a more or less independent platform, with one of the tasks of those who work and study there being to scrutinise trends and developments in society from an open and critical perspective. Indeed, this latter aspect is one of the factors which have earned the university system the positive regard in which it is generally held by the public. It is nevertheless the case that specific and explicit civic education is not a particularly visible feature of university education, despite the fact that the generally held view is that university studies and university-based research should be of relevance to society. Civic education which looks at ethnic and cultural questions and their conflict potential has not been a subject of debate at the university level in the same way as in the school system, even though certain university subjects which are of relevance in civic education have been placed in focus in the multicultural debate - for example, History. The more public and inclusive character of schools has in other words made them more prone to intense debate on multiculturalism (See Hollinger, 1997; and Glazer, 1997b).

6. Our Creative Diversity, 1996, p 168
7. See for example Levinson, 1997.
8. See Köker, 1996.
11. See Roth (Svenska Dagbladet daily newspaper, 29.06.1994) and Bollinger 1986.
14. For a presentation of different models of cultural coexistence, see Kymlicka, 1995a. p 223.


17. See for example the report from the Swedish National Agency for Education, 'Far Away, Close at Hand', 1996. For a discussion of questions relating to cross-cultural education, see Nordlund, 1996.


19. Ibid., p 32.


21. For discussions concerning the topic of intercultural education, see Woodrow, 1997.

22. This presentation is based on Cummins, 1996; Huss, 1996; Hyltenstam, 1996; Otterbeck, 1993; Sjöqvist/Lindberg, 1996; and Huss/Lindgren, 1999.

23. This presentation is based on Report 109 from the National Agency for Education, 'Choice of School (Att välja skola)'; Höglund, 1996; Micheletti, 1997; and Borevi, 1997.


25. 'Kommunaktuellt', municipal authorities’ newsletter, 25 September 1997


27. This presentation is based on Bexell 1994; Hagström, 1995; Bexell/ Bischofsberger/ Thunberg, 1996; Borevi, 1997.
Chapter 2.


The expression 'common values' can be considered to be preferable to the term 'value base', for several reasons. The term value base suggests that norms are both something static, and also something hierarchical, almost axiomatic. The term common values, on the other hand, does not have these connotations, and is also appropriate since it expresses the notion of values which are shared, i.e. which delineate a community. The concept of common values, or value community, as used here refers to the overall, general common values which, among other functions, establish which areas of responsibility are to be the joint concern of all the citizens of society, including such matters as the organisation of the legal and political systems.


3. Taylor, 1992, Chapter 10. See also Roth, 1996b.


5. Roth, 1996 a, pp 30-32.

6. For an illustration of conflicts of interest in terms of rational choice and game theory, see Axelrod, 1984.

7. See Gleason, 1992, p 25 for a critique of the most well-known 'multicultural metaphors'.


11. It is important to underline that for many people, the ties which create loyalty and the bases for identification are no longer the same in today’s world of rapid and multifarious communication. More and more people have a lifestyle characterised by mobility, where their conditions of living and the activities with which they assure their livelihood undergo constant change, and as a result they develop a multiplicity of feelings of loyalty towards different societies and environments. This multiplicity of loyalties may very well lead to a situation in the future where nation-states are much less able to appeal to their citizens to give their support to one-sided, expansionist national projects.

12. It is of course the case that people’s interpretations of the concept of a park itself can differ considerably, depending on their cultural background. For example, there are large differences between park environments in certain Arab and Moslem countries, and many of the park environments found in Europe and the USA. In the latter countries, people may associate the idea of a park with the more or less strictly organised amusement parks which were built up earlier this century. This was the kind of association used by the former Chancellor of Germany, Helmut Kohl, when he criticised many Germans for viewing their country as a kind of amusement or leisure park. Kohl was not, however, using the park comparison in the context of multicultural issues. In Kohl’s speech in the German parliament, given on 21 October 1993, the Chancellor claimed that there were many citizens in Germany who were not taking their work duties sufficiently seriously, but who instead looked on their country as some kind of ‘kollektiven Freizeitpark’. Kohl came in for heavy criticism for his use of a park comparison, since at the time unemployment was high in Germany. Indeed, Kohl was nominated as one of the candidates for having coined the worst expression of the year, the ‘Unwort des Jahres’ an annual ‘prize’ awarded by a German institute of linguistics.

In this book, rather than thinking of an amusement or leisure park, we have used a concept of the park which most closely corresponds to parks found in urban environments in Europe - where central importance is accorded to green/cultivated areas, and where, in addition to the organised, structured activities, the park affords space to individual and collective activities which take place with varying degrees of spontaneity.
13. For a discussion of various democratic decision-making rules in a multicultural society, see Kymlicka, 1995a.

14. In recent years many writers have posited different distinctions when characterising the differences between various types of normative judgments in a multicultural society. The American philosopher and political scientist Michael Walzer makes a distinction between what he calls minimalistic and maximalistic norms (see Walzer, 1994). Minimalistic norms are what he terms 'thin' ethical values, concerned with general concepts such as 'justice' and 'truth'. Maximalistic norms are defined as 'thick' values, and Walzer locates them in specific cultural circles. These norms may for example contain specific ideals as to which character traits should be fostered within the society or religious group in question. The thin norms are to be considered as a temporarily overlapping abstraction derived from the more 'maximalistic' moral doctrines. In Walzer's account then, minimalistic norms do not represent a universal moral code which can function as a critical corrective and provide guidance when the customs of different cultures come into conflict with each other. In other words, the different cultures have no universally applicable critical corrective which they can have recourse to if conflict arises between their respective values.

However, one can ask what an 'ethical overlap' between different cultures actually indicates. Are we really only looking at a temporary, 'incomplete abstraction'? Our standpoint is that the group-transcending or 'universal' level of ethics functions as a set of governing norms, in so much as it can be used as a critical tribunal or platform in cases where different 'local' customs find themselves in conflict with each other. We should not forget that different cultural customs can be explained and justified according to the importance of the role they play in satisfying certain central human needs.

A distinction which in part is reminiscent of Walzer's is that established by the philosopher Sisela Bok, who analyses the twin concepts of minimalistic and maximalistic norms (see Bok, 1995). According to Bok, almost every society known to man has had rules aimed at averting crimes of violence and deception. There are also common values and rules of conduct which are aimed at governing the relations between members of families and fellow citizens - for example, the requirement to be trustworthy, caring and loyal. In
most societies we can also observe rules which determine the distribution of
goods or values and the procedure to be adopted in trials, such as that 'equals
shall be treated equally'. Bok calls these norms or rules minimalistic, in con­
trast to the kinds of rule she defines as maximalistic ethics. Maximalistic norms
have a more substantial content, in the sense that they specify a whole series
of different rules of conduct and behaviour which are to be observed in all
areas of human life, over and above the afore-mentioned minimalistic rules
governing what people may and may not do. The rules embodied in the max­
imalistic code are firmly rooted since they have their base in distinctly de­
ned religions/world-views.

The distinction we have made between *inter-group* and *group-specific* norms
concerns the difference between those rules which all citizens, irrespective of
the group to which they belong, need to be in agreement on, and those rules
which apply to the members of specific groups within the framework of their
particular culture. In this, our distinction is similar to that established by Bok.
The group-transcending or 'universal' norms also endeavour to be 'complete',
in the sense that the different groups in a multicultural society are to be able
to motivate their tolerance or respect for customs different to their own on
the basis of this common moral code. The fact that we expect people to show
tolerance or respect to unfamiliar customs arises from the idea of people's
'plasticity', and a theory of value-pluralism - i.e. the idea that there is more
than one good way of satisfying any given basic human need. This 'deeper'
kind of defence of multicultural policy has the advantage that tolerance or
respect for differences is not only motivated on the grounds that it is a prag­
matic way of avoiding social conflicts. The situation can change in such a way
that a group finds it is in its own interest to pursue a policy of assimilation as
long as the costs to itself are not too high. Certain groups are also enabled to
place less emphasis on the avoidance of conflicts, such as those religious groups
which underline the importance of a holy war.

We can say that our distinction between *inter-group* and *group-specific*
norms is in itself the expression of a maximalistic moral standpoint, in the
sense that the term is used by Bok - our distinction embodies a clear ideal
with regard to multicultural society. In this multicultural society certain spheres
of activity are seen as areas of common, joint responsibility, while other spheres
are seen as private, or group-specific domains. Establishing this distinction
between public and private in the 'multicultural park' is not primarily an expression of short-term, strategic policy, but rather the articulation of a particular social ideal.

This latter, more substantial kind of multiculturalism can be contrasted with a thinner 'modus vivendi' approach, where the acceptance of cultural differences is primarily based on the standpoint that this acceptance will lead to a reduction in conflict levels and thus increased stability in society. The substantial approach to multiculturalism is an ambitious doctrine which, making use of various positive arguments, sets out to campaign in favour of a multicultural society. In contrast to the 'modus vivendi' approach, substantial multiculturalism presupposes a relatively extensive base of common values, including the welcoming of cultural autonomy, cultural development and value-pluralism - in other words 'diversity as a social ideal'. One and the same multicultural society can thus find acceptance in different ways from different groups (see Roth, 1996 a).


16. The relationship of this 'multicultural' view of humanity to certain traditional ideologies can be said to consist of various kinds and degrees of tension. In many liberal and existentially coloured world views we often find a scepticism vis-à-vis humans' dependence on cultural traditions and collective identities. The ideal view of the human being held by the representatives of these philosophies is that of a free being, and the liberation of the individual from different traditions and community identities is seen as desirable. In socialistic and marxist theories, the material aspects of human existence are emphasised, at the expense of non-material matters, such as people's religious identity. The conservative ideologies, on the other hand, take cultural traditions more seriously. Conservative thinkers repudiate certain liberals' individualistic view of humanity, and marxists' one-sided emphasis on the material aspects of human life. What the conservative viewpoint accentuates is that a particular collective identity, be it national or religious, is of special importance for people's self-identification. This cultural identity is generally seen in relatively static terms. What the 'multicultural' view of humanity expresses, in contrast to the conservative, is that the people in a multicultural society have to build their identities on the basis of the various groups and tradi-
tions in which they have their backgrounds. A person’s primary identity does not only stem from one static cultural community.


18. The kind of slaughter ordained in orthodox Jewish belief (and also in certain Moslem groups) entails cutting the throat of animals which have not been stunned (See Chapter 4 in Poulter, 1998). The Jewish method is called kosher and the meat from Moslem slaughter is called halal. In Sweden, as in many other countries, there has been lively debate concerning animals’ rights. Many animal activists are against slaughter in general; criticism of religious slaughter can thus be seen as a specific example of a general negative criticism. The aspect that has aroused strong reactions from a lot of people is the fact that the animal is not stunned before being slaughtered, and it can take between 10 and 20 seconds for it to become unconscious from loss of blood. A central question for the religious groups is just how necessary is it for their religious identity that the animal be conscious during slaughter. Certain Moslem groups have shown a greater will to compromise than orthodox Jews with regard to the rendering unconscious of animals prior to slaughter. Moslems are however not allowed to eat injured animals or carcasses: if the animal is hurt or dies as a result of the stunning process the meat is haram, i.e. unfit for human consumption. For an examination of the debate in Great Britain, see Chapter 4 in Poulter, 1998.


22. In some respects an analogous problem is faced by classic liberals who wish to defend the value of the freedom of the individual. They may be in agreement that individual liberty is a matter of central importance, and that certain destructive freedoms should be forbidden, while at the same time there are a number of grey areas where they are uncertain as to the limitations which should be applied to the freedom of the individual. Certain communitarian philosophers maintain that in political debate the concept of freedom has often
been used in a manner that is completely disjunct from the contexts where it can facilitate certain values, such as within marriage. This 'disjunction' has led to a lack of clarity with regard to which liberties should be allowed and which should not. Liberties, the communitarian viewpoint propounds, need instead to be given a root in activities or contexts within which they can contribute to the realisation of certain values: they cannot be lifted out of these specific contexts and be used as guiding principles in themselves (see Sandel, 1996, p 107. See also Phillips, 1997).


24. This section has previously been published in Swedish, as an essay in Aspers/Uddhammar, 1998. The word 'virtue' is to be understood here in a general sense, referring to different character traits which a person may have, and which have a moral value.


Chapter 3.


4. For an overview of German policy towards the Jews during the period 1933-45, see Svanberg/Tyden, 1997. See also Bruchfeld & Levine 1998.


at the question of how ordinary German people could go along with Hitler’s policy of attempting to wipe out the Jewish race. Goldhagen puts forward the hotly debated thesis that the German people were characterised by an almost pathological anti-semitism, which made it easy for Hitler to get them to agree to and perpetrate these violent crimes. Goldhagen’s thesis has been attacked from many quarters, and his book has been accused of over-generalising and one-dimensional simplification (see Finkelstein, 1997).

13. Professor Yehuda Bauer, lecture at the Centre for Multi-Ethnic Research, Uppsala University, 21 August 1997.
16. For a critical analysis of creationism from a philosophical perspective, see Kitcher, 1982.


26. Insecurity and low self-esteem can manifest themselves in cases where a group has no more than a superficial understanding of its own culture. A majority culture with strong self-esteem and a clearly defined identity, on the other hand, can afford to be tolerant and open with regard to minority groups. The majority group can meet minorities with an attitude of open-minded curiosity if its self-esteem is not primarily nourished by a need to disparage and reject other cultural expressions than its own. An intolerant society is often characterised by a majority population which is insecure with regard to the identity and strength of its own culture; the majority’s insecurity may in such a situation find expression in the form of a frenetic defence of certain national symbols.


30. For an account of criticism and interpretations of Bernal, see Howe, 1998.

31. See for example Appiah, 1996.

32. See Postman, 1996, p 144.


34. ibid., p 86.


44. Fletcher, 1993, p 92.


46. Report No. 109 from the Swedish National Agency for Education.

47. Glazer, 1997a, p 144.

48. It should be underlined in this context that state schools in today’s situation also have the possibility to include new elements in the education on offer (see Borevi, 1997, p 64).


50. For similar viewpoints, see Jörgensen, 1899.

Chapter 4.


2. It is not surprising that many national movements and nation states have modelled their symbols on those of religious groups. National movements, like religions, frequently appeal to people’s need for something 'bigger' and 'deeper', something that goes beyond the concerns of everyday life; and the paraphernalia of religions, in the form of sacred texts, sites and rituals, have provided a golden point of departure for initiatives of national mobilisation, especially in times of crisis. In cases where a national identity has been interwoven with a particular religion, the role of religious symbols in national mobilisation has been even more prominent.


4. For a transcription of the speeches mentioned, see Podell/Anzovin, 1988.


14. See for example Ignatieff, 1993, pp 4-5.


16. Among this flora of books, Daun, 1989, has aroused the most attention. See also the series of articles on Swedish identity in 'Moderna Tider', September 1997, and Karaveli, 1997.

17. We should not however forget that several native groups in Sweden, such as the Saami (Lapps) and the Finnish-speaking Tornedal minority in northern Sweden, have suffered a history of discrimination, for example with regard to their respective languages (see 'The Debate on The Position of Minority Languages' in Chapter 1).

18. For the concept of 'liberation nationalism', see Björgo, 1997, p 56.


20. See for example Rojas, 1997, p 35. See also Åsard/Bennet, 1997, Chapter 4.


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Multiculturalism is one of the most intensely debated concerns of society today. This has been visibly the case in the field of school education. The questions we find ourselves obliged to confront include: In what ways should multiculturalism influence the content of school education? How should we interpret the concept of value community, and what organisational forms should schools adopt in a multicultural context? What kind of national symbols are appropriate in a multicultural society?

These questions provide the point of departure for this book, which looks at examples taken from Sweden and which also takes into account international scholarly debate.