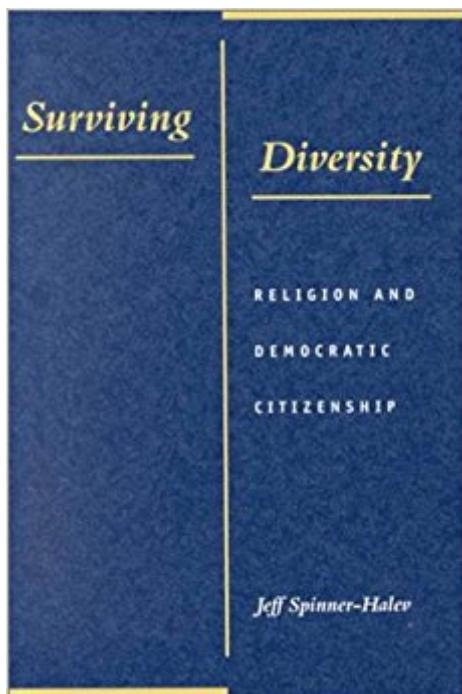


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Surviving Diversity: Religion And Democratic Citizenship



Synopsis

While liberal advocates of multiculturalism frequently call for tolerance of those with diverse views, this tolerance is often not extended to members of religious groups. This lack is perhaps not surprising, since the liberal ideals of autonomy, equality, and inclusiveness are the very ones that many religious groups—particularly the more conservative ones—reject. Yet, as Jeff Spinner-Halev argues in *Surviving Diversity*, any theory of multiculturalism that fails to take religious groups into account is incomplete. Spinner-Halev proposes three principles on which accommodation of exclusive religious groups should be based. First, they must provide their children with a basic education and allow adults to leave the community if they wish. Second, with some exceptions they should be welcomed to participate in the public sphere, since such participation often bolsters citizenship. Third, they should be free to exclude others from their institutions, except when doing so substantially harms the citizenship of others. While not condoning such extremist groups as the Branch Davidians or the Christian Identity movement, Spinner-Halev stresses that most religious conservatives have chosen to live a life that, in a permissive Western democracy, requires considerable restraint and thought. He concludes by demonstrating how the ideals of multiculturalism can be extended to such citizens, creating a society tolerant of even greater diversity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jeff Spinner-Halev's *Surviving Diversity* is a timely and absorbing essay on the extent to which

religious identities might be reconciled with the demands of citizenship in contemporary liberal democracies. The problem he addresses is not only among the most important that liberal theory confronts; it is also among the most urgent we face as citizens. Spinner-Halev writes with subtlety, clarity, and a tough-minded realism about the frictions that faith and democratic citizenship generate in our lives. Anyone interested in the tangled relationship of religion to democratic politics should read this book. (Eamonn Callan, Stanford University) Surviving Diversity takes a refreshing approach to an important subject, and will appeal to anyone interested in liberalism, liberal-democracy, issues of diversity, toleration, multiculturalism, and the ethics of education. (Margaret Moore, author of Foundations of Liberalism)

Jeff Spinner-Halev is the Schlesinger Associate Professor of Social Justice at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is the author of The Boundaries of Citizenship: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in the Liberal State, also available from Johns Hopkins.

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