Philosophy Café
On the first Tuesday of the Month (excluding January and February)

The ethics of cultural autonomy:
identity, ethnicity, localism, nationalism, and globalism.
Royal Oak Hotel Launceston March 5th 2019

**Individual Autonomy:** “Individual autonomy is an idea that is generally understood to refer to the capacity to be one’s own person, to live one’s life according to reasons and motives that are taken as one’s own and not the product of manipulative or distorting external forces. It is a central value in the Kantian tradition of moral philosophy but it is also given fundamental status in John Stuart Mill's version of utilitarian liberalism. ... In the western tradition, the view that individual autonomy is a basic moral and political value is very much a modern development.”

*John Christman*

And how might we understand cultural autonomy?
We could use ideas identified in reference to individual autonomy and apply them to a culture to attempt to understand cultural autonomy. Would that work?

We could find examples of what might be recognisable as cultural autonomy and see if that helps us understand it. What are some examples of cultural autonomy?
Trump?
Brexit?
French farmers resisting globalization (attacking McDonalds)?
The French policy of promoting the use of the French language worldwide.
Indigenous Australian examples (e.g., Customary Laws)
The issues surrounding ‘cultural appropriation’ (considered at our previous café).
Other examples?
...

Related ideas: the ‘tyranny of the majority’ and concern for the rights of minorities.

What are the practical costs and benefits of cultural autonomy?
**Costs:** more complex social and political systems that may need coordination?
**Benefits:** more variation in how the human condition is understood and experienced?
Other costs and benefits?
...

What are the ethical issues surrounding cultural autonomy?
Are they the same ethical issues that surround individual autonomy?
What are the ethical issues surrounding individual autonomy?
Are cultural autonomy and individual autonomy compatible?
Do the ethical benefits outweigh the ethical costs of cultural autonomy?

Reference: John Christman’s “Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Online)