Liberalism and Minority Rights: A Theoretical Picture

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In the last few decades there has been a great push toward the recognition of group rights for minorities. Besides a number of reasons which explain this rising interest in the issue, the general criticism of the liberal theory is the prime one. Liberalism is criticized for ignoring the issue of how belonging to groups affects individual autonomy and equality. Group rights are seen as a device legitimating a wide range of claims raised by minorities in pluralist states. The striking fact is that plurality has become a major source of political clash and violence in the world. Most conflicts of our time are internal arising out of ethno-cultural strife, which often deteriorate into massive violations of human rights and incalculable suffering. It was believed that liberal education and modern means of communication would link people together across states and continents and the relevance of cultural identity would progressively vanish. Moreover, the application of the universal framework of rights would properly address the demands of minorities and would cause a steady assimilation of citizens resulting in blending of all cultures and the emergence of a single cosmopolitan society. However, this optimism was flawed and identity consciousness has increased rather than decreased. Neither globalization nor democratic transformation has helped to avoid ethno-cultural conflicts. This paper tries to explore the available literature in the field by addressing the issue of minority rights and minorities accommodation in the pluralist society for the sake of justice, hormone and stabilities of these societies. The study is qualitative in nature based on secondary data.
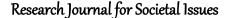
1. Introduction

Recognition of group rights for minorities has gained much prominence specifically in the west. Weaknesses in the liberal theory have been shown as the prime criticism. The striking fact is that plurality has become a major source of political clash and violence in the world. Most conflicts of our time are internal arising out of ethno-cultural strife, which often deteriorate into massive violations of human rights and incalculable suffering. It was believed that besides liberal education, the application of the universal framework of rights would properly address the demands of minorities and would cause a steady assimilation of citizens resulting in blending of all cultures and the emergence of a single cosmopolitan society. However, this optimism was flawed and identity consciousness has increased rather than decreased. Neither globalization nor democratic transformation has helped to avoid ethno-cultural conflicts. Now how will liberalism cope with this phenomenon? Liberalism is primarily concerned with the jurisdiction allowable to an agent within which it exercises its rights. However, the problem is "who is the recipient of rights-individual, group or both?" This paper shows very briefly how the above problem could be solved within the liberal tradition. A number of scholars including Charles Taylor, Bhikhu Parekh, Will Kymlicka, Chandran Kukathas and Tariq Modood have tried to present plausible solutions to address the issues of minorities within pluralistic states. The paper tries to evaluate only Charles Taylor's approach to the issues of plurality in pluralist states. It will answer the question how this scholar has treated the problems of plurality. What are the strengths and weaknesses of his theory? I take the scholar because he is the one of the most prominent and well known in the field. Before I evaluate Taylor's approach toward minorities treatment in a pluralist society, the dilemma of group rights and individual rights is explored.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Dilemma of Group Rights and Individual Rights

Communitarians believe that it is the community, rather than individual, state, nation or any other entity, that should be the main focus of analysis and the centre of our enquiry (Frazer, 1998: 112); possessing particular virtues and living in a community with a publicly sanctioned conception of the good life and, as Sullivan (1986: 10) says, "the question of which lives are valuable is necessarily a public concern and each of us has good reasons for taking a public interest in other people's lives". This concentration of ideas reflects dissatisfaction with the classical liberalism where only individual is the centre of analysis. Liberalism is criticized as excessively individualistic; producing a peculiar view of the self; that society should be neutral regarding different conceptions of the good and that liberal society is atomistic (Neal & Paris, 1990). Despite internal differences, communitarians share the view that excessive individualism has helped to produce anxious, competitive, and incoherent lives, and a society which is both unlovely and potentially self-destructive (Lund, 1993).

Now, for liberals, rights act as guarantees that individuals, and not communities, are allowed to actually endorse conceptions of the good life (this endorsement are internally motivated), and that the individuals will have the freedom to revise the conception of good life (Kymlicka, 1995: 152; Mill, 1978: 57; Rawls, 1985). For communitarians, revisability is not necessarily a positive trait and those who reject their current projects and beliefs are exercising an empty freedom. For Sandel, the distance from conceptions of the good that we need in order to revise them is 'always precarious and provisional'. To think otherwise, to 'imagine a person incapable of constitutive attachments', is 'not to conceive an ideally free and rational agent, but to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth.' Thus we treat people as equals by subordinating their reflectively endorsed beliefs to a list of unendorsed virtues and an unrevisable conception of the common good (Sandel, 1982: 179, 183). For communitarians equality means the freedom to flourish which requires being part of a community that engages jointly, rather than individually, in the business of endorsing and revising conceptions of the good life. Again, the successful claim for individual rights will protect citizens against public scrutiny of their performances in the constitutive roles; will shake citizens loose from the shared values and virtues which they need as criteria against which to compare their present projects, and permits them to sacrifice an essential interest in the good life to present needs (Lund, 1993). Communitarians criticize the view that men and women in liberal society no longer have access to a single moral culture and have no consensus and no public meeting-of-minds on the nature of the good life (Walzer, 1990; MacIntyre, 1984: 17).

Communitarians argue that the view that society should be neutral regarding different conceptions of the good itself constitutes the shared conception of the good in liberal societies where the shared understanding of the good is that there is no shared understanding of the good. Communitarians strongly criticize the belief of the liberals that the individual stands in direct relationship with the state (Frazer, 1998: 112). They also doubt the uniform application of some values (liberty, equality, fraternity and authority) as standard for all societies. Every society may give a different definition of liberty, equality and authority. For communitarians, autonomy and justice have different meanings for different groups. For Barber, autonomy is attained by participatory democracy as he says "without participating in the common life that defines them and in the decision-making that shapes their social habitat, women and men cannot become individuals" (Barber, 1984: xv). Similarly, for Walzer (1983, 313) "a given society is just if its substantive life is lived... in a way faithful to the shared understandings of the members". He even does not question the Indian caste system which is an illiberal societal setup and even according to Indian thinkers is an unfortunate legacy of the past that Indians should struggle hard to conquer.

However, eminent communitarians are committed to liberalism (Walzer, 1990; Neal & Paris, 1990; Lund, 1993). They are inconsistent in their support for the community as MacIntyre says:

"The fact that the self has to find its moral identity in and through its membership in communities such as those of the family, the neighborhood, the city and the tribe does not
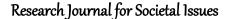
entail that the self has to accept the moral limitations of the particularity of those forms of community" (Macintyre, 1984: 221).

On the other side, liberalism believes in the commitment to human rights which outweighs all but the most extreme considerations of the overall good; rights are attributed mainly to individuals; and the concept of the right is distinguished from that of the good (Thigpen & Downing, 1987). As George Holland Sabine (1950: 475) puts that there is no middle ground between humanity as a sand-heap of separate organisms and the state as an outside power. Liberalism believes that there should be no intermediate entity or community imposing a particular perception of good of life between the state and the individuals; that no way of life can be considered to be superior to another; and effort to impose any particular way of life on individuals is considered to be illegitimate. Liberals repudiate the view that liberal individualism is inconsistent with the idea of a self as situated within a community. While treating individual, liberalism neither necessarily discourages community-regarding behavior nor promote selfishness (Neal & Paris, 1990). Communitarians blame liberals for not understanding individual as 'self' in social relation, a charge that is unfounded. Liberals understand individual as 'self' in social relation but with the contingent, and not essential, conception of shared relation which Neal & Paris (1990) define as

"A contingently shared relation is a relationship between two or more antecedently defined separate selves which…..does not penetrate the identity of the separate selves to the point that the identity of each becomes partially or wholly constituted by the relation itself. An essentially shared relation penetrates this deeply; when two selves essentially share a relation, the identity of each self is partially or wholly constituted by the relation".

I think that the earlier liberals have taken a rigid universal view of the rights because they were not faced with the problems of plurality so prominent since the last few decades and the minorities were not as expressive in the past as they are now. Nathan Glazer (1995: 126) also agues "the language and theory of the protection of human rights developed in a time and place (England in the 17th century) when the issue was seen as one of deprivation because of conscience, individual decision and action, rather than one of deprivation because of race, color, or national origin".

However, communitarians do not give a clear definition of the community. It is portrayed as a set of relationship between persons; an entity with boundary and a particular location or a thinking subject (Frazer, 1998: 118; Bell, 2005 & Waldron, 1995: 95). A further question is "what is being promoted when we promote community?" Whether it is the existence of the community, its rules and customs or the individual autonomy and wellbeing? And it is this question which places communitarians on the defensive side. The mobilities in terms of geography (changing the residence frequently), social behaviors (acting and behaving differently as our parents did), marital status (increasing rate of divorce, separation and remarriage) and political loyalty (declining
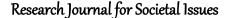
loyalty to leaders, parties and movements)[1] in developed states, especially in the US, have given a hard time to the communitarians to press for the group rights and consequently, have provided fewer if any justifiable alternatives to liberalism in modern societies.

However, the rising intensity of group based claims has also put a challenge to liberalism. Though different ethno-cultural conflicts have their own unique origin and character, and should be addressed contextually, there is a common tendency towards covering most of the heterogeneous demands of ethno-cultural minorities in multicultural states. It is the idea that identity and cultural membership are morally relevant factors that should be recognized and protected through specific rights which are reinforced by justice and equality between groups, rather than between individuals, and that neither the individual human rights nor the democratic majoritarian (usually representing the dominant group) decision making are sufficient to properly address group demands. These rights (defined as collective, group, third generation, differentiated or minority rights) are characterized as solidarity rights of the whole peoples of a group rather than individuals. But, in fact, most of the normative texts attribute rights to the members of minority groups rather than the group itself. That is why most scholars do not feel the need of the revision of traditional doctrines of human rights (Pejic, 1997), saying that group rights are not required because they could also be derived from other individual human rights and that constitutional rights and liberties, toleration and state neutrality provide a framework that is flexible enough to ensure the peaceful coexistence of different groups in democratic societies. Certainly, most democratic states are nowadays facing a crucial challenge: how to accommodate national and ethnic minorities' interests while preserving the universal structure of individual rights, as constitutionally recognized? The liberal tradition has serious difficulties with this question because according to a widespread view, group rights and individual rights are deeply incompatible. As Iris M. Young (1989) says 'modern political theory asserted the equal moral worth of all persons, and social movements of the oppressed took this seriously as implying the inclusion of all persons in full citizenship status under the protection of the law-citizenship for everyone and everyone the same qua citizen'.

This observation explains the potential problem of adopting a model of differentiated citizenship based on asymmetrical rights. This problem requires us to rethink the interpretation of the basic principles and values that sustain liberalism. The widespread idea that group rights can only be justified from a communitarian perspective that assigns value to the group over the individual is rejected as flawed. Liberal theorists normally oppose group rights because besides skepticism over the satisfactory criteria to define 'minority' and 'community', the right-holder must have a moral agency, which the group does not have. Thus rights are assigned to those who have mind and certain capacities; groups, as a body, are short of minds and the capacity for rational

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[1]For detailed discussion on mobility see Walzer, M. (Feb., 1990). The communitarian critique of liberalism. *Political Theory, 18*(1), 6-23.
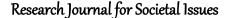
thought; consequently, have no basic need for the ascription of moral rights. Only individuals are capable of reasoning, have values and make decisions and take actions, decisions and values of a group are always the product of the individual actions and decisions thus all group interests originate from individual ones; individuals, not groups, have interests and are the potential holders of moral rights (Jan, 1991; Michael, 1991).

However, it must be clear that due to the rising demands of minorities and problems associated with the plurality, the link between communitarianism and group rights, on the one hand, and between liberalism and individual rights, on the other, is unable to account adequately for those problems. Some scholars have remodeled the liberal theory just to address some of the apparent problems faced by minorities. These remodelers of modern liberal theory do not necessarily prioritize traditional forms of living. Remodelers such as Taylor are not a faction of anti-liberal collectivists who think that the collectivity is more important than the individual and, therefore, freedom and individual rights should be suppressed in order to promote some sort of a cultural pre-modern revolution. Again, as Kymlicka (2001a: 21) says, most debates about minority rights are not 'debates between a liberal majority and communitarian minorities, but debates amongst liberals about the meaning of liberalism'. They just say that insofar as liberalism tends toward instability and dissociation, it requires periodic communitarian correction.

This model may indeed depart from dominant view of liberalism, but not from some central liberal ideals associated to the value of the individual. Thus neither the liberal nor the communitarian theory need adhere to such extreme views of the formation of the self (Taylor, 1995: 182). Like Taylor, Walzer (1990) also acknowledges that the disagreement is less pronounced than one might initially think:

> "Contemporary liberals are not committed to a pre-social self, but only to a self capable of reflecting critically on the values that have governed its socialization; and communitarian critics, who are doing exactly that, can hardly go on to claim that socialization is everything".

However, the problem is that mostly all minority groups aspire not merely to neutralize their diversity, or to attain equal treatment despite their difference with the majority, but to preserve and develop a distinctive cultural identity, often through separate institutions or jurisdictions (Casals, 2006: 75). Cultural minorities do not accept the recognition of a special temporary status, but of a lasting one giving specific rights to their members specifically by virtue of this membership. Thus the recognition of group rights produces an asymmetrical distribution of rights, which poses difficulties for liberal theories. Again, the group rights are rejected on the basis that it would give the illiberal groups a *carte blanche* to mistreat all or certain categories of its members. However, this is not a conclusive argument to reject the legitimacy of group rights altogether. The demands raised by groups are often justified and not illiberal in nature. Furthermore, setting the claims of illiberal minorities as a justification for rejecting the group rights would clearly be inadequate to account for the problems that multiculturality poses in most democratic states. Majorities and minorities disagree over the traits of political systems of representation and linguistic regimes,

over issues of territorial and political borders, over education curricula and public subsidies for cultural activities and religious schools, the choice of state symbols and holidays, etc. The dominant approach fails to take these issues on the basis of justice and offer convincing answers to them.
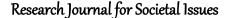
Thus minority rights are special rights that individuals have by virtue of their belonging to particular, identifiable groups. The existence of minority group rights as moral rights can be rejected on their face value as against the liberal tradition; however, their recognition might be justifiable only as long as they are adjusted and understood in terms of individual rights. Thus the representation of a minority in parliament, though legally attributed to the group as such, in the end, founded on the individual right of all citizens to political participation. Or, the special right to land accorded to the members of a group might be legally given to group, but this right can be founded on the fact to protect individual interests. Or, right to cultural protection of a collectivity is the right of protection of the members of the group to protect their culture.

However, those group rights are acceptable which are reducible to individual and those which are irreducible, as against Dyke (1995: 38); not based on the consent of the members of the group; where the members of the groups have no right to exit, cannot be justified under liberal theory. Furthermore, the variables of interdependence (the identity and well-being of the members and the group are linked) (Fiss: 1976); recognition (recognition of important commonality); and multidimensional complexity (common bond of language, religion, ethnicity, race and historical experience)[2] provide the criteria whether a group should be considered as right-bearing entity. Again, social group is accepted as an artifact of individuals and, contra Fiss (1976), it has no distinct existence of its own apart from its members. This means that communities are important and have, if they, value because of their contribution to the well-being of individuals whose lives have the ultimate value (Kymlicka, 1989: 140). Hartney (1995: 206) calls this view as value-individualism as against value-collectivism-community has value independent of its contribution to the well-being of the individuals. It does not mean that groups do not matter but rather that there is no need to depart from the liberal language of individual rights to do justice to them (Kukathas, 1992). Thus, an attractive political theory must accommodate the claims of ethnocultural minorities, on the one hand, and the promotion of responsible democratic citizenship, on the other.

3. Charles Taylor and the Treatment of Minorities

Taylor's logical, consistent and concise essay is usually considered as the classic work of a theory of recognition and has instigated a general interest in the idea of recognition which for him is a 'vital human need' (Taylor, 1994: 26) and is the essential requirement for self-respect and self-esteem (Maclure, 2003). Indeed, the struggles over "who we are" are means of enhancing self-respect and self-esteem, self-confidence and dignity. On the other hand, judging the present-day

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[2] The criteria are not exhaustive. For more detail see Johnston, D. M. (1995). Native rights as collective rights: A question of group self-preservation. In W. Kymlicka (Ed.) (1995). *The rights of minority culture* (179-201). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
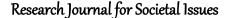
cultural conflicts in pluralist societies, it has become very challenging to support the restriction of identity within the limits of the private sphere alone and all conflicts including those over economic distribution are the various manifestations of a fundamental struggle for recognition (McNay, 2008). This recognition is an important condition of social life as Honneth (1995: 92-93) argues:

> "The reproduction of social life is governed by the imperative of mutual recognition, because one can develop a practical relation-to-self only when one has learned to view one-self, from the normative perspective of one's partners in interaction, as their social addressee.... since it is only by doing so that they are able to express socially the continually expanding claims of their subjectivity".

Recognition, for Taylor, is important because it related to identity which is a person's understanding of who he or she is, of his or her fundamental characteristics as a human being. Our identity is shaped precisely through our relations to others, our being recognized by them. Feelings of self-esteem, self-confidence, self-respect are possible only if we are positively recognized for 'who we are'. As our identity is partly shaped by recognition 'so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being' (Taylor, 1994: 25) and 'can inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred' (Taylor, 1994: 26). Due to non-recognition, the targeted group develops a sort of inferiority complex which is internalized and the group cannot liberate itself even though the hurdles in the way are removed. For Taylor, as proceduralist neutrality of liberalism cannot accommodate minorities, it must be modified to give way for the politics of difference. He is the supporter of preserving the basic political principles of the society but expounds that as societies are becoming more permeable and multicultural, there are 'substantial numbers of people who are citizens and also belong to the culture that calls into question our philosophical boundaries. The challenge is to deal with their sense of marginalization without compromising our basic political principles' (Taylor, 1994: 63).

Taylor justifies the fair treatment of minorities on the basis of equality. He argues that when we talk about equality in the context of race and ethnicity, we are actually appealing to two different though related concepts of equal dignity, and equal respect. Equal dignity appeals to people's humanity that applies to all members in a relatively uniform way. But if equal dignity focuses on gender-blindness and color-blindness, equal respect implies that difference is also important in conceptualizing and institutionalizing equal relations between individuals because they have group identities and these may be the ground of existing and long-standing inequalities such as racism, discrimination and considering others as inferior which would have affected the dignity. For Taylor, the politics of difference is the logical extension of the politics of equal dignity. Each culture should be presumed to have equal worth and "if withholding the presumption is tantamount to a denial of equality, and if important consequences flow for people's identity from

the absence of recognition, then a case can be made for insisting on the universalization of the presumption as a logical extension of the politics of dignity" (Taylor, 1994: 68). Thus equal respect should be given to particularities because difference-blind principle is not always neutral and "the claim is that the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles of the politics of equal dignity is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture (Taylor, 1994: 43). Again, every legal system is the expression of a particular form of life and not merely a reflection of the universal content of basic rights (Habermas, 1994: 124). Thus, public sphere is not always neutral nor could it be purely secularized (Galeotti, 2002: 124; Parekh, 2000: 201-202, Modood, 2013).

According to Taylor (1994: 26-30), the present discourse of recognition and identity came due to two main changes. The first was the collapse of social hierarchies which were the basis for honor. This view is wholly western and in eastern developing states like Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and Bangladesh etc. it still rules. The second change came with the new understanding of individual identity that emerged at the end of the 18th century. We might speak of an individualized identity, one that is particular to me, and that I discover in myself, the view developed and articulated by Jean Jacques Rousseau, Herder and John Stuart Mill. Taylor rejects this monological view of identity formation and takes that our identity is made in a dialogical process as he argues:

> "We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression…..But we learn these modes of expression through exchanges with others. People do not acquire the languages needed for self-definition on their own. Rather, we are introduced to them through interaction with others who matter to us… [as] 'significant others'. The genesis of the human mind is, in this sense, not monological, not something each person accomplishes on his or her own, but dialogical" (Taylor, 1994: 32).

For Taylor, there are two versions of liberalism: the politics of equal dignity and the politics of difference. For the proponents of the politics of equal dignity, the politics of difference 'violates the principle of nondiscrimination' while for the proponents of the politics of difference the politics of equal dignity 'negates identity by forcing people into homogenous mold that is untrue to them…. The claim is that the supposedly neutral set of difference- blind principles of the politics of equal dignity is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture' (Taylor, 1994: 43). One of the main assumptions of procedural liberalism, which Taylor objects, is that human dignity consists mainly in autonomy: the ability of each person to determine for himself or herself a view of the good life (Taylor, 1994: 57). The politics of difference, on the contrary, is connected with the ideal of authenticity, whereby each individual is considered to have a unique identity, an original way of being human, his or her distinctiveness from everyone else, to which he or she must be true. And Taylor says that it is precisely this distinctness that has been ignored, glossed over, assimilated to a majority identity. And this assimilation is the cardinal sin against the ideal of authenticity (Taylor, 1994: 38). This authenticity can be compared with John Stuart Mill's *individuality* and
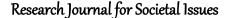
Will Kymlicka's notion of the right to *revise* and *question* but where Mill and Kymlicka give this authenticity to the individual, Taylor is ambivalent in giving it to the individual. He is the supporter of group recognition and it seems that he gives it to the group.

Taylor favors certain rights to be given to minorities in order to avoid discrimination but does not provide a convincing justification for doing so. He is also not clear about what types of rights should be given and whether the rights are contextual. However, he is to some extent right when he says that affirmative action should be taken on temporary basis to rectify past discrimination and injustices "that will eventually level the playing field and allow the old blind rules to come back into force in a way that doesn't disadvantage anyone" (Taylor, 1994: 40). But, some minority rights are to be given on permanent basis which minorities consider as part of their religion and culture for example a Sikh or a Muslim woman will require a permanent right to wear turban or headscarf respectively. These rights cannot be given on temporary basis. The violation of these sorts of rights might disturb peaceful co-existence in a multicultural society-a fact not highlighted by Taylor's theory.

According to Taylor (1994: 59), a society with strong collective goals can be liberal, if it distinguishes the fundamental liberties which should never be violated and ought to be unchangeably well-established, on one hand, from privileges and immunities that are important, but that can be revoked or restricted for reasons of public policy, on the other, provided that it is also capable of respecting diversity, especially when dealing with those who do not share its common goals; and provided that it can offer adequate safeguards for fundamental rights. It is on these grounds that Taylor rejects the politics of equal dignity inaugurated by Rousseau because Rousseau supports the notion of equality of esteem which requires a tight unity of purpose which is incompatible with any differentiation.

But, Taylor goes a step further in recognizing cultures by arguing that "we all *recognize* the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them survive, but acknowledge their *worth*" (Taylor, 1994: 64, emphasis in the original). Here we can recognize the existence of the culture and its value for its members. I may and may not recognize the equal values of all cultures nor does a culture impose any duty on me to recognize its value. I may, in good faith, only recognize its existence and its value for its people. Acknowledging all cultures' equal worth, as Taylor says, is too much a demand from the society. People may give equal respect to all cultures on the assumption that those cultures are of value for their members but may and may not be of equal value for outsiders. Again, all cultures may not be of equal value from liberal perspective. Some cultures, for example racism and anti-Semitism, ought not to be respected. Taylor's theory does not clearly state the conditions under which acceptable demands for recognition can be differentiated from unacceptable demands. Such a conclusion both unite with and separate Taylor from Kymlicka. Both give importance to culture but for different reason. Kymlicka values culture for providing the spectrum of choice from which one chooses but does not value all culture. It is the societal culture providing a range of choices and in which one has the option to question and
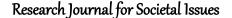
revise the traditional ways that he values (Kymlicka, 1995). Taylor values all cultures for the sake of justice, equality, religious perspective and nondiscrimination. However, the emphasis on equal worth could be interpreted in the sense that each culture has some importance for its people, if not for other, and should be thought and recognized as such and comments should be passed on such cultures only after objectively studying them with the universally applicable vocabulary. Again, Taylor's indication that 'recognition requires us to give all cultures the presumption that…. they have something important to say to all human beings' (Taylor, 1994: 66) and we should approach the culture through this presumption may bring flexibility in the attitude of the dominant group towards the minority cultures. But it is not free from difficulties because firstly; it will require a common vocabulary and secondly; it is time consuming to investigate every culture properly to find its value.

Taylor's endorsement of a model of liberalism in the form of recognition goes against the principles of justice when stretched to the position of government support for securing the goals of a particular cultural group, such as the French Canadians in Quebec, for cultural survival firstly because the dominant culture might not have received such support and secondly, it will require the government to spend tax-money of some persons for the cause of others. Liberal and neutral democratic states are under obligation only to help disadvantaged groups preserve and defend their culture against interference and attacks from the dominant cultures. Taylor sticks to the universal notion of rights but his emphasis on the protection of some particular cultures to the extent of allowing the government to maintain that culture at the expense of individual freedom presents a contradiction in his theory- argument presented by Rockefeller too (1994: 92). From the liberal democratic perspective it is the individual that has right to equal recognition first and foremost primarily on the basis of his or her universal human identity and potential, and not on the basis of ethnic identity. Again, Taylor' theory has a sort of paternalistic germs. He seems to give preference to the group rights over the individual rights and tries to constrain the autonomy of the future generations thus enforcing conformity at the expense of individual specificity as he (1994: 58-59) states:

> "But it [Quebec's cultural survival] also involves making sure that there is a community of people here in the future that will want to avail itself of the opportunity to use the French language. Policies aimed at survival actively seek to *create* members of the community, for instance, in their assuring that future generations continue to identify as French-speakers. There is no way that these policies could be seen as just providing a facility to already existing people".

Appiah (1994: 163) is scared that the creation of a black politics in which black identity is given emphasis and celebrated can provide a sense of self-esteem, confidence and dignity to black communities but at the same time it can also lead to a proper way of being black, one which all members of the black community must demonstrate in order to partake in this positive self-image. Such expectations of behavior can lead, Appiah notes, to one form of tyranny being replaced by

another. Taken to the extreme it can also lead to separatism through creating an 'us-and-them' group mentality which may prevent dialogue between groups. It is this point where Taylor is critical of Kymlicka's solution to the problem of plurality which is the position of maintaining liberal neutrality, and since individuals need certain basic cultural goods to pursue the good life, neutrality requires accommodating certain groups by granting them differential rights so that their members are able to pursue good life (Kymlicka, 1995: chp. 4). Taylor (1994: 41) argues that this solution works only for existing people who find themselves trapped within a culture but doesn't justify measures designed to ensure survival through indefinite future generations. In my opinion, it not only hampers the autonomy of the future generations to decide for themselves the perceptions of good life, but also is purely an essentialist approach to culture. It binds the community members to pass their culture to the future generations without clarifying whether the present generation is under an obligation to do so. Again, by carefully studying Taylor, one comes to know that for him it is cultures that are to be recognized by the politics of difference. However, considering cultures as entities to be recognized and protected require justification which Taylor does not provide. Though he presents that

> "There is a form of the politics of equal respect, as enshrined in a liberalism of rights, that is inhospitable to difference, because (a) it insists on uniform application of the rules defining these rights, without exception, and (b) it is suspicious of collective goals. Of course, this doesn't mean that this model seeks to abolish cultural differences…. I call it inhospitable to difference because it can't accommodate what the members of distinct societies really aspire to, which is survival (Taylor, 1994: 61).

But it cannot be a justification for rejecting or modifying the politics of equal dignity that it is highly "individualistic or inhospitable to difference," without arguing why group recognition is justifiable. Brian Barry (2001: 67) also argues that "cultures are not moral entities to which we can owe obligations of fairness. Insisting that we should be fair to cultures merely as cultures is like insisting that we should be fair to paintings or to languages or to musical compositions…. So, if we seek to deal fairly with cultural diversity, it is not cultures that will be the ultimate objects of our concern but the people who bear them".

4. Conclusion

I think we recognize a group by the fact that it exists. It is the construct or artifact of its members who as 'persons' cannot be denied recognition, that group's identity has value for its members and it is that significance of identity that we accord recognition to. This sort of recognition is general, subject and mediated[3]. Again, essentialist form of recognition which assumes that groups and culture are fixed is also rejected (Kukathas, 1992; 2003: Ch. 2; Maclure, 2003, Modood, 2013). Quebeckers struggle to be recognized as Quebeckers, equal with and different from Anglo-Canadians. However, the internal differences and heterogeneity of Quebec's

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[3] For more detail on recognition see Peter Jones, Toleration, recognition and identity (page, 10-14). Retrieved from cfs.unipv.it/seminari/jones.pdf

identity makes every form of fixed, unalterable or authentic recognition contestable and problematic. Citizens often have overlapping and sometimes contrasting practical identities or forms of subjectivity.

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