Liberal Multiculturalism: Official Language Use and Education

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Abstract

This thesis constitutes an exercise in political philosophy on the theme of liberal multiculturalism. It does so by reflecting on two contemporary dilemmas from the case of Hungarian minority community in Slovakia. One of these dilemmas pertains to official language use, and the aim of the thesis is to explore possible moral justifications for an officially bilingual regime. The other dilemma pertains to education, and in this context, the thesis seeks to answer the question whether it is right for minority parents to enroll their child to minority language schools, and thereby perpetuate their minority status. Finally, in the last section, the thesis also briefly addresses the issue of political education and asks what the content of citizenship education should be in a linguistically divided community. The conclusions reached in the thesis suggest a more extensive minority language rights regime in the context of official language use, but a less extensive one in the sphere of education than they are currently at place in Slovakia.

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Abbreviations

TJ	Rawls, J. (1999). *A Theory of Justice.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
MC	Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural Citizenship*. New York: Oxford University Press
KD	Kétnyelvű Dél-Szlovákia ("Bilingual South-Slovakia") Initiative
ECE	East-Central Europe

Introduction

This thesis constitutes an exercise in political philosophy on the theme of liberal multiculturalism. It does so by reflecting on two contemporary dilemmas from the case of Hungarian minority community in Slovakia. One of the dilemmas pertains to official language use which is illustrated in the thesis by the recent upsurge of civil activism on the revitalization of minority language use in certain regions of Slovakia. These activists would like to see a bilingual South-Slovakia, and the question this thesis tries to answer is what could be a legitimate justification for such a bilingual linguistic regime. Another topic of the thesis concerns minority education. It's been a major dilemma for most minority parents whether they should enroll their child to Slovak or Hungarian schools once the school age comes. Interestingly enough many Hungarian parents do enroll their children to minority language schools and the second concern of this paper is to explore this phenomenon, and answer the question whether it is legitimate for parents to do so if they really want the best for their child. Finally, the last part of the thesis is concerned with a publically less thematized, but, from the perspective of long term prosperous coexistence of national cultures, arguably, a key theme, which is citizenship education. It asks the question what the content of political education should be in a linguistically divided community.

The thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 1 presents the theoretical framework of the thesis and starts out by outlining liberal egalitarianism in its classical sense by presenting Rawls' theory of *justice as fairness* and Dworkin's conception of *equality of resources*. Then it continues with the liberal multicultuarilst critique which charges the former theories that they tell us very little about what justice means in a multiethnic or –national society. The sources of ethno-cultural injustices are identified as stemming from status inequalities and

from certain nation-building processes, both of which tend to systematically disadvantage minorities.

Chapter 2 narrows down the scope of thesis to a specific aspect of cultural difference, which is language. It brings in the case of recent aspirations for bilingualism in South-Slovakia and tries to explore possible justifications for it by considering some of the existing multicultural theories including Taylor's thesis of *Politics of Recognition*, and Kymlicka's *Multicultural Citizenship*.

Finally, Chapter 3 turns to the issue of education which plays a significant role in the perpetuation and formation of national identities. The largest part of this chapter is concerned with parental choices about enrolling children to minority or majority schools, and the consequences of these decisions on children's equality of opportunity. The last section of the chapter briefly addresses the issue of citizenship education.

Chapter 1 – Liberalism

1.1. Liberal Egalitarianism

Liberalism is a body of thought that is concerned with the relationship between the individual and the state. Its proponents have been committed to safeguarding the liberties of individuals against the encroachment of the state; their political ideal is one of a limited state and where individuals have the most extensive rights available to them in order to freely pursue their own interests.

A particular version of liberalism is liberal egalitarianism and this section is concerned with setting out its general thesis following two of the most prominent proponents, John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin. Rawls with his magnum opus, *A Theory of Justice* (from here on just TJ) first published in 1971 has given a major impetus to political philosophy by revising liberalism and introducing the concept of social justice into it. His theory has been widely seen as a comprehensive justification for current welfare state regimes[1]. Much of the liberal multicultuarlist literature develops on Rawls' (and Dworkin's) works, therefore it is appropriate that this thesis should also start with a brief sketch of Rawls' theory.

Rawls' main purpose in TJ was "to work out a conception of justice that provide[d] a reasonably systematic alternative to utilitarianism," which had long dominated the Anglo-Saxon tradition of political thought.[2] In TJ Rawls attacks the utilitarian idea according to which "society is to be arranged so as to maximize (the total or average) aggregate utility or expected well-being"[3]. Here I do not wish to go into the details of this debate, but to illustrate the counter-intuitive problems utilitarianism raises. It should be enough to note that such a moral theory has a problem to explain on its own why we should not treat some humans

[1] This statement is made, for example, by Kymlicka in his *Introduction* (2002: 88)
[2] TJ at xvi
[3] http://www.iep.utm.edu/rawls/#SH2b

inhumanly (e.g. subject them to torture, slavery or mass murder) if it could be to the benefit of the larger society.

In TJ Rawls conceives society as a "cooperative venture for mutual advantage,"[4] and he is interested in defining the fair principles of this social cooperation on the level of basic institutions. Some institutions (such as the ones informed by utilitarian principles) enable the suppression of basic liberties, others such as completely free and unregulated markets may lead to the exploitation of one individual by another. For Rawls none of this is compatible with justice as he is committed both to the idea of freedom as well as equality, and his theory is aimed at balancing out these two values. TJ thus represents a compromise between what has traditionally been known as the political right on the one hand, and the political left on the other.

So how does Rawls manage to reconcile these two competing values? He asks us to imagine an initial or "original" position where individuals are behind a veil of ignorance and do not know their social positions or their conception of the good. A just and fair society would be one, according to Rawls, where these representative people who were denied these particular facts about themselves would agree upon. Rawls here evokes a hypothetical contract situation in order to appeal to our sense of intuition. To be sure contract theories are not very popular (or credible) in political theory concerning our political obligations[5]. But here Rawls is not evoking them in order to work out the historical origins of the state or that of our political obligations, but for him it is a "device for teasing out the implications of certain moral premises concerning people's moral equality."[6] It is a way that helps us imagine each person as morally free and equal in the absence of the natural subordination that is been present throughout most of human history.

[4] TJ 74

[5] Contract theories concerning our political obligations are not popular because they suggest we have a moral obligation to obey the rules of the state because we consented to them, but in not reality, few of us expressed our consent to any political authority, most of us are just born and raised in particular jurisdictions.

[6] Kymlcika (2002: 61)

In such circumstances which would be brought about by the original position people would agree to two basic principles roughly corresponding to the concept of freedom and equality. Concerning freedom, rational persons would agree that they should be free to choose their own conception of the good, that is to decide about their life plans and projects, and they should be free to act upon them. A life only goes well if it is decided from inside, therefore individuals in order to have a fulfilling life should be able to decide about their own goals themselves. In the original position people do not know about their conception of the good, and this ignorance is intended to capture the freedom related aspect of just agreement that they should arrive at. Since no-one knows their actual conception of the good, no one should have an interest to impose any particular good on the community because it might turn out that she does a disfavor to herself. Instead what all should be interested in is protecting merely their capacity to choose (and revise, and act upon) their own conception of the good.

The equality related aspect in the original position is captured by people's ignorance about their social position and their natural endowments. Rawls believes that a just distribution of primary goods ("things that every rational man is presumed to want" irrespectively of their individual plan of life[7]) is where everybody can have an equal share of these goods. This is largely consistent with the view as we nowadays tend to interpret equality as equal opportunity in society, that one's social position should not have an influence on one's ability to achieve certain goods, or occupy positions, since the position one is born into is arbitrary from a moral point of view. However, Rawls goes further and suggests that it is not only our social status but also natural endowments that are arbitrary: no one is responsible for their talents, physical or mental capacities. These are also arbitrary from a moral point of view, and therefore so are they products as well. Here although Rawls does not advocate a completely equal share for everybody (probably because that would not

[7] First and foremost these include: liberties, opportunities, income, wealth and the bases of self-respect. See Rawls (1999: 54)

be sustainable and people were less likely to cooperate in such a society where they have to share everything with the less or disabled), but he does advocate a quite extensive scheme of redistribution. He says all primary goods should be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution pattern favors the least well off[8]. The role of ignorance in respect of equality is again to ensure the fair terms of agreement. It is intended to check people's unequal bargaining positions. The classical example here is that of cutting the cake: when a person does not know which part she is going to get, she will make sure that she cuts it to equal pieces so that she is not worse off than any of her peers. This type of distribution, according to Rawls is just because its procedure[9]: as goods are divided equally without a prior knowledge of who will end up with which particular bundle. So the special conception of Rawlsian justice is the following:

> First principle: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive schemes of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others.
>
> Second principle: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all[10].

The special conception of justice allows for the ordering of the values of liberties and equality. Rawls insists that the principles should be read in lexical order that is the first one, concerning liberties should always have a priority over the second, socio-economic related

[8] It is possible to imagine that e.g. letting the rich to retain some of their resources will benefit the poor more (because it will be invested into some public good) than a direct redistribution would do.
[9] Although libertarians such as Nozick would certainly disagree, and argue that such a distribution is indeed patterned because it is concerned about the final outcome of distribution and that everybody gets equal share.
[10] Rawls (1999: 53)

ones. It is not acceptable accordingly to infringe on the basic liberties of certain individuals even if that would bring them or the whole society increased benefits in terms of material wealth. Basic liberties are not tradable for socio-economic benefits. Nevertheless, Rawls' theory still goes a long way to ensure social equality. If societies were organized according to the principles he suggests it would call for a major redistribution of resources from one generation to another (potentially in the form of high inheritance taxes), and would certainly not endorse large inequalities of wealth among people that currently exist in many capitalist liberal democracies.

Opponents of liberalism (such as Marxists) have typically criticized liberalism because they believe it promotes values and an ordering of society that leaves the weak vulnerable to the stronger. They typically charge it is "Social Darwinism" because it is concerned with the promotion of an overly extensive freedom of the individual to the detriment of social equality. Rawls conception of liberalism is certainly not like that. It is concerned with much more than formal equality of the individual and calls for the compensation of morally arbitrary factors that may disadvantage individuals. The theory itself does not specify the exact market mechanism how it should happen (whether its capitalist or socialist one) but it certainly involves a large degree of state regulation[11], and is much more ambitious in its aim to compensate inequalities than the most progressive Western socialist parties have typically advocated for the reform of their societies.

So much of Rawls' theory is about social justice and distributing fairly primary goods in society. But can this theory survive in a pluralist world where people fundamentally disagree over the good? Some critiques charged that Rawls' theory of justice is just another comprehensive doctrine and it is unable to accommodate other (notably communitarian)

[11] It would certainly not endorse such an unequal distribution of wealth as it is in the US. According to a BBC report *The Wealth Gap – Inequality in Numbers* (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-16545898) the largest share of growth that happened in the last 30years in the US had gone to the richest households. Incomes have increased by a total of 62% (allowing for taxation and inflation), but while the lowest paid 5th Americans income grew only a meager 18%, this corresponded to a massive 275% income growth for the richest.

views[12]. As a response Rawls extended his theory in *Political Liberalism* (PL) which aimed to address the issue of justice as fairness in a society that is characterized by deep diversity, and where people disagree over their conception of good life. PL still contains the fundamental ideas of freedom, equality and fair cooperation, as Rawls believes any system that is just should uphold those ideals. However, Rawls introduces an extra element, the criteria of *public reason*, which is to justify political coercion in the face of this reasonable disagreement. The idea is that in a society where people are free and equal, it is natural that people hold different, sometimes conflicting comprehensive views (such as Christianity or atheism). However, the legitimacy of political institutions cannot rest on comprehensive doctrines that people hold as their whole truth, because obviously not everybody shares their views in a diverse society. Rather, political institutions, and in particular the basic structure of society, should be justified by some freestanding principles that are acceptable to all individuals irrespective of the comprehensive doctrines they subscribe to. This is the condition of public reason which is a kind of minimum that all reasonable people can agree on. It is supposed to provide an "overlapping consensus" for people with different believes, and a neutral framework in a modern society characterized by deep diversity.

Another influential liberal egalitarian theory comes from Ronald Dworkin. Dworkin shares the liberal framework of Rawls, however, he believes that a different scheme could better realize that. His main objection is that the veil of ignorance is not sensitive to people's choices and much of his theory is aimed at correcting for this (perceived) shortage. So Dworkin, instead of the veil of ignorance, asks us to imagine a hypothetical shipwreck scenario, at which survivors are washed up on a desert island which has abundant resources that they have to find a way to equally divide between themselves[13]. In order to ensure that everyone's interests are taken into consideration equally they distribute hundred clamshells

[12] Notable communitarian critiques of Rawls come from Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, or Micheal Waltzer. For a clear summary of the content of their respective criticism see, for example, Mulhall & Swift (2006)
[13] See Dworkin (2007: 110-33)

among themselves and they bid for the goods of island in an auction. According to Dworkin an equal distribution of resources arises, if the division is complete, no islander would prefer someone else's bundle of resources to her own bundle[14]. Under such circumstances no one has grounds to complain that she has been treated unequally because if someone had preferred other bundle of resources, she could have bid for it. The auction ensures equal division by allowing people to decide what sort of life they want to live by taking into account the costs of their choices. This ensures the ambition sensitivity of the scheme.

But of course, the auction will be only successful if no one is disadvantaged in terms of their initial position. And in the real world some people face disadvantages in their natural talents or social circumstances, that is they possess differences that none else would choose. They have special needs, and therefore, the same amount of 100 shells might not be enough for them. Dworkin's solution to this problem is to add to the auction an insurance scheme as well before the distribution takes place by asking people how much of their share are willing to spend on insurance against being handicapped, or being otherwise disadvantaged in the distribution of social and natural circumstances. These disadvantages in society would be covered from this pool of insurance that people were willing to separate from their resources, but only those would be entitled to them who have initially insured them. Those who did not had no grounds for compensation.

Dworkin's version of justice theory then relies on a hypothetical auction scheme to ensure the equal distribution of resources, and another hypothetical insurance scheme to ensure the compensation for disadvantages stemming from differences in people's endowments. Of course, the latter part will not be able to compensate for all disadvantages, since no matter how much money we give to as mentally disable people, in some cases, unfortunately, it will never be able to equalize their positions adequately and bring them on

[14] Dworkin (2007: 111)

an equal starting point with mentally healthy people[15], but the insurance scheme represents a compromise between completely neglecting endowment related disadvantages and devoting all resources to their compensation (which might still turn to be unsuccessful). Dworkin deems his theory also procedural because it focuses on the distribution of resources, and not that of welfare. The latter, exactly because of the aforementioned example of endowment differences is a an impossible task. What he does is looks at available resources and tries to device a scheme that would enable their equal distribution in society according to people 's choices. There are of course other factors at play which influence the outcome of distribution such as the availability of certain goods, the prevalence of particular tastes (how many people bid for particular goods), but this for Dworkin is not something that challenges the fairness of the scheme, but only a matter of luck. Similarly it is with eccentric or expensive tastes (such as some people having a flare for expensive wines, or luxurious lifestyle) – Dworkin's distribution scheme is not intended to compensate for such lifestyles, unless people see them as a handicap (and not an essential part of their identity) and whish they did not have these tastes. As long as their preferences are the result of their choice, or they do not regret that they have these expensive tastes, they have no grounds for complain as those preferences would not pass the envy test (presumably they would not insure against them).

Liberal multiculturalists have some issues both with Dworkin's insurance scheme as well as Rawls' original position, and in the next section I will turn to their conception of justice.

1.2. Liberal Multiculturalism

While liberal egalitarians have recognized the presence of certain degree of pluralism in society, they thought about it primarily in terms of different conceptions of the good:

[15] Nor would it be rational for one to insure against such misfortunes, since it would be way too expensive.

members of religious sects might disagree with seculars, communitarians or socialists with liberals etc. All of these fractions exist within a given community where the people are considered to be one (the People of America, Frenchmen etc), but in some cases there are more than one people present in one state, and these liberal egalitarians tell us very little about it what does justice mean in such contexts. Rawls and Dworkin have written their theories mainly by taking for granted the concept of nation-state: that is that the boundaries of the state and nation coincide, yet in the reality this is a highly problematic assumption[16]. They have taken for granted borders of the state and unit of community are given and uncontested, and they tell us nothing about it how we should think about justice when it is not like that. It is for this reason that liberal multiculturalism had arisen, and have tried to develop further theories of justice in the context of ethno-national-plurality.

It is useful to differentiate between two conceptions of the boundaries of the nation-states. One is that of a territorial unit, and another concerns that of the sovereign people[17]. The assumption for most of the liberal egalitarian theories is that the two coincide. However, as I hinted before this is not necessarily the case, and there are many states where there are more than one people residing on a territory. In such a circumstance, where there is no distinction made, the sovereignty/self-government or self-determination of the people also gains a different meaning. As Tamir explains, it has a democratic version which means essentially participating in government; much of democratic theory has focused on this aspect. But in addition to that, it also has a cultural version which is a "community's ability to preserve its distinct existence and manage its communal life"[18]. It involves members of minorities to freely define their national identity, and concerns also the public expression of national identity and the allocation of corresponding public space for this purpose. Where the two concepts of nation are washed together and there is no distinction, it is very often that the

[16] Currently very few states on the world are clear nation-states.
[17] Kymlicka (2002: 262)
[18] Tamir (1993: 69)

majority is the one who gets to decide about and the cultural component for the minorities as well, and this can be perceived as a cultural domination.

This raises new questions about the conceptions of equality in multi-nation states that might not be adequately captured by justice as fairness that focuses merely on issues of inequalities in distribution. As Nancy Fraser says it, in every society there are two types of powerful hierarchies: one is socio-economic, or class related, and remedies to it have been traditionally conceived in terms of redistribution. This is what classical liberal theories of justice (Rawls and Dworkin) are primarily concerned with. But there is another hierarchy as well which is status related, and a large part of it is made up of cultural components. In Slovakia for example, just as in many other European countries, it has been always better to be a white, Christian, Slovak speaking, heterosexual, or male, than a Roma, Muslim, Hungarian, woman or a gay. The latter identities are one that have traditionally been marginalized, seen as less desirable or sometimes even ridiculed and denigrated in comparison to the majority population, and for this reason some of these groups have sought equal recognition of their different identities. It is not more redistribution what they want but it is equal parity, that they are treated with equal respect by state and its institutions. The latter component is also important, that they seek recognition primarily not from individuals but by the public, that they have a comparable share in the public space allocated to them (e.g. in media), and that public institutions reflect to some extent their culture too, and not only that of the majority. Otherwise, it will be hard for these groups to see themselves as equal citizens even if they have the very same citizenship rights than the majority.

Of course many of the status inequalities also interact with economic inequalities (notably in the case of Roma), and minorities have sought to affirm their identities to a different extent. To sort out exactly what sort of recognition is appropriate in different degrees of pluralism and exclusion is itself a complicated task, and there might not be a single

magic formula that would fit for all heterogeneous societies. In the followings I would like to restrict the discussion and continue to focus merely on the case of national minorities which contrary to racial, (some) religious or sexually marginalized groups tend to be characterized by a highest degree of "separateness" from the majority community, in a sense that they are self-reproducing (unlike sexual minorities), and have their own societal cultures in which they can lead of full and meaningful life. Having this societal culture they constitute a sort of competition to the majority's culture, and in fact, they have often sought to affirm the most extensive self-government rights (typically, in the form of official language rights, or territorial autonomy, or both). Other minorities, on the other hand, have had different concerns. Some of them just seek non-discrimination, or acceptance of their different practices, but all this with the intention to gain inclusion to the mainstream society. National minorities are different in a sense that, it is exactly what they want to avoid, for they want to be able to live in own cultures and perpetuate their separateness for future generations as well.

Another reason why national minorities can be disadvantaged if they do not have minority rights is not because of the misrecognition of particular identities, but nation-building processes in which all states engage to a more or less degree. Nation-building (or maintaining, in the case of well established nations) simply means certain cultural contents that are adopted by states with the intention not as much to exclude any particular group, but to ensure the efficient functioning of the state. Gellner[19] describes how the dissemination of national culture in modern nation-states contributed to forging of sense of unity among inhabitants of a territory where people often knew very little about each other and were otherwise in contact minimally. The introduction of common school system, army, bureaucracies and print media all actively contributed to the formation of single national

[19] Gellner (1983)

communities since much of the 19th century. They disseminated a common language, introduced history classes from a specific national point of view in school curricula, and disseminated symbolical items (flags, national maps, mottos, etc) through their territories. While much of this process happened with forced assimilation or expulsion in previous centuries, which nowadays would hardly be acceptable, nation-building (or maintaining) processes also serve some very important valid purposes in modern societies. As Gellner[20] pointed out they ensure the mobility of workforce in industrial/capitalist societies: adequate literacy on the same language with the same cultural background understandings, while not important for peasants working on the field is essential for the management or quick retraining of personnel working in factories or offices, the sites where the overwhelming majority of population is employed in modern societies. Furthermore, a common national culture is also important for the functioning of deliberative democracy. If large sections of populations read different newspapers (or do not read at all) it will be much more difficult for them to be informed and maintain a sense of connectedness to other people living in some distant regions in the country. In fact, some commentators, such as Miller, have feared that the absence of common national culture can undermine the effective functioning of welfare state, since people will be less likely to cooperate and make sacrifices for other people than their own[21].Finally, some liberal egalitarians have argued that the dissemination of common national culture without adequate protection for minorities is justified because it is more efficient for states to function on one language than on a multiple one[22]. It is not for any reason that states would like to affirm a particular cultural identity over another, but it is merely the least expensive and a more effective way to run the state on the majority's language.

[20] Gellner (1983: Ch.3)
[21] Miller (1995:71-2)
[22] Barry and to some extent Kukathas also makes this critique.

It is perfectly understandable that states participate in these nation-building processes, but what is not clear is why minorities should not be allowed to engage in nation building to the same extent. As Kymlicka[23] and Norman[24] suggests we need a permissive theory of nation-building that outlines what are its liberal and illiberal forms. The absolute minimum is that the basic rights of individuals are respected. However the fact that basic civic rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of association are provided for minorities, although absolutely essential, go very little in the way to ensure equal parity between two cultural groups. One of the most important site where cultures are present is the public sphere and any viable national culture for its members must be accessible in that realm otherwise very quickly it starts declining and eventually disappear. A traditional liberal response is that evenhandedness for cultures can be ensured in the public by (striving for) neutrality. Rawls' overlapping consensus is exactly this sort of neutral framework that it is aimed at providing. But note how Rawls was thinking in terms of religious differences, and these are not the same as having different national attachments. The former pertains to differences or disagreements about the good while the latter about different belongings. Language and culture is a phenomena that cannot be disestablished in the public sites since bureaucracies must speak languages, schools must teach some sort of history in the educational curricula, and so neutrality is impossible. When neutrality is clearly impossible it seems the best approach is trying to include members of the minorities within the society by sharing with them the public space. This requires the introduction of certain minority rights that enable the minority protect themselves from these nation-building processes. A principle of fairness would ensure that they also have a right to participate in equal degree in their nation-building processes, and on decisions that are crucial to the viability and survival of their culture the majority would not be able to outvote them. In essence the point of minority rights is to provide members of the

[23] Kymlicka (2002: 343-347)
[24] Norman (2006: Ch.2.6)

minority group equal access to a viable cultural context that it is available to the majority population.

But even if liberal egalitarian thinkers did not initially address the issue of national differences, I think their theories can be applied and adjusted to those contexts. Take Rawls' theory first. The representative men stand behind the veil of ignorance not knowing their conception of the good, natural talents, social position and national attachments in the society. We are about to agree about the principles of basic structure that should govern the state institutions, and regulate the distribution of rights and obligations in society, but we do not know whether we will belong to the majority or minority. In such circumstance would we prefer to have institutions that are multilingual and accorded equal recognition to both national groups, or one where one group is valued and promoted over the other? I think reasonable people would have to say that they preferred the first option, simply because they would not know in advance which position they would find themselves later.

The same line of argumentation is developed by Kymlicka who uses Dworkin's equality of resources scheme[25]. Kymlicka asks us to imagine Dworkin's shipwreck scenario with a slight modification that is more reflective of a multi-nation setting. Instead of assuming that there is only one vessel, he posits two ships, one larger and another quite small which are shipwrecked on the island. In order to ensure a smooth auction, members of the crew proceed their bids into the ships' computer system without ever leaving their ships (the information about the available goods was perhaps provided them in a dataset by a third scouting party). As the auction proceeds it turns out the passengers of the two ships are very similar in their composition: in both about 10% bids for resources that suit contemplative lifestyles, about 20% prefer resources that are necessary of entrepreneur life, and so on. However, when they enter the island it becomes evident for them in the first time, what has been masked by the

[25] Kymlicka (1989: Ch. 9)

common computer system, that the two ships are of different nationalities. Minorities are now in a very undesirable position. They are forced to execute their chosen lifestyles in an alien culture – e.g. in their work, or when the state institutions are created in courts, legislature, school system etc[26].

Notice that the problem again is not that members of the minority group envy the bundle of resources of the majority. On the contrary, the minority has the resources what they bid for their preferred life choices. What they envy is the fact that they do not have the ability to execute these life choices in their own cultural context as members of the majority can. Kymlicka suggests that the auction could be re-run in a way that members of the minority would decide to buy resources in one area of the island, which would involve outbidding the present majority owners of those resources. But then they have to secure additional costs to secure their cultural community (depending how much a person values cultural attachment). The inequality is that members of the minority community face this dilemma already before making any choices about their life plans, whereas members of the majority rarely have to worry about the viability of their cultural structure; they get secure cultural membership for free[27].

Because the disadvantages minority nations can face is not identical to their member's life choices and ambitions Kymlicka and multiculturalists argue that minorities should not be penalized for their national attachments. What form should the compensation take? We could imagine a variant of the Dworkinian insurance scheme which would compensate people for the costs of assimilation in the majority culture. We could perhaps ask people before the auction how much they would take out for insuring themselves against the possibility that they will be a minority and the political/economic operations of the society will undermine their societal culture. But suggesting such an insurance scheme is to misunderstand the good

[26] Kymlicka (1989:188)
[27] Kymlicka (1989:189-9)

of cultural membership. Unlike physical or mental disabilities which undeservedly limit one's capacities to achieve one's ends, culture is not a means to an end but a context within which choices happen. It also affects our sense of personal identity and self-respect, and asking members of the minority group to trade their identity for some money is like expecting someone's self-respect to trade off for some money[28]. For this reason multiculturalist have advocated the granting of differentiated citizenship rights to minorities which would provide their culture external protections from the political decisions taken by the majority. In the next section I will deal with one form of such protection which is minority language rights illustrated by the case of official linguistic regime in Slovakia.

[28] Kymlicka (1989: 192-3)

Chapter 2 – Language

2.1. Kétnyelvű Dél-Szlovákia (Bilingual South-Slovakia) Initiative

In the last year there has been some remarkable civil activism among the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. Since June 2010 a number of local initiatives have sprung up more or less independently from each other, which have been trying to promote by various means the use of Hungarian language in public life. Perhaps the most visible of these initiatives is the Kétnyelvű Dél-Szlovákia (KD) which has drawn the public's attention to this matter by various "guerilla" activities[29]. The vary last of such action had arguably had the biggest impact. These activists put stickers on monolingual signage of shop windows, train stations, or other service facilities that address the local population only on the state language in the nationally mixed regions of Slovakia. This activism has started from Šamorín (Somorja) but then quickly spread to other south Slovakian towns such as Dunajská Streda (Dunaszerdahely), Galanta (Galánta), and other towns with the help of volunteer activists.

The sticker campaign works ultimately as a consciousness raiser. Via the guerilla actions its members want to draw the attention of minority population that their language is declining and being increasingly marginalized from the public sphere. The worries are fed on one hand by the awareness that if a language recedes from a public sphere to the private and within that the family life, it has no future perspective to survive than just a couple of generations. For official interaction and education are the main sites of language where it is being reproduced and if a language is marginalized from these spheres, it will unavoidably start to decay and regress to a "kitchen language" that is merely spoken at home. On the other hand, the timing of the sticker campaign (and also that of the other activisms encouraging

[29] Other initiatives include the Fontos vagy! ("You are important movement!"), or local initiative trying to promote a wider space for bilingualism.

minority language revitalization) is not an accident, and has certainly been influenced by the 2011 Census results which confirmed the already anticipated tendency that there will be yet again less citizens in Slovakia who claim themselves to be members of the Hungarian national minority. For since the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the number of Hungarians has gradually declined[30]. So there is this worry about the apathy of minority citizens and consequent decline and disappearance of Hungarian community in Slovakia. The activists thus try to encourage minorities to use "more consciously their language." This is mostly an issue within the minority community, and raises the question till what extent are some members of the community right to demand that others use the minority language, or they put it on their shop window – if they themselves do not want to. Some section of minority entrepreneurs do find the sticker campaign offensive and charge that it is a damage of property and interference with once choices of language; the activists on the other hand argue that the material wrong that is done by the small stickers is incomparably smaller than the "moral wrong that is caused in a *de facto* bilingual town by monolingual billboards."[31] They see monolingualism as a sign of disrespect towards the minority speakers, and believe that a bilingual settlement simply should have institutions and services that are provided them also bilingually. For that is just what parity of esteem requires that everybody be treated equally irrespective of their mother tongue.

This brings us to a second and more important aspect where this minority language activism ultimately points to. Underlying all these bickering about bilingual shop windows and billboard signage within the Hungarian minority community, there is also a long term goal that these activists would like to attain, which is official bilingualism of the mixed

[30] Although this is not exactly true because there has been some oscillation among the numbers, but these numbers, it is argued by sociologists, do not reflect the real composition of society but where heavily influenced by political events. E.g. After the war it was not quite trendy to proclaim oneself to be Hungarian, as they were divested from their citizenship rights, so in the early 50s the number of those who proclaimed themselves Hungarians in Slovakia was at a record minimum (around 300.000).

[31] Rimaszombat: http://www.bumm.sk/68354/ketnyelvu-oriasplakatokat-kovetelnek-rimaszombati-civilek.html

regions of South-Slovakia[32]. The endeavor for this goal can be nicely tracked down from a recent activism where members of KD succeeded to convince a local rail company, called Regiojet, commuting between Komárno (Komárom) and Bratislava (Pozsony) passing some villages overwhelmingly populated by Hungarian minorities, that the rail company should put out the name of train stations on the minority language, for the majority of their customers in these areas are Hungarian speakers. As their catchy slogan expressed it: "the customer has not only money but mother tongue too". Eventually, Regiojet did put out the signs in Hungarian too. Now after the success, KD and other organizations immediately approached the national rail company in Komárno and asked that on the example of local rail company, they should also make their stations bilingual. After all, the passengers who commute on the stations are mostly Hungarian, and as the line of argumentation went, as "tax paying citizen they deserve that their mother tongue be also given equal respect". The Slovak national company declined the request referring to some bureaucratic issues, and it is likely that the fight over bilingualism with the state will take much longer than with local companies. However, the conscious strategy one can see here is first to approach and win over the small fish in the neighborhood and then put pressure on the state which is seen by some members of the Hungarian community as the ultimate source of discrimination against their language.

How does the Slovak state discriminate minority languages? Many minority commentators and representatives in Slovakia have complained that the status-quo towards national minority languages is "not enough."[33] For the law on minority languages in Slovakia is informed by a philosophy of permissiveness which puts it to a disadvantage in comparison with the (obligatory) majority language, Slovak. According to the current language law in Slovakia, settlements can use the minority language if national minorities constitute at least

[32] KD for example openly states on its Facebook site in its self-description that its ultimate aim is "to achieve complete bilingualism [in South Slovakia]".
[33] See for example a recent article on bum.sk: http://www.bumm.sk/68663/csemadok-es-mkp-a-status-quo-megorzese-nem-eleg.html

20% of the local population. An emphasis must be put on "can" for the law does not prescribe the minority language in these towns but merely allows. Thus, while all mixed settlements have their signs in Slovak, for various reasons (of "forgetfulness," or apathy) somewhat less have it also in Hungarian[34]. The law of permissiveness similarly disadvantages minorities in the access of public services. Since in the name of language law, minorities have a right to use their language in official contexts (e.g. in interaction with the local bureaucrat), however officers have no corresponding obligation to deliver public services on the minority language. Thus, Hungarians have typically complained that their rights to speak their language are merely empty rights, because public officials do not have an obligation to understand the minority language. Finally, another site where the inequality between languages manifests itself, is in the sphere of education. While Hungarian parents tend to enroll their children both to Hungarian or Slovak schools, this does not work the same way on the Slovak side. Slovak parents in the nationally mixed regions tend to enroll their children only to Slovak schools. Moreover, in mixed families it is also an overwhelming tendency that the first language being later passed on, and the school choice will also be likely that of Slovak. One reason behind this lack of reciprocity in terms of language maintenance, and learning the other groups' language is that Hungarian parents often want their child "to achieve something in life" to which Slovak language is seen as essential where they live[35]. Slovak parents, on the other hand, can be confident enough that all what their child needs for her future prosperity is her mother tongue, and so they do not have to regard the Hungarian language as an asset even in towns where the Slovaks otherwise constitute a local majority, because, as it is currently stipulated by the law, the official language is everywhere Slovak, and not Slovak *and* Hungarian. In other words, the system is made so that it tolerates bilingualism but does not

[34] There are dozena villages in Slovakia which are populated by Hungarian minorities but do not have their names only in Slovak language on the local sign posts. Some of these villages can be checked on KD's Facebook website in their photo album titled *Névtelen falvak* ("Nameless villages").

[35] I discuss in more detail the school choice of minority parents in the next chapter.

see it as an asset and even less promotes it. Apparently, what from the point of view of state is above all an asset is monolingualism in Slovak.

This is what civil groups such as KD want to change, and to see how such a change is justifiable I will turn to multicultural theories in the next section. But before that some clarification is needed on what is meant and what is not meant by the idea of official bilingualism in South-Slovakia[36].

First of all, official bilingualism in a given area does not mean that everybody has to be bilingual; it does not apply on personal but rather on institutional level. It demands that in the nationally mixed regions institutions should reflect the diversity of local population, and this should find full expression in the character of public institutions (like municipalities, and social services) and a partial expression in the character of semi-public entities (like shops, enterprises, and so on) operating in these bilingual regions. By full expression I mean that public services available to citizens should be formally bilingual, that is, have bilingual signs, information; and in addition, a personnel that is able to converse and provide services to citizens on the latter's choice of language. The choice of communication should be defined by the citizen, not the bureaucrat. This does not necessarily mean that everybody has to learn two languages in these regions (although it would be welcomed if Slovaks did so too), but it certainly means that public employees who are able to proficiently work on two languages, should be prioritized in hiring process[37]. By contrast, partial expression in the semi-public sphere is less demanding. It only requires formal bilingualism, so that for example shop titles, opening hours or restaurant menus are designated or made available on both languages. But the staff should not be required to be bilingual, because, on one hand, that would arguably be

[36] The following description is my interpretation of an officially bilingual regime. Certainly other possible versions of it could be also legitimate.

[37] Larger departments could perhaps allow having both Hungarian and Slovak speaking personnel. The point is that if public services are really to serve citizens there should be somebody around who can speak the minority language too.

too demanding to expect from Slovaks[38], and on the other, because a large part of these semi-public entities operate in the private sphere which is voluntary. If someone doesn't like the restaurant where they refuse to serve in Hungarian language, one can go somewhere else. But to the extent that these private entities are present and, so to say, "intrude" the public space (with their shop windows, or commercials) they should respect formal conventions of bilingualism.

Secondly, official bilingualism in this sense should only apply to those settlements in Slovakia where national minorities constitute a significant part of the local population, as it is defined by law (20% currently). As it is evident from the name of Kétnyelvű Dél-Szlovákia ("Bilingual South-Slovakia") initiative, this movement does not demand that the Žilina or Martin regions in Northern-Slovakia, almost exclusively populated by Slovak speaking inhabitants, should have also Hungarian signs, but only those settlements which are home to significant Hungarian speakers. So this is how official bilingualism should be meant: it applies only on institutional level, and to the relevant regions having significant number of minority language speaking inhabitants.

2.2. Taylor

The stated reason why some members of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia demand bilingualism is that they perceive the omission of their mother tongues from the (semi-)public sphere as a sign of disrespect to their personhood[39]. Hungarians feel less at home in their towns and villages if private and public services are only delivered on the majority community's languages, therefore they demand the recognition of Hungarian language

[38] It would be too demanding to expect Slovaks to learn also Hungarian, because in general they would gain much less from the minority language than the other way round.
[39] The sticker slogans clearly express this perception when they state "Monolingualism is a disrespect. This is a multi-lingual country."

besides the Slovak. But why should we recognize minority cultures? One answer is provided by Charles Taylor, one of the most popular proponents of multicultural recognition. I will look at his account of recognition in this section.

Rather then trying to work out a justification for multicultural policies from a liberal framework, Taylor proceeds by critiquing liberalism itself. For this reason he has been often branded as a communitarian philosopher, although the appropriateness of this tag can be disputed, it is true he uses some communitarian arguments to critique liberalism and its traditional approach to cultural differences. In particular, he critiques liberalism for its tendency of its excessive universalism and neglecting the particularities of individuals. This critique of his is perhaps best articulated in his *Politics of Recognition* essay, and goes into the hart of debate what exactly equal recognition means in a liberal democratic society.

According to Taylor the novelty of modernity is the recognition of equal moral value of humanity. It is this fundamental principle that differentiates our age from pre-modern societies, which was centered around the notion of honor, and where one's position within the hierarchical structure of society was defined by birth into a particular status group. Modernity broke with this notion honor altogether, and called for the equal recognition of every individual regardless of class, race, religion, gender and so on. But what exactly equal recognition means is widely disputed between liberals themselves. The classical way how this equal recognition has been understood was by basing policies and social arrangements on universalist principles: everybody is accorded the same basket of rights, and to everybody identical rules apply. To be sure egalitarian liberals allow for certain forms of positive discrimination but only temporally and until the disadvantaged groups are not taken to the level of majority in society. The great advancement of this approach was that it enfranchised all previously suppressed groups and gave them equal set of formal rights. The idea was that such identities should not matter anymore, and be relevant in defining one's status in society.

In other words, the state should be "color blind" to people's different identities and treat them with "benign neglect."

However, as feminist and multiculturalist realized within the last 20 years or so, even if the equal rights do not exclude anybody from the public space, they do have another tendency which prevent or at least make difficult to enjoy a full sense of moral equality for minorities, which is that they do not recognize people's unique identity. The particularity of modern age, as Taylor explains, is that our identity is no more derived form our social status that we occupy (since everybody has the same formal status), but it has to be worked out inwardly – by listening to one's inner self, intuitions; this is the idea of authenticity, and dialogically, by a process of communication and interaction with one's "significant selves," that is, with persons that matter to us. This is merely to make a statement how one's identity is build up. Now the peculiarity of modern age is not recognition per se, since there was also recognition in previous ages, but that it can fail if there are no adequate conditions to it. If the society projects a view towards minorities that their identity is somehow inferior, less desirable, and it's something that they should be ashamed of. And this is very much relevant in the contemporary societies where the Roma are ridiculed for who they are, or national minorities are seen as a "problem group". The upshot of such misrecognition is on one hand that minorities can internalize it which is bad enough in itself, but also that it introduces a "new form of second-class status" in society[40].

The politics of difference grew organically out of the politics of universalism, and it also has in its center the equal dignity of human beings. However, where the politics of universalism fought for ways of non-discrimination that were quite blind to the ways in which people differ, the politics of difference makes these distinctions to the bases of differential treatment. These differential treatments have come in the form in certain minority rights

[40] Taylor (1992: 39)

which allow minorities to exercise their differences. Multiculturalism's goal is not to bring up the minority to the "level" of majority, for that be quite hypocritical and communicate to members of the minority that their culture is somehow less valuable, and does not live up to the dominant culture. So rather than promoting assimilation and molding minorities into a "homogeneous mould that is untrue to them", the politics of difference allows and even assists the maintenance of distinctive identities[41].

However, Taylor has a very particular understanding of recognition of culture. When he discusses the Quebec case, he believes that it is also justifiable for national cultures within the liberal framework to put certain collective goals before individual rights which is the case in Quebec which claims a right to cultural survival. It is not only that it provides recognition for existing French speakers but the public policies are "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 facility to already existing people"[42]. There are a number of laws in Quebec that are aimed at ensuring the survival of French language, one regulates for example who can send their child to English-language schools (not francophone's and immigrants), another requires businesses with more than fifty employers to operate on French language, or a third one outlaws commercial signage in any other language than French[43]. The Quebec policy clearly seems to violate the liberal notion of neutrality[44], however, for Taylor this is acceptable, because this violation pertains only to public policy and does not violate fundamental human rights such as right to life, liberty, property or freedom of speech and

[41] Taylor (1992: 43)
[42] Taylor (1992: 58-59)
[43] Taylor (1992: 52-53)
[44] There are two notions of liberal neutrality according to Taylor: substantive one, which concerns views about good life, and procedural ones, which refer to treating citizens fairly abnd equally regardless of what their conception of good life is. Quebec clearly violates the procedural neutrality model as it promotes a collective good,.

religion, and so on[45], and those who do not share in these communal goals (i.e. English speakers) are provided adequate protection of their fundamental rights. For Taylor the dilemma between individual rights and communal goals in Quebec exemplifies just another variety of conflicts that can potentially come up in liberal democracies and which societies have to deal with, such as the dilemma between liberty and equality, or prosperity and justice[46].

Finally, Taylor believes that we should not only "recognize the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them *survive*, but [also] acknowledge their *worth*."[47] He believes we owe "equal respect to all cultures"[48] because they

> provided the horizon of meaning for large numbers of human beings, of diverse characters and temperaments, over a long period of time – that have in other words, articulated their sense of good, the holy, the admirable – are almost certain to have something that deserves our admiration and respect, even if it is accomplished by much that we have to abhor and reject. Perhaps one could put it another way: it would take a supreme arrogance to discount this possibility *a priori*.[49]

Taylor makes a number of claims in the *Politics of Recognition* which rest on some problematic assumptions and I want to look at these claims here more closely. First, Taylor claims, our identity is discovered by an inward looking process, and as a result of this we come discover our true self in ourselves. This is a controversial statement from a liberal perspective that can hardly be squared with the Rawlsian or other liberal conceptions of self,

[45] Taylor (1994: 59)
[46] Taylor (1994: 59-60)
[47] Taylor (1994: 64)
[48] Taylor (1994: 66)
[49] Taylor (1994: 72-3

which hold that none of our beliefs and values are free from revision or reflection[50]. This is not to say that liberals assume that individuals do revise all of their belief or attachments, many people are completely satisfied with not revising their believes. Nor is there anything to suggest in this assumption that people should revise their believes, the liberal view can be compatible with the idea that most people prefer to stay with their original beliefs that they were raised in, or that they value their communal attachments, and it is difficult to switch for them. However, it is suspicious of models of the self which posit there is some part inside us that cannot be questioned, or subjected to our reflection.

Second, there is the idea that for ethno-cultural equality we should recognize the equal value of cultures. This is also a problematic idea from a liberal point of view. Since I am free to believe whatever I want about different cultures, and in fact, many cultures do terrible things (denying their members medical treatment, requiring wives to be submissive to their husbands, or projecting artificial ideals of beauty[51]). It would be ludicrous to say and expect that we should respect all these cultures. Rather, what is important from a liberal point of view is that persons with different cultures are give due respect[52]. The value, hence, should be attributed to the individual, and not to the culture. Cultures from a liberal point of view have only value derivatively, to the extent they are important to the individual person, but have no independent value apart from that, and hence there is no reason why we should recognize them as such.

Finally, my last critical point about Taylor is concerning the idea put forward in his essay about *La Survivance*, that is, that French speakers in Quebec have a legitimate claim for the survival of their community. Taylor suggests that this survivalist policy can be squared

[50] See for example Tamir (1993: 20)

[51] In this context it is interesting to note that while in the West there is a huge money made from tanning industry (solariums, stranding), in the East fairness products are promoted. As an example of the latter, see, for example, this Indian advertisement by *Clean and Dry* about a vagina bleaching product: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l9Dmbqz5tJ0

[52] For a lucid articulation of this liberal view about respect for cultures and individuals see Jones (2006)

with liberalism and makes a reference to Walzer's distinction between two nations fo liberalism (one which recognizes a thicker another a thinner notion of collective goods), as long as the collective rights of the French community do not limit the individual rights of other communities. But if we stick to the previous notion of cultural value which rests in the individual's allegiances rather than independently in the culture itself, it is hard to see what can credibly justify such a survivalist claim. Why is French more special in Quebec than any other settler community (say Ukrainians)? And why should even all French speakers be committed to the perpetuation of Frenchness until indefinite future? Would the world be anyhow worse if in 200 years there would be less or no French speakers at all in Quebec? These are some of the questions that immediately pop up once one prioritizes a particular national culture without grounding that in the interests of individuals, and it is difficult to see how such questions can be answered without arbitrariness. If cultures independent of their members have no value, then we should avoid making claims for their protection merely so that they can survive. That would amount to some sort of commitment of "preservation of species"[53]. We do not agonize for example because Celtic is no longer spoken in East-Central Europe. Likewise, should we be concerned about the survival of any other languages at other parts of the world, including our homelands. I believe that minorities do have a strong claim for the protection of their cultures, but this cannot rest merely in the desire about the survival of cultures as such. Where I agree with Taylor is that the equal moral worth of humans in a culturally diverse society requires differential treatment, but to find justification for this claim we have to search elsewhere.

[53] I borrowed this term from Habermas (1992).

2.3. Kymlicka

Another theory at hand is that of Kymlicka's multicultural citizenship. In a series of books Kymlcika has developed perhaps the most influential liberal theory of multiculturalism up to date[54]. His theory is comprehensive because it deals with the case of indigenous people, immigrant group, and national minorities and convincingly demonstrates that differentiated multicultural citizenship is not only compatible but in fact in some cases enhances the concept of liberal equality in a diverse society[55]. Having said that, I think, Kymlicka's theory is less successful in the case of national minorities than in other minority groups, but to see this, we have to see what his theory is about.

Kymlicka defends multiculturalism from a liberal perspective, as his theory hinges on a link between culture – or in his terms, societal culture – on one hand, and the freedom of individuals, the latter which supposedly liberals value high, on the other. In order to differentiate societal culture from other, narrower ways of life styles, say, military or pub culture, he defines societal culture in the following way:

> [It is] a culture which provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres. These cultures tend to be territorially concentrated, and based on a shared language.[56]

[54] The most prominent ones that this section will deal with are Liberalism Community and Culture (1989), and MC (1995) where his ideas about liberal multiculturalism are the most clearly articulated.
[55] For an exposure of this idea see for example MC (75)
[56] MC 76

Because societal culture is so pervasive that it is present in all spheres of our lives, and defines the terms of any human interactions, Kymlicka suggests that we should incorporate it among the Rawlsian primary goods that every individual, including minorities, should want to have access to regardless of their particular chosen way of life[57]. He links societal culture to freedom by arguing that the latter "involves making choices among various options and our societal not only provides these options, but also makes them meaningful to us."[58] Now there are two claims are being made here, namely, that culture provides options, and also meanings. It is worth considering these one by one. Let's start with the second, which is meaning.

Culture provides its members a certain narrative or "spectacle" via which certain practices become to be seen valuable and others not[59]. It is for instance due to membership in a particular (Christian) culture that one comes to believe that Sundays should be a day off and devoted to God, or it is through an (indigenous tribal) culture that one comes to value traditional ways of life, living close to nature, rather than pursuing a business career. All these meanings are mediated and make sense to us within the framework of a particular culture, and should these cultures be undermined and the options they provide perish, it will be more difficult for its members to choose and pursue these life styles. They will not be able to freely choose between different ways of life, and therefore we must protect cultures from debasement or decay[60]. When people are deprived of the choices their cultures provided for them, they may loose what has previously given meaning to their life, such as serving God, or living in harmony with nature, and they may experience a real harm[61].

[57] MC, p.214, footnote 11.
[58] MC 83
[59] MC 83
[60] To be sure Kymlicka emphasizes that cultures are valuable, not in and of themselves, but instrumentally. Because it is "only through having access to a societal culture that people have access to a range of meaningful options". This is one reason way his multicultural theory can be considered a liberal one. MC (83).
[61] One could perhaps argue that this is one of the reasons why alcoholism and delinquency is so prevalent among indigenous tribes in the Americas and Australia. The societal culture of these people have become undermined and increasingly became unviable as a result of expansion of modern European culture, and as a result some members of indigenous minorities have slided to a sense of anomie and lost a sense of control and

I think this line of reasoning has some plausibility, but can it also be applied to the case of national cultures and provide grounds for justification for maintaining their separate cultures? I think here the theory faces limitations. Since Hungarians and Slovaks are part of the same globalized, post-industrial and increasingly secular culture. In terms of their lifestyles they are more alike than different, and, hence, it is safe to say that if one was not Hungarian but Slovak, quite probably one would participate in the same modern culture. There might be minor differences between national cultures, but, as Allan Patten puts it, it would seem "faintly hysterical" to argue that members of these national cultures were in danger of slipping into a sense of meaninglessness or anomie if they were not given the means of preserving their cultures[62]. In the presence of one culture instead of another individuals would be provided basically identical values only in different contexts. So what might be a reason to insist on having access to a particular culture from this context of choice perspective?

We could turn to the option providing reasons of valuing societal culture. On this account it would not so much matter whether there are different meanings provided by cultures, but that it is a particular culture that provides the context of options, and it is this reason that they are valuable. Kymlicka tries hard to overcome the ambition/endowment dichotomy in liberal theory, and present culture not as a choice but more of a circumstance and hence justify measures for cultural protections. But all what he can say is that culture is a context of choice instead of choice. He is not able to say that we should treat it as a circumstance, and clearly it would be absurd to demand that, because culture is not given and unchangeable for everybody, some members can, in fact, they choose to leave their culture for example for social mobility. Thus the argument with context of choice does not go far

meaning over their life. They are no more able to pursue their life according to their inner convictions what they believe to be meaningful ways of life.

[62] Patten (2000: 207)

enough for it fails to establish that culture should be treated as a circumstance that could justify intervention. And if there is no separate meaning that is provided by a societal culture, as it is apparently in the case of national cultures, it is not clear why national minorities should insist that the context for their options be provided by their particular societal culture, as Kymlcika would like to see it.

One of the most interesting argument Kymlicka puts forward concerning the disadvantage that minorities have to face in the absence of certain external protections of their culture, is that "they [can] be outbid or outvoted on resources and policies that are crucial to the survival of their societal cultures."[63] But liberals would argue that that is just a result of democratic process and one cannot intervene in those because that would raise the problem of welfarism and the subsidization of expensive or tastes. As an example, consider the case of Gazo who prefers to drink Champaign, live a lavish lifestyle and spend a lot of money on parties on one hand, and Timi who prefers to drink beer, live a modest lifestyle, and invest into education on the other. From an equal share of resources Gazo will have a harder time to satisfy his preferences but we still do not feel that he might be in anyway mistreated if we only gave him as much money as to Timi. Multiculturalists would of course argue that the analogy does not work because culture is akin to drinking taste or preference, but from the position of Kymlicka it is not evident why we should be interested in subsidizing national cultures if we are ultimately interested in protecting individual life choices, and particular cultures do not really provide different ways of lifestyles to their members.

An alternative solution in the case of national cultures have been provided by Allan Patten. In a series of essays Patten has tried to criticize or modify Kymlcika's theory to suit it to the case of national minorities[64]. In one of these essays, entitled *Liberal Egalitarianism and*

[63] MC (109)
[64] Patten (1999; 2000; 2001: 707-9; 2009: 14-20.)

the Case for Supporting National Cultures[65], he does this by introducing two new concepts, one of which is *viable linguistic community* (instead of societal culture), and another, *linguistic incapability*.

According to Patten a viable linguistic community is one which is sufficiently numerous and concentrated to provide its members a full range of human activities within the private and public sphere. Members of L-linguistic community would be able to work, practice their religion, participate in political debates, form friendships, and have a rich family life, all in their own language. The L-linguistic community falls below the threshold level of viability when the number of L-speakers become too small and dispersed, and its members are unable to pursue these activities on their own language.

An individual has linguistic capability with respect to a language L if he is able to speak L, or could learn it or do so without an excessive cost to himself. An ability to speak the language refers to just the above mentioned activities. An individual has a linguistic incapability with respect to some language if she is unable to use or master it without also imputing on herself an excessive cost.

Now imagine two linguistic communities living in one country, the Majority and Minority, each having its own language and for a variety of reasons the Minority population falls below the viability threshold level (this could be because of stagnation in fertility rate, immigration or emigration) and the population of this community will be too small and dispersed to provide for the full range of activities for its members. This means that the remaining members of Minority community will find themselves in a position of linguistic incapability with regard to the Majority. Their freedom in life will be diminished as they become increasingly unable to engage in the pursuits that were provided them by their linguistic community. This incapability did not arise as a result expensive preferences or

[65] Patten (2000)

because the Majority outvoted the Minority. Rather, it has arisen because of an individual handicap: that members of the Minority community are unable to master the Majority language which increasingly becomes a condition in order to get one's projects through in life. In their cases minority rights could be justified. But note that the problem of linguistic incapability is unable to provide a full account of recognition for minority cultures. It pertains only to those who are incapable to learn the dominant language, and says nothing about those who did not want to do so, nor about those who are bilingual and still want to use their language in the public. Their cases are still vulnerable to the expensive tastes objection.

As it stands now neither Taylor's, nor Kymlicka's, nor Patten's version of minority protections are sufficient to justify the claims of KD. The recognition of groups as Taylor suggests it, may have illiberal implications for individuals; Kymlicka's theory relying on context of choice cannot explain why we should be concerned about protecting the societal culture if it provides the same meaning to its members than the majority culture; and Patten's modified conception of linguistically viable community is only able to justify language rights for a small minority within the minority: the linguistically incapable.

I think a fourth option is available which is that multiculturalists, in part, accept the expensive tastes objection. For it is true that Hungarians want to use their language despite the fact that they understand Slovak. This has been repeatedly made clear in blog articles made by defendants of bilingualism in Slovakia[66], and has likewise been signaled by the slogens on the activists' stickers where one of the main claim is that *Az egynyelvűség tiszteletlenség!* ("Monolingualism is disrespect!"). The primary reason is not that they do not understand Slovak, and therefore in a monolingual state they have less choices available for them. In some cases levels of competency come into the picture, when in stressful or highly

[66] See for example http://www.kozbeszed.sk/2012/04/trianon-update-avagy-magyar-cegek-esete.html

complex situations (such as calling the emergency, or filling out a tax sheet) it is easier for members of minorities to interact on their own language. In other cases some people really have a problem in communicating in the majority language. In all these cases official bilingualism would be helpful. But for the most part people just prefer to have the option of being able to use their mother tongue, and they see the availability of their language as an important good in itself. The main disagreement between liberal egalitarians and multiculaturalists is what weigh we should give to this good. The former suggests that it should be dealt with in the private sphere, whereas the latter, such as Kymlicka, would like to subsume it under the Rawlsian primary goods, that we can legitimately expect want to have access to, and therefore, be provided by public expenses. Part of the reason why Kymlicka may succeed to convince us agreeing with him, is because he reframes Dworkin's auction scheme and envy test from a luck egalitarian position[67]. This means that for him in the envy test it does not matter whether the disadvantaged are able to point to somebody else and who they would like to be instead (for it would be unlikely that any Hungarian would say they regret not being Slovaks). Kymlicka merely points out that members of minority cultures are disadvantaged outside of their choice, since they did not choose their membership in a culture in which they were born and raised. Now this is a much less demanding criteria for compensation, that one did not choose his disadvantage, than that of Dworkin, which also asks that the person be able to point to somebody else and say "I regret that I have my current identity, and I would rather have some other." On one hand, Dworkin's suggestion seems counter-intuitive for national minorities, because they clearly do not regret their membership as such in their national culture; quite contrarily, some of them tend to be proud of it, but at least most of them do not rank cultures on a hierarchical scale and evaluate one as better than the other. On the other hand, Kymlcika's luck egalitarian theory is also not sustainable in the

[67] I am greatful to Andres Moles for drawing my attention to this detail.

long run. For people are disadvantaged in their life in all sorts of ways that they have had not chosen. Nancy Fraser suggests that if we take into consideration all spheres of social disadvantage: poverty, race, gender, culture, disability – it may turn out that about 90% of the population in US (and arguably in other countries) are in some way or the other discriminated[68]. It would be insane to expect full compensation for all these disadvantages. So how shall we decide which ones should deserve our attention?[69].

One way to go out answering this question is looking at how much compensation is really expensive? Our position concerning the adoption or rejection of bilingualism could depend on the costs it imposes on society. There are of course many dimensions costs can be assessed such as in terms of money, efficiency, or social costs, and a proper assessment would require a detailed cost/benefit analysis that is beyond the scope of this thesis[70]. But it seems that, a bilingual regime could be secured from a relatively marginal cost. If one considers the EU where translation and interpretation of services to 23 official languages (otherwise rarely utilized by ordinary tax payers) amount to 1% of the total EU budget[71]. In contrast, in South-Slovakia translation would be required to only one language, and it involves the functioning of local authorities that are in touch with citizens on a daily bases, which in turn could also yield a higher benefit. Not only in terms of better public services, but also that minority citizens could feel themselves more at home in their country.

Another criteria is that of efficiency. Some defenders of monolingualism have argued that one official language in a country is more desirable because it is more efficient than having two or more. I think this position rests on a faulty generalized assumption. For it might well be that official monolingualism is more efficient in northern Slovak regions with almost 100% of Slovak speaking inhabitants, but it is certainly not so in the south where most

[68] Fraser (1998)
[69] Fraser goes for the economic dimension.
[70] For one possible model see Pool (1991), or applied to the EU context see Parijs (2011).
[71] See the "EU translation policy 'here to stay'" article at http://www.euractiv.com/culture/eu-translation-policy-stay/article-170516

of the areas are inhabited jointly both by Slovaks and Hungarians. In some of these settlements Slovaks even constitute a local minority: they are present in towns at a rate of 50 or 25% (for example in Komarno or Sturovo repectively) but in some villages are even below 10%, such as Salka, Kamenin, and so on. In these settlements official bilingualism would certainly be a more efficient solution.

But the obstacles to bilingualism in South-Slovakia are really not financial, but legal and attitudinal. Many people in the region do agree with the cause of KD activism, they do not take part in it because they see it is a form of "provocation" of the majority[72]. But even entrepreneurs who criticize the methods of putting stickers on shop windows, say they ultimately agree with the cause of bilingualism they just see stickers as "not appropriate means for it."[73] It is difficult to see however how else could bilingualism be achieved in South-Slovakia, as the Hungarian minority political parties have long abandoned this issue, as they quickly realized after the independence of Slovakia in 1993 that such a position immediately makes them an unattractive coalition partner to any other major Slovak political party. This is the main reason why the call for bilingualism has been recently taken over by civil activists and is carried for a large part in anonymity.

The legal obstacles stem from the state's attitude to its national minorities. That it is reluctant to recognize the language of minorities on equal par with that of the majority. But this runs counter to the idea of state neutrality, or better to say, even handedness which requires that the state treats fairly national-cultures. A fair treatment would imply an even handed, rather than off-hands approach, that the state balances the effects of its nation-maintaining practices that disadvatge the minorities. This does not mean interfering with the

[72] See for example the article at http://www.kozbeszed.sk/2012/05/matricazas-erkolcstana.html which also contains an (arguably non-representative but) informative poll about the overwhelming popularity the cause of bilingualism enjoys among Hungarians. The poll had about 300 respondents.

[73] Entrepreneurs complain that (the otherwise easily removable) stickers are an unlawful damage of their property. See the news bite "Dűhösek a vállalkozók a megrongált óriásreklamok miatt" at http://www.hirek.sk/video/20120412232308/Duhosek-a-vallalkozok-a-megrongalt-oriasreklamok-miatt.html

choices of individuals as such, for people would still be free to choose their preferred language for communication purposes because the system would be bilingual. The point is however that it would aim to provide fair background conditions for members of both national cultures. It would not matter if people decided for switching to the majority culture, nor it would have ambitions to regulate the commercial market and require to provide its services bilingually (apart from the minimal formal requirement outlined before, and that only in the relevant regions). That would remain mostly intact by the regime of bilingualism. The whole point is that a liberal state should not take a position on, or provide incentives to a particular language use in the bilingual regions but leave it up to the individuals.

Chapter 3 - Education

Hungarians have been living in Slovakia for about three generations now. It is one thing to say that there should be minority language accommodations provided for existing Hungarians, and quite another that the minority status of people should be reproduced for future generations as well. Nevertheless, this is what happens in Slovakia for Hungarians do not just grow as mushrooms there, but there is a massive role that education in monolingual minority schools assumes there. It is in these primary and high schools where Hungarianess is still being actively reproduced, and this raises two important moral dilemmas that I should address here. One concerns parental responsibility and whether, from a liberal point of view, it is legitimate for minority parents to sign their child into these minority language schools, and hence, to perpetuate their minority status for successive generations as well. The other dilemma pertains to the content of political education, and I am interested in exploring the issue what sort of national identity should schools nourish (if they are already present) in such a multicultural educational system that is most conducive to the working of liberal democratic societies.

In section 3.1 I introduce two different reasons behind minority language rights – the instrumental and non-instrumental ones – which concern the good language rights are supposed to protect. Then I will make a little excursion to the liberal conception of education elaborated by Clayton in the context of religious diversity. Finally, I will tentatively try to apply this liberal framework, with some relevant modifications, in the context of linguistic pluralism, exemplified by the case of Hungarian minority in Slovakia. I will differentiate two, analytically distinctive aspects of language: one, that it is a communicative tool, and another, that for many people it can also be a constitutive part of their identity. I conclude section 3.3 with elaborating on the first aspect, and will argue that although mother tongue education can

have some identity related benefits for members of minority groups, ultimately, however, this will leave some members of the minority in a disadvantageous position in terms of their equality of opportunity in society. In section 3.4 I continue with the second aspect and explore the identity related component of mother tongue education. I argue that educational institutions have a responsibility, first and foremost, to cultivate a heightened sense of awareness in individuals about their civic duties, as well as a certain degree of sensibility to members of other national groups if society is to function effectively in such a linguistically divided community.

3.1. Instrumental and Non-Instrumental Language Rights

One way to think about what good language is for people is to look at the different rationales behind minority language rights. I will adopt here Rubio-Marin's understanding of language rights who differentiates between instrumental and non-instrumental ones[74].

Instrumental language rights are ones that are tied to other existing rights in society. The point is that language in itself should not be an obstacle for the enjoyment of one's civic, political and social rights and equal opportunities in society[75] (Rubio-Marin, 2003, p. 63). Examples could be drawn from all areas of life where access to public goods is facilitated by linguistic interaction. One does not really have a right to fair trial if one cannot understand and be understood on one's own language the proceedings, so there's a need for interpreters. Similarly, right to vote does not really make sense if there is a chance minorities cannot understand the choices they are presented with, and therefore bilingual ballots may be justified. Nor free access to health care is really an option if doctors cannot speak, or worse,

[74] Rubio-Marin (2003)
[75] Rubio-Marin (2003: 57).

are prohibited to speak the patients' language[76]. Instrumental language rights are, by and large, consistent with the general liberal idea that individuals should not be punished for traits they do not choose, and that mother tongue can be one such a trait, since no one really chooses her native language. The goal of instrumental rights is thus to facilitate the enjoyment of public benefits to minority language speakers by providing effective access to them on their language too. Furthermore, instrumental language rights can also justify certain non-discriminatory measures, particularly if the minority group is commonly associated by the majority with lower social strata in society. In such cases affirmative policies can be used to enhance the presence of minority language in the public sphere by providing them, for example, presence in the public media, or in the public education curriculum in order to make their presence more acceptable in society, and decrease prejudice and social profiling. These language rights can vary depending on how much importance is attached to the enjoyment of other rights in society, but the main point is that their good is always derived from the existence of other rights instrumentally. Ultimately, the state does not assume any responsibility for the protection of language itself, the point of instrumental language rights is purely pragmatic.

By contrast, non-instrumental (or intrinsic) language rights are ones whose primarily goal is to protect the language itself, because it is recognized that access to one's language in the public space is not only instrumentally valuable but is an independent good in itself. This idea is mostly associated with the liberal multiculturalist thesis that cultural membership is necessary for the fulfillment of individual autonomy and for the basis of individual self-respect. The goal of non-instrumental language rights is to enable minority's capacity to

[76] This latter example is actually not so farfetched. In Slovakia in 2009 there was a language law passed in the previous governmental term under the socialist party, Smer, led coalition, which prohibited the interaction in public clinics on Hungarian language between doctor and patient even if both of them wanted to speak Hungarian. The law was later repealed in 2010 when after the elections a new center-right party coalition came to the government. For more on the language law see e.g. the article: "Only say it in Slovak" http://www.presseurop.eu/en/content/article/68491-only-say-it-slovak

enjoy a secure linguistic environment in their mother tongue, so that they can use their language with dignity in public, and also, that they have a fair chance of cultural reproduction in society, and can continue to live a full life in their culture if they choose to do so. In practice these types of rights have been used to justify certain *external protections*, measures which protect the minority's cultural base from the adverse impact of decisions coming from the majority group in the larger society[77]. In the absence of these protections majorities could outvote or outbid the minority on matters that are crucial to the latter's survival of culture. Furthermore, it is also argued that in the absence of non-instrumental language rights, majorities get something for free, as they never have to be concerned about the viability of their language because it is simply supported by the presence of the state. In essence, non-instrumental language rights recognize language as an intrinsic good, and try to provide fair chances of cultural reproduction in a linguistically diverse context.

Now this is all about the motives behind language rights. Often the two are disentangled and difficult to clearly separate them in different contexts, in fact, individual states may have different approaches in different policy areas depending on how much they value certain rights over other ones (let's say civic over social, or cultural over both). But in general, minorities and proponents of multiculturalism have typically framed the debate over bilingualism in a way by lauding minority languages for their intrinsic value, the role they play in the formation of a healthy sense of identity and self-respect for members of the minority community, and they have tended to downplay the overall importance of dominant languages. This tendency can be observed in Slovakia within the Hungarian community too, where every year at the time of enrollment to primary schools there is a large-scale campaign made by minority schools and other interested parties such as the Hungarian Parents' Association in Slovakia in order to encourage parents to enroll their child to Hungarian

[77] Kymlicka (1995: 7).

schools. According to them, as it was written in one of the Hungarian newspapers, "mother tongue education cannot be substituted with anything else; for the security of mother tongue environment is an indispensable condition of our child's harmonic development, good performance"[78]. The implied message in the argument is that if children cannot receive education on their mother tongue, they can be exposed to an increased peer pressure, as they would have to attend schools where they stick out from the majority, and in the face of that, they even have to perform and live up to standards that have been set primarily to Slovak pupils. Also, since initial impressions children get in classrooms are crucial in respect of their attitude formation towards formal learning, such negative experiences could have lasting impact and potentially discourage them for good. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the child, it is argued, that she is enrolled to a minority language school. In this paper I want to challenge this position and show that insisting on minority education can actually have adverse implications for some children's prospects because they can effectively become cut away from the opportunities that are available in the society they live in. But before proceeding further in the argument let us make the short excursion to the conception of liberal education exemplified by Clayton in the religious context.

3.2. Liberal Education and Religion

The main claim of Clayton is that parents should not be allowed to enroll children to any comprehensive doctrine, such as religion, but rather, they should just expose and familiarize children with different type of worldviews during their upbringing. Parents imparting their beliefs on a child from her early years on pursue a practice that can be hardly seen as legitimate from a liberal point of view. For according to liberals one can legitimately

[78] See the article in *Szabadujsag*.

impart a belief to other if the individual has a capacity for a conception of the good, and she autonomously consent to it[79]. These requirements clearly are lacking in the case of children. Moreover, the indoctrination of parental values to children is also problematic because it could hinder the later development of capacity of autonomy in these children. Would these children once want to revise their beliefs, it will be much harder for them to do so, because they might know less about alternative beliefs, but also because of the emotional pull their early beliefs might retain on them[80]. They might feel a sense of guilt, for example, or that they offended their parents if they were to repudiate the upbringing they had received from them.

While all liberal parents should want their child to develop a capacity for autonomy, instilling into a child a particular comprehensive doctrine, for the above mentioned reasons, will likely be not conducive for that purpose. Since autonomy is not only an end-state that a child should reach, but is in itself also a pre-condition that must be retained before they can legitimately be engaged with other ways of life. Parents should merely help facilitate this engagement for their children but should not impose it upon them. According to Clayton, the only legitimate view liberal parents should impart to their children is a sense of justice that can be justified by public reason[81]. This entails a much thinner world view than it is in any comprehensive doctrine, and is one which compatible with both religious and non-religious views. In other words it is one that can be acceptable for a reasonable person be her a religious or non-religious.

[79] Clayton (2006: 91-2).
[80] Clayton (2006: 106-9).
[81] For more on public reason see Clayton (2006: 96-102).

3.3. Liberal Education and Language - Consequences for Equality of Opportunity

Presumably most liberals would not find it controversial that parents, whose first language is different than that of the state, speak to their child at home on their own language. This might be so because of costs considerations that it is easier for parents to communicate on their own language with their child, or because of reasons of intimacy, that they may want to retain a sense of closeness at home and, for example, enable their children to be able to converse on family gatherings with relatives on their own language, and so on. What language is used in the sphere of family is seen as relatively uncontroversial as it is guaranteed by freedom of speech and basic civic rights. What is controversial from a liberal point of view, however, is whether parents are also right to enroll their kids to minority language schools, given that they know Slovak is the language of social mobility in Slovakia.

If we turn back to Clayton's conception of autonomy, what he defines both as an end-state (that should be brought about by education) and a pre-condition (that should be retained before one can legitimately impart a view to somebody else), we see that language is fundamentally of different nature from religion or other comprehensive doctrines. First of all, it is not a belief but a means of communication, and one modern language can be just as good for this purpose than another. Hungarians might speak a different language, but they still might hold beliefs and worldviews that are completely consistent with liberal tenets – they might be religious or non-religious, for or against more redistribution, and so forth – just as Slovaks. The difference is only that they think and communicate these very same ideas by the use of a different medium than the majority. Second, the legitimacy question does not arise because even though, we might agree that legitimate enrolment to comprehensive doctrines requires the capacity for the conception of the good and autonomous consent, in the case of

native language, this does not make sense. Autonomy is not a pre-condition here for enrolment into a language – since none of us chooses her native language, we are raised into it before we are able to start consciously thinking and reflecting on things. Rather what happens is that language is itself a pre-condition for autonomy, since it is only via language we can develop our capacities for autonomous thinking. Without language we would not be able to think at all.

Drawing on Clayton we could modify his liberal account of education in the linguistic context, by stating that language is an important good since it is a pre-condition for a capacity of autonomy. But this is only to say that we need *some* language to be able to develop our autonomous capacities. If we also want to establish that it is not just any language but it's *one's own* language, we need to go further. Here the instrumental and non-instrumental views may be useful for us, although, I believe they do not take us very far. For they might give us some reasons to justify education on minority languages, but ultimately, they do not necessarily warrant such an extensive monolingual education system that currently exists in Slovakia.

If we adopted an instrumental view and believed that every child should have a right to receive education that she can understand, it would be enough for us to provide education in Hungarian only until the child's education could not effectively be continued on the state language. We could imagine, for example, starting to teach kids in the first couple of years bilingually and then once they are sufficiently fluent in the majority language, just continue with the latter. In fact, after that it would probably not matter in which language we choose to go on, because pupils were fluent on both languages. However, for the future prospects of the children, it would probably make sense to continue with Slovak, because that is the language they will need later on, either if they decide to study at university or seek employment in the

country. The lingua franca in Slovakia is Slovak, and the opportunity of social mobility is also closely tied to it.

If we adopted a stronger, intrinsic value position, which holds that mother tongue is an integral part of one's development of autonomous capacities and self-respect, we could consider a more extensive education in minority language than merely until children are able to learn on the state language. But it is hard to see why an education system based on this proposition should be very much different than the previous one. The capacity for autonomy is not tied to a single language for good. Once children are able to master another language this capacity of theirs does not have to depend only on the availability of mother tongue. In fact, the previous model which recognizes minority languages instrumental function and therefore introduces minority pupils gradually to education on the state language seems exactly to be tuned to this criteria of autonomy. It is not clear how insisting on minority education even further increases the autonomous capacities of children more than, say, a bilingual one.

In order to satisfy the self-respect criteria, certain subjects that are deemed essential to the reproduction of national minority's identity could be taught in Hungarian. Literature and history, e.g., could be among the prime candidates for these classes. But again, it is not clear why others, such as math or physics, presumably not substantial to the formation of national identity should also be taught in the minority language. We could imagine some of these subjects at least some of the time being taught on the state language as well. That would surely not hurt the self-respect of minority speaking pupils, and would equip them with beneficial linguistic skills for their future life. Such bilingual education system, however, has traditionally been starkly resisted by Hungarian parents associations and teachers in Slovakia fearing that it would undermine the long term viability of their national community[82].

[82] Slovak nationalist leaning governments, such as the Maciar coalition in the 1990s or the Fico led coalition between 2006-2010, have occasionally attempted to initiate the reform of education system in Slovakia and

Hungarian speaking children spend 12years of the compulsory education in completely monolingual schools, where except for the Slovak language itself all classes are taught in Hungarian. Parents and Hungarian teachers insist that this monolingual education system is essential for the preservation of their groups' sense of national identity, and children will have plenty of opportunity to learn Slovak later on anyway. And while this might be true for some, for others this is not necessarily the case. For some children in largely Hungarian isolated communities in South-Slovakia, this objective to maintain a healthy sense of national identity (whatever it is), may in effect also result in reinforcing their socio-cultural status and cut them away from future opportunities of social mobility. In their cases, self-identification with the minority group persists less because of a voluntary choice, and more because throughout their education they couldn't learn properly the state language and now as a result they are essentially trapped in the minority culture.

To be sure, if parents' objective is to cultivate a sense of autonomy in their children, minority education does not have to be discarded overall. But there are some good reasons to think that it could be more limited than nowadays it is in Slovakia. A certain degree of bilingualism could be introduced to the education system, or the availability of immersion programs would certainly be of much help in this respect. But the acceptance of such novel system would require a major attitudinal change in the minority population which would perceive the relationship between the dominant language and education not primarily in terms of threat to their identity, but more as a means of opportunity. In any case parents will have to make a choice between the identity and opportunity costs of minority education, and this for many is not always an easy choice. But in general, it could be said that for parents who live in towns where the Hungarian community constitutes a local minority, it carries smaller danger to enroll their kids to Hungarian schools because their child will have plenty of opportunities

replace the monolingual minority schools with a more bilingual one, but their measures were perceived by the minority community as another attempt to assist and fasten their assimilation, and therefore, they were strongly resisted.

outside the school to learn the majority language. This is the case with many Hungarian children living in Bratislava or other Slovak towns. Their larger environment outside of their home and school operates almost exclusively in Slovak; therefore, by simply living in this area they are able to learn sufficiently well the dominant language from relatively early on. In their cases minority education is perhaps really enrichment to their life, not a setback. But in largely Hungarian populated southern, rural areas, it seems to be somewhat futile to insist on Hungarian education as a necessary condition for a child's ability to help preserve her national identity, because in these regions she is virtually exposed only to Hungarian anyway. Therefore, there is less danger that she would lose connection with her community if she was not enrolled to a Hungarian school. There is still plenty of opportunity for her to be exposed to Hungarian culture; in fact, in many of these southern towns it is virtually only Hungarian culture that is being spoken. In these cases, it seems that insisting on Hungarian education for a child is less of a prudent choice, and it might come of the price of her future opportunities.

3.4. Liberal Education and Language – The Content of Political Education

Language is not only a communicative tool that enables one to have effective access to one's rights, it is also a constitutive part of peoples' identity. At least part of what it means to be Hungarian is that one can speak the Hungarian language. For this reason the Hungarian minority in Slovakia may have a legitimate reason to have Hungarian educational institutions. But these institutions come with much more than a minority language instruction. They teach their own histories and literatures and as a result, foster a sense of belonging in children to their particular national communities[83]. While this function of schools may be relatively unproblematic in "pure" nation-states, it raises some important stability-related issues in

[83] I use here the term of nation in the East Central European sense which denotes a cultural community, rather than in the American sense which refers to the state.

states where there are multiple nations residing on the territory. The cultivation of different national identities may foster a sense of separateness between different national communities, and at times, this can make living together more difficult in a common state. The well known cases in point are the Belgian or Canadian constitutional impasse, or in East-Central Europe (from here on ECE) the irredentist sentiments that are harbored by certain segments of the population. Citizenship education then has a special role in inculcating a sense of national identity in individuals that does not jeopardize the stability of the community, and in a linguistically divided polity, such as Slovakia, proponents of multiculturalism should be able to say something about how this could be facilitated.

In general there are two broad perspectives how commentators have viewed the relationship between education and national identity[84]. Some believe, such as Miller that education should serve to sustain or forge a shared national identity, otherwise the realization of liberal values will indeed be jeopardized[85]. In modern democracies people are required to make scarifies, e.g., share a substantial part of their resources in the form of taxes with their co-citizens that often live far away, and have actually not had any interpersonal contact with before. A propensity to come to the aid of these unknown individuals is largely facilitated by the glue of shared national identity which binds people together into a common ethical community. Hence, according to this view, a shared national identity is a precondition for a viable political community. We could call this perspective *education for nationality,* since its aim is to foster a sense of belonging together between people.

And in fact, traditionally the role of education has been conceived along these lines; its primary function was to disseminate the seeds of patriotism, and develop a sense of solidarity between people living in different regions of the country. But while this could perhaps be a viable approach for homogeneous nation-states, in our current case with national

[84] The following distinction I make is heavily informed by Clayton's view on the connection between nationality and political education in his *Justice and Legitimacy in Upbringing,* Ch. 4.4.
[85] Miller quoted in Clayton (2006: 156-7)

minorities, it is not clear how it should work out. Forging a sense of belonging together among national communities might boil down essentially to assimilative education, so that it is one (presumably the majority's) version of history, culture and traditions that are passed over to children all over the country. Such an assimilative education could hardly be seen as liberal, which forces a particular identity on individuals that is not theirs. Although, Miller does seem to recognize national minorities to some degree, because he is at pain to point out that nations should not be conflated with states, and for this reason, he seems to go quite far in endorsing self-government rights on the grounds of self-determination[86]. But it is not clear how education for a national identity could serve holding different peoples together in a common state either by imposing upon them a thick sense of national identity that is not theirs, or encouraging them to cultivate their own national identity in the same intensity. The former would likely increase the sense of alienation of members of the minority groups, whereas the latter would serve exactly the opposite extreme and reinforce their group differences. Hardly could these strategies be said conducive to be peaceful cohabitation in a multi-nation polity.

Furthermore, inculcating a sense of national identity raises some separate moral problems as well. As Clayton points out, nationality (as opposed to citizenship) is a comprehensive doctrine over whose merits and attractiveness reasonable people disagree[87]. Some, such as cosmopolitans, prefer to identify with global communities and reject our alleged special commitments to the national community, and others, such as socialists, are also critical about national loyalties and see them mostly as a sham which conceals and helps sustain our more important class differences. Even among those who buy into the ideology of nationalism, there is considerable disagreement on the conception of nationality itself. Some believe that, say, "Hungarianness," is limited by categories of race, and Roma are not

[86] Miller (2000: 27-33)
[87] Clayton (2006: 159)

"proper" Hungarians, or that the national group is also defined by some commitment to a particular religious tradition (which is Christian rather than Jewish or Muslim), and perhaps most importantly, there is a prevalent view in the region that national belonging transcends borders, and that the Hungarians in Hungary and the Hungarian minority in Slovakia form one, discrete community[88]. In short, the value and content of national identity is widely disputed, and therefore it cannot serve as a solid foundation for liberal principles in society from a moral point of view either.

Another role education can assume in the formation of national identity, is not necessarily inculcating a particular version of it, but merely recognizing the fact that many people do align themselves to particular nations, and then it aims to influence individuals' sense of identity in a way that it complies with liberal principles of justice. In other words, nationality is recognized as one important source of identity, but it is subordinated to liberal principles – such as equal dignity, fairness and tolerance. We could call this *nationality shaping education*. Such an education would be concerned with cultivating a sense of belonging in citizens primarily to the wider polity and its institutions which embody these principles, rather than to their more immediate national community. One of its tasks would be, e.g., to cultivate a heightened sense of awareness in people that they are required to pay taxes first and foremost because justice as fairness requires so, and not because the transfers go to their co-nationals[89].

Of course a sense of belonging to the polity (instead of national community) requires, as I suggested, a widely inclusive polity which citizens can identify as their own, where they see the flourishing of these institutions intimately intertwined with their own flourishing, and

[88] In fact, largely in this vein there has been a special statement enshrined in the Hungarian Constitution which proclaims that Hungary shall bear a special responsibility to Hungarians living beyond its borders and facilitate their survival, development, and even the assertion of their individual and collective rights. See the Fundamental Law of Hungary (2011), Article D.
[89] Clayton (2006: 160).

they feel at home in them[90]. This is in fact what is largely missing in the case of national minorities in the ECE region. What could be done to foster such identification? Mason suggests that the fact that minorities live under these institutions and possess citizenship already goes some way to ensure a sense of belonging to their polities. However, it is not enough to be subject to these institutions if they reflect legally, politically, and culturally the concerns and interests of the dominant culture.[91] In such cases it will be hard for minorities to identify with this polity because the particular culture which its institutions express is (only) that of the majority[92]. What is necessary for an inclusive polity is that there should be a certain degree of mutual valuing within the polity. Members of the dominant community must come to value the influence of minority traditions, and this should be also reflected in some transformation of the institutions. But equally, members of the minority community must come to value the traditions of the majority that have informed the society's existing institutions and under which they currently live.

In promoting such attitudinal change of mutual valuing, the content of education has a tremendous importance. While each national community should be able to teach its own version of history and literature, as it is now, this should probably go hand in hand with much more sensitivity regarding the traditions of the other community. In particular, it should be realized that constant reminders about past injustices does not help. In Slovakia, e.g., both sides have the tendency to play up grievances presumably caused by the other community. Slovaks tend to lament the forceful Hungarianization policies in the 19th century Austro-Hungarian Empire when several Slovak schools and major cultural institutions were shut down or officially banned. Hungarians, on the other hand, tend to agonize over the "unjust"

[90] Mason (1999:272).
[91] Mason (2000: 148).
[92] There are certain institutional arrangements that have been developed to accommodate minority identities on institutional level, such as representation in decision making, federalism, territorial or personal autonomy. I do not intend to open this debate here, although elsewhere I try to develop an institutionally bilingual regime that I believe would be more feasible to minority-majority relations in the Slovak context.

Trianon peace treaty, which dismembered "their" national empire. This is naturally not to say that the history should be twisted or certain defining momentums should be omitted. Knowing the past is very important so that we can make sense out of the present. However, it should be borne in mind that history is an unavoidably selective way of narrating the past, and loyalty to a particular nation has traditionally been facilitated by a highly sanitized version of history. For example, as Callan noted, the glorification of historical figures almost inevitably requires the diabolization of enemy, and presenting the latter in a one sided way[93]. Presenting other readings of these events, particularly ones that are relevant from the perspective of co-citizens of different nationalities, could go a long way in nourishing a more critical attitude in individuals towards their national communities, as well as, diminish their propensity of animosity or suspicion concerning citizens of other nationalities.

It seems to me that some of the assumptions in political philosophy could be particularly relevant for such nationality-shaping education, and a linguistically divided community could considerably benefit if the underlying values of its education system were more informed by these propositions. Just to mention a few observations, without the aim of exclusiveness, concerning nationality: first, concerning the status of the individual, it should be emphasized that membership in a community is accidental, and that no one is responsible for being born to parents of one or the other national community. Therefore, individuals should not be blamed for one group's presumed past injustices; each individual should be treated with equal dignity. Second, concerning what counts as a relevant unit of polity, it should be stressed that state borders do not reflect an inherent right to self-determination of a particular group, but are mostly the result of arbitrary factors, such as political power, or geographical conveniences, and, therefore, they should be regarded by and large as historical accidents rather than the (dis)possession of a particular titular nation. Finally, and perhaps

[93] Callan (1997: 108).

most importantly, in many countries due to past wars, migration, intermarriage and other demographic reasons, there is a large degree of cultural heterogeneity. In these countries, including the ECE-an region, it is impossible to draw clear nation-state boundaries, or to maintain them in the long run. Therefore, it is best if members of different nationalities learn to live together.

Conclusion

Since the last year on Hungarian minority civil activists became remarkably visible in Slovakia by demanding from their co-citizens and state officials a more thorough implication of minority language rights on local level. These language rights are permitted but not prescribed by the Slovak state, and one of the main goals these activists want to achieve is the institutionalization of official bilingualism in the nationally mixed regions in South-Slovakia. One concern of this thesis was to explore the moral arguments behind justifying such a bilingual regime. I have argued that although, activists often appeal to the recognition and survival of their culture, a liberal bilingual regime cannot be grounded in a concern for cultures' wellbeing or survival, but only in the interests of individual. This limits the justifiable positions in favor of bilingualism to liberal multicultuarist arguments. So I have continued with Will Kymlicka's theory which recognizes (societal) culture as an important good, which should be protected because in provides a "context of choice" for individuals that are members in different cultural groups. But while linking culture to the availability of options might be a workable strategy in the case of aboriginal bands, for their culture provides its members a lifestyle that is genuinely unique from that of the mainstream society's, I have argued, that it is not clear why we should be concerned about protecting national cultures on these grounds. For national minority cultures do not provide special meaning or options to their members that would be very different from the majority's culture. It is only in the case of those minorities who cannot speak and are not able to learn anymore adequately the majority language that cultural protections could be justified on the grounds of context of choice. This is arguably a very small fraction of Hungarians in Slovakia. But most Hungarians in Slovakia want to use their language despite the fact that they understand Slovak. Therefore, I have suggested that multiculutralists, in part, have to accept the

expensive tastes objection, and should try to argue on another front. Namely, that the minority's ability to use and retain their language on their homelands might matter for their self-respect, and the main argument put forward to the state to recognize this could be that state neutrality or even handedness requires that the state should not interfere with the background institutions of society by privileging one national culture over other. But instead of that, it should aim at balancing the availability of languages in the public sphere, and leave it on the individual which language will be used in official interactions. The survival of languages in a liberal state should solely depend on the choices of individual and the language's attraction on the market, but the state should not offset this equilibrium by (mis)recognizing one or another language in the nationally mixed regions.

It is one thing however to claim that the minority language of citizens should be recognized for existing individuals and quite another to demand that the minority status be perpetuated for future generations as well. Interestingly however, the Slovak state is much more permissive in this respect, and provides some wide-ranging rights to minority parents to educate their child in minority language schools up to university level. Many minority parents face the difficult choice whether they should enroll their child to Slovak speaking or a Hungarian speaking school. The dilemma is one between the presumed identity related benefits and future prospects of equality opportunities of child. I have argued that if parents want the best for their children, in some circumstances, they should consider prioritizing the educational benefits arising from the opportunity aspect over that of the identity, and enroll their child to a Slovak school.

In addition to this, the thesis has also suggested that it would be desirable that a certain degree of mobility was institutionalized between the Slovak and Hungarian school systems. Students in Slovakia spend about twelve years of their compulsory education in completely monolingual schools. In many cases these schools can be found next to each

other, but there is little interaction between them. More cooperation, perhaps in the form of immersion programs should be welcomed by both national groups in the region. This could both bring members of the two cultures closer together, and they could easily capitalize on a fortunate environment, where they could learn a second language in a very efficient way.

The last part of thesis explored the issue of citizenship education. It suggested that the content of education curricula should be tuned more towards cultivating a sense of belonging to the polity (rather than to the respective national culture) of students, and facilitate a process by which future citizens can open up to and recognize each other as equals irrespective of their national attachments.

The conclusions reached in the thesis are, hence, somewhat contradictory to current language rights practices in Slovakia. In the context of official language use, the thesis suggested that a more widespread protection of minority language use could be justified based on the principle of evenhandedness. This would warrant a departure from the current permission of minority language use to an officially bilingual regime in the nationally mixed regions of Slovakia. In contrast, in the context of education the thesis suggested that at least in some cases, parents should have good reasons to enroll their child to Slovak schools instead of Hungarian ones, because the former is more beneficial for the child's future opportunity prospects. In other words, the paper has argued for more extensive minority rights for the sake of existing minorities, but less extensive ones for the sake of perpetuating minority identities for future generations. The practical realization of both of these conclusions would require a major shift of attitude in the way majority Slovaks and minority Hungarians perceive each other in Slovakia. Such an attitudinal change currently seems quite unlikely to happen. We can only hope that more theoretical work on the idea of nationality shaping education will help inform the education systems in linguistically divided communities such as Slovakia as well as elsewhere in the world.

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