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# Minorities and Green Political Thought: Normative challenges to an ideal ethics?

*National and ethnic minorities are increasingly becoming participants in the quest to protect the Earth. To the Zapatistas in Mexico, the destruction of the jungle for oil extraction and large-scale logging were some of the core issues that motivated their freedom movement. Native Americans in other parts of the Western hemisphere are known for a moral concern for the Earth that provides for more natural management of the environment than any environmental agency could muster. German minority farmers in Denmark have taken the lead in bringing Danish agriculture into the organic realm as well as in creating bio-energy. In Germany, an environmental wing of the Danish minority has created a grass-root organization following the “think globally, act locally” mantra of the new environmental movements. Indeed, in Northern Italy, a member of the Green party has proposed an entirely different type of minority, not defined by ethnicity or allegiance to a nation but by the biosphere that it inhabits, the Alps. In other words, in action and perhaps ontologically, minorities are being redefined along the lines of Green ideas and ecological characteristics.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

What does Green minority action do to our traditional views of minorities as conflict-prone, rights claiming entities that defy definition and pose constant tension in normative political theory? Normally concerned with justification of such issues as the right to existence, the right of self-determination, the protection of culture and language, and steeped in discourses of politics and struggles for recognition as well as of identity and difference, and multiculturalism versus egalitarianism, political theory has confined itself to addressing minority issues in terms of normative accommodation. The arrival on the scene of Green political thought has not changed this (as yet) but the empirical facts may force normative political theorists to engage

with Green theory as well as impel Green political thought to address normative minority accommodation. It is the possibility of the latter that I will explore in this paper.

To the best of my knowledge, no Green political theorist has explored minority issues from a Green perspective. This is not unexpected. Green political thought<sup>1</sup> does not have a strong theory of justice (as yet), and its minimal theorizing about identity and difference does not address human characteristics, such as race, ethnicity and culture. Nevertheless, Green political thought engages with issues of community, ethics and citizenship theory. For these reasons, Green political thought takes issue with most conventional ideologies of society, not because it sees itself as replacing any of these, but because it wishes to challenge these. It requests a place alongside other political



ideologies worthy of attention, such as liberalism, conservatism and socialism.<sup>2</sup>

Andrew Dobson engages with these ideologies by arguing in terms of liberalism that there will always be tensions. Liberalism and Green political thought differ over autonomy and individualism, the use of rights-talk, and the metaphysical outlook of our world versus a natural view of inter-species relationships.<sup>3</sup> The gap between conservatism and Green political thought is even wider and deeper. The pessimistic and deterministic view of human nature held by conservatism is not palpable to Green theorists, nor is the idea of the original sin as unredeemable. Basically, Green political thought believes that human beings are capable of transformation, that they can abandon the 'acquisitive, instrumental and use-related relationship with the natural environment' that dominates conservatism.<sup>4</sup> As to socialism, Dobson believes that the two ideologies can learn from each other. While some socialists will have to reassess the traditional goals of production and indiscriminate growth, Green theorists must think harder about the relationship between capitalism and environmental degradation. What they have in common is the problem of capitalism as wasteful and inequalitarian. With feminism Green political thought has found a common cause, the desire to change the attitudes of power strong male elites. Although there are tensions between feminism and Green political thought in terms of feminists promoting an androcentric difference principle, similarities also exist with feminism's promotion of care, concern and compassion. Communitarianism is probably the ideology with which Green political thought has the best co-habitation.

According to Robyn Eckersley, communitarianism would have no major problem with ecological embeddedness meaning to include ecosystem integrity as a structural precondition of human agency and to include non-human species as part of the community.<sup>5</sup> In fact, an eco-communitarianism is highly thinkable both in terms of ethics and political structures. Similarly, Avner de-Shalit would argue that nationalism and Green political

thought could be complementary in that nationalism demands solidarity and responsibility towards fellow citizens; it promotes preservation of national heritages, and it may sustain a sense of obligations to future generations.<sup>6</sup> Common to these critiques of ideologies is that they seek to challenge these through the lens of Green political thought.<sup>7</sup> However, little has been said about how Green political thought would stand the challenge of critique from for example normative theorists seeking to find solutions to minority accommodation. Notwithstanding the fact that challenging Green political thought in terms of existing norms and standards has been likened to a trap in as much as it may result in enhancing and sustaining views to which we are already committed,<sup>8</sup> the aim of this paper is nevertheless to submit Green political thought to such a critique.

I propose to subject Green political thought to some of the traditional problems of normative political theory posed by minority existence in terms of justice, ethics and identity. In political theory, minorities draw attention mostly in terms of rights claims against assimilation. Negative rights of individuals as well as groups include protection against discrimination, rights to preserve and promote culture, cultural values and cultural identities. Positive rights are discussed in terms of political accommodation and participation, education and language, and some times in terms of cultural survival and non-discrimination. In other words, normative minority issues span the gamut from political and civil justice to socio-economic participation to cultural protection. Most controversial are the rights claims that demand full political self-determination or the equivalent to secession. But equally as difficult if not more are the less radical types of rights claims to internal self-determination and various collective autonomy arrangements as well as requests for cultural and linguistic rights either territorialized or universal. Minority rights may be afforded the minority as a group as in the case of collective autonomy or they may be individual citizen rights or human rights. Much debate has centred on how the various ideologies



might or can accommodate such demands, and there is clearly no consensus.

Green political thought has, as I will argue little to say about most of these problematics. Green political thought has yet to graduate normatively, at least in terms of theorizing inter-human relations such as minority-majority relations. Minorities in Green political thought appear to be mostly non-humans and ecosystems. Although the value of the community is highly rated in Green political thought, it appears to be as a result of its instrumental value to environmental change rather than its intrinsic value as the home of Green citizens. Inclusiveness in terms of democratic processes and justice appears to focus on a hierarchy of goals rather than on how goals can sustain each other.<sup>9</sup> As such, there is not a clear indication as to how Green political thought would integrate minorities into this hierarchy let alone how this hierarchy differs much from any liberal democratic hierarchy that we already know.

Before proceeding into the body of discussion, a note of clarification about Green political thought as it is viewed in this paper. Green political theory should be distinguished from environmental politics. Green political theorists operate with two types of Green thinking, ecologism and environmentalism. While environmentalism argues for a managerial approach to environmental problems, believing that these can be solved without fundamental changes in present values or patterns of production and consumption, ecologism holds that a sustainable and fulfilling existence presupposes radical changes in our relationship with the non-human natural world and in our mode of social and political life.<sup>10</sup> Environmentalism is not an ideology because it does not provide an analytical description of society, it does not prescribe a particular form of society beliefs, and it does not provide a programme for political action. As such, environmentalism may be accommodated by other ideologies and does not necessarily become a strand of ecologism. Environmentalism represents a managerial approach to the environment within the context

of present political and economic practices.<sup>11</sup> It does not necessarily subscribe to the limits to growth thesis nor does it seek to dismantle industrialism. It does not argue for the intrinsic value of the non-human environment and declines any attempt to reconstruct the human race metaphysically. It believes that technology can solve the problems it creates.

Ecologism, on the other hand, possesses a number of definitional tenets of ideology and is capable of being described as an ideal type. It claims thus to be capable of being kept apart from other ideologies, such as liberalism or socialism, and should not be seen as a cross-cutting ideology taking aspects of tenets from other ideologies to create an eclectic, new fad of ideas. Ecologism's relationship to political theory has been likened to that of feminism, and should therefore be seen as a "radical Green challenge to the political, economic and social consensus that dominates contemporary life."<sup>12</sup> In other words, where environmentalism seeks reform through a cleaner service economy sustained by cleaner technology and producing cleaner affluence, ecologism is based on "self-consciously hard-headed assessment of the unsustainability of present political and economic practices."<sup>13</sup> Thus, environmentalism and ecologism need to be kept apart because they differ in degree and kind. Since the Green political theory that we are concerned with here is essentially ecologism, it may be constructive to elaborate a few of the main tenets of this body of ideology.

## II. GREEN POLITICAL THOUGHT – ONTOLOGY AND ETHICS

Green political thought has developed into what appears a comprehensive body of political thought that proposes to deal with the environmental issues facing our planet in a different manner than most conventional theories of political order. Philosophically, Green political thought is the only theory that



has a view about the relationship between human beings and the non-human natural world. Basically, Green political thought holds that the non-human natural world is ethically important and should be defended intellectually. It is not just that the non-human world constitutes a set of resources for human use but that we should not treat the non-human world in a purely instrumental fashion. Green political thought thus includes a *theory of value* which holds that the natural value of things created by natural processes rather than by artificial human processes should be preserved and promoted.<sup>14</sup> Things refer here not only to species and the natural world but also processors of natural value. The intrinsic value of the natural is thus a core tenet of what might be called the moral philosophy of Green political thought. By the same token, natural things must not be split or separated in the overall goal to preserve them. Or to put it another way, natural things must be seen as holistic in their being part of our ecosystem. Natural value is thus also the essence of the philosophical outlook that Green political thought defends through the *theory of environmental sustainability*. The sustainable society principle is that the Earth is finite and implies scarcity, thus placing limits on industrial growth. A fundamental framework for a sustainable society must therefore take into account not only limits to growth but also aspects of consumption, energy, trade and travel, work patterns, regionalism, agriculture, as well as decentralisation and community.

Limits of growth politics follow three principles. First, technological solutions cannot help realize the impossible dream of infinite growth in a finite system. Second, that the exponential nature of growth underpins its unsustainability, and third, that the immense complexity of the global system has resulted in clumsy and superficial solutions so far.<sup>15</sup> The logical consequence for Green political theorists is to question our level of consumption in terms of need, population, and technology. Moreover, they question our relation to energy both in terms of quantities of consumption and unethical application. Non-renewable energy is thus not considered healthy for a sustainable society. As

self-reliance thus becomes an important tenet in the aim to keep our societies sustainable, Green political theorists advocate restraint on trade and travel. Trade is seen as wasteful, as creating vulnerable communities, as locus for exercise of political and economic power through dependency, and as creating unnecessary needs.<sup>16</sup> Finally, Green political thought calls for a reconceptualization of the nature and value of work. Green political theorists believe in the value of work but question patterns of work in terms of early retirement (more people taxing the ecosystem), automated production (restraint on resources will bring back labour intensive production), paid employment (many tasks that are not considered work and not paid for could be seen as work), and guaranteed basic income schemes (declining productivity decreases tax revenues which in turn result in no funds for guaranteed income schemes).

However, the future need not look so bleak according to Green political theorists. The reason for this is that the problems caused by centralized systems of production and social security can be solved at the local level. *Bioregionalism* is thus a core pillar in the political cosmos of Green political thought. Bioregionalism refers to the idea that we get “to know the land around us, learn its lore and its potential, and live with it and not against it. We must see that living with the land means living in, and according to the ways and rhythms of, its natural regions – its bioregions.”<sup>17</sup> Bioregionalism includes various types of regions. Ecoregions are the largest type, usually several hundred thousand square miles; georegions are smaller, perhaps a few tens of thousands of square miles; and morphoregions, or vitaregions of several thousand square miles.<sup>18</sup> Bioregionalism involves identifying bioregional boundaries and living with what those territories provide in the way of natural resources and natural products. In bioregions people live in communities which seek to minimise resource-use, emphasize conservation and recycling and avoid pollution and waste. Land is often communally owned and centralised institutions are avoided. In short, the guiding principle of bioregionalism is that the



natural world determines the political, economic and social life of communities and that it reduces the spiritual and material distance between us and the land. While not all Green political theorists will subscribe uncritically to this picture, many will urge people to live in place, and to accommodate to the environment rather than resisting it.<sup>19</sup> Agriculture therefore has a central place in bioregionalism and in Green political thought.

Sound agriculture, according to Green political thought is not only non-polluting and organic; it is also labour-intensive and spiritual. Some Green political theorists prefer to promote decentralization rather than bioregionalism even though their arguments rest on much the same premises as those promoting bioregionalism.<sup>20</sup> Both emphasise the advantages of small communities in terms of human relationships, more economical solutions, and more democratic decision-making. The *community* is thus the core element of the Green political society because it is in the communities that attitudes to the need for environmental protection and social change can best be fostered. Finally, bioregionalism based on Green political thought must ideally create societies that thrive on the diversity of human behaviour fostering democracy, freedom, tolerance, and equality. Equality is seen as a holistic view of science of ecology which defends equality of status among species. A political ecology outlook would thus emphasize the inter-relationship and the inter-dependence between species and nature on the basis of an egalitarian outlook.

The upshot of this political outlook is that Green political thought is profoundly anti-anthropocentric, meaning that the Enlightenment view that man is the centre of the world is not a presentable picture of reality. *Anthropocentrism* as a world view is “held to be a basic cause of environmental degradation and potential disaster” whether in its weak meaning of human-centred or its strong meaning of human-instrumental.<sup>21</sup> The non-anthropocentric view of ethics thus requires followers of Green political thought to conform to a set of ethics based on the one hand on a code of conduct, and on the

other hand, a state of being. The ecological *code of conduct* is informed by what has been termed ‘deep ecology’ or the concern for its own sake for ecological principles such as complexity, diversity and symbiosis.<sup>22</sup> This means the belief that the non-human world could have and does have intrinsic value, or an attempt to move beyond human-prudential arguments for concern for the biosphere.<sup>23</sup> This idea has been the object of some controversy among Green political theorists as to scope and membership and the fact that it may result in an authoritarian approach to the theory of value. Generally it is held, however, that “a change in the attribute that invokes moral considerability inevitably brings with it a shift in the boundaries of ethical concern.”<sup>24</sup> The theory of the *state of being* in Green political thought instead relies on an ethic that takes into consideration ecological consciousness, or the idea that we identify with the non-human world, that we presage our self-realization on such a view and that our behaviour is a logical result from this view. In other words, an alternative view of reality based on a social critique rather than on a metaphysical view of ethics.

The social critique therefore yields a picture of the world that shows “that present social relations and the goals and desires that spring from them are unsatisfactory, and that new conceptions of self-fulfilment and happiness are desirable.”<sup>25</sup> This is why Green political thought in terms of ecologism has positioned itself primarily as an alternative to the prevailing views of both local and global approaches to environmental management.<sup>26</sup> The *Green strategy for social change* is consequently aimed primarily at practices rather than institutions. As the strategy calls for a fundamental shift this renders Green political thought rather more radical than the environmentalism described earlier. Since Green political thought aligns itself with a democratic outlook, the strategy involves both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action.<sup>27</sup> Parliamentary action is, however, fraught with problems as parliamentary survival often set the agenda of political parties rather than the issues at stake.<sup>28</sup>



The desire to change practices (of parliamentarians) has thus not been an easy goal for most Green parties. Instead, Green political thought proposes to change the practices of lifestyles, communities, direct action and classes.<sup>29</sup> The strategy for social change is thus an implementing scheme of the rules of ethics noted earlier. In terms of lifestyle, social change should be sought in the patterns of individual behaviour in daily life. Typical examples of this are taking better care of and with the things that we buy, being careful in the things we say, paying careful attention to where we invest our money, and the way we treat other people. It can also include care about the means of transportation we use. In other words, Green consumerism is a core tenet in the social change. But it is argued that Green consumerism alone is but another type of environmentalism, if it is not accompanied by a fundamental change of psyche that brings about a calmer, gentler, and Greener state of consciousness.<sup>30</sup> A metaphysical reconstruction is therefore required. A change on the basis of modified interests is therefore not enough. It must take the spiritual dimension of Green political thought seriously.

To some Green political theorists this change is best promoted in the local communities referred to earlier. Revolutionizing community practices can support the aim of changing lifestyle practices. Some Green political theorists argue that community living is by far the most ideal mode by which to seek changes in social behaviour. Communitarian behaviour supports the inter-relational and inter-connectedness that the ecological principle of equality requires parity between the human world and the natural world. People living in communities are thus more likely to see the merits of seeking sustainability through improved social behaviour, such as self-help, community responsibility and free activity that are consistent with ecotopian ideals of loose federations of regions and communes.<sup>31</sup> On this view, community members see jointly the merits of the Green future that individuals in urban societies may not. This is not to argue that urban individuals are not capable of seeing the merits

of a Green future. Certainly, social movements with environmental agendas do exhibit the morality of the urban individual becoming involved. However, direct action implemented by such movements often end with the movement on the losing side of the battle. Instead some Green political theorists have suggested that change may best happen as a class phenomenon. It may be that certain classes might be more open to changing their social behaviour towards the environment and mother nature in general. In a similar vein, it has been suggested that women could be the promoters of Green social change as they occupy a crucial space in the reproductive process, and an optimal way to sense nature and respect nature is through your body.<sup>32</sup> Whichever strategy is followed it is clear that to Green political theorists that Green political thought is a transformative political ideology.<sup>33</sup> Green political thought stands out on its own in its foundational approach to the relationship between human beings and their natural environment, its belief in the limits to material growth and its non-anthropocentrism. In short, Green political theorists hold that Green political thought offers a coherent critique of contemporary society and a prescription for improvement.

### **III. NORMATIVE MINORITY ISSUES – GREEN ACTION AND IDENTITY**

The sustainable society decentres the individual in its relationship to nature and to other human and non-human species. This non-anthropocentric but ecocentric individual does not, however, appear to be a post-structural and possible non-rational person as the citizenry of the Green society is expected to be actively promoting Green approaches both in action and in thinking. Clearly, the two theories of ethics, the code of conduct and the state of being do not allow for individuals to be mere instruments of society. Rather, the Green individual is expected to be pro-active and rational in all aspects of life.





Moreover, the most active of the non-anthropocentric but ecocentric individuals must have a good sense of democracy and the functionings of democratic processes in order to influence the status quo. It would appear then that this makes for a very modern, enlightened citizenry that is capable of devising strategies, local as well as broader ones in the building of Green societies.

As noted in the beginning, some established national and ethnic minorities have become known for their Green streak. To the Zapatistas of Mexico it is the biodiversity of the Chiapas jungle that provides the identity for much of their independence struggle and thus their identity as indigenous people living amongst this biodiversity. The destruction of the jungle for oil extraction and large-scale logging were some of the core issues that motivated the Zapatistas. The leader of the Zapatistas, Subcomandante Marcos, depicts the malevolence of a form of expropriation from the Earth unhinged from any sense of indigenous reality.<sup>34</sup> But more importantly, the uprising was also a reaction to the post-NAFTA flooding of the Mexican agricultural market with genetically modified corn. Corn being seen by Zapatistas as the original ancestor of all humans, its continued purity has profound importance for the preservation of their indigenous identity. Zapatista fighters were killed while guarding seed safe houses where their heirloom seeds preserved.<sup>35</sup> The relationship with nature and the Earth of indigenous peoples is of course well known from the plight of many Native American nations' fight against expropriation of their territories as an encroachment on not only their means of living but also their identity as one with their land. The difference in how Native Americans perceive the natural world and therefore how they would govern and manage biodiversity is stark in comparison with the Western ethnocentric and instrumental view.<sup>36</sup> Although it is the normative debate about indigenous peoples rights that has reached mainstream attention over the years, the holistic approach of indigenous people to nature and Earth is perhaps worth the same attention.

Green action has also become part of the life of established national minorities in Europe. Biodiversity and organic agricultural products are the concern of the German minority in Denmark. With diversification, the German speaking farmers took the lead in bringing Danish agriculture into the organic sphere and the German association of farmers in Denmark, the LHN, is now the leading association on organic farming and represents some of the most important organic farms in Denmark.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the German minority is now also taking a lead in bio-energy production. Similarly, just south of the Danish border, in Schleswig-Holstein, another national minority is taking another tactic with regard to biodiversity. Having become despaired by the local government's lack of attention to the environment, a hand full of members of the Danish minority have created a grass-root organization called "Glokale Sydslesvigere" (glocals from South Schleswig). The action group has been spurred by the slogan of many environmental activists, "think global, act local" and their slogan is "handle/forvandle" meaning act and change.<sup>38</sup> Clearly, the social capital that these small national minorities represent is being put to work for a good cause.

In the autonomous province of northern Italy, Alto Adige or as it is also known South Tyrol, the current president of the local parliament and a member of the Italian Green political party, Riccardo Dello Sbarba, has recently challenge the conventional thinking about national minorities in the region by arguing that the largest and most important minority in Europe is in fact the Alpine people.<sup>39</sup> According to Dello Sbarba, this Alpine minority is not defined by history or nationalism but in terms of its environmental surroundings. It is not an ethnic people but a multilingual and multicultural minority. It represents German (40%), Italian (35%), French (20%), Slovenian (5%) as well as a number of small languages and dialects. As its territory encompasses parts of France, Switzerland, Austria, Italy and Slovenia, it is not a national grouping but a minority defined by the common ecosystem of the Alps. This ecosystem represents more than 5.000



species of plants, or half the number of species to be found in the entire continent as well as 30.000 species of animals; thus, the largest reserve of biodiversity in Europe. It is the home of three million human inhabitants, covers 191 thousand square kilometres with populations, industry and transport means covering only two percent of the territory. It is thus a minority whose value is defined by the intrinsic value of the ecosystem of the Alps rather than the sovereignty of the people. But most importantly, the identity of this Alpine minority is defined in terms of two principles: limits and diversity spun together in one string. According to Dello Sbarba, limits produce diversity and diversity signals limits.<sup>40</sup> On this view, ethical and moral values meet in the relation between limits and diversity.

Limits and diversity is another way of referring to the enduring normative problems of freedom versus equality that minorities pose to liberal democracy. This is in a nutshell the debate egalitarian liberals and multiculturalists have as to whether liberalism can accommodate minority claims. The disagreements usually hinge on the type of equality that should be sought and whether rule-exemptions can be made in favour of members of minorities. Where multiculturalists want to institutionalize rule-exemptions,<sup>41</sup> egalitarians want to settle the issues case by case.<sup>42</sup> Communitarians argue for institutionalized minority rights usually reaching further than multiculturalists and often in terms of collective rights.<sup>43</sup> Minority rights claims during or after violent conflicts, in terms of self-determination claims, are most often settled through international mediation and thus follow the rules of liberal international law. Self-determination in the liberal international system is awarded rather restrictive and according to archaic traditions which are not flexible and adjustable to late modern realities. Unlike post-conflict situations that require international mediation, intra-state minority claims are settled through the political and democratic processes over time. Most debates in political theory therefore address the rights of minorities in liberal democracy.

Minority citizenship in terms of active citizenship has yet to draw much attention in political theory. This is not because members of minorities are not expected to possess republican virtues. Indeed, our examples of national minorities and indigenous people acting on Green issues show that members of these minorities are likely more engaged than the average member of society. Moreover, the accumulation of social capital that members of such groups are capable of gathering often due to the need to use social networks for emancipatory aims in fact demonstrates that members of minorities might be obvious candidates for good active citizens. Will Kymlicka's theory of multicultural citizenship addresses the aspect of community in terms of individual members being able to perform as active citizens in democratic societies.<sup>44</sup> He focuses on the importance of individual identity and cultural belonging in the self-identification of members with the traditions, customs, conventions and ideals of minority communities. While not a communitarian argument, Kymlicka's theory is not dissimilar from the communitarian ideals that Green political theories argue are required to promote Green ethics.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the deficit in active minority citizenship studies in contemporary political theory makes it difficult to interrogate Green political thought in terms of Green minority citizenship, since the deficit is mostly due to the fact that minority issues are seen as issues of conflict or social justice.

Finally, minorities in social theorizing clearly constitute 'the other.' In countries where international settlements have institutionalized minority accommodation this is less a problem than in societies that have been recent recipients of immigration. The other in immigration societies is usually ostracized due to religion, race, ethnicity and unacceptable cultural traditions. In traditional settlements the other may be seen as not fitting in with the national identity of a specific national state and thus state nationalism may clash with minority nationalism. The latter is essentially a spill over from the nineteenth century and the latent nationalistic sentiments that still exist in many



especially European states even as societies are becoming increasingly diverse. It is however an enduring legacy that is alive and kicking well in the Balkans and Europe's wider neighbourhood as well as within some of the newest members of the European Union. Democratization is therefore seen as the tool to overcoming these problems.

#### **IV. GREEN DEMOCRACY AND MINORITY PARTICIPATION – RECOGNITION AND INCLUSION**

Green democracy, sometimes called biocracy or eco-democracy, is considered an inclusive view of society. It is by no means mono-cultural. Its anti-anthropocentric approach allows it to widen the moral circle of not just included species but also non-species phenomena such as ecosystems. On the surface, non-anthropocentrism does not appear to pose any problems to accommodating the identities of minorities whether individual or group identity. Members of minorities self-identify strongly with the group primarily because membership and belonging are important factors in the individual's ability to function both as an individual and within the group. Hence, accepting that the individual may be decentred from the anthropological apex is not a threat to the identity of the individual member of an ethnic or national minority. In fact, the understanding of our identity, according to Charles Taylor, is related to four aspects of identity. These are (1) our notions of the good, (2) our understandings of self, (3) the narrative in which we make sense of our lives, and (4) our conceptions of human agency.<sup>46</sup> On Taylor's view the first three aspects have been largely neglected or rejected in the modern understanding of identity and the fourth has been interpreted in such a way as to fit into the liberal mode of interaction. Hence, "the focus is on the principles, or injunctions, or standards which guide *action*, while visions of the good are altogether neglected. Morality is narrowly concerned with what we ought to *do*, and not

also with what is valuable in itself, or what we should admire or love.<sup>47</sup> This "action" outlook of morality makes for an identity which to Taylor is in opposition to a "substantive" outlook whereby the rationality of agents and their thoughts and feelings are judged in substantive terms. To Taylor, moral sources of nature and sentiments influence personal identity in interlocking modern lives.<sup>48</sup> Sentiments are the inner impulses that define one's own nature as opposed to a rational ordering of purposes; it is the centrality of feeling and its link to the sense that one's moral sources are within. Both the community and nature thus constitute the good that influence personal identity.

However, in modern democracy any lack of recognition of these communities may deprive the individual of recognition. Misrecognition, Taylor argues, can result in individuals feeling real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, when minorities are concerned with recognition, one must take it that they are concerned with the well being and respect of their members. Recognition for minorities is a question of desiring respect in terms of self-esteem and moral and social worth.

Recognition thus relates to another important feature of Green democracy, that as far as possible the 'voices' of all included species and natural habitats should be heard. And more importantly, the interests of non-deliberating entities, i.e. future generations, animals, ecosystems must be represented and protected. In practice this may be accomplished through trans-generational and trans-species representative democracy.<sup>50</sup> This is not considered a major problem to Green political theorists as we already have systems of stewardship whereby we protect the interests of minors and others who do not have a vote. But Green democracy is not just deliberative democracy and representative democracy; it



must be participatory because it must be able to make room for people to apply the active citizenship that Green democracy fosters. It is an expanded democracy in which living and legally enfranchised humans view themselves and act as plain members and citizens of the broader biotic community and where we represent the interests of the biotic community as well as our own.<sup>51</sup> Green democracy is thus an interest democracy where institutions focus on how to represent the interests of the broadened membership. The aim of protecting interests is the survival and flourishing of interest holders.<sup>52</sup> Because interest representation at the central level can be difficult to implement democratically in practice, Green political theorists have suggested that interests are better protected at the decentralized level, i.e. the bioregion or the community.<sup>53</sup> In short, Green political thought holds that through non-anthropocentrism and listening to all voices, Green democracy is morally and ethically more inclusive than most conceptions of democracy.

For members of minorities Green democracy might appear as an ideal society. Inclusiveness as a democratic goal is certainly a goal that minorities can support. However, non-anthropocentrism and listening to all voices may pose problems to the sense of identity that motivates minority politics. As we noted, minorities usually seek respect on the basis of their cultural, ethnic or religious difference. In liberal democracy this has been one of the most difficult aspects of normative theorizing due to the fact that liberalism does not easily recognize difference. The problem of the 'politics of difference' has thus become the focus of much debate among liberal theorists. Essentially the problem is that the idea of a politics based on group identity as opposed to interest raises issues of the merits of whether difference is the regulative principle through which selfhood and morality are operative.<sup>54</sup> It has implications thus for the possibility of political co-operation and for the incommensurability of political values. The politics of identity is related to many different developments in modern society, most notably the allocating of rights to minority groups,<sup>55</sup> the aspect of differentiated citizenship,<sup>56</sup> the possibility of recognition of

minority groups on the basis of cultural identity,<sup>57</sup> and the resulting struggles for recognition.<sup>58</sup> Identity politics thus reflects a shift away from political alignments driven by individual interests or ideological debate towards a culture in which citizens cluster under the banner of an encompassing group, with its own collective personality and distinctive culture.<sup>59</sup> The strong emphasis on identity may thus clash with the aim of Green democracy to protect interest. Green democracy is based on interest politics aimed at protecting the interest of both contemporary and future generations as well as non-human species and ecosystems. It is not clear how identity politics pursued by minorities would be accommodated in such a system. Of course, one might argue that the interest of minorities is cultural survival because cultural survival would protect identity. But the justification for cultural survival nevertheless relies heavily on the identity argument. If the identity of minority groups would be awarded equal standing with the moral justification for environmental protection of ecosystems and non-human species in the deliberative process, minorities would not be concerned. But it would appear that Green interest politics leaves little room for those who are disenfranchised due to ethnic and cultural characteristics.

The key question is therefore how the ethos of listening to all voices is implemented. It is clearly desirable in multicultural societies where several minorities vie for participation in the governing process. James Tully has been the foremost defender of such an ethic in terms of a discursive ethics.<sup>60</sup> According to Tully, the discursive approach emphasizes the right of minorities to articulate their opinions and arguments through participation. The goal is to reach if not agreement at least understanding and compromise. It is an approach that presupposes a degree of group agency in order that the minority's arguments may become articulated as well as participation and dialogue in order that each group is able to hear the arguments of other groups. The discursive approach thus seeks to expand the liberal democracy approach that is based on political representation and voting rights. This is because by having to articulate



their ideas or grievances, minorities become directly involved in the process of collective reasoning, and by having to participate in collective reasoning, they are forced to learn the art of dialogue and mutual understanding. It is an approach that requires considerably more engagement on the part of individuals than the standard political model of representation by political representatives. More importantly, it is an approach that requires skills in inter-group communication and ethics in human interaction. Tully names this approach “intercultural multilogue.” Intercultural multilogue refers to the ongoing negotiations that diverse groups in divided societies should have as part of the self-organization of their societies.<sup>61</sup> It is a view of political and social ordering that sees constitutionalism not as a fixed set of uniform rules but a flexible entity that is constantly renegotiated to adjust to the ongoing changes of modern society. Tully names this common constitutionalism as opposed to the contemporary imperial constitutionalism of liberal democracy which he argues is unable to adjust to multiple diversity.

Tully builds his theory upon three cornerstone concepts or conventions of intercultural multilogue that I call “conventions of trust.”<sup>62</sup> These are ‘mutual recognition,’ ‘consent’ and ‘continuity.’ By *mutual recognition* Tully means the principle of equality of self-governing minorities.<sup>63</sup> The second convention of trust, that of *consent* is derived from the principle of *q.o.t.* in Roman law and later articulated by Locke, or *quot omnes tangit ab omnibus comprobetur*, ‘what touches all should be agreed to by all.’<sup>64</sup> The third convention of trust, *continuity* refers to the principle of respect meaning that the ways and customs of diverse groups and peoples are evidence of their free agreement and therefore the continuity of the group’s culture in terms of norms, values and traditions should be respected.<sup>65</sup> According to Tully, these three conventions should be seen as preconditions for a reasonable system of accommodation in divided societies. But they are not only preconditions; they are principles that diverse groups must follow in their intercultural

multilogue, a mode of communication that is built on another principle from law, the ethical principle of *audi alteram partem*, which means the duty to listen to the other side.<sup>66</sup>

However, ethics in inter-group communication is always at risk of being challenged by distorted information, deceitful rhetoric, and strategic bargaining. While information and rhetoric may be critically assessed through individual reasoning, bargaining can result in suppression of democratic articulations and ethical discussions about issues. Moreover, while political ideologies often claim to promote inclusive conceptions of democracy, the operationalization of such concepts often turns out less inclusive than expected. For instance, many egalitarian views of cultural freedoms that give preference to formal equality result in non-egalitarian outcomes. How the Green listening-to-all approach can be inclusive of members of minorities is not clear. In fact, you could fear that the overriding goal of Green sustainability and the heightened attention to non-human species and ecosystems could sideline members of minorities in the quest of the common goal for sustainable societies. The holistic view of Green science which impose equality without differentiation across the board, could result in Green political thought having similar outcomes as conventional egalitarian theories.

## V. THE GREEN STATE AND MINORITY INSTITUTIONS – REGIONS AND REPRESENTATION

As noted, the Green society must be a sustainable society and important methods of achieving this are through bioregionalism and decentralization. This is because it is recognised that at the community level, Green ideology is more likely to enter people’s lives directly. Other methods include the ethics of listening-to-all, by some Green political theorists actually referred to as discursive will-formation.<sup>67</sup> In practice as we have noted this entails the Green



state to be both deliberative and participatory, and to some Green political theorists also representative. The representative notion of democracy is not however supported by most Green political theorists. The instrumental value of the Green state is thus that it is an enabling state based on democratic values. An important part of this instrumental conception of the state is that it can put importance on the possibility of preference transformation. The Green state is not however authoritarian but will insist on obedience to the laws, especially ecological laws. Obedience is achieved through the idea of consent given by the people thus securing the legitimacy of the laws. Majority rule is considered the moral basis for decision making, and accountability is ensured through the ethics of listening-to-all, or at least those who are affected.<sup>68</sup> This latter aspect of statehood requires that the state also listens to those affected outside the boundaries of the state since many ecological disasters involve transgressing national borders. At the level of international politics, the Green state is thus a profoundly cosmopolitan actor that co-operates with other states towards normative international government. The cosmopolitan ethos of co-operation is seen as vitally important to Green state politics as ecosystems do not respect state boundaries. The idea of surrendering sovereignty in the name of environmental sustainability is thus not alien to Green political thought.

There are some aspects of the Green state that appear to lend themselves to normative minority theorizing. First, bioregionalism and decentralisation are clearly the good news for minorities such as national and linguistic minorities that are territorially concentrated. A number of smaller European minorities would certainly qualify as small bioregions, such as the morphoregions, or vitaregions. The Alpine minority suggested by the Italian member of the Green Party, Riccardo Dello Sbarba above might be a bioregion in the sense of Green political thought. It possesses the characteristics of an ecoregion in terms of size, and it is defined naturally rather than along ethnic, linguistic or nationalistic lines. However, Green political

thought does not provide us with much knowledge about how the Green bioregions are defined let alone the populations that populate them. Perhaps this is due to fact that Green political thought does not address nationalism even though nationalism has been a strong force in defining borders. Nationalism has been one of the major reasons for minority conflict, especially national minority conflicts throughout the twentieth century since state nationalisms have clashed with minority nationalisms.<sup>69</sup> For this reason, state nationalism in terms of state construction remains an enduring problem as to how to accommodate minority nationalisms. As noted earlier, Green political thought could perhaps accommodate some positive aspects of nationalism ethics, such as solidarity and responsibility towards fellow citizens, promote preservation of national heritages, and a sense of obligations to future generations. On the negative side, nationalism may contradict thinking globally while acting locally, it may prevent the cosmopolitan streak of Green political thought to take hold, it may not be able to transcend the idea of borders being ecological rather than political and historical, and it is not anti-anthropocentric.<sup>70</sup> In other words, nationalism would have little currency for Green state construction except in the local communities where it could support an ethos of solidarity and responsibility towards both heritage and future generations. It is not clear how Green political thought would view nationalism as a tool of state construction.

The second aspect of the Green state that should however worry minorities is that majority rule is considered the moral basis for decision making. Clearly, majority rule as the name indicates could leave minorities out-voted. A major reason why classical liberalism is not able to take into account minority claims is that it must hold on to majority rule. Political theorists consider minority participation in the political process to be problematic unless some kind of guaranteed representation or participation is forthcoming.<sup>71</sup> In centralized states this can be in the form of token seats in parliaments and through consultative bodies. At times exemption from the minimum threshold to



enter parliament is granted, while in other situations territorial autonomy releases the right to a proportional number of seats. In federalized or devolutionized states, local parliaments may be entirely dominated by minorities and certain types of self-rule may have been granted. Finally, in states with many minorities a consociational type of government may have been put in place whereby each group is proportionally represented and each group often holds veto powers. Not every model is well functioning; all have some deficits. Nevertheless, the moral notion of guaranteed representation is a core tenet of normative minority politics. It is not clear how Green political thought would allow minorities to be represented. Representation by stewardship or proxy as suggested by some Green political theorists would not be acceptable to a normative model of minority accommodation.

The contours of the Green state still remain somewhat vague. We have no idea of a Green constitution<sup>72</sup> although it has been implied that a Green constitution might be seen as an ‘ecological social contract’ between citizens and the state whereby the allegiance of citizens is to constitutional rights and obligations rather than to the nation. The legitimacy of the state is thus based on ‘environmental justice’ rather than the traditional view of the nation of a people legitimizing justice.<sup>73</sup> Maybe for this reason, Green political thought does not appear to concern itself much with how nationalism relates to Green ideology. Moreover, we do not know much about power structures in the Green state. In fact, it would appear that Green political thought so far has been concerned more about the role of the state in the international arena than state construction and the role of the state in distributing justice to society.

## VI. GREEN JUSTICE AND MINORITY CLAIMS – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Justice is a question of giving what is deserved to those who deserve it. It is thus concerned with both *what* is deserved and *who* deserves this. Moreover, it must operationalize *how* justice is delivered. In other words, which means are available to ensure that the appropriate goods are distributed fairly? Green political thought focuses mostly on protection, protection of both species and ecosystems against current and future destruction. It also emphasizes protection of the interests of these. Thus, a morality of protection seems to underpin Green justice as it does in much of the normative theory on minority rights. However, if protection of all things natural is paramount, the protection of cultural traditions, ethnic identities and national minority communities may not be included. This is because we can not argue that culture and ethnicity are natural. Rather, they are generally seen as a human construct. If we accept the post-structural view of individual agency and identities as instruments of cultural categories formed in our minds through subconscious processes, we might be able to stretch our imagination that culture may be considered a natural phenomenon. But this appears rather far-fetched. By the same token, the interests of minorities would not be eligible for protection either since they are the interests of something which is not natural. It is not at all clear, therefore, that minorities whether of racial, ethnic or linguistic background, may count on Green justice to protect their communities and identities.

The scope of who deserves Green justice brings the anti-anthropocentric approach of Green political thought centre stage. A non-anthropocentric approach to justice creates enormous problems in terms of interests among rights holders. First, it is not clear whether the rights of human beings trump the rights of non-human species and ecosystems or vice versa. For a normative accommodation of minority claims



a theory of freedom and rights is indispensable. Freedom has to do with our autonomy and agency in terms of both the way we act and feel. Thus, autonomy must be protected against interference and domination, and it must be able to be activated in many different ways as we do not all consider the same type of autonomy suitable for pursuing our individual ends. It follows from most liberal ideologies that our freedom to be autonomous and act accordingly must be protected by rights. Rights may conflict especially in diverse societies and societies with complex social strata. This too would be the case for the Green society as the existence of human life must share the complexity of life with non-human species and ecosystems. Green political theorists may argue that in order to preserve the Earth it is necessary to let the rights of non-humans and ecosystems trump the rights of human. The Green ethics of the code of conduct and the state of being do seem to imply this. However, if the rights of humans are thus secondary, it may result in the protection of biodiversity loosing out to other powers because who would take care of environmental protection? Disease control would be one example where human action is needed. Of course, one might argue that if all human beings ceased to exist then there might not be any diseases since these may be imbued by the actions of human beings. Therefore, the interference of human beings may be needed, and thus the rights of human beings may have to trump the rights of non-humans and ecosystems. Second, the right to be represented may pose problems of electing representatives for non-human species and future generations. Special representatives would have to be selected to act on behalf of these groups.<sup>74</sup> Hence, if non-humans and future generations deserve special representatives, where would that leave other “under-represented” groups, such as minorities? However, Green political theorists do want to temper the rights-trumping approach. Green political thought would insist on a definitive view of the proper moral relationship between human beings and the non-human natural world. It would acknowledge the uses of rights-talk if it is put to use for environmental ends. And it must

be complemented with an idea of responsibilities.<sup>75</sup> In short, Green political thought would ask not what we can get out of the world, but what we can do for the world.<sup>76</sup> As such, Green political thought theorists would wish to sever the orthodox relationship between rights and duties by emphasizing responsibilities. This certainly puts Green political thought in a category of its own. A Green conception of rights and responsibility would require that these are seen in terms of individual autonomy.

## VII. GREEN CITIZENSHIP AND MINORITY AUTONOMY – REASONING ABOUT ACTION

It has been proposed that Green autonomy is self-government rather than licence.<sup>77</sup> The Green conception of autonomy sees autonomous species as interdependent and receptive to the Green ethics of code of conduct and the state of being. On this notion, people need not surrender their freedom in order to respond effectively to the ecological challenge.<sup>78</sup> Although they must surrender some of their options in life to be good Green citizens, and thus some rights could be curtailed, they would apply a mode of practical reasoning about the environment in relation to individual autonomy and freedom which in turn renders the result ethical.<sup>79</sup> It is a conception of individual autonomy that I would argue resembles a Kantian mode of ethics that sees autonomy as act-oriented as opposed to other modes of Kantianism that see autonomy as end-oriented.

Kantian ethics have recently been put in connection with normative minority issues.<sup>80</sup> Onora O’Neill has suggested that a model of critical reasoning is one way of mediating conflicting views of the good life.<sup>81</sup> To O’Neill the moral values of constitutive communities and individual moral and social worth are issues that should be seen in terms of a revisionary Kantian model of individual autonomy. To O’Neill moral and social recognition provide individuals with ethical standing. By ethical





standing we mean ethical acceptance without moral commitment. Ethical standing is afforded reciprocally by individuals to fellow individuals and these individuals themselves define the scope of the ethical standing. Individuals eligible to be part of the scope are determined by the critical practical reasoning process. Critical practical reasoning is thus a complex process of individual autonomy that relies on a certain conception of freedom. The process is guided by ethical principles which we agree on in our communities, such as rights and obligations. Rights and obligations form a complex set of rules whereby individuals exchange goods depending on individual circumstances. In so far as the individual autonomy process is guided by these ethical principles that we have agreed upon, the outcome of the action of individual autonomy will produce both correct and virtuous action.

O'Neill's revisionary Kantian view of individual autonomy should be seen in contradistinction to earlier interpretations of Kant's ethics. These are the conceptions criticized by Hegel, Mill, and contemporary communitarians such as MacIntyre as well as the conception put forth by John Rawls. Whereas these conceptions of Kant's ethics are obscure in their reliance on deontological ethics, the conception that O'Neill defends is the deontological conception that Kant himself envisaged.<sup>82</sup> On this view, individuals evidence ethical standards when they reason about practical outcomes. Practical reasoning is of course something we all do all the time, but O'Neill argues that in so far as we are capable of being *critical* in our practical reasoning, we are able to critically discern between good action and bad action in terms of how to act toward one another. In focusing on action, we overcome the problem of making value judgements about comprehensive moral values because we concentrate on action evaluation. This is not to argue that we do not make value judgements about moral issues but merely to state that in human interaction there is no need to make such judgements inasmuch as action refers to inter-human relationships whereas values usually refer to attitudes, ideals and norms. Therefore,

revisionary Kantian ethics see individual autonomy as implementing judgements about action rather than judgements about values.

The fact that the model of critical practical reasoning is act-oriented means that it provides a model of social interaction for culturally diverse societies. To be act-oriented means that 'reasoned action is informed by principles all in the relevant domain can follow' and which is 'followable by all others within the relevant scope.'<sup>83</sup> This is in contradistinction to models of practical reasoning that are end-oriented which means that they guide reasoned action that is 'oriented by objective ends, such as real moral properties or meta-physically grounded moral ideals.'<sup>84</sup> The most well known end-oriented model of individual reasoning, according to O'Neill, is Rawls's theory of justice.<sup>85</sup> To O'Neill, Rawls takes an 'empiricist view of action,' meaning that Rawls construes reasoned action in broadly empiricist terms as a matter of choosing between ways of pursuing an agent's preferences, desires, motivations, and inclinations.<sup>86</sup> The Rawlsian model, therefore, is self-centred whereas O'Neill's model is ethical inasmuch as it defines the scope more broadly than the end-oriented model.<sup>87</sup> By relevant scope O'Neill is referring to the group of individuals who would accept the principles upon which the model of critical practical reasoning relies. The scope, according to O'Neill, does not have clear boundaries but rather is defined in pragmatic terms by the actors themselves. This means that those actors who aim to reason 'look for ways of structuring some of their thought and action so that it will be followable by multiple, differing and often dispersed audiences.'<sup>88</sup> Hence, the individual's reasons for acting are not only universalistic or only particularistic, but both.

To reason and act on the basis of both universal and particular principles sounds more complex than it need be. Essentially, O'Neill is defending a model of individual practical reasoning that takes into account both the *phenomenal* being that is natural, causally determined and the *noumenal* being that is non-natural, self-determining.<sup>89</sup> The factors that influence this process and determine the type of being are of course moral sources and norms.



Thus, the *noumenal* being fosters transcendental and universal reasoning whereas the *phenomenal* being fosters particular reasoning. But according to O'Neill, it is not only the *noumenal* being that fosters action based on universal values, reasoning by the *phenomenal* being is also capable of fostering action based on universal values. This is because the *phenomenal* being on Kant's view relies on a strong conception of human freedom. This *homo duplex* view of fostering both universal and particular action through a strong sense of human freedom therefore relies on a certain link between negative and positive freedom.

To Kant the relation between negative and positive freedom was not clear and neither absolute. According to O'Neill, Kant saw negative liberty as the "freedom of the will" which enabled the individual to function independently of alien causes, whereas positive liberty to Kant meant autonomy, or a 'specific, coherent and reasoned way of using negative freedom.'<sup>90</sup> Linking negative and positive liberty to Kant meant that the individual is able to be self-critical even when relying on the moral sources of the *phenomenal* being. This means that critical practical reasoning 'offers a framework for instrumental reasoning which discards the assumption that actual or idealized preferences have an automatic justificatory role, and provides some means for distinguishing those which can justifiably be pursued from others which cannot.'<sup>91</sup> The critical conception of practical reasoning does not take the expression of the basic norms of a community or personal commitments as intrinsically rational. Rather, it affords a critical view of actual preferences, norms and commitments while also taking into account that the substance of rationality is not given but has to be constructed without arbitrarily taking elements of self and community as premisses. In other words, it is a model that allows for both particular and universal norms to inform individual reasoning. This O'Neill argues is in contradistinction to Rawls's model which assumes a different account of rationality. Whereas Rawls identifies the principles that *would* be chosen by instrumentally rational beings, Kant's rationality

identifies principles that *could* consistently be chosen regardless of particular ends.<sup>92</sup> This is not to argue that all Green minorities are hereafter considered autonomous according to revisionary Kantian ethics. What it indicates is that members of minorities that have shown a capacity for Green ethics in their approach to the sustainable society would need the rights and freedoms required to pursue the good cause of Green citizenship.

However, the automatic justificatory role of the non-anthropocentric values of Green political thought poses some problems to the revisionary Kantian view of critical practical reasoning because it could force individuals to reason on a non-critical basis. In so far that anti-anthropocentric values must prioritize non-human interests, critical practical reasoning may be impossible. Moreover, the end-oriented view of sustainable societies may in fact render the desired practical reasoning of Green political thought more Rawlsian than Kantian. It is not clear therefore how Green practical reasoning differs from liberal practical reasoning as opposed to the revisionary liberal practical reasoning that involves critical autonomy. In other words, it is questionable whether Green practical reasoning can be critical.

There are, however, similarities between the revisionary Kantian ethics and Green autonomy in terms of cosmopolitan reasoning. The way in which Green political thought theorizes Green citizenship in terms of individual practical reasoning is through an eclectic notion of a communitarian-cosmopolitan citizenship. The communitarian ethos would be needed to foster virtues of care, concern and compassion, and the cosmopolitan ethos would be required for the consideration of the 'other', or an 'other-regarding' quality.<sup>93</sup> O'Neill's theory exposes a cosmopolitan streak that takes into consideration the other. It is a concept of individual practical reasoning that relies not only on self-criticism but also on the virtue of being "respectful of the other."<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, according to O'Neill, virtues are not guided by empty or rigidly uniform principles that neglect differences; rather they are guided by character traits of individuals and



by practices and traditions of communities.<sup>95</sup> Hence, virtues are expressed more or less reliably in action and allow for a loose fit between the action and the source of action. In short, universal principles of action allow for the expression of virtues to be variable because they are feelings and sentiments that refer to characteristic, intelligible patterns of action. Hence, while universal, they are not idealized principles that deny human particularities and differences. This is precisely why the revisionary Kantian notion of virtues also provides for a strong sense of duty. Virtues of duty are complex and come in various forms. Firstly, there are the virtues of justice that, according to O'Neill, would avoid severely injuring. These are the important virtues for the model of critical practical reasoning that might also include virtues of toleration, respect, fidelity, fairness, truthfulness and honesty. Secondly, there are executive virtues that are guided by among others self-respect, self-control, decisiveness, courage, endurance, and autonomy. Thirdly, there are social virtues that build on sources of altruism, sympathy, beneficence, care, concern, generosity and magnanimity. These are virtues that must reject indifference as well as neglect and that have implications 'not only for action that affects others directly, but for action that affects either the social fabric or the natural and man-made environments on which human lives depend.'<sup>96</sup> Although indifference cannot be avoided in all action, there are some actions where people must show a willingness to go beyond mere duty. We might therefore see a compatibility between revisionary Kantian ethics and Green autonomy.

The operationalization of Green citizenship happens, according to Green political theory in quotidian politics.<sup>97</sup> It is not turned on and off, nor is it divided into private and public spheres. It takes place locally, as in the bioregions, and it is globally oriented as many ecological problems transcend historical borders. In fact, a good Green citizen would think globally while acting locally. Similarly, O'Neill argues that there is no one solution as to how revisionary Kantian ethics may be institutionalized. It is difficult to

know when they are required and not required, nevertheless they form a good basis upon which to begin building public policies. As such, it is important to emphasize as O'Neill also does that revisionary Kantian ethics is merely an action guiding theory, and one should not expect it to determine action. Virtues are potentially applicable to the construction of public policy, they provide for the conditions of possibility of an ethics that reject principles that do not pertain to those towards whom the public policy is directed. In terms of cross-cultural reasoning in politics this results in the possibility of fostering an ethos of virtues and duties that foster ethical consideration of the other. Rather than seeing ethics in universal terms only or in particularist terms only, as O'Neill argues has been the tendency in politics, it is possible to describe a model of cosmopolitan ethics where our virtues make us feel obligated to give ethical consideration to those particularities that we might otherwise reject outright. This does not require moral universalism but a set of cosmopolitan ethical principles that defend specific claims about action. These claims must, therefore, be specific about scope, structure and content. Of course, both Green political thought and any liberal theory, whether derivative or otherwise, share the problem that claims about action are seldom specific enough.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

It should be clear now that Green political thought is far more about ethics than about political institutions and normative accommodation. Although Green political thought has a well developed theory of the sustainable society, especially the relation between the local community and the environment, and it has a sophisticated theory of the individual as a decentred person from the cosmos of natural life, it does not have much to say about how to balance individual liberties and rights with ecological policies.<sup>98</sup> If not normatively, we can however speak of Green minority ethics. Green citizenship and its ethos of communitarian values are compatible with the



ethos that some minority exhibit both externally and internally. Moreover, the ethos of practical reasoning informing Green autonomy is comparable to the revisionary Kantian ethics that informs liberal practical reasoning except on its ability to be critical. This is because it affords an automatic justificatory role to ideal ends such as non-anthropocentrism. The non-anthropocentric view of human life thus creates a circular problem for how Green political thought is able to deal with issues of justice, rights and freedoms, state construction and political representation. If one of the objectives of Green political thought is to find resolution to environmental problems based on ‘a clear-eyed attention to their differential impact on human communities based on class, gender, race, and position within the global community,’<sup>99</sup> then we must say it fails with regard to minorities.

This, I have tried to show is due to its emphasis on a hierarchy of goals rather than seeking complementarity or convergence. This results in an inequality of ends and a preference for means which thus informs the normative issue of recognition. Hence, as to recognizing the intrinsic value of minorities as constitutive communities, Green political thought is not clear. One of its most important pillars is the community due to its ability to engage in environmental action. But the moral value of that community is subjugated to its instrumental value. This problem is linked to most of the other issues raised in this paper because recognition comes not as a single problem but as a normative package of rights and privileges as well as duties and responsibilities. Normative recognition of human communities is not,

however, feasible due to the non-anthropocentric edict of Green political thought.

It would thus seem that non-anthropocentrism is a major reason why we can have Green minorities in ethics and action but not as moral communities. Those minorities that are already defined along traditional characteristics and who given their active environmentalism are implementing the ethics of Green political thought, we might call Green minorities. They support a Green citizenship and the aim of a sustainable society. In contradistinction, the bio-minority which is defined alternatively along the lines of ecological borders rather than traditional cultural characteristics and national state politics poses problems to Green political thought at different levels. First of all, it is not clear how it would function. It seems to do away with the state altogether. Indeed, Green political thought may eventually be ready to eliminate the state as many of its practical concerns pertain to the fact that nature and the environment do not recognize borders. But, and perhaps therefore, Green political thought can not conceptualize such an alternative minority because even without political borders there may still remain psychological borders between humans and non-humans. The upshot of this would be that we would have to think of new ways of defining not only bio-minorities but also bio-majorities.



## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> I use Green political thought and Green political theorists interchangeably with little discrimination as to which Green theorists promote what theories. This unfortunate simplification of a very diverse field of political thinking is clearly only with the one purpose of making it accessible to the non-Green reader who is interested in the relation of Green political thought to minority issues. For any unwarranted mistreatment of presentations and arguments, I sincerely apologize.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (London: Routledge, 1990), chapter 5.

<sup>3</sup> See Marcel Wissenburg, "Liberalism" in Andrew Dobson and Robyn Eckersley (eds.), *Political Theory and the Ecological Change* (CUP, 2006), chapter 2. See also, Mark J. Smith, *Ecologism. Towards Ecological Citizenship* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998)

<sup>4</sup> Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 178.

<sup>5</sup> Robyn Eckersley, "Communitarianism" in Dobson and Eckersley (eds.), *Political Theory and the Ecological Change*, pp. 91-109.

<sup>6</sup> Avner de-Shalit, "Nationalism" in Dobson and Eckersley, *Political Theory and the Ecological Change*, pp. 75-91.

<sup>7</sup> See in general, Dobson and Eckersley (eds.), *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge*

<sup>8</sup> Avner de-Shalit, "Thirty Years of Environmental Theory: From Value Theory and Meta-Ethics to Political Theory" *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, Vol. 9 (2006), No. 1, pp. 85-105 at pp. 87-88.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>10</sup> Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 2

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Goodin, *Green Political Theory* (CUP, 1992), p. 27 quoted in Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 68.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>17</sup> Kirkpatrick Sale, *Dwellers in the Land: the Bioregional Vision* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1985), p. 56 quoted in Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 99.

<sup>18</sup> Sale, "Mother of all: an introduction to bioregionalism" in Kumar (ed.), *The Schumacher Lectures: Vol. II* (London: Blond & Briggs, 1984), p. 227 and Sale, *Dwellers in the Land* p. 58 quoted in Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 99.

<sup>19</sup> Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 101.

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<sup>21</sup> Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 51.

<sup>22</sup> Arne Naess, "The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary", *Inquiry*, 16(1973), p. 95 quoted in Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 40.

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>25</sup> J. Thompson, "Preservation of wilderness and the Good Life" in Elliot and Gare (eds), *Environmental Philosophy* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1983), p. 98 quoted in Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 163.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

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<sup>31</sup> Robyn Eckersley, "Green politics: a practice in search of a theory" (paper delivered in 1987), p. 22 quoted in Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 136.



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- <sup>34</sup> Michael Becker, "Rhizomatic Resistance: the Zapatistas and the Earth Liberation Front" available at <http://greentheoryandpraxis.csufresno.edu/articles/becker.doc>
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- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314-15
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- <sup>62</sup> Tove H. Malloy, *National Minority Rights in Europe* (OUP, 2005), Chapter 6,
- <sup>63</sup> Tully, *Strange Multiplicity*, p. 117
- <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125
- <sup>66</sup> James Tully 'The Crisis of Identification: the Case of Canada' in *Political Studies*, 42 (1994), 77-96 at 84.
- <sup>67</sup> John Barry, "The State (and Citizen) of Green Political Theory" in *Green Political Theory and the State*, p. 4.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- <sup>69</sup> See Tove H. Malloy, *National Minority Rights in Europe*, Chapter 4.
- <sup>70</sup> Avner de-Shalit, "Nationalism" in Dobson and Eckersley (eds.), *Political Thought and the Ecological Challenge*



- <sup>71</sup> See Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*; Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*.
- <sup>72</sup> Apparently a study on environmental rights and democratic rights has been published by Tim Hayward in Minter and Taylor (eds.), *Democracy and the Claims of Nature* (Kanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2002). It has not been possible to take this into consideration in this article.
- <sup>73</sup> John Barry, "The State (and Citizen) of Green Political Theory", p. 9
- <sup>74</sup> Andrew Dobson quoted in Avner de-Shalit, "Thirty Years of Environmental Theory: From Value Theory and Meta-Ethics to Political Theory" at p. 96.
- <sup>75</sup> Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 172.
- <sup>76</sup> Tim Hayward, "The meaning of political ecology", *Radical Philosophy*, 66(1994), Spring, p. 163 quoted in Dobson, *Green Political Thought*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, p. 172.
- <sup>77</sup> Richard Dagger, "Freedom and Rights" in Dobson and Eckersley (eds.), *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge*, p. 213
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>80</sup> Tove H. Malloy, *National Minority Rights in Europe*, Chapter 5.
- <sup>81</sup> Onora O'Neill, *Towards Justice and Virtue: A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning* (CUP, 1996)
- <sup>82</sup> O'Neill 'Kantian Ethics' in Singer, Peter (ed.), *A Companion to Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 175-185.
- <sup>83</sup> O'Neill, *Towards Justice and Virtue*, p. 50
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 55
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-48
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- <sup>90</sup> Onora O'Neill, *Bounds of Justice* (CUP, 2000), p. 42
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid. p. 42
- <sup>92</sup> O'Neill, 'Kantian Ethics', p. 184
- <sup>93</sup> John Barry, "The State (and Citizen) of Green Political Theory" p. 8
- <sup>94</sup> I borrow this term from Kostakopoulou, T. 'The Politics of 'belonging' and 'exclusion' in the EU: Citizenship and Immigration', PhD thesis (University of Essex, 1996), Introduction.
- <sup>95</sup> O'Neill, *Towards Justice and Virtue*, p. 72
- <sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 5
- <sup>97</sup> Dobson, "Citizenship" in Dobson and Eckersley (eds.), *Political Theory and the Ecological Challenge* , p.226
- <sup>98</sup> Avner de-Shalit, "Thirty Years of Environmental Theory: From Value Theory and Meta-Ethics to Political Theory" at p. 99.
- <sup>99</sup> John M. Meyer, "Political Theory and the Environment" in Dryzek, Honig and Phillips (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory* (OUP, 2006), pp. 773-792 at 782.



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