

# The Impact of Rawls and MacIntyre Theory of Justice on National Cohesion in Multicultural Societies

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## Abstract

Today, many countries have differences ethnic, subcultures, communities and religions. Managing and making policy in this society is more difficult than en bloc societies. Therefore one of more important of their problems is making just policies, which create and preserve national cohesion. To achieving this purpose, their governments try to use a justice theory, which can apply justice among people and preserve national cohesion.

There is several justice theories that may help to these kinds of societies, and each society based on its own positions select and perform one of them. Among different theory of justice, this essay studies Rawls and Macintyre theory of justice, because They play a huge role in shaping political philosophy, and also they represent two major contemporary political streams like liberalism and communitarians.

The main question that this essay tries to follow is which theories of justice could be useful in multicultural society and cause to create national cohesion.

This essay use descriptive and analysis method.

**Keywords:** communitarians, justice, liberalism, multicultural society, national cohesion.

## Introduction

National cohesion in all societies, especially multicultural societies is one of the most important demands that governments have always sought. This is because national cohesion is directly related to political stability and political stability is also one of important factors to achieve development. In other words, countries that have no national cohesion, and have cultural, ethnic or racial conflicts, not only fail in development path but are also prone to collapse.

Cultural and political management in multicultural societies is very complex and requires special methods and principles that completely different from method of management in other societies. In this regard, some are trying to build a community by eliminating differences. These politicians forget that different traditions are not a danger to society, but the main risk is to

ignore the differences and misunderstanding of cultures. That's why officials are working in such societies while respecting differences impede national integration are compromised. In other words, just policies in these societies are able to create and increase national cohesion. Therefore multicultural societies try to find justice theory and also just law to deal with this reality.

This paper tries to analysis the relationship between national cohesion and justice in multicultural societies based on Rawls and Macintyre theory of justice.

### **Explanation of main concepts**

As a first step, it is better to explain the meaning of our main concepts, because sometimes words have several meanings in the humanities and social sciences and researchers should first of all define the specific meaning of his keywords.

The term of culture refers to the growing of plants, animals and cultivation is even raising a family. After Renaissance this term means to achieve progress and prosperity of a civilized society and a sign was used. Thus, the concepts of civilization and culture in its traditional usage in European languages are heavily intertwined and are sometimes used as synonyms.

In fact, because of the common belief system, they behave a certain way and the only way to understand the actions for social scientists to understand the culture of a nation. Of course, culture is a complex phenomenon, including ways of thinking and acting which is constantly adjusting and changing and not talk about it in such a way that if we introduce something unchangeable.

Today, most of societies have variety of different culture and we call them multi cultural societies. This phenomenon has two different origins. In some societies it creates because of migration and in others it's related to group of people who have certain territory (Coulange, 1980:193).

On the other hand, National cohesion is based on collective agreement in a society. Social scientists have long known that the most important factor in the survival of a nation is national cohesion. For example, Ibn Khaldun The crucial factor for the survival of their communities "nervousness" and the main reason for the rise and fall of nations and civilizations is its strength and weakness. "Durkheim" French sociologists also distinguish between organic and mechanical solidarity has examined this issue.

In the other words, national cohesion is a situation in which people with shared cultural and social obligations are linked to one another. Mitchell believes national cohesion has 3 important factors:

- Commitment to a community of shared values and norms
- To the interdependence among people of common interest
- A shared sense of collective identity (Mitchell, 1981:180).

McCracken conceptualized national cohesion as characteristics of a society dealing with the connections and relations between individuals, groups, and territorial units (McCracken,1998), and also Beauvis and Jenson have also identified five different possible conceptions of national cohesion: 1) cohesion as common values and a civic culture, 2) cohesion as social order and

social control; 3) cohesion as social solidarity and reduction in wealth disparities; 4) cohesion as social networks and social capital; and 5) cohesion as place attachment and identity (Beauvis&Jenson,2002).

In fact, it can be said, the most important condition for the survival and continued political system is existence of national cohesion, and lack of this cohesion can threaten countries.

What should be noted here is that it is much harder to achieve cohesion in multicultural societies. Governments in some of these societies have tried to homogenized culture of society to achieve this goal and some others have tried to accept and respect differences, to uphold justice. In such countries, historically, the most important concern of many religions and ethnic subcultures concerns disappear and melt them in the realm of culture. This caused in the multicultural society religious and ethnic minorities try to preserve its existence and in many cases, they want to separate from original territory. In other words, if the political system cannot have just behavior to the minority communities, the society faced with riot, immigration or even secession.

On the other word, Good governance in multicultural societies generally ensures the confluence of each ethnic group's culture to create national cohesion. National cohesion must not mean a dilution of the ethnics' cultures, and must not mean giving a higher status to some cultures to the exclusion of other cultures. Ethnics should be given space to unite and interact within a mosaic of all cultures. National cohesion must mean pluralist unity where there is a dynamic coexistence of each group's culture. National unity must create space and promote an appreciation of all cultures. Further, all cultures must be on a level playing field to contribute to societal development (Misir, 2013).

Based on what has been said in this paper our assumption is in just multicultural society all minorities and subcultures believe have enough ability to influence on government policy , and also government do not try to homogenizing cultures. There is high level of political trust, political satisfaction and political empowerment in such societies.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Justice has always been among the issues that the people in general and scholars in particular have been attracted to. So many definitions of justice presented. For example, some such as Plato put justice on each object knows its place. Classical liberals and libertarians have given it entitlements and some of its links with concepts such as need equality, fairness and deserve are linked.

Another issue is that justice will become a major issue in human society, is to use or even misuse the government in the history of the concept and its various definitions. In fact, governments always have tried using different definitions and theories of justice, their policies seem fair and to justify their actions. Why less government and society can be found, that do not have a justice theory.

However, what should be noted is that the concepts and theories associated with it throughout history have had a lot of changes. So that the sense of justice in the ancient world, medieval and modern times are quite different. Even within each of these courses are also deep disagreements about the meaning of resources there. Hence it is necessary to first have an understanding of these changes so we can use these words correctly. Therefore, this paper tries

to point out some of these changes and then according to the above changes, review the relationship between justice and national cohesion based on Rawls and Macintyre theory.

Justice in ancient Greece was closely related to the aim of life and virtue. For example, Plato's view of everyone is constructed in the community to work on specific objectives and therefore should just do their job well. After that it is just people with different talents in different position in society. He believes, as we have three branches of wisdom, wrath and lust, as well as the three requirements for survival, defense and leadership that the public guardians and rulers will be removed. His justice coordinator of the three branches and causes each of them do their special duty in the society. So if anything is located in its place in the society, where there is justice.

In Aristotle philosophy justice have special location, which is why he calls justice as "all virtue". As he says, happiness of people directly depends on justice. For having definition from justice, he links this with equality. In his view, justice is equal treatment with equal person and unequal treatment with unequal person. In his point of view, everything in this world has a purpose and purpose of human life is well-being. So if people want to find their well-being and happiness, they have to live in just society, which emphasize in happiness of people (Hugh, 1976: 65-73).

We can say that in ancient age; most of great philosophers see justice as a virtue, that must used by specific persons like philosopher or wisdom people. In fact, they have elitist view about this.

However, in modern age this view has changed. Although scholars still believed that justice is a virtue, they do not use ultimate meaning to life, well-being or happiness to explain it. One of school that place in front of views expressed in up is deontologism. This school does not see virtues as an instrument in the path of happiness, but see virtues like justice as a human duty.

Kant is the most important deontologist thinkers. He believed that pure reason is the best justifier for morality and justice and happiness and our understanding of the good cannot be a root of morality, because our good, in all its forms, is selfish. Furthermore, rational being is autonomous being and law of justice must be support this autonomy. Therefore human, as a rational being, have right to select their good and live according to it (walker, 1978: 159).

The central idea of his theory of justice is "universal law of justice". This says that: "act only on that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should be a universal law". His theory of justice believe some values such as civil liberty, autonomy and individual liberty is more important than other values in society. Therefore any power, even government, could not limit people's liberty, even the excuse of protecting certain conception of the good.

One of very important followers of Kant in contemporary age is John Rawls. He gets some idea of Kant such as deontologism and social contract to find laws of justice. Rawls is a liberal theorist that is trying to put freedom and justice in together. He uses social contract as hypothetical situation and believes on that situation rational, autonomous and selector person behind the veil of ignorance select tow principal of justice that is always valid. He calls this theory justice as fairness. The principles include the following:

- 1- Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberties for all.
- 2- Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just saving

principle, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity (Rawls, 1971:266).

About first principle Rawls mentions, these basic liberties like political liberties and personal freedom in thinking and speech. In his view this principle has priority over all other principles. The only way to limit these liberties is if they interfere with one another. In the second principle, he accepts some inequalities in a new liberal order. The first part of the second principle is called 'difference principle'. In a Rawlsian society, some inequalities are allowed to happen. The purpose of it is to rearrange these inequalities to favor the least advantaged representative individual.

On the other hand, he believes that when people do not know anything about his future situation, for example about his wealth, social status, sex, ethnicity, and religion, they use maximin strategy to select principle of justice. Based on maximin strategy, people select some universal and general rules and principle that if they stand in a worst situation in their society, endures minimal harm.

He believes that in such society, people can have their own belief and also can seek their 'good'. In fact in Rawlsian society 'right' has priority in 'good' and he considers some basic rights like liberal liberties and equitable access to opportunities to people that in his view it is essential for them.

Of course, Rawlsian theory of justice has many protectors and opponents. One of the philosophical schools that really criticize justice as fairness is called communitarians. Alasdair MacIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor and Michael Walzer are more important communitarians. They believe Rawls' theory is based on liberal default and against his claim, justice as fairness strongly supports one specific life style. They also say that Rawls separates individuals from their background, tradition and community, and it is a very important critic of his theory.

MacIntyre about this problem says that we as humans have deep dependence to our community. In other words they make our identity so we cannot quit them. Therefore we cannot think and make decisions out of our community, tradition and culture. He criticizes Rawls because he has an atomistic view about individuals. In fact MacIntyre believes our rationality and our tradition have an important relationship, so we cannot have a universal neutral theory for all.

Based on MacIntyre's view, justice is understood in tradition and community, but in his view justice must be based on virtue, and every culture and tradition specifies what is virtue.

### **Comparative Analysis of MacIntyre and Rawls Theories on national cohesion**

For justice in a multicultural society, different solutions have been proposed. For example, some argue that policies based on equality of citizens in multicultural societies can be very useful and fair. Equality means that all people who have accepted membership in a nation-state are citizens and have equal rights and opportunities. The most important of these rights include:

- Equality of opportunity to achieve political and administrative authorities
- Equality of basic opportunities as education, jobs, welfare
- Equal legal rights
- Equal rights to political participation (Coleman, 1947: 77-78).

These solutions stress on a kind of justice to policy making, but the problem here is that each of these schools of thought and thinkers have certain and different opinions about the meaning of justice in society, particularly multicultural societies. Hence, we are trying to explain the theories of Rawls and McIntyre to this matter. The decision will come as Rawls can be understood as the most important representative of contemporary liberalism that justice is discussed, and McIntyre also is the most important communitarian critic of Rawls who offers a different point of view about justice.

Although Rawls is not much to comment about multicultural societies, his theory of justice includes elements that can be helpful in managing of such communities. He expresses an “anti perfectionist” theory, and tries to avoid the problem of truth and the controversy between realism and subjectivism about the status of moral and political values. Therefore his theory neither asserts nor denies these doctrines (Rawls, 1985:230).

Rawls in his book that named “political liberalism” talks about new concept that named reasonable pluralism. He believes Liberalism as a political doctrine supposes that there are many conflicting conceptions of the good in societies, so far as we can ascertain within a workable political conception of justice. Therefore Rawlsian liberalism assumes that it is a characteristic feature of a free democratic culture that pluralities of conflicting and incommensurable conceptions of the good are affirmed by its citizens (Rawls, 1985:249).

Based on a Rawls theory, we face with humans who have many similarities. Most important similarities are their equality, freedom, rationality. He believes that all people are equal so they are free to select their “good” by their reason (Rawls, 1993:30-32). Accordingly, anybody like government could not support any beliefs and impose it on individuals.

Rawls thinks that this version of liberalism can also establish justice in society and create unity and cohesion in the society. In justice as fairness, social unity is starting with the conception of society as a system of cooperation between free and equal persons. Social unity and the allegiance of citizens to their common institutions are not founded on their all affirming the same conception of the good, but on their publicly accepting a political conception of justice to regulate the basic structure of society.

In addition, he talks about public justification as a way to making policy in societies. Public justification is a moral justification that aims at reasonable agreement and construes such agreement as genuinely justificatory. He says that public justification is the only source of both the legitimacy and the stability of the political process in constitutional democracies, and political power should and can be framed by normative principles that are not derived from comprehensive doctrine, natural law but from public justification (Audard, 2007:215). On the other word, he rejects both moral scepticism and moral dogmatism.

In contrast, Macintyre has different view to question of justice in society. He believes that Different and incompatible receives of justice closely related to practical different and incompatible receives of rationality, And rationality cannot be achieved without history (Macintyre, 1988: ix). On his view, we are starting thinking about justice and rationality based on our tradition. In fact, we cannot talk about this matter without belonging to particular tradition.

In his opinion, those who think that there are universal and fixed standards for rationality take the wrong path. It has two reasons. Firstly, the questions of justice and rationality are not

the same for all people. Secondly, the answer to these questions depends on plural historical and cultural origins, that people who it belongs to (Macintyre, 1988:393).

Furthermore, he has seen justice as a kind of virtue, so believe that justice like other virtues link with desert. Whereas, we understand virtue in a tradition and in community, there are not any fixed standard for justice and desert. However, standards of desert are different in different community and tradition. In his point of view, unlike liberal theories we cannot judge about other traditions and community, when we are not in that tradition. Of course, it is not an implicit rule and Macintyre set an exception for it. In his view, we are able to judge between two traditions if we understand those traditions quietly and wholly. On the other hand only people judge among two or three tradition who have two or three first tradition and dominate on those presupposes, language, culture and something like that (Macintyre, 1988: 374-375).

Theory of Macintyre denies that all civilization people have, must have, only one perception about rationality (Macintyre, 1990: 24). Therefore, any one can not enumerate other traditions irrational, also cannot impose a specific version of rationality on others.

As we seen both of these theory have positive points, and both of them promote a kind of pluralism. Rawls justifies pluralism as a sign of justice in “well-ordered society” by liberal origins. However, they have important differences. Rawls believes right is prior than good and by this reason explains why we need pluralism, reasonable pluralism, in multicultural society. This point of view has an internal danger, because may distinguish some tradition and culture unreasonable and judges other traditions by own presupposes, so impose his views on others. This point can cause to threat national cohesion in multicultural society, because it omits some traditions and cultures by this excuse that those are unreasonable. On the other world, although this theory promotes pluralism and tolerance, only be successful in societies that all subcultures have same presuppose.

In contrast, Macintyre`s theory do not encounter this problem. Although he believes good is prior than right, he thinks people`s good strongly link with their communities and their traditions. As he believes each tradition has specific rationality, cannot impose a particular kind of rationality on other traditions. In fact, this approach of justice is able to create and revival national cohesion, because this point of view recognizes differences and it can satisfy different people and different communities.

In fact, both of those theories achieve to a special kind of pluralism. As we said, Rawls names that pluralism reasonable pluralism. In the other words, he judge about different minorities and communities. This method is really suitable in liberal societies. For example, today, this idea performs in the U.S. This country has different communities like Asian-American culture, African-American culture, Jewish-American culture, Italian-American culture, Native-American culture, etc. Each ethnic group practices its culture and there is no attempt to create one cultural identity for all Americans. Pluralism, a philosophy that encourages the coexistence of many cultures, is at work.

However, the blind point of Rawls theory of justice is not recognizing of traditions inconsistent with the liberal tradition. It means that, if a society encounters deep differences and its people have liberal and also illiberal ideas, government could suppress minorities, because these tradition or mindset is deemed unreasonable. For instance, in the case of Salman Rushdie , government of countries that use this method for justice, such as the U.S and Britain, believe that Muslims protests against that book is contrary to fundamental freedom like

freedom of speech and thought, and therefore it is unreasonable. Surely, repeat such encounters with some specific minorities can lead to feelings of frustration and lack of political ability among them, and that is threatened national cohesion.

In contrast, MacIntyre theory accepts specific rationality and specific traditions of minorities and subcultures and it can be useful for multicultural countries. For instance, India is a successful example of respecting different rationalities and traditions. India enunciates five fundamental principles regarding state policy towards different communities and groups in India:

1. People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their traditional arts and culture.
2. Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected.
3. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development.
4. We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through and not in rivalry to their social and cultural institutions.
5. We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved (Bhattacharyya, 2003:157).

On the other word, the government of India pays attention that every multicultural society needs to devise its own appropriate political structure to suit its history, cultural traditions, and range and depth of diversity. Therefore it based on this principal, accept and respect all difference rationalities and achieve a unique pluralism.

## **Conclusion**

As a conclusion, we can say making just policies in multi cultural society has a direct relationship with national cohesion. It is cause that if minorities and subcultures find government`s policies unjust, they feel majority do not observe their rights, and do not respect their differences. This matter may create political distrust among them, and in long term they are going to separate from political society, so threat national cohesion.

Hence, today, many multicultural countries pay attention to minorities' situation and their requests, specially their religious and cultural request. To achieve this aim, they use difference policies. Some of them use liberal policies that stress on human rights, so suggest tolerance as a useful solution. Rawls theory of justice is one of theories that liberal, especially western, societies find it suitable to managing multicultural society. Of course, this theory has very positive points, for example it recognizes differences and pluralism and allows all people, and especially minorities follow their traditions and their good. However, this theory has a negative point. It does not recognize all tradition, and divides it to Part of reasonable and unreasonable



so only allow reasonable tradition and comprehensive doctrine act freely. Here, the problem is it meter scale of reasonable by its own standards. Therefore Rawls theory of justice only can useful in liberal and western societies, which all subcultures have similar presuppose.

Macintyre theory also recognizes differences, but it does not emphasize on rights. It stress on good of people, and believe that the good of people has direct relationship with their specific rationality, which make in their tradition. Therefore it does not compare and judge among different cultures and traditions. This point of view dose not impose majority's values and request on others, especially minorities.

As a result, policies that pay attention to peoples tradition and does not want to prescribe one and universal prescription for every societies, are more successful in creating and increasing national cohesion.

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