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## TOLERANCE, INTEGRATION AND DIALOGUE AS DYNAMIC PRINCIPLES OF LIBERAL MULTICULTURALISM

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**Abstract:** The motif behind this paper is to explore the issue related to tolerance, integration and dialogue, which represent dynamic principles of multiculturalism, especially the liberal multiculturalism. From a historical perspective, liberalism and tolerance are closely related, but their connection is also a conceptual one.

Many debates about tolerance have dealt with its scope and boundaries. This is often related to different attitudes about the moral grounds or justification of tolerance.

Among the influential arguments put forward in favour of tolerance are the ones to invoke the principles of unity, neutrality and regard for individuals. The principles of neutrality and regard for individuals are gaining salience especially in recent liberal theories on the proper role of the state. These principles seek that the state be neutral in the same sense among the various concepts of good held and followed by its citizens.

Without ever abandoning the care for individual rights and freedoms, liberalism should insist on harmonising freedom with equality and community. If liberalism should ever have a chance of establishing itself in countries with polyethnic structures, it must explicitly meet the needs and aspirations of ethnic and national minorities.

Besides integration and tolerance, dialogue is a dynamic principle of liberal democracy. It is considered to be the bloodline of the institutional system in multicultural societies and countries, and therefore, the dialogue led among cultural groups or their political elite is one of the most prominent topics.

**Keywords:** tolerance, integration, dialogue, liberal democracy

### INTRODUCTION

Tolerance (lat. *tolerare* – “to bear, endure”) is based on the belief in subjectivity of values. Yet, there are views in which tolerance presents intentional choice to not prohibit, prevent or address unapproved conduct, despite having the power and knowledge to do so. Tolerance can be foreseen: for individuals, institutions and societies. It is contrasted with a set of negatives, including intolerance, excess and disinterest. Tolerance is often a matter of degree, and it requires subtle reasoning, which tends to cause certain disagreement. Namely, not meddling due to uninformedness about unapproved conduct, is not tolerance. Disapproval can be moral or non-moral (unwillingness). When an action or practice is not morally sanctioned, its tolerance is usually deemed problematic and even paradoxical: tolerance may be seen along the line of seeking the right to permit a wrongful action. Wherever the power to meddle in unapproved conduct is lacking, however, one may distinguish between disposition for tolerance and pure ignoring. Intolerance is a purposeful attempt to eliminate unapproved conduct in a forceful way, usually through violence, or even relentless prosecution. There is the assumption that the honesty of the majority towards the minority, and vice versa, is somewhat arguable, while the potentially subjective reason cannot represent realistic criterion for intolerance. Disinterest opposes tolerance, since in the former, sanctioned conduct is neither rejected nor approved, and whereas disinterest suggests simple passivity, tolerance summons active restriction.<sup>219</sup>

Many debates on tolerance tackle its scope and boundaries. This, on the one hand, is connected to various opinions about the moral grounds or justification of tolerance. But is tolerance to be gathered as a morally neutral, descriptive concept or as a moral ideal?

This section of the paper dwells on the most fundamental principles of tolerance in democracy and liberal multiculturalism.

Liberalism and tolerance are closely related, both historically and conceptually.

### TOLERANCE AND INTEGRATION

Historically speaking, the idea of tolerance predominantly relates to religious practices and beliefs, originating as an idea that carries bigger significance than Reformation Europe, divided by firm controversies and struggles.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Давид Милер, “Блеквелова енциклопедија на политичката мисла”, МИ – АН, Скопје, 2002, стр. 452 - 455.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid, p. 454.

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There exist forms of religious tolerance which are neither liberal nor resting on the idea that every religious group should be free to organise their community as they wish, with illiberal methods included.<sup>221</sup> For example, the millet system in the Ottoman Empire: Muslims, Christians and Jews were recognised as self-governing confessional communities (*millet*s), allowed to impose restricted religious laws on their members. Although Muslims never attempted repression against Jews, and vice versa, they, nonetheless, conducted repression against heretics within their own communities. Heresy (questioning the orthodox interpretation of Islamic doctrine) and apostasy (disaffiliation from a religion) were considered crimes in the Islamic community. In fact, the millet system was a federation of theocracies and it was likely among the most developed models of non-liberal religious tolerance. Generally speaking, the millet system was incredibly stable, and it was humane and tolerant towards group differences. But it was no liberal system, since it recognised none of the fundamental principles of individual freedom of conscience.

Liberals throughout history viewed autonomy and tolerance as two sides of the same coin. Gradually, the scope of the idea of tolerance extended to include other areas of civil and moral controversies.<sup>222</sup>

In political theory, tolerance, understood as a moral ideal, tends to be somewhat more interesting, especially in the tradition of liberalism. As arguments of tolerance are in practical political life, however, stiff competition and self-interest are the most efficient.<sup>223</sup>

Among the most influential moral arguments offered in support of tolerance are those invoking the principles of *unity*, *neutrality* and *regard for individuals*. The principles of neutrality and regard for individuals are gaining salience especially in recent liberal theories on the proper role of the state. These principles seek that the state be neutral in the same sense among the various concepts of good held and followed by its citizens.

The principle of regard for individuals offers a rationale why it might be wrong to meddle in the free choice of another person. The principle, having its roots in the moral philosophy of Kant, intends to enforce the position that the moral choice of individuals reflects their nature as autonomous and rationale actors. One serious issue this principle has is its ambiguity. Such concepts as *autonomy* and *rationality* are crucial for the principle, and yet they admit many various interpretation, which, if understood restrictively, may render the threshold of tolerance very restricted.<sup>224</sup> However, despite the difficulties, some version of the principle of regard for individuals seems to be the best means of justification among currently preferred alternatives.

According to John Rawls, liberals have expanded the principle of tolerance onto other controversial issues on the “meaning, value and purpose of human life”,<sup>225</sup> – namely, the idea of individual freedom of conscience. (One must admit that religious tolerance in the West has acquired a very specific form – an idea of individual freedom of conscience.) He underlines that the tolerant have the right not to tolerate the intolerant, restrict their freedom if they honestly and with a valid reason believe that their individual and institutional safety is at stake, and so in such cases, the intolerant sect (culture) has no right to complain about intolerance, since there is no right to object to the conduct of others, which is in line with the rules and regulations they themselves would apply when justifying action directed towards them.<sup>226</sup>

On the freedom of conscience, Sandel claims that it should be understood as freedom to follow one’s own basic values, and not as freedom to select a religion.<sup>227</sup>

Bhikhu Parekh maintains that liberalism has forged strong bond with the state and has steered it in a given direction, although it is unusual for the state to become the centre of observing liberal theory. Members of a nation will rarely share moral values, life goals or traditional way of living. Instead, they share common language and history. It is for this fact that the nation represents a fundamental unit, and not an instance of family or religious community. Nation, namely, succeeds in ensuring a framework to uphold such liberal values as the individual freedom of conscience.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>221</sup>Ibid.

<sup>222</sup>Давид Милер, “Блеквелова енциклопедија на политичката мисла”, МИ – АН, Скопје, 2002, стр. 453 - 454.

<sup>223</sup>Ibid, p. 453.

<sup>224</sup>Давид Милер, “Блеквелова енциклопедија на политичката мисла”, МИ – АН, Скопје, 2002, стр. 454.

<sup>225</sup>John Rawls, “*The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus*“, Oxford Journal of Legal Studies, 1987, 7 / 1: 4.

<sup>226</sup>John Rawls, “*A Theory of Justice*“, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press Cambridge, 1971.

<sup>227</sup>Michael Sandel, “*Freedom of Conscience or Freedom of Choice*“, in James Hunter and O. Guinness (eds.), *Articles of Faith, Articles of Peace* (Brookings Institute, Washington, DC), 1990, 74 – 92.

<sup>228</sup>Bhikhu Parekh, “*Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*“, Palgrave, New York, 2000.

Kymlicka believes that defending individual freedom of conscience implies discarding the communitarian idea according to which values of people are fixed and not subject to rational re-examination. He states that people must stand for the traditional liberal belief in personal autonomy.<sup>229</sup>

Susan Mendus presents her own definition of *liberal* tolerance, whereby she ascribes great importance to the autonomy of the individual. She states that liberal tolerance means standing for autonomy, whereby individuals should be free to evaluate and (if possible) to change their life values.<sup>230</sup>

Still, most liberal theoreticians claim that citizens of a liberal society, being motivated by the liberal principles of justice, would not pay political attention to their cultural affiliation. Liberal justice cannot accept those rights which allow a group to conduct repression or exploit another group. But liberals do not, by automatism, have the right to impose their own views on non-liberal minorities, albeit they have the right and responsibility to identify and qualify such views.

There are opinions that liberal theory, that is, liberalism based on tolerance, may offer safer and wider basis for the legitimacy of power, as opposed to liberalism based on autonomy, since the latter threatens to alienate groups, and hence undermine their affiliation to liberal institutions. Chandran Kukathas, for example, is among the liberals who highlight tolerance and deride autonomy. In his opinion, liberal tolerance dictates that non-liberal groups are to be left aside, whereby at the same time it does not impose obligation for the state to help in any way.<sup>231</sup> Liberals, therefore, can accept non-liberal groups as long as they do not seek some kind of support by the wider society and as long as they do not impose their values on others. It is a “live and let live” approach – kind of ethics of reciprocal non-meddling.

Brian Barry expands liberal tolerance to include the internal issues of non-liberal groups, but only if they remain within the liberal frames.<sup>232</sup>

Joseph Raz, on the other hand, claims that the cultural community should be tolerated until it is sustainable, whereas it is sustainable as long as it ensures their members satisfactory life, while to non-members it ensures personal safety.<sup>233</sup> Several years later, Raz would defend the multicultural political community which recognises equality and sustainable cultural communities.<sup>234</sup>

Defending individual rights based on autonomy, John Rawls invokes the ideals and values generally not shared in a democratic society, and therefore, he maintains that autonomy cannot ensure proper agreement. If liberalism should be based on a controversial value such as autonomy, it means that it becomes a more sectarian doctrine.<sup>235</sup> Still, Rawls’s proposal is not about discarding the idea of autonomy, but instead it is about restricting its scope of use. He states that the idea according to which we can form and re-evaluate our concept of good is but a “political concept” of the individual, accepted strictly for the purpose of establishing our public rights and responsibilities. He insists that such an idea is not intended as a general report about the link between selfhood and its values, applicable to every aspect of life, or as a precise description of our deepest personal understandings. Hence, Rawls no longer claims that the religious conviction of people can be subjected to re-examination or autonomous acceptance, but rather accepts that values are so essential to our identity<sup>236</sup> that we cannot distance ourselves from them and put them under evaluation or revision. Citizens might see it as simply unfathomable the possibility of seeing themselves detached from specific religious, philosophical and moral persuasions or from given permanent attachments and loyalties. Such persuasions and attachments are part of what we may call “private identity,” as Rawls underlines. Nonetheless, he believes that there are isolated minorities who reject the ideal of re-examination and re-evaluation of our inherited value concepts, including local groups (Pueblo Indians) and religious

<sup>229</sup>Will Kymlicka, *“Multicultural Citizenship”*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 163.

<sup>230</sup>Will Kymlicka, *“Multicultural Citizenship”*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 158; and Susan Mendus, *“Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism”* (Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, NJ), 1989, p. 56.

<sup>231</sup>Chandran Kukathas, *“The Fraternal Conceit: Individualist versus Collectivist Ideas of Community”* (Centre for Independent Studies, St Leonard’s), 1991.

<sup>232</sup>Brian Barry, *“Kultura I jednakost: egalitarna kritika multikulturalizma”*, Naklada Jesenski i Turk, Zagreb, 2006.

<sup>233</sup>Joseph Raz, *“The Morality of Freedom”*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

<sup>234</sup>Joseph Raz, *“Multiculturalism: A liberal perspective”*, in: Joseph Raz, *“Ethics in the Public Domain”*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

<sup>235</sup>John Rawls, *“The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus”*, Oxford Journal of Legal Studies, 1987, 7 / 1: 6, 24; John Rawls, *“Justice as Fairness: Political and Metaphysical”*, Philosophy and Public Affairs, 1985, 14 / 24; and Will Kymlicka, *“Multicultural Citizenship”*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 165.

<sup>236</sup>John Rawls, *“Justice as Fairness: Political and Metaphysical”*, Philosophy and Public Affairs, 1985, 14 / 3:241; и Will Kymlicka, *“Multicultural Citizenship”*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 159.

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sects (the Amish and the Mennonites). But in the political contexts we ignore the existence of such “constitutive” values. Namely, Rawls’s strategy supporting autonomy solely in political contexts, and not as one general value, fails. He provides no explanation why people who are communitarianists in their private lives should be liberal in the political life.

Rawls distinguishes his “political” liberalism from the “comprehensive” liberalism of John Stuart Mill. Mill stresses that people should be given the option to evaluate the value of their inherited social practices in all aspects of living, and not just the political life.<sup>237</sup> His concept of liberalism rests on the ideal of rational reasoning, generally applied to human activity and intended to form our opinion and behaviour in general.<sup>238</sup>

But Mill’s “comprehensive” liberalism and Rawls’s “political” liberalism do not meet the demands of non-liberal minorities seeking internal limitations, which would precede individual rights. Liberalism in a given culture is a matter of degree, but it is important not to have prejudice against the non-liberal nature of a specific minority culture. In cases when the national minority is non-liberal, the majority will not be able to prevent violation of individual rights within the minority community.

Kymlicka points out that the most substantial liberal theory is based on the values of autonomy and that, because of it, every form of group-differentiated rights restricting the civil rights of group members is inconsistent with the liberal principles of freedom and equality; this, on the other hand, does not mean that liberals are at liberty to impose their own principles on groups which do not agree with such principles. Hence, there is the need to resolve two separate issues: the issue of *identifying* a substantiated liberal theory of minority rights, and the issue of *imposing* such liberal theory.<sup>239</sup>

Experience shows that based on the liberal principles, individuals have certain rights, like, for example, individual freedom of conscience, which should be respected by the governments. Still, having established (*identified*) such rights, there arises one different issue: the issue of *imposing liberalism*. “Imposing” liberalism implies intervention by force by a third party. Modern liberals have become increasingly unprepared to impose liberalism onto other countries, but increasingly prepared to impose it onto national minorities, which presents inconsistency. In the case of national minorities, liberals are much more prepared to support intervention, like, for example, many American liberals believe that the U.S. Supreme Court has the legitimate authority to annul a decision of the All Indian Pueblo Council.

The fundamental value of liberalism does not exclusively lie in autonomy or in tolerance. In many instances there is well-founded fear that consequences of tolerance will be moral chaos and social disintegration.

Without ever abandoning the care for individual rights and freedoms, liberalism should insist on harmonising freedom with equality and community. If liberalism should ever have a chance of establishing itself in countries with polyethnic structures, it must explicitly meet the needs and aspirations of ethnic and national minorities.

However, liberal principles impose two basic limitations of minority rights. The liberal concept of minority rights cannot justify “internal limitations”, but it has more understanding towards “external protection measures.”

Decision-making by the majority vis-à-vis the minority should be based on mutual understanding, respect and dialogue, instead of just blindly upholding to and following of the principles of a single theory (the one held by the majority). Liberals from the majority group should come to terms with this, just as they have already come to terms with the non-liberal laws in other countries, whereas they do have the right and responsibility to talk against such injustices. It is obvious that there are many analogous possibilities for a majority nation to use non-violent ways of coercing national minorities to liberalise their own regimes. One option is for liberals to put pressure on developing and strengthening international mechanisms for the protection of human rights.

Namely, the international community promotes a liberal form of multiculturalism for the ethnic or national minority rights as well, since in its basis, multiculturalism has simultaneously become integral to the leading principles of modern political orders. The model may not be ideal and the most acceptable for old and new EU member states alike, but it is a new model, nonetheless, and so it is much too early to draw any conclusions whether it offers better concept and where it leads to.

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<sup>237</sup>John S. Mill, “*On Liberty*”, ed. G. Himmelfarb (Penguin, Harmondsworth), 1982.

<sup>238</sup>John Rawls, “*The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus*”, Oxford Journal of Legal Studies, 1987, 7 / 1: 6; and Will Kymlicka, “*Multicultural Citizenship*”, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 160.

<sup>239</sup>Will Kymlicka, “*Multicultural Citizenship*”, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, ctp. 164.

**DIALOGUE AS A DYNAMIC PRINCIPLE OF LIBERAL MULTICULTURALISM**

*Dialogue* among cultural groups or their political elite is one of the most prominent topics. And rightly so, since dialogue is commonly considered to be the bloodline of the institutional system in multicultural societies and countries on several levels: 1. Institutional dialogue ensured by inclusive multicultural institutions, thus promoting a more open attitude among political factors, political parties, etc.; 2. Dialogue taking place in the media and the civil sector; and 3. Dialogue taking place in the everyday life, that is, dialogue among citizens, a sort of “komşi kapıcık” (as Sarkanjac puts it).

Yet, there is very distorted understanding of what presents a dialogue which leads to solutions and achievement of historic goals for political stability, and economic and social development in a multicultural society, on the one hand, and what presents a “dialogue of the deaf” or a *debate* which can aggravate existing tensions at multiethnic level within a society.

In that respect, I will present several theses about the importance of an essential dialogue, as portrayed through the difference between dialogue and debate.

In debate, parties commence from their positions, which they strongly defend with arguments, whereby trying to refute opponent’s argument with the intention of coming out as the winner. There is but small room for “understanding” the other. Following such debates, actors in multicultural societies become more frustrated than they were before the debate, and this creates a difficult and confronting atmosphere at all levels of society.

The structure of true dialogue differs from the structure of debate. Namely, in the first round, parties X and Y, much like in the debate, start from their initial positions and arguments they hold. But after the first round of sharing their position, each party should have the mental capacity to enter the “*moment of silence*.” This presents inclusive and acceptive way of thinking which strengthens the initial positions of the one party and brings them closer to those of the other. The “moment of truth” institute or the “practice of active listening” (Nansen Dialogue) implies that the first party starts analysing the arguments of the other party, trying to put themselves into the other one’s position and trying to understand the other. This thinking at the same time enables deeper recognition of the validity of the other party. In this context, John Stuart Mill maintains that one does not know their own arguments until they hear arguments against their thesis.<sup>240</sup>

Following the “moment of silence” in the second round of exchanging arguments, actors have different positions. Party X tries to “reset” their arguments, that is, organise them in the light of the arguments of the other, Y, whereas at the same time, the second party tries to make out the position of party X, and make a step closer to the other party towards a possible compromise.

Only through such dialogue with a “moment of truth” and attempts to understand the other can there be success in multicultural societies and will there be a chance to come to what has been already pointed out: achieve a consensus, that is, consensus constantly achieved by multicultural societies. The dialogue thus lead ensures life of tolerance and makes a step forward to integrating different groups to a higher level of fair institutional arrangement.

**CONCLUSION**

In political theory, tolerance, understood as a moral ideal, tends to be somewhat more interesting, especially in the tradition of liberalism. In practical political life, however, stiff competition and self-interest are the most efficient.<sup>241</sup>

Among the influential arguments put forward in favour of tolerance are the ones to invoke the principles of unity, neutrality and regard for individuals. The principles of neutrality and regard for individuals are gaining salience especially in recent liberal theories on the proper role of the state. But since every culture is naturally bounded, dialogue among cultures is mutually beneficial. It warns against mutual prejudices, which is a benefit in its own right, and so it allows them to reduce and expand their horizons of thinking. Hence the view that talking means being above oneself, it means thinking together with the other one, and reciprocating to oneself as if reciprocating to the other one. Dialogue is only possible if every culture accepts the other as an equal partner in discussion, who should be considered as a source of new ideas and whom we owe explaining ourselves. Dialogue meets its goals only if participants have equal self-confidence, economic and political strength, and access to public space.<sup>242</sup>

Dialogue in a multicultural society requires certain institutional conditions and essential political virtues. The institutional conditions needed for a dialogue in a multicultural society are as follows: freedom of expression,

<sup>240</sup>John S. Mill, “*On Liberty*”, ed. G. Himmelfarb (Penguin, Harmondsworth), 1982.

<sup>241</sup>Давид Милер, “Блеквелова енциклопедија на политичката мисла”, МИ – АН, Скопје, 2002, стр. 453.

<sup>242</sup>Bhiku Parekh, “*Rethinking Multiculturalism, Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*”, New York: Palgrave, 2000, стр. 336 – 337.

agreed-upon procedures and basic ethical norms, participative public places, equal rights, responsive and popularly-responsible structure of power, and emancipation of citizens; whereas essential political virtues are the following: common respect and care, tolerance, self-containment, readiness to engage into unknown worlds of thought, appreciation of difference, a mind open to new ideas and a heart open to the needs of others, as well as skills of persuasion and living with unsettled differences. But the dialogue should not be directed solely towards minority practice as an issue, but instead, it should be bifocal, also addressing both the practice of minority and operational public values in a society, and also minority and wider social life.

Still, most modern liberal theoreticians claim that citizens of a liberal society, who would be motivated by the liberal principles of justice, would not pay any political attention to their cultural affiliation. Liberal justice cannot accept those rights which allow a group to conduct repression or exploit another group.

The international community promotes a liberal form of multiculturalism and of ethnic or national minority rights, since multiculturalism in its essence carries the liberal values of freedom, equality and tolerance.<sup>243</sup> A dialogue with a “moment of truth” and attempts to understand the other can breed success in multicultural societies; it ensures life of tolerance and makes a step forward to integrating different groups to a higher level of fair institutional arrangement.

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<sup>243</sup>Will Kymlicka, “*Multicultural Odysseys: Navigating the New International Politics of Diversity*”, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.