

ABSTRACT

Toleration has been a topic that was widely considered as an intra-state matter rather than an international issue among the contemporary scholars. By arguing against the possible reasons for this neglect on the international aspect of toleration, this thesis claims that there is a place for toleration in our thinking on the international realm. Moreover, it is argued that various dimensions of international toleration can be conceptualized such as the characteristics of and reasons for international toleration. In line with this, the theories of John Rawls and Jurgen Habermas are analyzed as two theoretical sources for investigating the way one might think of toleration as an international issue. In this respect, a comparative and interpretive analysis is made by focusing on the grounds and characteristics of toleration in their outlooks for addressing their strong and weak points on the issue.

To argue for the possibility of international toleration, first, a conceptual map is developed which outlines the characteristics (structure) of the concept. I noted agents and objects, diversity coupled with disapproval, power, scope, demands and limits of toleration as characteristics of toleration that make toleration possible. Possible reasons that might be given for the justification of toleration are also listed: non-moral prudential reasons, moral consequentialist reasons, principled moral reasons and skepticism. Then, theories of Rawls and Habermas are analyzed in the light of this conceptual map as two supportive cases for international toleration.

It is stated that both Rawls and Habermas provide strong cases for the possibility of international toleration. They take pluralism seriously as a global condition in which the question of toleration arises, and for both of them, toleration

is a requirement of international political justice. In line with this, they provide a moral principled justification for international toleration in bringing the idea of respect to the fore as a reason for toleration in the international realm. Thus, I contend that there is a commonality concerning the grounds of toleration as an international issue between the theories of Rawls and Habermas.

I state that the differences between the outlooks of Rawls and Habermas on international toleration stems from Habermas's cosmopolitanism as opposed to Rawls's internationalism. I claim that the fact that Habermas leaves room for a variety of agents allows him to incorporate plural and diverse agents into his theory of toleration as compared to Rawls. I also mention that Habermas's insistence on both positive actions and dispositions as requirements of international toleration leads to a demanding notion of international toleration but not less realistic.

I also analyze the differences between the outlooks of Rawls and Habermas on human rights as limits of toleration. I argue that they differ in principle regarding the content and role of human rights. Nevertheless, I concede, beside their differences in principle, they not differ much in practice: Habermas is not necessarily supportive of any international intervention in the name of human rights.

Lastly, I focus on which features a theory of international toleration should have in the 21st century by way of reflecting on the strong and weak points of the outlooks of Rawls and Habermas on international toleration. In this vein, I state my concluding remarks on dimensions of international toleration for a pluralistic multicultural world-society.