Is Toleration Possible and Morally Relevant in the International Realm?

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary political theory literature, toleration has been considered widely as an intra-state issue rather than an inter-state issue. First, this paper argues that the possible reasons for this disregard on the international aspect of the concept do not justify the disregard. Secondly, it demonstrates that international toleration is conceptually possible by outlining its characteristics (structure). Thirdly, it lays out the possible different reasons that might be offered for the justification of international toleration. In line with this, it is claimed that toleration, to bare a strong moral relevance in the international realm, should be founded on the idea of 'equal respect'.

Keywords: Toleration, International Toleration, Global Pluralism, Global Diversity, Equal Respect

Uluslararası Alanda Hoşgörü Mümkün müdür ve Ahlaki Açıdan Gerekli midir?

ÖZET

Hoşgörü, günümüz siyaset kuramı yazınında devletlerarası bir sorun olmaktan çok devlet içi bir sorun olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu çalışma, ilk olarak, hoşgörünün uluslararası boyutunu göz ardı eden olası nedenlerin savlarını yeterince gerekçelendiremediğini iddia etmektedir. İkinci olarak, uluslararası hoşgörünün özelliklerini (yapısını) ortaya koyarak, uluslararası hoşgörünün kavramsal olarak mümkün olabileceğini ispat etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Üçüncü olarak, uluslararası hoşgörünün gerekçelendirilmesi için önerilebilecek mümkün olan çeşitli olguları ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, çalışmada uluslararası hoşgörünün, uluslararası alanda güçlü ahlaki bir geçerliliği olabilmesi için, "eşit saygı" fikri tarafından temellendirilmesi gerektiği de iddia edilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hoşgörü, Uluslararası Hoşgörü, Küresel Çoğulculuk, Küresel Çeşitlilik, Eşit Saygı

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Introduction

Toleration as a term, which originates from the Latin word *tolerare*, means "to put up with," "countenance" or "suffer" and it "generally refers to the conditional acceptance of or non-interference with beliefs, actions or practices that one considers to be wrong but still 'tolerable,' such that they should not be prohibited or constrained."[1] In the period of Reformation, toleration emerged as both an intrastate and interstate phenomenon.[2] During the 16th and 17th centuries, toleration arose not only as an issue for rulers in relation to their subjects, but also in relation to one another: Catholic and Protestant rulers had to face the question of whether they should tolerate one another. *Cuius regio eius religio* came onto the agenda as a principle of toleration, even though it was largely pragmatic in its basis.[3]

In the contemporary political theory literature, toleration is a topic that has been widely studied as an intrastate matter rather than an international issue.[4] Although various subjects in international politics, such as the debate on humanitarian intervention and the role of human rights in international relations, raise questions of toleration, it is difficult to find direct reference to the concept. The only exceptions are Peter Jones, Michael Walzer, John Rawls and Kok Chor Tan.[5]

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[1] R. Forst, "Toleration", Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2008, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/toleration/ (Accessed on 9 February 2009).

[2] It is not to say that toleration is solely a Christian phenomenon. Evidently, one could analyze the history of toleration in other civilizations as well.

[3] *Cuius regio eius religio* is the principle accepted by the Augsburg Religious Peace Treaty in 1555, signed by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and the forces of the Schmalkaldic League. In line with this principle, German princes were allowed to choose Lutheranism or Catholicism within the territories they ruled. The religion of the ruler also determined the religion of the people inside the territory.

[4] See Susan Mendus and John Horton (eds.), *Aspects of Toleration,* London, New York, Methuen, 1985; Susan Mendus, *Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism,* London, MacMillan, 1989; Susan Mendus and David Edwards (eds.), *On Toleration,* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987; Susan Mendus, (ed.), *Justifying Toleration – Conceptual and Historical Perspectives,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988; John Horton (ed.), *Liberalism, Multiculturalism and Toleration,* London, MacMillan Press, 1993; John Horton and Peter Nicholson, *Toleration: Philosophy and Practice,* Aldershot, Averbury, 1992; Catriona McKinnon, *Toleration: A Critical Introduction*, London, New York, Routledge, 2006; Rainer Forst, "Toleration, Justice and Reason", Catriona McKinnon and Dario Castiglione, (eds.), *The Culture of Toleration in Diverse Societies*, Manchester, New York, Manchester University Press, 2003.

[5] Peter Jones, "International Toleration and the 'War on Terror'", *Globalizations*, Vol.6, No.1, March 2009, p.7-22; Peter Jones, "Toleration, Supererogation and Rights", D. Edyvane and S. Mendus (eds.), *Toleration Re-Examined*, University Park, PA, Penn State University Press, in press; M. Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Morality Argument at Home and Abroad,* Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1994; M. Walzer, *Toleration*, New Haven, London, Yale University Press, 1997; Kok Chor Tan, *Toleration, Diversity and Global Justice*, Pennsylvania State University, 2000; K. C. Tan, "International Toleration: Rawlsian versus Cosmopolitan", *Leiden Journal of International Law*, Vol.18, No.4, 2005, p.685-710; J. Rawls, *The Law of Peoples-with the idea of Public Reason Revisited*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, Harvard University Press, 1999

In this article, the goal is to demonstrate that not only is international toleration possible but it is also morally relevant within the concept of global diversity. First, I will focus on what might be the reasons for the lack of concern regarding toleration as an international matter. I will show that these reasons do not justify the disregard for the international dimension of toleration. Then, by concentrating on the characteristics of and reasons for toleration, I will analyze in which way one might refer to toleration as an international issue. In the last section of the paper, I will discuss which moral grounds are preferable and why as justifications of international toleration in the conditions of global diversity.

Possible Reasons for the Disregard of International Toleration

Perhaps the first evident reason for disregarding toleration as an international matter is the effect and dominance of the realist paradigm which claims that international realm is anarchic and that the only rule is that states follow their own interests.[6] According to the realist paradigm, toleration, as a moral basis for the action of the states, does not have a place in the international realm because states tolerate each other only when their self–interest is on the agenda. Thus, toleration is viewed only in prudential terms: what matters for a state is to act always for its own security. This assumption of the realist paradigm might have prevented the consideration of toleration as something important in the international realm since there cannot be any moral reasons for toleration in the international realm in the realist view. It is the self-interest that rules the motivation of the states but not any other normative idea such as toleration. That is why, on a realist view, whether to tolerate or not is not significant; what matters is the self-interest.

Michael Walzer, who is one of the few thinkers who has explicitly addressed toleration as an international issue, challenges this realist argument by stating that toleration is an essential feature of international society. In his text *On Toleration*, he refers to five regimes of toleration – multinational empires, international society, consociations, nation-states and immigrant societies – that correspond to distinct approaches to coexistence in history.[7] For him, international society is a tolerant society as a matter of principle: it is not tolerant because it is an anarchic society in which the only rule is that states follow their own interest:

> International society is an anomaly here because it is obviously not a domestic regime; some would say that it is not a regime at all but rather an anarchic and lawless condition. If that were true, the condition would be one of absolute toleration: anything goes, nothing is forbidden, for no one is authorized to forbid (or permit), even if many of the participants are eager to do so. In fact, international society is not anarchic; it is a very weak regime but it is tolerant as a regime despite

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[6] I refer to realism in a broad manner in terms of a political paradigm in international relations theory that has its roots in Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes. I do not distinguish between different realisms in different historical epochs for the sake of identifying the common political assumptions about the nature of international relations.

[7] Walzer, *Toleration*.

the intolerance of some of the states that make it up. All the groups that achieve statehood and all the practices that they permit (within limits that I will come in a moment) are tolerated by the society of states. Toleration is an essential feature of sovereignty and an important reason for its desirability.[8]

Thus, for Walzer, the fact that states respect the freedom of one another to be self-determining is not merely anarchic – it constitutes a norm of right conduct in international society. This is to say that international society is not anarchic in the sense of not having common norms; rather there is a shared normative realm of conduct that states respect. It is not the only fact about international society that states do not respect any norms except for their self-interest. On a Walzerian view, they do respect certain norms such as self-determination of each other which might be considered as a principle of toleration.

John Rawls, one of the most well-known philosophers who addressed toleration as an international issue, also challenges the realist position that claims the only rule in the international realm is that states follow their own self-interest and that there is no common shared normative ground on which states and international actors act. His text *The Law of Peoples* extended the social contract idea to the level of what he calls "peoples."[9] He works out the principles and regulations of a liberal idea of justice among peoples. In this sense, the 'Law of Peoples' refers to the rules of the society of reasonable peoples. 'Reasonable peoples' comply with and act according to the principles and rights that they established among themselves. Therefore, the Laws of Peoples constitute the common shared normative ground on which international actors act. For Rawls, the rights and obligations of a just arrangement among peoples make toleration necessary. Well-ordered (liberal and decent) societies act out of the principles that they have worked out and that give a reason to tolerate each other as societies who recognize each other as equal members of the society of reasonable peoples.

Rawls lists eight principles of Law of Peoples:
1. Peoples are free and independent, and their freedom and independence are to be respected by other peoples.
2. Peoples are to observe treaties and undertakings.
3. Peoples are equal and parties to the agreements that bind them.
4. Peoples are to observe a duty of non-intervention.
5. Peoples have the right of self-defense but not right to instigate war for reasons other than self-defense.
6. Peoples are to honor human rights.
7. Peoples are to observe certain specified restrictions in the conduct of war.
8. Peoples have a duty to assist other peoples living under unfavorable conditions that prevent their having a just or decent political and social regime.[10]

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[8] Ibıd, p.19.
[9] Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*.
[10] Ibıd, p.37.

These principles are reached under a veil of ignorance first by liberal peoples.[11] Secondly, he extends this idea of hypothetical contract to decent hierarchical societies that are not liberal. He argues that these principles would also be agreed upon by decent peoples (even though they are not liberal). Liberal and decent peoples, in acting in line with these principles, tolerate each other's conduct. Thus, for Rawls, the common shared set of norms (the Law of Peoples) guides the action of peoples and provides reasons for toleration of each other's conduct. Peoples do not always act out of their self-interest and security; they also act out of moral concerns and principles.

Kok Chor Tan also supports the concept that the international realm is not devoid of shared normative set of rules. He criticizes Rawls's account of international toleration for certain reasons, yet he still thinks that toleration can be a moral reason for the attitude and action of international agents in the global realm. Different from Rawls's account of international toleration, he defends a cosmopolitan approach, which claims that only societies that qualify as liberal deserve toleration.[12] For Tan, it is only cosmopolitan toleration that is compatible with the principles of liberal morality at the international level. Like Walzer and Rawls, Tan also challenges the claim of realism that international realm is anarchic and the only rule is that states always follow their own self-interest. From a cosmopolitan approach, he defends the idea that international agents can and should act from a liberal moral position that aims to protect the rights and liberties of individuals.

Jurgen Habermas, too, challenges the realist paradigm in his international normative theory. For him, toleration as a normative and moral reason for the attitude and conduct of international agents has a significant place in the international realm. This idea of his is evident in his writings that aim to deal with religion and secularism in the global realm, where he considers the question of how it is possible to live together in peace in a world society divided by various faiths, world views and beliefs. As he says: "the conflict of cultures take place today in the framework of a world society in which the collective actors must, regardless of their different cultural traditions, agree for better or worse on norms of coexistence."[13] Precisely, for Habermas, the international realm has to be based on a shared set of norms in order to ensure the peaceful togetherness of diverse communities and cultures.

Moreover, for Habermas, international toleration is a requirement of justice too. He believes that a multicultural world society which is peaceful and just can be possible with the endorsement of the principle of toleration. For him, toleration comes as a

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[11] The conditions of the second original position are similar to those of the first one that provides for domestic case: "the parties are subject to a veil of ignorance properly adjusted for the case at hand: they do not know, for example the size of their territory, or the population or the relative strength of the people whose fundamental interests they represent. Though they do know that reasonably favorable conditions obtain that make constitutional democracy possible- since they know they represent liberal societies- they do not know the extent of their natural resources, or the level of their economic development, or other such information." See Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, p.32-33.

[12] Tan, "International Toleration", p.685-710.

[13] Jurgen Habermas, *Postnational Constellations*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2001, p.128.

cognitive presupposition "which must be satisfied if intercultural discourse on principles of political justice for a multicultural world society is to be successful."[14] In line with a tolerant disposition, as a requirement of intercultural discourse, "all parties, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds, had to consider controversial issues simultaneously from their own perspective and from those of the various other participants. Furthermore, they had to learn to restrict themselves to arguments that could in principle convince anyone irrespective of their underlying metaphysical or religious commitments."[15] Thus, for Habermas, the principle of toleration should be reflected in the attitude of the participants of an intercultural discourse on principles of a political justice for a multicultural world-society. In this way, a Habermasian conception of international toleration might be regarded as a requirement of international justice as well.

Another possible reason for the disregard of toleration as an international matter might be the dominance of the Westphalian model in our thinking on international realm. As Peter Jones puts it, viewing the world from a simple Westphalian model in which each sovereign state is interested in its own affairs might lead one to think toleration is not necessary.[16] In a Westphalian view, it might be claimed that a state lacks the right (moral entitlement) to intervene in the affairs of other states. Here to counter this argument, we might say that State B's right to self-determination can be the reason for State A's toleration, rather than something displaces toleration. The argument Jones made in *Toleration, Supererogation and Rights* is relevant to support us here. For him, it is appropriate to regard moral rights as moral reasons for toleration. He said:

> If someone should ask why I tolerate A's dissolute or misguided form of life, there is nothing odd in my replying that I do so because A has a (moral and natural) right to lead that sort of life if she so chooses. My acknowledgement of A's right is consistent with my "tolerating" her conduct and with my conceiving that right as the reason for my toleration.[17]

Thus, as Jones mentioned correctly, we can find a place for toleration within the realm of rights and obligations at the international level. As we have touched upon before, Walzer shares the same intuition that the rights of the states as sovereign entities do not rule out toleration but it is the very basis of a tolerant regime.

As I aim to demonstrate, the reasons contributing to the disregard of international toleration mentioned above are not plausible. Furthermore, a simple Westphalian view does not describe the world in which we live in anymore.[18] States and their governments intervene in each other's affairs all the time and they are not the only actors who do so. In

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[14] Jurgen Habermas, "The Resurgence of Religion- A Challenge for a Secular Self- interpretation of Modernity?", *Paper for the Conference 'Religione e Politica nella Societa Post-secolare'*, Rome, 13 September 2007, p.10.

[15] Ibıd.

[16] Here, I specifically refer to Jones's paper "International Toleration and Equal Respect" of which then appeared as "International Toleration and the 'War on Terror" in *Globalizations*.

[17] Jones, "Toleration, Supererogation and Rights", p.11.

[18] Jones, "International Toleration', p.3.

this sense, it is significant to acknowledge the interdependent nature of societies on each other's affairs in a globalizing world. One might even say the contemporary nature of the international society (post-Westphalian) brings toleration to the fore even more significantly as an international matter.

Conceptual Characteristics of International Toleration

I stated that the possible reasons – *realism and the Westphalian model* – that might have led to the disregard of toleration as an international issue are not plausible enough. In this section, I aim to consider in which way one might imagine international toleration as a concept by focusing on its structure. In line with this, the goal is to apply the conceptual debate on toleration as an intrastate matter to the international realm. Such application will allow us to comprehend the dimensions of toleration as an international issue. Eventually, this will shed light on whether international toleration is possible and if so, in what sense, and whether it is morally relevant in the international realm. Hence, the characteristics of toleration will be analyzed by focusing on its international aspect. Here, by characteristics, I refer to the conceptual conditions that make toleration possible.

Agents and Objects of International Toleration

I begin the analysis with the possible objects (the "tolerated") and subjects (the "tolerator") of toleration as essential components that allow us to think of toleration. As Peter Jones has stated, "[a]ny agent that judges others and that is capable of influencing conduct beyond national boundaries might be engaged in international toleration or intolerance."[19] For instance, the most obvious example for an agent of toleration might be the UN as an international organization, which actually engages in acts of toleration towards individual states, especially with respect to matters of intervention. In this sense, when to intervene and when to tolerate is a matter that is debated among the society of states which compose the UN (at least the Security Council).

John Rawls's position on the agents of international toleration needs to be mentioned here given that it provides an example on how we can conceptualize the possible tolerators in international domain. From an ideal normative theoretical position, Rawls considers "peoples" as subjects and their conduct as objects of international toleration. As he puts it, the account of the Law of Peoples conceives liberal democratic and decent peoples as the actors in the society of peoples, just as citizens are the actors in domestic society.[20] Rawls said that "liberal peoples have three basic features: a reasonably just constitutional democratic government that serves their fundamental interests; citizens united by what Mill called "common sympathies; and finally, a moral nature."[21] By a reasonably just (not necessarily fully just) democratic government, he

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[19] Ibıd, p.2.
[20] Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, p.23.
[21] Ibıd.

means that people have the political and electoral control of the government and the government protects the fundamental interests of the people as stated in a written or unwritten constitution.

The parallel Rawls drew between *Political Liberalism* and *Law of Peoples* becomes evident in his depiction of peoples as having a moral character: Like citizens in a domestic society, liberal peoples are both reasonable and rational. As reasonable citizens in domestic society abide by fair terms of cooperation with other citizens, so do reasonable liberal or decent peoples offer fair terms of cooperation to other peoples.[22] In this way, the rational conduct of the peoples is constrained by their reasonable disposition in relations with each other.

The feature of peoples as reasonable agents also distinguishes peoples from states. States are depicted as having traditional sovereignty, the right to wage war and unrestricted internal autonomy. For Rawls, "a difference between liberal peoples and states is that just liberal peoples limit their basic interests as required by the reasonable. In contrast, the content of the interests of states does not allow them to be stable for the right reasons: that is, from firmly accepting and acting upon a just Law of Peoples."[23] That is why peoples are the agents of toleration rather than states. We could infer that for Rawls, states could not affirm the principle of toleration for the right reasons. Possibly, they could be tolerant agents participating in a *modus vivendi* but they could not be stable for the right reasons.

Rawls is clear on which agents count as the agents of international toleration: it is the peoples as corporate agents that enter into relationships of toleration in his ideal normative theory. Even though one might interpret the idea of "peoples" in a broader manner so as to incorporate cross cultural entities of international realm, sticking to corporate entities of peoples as the agents of toleration might contain the risk of disregarding other possible actors of international toleration, such as individuals. Individuals can have some influence on the conduct of other agents in the international realm. In other words, it seems that in an age of global pluralism, it is significant to recognize quite a variety of agents such as NGOs, international groups, intercultural movements, communities of faith and individuals. Specific acts, practices and affairs that occurred in individual states might be mentioned concerning the object of international toleration.

Circumstances of International Toleration

In addition to the agents and objects of toleration, we might refer to four other characteristics that qualify as the conditions of possibility of toleration: Circumstances, demands, scope and limits. As for the circumstances, one might mention diversity, dislike/disapproval and power as characteristics of toleration that are commonly accepted in contemporary literature.[24] First of all, there needs to be diversity coupled with disapproval – or dis-

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[22] Ibıd, p.25.

[23] Ibıd, p.29.

[24] See Mendus/ Horton, *Aspects of Toleration*; Mendus, *Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism*; Mendus/Edwards, *On Toleration*; Mendus, *Justifying Toleration*; Horton, *Liberalism, Multiculturalism*

like – to be able to talk about toleration (not sheer diversity or approval). It is not so difficult to refer to diversity at the international level given the pluralistic nature of our world cross-cut by societies and civilizations. Furthermore, one might claim that global diversity contains the sources of disapproval and dislike too, given the conflicts that arise in different parts of the world that have a global nature, i.e. conflicts between states as well as individual groups and associations. Hence, diversity worldwide, coupled with disapproval and dislike, constitutes a characteristic of toleration in the international realm.

It is also commonly accepted that power is a circumstance of toleration. I need to have the power to act otherwise in order for me to tolerate something. Here, we can make a distinction between tolerant conduct and a tolerant disposition concerning the characteristic of power. It might be argued that in order for me to act tolerantly, I should have the power to act on my objection but refrain to do so; it is significant to talk about tolerant conduct. If we consider a tolerant disposition or attitude, then I do not need the actual power but it is enough if I say I am tolerant and that I would not interfere with the conduct I disapprove of even if I had to power to interfere.

If we translate the debate on power to the international realm, I think, we might refer to both tolerant conduct and tolerant disposition. States and governments tolerate each other's affairs even though they have the actual power to not do so. For instance, we might think of those who determine the foreign policy of a state as exhibiting a commitment to toleration or not. Furthermore, we might imagine a state committed to an ideology or an ambition that is consistent or inconsistent with toleration. For instance, State A might have an ideology of domination. Due to the lack of power, it may not behave intolerantly but we say it still exhibits an intolerant stance. Furthermore, it is not only states that are referred to as agents with respect to power in the international realm, but also international organizations, NGOs and even individuals might be considered as exhibiting a certain degree of power to interfere with the conduct of which they disapprove. Even at the individual level, with the help of international advocacy networks and Internet-based social networks, it is possible to have a certain effect on the disapproved conduct.

It might be claimed that different actors have different degrees of international power and therefore they are situated differently regarding international toleration. However, it also seems to be the case that no actor is immune from the power of others. For instance, the US is considered a superpower of the world but it is not the only state that acts tolerantly or intolerantly and in this sense, there are occasions where it is the object of intolerance as well.

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and Toleration; Horton/Nicholson, *Toleration*; Peter Jones, "Making Sense of Political Toleration", *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol.37, No.3, July 2007, p.383; Peter Jones, "Toleration, Recognition and Identity", *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol.14, No.2, 2006, p.123-143; Jones, "International Toleration"; Peter Jones, "Toleration and Neutrality: Compatible Ideals", D. D. Castiglione and C. McKinnon(eds.), *Toleration, Democracy and Neutrality,* Dordrecht, Kluwer, 2003, p. 97-110; Jones "Toleration, Supererogation and Rights"; McKinnon, *Toleration*; Forst, "Toleration, Justice and Reason"; Andrew Jason Cohen, "What Toleration is?", *Ethics*, Vol.115, October 2004, p.68-95.

Demands, Scope and Limits of International Toleration

One might also mention the demands, scope and limits of toleration in terms the conditions of possibility and characteristics of toleration. These characteristics are noted regarding what could be tolerated and what could not rather than what ought to be tolerated. Here in this section, I aim to examine how one might think of toleration as an international issue regarding these characteristics.

The scope of toleration concerns whether the source of disapproval is moral or simple dislike.[25] One might think of various sources and reasons for disapproval in the international realm. These sources can be cultural, aesthetic, economic, etc. However, it can be contended that it is the moral reasons of disapproval, which have the utmost effect on our judgment in reacting in an intolerant way in the international realm. This can be more intelligible if we consider that we are more ready to react to something we think is morally wrong than something we just think is aesthetically ugly.

The demands of toleration signify the limits of action that might be taken with reference to toleration: whether toleration requires just to leave the thing disapproved alone and refrain from persecuting it or whether more than that should be required such as assisting, aiding and fostering the thing being tolerated. This discussion seems to be significant in the international domain, especially concerning issues regarding humanitarian intervention and assistance. One might even argue that in the era of global pluralism, toleration as a reaction to difference must refer to both negative and positive demands. It seems it is not enough if we only adopt a negative disposition of non-interference towards other cultures which are different than ours but also we should adopt a positive disposition, if not action, in the sense of recognizing and respecting their equal status.

As far as the limits of toleration are concerned, limits regarding a concept and limits in the sense of substance must be distinguished. The first characteristic is to be considered in relation to the possibility of the concept of toleration regarding what could be tolerated whereas the second dimension is related to the substance of toleration concerning what ought to be tolerated. Both conceptual and substantive limits are important characteristics of international toleration. For instance, it is sometimes mentioned that we can only tolerate what could be changed with respect to the conceptual limits of toleration. Some argue that we cannot tolerate race because race cannot be changed. We might think of ethnicity and other characteristics of a person that are not changeable within that range as well. In line with this, in the international domain, it can be argued that a society's race or ethnic-

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[25] Mendus, *Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism*, p.10; Mary Warnock, "The Limits of Toleration", Mendus/Edwards, *On Toleration,* p.16. Regarding this point, Mary Warnock claims that toleration is not necessarily moral and that we could have nonmoral beliefs about the thing that we tolerate. For Warnock, beliefs and feelings that are not rationally developed can also be the subject of morality. She makes a distinction between strong toleration (based on "moral" disapproval) and weak toleration (based on simple dislike). From an opposite standpoint, Peter Nicholson thinks that toleration is a moral concept because it is both applicable to moral action and in the narrower sense, it is a virtue. See Warnock, "The Limits of Toleration", p.126 and Peter Nicholson, "Toleration as a Moral Ideal", Mendus/Horton, Aspects *of Toleration*, p.161.

ity could not be the object of toleration because they are unchangeable features. On the other hand, substantive limits of toleration might differ in the domestic and international domains since what ought to be tolerated would depend on the characteristics and specific conditions of the two different domains.

In *Thick and Thin*, Michael Walzer's approach can be conceived as an illustration of the significance and relevance of the limits of toleration regarding what ought to be tolerated in international domain. When discussing when to intervene in another state's affairs, he wrote:

> Now let's consider one possible occasion very much in today's news: when the solidarity we feel with people in trouble, confronting murder and oppression, seems to require not only marching but also fighting- military intervention on their behalf. No doubt, we should never be in a hurry to fight; I have argued elsewhere for a strong presumption against intervening in other people's countries. Nor can every moral rule that we are able to describe in minimalist terms serve to justify the use of force. We are more likely to called upon to speak up for "truth" than to fight for it. "Justice", too, is better defended with the moral support of outsiders than with their coercive intervention. We might even say that this preference is a feature of the moral minimum. Nonetheless, there are times when it is morally justified to send armed men and women across a border- and minimalism alone (ultra minimalism?) defines the time and fixes its limits.[26]

Here he refers to minimal morality concerning when to intervene, which is an attempt to draw the limits of toleration in the international realm.[27]

Reasons for International Toleration

So far, I have reflected on toleration as an international issue with reference to the characteristics of the concept. In this section of the paper, I aim to identify and distinguish a number of different reasons that might be offered in defense of international toleration. Reasons for toleration signify how we justify toleration. I claim that, contrary to what realists contend, non-moral prudential reasons are not the only reasons for toleration, and that there might be diverse reasons such as consequentialist moral, principled moral and skeptical. Below, I identify these possible justifications for international toleration.

In prudential (non-moral) reasons, the self-interest of the tolerator is the only reason to tolerate. Even if a society is hostile to the politics of a neighbor state, it might refrain from acting on its objection due to the fact that it is either unprepared or unwilling to pay the costs of interference. Imagine State A oppressing a minority group within its territory due to their ethnic origins. State B, a neighbor, thinks that what State A does is morally

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[26] Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 16.

[27] Moral minimalism is the core set of meanings, which is derived from maximal thick moralities in which we are embedded. In this sense, minimalism refers to a common core, which appears as a shared thin morality cross cutting all the traditions and cultures. Regarding moral minimalism, see Walzer's *Thick and Thin*.

wrong. However, it does not criticize its neighbor because they are involved in an economic alliance and if the alliance is broken due to the intolerance, the economic costs will be very high for the community of its fellow citizens. Here, the reason for the tolerance of State B stems solely from its self-interest and that is why it is non-moral prudential.

The second reason for toleration might be based on moral consequentialist reasons. In this case, we tolerate for the sake of the consequence that we expect to achieve out of the conduct of tolerance but the consequence is not calculated on the basis of merely the self-interest of the tolerator. Unlike non-moral prudential reasons, in moral consequentialism, the reason for toleration is more 'other-regarding': the relevant consideration is how tolerance – or intolerance – will affect the interests of others. One might think of diverse reasons out of consequentialism. For instance, the most evident reason might be peace and stability. It seems very likely that states or international organizations tolerate each other's conduct because they do not want to risk stability and create a hostile environment that would risk peace. In this case, peace as a moral idea motivates toleration.

We might think of other consequentialist reasons as well. As Peter Jones mentions, one might appeal to the adverse consequences of intolerance, such as the human suffering it may cause, when considering the reasons to tolerate.[28] Another appeal can be the idea of human good: it might be suggested that human well-being might be enhanced by allowing people to follow their own personal conception of good even if we do not agree with their conception of good.[29] Thus, on a consequentialist view, it can be argued that different societies and groups of people in the international realm should be able to pursue their own life path in terms of culture, tradition and politics because this will help promote and contribute to the human well-being in general.

There might be principled moral reasons for toleration too. The idea of "respect for persons" is a common appeal among contemporary thinkers as a reason for toleration.[30] Basically, "respect for persons" is founded on the idea, which considers individuals as self-legislating beings that are capable of pursuing a way of life which they think is good for them. This way of reasoning gives principled moral reasons for toleration because toleration is not treated as a means to achieve an end.

How can we conceptualize the idea of "respect for persons" as a reason for international toleration? "Respect for persons" "points to the status and respect we should accord people as persons, which provide reasons why we should allow them to take their own path even when we think it the wrong path."[31] Hence, in the international realm, on the

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[28] Jones, "International Toleration", p.4.

[29] Jones also mentions skepticism and respect for persons as other two reasons that have been spelled out in political contexts as for justification of toleration.

[30] "Respect for persons" is accepted as a normative reason for toleration among liberal contemporary thinkers such as John Rawls, Peter Jones, Rainer Forst, Susan Mendus and Catriona McKinnon.

[31] Jones, "International Toleration", p.4.

"respect for persons" approach, international entities such as peoples can be treated as persons and tolerated in the sense of putting up with the conduct and way of life that these entities posses. Here, one might mention peoples as agents of toleration (like Rawls does) as well as different civilizations and cultural groups.[32]

Skepticism might be pointed to as a candidate, although controversial, to be one of the possible justifications for toleration. It might be claimed that skepticism does not offer straightforward reasons for toleration but it can help to prevent intolerance by referring to the epistemological uncertainty and doubt regarding beliefs. In this sense, skepticism can still play a role in the international realm due to its potential to challenge the ground of intolerance. From a skeptical view, one might argue that given the diverse and plural nature of beliefs, traditions, cultures and civilizations in the world, we could not know if our own set of beliefs are hundred percent certain and true. Since we cannot be certain that what we hold is true, there is no point in imposing our own values on other people. In this manner, although skepticism is far from offering a direct moral reason for toleration, it can still give some justification for why intolerance is wrong. This potentiality of skepticism seems to be significant for living in peace in a pluralistic world.

In line with the skepticism concerning the truth of our own moral norms, we might also mention the risk that one society will possess less than full information and understanding of another society as another reason for the wrongness of intolerance. One might say there is a risk that intolerant interventions may be based on mistakes and misjudgments. This can be considered as another version of epistemological skepticism. Michael Walzer seems to support some sort of skepticism on that basis. He distinguishes between two types of legitimacy for a state: A state could be presumptively legitimate in the international realm and actually illegitimate at home.[33] A "presumptively legitimate state" refers to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a state in the international realm. In the case of an actually illegitimate state, the addressee is only the members of the state. It is only they who should decide to rebel against the government or not because the foreigners cannot have a full understanding of that particular culture. In other words, the intervention made by foreigners in the affairs of a presumptively legitimate, but actually illegitimate, state may be based on false or inaccurate beliefs concerning the community in

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[32] It might be claimed that in his *Law of Peoples*, Rawls subscribes to the idea of "respect for persons" as a reason for toleration in his treatment of decent liberal peoples. In his account of toleration, the basic agent of toleration is specifically peoples. I take up this issue in part IV of this paper. On this point, see also Jones, "International Toleration."

[33] M. Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States", *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol.9, No.3, 1980, p.209-229. For Walzer, there are two rights that foreigners should respect as far as single states are concerned: rights of territorial integrity and political sovereignty. Here, Walzer makes a distinction between what is called people (community) and government. This distinction is significant to understand his perspective on legitimacy. The criterion to make a judgment about the legitimacy of a state is if there exists a 'fit' between the community and its government. For him, state is a people governed according to its own traditions; see Walzer, "The Moral Standing of States", p.5. Thus, foreigners should respect to a historic community and its internal life. As long as this fit is there, the state is legitimate and this should be taken into consideration by the foreigners when decisions are on the agenda regarding intervention.

question. Here the incapacity of outsiders to have full knowledge about the specific conditions of a community seems to be a reason based on skepticism which Walzer provides as grounds for the wrongness of intolerance.

The Moral Relevance of International Toleration: What is a better way of Tolerating?

In this section, I specifically focus on the moral relevance of international toleration. I argue that nonmoral prudential reasons and skepticism do not provide enough reasons for toleration to bear a moral significance in the international realm. Evidently, in order for toleration to have moral significance, it is necessary that toleration is justified by moral reasons. Thus, I claim that the idea of equal respect – referred as "respect for persons" in the previous section– seems to provide the most convincing justification for international toleration by offering a strong moral reason for toleration in principle.

As we have observed, based on a prudential reasoning, states and other international agents tolerate each other only when it serves their self-interest. Hence, there is no moral motivation behind the tolerant attitude and the action of the states as long as they reason from their pure self-interest. From a prudential reasoning, states might tolerate many acts of intolerable human suffering, such as genocide, war crimes and economic injustice, as long as intervention does not serve their self-interest. They might wage war on other states or manipulate the other states to initiate a war. This act of toleration does not ensure that toleration is morally relevant in the international realm. Rather, it excludes any normative consideration of the idea of toleration from the international realm.

As claimed in the previous section, skeptical reasons might provide some justification for why intolerance is wrong. However, I argue this kind of toleration does not provide enough reasons for toleration to bear a moral relevance. Factually speaking, it is almost impossible to find a state behaving tolerantly towards other states out of suspicion of the truth of its own ideology and actions. In general, states tend to act as if their ideologies are ultimately true. However, even if we assume that there might be international agents – such as communities of faith – that can tolerate out of reasons for skepticism, in such a case, they behave tolerantly out of suspicion but not because they think it is the right way to tolerate in principle. They do not consider their toleration as a necessary attitude that is required by a normative principle.

Consequentialist reasons provide moral justification for toleration in the international realm. However, they do not give principled justification for toleration since in a consequentialist view, toleration comes onto the agenda due to an expected gain out of the tolerant action. Having said this, I do not claim that moral consequentialist reasons do not serve international normative ideas. Certainly, they have a place in our normative conceptualization of the world by serving the ideas of peace, stability, wealth, growth, etc. Yet, from a consequentialist viewpoint, it is still difficult to reason that I do tolerate because it is the right thing to do as a matter of principle. Consequentialist reasons also offer moral justifications for toleration, yet they do not provide principled justifications. For instance,

states might end up tolerating the imperialist attitude of a powerful state just because they think they have to sustain peace and stability for the benefit and well-being of humanity. On the other hand, a principled moral justification provides a reason for international toleration that is grounded in the idea of equal respect and international justice. Therefore, such a justification would not provide reasons for imperialism, colonialism or any other manipulation, much less the domination of a state by other state/states.

What makes the idea of equal respect –as a principled moral reason– a better way of grounding toleration in the international realm? I claim that it is only with the idea of equal respect that toleration can sustain a moral value on its own and that it can be morally relevant for the idea of political justice in the international realm. As a reason to tolerate each other's differences in the international realm, equal respect provides a good starting point as long as we need to justify why we tolerate.

Given the conditions of global pluralism, it is not so difficult to imagine various encounters between different cultures, civilizations and communities at all levels in the global society. Recognition of pluralism and diversity at the global level is perhaps the first step with which to begin when considering matters of international toleration. We have to share the same world society as people coming from different cultural communities and civilizations. This requirement of coexistence provides us a basis for why we should not impose our own comprehensive doctrine on others. It gives reasons for why we should react to each other's differences in a tolerant way.

However, the consideration that different communities and cultures have to share the same world society should not be seen as the only requirement that pushes us to grant equal respect to the status of others who share the same world with us. It is the ideal of living in a just world that gives true foundation to the idea of equal respect as a reason for toleration. In other words, toleration is a requirement for justice and for this reason; we should respect the status of other cultures as equal. Evidently, the requirement of coexistence supplies us with some reason to tolerate each other's differences. Nevertheless, it is the idea of justice which requires toleration and that makes toleration morally relevant in a strong way.

I consider the theory of John Rawls as one of the plausible illustrations of what has been said about the moral relevance of international toleration. In his outlook, toleration has a strong moral relevance as a requirement of justice in the international realm. The idea of equal respect gives foundation to his account of international toleration.[34] Liberal and decent nonliberal peoples, as equal members of the Society of Peoples, grant respect to each other by abiding by the principles of the Law of Peoples. The Law of Peoples represents the rules of the just agreement among liberal and nonliberal decent peoples. Not abiding by these rules would not only mean behaving intolerantly but also unjustly. That is why, in respecting the equal status of each other, peoples tolerate the conduct of each other as a requirement of their just rules which they agreed on. In a sense, as long as their

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[34] See Jones, "International Toleration". In the article, he argues, "the idea of 'respect for persons' does not always argue for the individual and against the collective."

differences do not violate the principles of the Society of Peoples, they are respected and tolerated. The imposition of a set of values of one people on another people would mean not recognizing and respecting the equal status of the people who suffered the imposition. This imposition would be not only intolerant; it would also be unjust since it would violate the principles of a just Law of Peoples.[35]

However, in my view, Rawls's perspective is limited in its potential to incorporate all possible agents of toleration in the international realm. Peoples as corporate agents are ideal entities, which do not reflect sufficiently the reality of the international political scene. In other words, his restriction of the agents to peoples seems to underrepresent the diversity within international domain.

A Habermasian turn can help us enlarge the scope of the agents of international toleration. This would mean that toleration should be a principled attitude in the global discourse of various agents – such as communities of faith, cultural groups and civilizations – with respect to the principles of a just and peaceful world society. For Habermas, toleration can be seen as a cognitive presupposition "which must be satisfied if intercultural discourse on principles of political justice for a multicultural world society is to be successful."[36] Therefore, this turn would also require us to do away with the idea of a social contract in the international realm. It will have to be replaced by the idea of dialogue among various agents of toleration on the principles of international justice. In this case, toleration would still be a requirement of the justice argument in the global context since the idea of equal respect would still hold for the attitude of the agents in viewing each other's status.

The justification of toleration as equal respect and as a requirement of justice provides toleration with a strong moral relevance in the international realm. In this article, I constrained myself within the limits that point in which way toleration can bear moral relevance in the international realm. Certainly further investigation should be done to address the specific contributions that certain theories can offer for the normative conceptualization of toleration as well as revisions that should be made within those theories.

Conclusion

This article has argued that not only is international toleration possible but it is also morally relevant in a pluralistic global society. I supported this claim, first, by demonstrating that the possible reasons for the disregard of international toleration are not plausible. I conceded that contrary to what is asserted by the realist paradigm, toleration is a matter of rightful conduct in the international realm. I also contended that contrary to the belief envisioned by a simple Westphalian model, states often do interfere in the affairs of each other and influence each other's conduct. This raises questions of toleration in the international realm. Moreover, I said that the right to self-determination or sovereignty does not prevent the possibility of toleration, but is the very source of it.

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[35] See Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*.
[36] Habermas, "The Resurgence of Religion", p.10.

After dealing with the reasons for the disregard of toleration as an international issue, I examined in which way we might think of toleration as an international issue conceptually. In terms of the conceptual analysis, first I mentioned the possible characteristics of toleration as conditions of possibility of the concept: possible agents and objects of toleration, diversity coupled with disapproval, demands, scope and limits of toleration. Secondly, I focused on the possible different justifications for toleration in the international realm such as prudential, consequentialist moral, skeptical and principled moral. I touched upon these reasons to consider how toleration might be justified in the international realm.

Lastly, I examined in which way toleration bears moral relevance in the international realm. I conceded that non-moral prudential and skeptical reasons do not provide enough reasons for toleration to bare a moral significance in the international realm. It was claimed that moral consequentialist reasons do offer some moral ground as a justification to toleration, yet they are also far from providing principled moral justification. I concluded that it is only the idea of equal respect that gives a strong moral justification for international toleration. Thus, I claimed, it is only by this way of justifying toleration, can one consider toleration as a requirement of justice in the international realm.

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