



Advances on Tolerance Theory in Europe

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**ACCEPT PLURALISM Research Project,
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Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion: Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe (ACCEPT PLURALISM)

ACCEPT PLURALISM is a Research Project, funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Program. The project investigates whether European societies have become more or less tolerant during the past 20 years. In particular, the project aims to clarify: (a) how is tolerance defined conceptually, (b) how it is codified in norms, institutional arrangements, public policies and social practices, (c) how tolerance can be measured (whose tolerance, who is tolerated, and what if degrees of tolerance vary with reference to different minority groups). The ACCEPT PLURALISM consortium conducts original empirical research on key issues in school life and in politics that thematise different understandings and practices of tolerance. Bringing together empirical and theoretical findings, ACCEPT PLURALISM generates a State of the Art Report on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe, a Handbook on Ideas of Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe, a Tolerance Indicators' Toolkit where qualitative and quantitative indicators may be used to score each country's performance on tolerating cultural diversity, and several academic publications (books, journal articles) on Tolerance, Pluralism and Cultural Diversity in Europe. The ACCEPT PLURALISM consortium is formed by 18 partner institutions covering 15 EU countries. The project is hosted by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and co-ordinated by Prof. Anna Triandafyllidou.

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1. Introduction

The conceptual point of departure for ACCEPT Pluralism is the distinction between (1) intolerance, (2) toleration and (3) various other, more demanding arrangements that exceed the minimalism of tolerance. On the basis of this minimalist distinction between three ‘classes’ of acceptance, we draw attention to boundary issues – claims, conflicts and contestations – that arise in between the refusal and the concession of tolerance and between toleration and more demanding responses, such as full equality, or contested conceptions of a more demanding type of ‘acceptance’, including recognition and respect. The empirical work that has been completed in the project has established a considerable variety of ways in which boundaries of acceptance become an issue, often in response to claims put forward by minority groups but also when more narrow boundaries of tolerance are drawn in response to allegedly intolerable minority demands. Against the background of this work, the present report revisits and adds our perspective on three conceptual problems of tolerance/toleration that have been discussed extensively in social and political theory. Instead of offering a comprehensive review of the literature on these issues, we ask what lessons can be drawn from our project for the conceptual, theoretical and philosophical study of tolerance.

First, normative theorists regularly argue about what it means or whether it makes sense to go ‘beyond toleration’ – a question that has also been of considerable interest within the ACCEPT Pluralism project. The issue is usually addressed by way of a discussion of the conceptual structure of toleration and whether it can accommodate certain positions that tip the balance of ‘reasons’ that toleration contains in a more positive direction. Anna Elisabetta Galeotti’s (2002) work on toleration-as-recognition and her suggestion that, to obtain ‘equal terms of inclusion’ (2002: 193), this has to include the public destigmatization of stigmatized identities represents perhaps one example for how conceptual boundaries of tolerance are over-stretched. Beyond the concern with toleration’s conceptual scope, however, there are qualms that the promotion of recognition and respect for ‘difference’ means renouncing less demanding but more viable arrangements of toleration and, hence, harms the objective to preserve a form of ‘moral minimalism’. Such concerns have been put forward in addition to questions about how to best characterize minority claims, whether they are for toleration, recognition or respect, and what the state can or should do in response to such claims. The concern with options ‘beyond toleration’ thus points towards issues that may be resolved differently, depending on whether one’s starting point is the *conceptual scope* of toleration, the *empirical presence* of claims for recognition or respect, or some understanding of the type of *political response* that one would expect from the state, state agencies or embedded in social relations or civic institutions. We revisit the issue in this report and offer our perspective on the need to go ‘beyond’ toleration and related problems.

A second set of issues concerns the socio-historical place of tolerance and its political functions. Wendy Brown (2006: 36) has defined one such function as ‘to contain potential crises [...] that threaten to reveal the shallow reach of liberal equality and the partiality of liberal universality’. Brown acknowledges that the understanding of tolerance as governmentality does not require us to abandon the idea altogether (2006: 174–175); in her account an appropriately historicized perspective on tolerance offers a new humility and improved prospects for civilizational encounters.¹ But the implications of critical charges on tolerance by Brown and others remain somewhat unclear. What is left after the regulatory functions and liberal presuppositions of tolerance have been revealed? As much as the

¹ We acknowledge that there is a distinction between principles of *tolerance* and attitudes or practices of *toleration*. For the purpose of our discussion in this report, we only maintain this distinction where it is required to comment on issues in normative political theory.

concept may be tainted by its role in how Western civilizational superiority is affirmed and 'others' are stigmatized, its role in supplying a language for political claims by minorities and for conceptualizing decent responses to cultural pluralism should not be discounted on the basis of this critique. In a second step, we thus explore recent deployments of tolerance in elite political discourse before revisiting the critique of tolerance.

The third issue arises in relation to the balancing of reasons that forms part of how toleration is commonly understood. Current advances in tolerance theory often pay particular attention to what reasons count as eligible, either as negatively ineligible or as justifications for forbearance that can override the impulse to reject. Such considerations have been amended by scholars of toleration who stress the significance of perceptions, of pre-existing and ongoing relationships between tolerator and tolerated, or of communication and deliberation. For the most part, acts of everyday intolerance, from the casual discrimination that individuals may suffer in employment towards racist violence in the streets, do not raise questions about reasons, and why they weren't balanced, but about socialization, the internalization of norms of conduct and social institutions as well as the wider social climate that fails to provide safeguards against or even precipitates intolerance. This would speak for a sociologically grounded view on values and attitudes and a concern with learning, as Veit Bader (2007; 2013) has suggested, to complement the preoccupation with ideal reasons and their justifications. Our response is to argue for a combination of approaches and we highlight the way in which the ACCEPT Pluralism project has provided new perspectives on discourses, policies and practices of tolerance. In a third step, we illustrate this with a review of two significant strands of non-acceptance in contemporary Europe: liberal and ethno-cultural intolerance.

2. Beyond toleration? Comments on the classes of acceptance

The concept of tolerance/toleration is characterized by some inherent problems and limitations and, at least in a conventional conceptual understanding, is widely considered a non-ideal state of affairs for being compatible with various degrees of inequality and oppression.¹ Yet it has also been argued that toleration is necessary and may even be, in challenging circumstances, a desirable solution. It is unlikely that the presence of culturally diverse populations in European countries will cease to be challenging in all sorts of ways, and we are not the first to suggest that the minimalism of toleration is infinitely more attractive than many alternatives. As a result of increasing diversity, value pluralism means that we need a way of reconciling ourselves with differences we disagree with, which may be deep and difficult to bridge. Respect for the other's individuality, reason and human standing, or the fact of common citizenship, can provide grounds for putting disagreement into perspective and thus for tolerance. Tolerance is objection that is balanced by reasons for acceptance, and this balancing is not just a practical necessity in the absence of better options. The attitudes it requires are virtues that pluralist societies cannot do without.²

There are reasons, however, to consider the inherent logic that is contained in such virtues, which in some cases points 'beyond' toleration and towards a situation where difference is normalized and 'does not make a difference' (Schiffauer, 2013), or where 'negative' becomes 'positive difference' (Modood, 2007: 61). David Heyd (2003: 205) suggests that 'by acquiring a tolerant disposition, we progressively move towards full recognition of at least some of the opinions and practices of other people'. This trajectory beyond toleration would seem to correspond with Goethe's suggestion that – since 'to tolerate is to insult' – 'tolerance can only

² This emphasis on competencies resembles suggestions by theorists of 'radical democracy', although these authors usually distinguish their position from that of 'liberal tolerance' (see Mouffe, 2000, 101-102; Connolly, 2005: 123, 173, Fn. 10, on tolerance and 'agonistic respect').

be provisional and must lead to recognition' (cited and discussed in Forst, 2007). Yet this conception fails to hold up. Tolerance is not a mere stopgap that we condone while waiting for superior normative arrangements to emerge. The movement from tolerance towards recognition or full equality is uncertain and there are many circumstances where, even after exhaustive opportunities to revisit one's objection, this does not happen and not reconciliation but peacekeeping remains a priority. While the movement beyond toleration is anything but necessary – we are provided with numerous examples where minimally tolerant arrangements disintegrate into violent persecution – it remains a possibility. The civic equality and confessional pluralism that European states achieved (for the most part) only became possible after the consolidation of various non-ideal, yet minimally tolerant, arrangements in the aftermath of Europe's wars of religion. Toleration thus protects a minimalist 'modus vivendi', yet it comprises attitudes and reasons that exceed minimalism and contain not a necessary drift but at least intimations of more demanding moral arrangements.

A different way of unpacking the relationship between tolerance and recognition or respect is to suggest with Veit Bader (2013, add) that, while it makes little sense to introduce a hierarchy of classes of acceptance, toleration needs to be backed up by more demanding principles and virtues in order to be a stable and reliable arrangement. This would seem to provide for a reasonably complex view on the 'classes' of acceptance, none of which we can expect to be socially prevalent at any point in time. Multiple normativities are expressed in social attitudes, conceptions of values, political institutions and laws. This suggests that, rather than discussing the relative merits of any particular concept of 'acceptance', we should explore how different normative classes interact and sustain societies that are, in one combination or another, as tolerant and respectful of cultural diversity as possible.

In the debate about whether it makes sense or is desirable to 'go beyond' toleration, it is in particular some concern about the dispersal of such norms and the role of the state that leads to disagreement. The challenge is about the role that the state and public institutions can play in fostering or demanding certain attitudes and virtues. Respect or esteem are difficult to generalize and impossible to require on an individual basis for the same reasons that Locke gave for freedom of conscience: these are 'opinions and actions that are wholly separate from the concernment of the state' (Locke, 2006: 288). Additional concerns, such as whether it makes sense to conceive of the state as an agent that dispenses tolerance or recognition (see Lægaard 2013), seem perhaps less urgent than the claim that a universal regime of state-sponsored recognition may be not just impractical but ultimately undesirable and intrusive (Webber, 2010).

Theorists of recognition, however, stress that the exercise of recognition is not limited to state action. States have a role to play – but only within much larger social processes. For Taylor (1994), recognition is dialogical and cannot be left to politicians or captured in legal instruments; it consists of two (or more) collectivities with a history of domination-subordination that acknowledge each other within a shared political sphere. They seek to move beyond that historical relationship through allowing each to be true to itself – 'deep diversity' – while developing commonalities through mutual understanding – a 'fusion of horizons'. Galeotti (2002) argues that toleration in a context of contemporary cultural diversity cannot simply be a form of benign neglect but requires active policies of equal opportunities and inclusivity. While the state must lead this implementation of equality, she believes that the media, intellectuals, employers, trade unions, the churches, neighbourhood associations and so on have to participate in their own way for equality – 'toleration as recognition' – to be realized. Similarly, for Modood (2007), multicultural recognition is a civic idea, meaning that it is created and exists in horizontal relations among citizens and not just the vertical spaces between the state and citizens.

While the fundamental difference between minimalist toleration and more demanding forms of acceptance is that the latter, but not the former, requires sustained action against the negative perceptions of the 'other', the state is not the exclusive agent in attacking 'negative difference'. Such activist forms of acceptance are not simply focused on minorities. They require an affirmation of minority identities – namely, of those identities that are of importance to minorities – but they also require a remaking and a pluralizing of the common identity, the greater 'We'.

Finally, a strict distinction between the governing of behaviour and practices and a *laissez-faire* as regards beliefs and opinions is unsustainable where intolerance flows out of beliefs such as racism. On such matters liberal states do not claim to be neutral and, at least in liberal theory, use a combination of law, public censure, debate and education (including state schools) to channel beliefs and attitudes away from, for example, sexism and racism and towards forms of acceptance and equality that these ideologies deny. Yet for some liberals, the problem with recognition and respect as political concepts is not just that they push the state from regulating behaviour to 'thought-control' but also that they introduce notions of collective identities, such as blacks or Roma or Muslims, which are not sensitive to the heterogeneity that exists in all groups (see Brubaker, 2012).

In addition to the interest in relations between different 'classes' and normative options, we wish to highlight the significance of perceptions of difference and that toleration is a device that structures the relationship with perceived 'others'. Werner Schiffauer suggests that the conventional conception of toleration needs to be amended to explore how visibly 'abnormal' differences may become 'normal' and thus potentially invisible. The question is how such differences are socially defined as tolerable and intolerable and why some, and not others, become the subject of heated debates. In the current situation, changing types of liberal-intolerant argumentation play a particular role in shifting the boundaries of tolerable difference. As Mouritsen and Olsen (2013) see it, the challenge is to 'desecuritize' the assumptions and scenarios that underpin the liberal turn towards intolerance and to develop a more inclusive position than perfectionist liberalism and its stigmatization of others as intolerably illiberal.

When considering the 'classes' of acceptance, such as in the context of political efforts to make liberalism 'more muscular', we are dealing with contexts that are characterized by established relationships and attitudes towards 'significant others'. There are conceptual frameworks and languages of minority accommodation that have developed over time. In fact, intolerant outcomes in a number of European contexts seem to result at least partially from perspectives on minority 'difference' that prioritize the experience of one group but fail to take account of divergent experiences and claims. Responding to this difficulty, Triandafyllidou (2013), for example, argues that the challenge for countries in South-East Europe is to 'open up their diversity spectrum' and to arrive at a form of 'plural nationalism' that takes notice of established minority groups as well as of more recent newcomers.

It is a more general phenomenon that limited spaces on the 'diversity spectrum' accounts for intolerant outcomes. In Great Britain, there is a tendency among urban geographers and cultural theorists to posit the novelty of minority experiences (highlighting, for example, their newly networked, cosmopolitan or 'super-diverse' character) and to forget that such experiences are usually multifaceted and diverse both between different as well as within particular groups (see Walzer, 1997; Modood, 1998; Modood and Dobbernack, 2013). Conceptions of toleration or respect and recognition, inasmuch as they prioritize particular understandings of minority 'difference', can be questioned for whether they cover the spectrum of actual cultural differences and identities. Self-evidently, acceptance is easier to obtain for 'differences' that are politically privileged while it is more difficult to achieve for

those that aren't registered as part of the official nomenclature of visible and valid minority difference.

Collectively our project work show that there has to be a double interest: in the indispensable role of minimal and more demanding concepts of toleration and acceptance in relation to contemporary diversity challenges as well as in the significance of such concepts in organizing debates, drawing boundaries and structuring relationships between majority and minorities. In the following we propose to revisit some aspects of the double concern with political or discursive deployments of acceptance and its normative purposes to reinforce the case for a complementary perspective. We first consider the role of toleration in current efforts to delineate national identities before examining critical challenges to liberal toleration and what the appropriate response to such challenges should be.

3. The critique and remaining value of tolerance

Religious tolerance in particular is one of the key elements by which liberal universalism is distinguished from its historical precursors as well from illiberal others outside of or at the margins of Europe. The 'persecuting society' (Moore, 1987) of medieval and early modern Europe is contrasted with fully achieved rights and freedoms in liberal democracies. Such distinctions, both temporal and geographical, often reflect 'present investments' (Collins, 2009: 609) in that a historical movement is seen to support or reinforce contemporary objectives. Presentist histories of toleration have been questioned for a number of reasons, among them the resilience of persecution well after the alleged decline of the 'persecuting society' or a lack of concern with social practices (Walsham, 2006; Kaplan, 2007). Yet regarding the constitutive role of tolerance in how liberal-democratic polities conceive of their identity, it would seem rather misguided to reject its value on the basis of such historical misunderstandings. After all, we should expect the tolerance of difference to be a principle that is widely promoted and placated by policy-makers and state officials as well as in public education where values and attitudes of toleration are supposed to be learnt and practised (see Maussen and Bader, 2012). Not the constitutive role of tolerance for liberal identities but the definition of intolerable antagonists and a certain liberal triumphalism constitute a problem that requires critical attention. The following briefly revisits the place of the concept in recent attempts to define *Britishness*, German *Leitkultur* and French *identité nationale*.

The previous British prime minister, Gordon Brown, prioritized toleration in his concern to identify core values of 'Britishness' (see Davison, 2011). He suggested that 'a strong sense of national identity derives from the particular, the special things we cherish', and that among those things were 'a passion for liberty anchored in a sense of duty and an intrinsic commitment to tolerance and fair play' (Brown, 2004). When 'taken together they add up to a distinctive Britishness that has been manifest throughout our history and has shaped it'. Brown's successor, David Cameron, speaks of the need to readjust past excesses of toleration: 'a genuinely liberal country ... believes in certain values and actively promotes them'. To achieve 'stronger societies and stronger identities', it is necessary to be 'unambiguous and hard-nosed about this defence of our liberty', whereas 'hands-off tolerance has only served to reinforce the sense that not enough is shared' (Cameron, 2011). The new account is that previous manifestations of tolerance have led to moral ambiguity and that, without losing its central role in British self-understandings, tolerance needs to become more active, aggressive and hands-on.

Tolerance plays a related role in recent debates about German national identity. Conceived in contrast to 'relativist multiculturalism', Bassam Tibi (2001) points to tolerance as one of four characteristics of European *Leitkultur*. Attempts to delineate a specifically German *Leitkultur* usually refer to toleration as a distinctive achievement of the Enlightenment or of the 'Judeo-Christian heritage'. Friedrich Merz (2000) conceived of *Leitkultur* as a resolution to pressing

questions about ‘peaceful and tolerant’ coexistence. Similar to Cameron’s attack on ‘passive tolerance’, he suggested that uncommitted and relativist liberals (*Gutmenschen*) had stifled the development of a strong national identity. He suggested, ‘the receiving country has to be tolerant and open, immigrants that wish to live with us either permanently or for some time have to be prepared to respect *the* rules of coexistence in Germany.’ Angela Merkel’s contribution to the *Leitkultur* debate was to ask for ‘a clear commitment to the nation (*Nation und Vaterland*), to an open-minded patriotism, to tolerance and to moral courage’ (cited in Dürr, 2010).

Nicolas Sarkozy’s (2009a) recent attempt to instigate a debate about French national identity presented an occasion to define tolerance in the republican context.³ As in the case of *Leitkultur*, the conditionality of tolerance upon the embrace of a number of republican tenets was newly emphasized. Sarkozy (2009a) suggested, in a comment on the outcome of the Swiss referendum on the construction of minarets, that ‘France is a country of tolerance and respect. But France also has to be respected.’ He pointed to the ‘contempt for the people’ exhibited by critics of the Swiss ban. Contrary to such misrepresentations, ‘the peoples of Europe are friendly, are tolerant, it is in their nature and their culture. But they do not want their lifestyle, their way of thinking and their social relations to be distorted (*dénaturés*).’ Addressing his ‘Muslim compatriots’, Sarkozy (2009b) proclaimed that he would ‘do everything to make them feel like other citizens, enjoying the same rights as all others to live their faith, to practise their religion with the same freedom and dignity’. But religiosity (of whatever faith) would need to be practised ‘with humble discretion which – rather than being a reflection of half-heartedness – corresponds to the fraternal respect felt towards those who do not think alike, with whom one wants to live’. The republic is conceived as a space of toleration, including for religion, yet respect towards republican norms means that its practice-based and publicly visible (so-called *ostensible*) manifestations face significant limitations and are subject to an expectation of cultural assimilation, if possible, and the law, if necessary.

In these cases toleration plays a role in the definition of a national self within a ‘civilizational frame’. This role does not provide for the reaffirmation of liberal inclusivity or for the extension of boundaries of acceptance but for new conditionalities of acceptance upon the public endorsement of a number of liberal, republican or secular tenets. The domain of intolerable difference is more rigidly demarcated and national identities defined in opposition to antagonistic others which cannot be tolerated. In such deployments of liberal tolerance, the advocacy of which within Europe is not confined to France, the concept functions as ‘part of what defines the superiority of Western civilization, and as that which marks certain non-Western practices or regimes as intolerable’ (Brown, 2006: 179). While this interpretation of the political functions of tolerance seems harmful and problematic in its own right, it stands in a particularly stark contrast with the focus on deliberation, reasoning and communication that normative theorists identify in idealized acts of toleration.

While this role of toleration in antagonistic identity constructions needs to be scrutinized, there is a risk in overstating its significance when evaluating the concept. The value of toleration will not be exclusively determined by the meaning it obtains in a certain type of political discourse and there are different discursive circumstances where the concept is less antagonistically charged than in some of the speech acts mentioned above. The bottom-up relevance of toleration in political claims-making and its usefulness in how minorities may appeal to minimal standards of liberal decency may not be affected by this elite discourse, which of course is itself challenged by other conceptions of tolerance. Liberal arguments can obviously be deployed to justify both tolerance and intolerance depending on the standards

³ This was the *grand débat sur l’identité nationale* (Besson, 2009; Sarkozy, 2009a).

that are invoked and on the questions asked. The political ideology of liberalism is not unitary (see Galston, 1995; Gray, 2000) and it would be wrong to suggest that toleration as such, or even specifically *liberal* toleration, has been damaged by its role in exclusionary rhetoric. It seems to us that a more compelling critique of tolerance would need to be based on an investigation of its benefits and limitations for the multicultural accommodation of ethno-religious minorities within a framework of shared and equal citizenship.

In order to further pursue some of its ambiguities, the following explores aspects of the critique of liberal tolerance in social theory. However, political functions of tolerance have been of critical interest before the recently accelerated shift towards liberal-intolerant argumentation. For Herbert Marcuse (1969: 95), manifestations of tolerance in the liberal state serve ‘the cause of oppression’; tolerance is defined and practised against ‘the effective background limitations imposed by its class structure’ (1969: 100). The ‘ideology of tolerance [...] favors and fortifies the conservation of the status quo of inequality and discrimination’ (1969: 136). Marcuse proposes to examine the concept for how it conceals relationships of ‘domination’ (1969: 109, 119) and thus shares a conceptual perspective with – while arriving at different conclusions from – certain neo-republican contributions to tolerance theory (Honohan, 2013).

Recent critical approaches share with Marcuse the objective to ‘politicize’ the concept of toleration (eg, Žižek, 1997: 37; Brown, 2006: 13, 197-198).⁴ They differ in that their critical perspectives usually owe more to Michael Foucault than to Marxist critique of ideology. Much of the recent scrutiny that liberal toleration has received in critical social theory begins with its role in the ‘clash of civilizations’. 9/11 brought Islam into the focus of Western public debate in a way that frequently involved a contrast between empirical aspects of Muslim religious or political practice and highly idealized accounts of Western values and principles. In this context the compatibility of Islamic traditions with those of liberalism, including the liberal emphasis on toleration, has become an issue of some public interest. Under the immediate impression of 9/11, Khaled Abou El Fadl (2001) explored Islamic resources for toleration and pointed to a trajectory towards tolerance that had informed historical practices in many Muslim countries and that only recently had been distorted by ‘modern puritans’: ‘the burden and blessing of sustaining that moral trajectory – of accentuating the Qur’anic message of tolerance and openness to the other – falls squarely on the shoulders of contemporary Muslim interpreters of the tradition’ (Abou El Fadl, 2001). Regarding his arguments about toleration and democratic governance (Abou El Fadl, 2003), Saba Mahmood (2003) took issue with the ‘burden’ put on Muslims to demonstrate Islamic resources of toleration or democracy. As Mahmood (2005: 189) put it in *The Politics of Piety*, ‘[t]he events of September 11, 2001, have only served to strengthen the sense that it is a secular-liberal inquisition before which Islam must be made to confess.’ Conversely, Mahmood suggested that Islamic resources might provide the occasion for a ‘two-way translation’ and for a learning experience by adherents of liberal democracy who could benefit from such encounters. Rather than asking how Islam fits with democracy and tolerance, one of the questions that should be asked is: how should we ‘rethink the politics of tolerance and pluralism beyond the confines of individualism to include the rights of plural social grouping?’ (Mahmood, 2003). Wendy Brown (2006: 174) similarly suggests that the critique of toleration might provide an ‘occasion to open liberal regimes to reflection on the false conceits of their cultural and religious secularism’.⁵

⁴ Žižek (1997: 37), for example, suggests that ‘[l]iberal “tolerance” condones the folklorist Other deprived of its substance – like the multitude of “ethnic cuisines” in a contemporary megalopolis; however, any “real” Other is instantly denounced for its “fundamentalism”’.

⁵ In line with such concerns, Talal Asad (2003: 8) suggests that a ‘secular state does not guarantee toleration; it puts into play different structures of ambition and fear’. Asad’s suggestions are reminiscent of the Enlightenment of Frankfurt School

Accounts that question the political uses and abuses of toleration in this volume, as well as more generally, usually do not make the case for its dismissal but point out where it needs to be reconsidered or stripped of the triumphalism that accompanies some of its political deployments. Brown intends to ‘reveal the operations of power, governance, and subject production entailed in particular deployments of tolerance’ and to puncture ‘the aura of pure goodness that contemporary invocations of tolerance carry’ (Brown, 2006: 10). Liberal intolerance is intertwined with the ‘valorization of individual autonomy’ while ‘fundamentalism is equated with the valorization of culture and religion at the expense of the individual, an expense that makes such orders intolerable from a liberal vantage point’ (Brown, 2006: 166).

The realization that liberal tolerance does not reach as far as some would suggest, should in itself not be particularly surprising. Its political deployments in the clash of civilizations, in exclusionary constructions of national identity and in the language of contemporary ‘identity liberalism’ show that there are even more severe problems with liberal toleration than its universalist façade. Yet, if liberal tolerance is implicated in ‘operations of power, governance and subject production’, what is the alternative? If liberal toleration is normatively inadequate, does it at least offer the basis for its own improvement, or is it best to start elsewhere? In his critique of Wendy Brown, Slavoj Žižek (2008: 667) in fact suggests that ‘denouncing the false universality’ of tolerance as an ideological category does only half of the critical work that is needed. The other half would need to consider ‘the rise of universality out of the particular life-world’ (2008: 670). Regardless of the type of language that we use to characterize this movement, we can acknowledge that political actors may discover that the language of tolerance provides a starting point in struggles for decent treatment and political inclusion. The non-liberal origins of tolerance indicate that such struggles can be waged by drawing on a multiplicity of resources. The need for humility that Brown and others demand is furthermore reinforced by any cautious study of non-Christian, non-liberal and non-Western intellectual foundations for and social practices of toleration (Parekh, 2013).

4. Examining contemporary intolerance

In this final section we briefly review two contemporary sources of intolerance – liberal and civic versus ethnic and national – discuss their relationship and use this review to offer some suggestions for the analysis of acceptance and intolerance in social and political life. Across much of Europe, there has been a new focus in the political resistance to cultural pluralism. Rather than rejecting the presence of minority groups for their affront to ideas of racial purity and ethno-national homogeneity, it has become more common to highlight their incompatibility with liberal norms and values. It is an assertive, perfectionist or ‘muscular’ liberalism that plays a particular role in mobilizations against ‘Islamization’ and various aspects of the Muslim presence in European countries. This liberalism comes in a number of contextually specific flavours and, rather than representing a wholesale paradigm shift in the debate about ethnic minority integration, often harks back to older ethno-nationalist ideas (see Mouritsen, 2013). Indeed, the insistence on liberal principles, and the threat that Muslims are seen represent, has become the central plank of formations such as Geert Wilders’ *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) or the English Defence League (EDL). These groupings contrast their hostility to ‘Islamization’ with an endorsement of racial diversity, which they seek to attest to through demonstrations of their ‘race-blindness’, not anti-racism.

(Contd.) _____

theorists in the 1940s (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1986) or more recent suggestions by Zygmunt Bauman (1990) on intolerable ‘strangers’. It identifies an antagonism at the heart of liberalism: ‘the liberal must continually attack the darkness of the outside world that threatens to overwhelm that space’ (Asad, 2003: 59-60; see also 2003). Tolerance is inevitably part of the liberal’s attempt to regulate difference and to soothe his/her fundamental anxiety about otherness.

Within the political mainstream and elite discourse, as we have suggested above, the language of 'muscular liberalism' sees national identities of European states re-defined to limit the presence of 'illiberal' others. The new case for principled intolerance towards those others goes hand in hand with the vocal appreciation of the diversity of cosmopolitan lifestyles, which are not narrowly based in ethno-religious or group identities. In all this, tolerance is a key element that is defined, contested and mobilized, often in line with the logic of the clash of civilizations: it is their intolerance that makes us revise our toleration. This binary perspective has been applied for example as part of the trade-off that allegedly has to be made between religious freedom and the freedom to express sexual identities. A new logic of intolerance targets civilizational 'others' that are said to be intolerant of the liberal 'self' (Butler, 2010; Lentin and Titley, 2011: 224-5).

While 'liberalism with guts' (Bolkestein, 1991) is anything but new, its themes have become more popular and have come to constitute one of the main ways in which minority integration is discussed and political responses are conceived. David Cameron's (2011) reference to 'muscular liberalism' at a speech in Munich exemplifies one such way in which liberal values – such as gender equality, 'moderate' religiosity or the rule of law – are asserted in relation to challenging experiences of cultural diversity. Characteristic for similar interventions across Europe, Cameron introduced 'muscular liberalism' in terms of a departure from the 'failed policies of the past', notably those that failed to insist on substantial standards of liberal conduct. He pointed to how it had become 'hard to identify with Britain ... because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity'. The 'doctrine of state multiculturalism' had encouraged segregation and there was no 'vision of society' to which young Muslims feel they could belong. Minority status and 'political correctness', in turn, had shielded some groups from criticism for their illiberal practices. There should be more activism, engagement and liberal assertiveness. Some of this could be obtained through 'a clear sense of shared national identity that is open to everyone'. Beyond the rhetorical shift towards muscular liberalism, it is not always very clear what the concrete changes in minority accommodation policies are that result from the new emphasis. In the British case, this appears to be a gradual departure from a cooperative engagement with Muslim organizations.

This type of intolerance, which is presented in the form of a liberal concern with individual autonomy, equality and reasonableness, appears as distinct from other types of intolerance that are at work in different parts of Europe. In countries such as Greece, rising intolerance emerges in the form of a reactionary nationalism in the context of a multifaceted crisis. This intolerance can be attributed to the 'ethno-cultural' conception of nationhood dominant in national traditions of belonging and to the 'Eastern' heritage of the country. The conceptual and argumentative background of this intolerance, which assumes an 'ethno-cultural' conception of belonging to the nation, and the liberal intolerance that highlights universal and value-based forms of belonging, seem rather distinct. Yet in both cases intolerance is presented and requested in the form of a re-balancing of (or backlash against) more generous arrangements of immigrant and minority incorporation.

This backlash of intolerance in different countries is based upon similar conceptual grounds: an increasing sense of crisis that makes notions such as equality and tolerance irrelevant and fosters hierarchies between in- groups and out- groups; a manipulation of the immigrants, those 'significant others' so as to boost social cohesion; a cynicism towards 'politically correct' perspectives of multiculturalism, 'too much diversity' and human rights; a concern with cultural homogeneity and cultural practices which implies a resistance to minority accommodation while assigning blame to their 'difference'. The most recent economic and political crisis in Greece, for example, marks a shift of political discourse in an ethno-cultural direction of closure and intolerance. Interestingly social and political actors turn tolerance on its head, just like it happens with liberal intolerance, arguing that it is precisely to protect democracy and the nation that they cannot tolerate migrants, their 'inferior' culture and

religious tradition. Even if the case of intolerance found in Greece cannot be conceived as 'liberal', it is, though, 'principled', and justified by a conception of the national political order. It is 'new' as it follows from and reverses positive developments and of an opening up of migration and naturalisation policies favouring migrants integration (Pavlou 2009; Christopoulos 2012).

There is little doubt that the civic/ethnic distinction as regards nationhood, and the liberal/nationalist dichotomy for tolerance, is helpful in partially clarifying the issues at stake. However, such dichotomies also simplify a rather more complicated reality where radical intolerance towards 'others' takes various shapes in different countries. Recent studies show that although different national traditions of nationhood significantly influence the citizenship models countries produce, yet these are constantly in interaction with broader geopolitical and economic developments, migration flows, politics, diaspora and colonial settlements, or power relations within each nation state (Christopoulos, 2012). It is often the case that the same citizen can defend a model of belonging to a nation that entails civic and ethnic elements, at the same time as national traditions most often entail both 'trends' (Medrano and Koenig, 2005). 'There is no sustainable concept of political culture without history; all civic and democratic cultures are unavoidably integrated in specific national histories' (Bader, 1997: 780). The East-West divide in the conception of citizenship, as well as stark distinctions between liberal and ethno-cultural foundations for European intolerance, are equally put into question (Bauböck and Liebich, 2010). Different national traditions of citizenship are mobilized so as to justify a common trend, that of a rising intolerance towards the immigrant 'other'. European nation states put forward intolerance not as an exception to their political tenets but as emanating from those.

The analysis of the 'nationalist' intolerance within the wider European context sheds some light also on liberal intolerance in countries in the North and North-West of Europe. Even if appealing to general liberal principles, such principles are drawn on in defense of cultural particularities, national institutional contexts and at the very end a narrow definition of European belonging. The generalized discourse of intolerance towards diversity, using a variety of arguments (more or less liberal, more or less nationalist) emerges as a 'real' and 'pragmatic' response to multicultural threats that have been silenced due to a politically correct discourse on diversity. Intolerant positions across Europe do not even need to be justified as the result of political choices, but are introduced as 'objective' necessities in order to restore 'normality' to the natural state of affairs that has been temporarily distorted by multicultural, or otherwise tolerant, arrangements for minorities.

Analytically, this reinforces the need for a multi-disciplinary perspective. Studies that exclusively deal with the fate of 'national models' of minority integration – civic-universalist versus ethno-cultural, republican versus multiculturalist – are at risk of ignoring developments beneath the surface level of public proclamations (see Bertossi and Duyvendak, 2012). Regarding the exclusionary rhetoric that is directed at either illiberal or ethno-cultural outsiders, the point is not just that it is often exactly the same population that is targeted from both directions ('illiberal' outsiders also tend to be phenotypically different and it is Muslims that are seen to represent a challenge not just to liberal principles but also to ethno-cultural cohesion). Furthermore, when the belonging of such populations is put into doubt this occurs in the process of the construction of 'We' identities that in both cases operate according to broadly similar logics of exclusion and identity-creation. Repetative and ritualized hints to the 'failure' of past models of immigrant integration, especially of multiculturalism, and the attack on 'political correctness' are widely shared. They should be studied for their discursive dynamics, yet we should also remain interested in the various activities and practices in which participants in the debate about the boundaries of tolerance take up ideas, interpret them but also change and shape their situation. This means adopting, as we have done in the ACCEPT Pluralism project, a hybrid approach and the combination of sociological, political and

normative-theoretical concerns to respond to the contemporary situation of cultural diversity in Europe.

5. Conclusion

In this situation, debates about what can and cannot be accepted are more fluid than ever. While identities, lifestyles and practices that were previously stigmatized are publicly embraced, the boundaries of tolerance are drawn more narrowly for others, in particular for populations that allegedly do not live up to liberal-democratic standards. Such changes may be a reflection of sociological trends and how these are perceived and politically acknowledged. They may be the result of changing perspectives on race, of the reconsideration of ethno-religious difference within the liberal state and of new anxieties in particular about Europe's Muslim populations. It is difficult to identify what is driving the re-evaluation of 'difference', yet it seems clear that diverse 'modalities' of acceptance or non-acceptance, sociological formations of difference and their treatment in political discourse have to be brought into focus in order to catch up with European debates about cultural pluralism.

Social science and political theory have responded differently to this reality. The pluralization of differences has been of concern in sociology, ethnography and cultural theory, where emerging features of urban landscapes are seen to challenge the categories that guide the political accommodation of minorities. The concern with values and principles of minority accommodation is frequently absent in these accounts, which generally do not purport to evaluate prospects for tolerance or respect and are more concerned with the potentials of geographic or demographic situations. In turn, normative theory seems not particularly willing to register features – be they 'old' or 'new' – of the European multicultural condition. The balancing act of 'reasons' that normative theorists identify in toleration is frequently conceived without regard for sociological realities or the political debates in which the scope of tolerable and intolerable 'difference' shifts and is determined.

A more complete account is needed not least because political exchanges about how much and what kind of cultural difference should be tolerated are usually multifaceted; sociological findings – such as national census data on cultural diversity – are normatively evaluated and questioned for their political repercussions. Complex patterns of European diversity are newly registered by participants in the public debate on the scope of acceptance in the liberal state.

We have suggested that it is necessary to consider normative modalities of acceptance or non-acceptance, their correspondence to sociological formations of difference and their treatment in political discourse. This report has followed the double interest in the normative value of tolerance and its relationship with more demanding options and in perspectives that critically examine the political uses of liberal toleration under certain interpretations. Without seeking to arrive at conclusions that would exhaust the issues that have been raised here, we believe that we can end with the following suggestions:

- In relation to normative-conceptual concerns, the conflation of tolerance and more demanding concepts is not just normatively problematic but analytically unhelpful. While sympathetic to the strategy of developing a more demanding normative vocabulary, we believe that there is a risk of conceptual confusion here, one result of which is that we may lose the normative value of toleration.
- The forbearance of toleration is of normative and pragmatic value – as many minorities know historically and today – and to disparage toleration because it falls short of, say, respect is politically short-sighted. 'Gritted-teeth tolerance' is the most practical solution in many circumstances, and it makes little sense to denounce it where more demanding notions are unavailable.

- There are indeed things that we should not tolerate as well as those that we should be able to discuss. These include not only behaviours most people do not want to condone, such as racism and sexism. There is also a host of issues to do with post-immigration 'difference' itself that are rightly discussed in this context. These include clitorodectomy, marriage at the age of puberty and/or under duress, polygamy and so on.
- Regardless of one's position on these, we do need a normative-conceptual space where what is tolerated and what is outlawed can be clearly discussed without being confused with recognition, respect and substantive equality. We need to separate intolerance from toleration as well as toleration from more demanding positions.
- Having noted the continuing value of toleration, we cannot ignore its limitations, namely the element of disapproval and the fact that tolerance is consistent with – and in some cases hides – inequality and domination. In seeking a form of equality in a context of diversity, we may prefer a non-evaluative respect for others in which people, especially fellow citizens, have a right (which is not a gift of the powerful) to be included without assimilation or privatisation of their 'difference'. We need to find ways to give expression to this respect in social relations and institutional accommodation.

In all cases where intolerance, toleration and respect are possibilities, we need to acknowledge that positions are not beyond contestation, that the objects and boundaries of toleration are historically changing, and that there needs to be a *political* concern with the relationship between tolerator and tolerated and whether it entails the elements of power, authority and domination. Such relationships, if they are concealed, need to be brought out and queried, for the boundaries that are drawn and for how decisions are made about what can and what can't be tolerated. This is a particularly urgent task in light of the new 'liberal intolerance', which overlaps with, rather than having replaced, remaining forms of 'ethno-nationalist intolerance'. Both of these make pragmatic types of accommodation appear more fragile and difficult to achieve.

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