

Is multiculturalism consistent with liberalism



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Is Multiculturalism consistent with liberalism? Multiculturalism and liberalism are two of the most essential realities in the socio-political scenario of the world today, and lots of debates have been done on the possibility of these two socio-political trends in modern world going hand in hand. Since 1945, liberalism has been the most fundamental and political ideology in the Western countries, especially in the English-speaking countries. Significantly, this political philosophy has faced several crucial challenges in the recent years and the most striking challenge among them has been created by what is called 'multiculturalism' in general. One of the basic questions related with multiculturalism and liberalism has been whether the former is consistent with the latter. As Brian Barry assumes, multiculturalism, or the 'politics of difference', makes the basic claim that "the self-image of liberalism as a tolerant and open creed is inaccurate. In fact, it is said, liberalism imposes a false universality that discriminates against minorities of all kinds." (Barry 1997, P 3). In a reflective exploration of whether multiculturalism is consistent with liberalism, it becomes evident that these socio-political philosophies are not consistent with each other, mainly because both the philosophies are rooted in different ideologies. Analyzing the relationship between multiculturalism and liberalism, one recognizes that the roots of both these philosophies are in different concepts. Essentially, liberalism is the popular political philosophy in the modern world and it is understood in many different ways such as a weak form of social democracy, a political position favorable to markets, etc. According to Brian Barry, "liberalism stands for individualism (versus communalism), equality (as against any notion of natural or divinely-appointed hierarchy), and moral universalism (as against moral particularism). More concretely, at the core of <https://assignbuster.com/is-multiculturalism-consistent-with-liberalism/>

liberalism is the idea of equal citizenship.” (Barry 1997, P 3). However, in the modern world, which is faced with the reality of several cultures coming together, it is not easy to find these two political philosophies to merge and make a ‘ liberal multiculturalism’. In the words of Anke Schuster, “ liberal multiculturalism is neither a necessary nor a convincing extension of liberalism... [and] the idea of cultural difference has little of substance to add to the liberal view of social justice.” (Schuster 2006). It is fundamental to comprehend that the liberal view of social justice cannot be consistent with the ideologies of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism has been defined and understood in various ways, and it is a many-sided ideology. It is important to realize the term of multiculturalism as concerned mainly with the values of equality, tolerance, and inclusiveness as enjoyed (or to be enjoyed) by the migrants belonging to different socio-political, and ethnical backgrounds. As the Canadian government explained, multiculturalism ensures the right of the migrants to keep their identities and have a sense of belonging to the country of their migration. According to Bennett, “ multiculturalism here is a social doctrine that distinguishes itself as a positive alternative for policies of assimilation, connoting a politics of recognition of the citizenship rights and cultural identities of ethnic minority groups and, more generally, an affirmation of the value of cultural diversity.” (Bennett 2005, P 34). However, these principles are not consistent with the liberal view of social justice and any attempt to merge these conflicting philosophies will result in conflicts “ within a country between different cultures, for example the conflicts between Islamic and Western people. The main causes of multiculturalism are colonization, globalization and migration.” (Blom, Maussart, and Ernste 2006, P. 13). Therefore, it is fundamental to comprehend that the ideologies

and concepts of multiculturalism and liberalism differ considerably. In conclusion, the concepts of liberalism are not consistent with “ the notion of minority integration through cultural recognition, particularly with respect to immigrants.” (Joppke 2004, P. 237). Bibliography BARRY, Brian. 1997. Liberalism and Multiculturalism. Ethical Perspectives. 4 (2). P. 3. BENNETT, Tony. (2005). “ Multiculturalism.” Blackwell Publishing. Last Accessed 06 March 2011 at: <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/newkeywords/PDFs%20Sample%20Entries%20-%20New%20Keywords/Multiculturalism.pdf> BLOM, Iris., MAUSSART, Laura., and ERNSTE, H. (2006). “ Multiculturalism & Will Kymlicka.” P. 13. JOPPKE, Christian. (2004). “ The Retreat of Multiculturalism in the Liberal State: Theory and Policy.” The British Journal of Sociology. 55 (2). P. 237. SCHUSTER, Anke. (2006). “ Does Liberalism Need Multiculturalism? A Critique of Liberal Multiculturalism.” Essays in Philosophy. 7 (1). Last Accessed 06 March 2011 at: <http://commons.pacificu.edu/eip/vol7/iss1/15>