

VALUE PLURALISM AND COMPROMISE IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE

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## ABSTRACT

### VALUE PLURALISM AND COMPROMISE IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE

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This thesis develops an account of value pluralism which claims that the conception of “the political” is constituted by value pluralism and accordingly, “the political” is the sphere that is comprised of plural values and aims. Within this account of value pluralism, making compromises is accepted to be the viable option of resolving conflicts and disagreements in the political sphere. Besides, as this thesis argues, when compromises are made *sensibly*, the plural ways of expression are maintained in the political sphere without prioritizing liberty as a value and without a need of grounding liberalism on a comprehensive doctrine. In this thesis, I explore three different pluralist versions of liberalism, namely Berlin’s liberal account of value pluralism, Rawls’ “political liberalism” and Gray’s “agonistic liberalism”. After examining each of them from the value pluralist account of this thesis, I claim that it is not possible for us to reach a rational and universal consensus. However, this does not mean that the political sphere is to be defined in purely agonistic terms or that it should be as Mouffe depicts it within her “adversarial” approach. It does mean that we make sensible compromises

leading us to grasp the political sphere to be constituted by *non-consensual pluralistic liberal elements*, such as irreducibly plural values and incomparable perspectives.

**Keywords:** value pluralism, liberalism, compromise, the political, sensible compromise.

## ÖZ

### DEĞER ÇOĞULCULUĞU VE SİYASAL ALANDA ÖDÜN

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Bu tez, “siyasal” kavramının değer çoğulculuğundan oluştuğunu ve buna göre, “siyasal” ın çoğul değer ve amaçlardan oluşan bir alan olduğunu iddia eden bir değer çoğulculuğu açıklaması geliştirmektedir. Bu değer çoğulculuğu açıklamasında, ödün vermek siyasal alandaki çatışmaları ve anlaşmazlıkları çözümlmek için uygun bir seçenek olarak kabul edilir. Ayrıca, bu tezin iddia ettiği gibi, ödünler makul bir şekilde gerçekleştiğinde, özgürlük bir değer olarak öncelenmeden ve liberalizmi kapsamlı bir öğretiye dayandırmaya gerek kalmadan, siyasal alanda çoğul ifade biçimleri muhafaza edilir. Bu tezde, liberalizmin üç farklı çoğulcu versiyonunu araştırıyorum: Berlin’in liberal değer çoğulculuğu açıklaması, Rawls’un “siyasal liberalizmi” ve Gray’in “agonistik (çatışmacı) liberalizmi”. Her birini bu tezin değer çoğulcu açıklamasından hareketle inceledikten sonra, rasyonel ve evrensel bir fikir birliğine varmamızın mümkün olmadığını iddia ediyorum. Ancak bu, siyasi alanın tamamen çatışmacı terimlerle tanımlanması veya Mouffe’un “hasım” yaklaşımı içinde tasvir ettiği gibi olması gerektiği anlamına gelmez. Bu, indirgenemez çoğul değerler ve kıyaslanamaz bakış açıları gibi *konsensüse dayanmayan çoğulcu liberal unsurlar* tarafından



oluřturulan siyasal alanı kavramamıza yol aan makul tavizler verdiėimiz anlamına gelir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** deėer oėulculuėu, liberalizm, dn, siyasal, makul dn.

*For those who are interested in the topic, and for those who are not.*

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

*Those who believe this, and those who do not, have no common ground of discussion, but in view of their opinions they must of necessity scorn each other.*  
Crito 49D

*If the same thing were to all men by nature fair and wise, there would no disputes or quarrels among us.*  
Euripides, Phoenissae 499 ff.<sup>1</sup>

Resolution of conflict in the political sphere is the main concern of this thesis. I assume that the political sphere is pluralistic as it is comprised of various political interests and ends. Another assumption I accept in this thesis is that conflict is inevitable among these plural views, and, if any resolution would be offered, pluralism must be tackled. Based on these assumptions, this thesis develops a political conception of compromise by interrelating “value pluralism” and “the political”. The conception of “the political” grasped in this thesis is constituted by value pluralism. Within these conceptions of “the political” and value pluralism, this thesis argues that given the plurality of political interests and ends characterizing the political sphere ‘sensible compromise’ is carried out as political action to resolve conflicts.<sup>2</sup>

One of the key concepts and themes this thesis has is “diversity”. The observation that diversity plays an active role in political life is quite modern. Arguably it is implicit in

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations received from <http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/lists/pluralism/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> By “the political sphere” I understand the area where political action is maintained. I describe “political action” as the kind of action which is performed to convey political interests and aims.

all modern liberal thought but becomes an explicit concern in contemporary liberal theories such as those of Rawls, Crowder, Galston and Gray. In ancient Greece, where society was sharply divided into classes only “free men” were citizens. This means that political life in ancient Greece did not comprehend diversity. In ancient Greece, especially for political thinkers, the monist conception of “the good” was adopted. Living a good life could not be considered as separate from this monist conception of “the good”. Aristotle thought that leading a good life is only possible within a good state, and in a good society. Aristotle seems to be talking about a specific conception of the “good life” that can flourish in a specific conception of the state -the ancient Greek city-state.<sup>3</sup> However, modern states are comprised of diverse factors, which means that, contrary to Aristotle, we should not look for homogeneity in our modern societies. In a modern society we can talk about different ways of life rather than being attached to a single conception of the “good”.

Another key concept is the “human world”, which, in relation with the above-mentioned concept of diversity, should be thought of as “human worlds”. What is meant by ‘human worlds’ in this thesis can be understood by considering that which I shall call the ‘plural conditioning’ of human existence. Arendt makes a distinction between her conception of the human condition and the concept of human nature: “The human condition is not the same as human nature, and the sum of human activities and capabilities which correspond to the human condition does not constitute anything like human nature”.<sup>4</sup> For Arendt “human activities” belong to “human” as they are the plural conditioning factors of human existence, not of human nature. Their plurality creates human worlds in various ways and aspects that are nevertheless understandable in terms of certain characteristics. I identify four characteristics of human worlds: Human worlds are *plural*, *artificial*, *shared* and are created by or enable activities (i.e., spheres of *vita activa* in the Arendtian sense) that provide *non-essential possible goods*.

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<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, “Politics”, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle* Vol 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 4; 1252b28-1253a2.

<sup>4</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 9-10.

First, human worlds are *plural*. There is diversity of moralities and values, meaning that a universal human morality cannot be assumed in human worlds. Cultural diversity is only one aspect of this diversity of values. Second, human worlds are *artificial* in the sense that the cultural, political, moral, philosophical, and psychological elements that shape human worlds are not found in nature. Third, human worlds are *shared* in the sense that the elements that shape them are commonly recognized objects or concepts that are embodied by physical things, such as private property -a concept embodied by products. Fourth, *non-essential goods* are not necessary to human species or human nature but significant to human worlds. Recall Arendt: she ascribes significance to action because she considers action as “corresponding to the human condition of plurality” and according to her it must become a necessary (or significant) “condition” of political life.<sup>5</sup> Many products of work can also be cited as examples of *non-essential goods*.

Another key theme explored in this thesis is “value pluralism” which engages with the diversity of values on a meta-level. Value pluralism says that plural values conflict with each other and a permanent solution to this conflict does not exist. In this thesis, the emphasis on the incomparability of values does not simply repeat a meta-ethical claim that values are incomparable by a universal standard. Such meta-ethical claims are important to the extent that they shed light on the theory of values within an ethical ontology. They, however, are rarely useful in political matters that are in my focus. Thus, this thesis is primarily concerned with the political aspects of value pluralism rather than ethical ontology.

Therefore, the emphasis on pluralism is intended to address the experiences we have in the political sphere. Instead of investigating values on a meta-level, the emphasis on the incomparability of values aims at revealing its consequences in political relations. As a practical implication of value pluralism, to realize a value we should choose between conflicting incommensurable values, which means that when realizing

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 7.

a value, we should take the risk of losing another value which conflicts with it; or, to realize a value and an end in the political sphere we should make compromises.

The pluralistic characteristic of compromise is indicated in this thesis by the notion of “sensibility”. A compromise which is *sensibly* made is to consider plural factors in choosing between options; and, contrarily, a compromise made in a one-sided fashion is taken to be in opposition to its sensible form. In this respect, if one makes compromises to accomplish a single goal in one’s life, it means that these compromises are not made sensibly. Likewise, ‘sensible compromise’ has a close relationship with diversity. To give an example, encountering different phenotypes, different sizes and body types may lead the fashion industry to compromise their “ideal of beauty” and lead to the diversification of products in the fashion industry. Or the diversity of local properties may lead the process of globalization into compromising a straight universalization in favor of preserving local values and properties.

Sensible compromise can be made in two directions. One direction in which sensible compromise works is that when liberties, particularly the liberty of expression, are confronted with a value opposing their exercise, the value in question is more compromised so that liberties are compromised the least -the main topic of 4.4. The other direction in which sensible compromise can be made is that liberties are *sensibly* compromised when the situation concerns a potential harm to other, which is exemplified by Mill’s harm principle (4.4.1). In this second direction, the distinctive point about the subjection of liberties to compromise is not because of utilitarian concerns, but because of the conception of liberalism this thesis has. Either way liberties are not excluded from being compromised, which explains what is distinctive about the liberalism defended in this thesis, namely the capacity of accommodating value pluralism in the political sphere. Sensible compromise will, therefore, not be a violation to the incomparability of values; for liberties are not held to be an “absolute” value. The exercise of liberties, as seen, is subject to compromise (as same with other values), yet with an exceptional status which is explained in section 4.4. Sensible compromise thus effectively protects the exercise of liberty without the need for a comprehensive doctrine of liberty.

Within the content of this thesis, the concept of liberty needs to be analyzed in terms of a few more specific concepts, such as negative liberty, basic liberties and so on. While one should admit that political terms are vague, and, as Berlin says, “the attempt to make the vocabulary of politics too precise may render it useless”,<sup>6</sup> we may, nevertheless, must ascribe more specific meanings to them depending on the use we are trying to make of them. In this thesis, the conception of liberty is grasped in terms of negative liberty that denotes “the area within which” people can do what they want.<sup>7</sup> According to the negative conception of liberty individuals and groups are free as long as nobody interferes with their activity.<sup>8</sup> This conception of liberty is adopted by many political thinkers, especially in the British tradition of political thought, such as Hobbes, Locke, and Mill.<sup>9</sup> Liberty denotes “personal liberties” when used in the liberal tradition in which individuals’ values have a priority over the society’s values in political life. Liberty takes the form of “basic liberties” in the liberal theory of justice which Rawls developed to derive the principles of justice. According to Rawls among the important liberties there are

political liberty (the right to vote and to hold public office) and freedom of speech and assembly; liberty of conscience and freedom of thought; freedom of the person, which includes freedom from psychological oppression and physical assault and dismemberment (integrity of the person); the right to hold personal property and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure as defined by the concept of the rule of law.<sup>10</sup>

Rawls considers “equal basic liberties” to be the essential part of a just society.<sup>11</sup> The common characteristic of these liberties is that they are the forms of negative liberty. In connection to the negative conception of liberty, liberty can also be grasped in terms

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<sup>6</sup> Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty” (Revised version of D: Clarendon Press), 40.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999), 53.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

of the allowance of the pursuit of the various forms of life in the public sphere without being interfered with unless they physically harm others (Mill's defense of liberty can be an example of this understanding of liberty). In this sense of liberty, individuals', and groups' conceptions of the good are freely expressed in the political sphere. In the political sphere various values and claims must be expressible in order for their existence to be admitted; and if plural values and claims are politically recognized, a liberal public sphere can be possible.<sup>12</sup> This thesis' conception of "liberal public sphere" is constituted by diversity and compromise. Insofar as the liberal public sphere is constituted by the free expression of diverse values, the liberty of expression is taken to be, according to this thesis' perspective and argument, the least compromised.

One of the crucial aspects of this thesis is that moral and political spheres are taken to be separate areas. I have discussed in detail this point, especially regarding the difference between morality and politics, in 4.3. Making justification of values does not apply to the area of politics; instead, making concessions among conflicting incommensurable values applies to the political sphere. The view that making concessions is applied to politics as a way of resolution of conflict is to consider political action as emerging in the political sphere and not to be derived from morality.

Any political system based on a moral theory necessarily pursues certain values and hence undermines other values that conflict with them. Thus, political systems based on a moral theory threaten pluralism. While pluralism cannot be destroyed, it can be oppressed by such politico-moral systems. Rigid political ideologies are the examples. They pursue moral and un-compromise-able values; hence they are against a pluralistic political sphere. Any politics that relies on a rigid ideology pursues non-pluralistic goals. Any politics that relies on such a rigid ideology designs a community around homogeneous and "total" values within a unitarian approach that aims at imposing

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<sup>12</sup> For the definition of the "political sphere" see FN 2. The "public sphere", in usual sense, can be defined as "the arena where citizens come together, exchange opinions regarding public affairs, discuss, deliberate, and eventually form public opinion". There may be democratic, e.g., the ancient agoras and media, and non-democratic, e.g., the Royal court, forms of the public sphere. The public sphere is essentially reciprocal in the following sense: "a public sphere does not exist if, for instance, a government publishes information but does not listen to the people". See the link below: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08b45e5274a27b2000a69/PubSphereweb.pdf>.

values on individuals' lives so that it annihilates diversity. Diversity does not conform to the purpose of policies which pursue a single conception of "the good". Furthermore, a single or monist conception of "the good" can provide a strong rationale for various unjustified impositions, which is discussed in 2.2.2.2.

The claim that a single conception of "the good" should not be imposed due to pluralism can be said to have a relationship with pragmatists' conception of "truth". Pragmatists are known by their significant challenge against the realist conceptions of objectivity. Platonism and especially the Platonist distinctions have dominated Western thought for ages. However, this tradition has been encountering serious problems since the last century and hardly can provide effective solutions to the current problems in human worlds. Rorty's pragmatism emphasized that the Western tradition of thought may have come to an end as it is counterproductive.<sup>13</sup> This is understandable for many reasons. We live in a world in which no ideology, no political authority, no theory of truth and no theory of knowledge could remain the same because of human activity and progress. Considering the historical and cultural developments, no school of thought can satisfy us in giving a full account and foreseeing the consequences of this profound change in our lives. Rorty always considers "truth" within the scope of history and cultural practice rather than treating it as a transcendent reality outside of an actual society. The pragmatist challenge to the realist conception of "truth", depicted in Rorty's view, has an affinity to the way this thesis conceives value pluralism in the context of plural human worlds: as Rorty rejects transcendent conceptions of "truth", this thesis rejects universal criteria according to which values can be ranked. Yet, despite the relevance of the pragmatist challenge, the argument of this thesis must not be considered within and as a follower of the tradition of pragmatism, since this thesis has political concerns, especially about political action, instead of ontological concerns about "truth".

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<sup>13</sup> Rorty strongly criticizes the capitalized Philosophy, the Western tradition of thought, since it does not help us, instead causing theoretical problems by its Platonic notions and metaphysical distinctions. See Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), xiv-v. The pragmatist challenge was first presented by Dewey who emphasized practicality and concreteness, which tremendously influenced Rorty who made his own way by abandoning anything impractical in philosophy.

To understand what I mean by political action it may be helpful to compare it to Arendt's conception of action. Arendt describes *action* as "the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality" and conceives the plurality as "*the* condition of all political life".<sup>14</sup> *Action* has a specific place in and is central to Arendt's political thought as it refers to a component of "*vita activa*" -the notion that represents the fundamental aspects of human activity, i.e., "labor, work and action" and is contrasted with "*vita contemplativa*".<sup>15</sup> *Action*, among these three fundamental categories, is the one that has the connection with "the human condition of plurality". Plurality constitutes the condition of *action* and indicates the uniqueness of each human being.<sup>16</sup> *Action* appears in political life and widens the dimension of human existence by creating "the condition for remembrance, that is, for history".<sup>17</sup>

Political action described in this thesis has a similar pattern with Arendt's conception of *action* in the sense that, both see the political sphere, which is defined by plurality, as the domain of action and establish a close relationship between freedom and plurality. In Arendt's thought, the relation between freedom and plurality is mediated via *action*; in this thesis the relation between freedom and plurality is mediated by compromise. However, as the notion of 'compromise' differs from Arendt's notion of *action*, the related conceptions of freedom are also considerably different. Unlike Arendt's notion of *action*, compromise can be bound with all kinds of practical concerns and specific goals.

This thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 begins with examining the concepts of monism and pluralism in connection to the theories of value and their application to human worlds. In Chapter 2 it is argued that there is no one "human good", nor a universally objective measurement to define a "higher good". It is also argued that if

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<sup>14</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 7.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 9.



monistic theories of value are followed in political actions and applied to human worlds, we will eventually end up with a non-liberal oppressive government which threatens diversity. An oppressive government based on a monist conception of value reduces diversity to a few values or a single value and imposes them on the lives of individuals. Contrary to its monist conception, only a pluralist conception of value can provide an environment in which every human being can freely choose and pursue their own goals.<sup>18</sup>

In Chapter 2 the major premises of value pluralism are under examination; namely, that values are in conflict and that values are incomparable to each other because of the lack of a universally objective standard according to which values can be rated as higher and lesser. The practical outcome of the incompatibility of values is that a value can be realized at the loss of another value. The incomparability of values, on the other hand, produces a more complicated practical effect: How to decide to choose one value over another one. The incomparability of values does not mean that choice between values is impossible; on the contrary, choice between values is a *must*; yet it cannot be determined by a deeper truth about human worlds, but by the conditions that apply to changing values. In other words, the premise of incomparability -that no value is superior to another one due to the lack of an objective measurement of ranking values- “compels” us to choose between values under the conditions that are subject to change hence the importance of values changes. Thus, the incomparability of values must be grasped as a practical statement about values.

If values are incomparable and we do not have a “common tool of measurement” of values, then we have no chance other than compromising other values to realize a value. Each realization (of a value) is indeed a compromise which we should be aware of. Conflict happens because of diversity and compromise is a *necessary choice*

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<sup>18</sup> Without diversity and pluralism, we can barely speak of the presence of liberty. It should be noted that diversity and pluralism are not definitely the same things. Diversity can signify multiple views and values; however, pluralism adds to this multiplicity some features that characterize these various items, such as being incompatible with each other and their incomparability according to a universal criterion. These features of pluralism engender the diverse ways of expression. In this sense, this thesis takes what is monistic as deprived of liberties.

because of value pluralism. The Berlinian account of value pluralism is discussed in 2.3.1. However, Berlin seems not presenting in depth his views about compromise and I see that the notion of compromise needs further elaboration, which is one of the goals this thesis aims to accomplish.

In Chapter 3, I discuss three different pluralist versions of liberalism, namely “liberal pluralism”, “political liberalism” and “agonistic liberalism”. First, liberal pluralism, associated with Crowder and especially Galston, takes its basic notions from Berlin’s liberal humanism and a negative notion of liberty. Berlin introduces two concepts of liberty, namely positive and negative, and he associates the negative notion of liberty with value pluralism and a liberal government. Galston follows Berlin’s pluralistic account of liberalism. Second, Rawls’ “political liberalism”, another version of liberalism discussed in Chapter 2, seeks for the answer to the question of how a society of free and equal citizens in which “irreconcilable comprehensive doctrines” take place can live in harmony. Rawls’ solution to this problem is to abandon any liberalism based on a comprehensive and moral theory and to present a political conception of liberalism that endorses a conception of consensus reached by “reasonable pluralism” (i.e., reasonable incompatible comprehensive doctrines).<sup>19</sup> Third, Gray’s “agonistic liberalism” objects to the universality of liberalism and suggests a form of politics in which parties can reach a common ground to achieve *modus vivendi*.

Each version of liberalism confirms a specific notion of value. Galston’s liberal pluralism holds toleration as a liberal value that must apply to a pluralistic society as it embodies the principle of a pluralistic society which he calls “the principle of maximum feasible accommodation of diverse legitimate ways of life”.<sup>20</sup> Rawls’ political liberalism provides a liberal account of justice around the notion of “overlapping consensus”. Gray’s “agonistic liberalism” relies on the concept of *modus vivendi*. Each version is criticized in Chapter 3. Galston’s comprehensive view built upon the Berlinian account of liberalism is criticized from this thesis’ account of value

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<sup>19</sup> See Rawls *Political Liberalism* (1993).

<sup>20</sup> William A. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism Political Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 119.

pluralism. The Rawlsian consensual approach is criticized since “overlapping consensus” does not put the proper amount of weight on the effective role of pluralism that produces ‘compromise’ as political action. Gray’s criticism of traditional and universalist conceptions of liberalism is shared by this thesis; however, his view of liberalism falls short of giving accounts of the relationship between the concepts of pluralism and “the political”.

I, therefore, continue by probing the concept of “the political” from the perspectives of Schmitt, Mouffe and Arendt, and present the conception of “the political” that this thesis has. This thesis argues that “the political” is constituted by (value) pluralism; this view is shared by both Mouffe and Arendt although they have different understandings of pluralism.<sup>21</sup> In Mouffe’s thought plurality is associated with agonistic democracy. Mouffe’s agonistic approach is based on her conception of “the political”: Mouffe grasps democratic debate as a “real confrontation” in the agonistic conception and describes democracy in “purely” agonistic terms.<sup>22</sup> In this connection, Mouffe’s criticism of liberalism (which is the topic of 3.5.2) is based on the rejection of consensual approach as she sees the idea of consensus of the liberal project to be the opposite of democracy.<sup>23</sup> In Arendt’s thought, on the other hand, plurality is presented as an ontological aspect of the human condition as well as being constitutive of “the political”, which is elaborated in 4.1.1.2.

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<sup>21</sup> Mouffe conceives the political sphere as the field in which conflicts and power struggle among opponents take place. On the other hand, Arendt emphasizes plurality which denotes the features of “distinctness” and novelty of *action* in the political sphere.

<sup>22</sup> Mouffe makes a distinction between the categories of “agonism” and “antagonism” as follows: agonism is taken to be “relations between adversaries”; whereas antagonism refers to “relations between enemies” (Mouffe, *On the Political*, 20). See also Chantal Mouffe, “Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?”, *Social Research* 66, no. 3 (1999): 755.

<sup>23</sup> Mouffe, *On the Political*, 19-20. Mouffe mentions that there are pluralistic and agonistic form of liberal thoughts, such as that of Gray, which opposes to the traditional form of liberalism. Mouffe states that modern democracy mainly prioritizes the values of individual liberty and human rights; she also adds that these values, i.e., individual liberty and human rights, are central to liberal democracy. According to Mouffe, the connection between liberalism and democracy must however not be seen as necessary, rather, it must be seen as a “contingent historical articulation” (Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 2-3).

Considering Mouffe's and Arendt's conceptions of "the political" and the concepts of pluralism associated with their conceptions of "the political", the conception of "the political" this thesis adopts and the pluralistic resolution it offers to the problem of conflict in the political sphere can be expressed as follows. In the way this thesis conceives pluralism, the feature of incomparability is spotlighted more than that of incompatibility. When I say that "the political" is constituted by pluralism it means that the political sphere consists of not only the plurality of incomparable values, but also the plurality of perspectives. Each perspective may prioritize one or several values over others and is maintained by different conceptions of "truth" by which they evaluate things. As is highlighted by the pragmatist challenge against realist conceptions of objectivity, none of objective conceptions of "truth" can insist on rigidity. Furthermore, because of the epistemic skepticism this challenge implies, no worldview can dwell in a doctrinal depth and a comprehensiveness of ideas on the crossroads with other views in the political sphere. Therefore, political action emerges as making *sensible* compromises during encounters between various perspectives. Chapter 4 is planned to explain sensible compromise in its relation to liberties and politics.

The argument of this thesis must be grasped within a liberal dimension instead of an agonistic one, which, obviously, is not because this thesis acknowledges a consensual liberalism (such as found in Rawlsian version of liberalism); but because this thesis offers sensible compromise as political action. To put it differently, it is not possible for us to reach consensus, yet this does not mean that the political sphere is to be defined in purely agonistic terms or that it should be as Mouffe depicts it within her "adversarial" approach. It does mean, however, that we make sensible compromises leading us to grasp the political sphere to be constituted by *non-consensual pluralistic liberal elements*, such as irreducibly plural values and incomparable perspectives. Thus, in contrast to Mouffe's view that aims to lose the contact between liberalism and democracy, this thesis upholds that there is such a connection.<sup>24</sup> To distinguish my

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<sup>24</sup> For Mouffe democratic politics cannot be grasped in terms of a consensus and a "reconciled world" because it is about transforming "antagonism to agonism"; the aim of democracy is not to "overcome the we/they relation but how to envisage forms of construction of we/they compatible with a pluralistic order" (ibid, 115).

view from hers I should here note that, according to this thesis' argument and the conception of "the political" it adopts, the conversation between democratic political parties requires 'sensible compromise', which means that democratic politics has liberal constituents.

I should also note that the notion of "sensitivity" must be distinguished from the notion of Rawls' "reasonableness": Rawls sees reasonableness as an essential feature of determining a liberal conception of justice by way of consensus. On the other hand, the notion of "sensitivity" developed in this thesis does not specify any consensus; it employs plural reasons in making compromises, hence conceives pluralism in action and multiplies the possible ways of resolution in the political sphere.

Although supporting liberal values such as the priority of individuals' choice to society's impositions on their lives, this thesis does not aim to prioritize any liberal value over other values. This thesis understands liberties not to be non-compromise-able but the 'least compromise-able' when compromises are made *sensibly*, which does not violate pluralism while leading to the maintenance of liberties. As the statement of this thesis, I am not defending liberalism within a comprehensive view (it has been done by classical and traditional liberal thinkers); neither am I defending around a rational consensus; instead, I am defending liberalism in connection with political action as sensible compromise.

## CHAPTER 2

### MONISM AND PLURALISM

In this chapter first I tackle the two opposite views, namely monism and pluralism. I especially focus on pluralism in its relation to the concept of autonomy and rationality. Next, I tackle value pluralism.

Pluralism and monism are basically two approaches to *reality* in terms of the quantity of items in the universe. Pluralism is the view that there is a multiplicity such that it cannot be reduced to one single item. Monism, on the other hand, is the view that multiplicity can be reduced to one single principle. It can be said that, in monism multiple entities are not seen to be *real* entities; they can only be different aspects and appearances of one single entity that *really* exists.

Pluralism and monism can be applied to ethics, ontology, or epistemology; in ethics, the famously known discussion is pluralism of values -whether values are plural and can be ranked according to a fundamental or a highest value; in ontology, fundamental constituents of *reality* are at the focus of interrogation. In epistemology, pluralism refers to the view that there are plural domains for the discourse on “truth” with different criteria for talking about it.

The historical background of pluralism can be traced back to the debate between Plato and the Sophists. Arendt explains it in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951):

Plato, in his famous fight against the ancient Sophists, discovered that their "universal art of enchanting the mind by arguments" (Phaedrus 261) had

nothing to do with truth but aimed at opinions which by their very nature are changing, and which are valid only "at the time of the agreement and as long as the agreement lasts" (Theaetetus 172). He also discovered the very insecure position of truth in the world, for from "opinions comes persuasion and not from truth" (Phaedrus 260).<sup>25</sup>

It seems that the pursuit of "truth" for the Sophists had lost its importance regarding the motivation of engaging in philosophical discussions. The insecure position of "truth" that Plato complains about can be evaluated positively on the side of the Sophists who consider human beings, rather than a universal standard, as the measure of truth. Opinions do not have the necessity of conforming to "truth", which creates more space for philosophical utterances. It can be fairly said that, from the perspective of the Sophists, philosophy does not have a duty to secure the position of "truth".

Instead of the pursuit of "truth", the Sophists were only interested in and performed the art of argumentations. The attitude of the Sophists towards "truth" depicts the opposite scenery of Plato's "objectivist" perspective on "truth". This, I believe, had to be one of the critical stages in the history of philosophy, especially regarding the debates between monistic and pluralistic worldviews and indicating the persuading and key role of holding debates and making compromises in the political sphere.<sup>26</sup>

## **2.1. Monism**

In this thesis monism and pluralism are treated only as theories on the nature of values. In Kekes' definition monism appears when "the one and only reasonable system of values" is accepted to be the same for everyone.<sup>27</sup> Kekes also identifies three different versions of monism: The first version of monism is that there is one "human good" - going back to Plato's Idea of The Good. The second version of monism asserts that there is a standard or medium for comparing values -utilitarianism and classical

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<sup>25</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, new edition with added prefaces (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1973), 9.

<sup>26</sup> More detailed discussion and explanations regarding compromise as a type of political oratory are in 4.1.

<sup>27</sup> Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, 8.

hedonism can be examples of such a monistic theory. The third version is the one that accepts “a canonical principle for ranking all types of values”.<sup>28</sup> In the last version of monism it is quite difficult to know and state such a “canonical principle”; thus, an objective ordering of values will be questionable. Other versions of monism can also be questioned when considering the diversity of human values and the pluralist claim of incomparability. The common characteristic of each monistic version is the denial of an unresolvable incompatibility and incomparability of values, though they do so for different reasons.<sup>29</sup>

Galston, on the other hand, describes monistic theories of value as displaying either of these two approaches: Either reducing “goods to a common measure” or developing a “comprehensive hierarchy” among goods.<sup>30</sup> Both are highly questionable, according to Galston, as he explains below:

In the particular circumstances, which considerations should be regarded as more important, or more urgent? If a balance was to be struck, what weighting of competing goods could reasonably be regarded as fair?<sup>31</sup>

In Galston’s own words, to arrive at a reasonable way of determining the importance of one value or consideration over another, one needs more certainty than only making a strong monistic assertion. Such a certainty will require a meta-level of rationality to compare values, which is impossible to establish for various reasons. I discuss those reasons when thoroughly examining value pluralism in 2.3.

I would like to point out the subtle difference between a moral theory and a value theory: A moral theory is monistic in the sense that it requires one single principle to be the purpose of moral actions. For instance, an egoistic morality requires one to maximize one’s self-interest; a hedonist conception of morality requires one to obtain

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>30</sup> Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 7.



pleasure from one's actions. Moralities often require a fundamental value to be consistent and applicable. A value theory, unlike a moral theory, can either be monistic or pluralistic. The monist conceptions of value can be found in Plato, Aristotle, and Kant as they are centered on universality, eudaimonia and the ultimate moral law, respectively.<sup>32</sup> Utilitarian theories are also monist since based on the intrinsic value of "pleasure" and "utility". In all these traditions a monist conception of value is defended. Moral theories seem to have a monist conception of value that determines a supreme value among others to serve as a moral principle in one's life.

## 2.2. Pluralism

In value theory pluralism suggests that there are plural values which conflict with each other and cannot be compared to a rational standard -which is elaborated in 2.3. The lack of a rational standard of comparison (both in value and political theory) is the feature that pluralism and relativism share. Nevertheless, there are several reasons why pluralism must not be identified with relativism.

From the pluralist perspective, the fundamental elements of morality cannot be universally derived. In other words, a universal standard for determining a moral principle seems unattainable. The most convincing reason for this can be that there is a plurality of moral cultures and hence a plurality of values. Even within a single moral culture values cannot remain the same throughout time, which means that values cannot be determined to be eternally fundamental.

The values that have happened to change in the Western culture can be an example of the statements made above, since I am focusing on the themes raised in the Western tradition of philosophy and the relevant literature. The Western morality flourishing in the ancient times and reaching out to the late modern era (some call it the "post-

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<sup>32</sup> Anderson mentions other thinkers who adopt monistic or reductionist conceptions of value since Socrates. See Elizabeth Anderson, *Value in Ethics and Economics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 15. Besides, the "Socratic conception of morality" is also individualist and formally egoistic because of the connection between virtue and one's happiness as living is in one's self-interest. See Paul Bloomfield, ed., *Morality and Self-interest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

modern” era) has been subject to significant changes.<sup>33</sup> This is mainly because, as Kekes states, values “must be adjusted to fit changing economic, technological, political, demographic, and other circumstances”.<sup>34</sup> Values change in a society as they depend on plural conditions and cannot endure independently of them.

Kekes also states, there have been continual challenges by other moralities to the Western culture, which evokes the necessity of justifying values.<sup>35</sup> I consider these challenges as the indications of pluralism of moralities and pluralism of values that render the universalistic assumption within Western culture unjustifiable. Kekes’ observation is relevant not only to the problem of justifying values but also to the undeniable consequences of pluralism. Further, the pluralist challenge that leaves no chance for moralities other than going through the significant changes applies to every morality as no morality can claim universality and stability for its values in the face of the diversity of values and the changing conditions stated.

The values of Western morality have gone through a significant change which, Kekes regards, “has spread from the periphery to the center”: For example, the change of the values of Western morality has been not only about the attitudes towards “divorce, homosexuality, and extramarital sex”, but also about the attitudes towards “relations between men and women and about the place and importance of sex in our lives”.<sup>36</sup> The effects of pluralism seem not to be limited to the changes about the periphery; they expand to the center of morality, which poses another question: The question of “whether this basic change amounts to disintegration”.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, 3. Kekes states three main sources of Western morality as “ancient Greece and Rome; the Judeo-Christian religious tradition; and the thought and sensibility of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and secular humanism” (ibid).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

“Disintegration” denotes the situation in which a morality is dissolved because its foundation has been shaken by several circumstances and people cannot maintain their moral beliefs and values with certainty in it anymore. The disintegration of Western morality (or of any morality when the effects of pluralism are considered) becomes a concern when the moral confusion about values has emerged. The disintegration of a morality is about whether the center of morality can be anymore held after the challenges and changes that occur because of conflicts. If the center cannot be held as it used to be, then its justification becomes problematic, and it must be reframed within the contextual and perspectivist outlooks.

Kekes contends that conflicts cause change, not disintegration. However, I see a deeper problem than this from the pluralist perspective. Kekes may be right that the ongoing conflicts cause change not disintegration; yet pluralism is not only about conflicts, but also incomparability of values and the challenges occurring in human worlds do signify the inadequacy of attempts to justify any morality as “objective” and “true”.<sup>38</sup>

The problem of justification of morality can lead us to claim that pluralism is a form of relativism. Both pluralism and relativism accept that there is conflict among values and values are incomparable to each other by an objective standard. The view that values are equally compelling and incomparable in terms of a hierarchical order should not necessarily lead to relativism or subjectivism. Berlin also emphatically states that his view about pluralism and diversity must be “carefully distinguished from

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<sup>38</sup> A moral objectivity can be defensible when an objectivist outlook of relativism is formulated. Such a formulation is found in Wolf. Wolf, in “Two Levels of Pluralism” (1992), points out the two levels of the pluralist option regarding incomparability: One is about the incomparability of conflicting values which is named as “first-order pluralism”, and the other is about the incomparability of different moral systems which is “second-order pluralism” (Wolf, “Two Levels of Pluralism”, 796). Wolf conceives pluralism as a type of relativism yet “within an *objectivist* framework”, because she wishes to save relativism (as the second-level pluralism) from subjectivism (ibid, 797; italics by me). As can be seen, although the “second-level pluralism” (the incomparability among moral systems) is taken to be as a form of relativism, it is not an ultra-version of relativism. To draw attention the difference between my position and Wolf’s: Contrary to Wolf’s project, mine is not to be evaluated in a moral framework; on the contrary my thesis suggests a separation between the moral and the political.

relativism or subjectivism”.<sup>39</sup> He stresses that one can always have good, even “excellent” reasons for the preference of a value over another value.<sup>40</sup>

I have discussed that a significant change has been happening within Western morality. Moreover, its position in relation to other moralities can also be questioned in terms of “the universality” of values -whether Western values can have a claim to universality. The simple answer is “no”.

### **2.2.1. Pluralism and Autonomy**

This section discusses that, unlike Kant’s notion of autonomy according to which a moral action is free when performed within a limited understanding of rational reasons, acts based on voluntary reasons involve pluralism, hence reflect a pluralist understanding of liberty.

2.2.1.1 explains the close affinity of Kantian notion of autonomy with Rousseau’s notion of “general will” and presents a pluralist criticism of the social contract. 2.2.1.2 tackles independence within the liberal conception of individuals that excludes the idealistic conception of action and accepts the liberty of action in terms of the absence of external obstacles.

In many liberal theories, liberty to act is seen as closely connected to one’s right to pursue autonomous goals and values. However, the concept of autonomy is more related to the concept of moral law that is imposed by reason -particularly in relation with Kant’s notion of liberty. Instead of its rationalist conception based on autonomy, the pluralist conception of liberty defended in this thesis is supported by confronting rational reasons with voluntary reasons.

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<sup>39</sup> Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 306.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 308.

Human worlds require voluntary acts and pluralism of voluntary reasons. In other words, humans act on their voluntary decisions, and they do not have to necessarily follow a single conception of reason. This voluntariness is the very modern conception of politics, especially in terms of democracy. By ‘voluntariness’ I refer to the weight of personal liberties (which I take as liberties) in modern democracies -which is correlated with acting by one’s own choices and preferences rather than obeying an authoritative power.

The link between pluralism and liberties can be understood by the concept of voluntariness. The conception of liberties is different than the concept of autonomy that I am about to criticize from a pluralist perspective of liberties. The concept of autonomy is in opposition with pluralism as it approves rational acts to be the only indicative of the exercise of liberty. On the other hand, liberties are consistent with pluralism if voluntary acts are taken as the exercise of liberties. The exercise of liberties is related to the conditions of the plural ways of reasoning. In this sense the exercise of liberties requires voluntary reasons rather than rational limitation of one’s decisions and actions. To explain what I mean by “voluntariness”, I shall contrast it with Kant’s notion of duty that is connected to his conception of autonomy.

In Kant’s moral thought, one is free only if one acts for the sake of duty. This is because Kant finds freedom in determining the unconditional moral law which one obeys. Acting for the sake of duty implies one’s freedom to determine the unconditional moral law. The determination of the unconditional moral law, thus, requires one’s freedom - that is autonomy. Here I must note something about autonomy before going any further. Besides Kant’s notion of autonomy there may be other conceptions of it. Some may argue that it is not necessary to define autonomy only in terms of transcending desire; they may rather take the notion of autonomy to be deciding in terms of the pursuit of one’s values and desires, which does not seem wrong at all. In the latter conception of autonomy, decision seems much relevant to the exercise of liberty, and, in this sense, it can involve different reasons other than strong reasons imposed by a “duty”, hence it is compatible with plural reasons. Thus, I relate autonomy only to the former sense -the Kantian sense of it, according to which one is free only if one

determines one's will by the command of reason alone. I wish to criticize the notion of autonomy in terms of having strong reasons (by the command of reason alone) instead of voluntary reasons, and Kant's conception of autonomy is the most relevant one with this notion of autonomy.

Kant's conception of autonomy precisely amounts to moving oneself away from one's present desires and determining the will by reason alone for every time. Thus, in the Kantian conception of autonomy, one's own will is tied with nothing but what reason commands -the command that one must act for the sake of duty. This relationship between duty and freedom characterizes Kant's understanding of autonomy and his conception of positive freedom. An autonomous moral action implies not engaging with one's own interests and only respecting the unconditional moral law.

The point of Kant's moral theory is to convince us that we are free as we act for the sake of duty. Duty becomes the only objective measure that defines our moral status, and it is not freedom but duty (i.e., obedience to duty) that determines the moral worth of an action. Autonomy is nothing more than acting for the sake of duty and leaves little space for the concept of liberty that we understand commonly. Kant's conception of morality seems against the concept of liberty in the sense that it demands exclusion of one's own interests and one's goals from the moral sphere. On the contrary, I believe that one's goals and one's interests must have an important role in one's moral performance because morality is about the ways in which one must deliberate on one's own actions within relations between one's own interests and others' interests. These relations require the space in which one can do what one wished to do without being interrupted by others - which is about maintaining relationships between conflicting interests rather than a rational autonomy and the concept of duty.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> For another criticism of Kant's notion of "duty" see my master's thesis "Moral Justification of Private Property" (2018, M.A.). In that thesis, I have replaced Kant's notion of "duty" with the notion of 'response' that fits with an egoistic fashion of moral responsibility and abandoned the normative conception of duty in favor of the individualistic conception of 'demandability'. In this thesis, however, I have no purpose to ground liberalism on a moral and comprehensive theory; thus, I criticize the notion of "duty" from a pluralistic and political perspective instead of a moral one.

A voluntary act, contrary to the conception of duty, is not limited by rationality or the coercion of rational principles. A voluntary act may involve many reasons that come from either reason or emotions and non-rational beliefs. Accordingly, if we specify or even identify a voluntary act with a rational act or rational autonomy, we might reduce voluntariness to rationality, which seems quite problematic. The reasons for a voluntary action cannot be limited by a strict rationality since there is a pluralism of conflicting and incomparable reasons. Likewise, the pursuit of certain liberal values, such as autonomy and rationality, cannot be realized without sacrificing other values.

The conflict between the pursuit of self-interest and having a social obligation to others does not concern the moral sphere only, but also the political sphere. Giving an account of political authority or the legitimacy of government requires hypothetical arguments signifying the rival conceptions of the state of nature. Such arguments can be classified as (social) contract theories, which is the topic of the next section along with a criticism of it that could be made from a pluralist perspective.<sup>42</sup>

#### **2.2.1.1. Kant and Rousseau: The General Will and the Social Contract**

Kant's conception of autonomy and the obedience to the moral law has a ground in Rousseau's conception of the "general will" and the individual's surrender to the "general will". Thus, in connection to the criticism of Kant's notion of freedom it may be helpful to examine Rousseau's "general will" and how it arises from his social contract theory. Before it we should start with the Hobbesian conception of human nature, which comes before Rousseau and helps us to compare the two.

In early modern political philosophy, especially by Grotius and Hobbes, social contract is the theory proposed to justify the emergence of "civil order" and the obedience to

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<sup>42</sup> This thesis' pluralist perspective must be separated from contractarian approaches since this thesis does not endorse any conception of agreement on principles. This thesis argues that conflict resolution in the political sphere, which is the main concern of this thesis, can be provided not by having contract but by implementing political action as compromise. This view will be clearer when the Rawlsian conception of consensus is criticized in Chapter 3 and when a specific notion of compromise is introduced in Chapter 4.

political authority. We also see one of the versions of the social contract theory in Rousseau which can be compared to Hobbes' contract theory that takes self-interest as a fundamental concept.

Although we find in Hobbes' writings the view that human nature is selfish and human beings perform actions in their self-interest, Hobbes has a more sophisticated view than this. Even if human beings were less selfish, problems regarding living together in peace could still be shown to be a concern of major importance in political philosophy. Nevertheless, in the Hobbesian conception of human nature there is little space for moral obligation in the state of nature; rather the state of nature is full of conflicts and harsh conditions that human beings have equal chance to survive but their survival is always threatened and not secured by anything. A peaceful cooperation among human beings is merely possible within a "civil order" and under the power of an "unaccountable sovereign" whom human beings should obey. Hobbes' secular account of political power characterizes the modern tradition of social contract theories, which proves his great impact on political thought.

In the tradition of social contract theory, political legitimacy is not always justified in terms of promoting mutual self-interest. In connection with morality, rationality also plays an important role in understanding the civil society in which all human beings will and obey the same rational principles. Contrary to Hobbes, Kant holds pure rational principles that have the key role in the realization of human freedom to be over the sovereign, as the source of political organization must take them into account.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, the principles of the social contract are determined by reason not by history. The source of the social contract in Kant is not a historical fact but a rational justification of authority of the sovereign. In this sense his theory exhibits similarities with Hobbes, in providing an account of authority according to which

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<sup>43</sup> Because of the dualism Kant draws out between the moral and the political world, to secure individuals' moral autonomy "Kant claims that political practice must be subordinated to the same pattern or logic of universal principles found in morality". Antonio Franceschet, "Sovereignty and freedom: Immanuel Kant's liberal internationalist 'legacy'", *Review of International Studies* 27, (2001): 225.



social contract should be considered not as an actual event, but rather as a “rational justification” of the sovereign. It should be noted that there is a fundamental difference in their understandings: According to Hobbes, the social contract serves the aim to make a peaceful cooperation among self-interested individual beings, whereas for Kant, such a contract represents a conception of “right” in which all human beings are treated as rational beings, not just motivated by self-interest but by the moral principles legitimate and universal for everyone. Kant’s conception of human being and his notion of rational freedom are traced back to, and even based on, Rousseau’s thoughts on humans’ natural freedom.

According to Rousseau human society is *artificial* and it seems impossible to reacquire the state of nature for humans.<sup>44</sup> Rousseau’s social contract is a form of collectivism according to which individuals are subordinated to the society as the political unity. However, Rousseau sees the social contract “reasonable”. First, the emergence of civil order happens when every individual being “gives themselves *entirely*” to the political unity. The political unity is the collective being identified with the “general will” - which is different from the notion of the “will of all”.<sup>45</sup> The sole aim of the “general will” is the “common good” and, as Rousseau states, the sovereign is not somebody, but the collective being as “the exercise of the general will”.<sup>46</sup> Accordingly, the sovereign cannot want to do something disadvantageous to the community; otherwise it will contradict the “natural rightness” of the “general will”.<sup>47</sup>

The “exercise of the general will” contains freedom in the sense that the “general will” aims at “equality” -equality of everyone surrendering to the social collective. For Rousseau, forming a civil society, or the social contract, is not to completely renounce liberty, since a complete renouncing liberty is “incompatible” with humans’ nature.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 46.

<sup>45</sup> “The will of all is very different from the general will; the latter looks only to the common interest, while the former looks to private interest and is no more than a sum of particular wills.” (Ibid, 14).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 15.

According to Rousseau's conception of civil society, humans lose the "unrestricted" natural liberty they have in the state of nature while gaining civil liberty by the social contract which is limited only by the "general will".<sup>49</sup> From Rousseau's viewpoint of liberty, in the state of nature humans are imagined having the natural (i.e., physical) and absolute liberty which knows no legitimacy of power (authority) and legislation. By way of the social contract natural liberty becomes "civil liberty" that allows rational and moral thinking. In Rousseau, to have "civil liberty" is to obey the "general will", thus the "general will" is the source of legitimacy.

Rousseau denies "the right of slavery" as a null concept.<sup>50</sup> We must not forget that Rousseau denies natural superiority and that some born as free, and some born as slave (which Aristotle believes). It is not nature that makes humans slave, but force.<sup>51</sup> Instead of the assumption of natural slavery, he embraces the view that every human being is born free and renouncing freedom is not a true way to form a human society. Rousseau argues that although humans are deprived of "many advantages" that they have got from nature, social contract provides "benefits in return"—their "faculties are so stimulated and developed, his ideas are extended, his feelings ennobled, and his whole soul uplifted".<sup>52</sup> Rousseau insists that every citizen "who refuses to obey the general will is to be compelled to do so by the whole body"; in this consideration, obeying the "general will", for Rousseau, means to be "forced to be free".<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless being "forced to be free" seems not to be a proper definition of liberty; rather it conforms to duty, which I have already criticized in the previous part "Voluntariness and Autonomy" in contrast to the concept of voluntariness which is indeed the proper sense of using liberties.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

In Rousseau, the surrender of individuals to the “body-politic” (the political unity; the collective being) and obedience to the “general will” result in being “forced to be free”.<sup>54</sup> Being “forced to be free” is the basis of the social contract and civil society. This conception of freedom later inspires Kant in developing his conception of autonomy. Kant establishes the link between one’s liberty and the obedience to moral law by implementing the concept of duty. Duty signifies an unconditional character of moral action; thus, one’s will turn to be a will that “writes” the moral law.<sup>55</sup> I find this problematic as it excludes the proper function of liberty, that is one’s voluntariness in connection to one’s interests takes part in acting. I have already explained it in the previous part in this section. Rousseau’s conception of human in relation to the concept of freedom in *The Social Contract* is not different than the one Kant depicts: both see freedom in terms of a rational capacity that can perform duties. Freedom and humanity cannot be separable in both thinkers, yet the conception of freedom they adopt is highly problematic from the perspective of this thesis which adopts a more liberal sense of liberty, that is negative liberty.

I will later analyze the distinction between positive and negative notions of liberty. For now, it is enough to state that from the pluralistic viewpoint the exercise of the “general will” has been criticized and it should be replaced with the exercise of plural liberties, which is consistent with the negative notion of liberty and at odds with the positive notion of liberty. Individuals must be seen as empirical selves holding plural reasons rather than being seen as moral actors who perform in accordance with an overall goal of a “collective self” that is produced by positive liberty. Therefore, arguing for the exercise of plural liberties means opposing the concept of autonomy that is based on the positive notion of liberty.

Besides the criticism of the positive notion of liberty, such as the notion of liberty endorsed by Rousseau’s conception of the social contract, there is another criticism of the social contract theory that arises from a consideration of recent anthropological

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 7. “The Sovereign”, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Kant, *Groundwork*, 40.

research regarding the early settled life of humans.<sup>56</sup> Anthropological research into the pre-political phase of human societies could provide further knowledge regarding human nature and challenges the individualistic assumptions of the social contract. Nevertheless, the archeological and anthropological findings cannot reach any further than settled life, which means that the evidence they provide will necessarily pertain to what happens after human groupings have been formed. In this respect, humans can still be imagined to be independent individual beings, as hypothesized by Hobbes, who later form more extensive groups and finally the state which is the legitimate political authority. However, for Hobbes, contrary to the Aristotelian conception of human being, humans are not “naturally social” beings.<sup>57</sup> Hobbes knew there were people who had no government and living close to the state of nature when he referred to the places in *America* where “primitive” lives were led.<sup>58</sup>

For Hobbes, the source of political authority must not be looked for in nature; political authority is built artificially. Although the Hobbesian contractarian approach convince us that the source of the political authority is not found in nature, the people who live without a government may prove that humans can form different ways of societies and can have different senses of “the political”. What concerns us here from the pluralist perspective, the plural aspects of forming human groupings other than the individualistic aspect of the social contract can yield the result that we have pluralism of societal structures in human worlds. This means that the monistic Western understanding of society and the “rationality” underlying the social contract do not constitute the only ways of grasping the essence of a “political” society. This criticism, that the sense of “the political” cannot be restricted within the Western mind and there

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<sup>56</sup> As an alternative outlook of human history and a fresh vision within the perspective of “Indigenous critique”, based on the archeological information about the earliest times of farming communities contrasting with both Rousseau’s and Hobbes’ depictions about human nature and the first human societies, I recommend you *The Dawn of Everything* (2021) by David Graeber and David Wengrow.

<sup>57</sup> James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson, “The Context of the State of Nature” in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision*, ed. Marie Battiste (Toronto: UBC Press, 2000), 16.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, see the quoted statement taken from Hobbes.

exist plural concepts of “the political”, can also be found in the criticism of colonialism.

Although the social contract can be a useful thought experiment in political philosophy aiming at giving an account of the source of political authority, critics of colonialism object to its “rational” assumptions, such as the artificiality of political authority and the natural law. Henderson, for instance, draws attention to how the assumptions of the social contract are used “to create colonial assemblies and to begin their quest for self-rule and responsible government” and to justify the arguments of the colonizers who “took the view that Indigenous peoples were “savages” or “barbarians” rather than sovereign nations”.<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, Indigenous people are seen as “savages” or “barbarians” who must be “civilized”. In this respect, a serious criticism of the social contract theories which can be made is that the essence of the social contract mainly depends on the Eurocentric perspective of the world according to which European people have the right to rule the places where Indigenous people live based on “the treaty relations” between the Commonwealth and the *Indians*.<sup>60</sup> This view can be summarized by Henderson’s statement as follows: “The idea of difference arising from the theory of the state of nature created the Eurocentric thought, consciousness, and reasoning that justify colonialism”.<sup>61</sup>

#### **2.2.1.2. Independence and Liberal Conception of Individuals**

In the Aristotelian account of morality autonomy is realized within society and in accordance with the political institutions in terms of objectively applying to all rational beings in a realist fashion. Although having remarkable opinions on individual liberty, Aristotle approved the role of the state in the moral improvement of citizens.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>62</sup> Gregory R. Johnson, “The First Founding Father: Aristotle on Freedom and Popular Government”, in *Liberty and Democracy*, ed. Tibor R. Machan (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2002), 29-59, 30.

According to the Aristotelian conception of the individual, an individual's life is solely meaningful within the political unity of the city-state and hence an individual can be an autonomous being only within a political unity.<sup>63</sup>

If autonomy refers to an independent will, then it will be narrowed down to an idealist conception of action. The modern conception of autonomy is an example of this idealist conception of action. The modern conception of autonomy (partly belonging to the Kantian concept of a rational being) takes human beings as independent entities not only in the sense that they can make right choices for themselves, but in the sense that their moral choices can exist without the influence of societal or historical factors and can be completely original and independent from them.

The Kantian sense of autonomy is related to the notion of independence, as it employs the independent will directing one's choices to a universalist conception of morality. Thus, in the moral conception of liberalism (e.g., Kant), the notion of independence indicates the independent will in terms of spontaneity in acting. However, in the political conception of liberalism, an individual's independence does not necessarily signify such a spontaneity of action. In the political conception of liberalism, the notion of independence means being free from external ties and coercive factors -i.e., the negative notion of liberty fits with liberalism.

The relationship between individuals and their environment is a dynamic relationship so that individuals' capability of action cannot be identified with the independent will; instead, it must be grasped within a coextension with the world. Thus, individuals' struggle need not indicate a constant negation. On the contrary, individuals' struggle with their environment involves co-active elements of being in relationship with others in terms of persuading and inspiring each other. In these relationships, voluntary choices have the main role. As we can see, the means of getting into communication with each other is common to everyone. Besides, individuals' interaction with each other is the indication of a voluntary act akin to making the decision to be a part of

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<sup>63</sup> See Aristotle, *Politics*, 5; 1253a19-125a39.

political life. Such voluntary acts and their practical relations among individuals define an individual's capacity to be practically fruitful.

The liberal conception of individuals enables us to see that an individual is a being having capabilities of communication. The communication between individuals is carried out by way of the exercise of liberties. The liberal conception of individuals sees every human being as capable of exercising their liberties within a negative notion of liberty.<sup>64</sup>

### **2.2.2. Pluralism and Rationality**

In this section and its sub-sections I defend pluralism against a single conception of rationality. First, I tackle the concept of rationality, and why it must be grasped in multiple rather than one definite conception. Next, especially in 2.2.2.2, I move on to the implications raised when a single conception of rationality is applied to the political sphere.

Rationality can usually be defined within the position one holds as “impartial, neutral, and in this way universal point of view” which requires one to abstract from particularities and determinations.<sup>65</sup> McIntyre states that by having such a position we are expected to be able to “evaluate the contending accounts of justice rationally”.<sup>66</sup> However, as McIntyre also states, this procedure of evaluation does not automatically provide which conception of justice will be the outcome “rationally” accepted by all parties.<sup>67</sup> This is because the concept of rationality defined in terms of impartiality and “the requirement of disinterestedness” is not without problems and quite disputable: Such an “ideal” concept of rationality prepossesses one type of account of justice,

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<sup>64</sup> The negative notion of liberty is examined in detail in section 3.1.3.

<sup>65</sup> Alasdair McIntyre. *Whose Justice? Whose Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

particularly “that of liberal individualism” that ignores social and historical determinations to which it is bound.<sup>68</sup> Rationality may gain multiple definitions as there exist its multiple conceptions that cannot be considered independently of human history. McIntyre holds that there have been “competing rationalities” throughout history. Accordingly, rationality cannot be defined independently of it;<sup>69</sup> and, cannot ignore the “antagonistic” relationships between different philosophical traditions.<sup>70</sup>

What McIntyre tries to emphasize is that a specific conception of justice must be the outcome of a specific notion of rationality. The concern is that whether we can agree on such a specific notion of rationality universally and impartially. As a conclusion of what I have discussed in the previous paragraph, because of the rival conceptions of rationality we come up with the rival conceptions of justice. These rival conceptions are incompatible as each of them are generated by different contextual factors. In addition to this “context-bound” aspect of the conception of rationality, no academic philosophy and no party can provide a rational justification for citizens to agree on matters (such as an agreed conception of justice) that is politically relevant.<sup>71</sup>

As rival conceptions of rationality weaken the possibility of defending the universality of a single conception of rationality, a single conception of justice or any other good and value based on a single conception of rationality becomes questionable and subject to the value-pluralist critique.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*, 350.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 6. McIntyre also adds that none of Enlightenment thinkers provide the same principles that are undeniable for every rational person (*ibid*).

<sup>72</sup> Value pluralism is explained in depth in 2.3.



### 2.2.2.1. Rationality and *Post-truth*

In this section I deal with the claim that post-truth politics has a close connection with and even leads to authoritarian regimes. This claim may be true if a monist conception of post-truth is assumed: a monist conception of post-truth in pursuit of a particular conception of “truth” is the very reason that leads to authoritarianism. Therefore, I argue that the claim that there is a necessary link between post-truth politics and authoritarian regimes can be objected to by adopting a pluralist conception of “post-truth”.

Some have even gone on to argue that a monist conception of rationality could be used as a method of justification when facing with situations in which an ethical decision is to be made. An extreme rationalist could affirm killing disabled babies and justify this because he sees no more value in human babies than in animals.<sup>73</sup> Pluralism, however, could prevent this from happening as it denies the consistent pursuit of a single value, such as a strict and scientific rationality. In this sense pluralism and the plurality of views can provide a discussion platform whereby any view can be discussed, even the view that the “facts” of science are applicable to political and ethical affairs.

From the perspective of this thesis, any monist conception of “the good” is seen as an obvious threat to pluralism, especially when applied to the political sphere -no matter what source it comes from. This defense of pluralism can be related to the discussions on the concept of “post-truth”. Dictionaries, such as Cambridge and Collins, relate “post-truth” to a condition in which “facts” are rendered much less important than emotions and opinion when agreeing with a certain claim.<sup>74</sup> In this consideration, the concept of “post-truth” refers to the condition in which “truth” loses its significant. This loss has been reflected in the emergence of pluralist conceptions of “truth”, carrying the notion of pluralism even into the epistemological field. Hence, the

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<sup>73</sup> Peter Singer’s morality allows such a thing:  
[www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/1999/nov/06/weekend.kevintoolis](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/1999/nov/06/weekend.kevintoolis).

<sup>74</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/tr/sözlük/ingilizce/post-truth>.  
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/post-truth>.

condition of “post-truth” has a close affinity with pluralism of perspectives. The presence of multiple perspectives implies that there are various ways of valuation, and such a pluralism would be against authoritarian politics that requires a monistic outlook. The condition of “post-truth” in politics can be seen as opponent to authoritarian politics if it supports pluralism and if it denies applying the monist conception of “the good” to the political sphere. This is not a main claim suggested in this thesis but whether the condition of “post-truth” is opponent to authoritarian politics must be analyzed: Is “post-truth” an opponent of authoritarian politics or in the service of it?

The argument that “post-truth” in politics is harmful as it works against “objective truth” has not been a rare one.<sup>75</sup> From this argument it may follow that “post-truth” politics poses a problem since it leads to the relativization of facts. The problem is, however, not only the relativization of facts, but also, as Schindler states, that critical theories (i.e., “the critical study of ideology, knowledge, and power”) remain unsuccessful to cope with it.<sup>76</sup> According to Schindler, the reason why critical theories cannot overcome the problem is their tendency to make a binary distinction between “naturalization” of a belief and “relativization” of “facts”.<sup>77</sup> Schindler wishes to emphasize that the attempt of criticizing “truth” can be a useful tool at the hands of the political authority. In this sense, Schindler argues, “post-truth” politics which takes advantage of the “critique of truth claims” can result in an authoritarian ideology.

Seeing a connection between “post-truth” and authoritarian ideologies, Schindler argues that authoritarian ideologies can lead to a skepticism of such extreme limits that

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<sup>75</sup> Several perspectives on the condition of “post-truth” commonly declare that “post-truth” causes harmful effects in politics. See Yael Brahms, “Philosophy of Post-truth”, *Institute for National Security Studies* (2020): 1-5. Accessed March 10, 2022. Besides, in the same paper, the theories of “truth” are adequately explained. However, the theories of “truth” and their epistemological aspects and complications are beyond the scope of this thesis which is interested in pluralism in value theory and politics rather than pluralism in epistemology.

<sup>76</sup> Sebastian Schindler, “The Task of Critique in Times of Post-truth Politics”, *Review of International Studies* (2020), 1.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

they benefit from “post-truth” by neglecting reality: an authoritarian ideology accepts an ‘all-views-relativized’ approach to “naturalize” its own belief -which is a sort of extremist approach Schindler criticizes.<sup>78</sup> When referring to the identical relationship between an authoritarian ideology and “post-truth politics”, Schindler seems to depict the extension of a selective “truth” rather than a pluralist apprehension of the concept of “post-truth”. However, when linked to the plurality of incomparable viewpoints, the concept of “post-truth” does not reflect extreme attitudes of either “naturalization” or “relativization”; it rather opposes any establishment of the authoritarian conception of “truth” due to its linkage to pluralism. Thus, the danger is the extension of a particular “truth” by an authoritarian ideology rather than a pluralist conception of “post-truth”.

Another point I shall discuss is about the effective and democratic role of the plural ways of explanation classified as “conspiracy thinking”. If “post-truth politics” has a binary characteristic, asserted by Schindler, so that it naturalizes its own belief while it relativizes another “fact”, e.g., a scientific one, then the problem seems to be transforming a conspiracy belief into an established and constructed “truth”. This attempt means that a subjective truth is intended to be made a new “truth” of an authoritarian policy -making the irrational “truth”. In this sense, a conspiracy theory becomes a suitable force in the hands of political authority. Thus, Schindler seems right in considering that “post-truth politics” is a “conspiracy thinking”, represented in the case of Trump’s relativization of the “fact” of “climate change” and naturalization of his belief that climate change is a Chinese invention.<sup>79</sup> However, if the insignificance of (or indifference to) “truth” provokes a pluralist conception of “post-truth”, then a “conspiracy theory” becomes one of the plural perspectives in discussion with each other and “conspiracy thinking” cannot declare itself as an objective “truth”. “Post-truth politics” described by Schindler is indeed a politics of

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<sup>78</sup> Schindler draws attention to this problem by pointing out the distinction between “naturalization” and “relativization” that critical theories make. He argues that instead of relying on this distinction, the task of critical theories must rather be away from extremist approaches and provide a plausible critique by not leaving uncriticized both sides (ibid, 2).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 16.

“truth” as a politics of a subjective claim, and from this thesis’ pluralist perspective it falls into monism.

Schindler sees the merit of critical theories in their attempt in seeking for objectivity by going beyond relativity.<sup>80</sup> He also adds that critical theory as a “perspective on perspective” must be in “critical engagement with other perspectives” and attributes it an “inter-subjectivity”.<sup>81</sup> Such an assessment of critical theory seems to stress the importance of conversation. However, Schindler sees “post-truth” politics as a mistaken strategy to cope with “truth” since it is “unbalanced” as it is relativizing all “truth”, denying the “objective truth”, and making another “truth” claim instead.<sup>82</sup>

Schindler seems right to detect the similarity between “post-truth” politics and an authoritarian ideology only if they both claim that “there is no truth at all and that there is only one truth”.<sup>83</sup> Schindler’s point makes sense unless “post-truth” is conceived in a pluralistic sense and to promote pluralism in democratic discussion. A pluralist conception of “post-truth” is not unconceivable as the “post-truth” condition involves the features of pluralism, such as incomparability of perspectives and their ability to communicate with each other. Thus, a pluralist conception of “post-truth” saves us from the flaw of “post-truth”. Therefore, we should affirm that the problem with the “post-truth politics” is not directly the concept of “post-truth” but being a ‘truth politics’ against pluralism.

The view that pluralism must be applicable to every area in human worlds does not mean that pluralism should undermine or be a threat to the trust in a rational scientific activity. Pluralism, including many approaches classified as “conspiracy thinking”, can provide us limits in the application of science by entering into discussions about

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 15. The description of critical theory as “perspective on perspectives” belongs to Cox. See Robert Cox, “Social forces, states and world orders: Beyond International Relations theory”, *Millennium* 10, no. 2 (1981): 126–155.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 17.

the application of science to several areas such as law and technology. A conspiracy theory can serve as a perspective and reasoning that combines current data into an overall outlook that considers the ethical, political, cultural, and social aspects of what is going on. In this sense, conspiracy reasonings mobilize a pluralistic discussion platform so that we do not have to limit ourselves to monistic outlooks and become able to have a wider angle of seeing through things. They can problematize the application of science and warn us about the consequences of it. For instance, such a problematization can be about the dangers of applying an artificial intelligence in law since it can be biased and make inhumane decisions; or about the ethical affairs to apply a purely biological perspective as in the case of justifying killing human babies.

If science is taken to be completely free from and above public discussion, and scientific “facts” are believed to be undeniably true to be applicable in all aspects of human life, then not only an authoritarian ruling, but also severely unethical results become inevitable. Moreover, scientific “facts” cannot alone provide norms for the conduct of human worlds which including plural conditionings that cannot be conceived by a scientific reduction.

The real danger comes from the establishment and construction of a “conspiracy thinking” as a “truth” by authoritarian politics. Thus, the “cure” to the “post-truth politics”, if it is an authoritarian one, is not another single conception of “truth” whether established by the scientific method or religious authority, nor a “superior” rationality that excludes “conspiracy reasonings” by declaring them “irrational”. The “cure” can be having the discussion platforms and the allowance of the democratic discussion of plural views, including conspiracy reasonings.

#### **2.2.2.2. Rationality and Uniformity**

This section reveals the unfortunate situation that when politics is supported by a single conception of rationality that promotes uniform values, it likely turns into an oppressive government.

The rational conception of human life assumes humans to have the capability of acting in the same rational way which is aimed towards acquiring rational goods and rejecting irrational (and non-rational) motives.<sup>84</sup> Thus rationality requires uniformity about what are considered rational reasons and ends. However, even the rational conception of human life can give way to plural forms of politics. The values of liberalism and socialism are grounded on rational conceptions of human life, yet they differ in their premises: Liberalism prioritizes the value of self-ruling that guides rational behavior; socialism, on the other hand, highlights social cooperation as a primary value of human rationality. These two prioritizations oppose and conflict with each other even though they rely on “rational” premises; and we must conclude that they are irreducibly plural. Plural consequences, at least on the political level, will be inevitable.<sup>85</sup>

If plural consequences are ignored on the political level, homogeneity emerges. Uniformity as homogenous values crushing diversity is most often justified or supported through a single conception of rationality. Homogenous values and monism aid totalitarian politics which aims at crushing diversity.<sup>86</sup>

Besides totalitarianism, among the types of the political oppression there are despotism and dictatorship. Arendt states that totalitarianism uses different tools than despotism and even than dictatorship.<sup>87</sup> Despotism denotes the absoluteness of the state power with which no party can interfere; however, totalitarianism performs the policies in the

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<sup>84</sup> Berlin draws attention to the implication of rationality found in the thinkers “who believed in freedom as rational self-direction” that individuals’ interests must be compatible with rational laws and their freedom depends on accomplishing rational ends (“Two Concepts of Liberty”, 26, 28-29). However, Berlin states that liberals do not tend to measure the value of ends by a single standard so that “as many individuals as possible can realize as many of their ends as possible” (ibid, 35).

<sup>85</sup> Regarding an argument that socialism is a pushed-forward liberalism see Ed Rooksby, “The Relationship Between Liberalism and Socialism”, *Science & Society* 76, no. 4 (2012): 495–520. Rooksby argues that liberalism and socialism are not “significantly separate” from each other, rather they have a *transitional* relationship between each other, as he sees socialism to be a “radicalization and transcendence of liberalism” (Ibid, 496; 518).

<sup>86</sup> About the negative effects of aiming at unity and uniformity see Berlin’s criticism of Utopian ideals in “The Decline of Utopian Ideas” in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 49.

<sup>87</sup> Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 421.

pursuit of a value (e.g., justice) because it claims to manifest the law for the sake of “the good” of everyone and still can pretend not to be tyrannic. Totalitarian policy

does not replace one set of laws with another, does not establish its own *consensus iuris*, does not create, by one revolution, a new form of legality. Its defiance of all, even its own positive laws implies that it believes it can do without any *consensus iuris* whatever, and still not resign itself to the tyrannical state of lawlessness, arbitrariness and fear. It can do without the *consensus iuris* because it promises to release the fulfillment of law from all action and will of man; and it promises justice on earth because it claims to make mankind itself the embodiment of the law.<sup>88</sup>

This can be summarized in the claim that totalitarianism is the policy that aims to apply uniformity and at establishing a homogenous society that reduces diversity to a few and fundamental values. This can be exemplified in the totalitarian movements which emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Arendt describes totalitarian movements, such as National Socialism and Bolshevism as maintaining their power through a constant effort by which they aim to control every human being and make them accept only their values.<sup>89</sup> These totalitarian movements share the common goal of building a homogenous society in their own conceptions of unity.

Uniform morality becomes a useful tool at the hands of the authority to guide and force individuals to live in accordance with one single goal within an applied political structure by reducing plural goods to a single rational good. The antidote is pluralism: Irreducibility of plural goods is put against the single rational conception of human life and a single rational conception of politics. The monistic rational conception of human life does more than only damaging pluralism; it destroys liberties since leading to an authoritarian state -which is the real problem with monism. Berlin reveals this problem in a philosophically appealing way as follows:

The rationalist argument, with its assumption of the single true solution, has led from an ethical doctrine of individual responsibility and individual

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 462.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 326. See also footnote 43 in the same page.

self-perfection to an authoritarian State obedient to the directives of an elite of Platonic guardians.<sup>90</sup>

### 2.3. Value Pluralism

In this section I explain in depth value pluralism popularized by the political thinker Isaiah Berlin. Berlin conveys his views on not only the meta-ethical dimension but also the political dimension of value pluralism, especially in relation to liberal thought. In this chapter I focus on the main thesis of value pluralism, namely that incommensurable values conflict with each other and its implications that because a permanent way of resolution is impossible choices and compromises between values are necessary.

Being independent of meta-ethical views, value pluralism should be seen as a claim about “what value looks like” -regarding their relationship to each other.<sup>91</sup> In this regard, we should understand that value pluralism does not say anything about value systems or a particular value system; it informs us about the features of the relationship between values. Moreover, it does not apply to any field of moral theorization; nor does it provide a basis for deriving any moral principle. Thus, my intention is to discuss value pluralism’s political engagements rather than moral considerations and its relationship with liberalism. In this section I make a space for value pluralism to examine it and provide a background knowledge for the further discussions on politics. When examining value pluralism, I do not tackle it in terms of a meta-ethical theory of values (or moral pluralism), but I deal with it always in connection to politics.

Some contemporary figures have elaborately written on the relationship between value pluralism and liberal theory, such as George Crowder, William Galston and John Gray. These value-pluralists accept that values are plural. Value pluralism, in Berlin’s

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<sup>90</sup> Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty” (Revised version of D: Clarendon Press), 33.

<sup>91</sup> See Elinor Mason, "Value Pluralism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2018), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/value-pluralism>.



understanding of it, is the theory of values saying that (human) values are plural so that a value cannot be reduced to another value.<sup>92</sup>

### 2.3.1. Berlin's Value Pluralism

Value pluralism is famously associated with Isaiah Berlin, historian of ideas and political theorist. Berlin follows Herder's thoughts in holding that there are a variety of human ends which address different ways of life rather than representing one human good.<sup>93</sup> This pluralism and variety in human worlds is because of the diversity (or plurality) of cultures -meaning that each culture can have its own way or ways of life.

Herder's cultural pluralism (=no culture is superior to another<sup>94</sup>) has remarkable effects on Berlin in advancing value pluralism; yet there are some differences between Berlin's and Herder's ideas on the diversity of cultures. In connection with pluralism and the diversity of human ends, Berlin embraces a combination of pluralism and liberalism rather than adopting an ideal conception of "developmentalism". Berlin does not deny change and development by means of education or a "civilizing process"; what he opposes is the view that development takes place in a necessarily "predictable direction".<sup>95</sup> He is against the Hegelian teleological conception of development that comes from Herder, not development as such. Berlin's "non-teleological" conception of development is therefore fully coherent with his (value) pluralism and liberal views.

In Berlin's value pluralism two main assumptions come forward: Values conflict with each other and values are irreducibly plural. Values conflict in the sense that they

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<sup>92</sup> See George Crowder, Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism, *Political Theory* 35, no. 2 (2007): 122.

<sup>93</sup> Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 307.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 311. See also Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957). Popper's argument is as follows: "historicism collapses" because the goal of historicist method is "misconceived" as there is no scientific way of developing a theory of historical progress "serving as a basis for historical prediction" (ibid, xi-x; especially premises 4 and 5).

cannot be reducible to each other or to a single fundamental value. Berlin also regards values to be objective: “There is a world of objective values”.<sup>96</sup> By this statement Berlin conveys the meaning that there are values that are worth pursuing for the sake of themselves. As an instance he mentions the Greek values. One may not belong to the ancient Greek culture, yet, according to him, one can imagine oneself pursuing Greek values.<sup>97</sup> One may argue that it will be a mere imagination of a distant realm - so distant that we *cannot* live within it. Yet, by objectivity, Berlin seems to emphasize that although values are many and plural, they cannot be outside of the human perspective, which makes them objective; yet, *incompatible*.<sup>98</sup>

Pluralism of values implies that we can have alternative ways of choosing among values considering our interests and goals.<sup>99</sup> Values are in conflict so that realizing a value means giving up on another value. Berlin describes the cases of conflicting values to be manifesting themselves on many different levels: “What is clear is that values can clash – that is why civilizations are incompatible. They can be incompatible between cultures, or groups in the same culture, or between you and me”.<sup>100</sup>

The force and clarity of the statement that “values can clash” relies on the observation of the conflict between different civilizations. This is important in understanding the reason for incompatibility between values. Berlin continues:

You believe in always telling the “truth”, no matter what: I do not, because I believe that it can sometimes be too painful and too destructive. We can

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<sup>96</sup> Berlin, “The Pursuit of the Ideal” in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 11. About Berlin’s realist position towards values see Iain Mackenzie, “Berlin’s Defense of Value-pluralism: Clarifications and Criticisms”, *Contemporary Politics* 5, no. 4 (1999): 333.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> The incompatibility of values can be even affirmed by those who rejects the incommensurability of values. See Chris Kelly, “The Impossibility of Incommensurable Values”, *Philos Stud* 137 (2008): 372.

<sup>99</sup> Patricia Marino, “Moral Coherence and Value Pluralism”, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 43, no. 1 (2013): 120.

<sup>100</sup> Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (New York: Fontana Press, 1991), 12.

discuss each other's point of view, we can try to reach common ground, but in the end what you pursue may not be reconcilable with the ends to which I find that I have dedicated my life. Values may easily clash within the breast of a single individual.<sup>101</sup>

The incompatibility of values and ends are inevitable not only in the public sphere, but in the private life of an individual. In an individual's life values can easily conflict and resolving the conflict may not be that easy. However, because of there is a conflict between values, this does not follow that, for Berlin, we are deprived of making judgments. Berlin, on the contrary, has a "practice-centered" view according to which we can make choices: Berlin's pluralism excludes a universal rational standard of making judgment, but not practicality about passing judgments in accordance with our beliefs and values.<sup>102</sup>

Berlin's rejection of "moral monism" depends on two conditions as Crowder well defines:

First, the idea of a single right answer to all moral conflicts is an invitation to utopian thinking, and consequently to authoritarian, or even totalitarian visions in which utopia is realised by force. Second, moral monism is false, because no single formula can resolve all ethical conflicts.<sup>103</sup>

The first statement regarding that "moral monism" will lead to an oppressive government has an importance for the argument of this thesis as this thesis is mainly interested in the political implications of value pluralism. While monism can be dangerous for its potential usage to justify totalitarian regimes, pluralism as diversity would not provide such a rationale for oppressive policies.

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ella Myers, "From Pluralism to Liberalism: Rereading Isaiah Berlin", *The Review of Politics* 72, (2010): 613-14. Myers notes that Gutmann sees pluralism as "a threat to judgment": for Gutmann, a universal (moral) capacity of judgment must be possible to compare between things; otherwise, we cannot go beyond stating whatever is there (ibid). Berlin, however, does not see any requirement for universal criteria to be able to make judgments.

<sup>103</sup> George Crowder, "Gray and the Politics of Pluralism", *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 9, no. 2 (2006): 172.

Berlin's second statement in the quotation above regarding the absence of a single answer to moral conflicts comes from two theses of value pluralism: Values are in an unresolvable conflict and there is not a universally objective measurement to end this conflict. Ranking of values in a hierarchy is unlikely to work, yet this should not mean that ranking is irrelevant to our practical concerns. In other words, values can be ranked in many ways as pluralism allows and each way can be relevant in accordance with the choice of values. Therefore, any ranking among values can be "arbitrary" to some degree. Such a ranking can be seen as a problem in the sense that an arbitrary ranking takes us to relativism. Some thinkers, including Berlin, see the solution to the problem in suggesting that values (some of them at least) are *objective* -this is why Berlin thinks that we can understand other cultures.<sup>104</sup>

It is quite problematic that we can understand other cultures and pursue "their" values -which I have already touched when explaining the Berlinian sense of the objectivity of values in the previous part of this section "Berlin's Value Pluralism". Here is another example: Take courage as a value. Courage may not have the same meaning in our times as it used to have in ancient Greece; it therefore cannot be considered as an objective value as Berlin states. Besides, the degree of importance attributed to courage has dramatically changed. Further, the values with which courage once conflicted have also substantially changed. Because of this fact, the realization of courage has necessarily taken another shape -according to value pluralism the realization of a value cannot be made without losing another value and the connective forces between values have always existed yet in different degrees. We now only have their names, but we cannot save their meanings either by themselves or by a relationship in which they once stood to each other. The ancient Greek values do not live anymore -they are almost "dead" and obsolete to us, because we do not live in that culture and that worldview. Considering this point, we cannot talk about courage's or any other value's objectivity.

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<sup>104</sup> "We are free to criticise the values of other cultures, to condemn them, but we cannot pretend not to understand them at all" (Berlin, "The Pursuit of the Ideal", in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 11). About what Berlin understands by objectivity of values see the previous pages in this section.

Berlin does not posit any value as “absolute” and hence no absolute or objective morality can be derived from Berlin’s pluralism. From Berlin’s pluralist perspective it seems that no value or principle can be declared to be trans-historical and universal. However, some interpreters of Berlin wish to ground liberalism on the value pluralism depicted in Berlin’s works. Whether Berlinian pluralism allows such a grounding is questionable. Myers states that grounding liberalism on a “superior” value is problematic, even if this value is negative liberty: Although stating there are “common” human values, Berlin does not anywhere posit negative liberty or any value as transhistorical and universally superior to other values.<sup>105</sup> Thus it seems impossible to reduce pluralism, which means that there is always conflict and incomparability among “common” values. Therefore, any objective and moral ground for liberalism seems unwarranted from the perspective of pluralism.

On the other hand, for some liberal pluralists, such as Crowder and Galston, Berlin’s pluralism puts an emphasis on liberal values so that liberalism can be grounded on pluralism. This view differs from classical liberalism in the sense that Berlin grounds liberalism on the premises of value pluralism, whereas classical liberalism is grounded on liberal values such as rationality and self-interest.<sup>106</sup> According to this view, value pluralism grounds and legitimates universal liberalism. Myers states that such a reading of Berlin, i.e., “liberal universalist interpretations of Berlin”, considers Berlin’s pluralism as a “limited” version of pluralism rather than a “radical” version of it.<sup>107</sup>

### **2.3.2. Irreducibility of Values**

One of the main theses of value pluralism is that values are irreducibly plural. For value pluralism, values are irreducibly plural in that they cannot be reduced to a single

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<sup>105</sup> Myers, “From Pluralism to Liberalism: Rereading Isaiah Berlin”, 603.

<sup>106</sup> For the further details on liberal pluralism see 3.2.

<sup>107</sup> Myers, “From Pluralism to Liberalism: Rereading Isaiah Berlin”, 605.

value at either a deeper or a superficial level. Regarding this irreducibility thesis, two distinct approaches to pluralism shall be mentioned, namely foundational and non-foundational pluralism. Foundational pluralism sees the diversity of values at the most basic level, such that there are many-sided properties of goodness and there is not one ultimate good; whereas non-foundational pluralism suggests that the diversity of values solely appears at the level of choice and may serve one fundamental value.<sup>108</sup>

To see the difference between a foundationalist and a non-foundationalist pluralism, the following example can be helpful. For a foundational pluralist, either confidence or doubt can have different aspects of goodness, and both can yield good outcomes: Confidence may enable one to act faster. Doubt can lead us to take a pause and be involved in contemplative aspects of matters and gain an extended perspective on them. A superior value cannot determine which is better: sparing more time to have a deeper knowledge about matters or being smart and faster in acting. A non-foundationalist pluralist can regard ‘saving time’ as a fundamental value and can choose confidence against doubt in the circumstances that contribute to increase practical agility.

The irreducibility thesis can pose a problem for justifying a moral theory in the sense that a moral theory’s justification requires a fundamental value or a fundamental moral principle (as I have exemplified in 2.1). This means that a moral theory requires the pursuit of a fundamental value which other values serve and contribute to the realization of. However, the pursuit of a single value will lead to exclusion of other sensible options -since there is no one “good”, but various goods. For instance, if ‘commitment to success’ is the value that one ultimately determines in making decisions, this leads one to have a hardened attitude to other considerations so that one’s actions will be restricted to the actions that only serve to the ultimately determined value. For the person who is merely committed to success must consider a few goods to be proper goods, such as iron discipline and “tireless” work. As a result, diverse contributions to one’s success that may come from other options will evaporate

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<sup>108</sup> For more detailed information on the two distinct approaches to pluralism see Ch. 1.1 in the article “Value Pluralism” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

and one's hardened attitude to diversity will drastically limit one's life. The problem here occurs because pluralism compels one to consider diverse goods that can raise the possibility of achieving a value in a multidimensional way. Pluralism implies to consider diverse goods which are not reducible to a single conception of "the good". The monist conception of morality seems problematic from the viewpoint of pluralism. If the justification of a moral theory proceeds with a view to an ultimate value or a monist concept (e.g., "conception of law"), then it will necessitate certain acts in accordance with the view that one good is always *rationally* preferable against another. Pluralism renders such a "rational good" problematic as it recognizes the variety of goods instead of prioritizing a single form of "the good". Therefore, a single form of "the good" and a single conception of life in pursuit of it cannot be justified to be the ideal moral life if we take value pluralism into consideration. Within pluralism there are different conceptions of moral life that are *equally* unjustifiable by a theory.

Pluralism denies any justification of moral theory based on a monistic and fundamental value because it accepts the diversification of reasons in acting and different conception of "the good" other than "the rational good". When applied to the specific concern of this thesis, which is that liberalism should not be justified based on a moral theory, we see that a moral theory's justification of liberty would be based on a monistic and fundamental value and would not be compatible with pluralism and irreducibility of goods. In this respect, pluralism also rejects the conception of liberty based on a rational conception of authority either in morals or in politics.

Each sub-section to this section below puts under discussion a different assumption, which is found to be related to a reduction to monism and in opposition to irreducibly plural values. The topics which are, thus, discussed in the following sub-sections of this part are as follows: The two monistic theories of value, i.e., intrinsic, and subjective; the universal conception of morality in relation to human nature; and finally, a rational progressive conception of human history.

### 2.3.2.1. Intrinsic and Subjective Theories of Value

In this section I discuss a certain claim made by Ayn Rand about intrinsic and subjective theories of value: that absolutist states rise based on such theories. Rand writes that “the intrinsic theory and the subjectivist theory (or a mixture of both) are the necessary base of every dictatorship, tyranny, or variant of the absolute state”.<sup>109</sup>

Rand develops her theory within the objective domain of human survival and defines objectivity in relation to a rational conception of human life (as the objective values are “discovered” and chosen by human reason). She sets one’s life as the highest value and argues that the beneficiary of one’s own actions should be oneself and not others..<sup>110</sup> Rand’s conception of objectivity is based on a conception of rationality according to which reason is prioritized as humans’ basic means of attaining knowledge and producing objective values that conform to *reality*.<sup>111</sup> She conceives the objectivity of values in connection to the human mind, which means that values must not be defined by feelings nor by any realist conception of value that is not in relation to humans.

Thus *objectivism* (Rand’s philosophical system) would reject the incomparability of values since it holds the objective values to be the higher values in accordance with the rational nature of humans. Reason as a value, for instance, cannot be compromised, according to Rand, because it is the basic means of human survival and hence central to human life. Thus, from the perspective of value pluralism, Rand’s objectivism must be evaluated as monistic since it approves that there are fundamentally superior values and has a claim to certainty of values. Nevertheless, this criticism of Rand’s objective theory of values must not lead us to avoid the point that her statements about the

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<sup>109</sup> Ayn Rand, *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (New York: Signet, 1967), 14.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>111</sup> Rand grasps the concepts of “rational” and “irrational” as follows: “Rational” is that which is “consonant with the facts of reality” and “irrational” is that which “contradicts the facts” (Ibid, 161). According to Rand objective values are realized in pursuit of rational self-interest. For more information about Rand’s philosophical system (i.e., Objectivism) and her objectivist theory of value see Ayn Rand, “The Objectivist Ethics” in *The Virtue of Selfishness* (1964).



intrinsic theory and the subjectivist theory of value are highly important and stimulating to see how these theories of value lead to an authoritarian and absolutist state.

Her justification of why the intrinsic theory of value necessarily leads to oppressive governments is that, in her own words, “if a man believes that the good is intrinsic in certain actions, he will not hesitate to force others to perform them”.<sup>112</sup> The claim made by Rand implies the logical connection between the intrinsic conception of “the good” and the attempt to eliminate diverse goods. The close relationship between an intrinsic good and an authoritarian government that forces individuals to follow it against their consent is obvious: when the diversity of goods is reduced to a certain and monist conception of “the good” by political authority, then the public sphere will be dominated by this single conception of “the good” so that it will become a tool of oppressive politics.

Rand also states that if values are defined from a subjective perspective, then the choice between good and evil becomes totally arbitrary and this will eliminate the only possible way of communication, namely reason -as Rand believes that the subjective approach to value defines values in terms of one’s feelings rather than reason as the only means capable of producing objective values; thus, it excludes the possibility of communication.<sup>113</sup> The damage that intrinsic and subjective theories of value is not limited to excluding the possibility of communication; furthermore, they do even not hesitate to sacrifice humans in the attainment of a “higher good”.<sup>114</sup>

Rand does not deny individuals can value different things in their own lives; but according to her, subjective choices should objectively serve the aim of living and acting to the best of one’s own judgment. This notion of objectivity can be criticized

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<sup>112</sup> Rand, *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*, 14.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>114</sup> Rand illustrates her justification by giving the unfortunate events from human history, such as French Revolution and Stalinist Russia -as they performed extremely brutal actions.

in the sense that the values (she takes to be rational) conforming to the facts of reality are claimed to be undeniably objective. On the other hand, value pluralism suggests that no value can be prior to another value, and hence, each value is among the irreducibly plural values and “equally” incomparable.<sup>115</sup> Thus, the “objectivity” of values Rand defines within a specific notion of rationality must be exposed to compromise -as no value can be determined to be “higher”. Yet, as I argue, in human worlds we can only talk about irreducibly plural values.

Nevertheless, Rand’s distinction between the objective theory of value and other (intrinsic and subjectivist) theories of value can be important and relevant when seen in their connection to her claim about the rise of authoritarian policies. That is why I see her ideas on the theories of value as relevant to the argument of this thesis, while I also believe that the objective and rational values *objectivism* maintains would also be subject to compromise and the plural conditioning of human worlds.

### **2.3.2.2. Human Nature and Universality**

I tackle and criticize two things in this section, namely a single conception of human nature and a universalist approach to human worlds. First, from a pluralist perspective, there seems to be no single conception of human nature that can apply to all types of human morality.

The debate regarding the “essence of human nature” will be, as Berlin states, “a matter of infinite debate”.<sup>116</sup> Berlin himself does not believe in a fixed human nature<sup>117</sup>; however, sees the variation of characteristics of human nature to be somehow limited by the objectivity of basic needs and values in human life.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, the flexible

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<sup>115</sup> Further explanations about the incomparability of values are given in 2.3.4.

<sup>116</sup> Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”, 8.

<sup>117</sup> “Static” in the sense that human nature’s “essential properties are the same everywhere and at all times” (Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”, 24).

<sup>118</sup> One of the conceptions of objectivity that can be found in Berlin is that values can be objective based on the certain facts and objective realities of human nature. See Joshua Cherniss and Hardy, Henry,

understanding of human nature leads us to grasp human life within an “almost” universal and objective conception of human needs and human values. However, the “almost” universal and objective conception of human needs and human values cannot provide a universal way of human life because they are formed by cultural, historical, and economic conditions. Accordingly, Berlin’s conception of human nature draws a picture of a flexible human nature. A flexible human nature appears to represent the various pluralistic aspects of human activity, yet still does not ignore the objectivity of the basic needs and values in human life. Thus, the flexible understanding of human nature must not be considered separately from political pluralism which involves different conceptions of “human life” and diversity.

In “Introduction” I have mentioned Arendt’s conception of the “human condition” which is not the same thing as human nature in the sense that human activity “creates” the conditions to which humans belong and the conditions surrounding humans represent a different realm than “nature” in the sense that it is not simply given to humans; it is human made. The question of “human nature” will be relatively less important than the question of human activity: the former concerns the definition as an answer to the questions of “what is human?” and “what does *necessarily* belong to human being?”; the latter considers the practical consequences of human action. The practical consequences range from activities engaged in to meet the basic needs required for biological human survival to the societal and political institutions required for broader aspects of human life. Human beings inhabit the realm of the conditions of their products that is a result of their activity. In this sense the concept of “human nature” seems to rest in human activity, not with a reference to the definition of “what human is” or “what necessarily belongs to human being” but with a reference to the produced consequences. Thus, it is not the definition but the practicality this thesis takes into consideration. This practical aspect of human worlds takes its critical notions from Arendt and could be useful to separate humane aims from inhumane ones without referring to a moral conception of human being and human nature.

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“Isaiah Berlin”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/berlin>, section 4 “Ethical Thought and Value Pluralism”.

It may seem as if the pursuit of humane aims requires a justification that offers something more than biological and physical conceptions of human life, maybe a metaphysical justification that refers to the “sanctity of human life” for example. However, the “sanctity of human life” can serve either humane or inhumane aims. The “sanctity of human life” may prevent many actions against the rights of human beings. On the other hand, the “sanctity of human life” can serve an inhumane aim by allowing human sacrifice to realize a higher conception of something divine to which human beings belong, and their physical existence completely loses its meaning in such a conception of “sanctity”. Therefore, going beyond biological and physical conceptions of human life and providing metaphysical justifications does not necessarily warrant the realization of humane aims.

Besides, a morality that is based on single conception of human nature may produce inhumane results. As an example, Aristotle’s morality can be examined. Aristotle takes “eudaimonia” to be the highest value of human morality and sees human capabilities arising from the essence of human being as serving this aim. However, he sees such an accomplishment to be achievable only by a certain class and thus ascribes it to the life form of a certain class in the “city-state”: Aristotle makes a certain classification between humans; some born free some born slave by nature. Aristotle’s morality accepts a single notion of human nature which is static and defined in accordance with the purpose of “eudaimonia”. Aristotle believes that the functioning of human capabilities is valid only for “free” citizens. In the Aristotelian conception of morality, virtues only belong to “free citizens” since they require a rational capacity that is naturally found in “free” humans.<sup>119</sup> This kind of morality can produce inhumane results because of the classification it relies on.

Recognizing the pluralistic aspect of human activity and the plural conditioning of human existence removes the moral confusions in realizing humane aims. The reason is that human activity is observed and evaluated through and within political relations between different individuals and groups rather than within and through metaphysical

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<sup>119</sup> Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 187.

conceptions of human beings which fall outside the political sphere. The human condition as a political conception allows us to evaluate about whether a certain human activity serves humane aims: humane aims are realized by political action. The political sphere can be conditioned either by a single conception of human life or by pluralism. When it is conditioned by pluralism it promotes the different conceptions of “human life” and diverse values. Therefore, the more flexible the understanding of human nature is, the more we can realize humane aims due to the pluralistic aspect of human activity.

The single definition of human nature should be abandoned in conceiving human worlds to produce plural consequences. If we hold that there is not a universal and single definition of human nature, then we must take one step further and admit that there is no one way of living the human life. We must also admit that there is the diversity of goods that cannot be described under a monistic theory of morality. Moralities can vary as moral concepts and values are developed through changes in time and their meanings are used and grasped differently in a culture or period. Moralities are plural just as many values are; in Berlin’s own words:

No one seemed anxious to grapple with the possibility that the Christian and the pagan answers to moral or political questions might both be correct given the premises from which they start; that these premises were not demonstrably false, only incompatible; and that no single overarching standard or criterion was available to decide between, or reconcile, these wholly opposed moralities.<sup>120</sup>

Moralities and conflicting values can be present and applicable at the same period and same place, although they clash with one another. As an example, conflicting traditions of Paganism and Judeo-Christianity and their opposing values “self-assertion” and “self-denial” existed in the same era and place in the late Roman Empire but did not share the same moralities.<sup>121</sup> Such a co-existence of incompatible values seems to be supporting the diversification of ideas and the different ways of life. Moreover, I also

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<sup>120</sup> Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 33.

<sup>121</sup> In *Two Concepts of Liberty* Berlin writes that “Pagan self-assertion is as worthy as Christian self-denial.” (9).

believe that these two incomparable and opposite values are equally defensible and can be well-reasoned depending on the premises they hold; therefore, neither can be asserted to be transcending all times and making a universally valid moral claim beyond being a matter of choice.

Universality is another concept that is analyzed. Values and principle which are claimed to be universal could serve as an objective standard for a political theory. However, pluralism in human worlds would invalidate such a claim to universality either in values or principles. Thus, there can be no universality based on an objective standard (and no political theory can be objectively proven based on a universal conception of morality). Kant's conception of universalism can be a fine example. Take the concept of humanity in Kant: The concept of humanity found in the third formula of the Categorical Imperative expresses that we have moral responsibilities and moral obligations towards other humans: the source of moral obligation towards other humans comes from the principle that humans must not be used as a means only because they must be end-in-themselves, which is claimed in a transcendental (and non-empirical) way.<sup>122</sup> The intrinsic value of humans is rooted in the claim that humans are rational beings, and they can determine the universal moral law. Kant's belief that humans are rational beings also means that all humans are equally capable of determining the moral law and they are "free and equal" in their rationality. Such an understanding of humans validates one way of human life guided by reason in obedience to the universal moral law. Kant seems content to determine the universal character of moral authority based on his ideal conception of human nature. In other words, Kant's ideal and universal notion of human nature leads him to grasp a conception of universally applicable morality.

Kant was a typical thinker of Enlightenment. The typical characteristic of enlightenment philosophers (such as Kant, Hegel, Marx) is not only the belief in human reason to be the original source of authority (instead of traditional and religious

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<sup>122</sup> See the third formulation of Categorical Imperative in Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. James Ellington. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993, 35-6.

ones), but also their commitment to “progress”. Again, Kant’s humanism can be a fine example of this: In Kant humanism appears to be an “ideal” which humans can progressively achieve through their efforts and can be applicable to all societies as a formal (thus universal) structure of morality.<sup>123</sup>

His universalist conception of human morality is incapable of grasping the pluralistic characteristic of human worlds and insufficient to grasp plural reasons for human action. According to the thinkers of Enlightenment, humans can solve their problems via “proper use of reason” that is based on a definite description of universal reason.<sup>124</sup> However, the empiricist, rationalist, and transcendental accounts of this “human reason” that were attempted during the Enlightenment all had their shortcomings and incompatibilities and did not result in an account of universal reason that could be found satisfactory by all.<sup>125</sup>

### **2.3.2.3. History and Utopian Values**

From the pluralist aspect of human worlds, the view that history (hence future) is determined by necessary “laws” can be objected. To begin, human worlds are subject to a constant change and the future unpredictably takes shape by way of changing conditions such as technological, economic, political, and so on. These changes in human worlds can be interpreted as if they occur in an “inescapable” route in which human history necessarily determines the future. Such an interpretation would enable one to claim to find a rational explanation which underlies the change, and hence

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<sup>123</sup> Claus Dierksmeier’s article “Kant’s Humanistic Ethics” in *Humanistic Ethics in the Age of Globality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) can be a helpful reading to understand Kant’s humanism in connection to the notion of “progress”. In his article Dierksmeier describes Kant’s ethics in terms of a “procedural humanism”, according to which “humanistic ethics arises from the ways and procedures by which persons seek the good” (ibid, 79).

<sup>124</sup> Cherniss and Hardy, “Isaiah Berlin”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, section 3 “The History of Ideas”.

<sup>125</sup> Hume was one of the prominent figures in the history of Western philosophy who attacked rationalism. He was also disturbed by the idea of “rational harmony” endorsed by the eighteenth-century rationalists who attempted to deduce the principles of a universal morality. See Sheldon S. Wolin, “Hume and Conservatism”, *The American Political Science Review* 48, no. 4 (1954): 999-1016, 1002.

derive a monistic basis on which values can be grounded.<sup>126</sup> This interpretation can also be linked to a conception of human worlds within the category of progress. The rational explanation of human history within the category of progress can be associated with Marx's "historical materialism". Marx creates an historical narrative of these changes in terms of economic relations and, further, he believes it to happen in a progressive "march" of human history. This view is problematic. Progression in human worlds is hardly provable.<sup>127</sup>

Marx's conception of history can be criticized in two ways. First, it cannot be reliable due to the events that falsify the progressive improvement of human history (today's increasing statism against liberalism can be an example of this).<sup>128</sup> Second, it cannot be respectable because it has harmful effects on politics. In this section, I criticize Marx's conception of history in connection to the latter criticism. Berlin makes an incisive criticism of Marx's conception of history in this sense, which is helpful for us to understand its political risks.

Marx's ideas about how a classless society will emerge after the state disappears promise a utopia.<sup>129</sup> Such a utopian view rises upon the deterministic conception of human history and the belief in the "progress" of reason.<sup>130</sup> This view shares the idea

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<sup>126</sup> Rational explanation of human history can be interpreted as "rational necessity" upheld by "enlightened rationalism from Spinoza to the latest (at times unconscious) disciples of Hegel" (Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty", 23).

<sup>127</sup> See Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957). The diversity of human worlds seems to cause human history to be indeterministic and non-teleological so that history cannot claim to have a particular direction, even though it allows us to summarize history of humankind in some broad historical interpretations. See Daniel Little, "Philosophy of History", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2017), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2017/entries/history>, section 2.2. In this sense human history is *unforeseen*.

<sup>128</sup> A historicist may claim that any event is a proof of "improvement"; however, such predictions are not reliable since "exact and detailed scientific social predictions" are mistaken and pointless (Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 14) See "5. Inexactitude Of Prediction", *ibid*, 12-14.

<sup>129</sup> Marx's "historical materialism" is not deprived of "ideal" though it mostly focuses on the practical aspects of human worlds. In this sense, it promises a utopia as its basic assumptions serve utopian objectives (and values) such as classless society and the abolishment of private property.

<sup>130</sup> Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 46.



with the other points of view that sacrifice humanity for the sake of one “truth” described in different ways but same in conclusions. Contrary to the alleged “law” of history, Berlin states that no law can be applied to history.<sup>131</sup>

From Berlin’s perspective development in human worlds cannot be denied; yet it cannot be proven to happen towards a predictable direction. Berlin claims that a progressive conception of history is a false theory of history –that is what we have well learned from the totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century installed by fascist leaders based on their “pseudo-historical theories”.<sup>132</sup> Following this criticism, I should also add that definite descriptions about the future of human worlds remain incomplete because of the unpredictability of future. Just because of this incompleteness of conceptions and descriptions concerning human worlds, no conception of universality and commonality regarding human life (as well as human knowledge) can be maintained as permanently applicable. Diversification and unpredictability confirm that history is also incomplete.

According to Berlin individuals’ effort builds realities, not the *so-called* “general laws” in history: “The day would dawn when men and women would take their lives in their own hands and not be self-seeking beings or the playthings of blind forces that they did not understand”.<sup>133</sup> We have no compelling reason for believing that we are approaching a single “truth”.<sup>134</sup> We cannot talk about the theory of history described either in terms of a rational or ideal (utopian) values, but only plurality of events and their scattered consequences in human worlds.

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<sup>131</sup> Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, 13; see the footnote.

<sup>132</sup> Isaiah Berlin. *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and their History*, ed. Henry Hardy, (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1997), 9-10.

<sup>133</sup> Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 7. “Human history, as a famous Russian thinker once remarked, has no libretto: the actors must improvise their parts.” (Ibid, 213).

<sup>134</sup> Isaiah Berlin, *Freedom, and Its Betrayal: Six Enemies of Human Liberty*, ed. Henry Hardy (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 94-95.

### 2.3.3. Incompatibility of Values

Another characteristic of value pluralism I am about to discuss is incompatibility, i.e., conflict. From a value-pluralist perspective, values are conflictive in the sense that they *disagree* with each other, and realization of a value requires a choice between conflicting values. Berlin states that values continually clash so that we cannot make conflict cease. He describes pluralism in connection to this feature of values:

There are many objective ends, ultimate values, some incompatible with others, pursued by different societies at various times, or by different groups in the same society, by entire classes or churches or races, or by individuals within them, any one of which may find itself subject to conflicting claims of uncombinable, yet equally ultimate and objective ends.<sup>135</sup>

As Berlin emphatically asserts “the uncombinable remains uncombinable”.<sup>136</sup> He also describes his philosophical position in the following words:

If, as I believe, the ends of men are many, and not all of them are in principle compatible with each other, then the possibility of conflict—and of tragedy—can never wholly be eliminated from human life, either personal or social.<sup>137</sup>

Berlin sees conflict to be inevitable among values as he regards that the conflict among values stems from both their and our nature.<sup>138</sup> For Berlin the “ultimate solution” to the conflict among values is impossible. It is practically worthy for us to recognize conflict as the essential feature of values, because it implies that no choice can be realizable without the loss of another choice.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 83.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>137</sup> Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”, 51.

<sup>138</sup> Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 13.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 14.

In addition to Berlin's views on incompatibility, Kekes treats conflict as an intrinsic property of multiple values. Such property leads us to the consequence that we must choose between values or compromise a value to realize another one:

But conflicts among many other values are intrinsic to the conflicting values themselves, and so we simply have to choose between many values. The choice need not be all-or-none; we can compromise and try to strike a balance. Whatever we do, however, it remains a fact of human life that as we seek one of two conflicting values, so we must put up with missing out on the other.<sup>140</sup>

Kekes clearly states that realization of any value will involve a *loss* of another value or other values. As Kekes also states, because of this internal reality of conflicting values we have two chances to resolve it: Either we must choose between values, or we can compromise. According to Kekes, conflict is a natural part of pluralism independently of our attitude towards values, that is we cannot make conflicting values compatible.<sup>141</sup> Thus, we choose and compromise. The choice is made not between good and evil; but between good and good or evil and evil -this is the nuance with value pluralism. This nuance indicates not only incompatibility among conflicting values but also incommensurability among incomparable values. I tackle incomparability of values in detail in the next section.

Conflict among values or the incompatibility of values says that values are not fully realizable at the same time. Berlin emphasizes the impossibility of fully realization of a value by saying that "total liberty for wolves is death to the lambs" and he points out that total liberty can be "of the powerful, the gifted, is not compatible with the rights to a decent existence of the weak and the less gifted".<sup>142</sup> The complete realization of liberty, as you see, can be at the advantage of the stronger whereas it happens at the cost of the weaker simply because "perfect liberty (as it must be in the perfect world)

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<sup>140</sup> Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, 54.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>142</sup> Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 12-13.

is not compatible with perfect equality”.<sup>143</sup> If we wish to realize equality for all humans then we need a complete abolishment of all the differences, which would result in prohibition of any attempt of creative work. Thus, a total equality would be against the smallest effort of one’s ability such as a creative production and any possibility of exercising of one’s liberty.

Another example he gives is between justice and mercy, that a complete realization of justice conflicts with a complete realization of mercy.<sup>144</sup> This is even valid for a particular event as one cannot be fully realized without sacrificing the other. Think of Javert’s dilemma in *Les Misérables* (1862): Javert’s strict loyalty to law makes him relentless and merciless in conducting law; and his strict loyalty to law puts him in the agony in which he cannot decide whether Jean Valjean is a good or evil person (or he realizes that both is true at the same time). Thus, one of the outstanding implications of value pluralism is conflicting values and incompatibility.

Conflicting values implies that we cannot realize two conflicting values and we cannot simply be in a consistent pursuit of a certain value without sacrificing others. These sacrifices can be dreadful and sometimes we cannot anticipate the results. Nevertheless, we seem to have no choice other than choosing between values. We must understand that ideal purposes and complete realizations of values are not possible in human worlds because of conflict. Berlin concludes that “the very notion of a final solution is not only impracticable but, if I am right, and some values cannot but clash, incoherent also”.<sup>145</sup> That there is not a final solution to conflict is not only because of conflicting values, but because of permanent change in human worlds where nothing remains stable. Practical matters will always require our effort to choose between values. We will always be at the situation of choosing and compromising so that we cannot have stability with our values.

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<sup>143</sup> Isaiah Berlin, *The Power of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 26.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 27. See also Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 12.

<sup>145</sup> Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, 15.

### 2.3.4. Incomparability of Values

Besides incompatibility, the other premise of value pluralism is that no value is superior to another one, which addresses incommensurability. Incommensurability is peculiar to value pluralism, whereas diversity is not. In other words, the diversity thesis can also be defended by a value monist and there is not an entailment between the diversity thesis and incommensurability.<sup>146</sup> Nevertheless, the affirmation of diversity is fully grasped by pluralism and the incommensurability thesis.

Incommensurability of values is more debatable than the incompatibility of values in the sense that there are various approaches to it, whereas conflict among values is widely shared idea among pluralists. Thus, incommensurability has become more of focus among pluralists.<sup>147</sup> I conceive incommensurability to be the key premise of pluralism that deserves more attention for it will encourages us to develop liberal means to resolve problems.

Incommensurability basically means that we cannot have “a common scale of measurement” of two things.<sup>148</sup> According to this definition of incommensurability, we can be sure of the situation that between two values or two options none of which can be determined as more rational than the other. I will interchangeably use the terms “incommensurability” and “incomparability”. These two terms refer to the same meaning in my usage, namely the lack of a universal measurement and rational standard according to which values can be evaluated as better or worse.

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<sup>146</sup> Robert B. Talisse, “Value Pluralism: A Philosophical Clarification”, *Administration & Society* 47, no. 9 (2015): 1069.

<sup>147</sup> According to Kekes, quite a few pluralists heavily focus on incommensurability and the efforts to overcome it. See John Kekes, *The morality of Pluralism* (1993), Chapter 4.

<sup>148</sup> Raz, “Incommensurability and Agency”, 110. Besides, Chang traces the historical usage of the incommensurability of values back to Pythagoreans who were disappointed by the fact that “diagonal could not be represented by the ratio of integers” (Ruth Chang, “Incommensurability (and Incomparability)”, 2).

In addition to the lack of these standards, as Raz contends too, I understand by ‘incomparability’ that values cannot be also ranked to be either better or worse according to an overarching and a deeper value.<sup>149</sup> Raz explains it in a simple way: “Values may change, but such a change is not a discovery of a deeper truth. It is simply a change of values”.<sup>150</sup> Choosing among options as we value them does not mean that we choose always in accordance with a fixed value. It means that we rather compromise our values to realize a value that is incomparable with others in terms of a complete outlook of valuation.

#### **2.3.4.1. Raz’s Conception of Incomparability**

Raz emphasizes that incommensurability, or incomparability, is rejection of any type of valuation in terms of either relativeness or equalness of values.<sup>151</sup> He seems to point out the theoretical accounts of valuation that are avoided by incommensurability. This means that to choose among options we do not need a theory of comparability. In other words, whether the value of an option is better than another one does not have to be a matter of justification by a theory that serves as an account that classifies right and wrong actions. Incommensurability is rejection of a presupposition of comparability among the values of options. Thus, maintaining a value-pluralist approach should mean to have a commitment to incommensurability.

Raz’s conception of incommensurability seems to me differing from moral reasoning that determines the principles of an action. In our daily lives we find ourselves in the difficulty of comparing between two options about the possible consequences they may produce. We sometimes assume that an action will bring good and contribute to our well-being though we can realize that it happens in the opposite way. Most of the time our expectations or presuppositions of comparability seem to be misleading. Raz

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<sup>149</sup> See Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 327.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 329.

states there is the same problem with morality. Moral reasoning about what is right and wrong in principle depends on the presupposition of comparability.<sup>152</sup>

Raz seems to deny that actions can be ranked according to the general principles of a morality. Having reasons and a morality before a choice seems meaningless as Raz says that "...there can be no wrong action without a choice".<sup>153</sup> Raz draws attention to the circumstances that choice still has an important role in human life, as incommensurability "does not preclude choice".<sup>154</sup> A wrong choice must be made if there is no chance to escape from it.<sup>155</sup> To put it in a simple way what has been said, we evaluate our choices after they cause practical consequences that can be harmful; yet, we do not have a tool to compare them in principle before choosing. Besides, a morality that is comprised of general principles has the danger of putting pressure on individuals' choices and to be used as a tool for social engineering. This dangerous role of morality can be avoided by incommensurability.<sup>156</sup>

Raz contends that the three conditions of incommensurability -two values are not better than, nor worse than and not equal as each other- are enough for values to be incomparable.<sup>157</sup> We have seen that, in general meaning, the incommensurability of values is the thesis that values cannot be comparable. The incommensurability thesis as the denial of such a comparison can have a "radical" form, as Raz defines, according to which "that of two options neither is better neither are they of equal value".<sup>158</sup> Such a radical incomparability, Raz states, seems to be "indeterminacy". Other than declaring the incomparability of values with respect to this thesis of

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 362-3.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 363.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 339.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 364.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid 364-5.

<sup>157</sup> See Raz's article "Incommensurability and Agency" in Ruth Chang's edited work.

<sup>158</sup> Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 328.

incommensurability, Raz explains why incommensurability must not also be “rough equality” of values.<sup>159</sup> Two values cannot be of the same value when we are about to choose one of the options and none of these options are chosen on a guidance of reason that signifies which option is better and which one is worse: “Incomparability does not ensure equality of merit and demerit. It does not mean indifference. It marks the inability of reason to guide our action, not the insignificance of our choice.”<sup>160</sup> Therefore, it is possible for us to make either right or wrong choices, although we may not definitely know which one is right by the guidance of reason (as the incommensurability of values says so). It is practical that we choose one of the options and we can only see better whether it was the right or wrong choice when we encounter its consequences.

Considering Raz’s views on incomparability, it can be concluded that value pluralism does not yield the simple result that every value is worth being pursued. It rather emphasizes that values have the *equal* property of being not to be compared to each other and ranked according to a standard. In value pluralism the emphasis is on the incomparability of values rather than leveling them. The incomparability of values invites choice; the pursuit of a value is a matter of “choice”.

Raz distinguishes two conceptions of action in regard with one’s reasons for taking the action, namely *rationalist* and *classical*.<sup>161</sup> Basically, the difference is that the former is strongly determined by reason, whereas the latter depends on choice. In this sense, the rationalist conception of action is not compatible with incommensurability, whereas a classical conception of action embraces different possible choices depending on various reasons.<sup>162</sup> If we have incommensurability among reasons, our decision includes either an exclusion or a compromise of some of these reasons and

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<sup>159</sup> See the example and further clarifications in pp. 331-2.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 334.

<sup>161</sup> Joseph Raz, “Incommensurability and Agency”, in *Incommensurability, Incomparability and Practical Reason*, ed. Ruth Chang (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 111.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.



evaluate preferable options. The pursuit of rational commands for an action would only allow “ought”s, a determined course of action, and exclude “weaker” reasons that are not evaluated as properly rational. However, incommensurability says that reasons to take an action are so various that they are not rationally comparable. The significance of incommensurability is, therefore, that we are allowed to choose among preferable options and making compromises between plural reasons as we are not only bound with coercive reasons such as “ought”s. The variety of incomparable reasons implies that we have more space of liberty in acting while examining other reasons.

Rationalist conception of action would find a direct correlation between reasons and action. A determined will is to act in accordance with the “strongest” reason. In rationalist perspective, if we do not act in accordance with the rational reasons then it may be because of our ignorance. This rationalist conception of action in terms of the close tie between the will and the reason of an action is found in Socrates’ thought. It is not my intention here to change the direction of the discussion as to whether we have weakness of will or reasons are just incomparable. The weakness of will is not the issue here; the issue is rather about the lack of completeness about comparability. What I try to emphasize is that incommensurability means the absence of a rational standard for comparing reasons for an action.

Raz argues that the role of the will, and the role of reason are separate in acting. According to Raz, the role of the will is neither merely opposing reason nor merely satisfying.<sup>163</sup> In its independent role, the will is apparently free to choose among options available to the actor. Raz believes that the classical conception of action depending on incommensurability is exhibited in human experiences.<sup>164</sup> I conceive Raz’s view in connection to the voluntarism that stands against rationalism or intellectualism and in giving primacy to will rather than reason. Moreover, the separate role of will underlines compromise more than is implying choosing. Incommensurability in terms of lacking the rational standard for comparing the reasons

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 127-8.

of an action promotes compromise. Upholding plural options of an action can be compatible with pluralism; whereas a non-compromising mind that only accepts strict reasons for an action can only be related to monism. Thus, the separation of the will and reason (as we see in the classical conception of action) concerning plural reasons for an action will put more emphasis on both compromise and choice.

Incommensurability does not undermine the possibility of reasons of an action. Incommensurability implies that we can have many reasons none of which is “ought” for us but rather is an option and this happens only because we choose to act so. This presence of options opens the way for the liberty to act by extending the narrow scope of the rationalist conception of action and to decide attentively as we compromise. Incommensurability allows us to see which reasons are well considered and which of them are compromised to carry out an action and grasp the pluralistic character of our actions that lies outside of a narrowly defined consistency.

#### **2.3.4.2. Boot’s Notion of “Incomplete Comparability”**

Martijn Boot has a different point of view according to which incommensurability allows us to assign weights to the value of options, when incommensurability means an “incomplete comparability” as a “partial justification”.<sup>165</sup> Boot describes the conditions of comparability according to which two values are comparable if one of these two values is “better than, worse than, and equally good as” the other one.<sup>166</sup> If none of these conditions are true, then we can conclude that two values cannot be comparable -that is, it is not true that one of the two values is better than, worse than, and equally good as the other value.<sup>167</sup> Besides these three conditions, two values can be “incompletely comparable” with two more additional conditions. Boot states that an “incomplete comparability” between two incommensurable values (that meet the

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<sup>165</sup> Martijn Boot, “Problems of Incommensurability”, *Social Theory and Practice* 43, no. 2 (2017): 333.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 317.

<sup>167</sup> Parfit defines the “incomplete comparability” under the three conditions as “imprecise equality”. See Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (1984).

incommensurability thesis in all three conditions) happens when these two values are “not symmetrical” and “the differences in amounts of values are ‘significant’”.<sup>168</sup> Incomplete comparability allows us to compare values, not in accordance with a universal or impartial measurement but, as Boot argues in his essay, based on the relative importance of values under the conditions stated.

Further, Boot mentions the “Paradox of Absent Equivalence” according to which “there is a range where *B* is worse and a range where it is questionable that *B* is better than *A* overall, but nowhere is there a level or range where *A* and *B* are (roughly) equally good”.<sup>169</sup> Boot links this paradox with the discussion about “imprecise equality” which is caused by the “vagueness” of human values, whereas he believes that “incomplete comparability” does not depend on such a “vagueness”.<sup>170</sup>

#### **2.3.4.3. Kekes’ Conception of Incommensurability**

To examine the other aspects of incommensurability, I present Kekes’ description. Kekes lists the detailed conditions of incommensurability. These conditions can be summarized as follows: i) there is not a fundamental or a highest value; ii) there is not a medium by means of which values can be expressed and substituted with each other; and iii) values cannot be ordered and ranked by some principles.<sup>171</sup> Kekes states that pluralists must adhere to the conjunction of these three conditions in order to argue incommensurability, whereas monists must show that these cannot be held to be true.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Two values are not symmetrical if “one value has a higher ranking on an ordinal scale than the other” (Martijn Boot, “Problems of Incommensurability”, 319).

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 325.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 328.

<sup>171</sup> Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, 56.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

The first condition says that no value can be estimated in terms of how much it comes closer to a higher value. This must be followed by the second condition saying that each value is unique and distinct. In the second condition, we are told that values cannot be exchanged with one another value by means of a medium. This also means that values are not substitutable with each other. Values do not have a currency and cannot be expressed in the kind of another value. Each value is expressed by only itself and realized as an end. For instance, happiness and truth are such distinct values that we cannot compare them in terms of how much “pleasure” they provide.<sup>173</sup> Values have their characteristic aspects that cannot be fully represented by another value and cannot be exchanged with each other in terms of a medium.

Second condition, the absence of a medium by means of which values can be exchanged and substituted, implies that there is not a way of making a universal comparison among values. Our relationship with values is then not about our stance towards values in terms of a universal comparability, instead is about our effort to compromise in realizing a value. Our choices and decisions are subject to changes in our worlds and these changeable conditions put us in a continual activity of choosing and compromise. Remember that each realization of value will mean a *loss* of another value. This is evident in our daily lives: we cannot stop feeling remorse and upset when choosing a value instead of another one, even though we believe that we have chosen it to accomplish a more valuable purpose.<sup>174</sup>

In the third condition, we see that the universal principles do not exist, and conflict is inevitable among different types of values. At this point it may be helpful to understand what pluralists think about incomparability. What pluralists oppose is not the possible ways of ranking values and suggesting solutions to the conflict among values according to a theory, rather they oppose the view that “such theories could do justice

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<sup>173</sup> See Kekes’ example of one cup of tea and one cup of coffee, (ibid, 56-7). Kekes says that suggesting a basis of comparison for values will lead to questioning the appropriateness and validity of such a basis (ibid).

<sup>174</sup> For more detailed explanation on and for the other reasons why there is incompatibility and incommensurability among values, ibid, 57-8.

to all the different types of values there are”.<sup>175</sup> This can be interpreted as following: No theory of value can be *complete* in ranking values since these theories of comparability must exclude some of the values that are not acceptable according to the principles of such theories. Kekes wants us to see that we can accept such theories to rank values; however, it does not mean to deny value pluralism.<sup>176</sup>

*Incomparability* can be confused with *noncomparability*. *Noncomparability* is that we have not got any means to compare, or we have not yet had such a means to compare two things that *may* be comparable in some circumstances. On the other hand, *incomparability* is that there *does not* exist a common tool of measurement -in other words, when two things are said to be *incomparable*, then there is no way of measuring them regardless of other conditions. Incomparability puts a stronger emphasis and sometimes implies a thorough deliberation on choosing between values. Different situations can require different values to be realized and this changeable position is closely related to our effort. Thus, my focus is on this effort rather than the circumstances requiring choices between values, although both can be important at the same time.

Choice between values becomes an essential part of our worlds while making decisions. Since the “complete comparability” of values is impossible, we should face the unavoidable circumstances in which we can only manage an incomplete means of deciding.

### **2.3.5. Practical Effects of Value Pluralism**

Having considered the main characteristics of the pluralist account of value, we can have the inevitable result that a complete and timeless theory of values is impossible. Nor can we insist on any underlying value or set of values that is supposed to govern human worlds. For the practical concerns, the main characteristics of the plural

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

ontology of values such as incompatibility, incomparability, and irreducible plurality, have concrete effects on human worlds.

Pluralism can be dramatic. However, this does not necessarily require us to adopt a cynical view of human worlds. Conflicting values have meta-ethical and practical implications on our conceptions of ethics and politics. At the meta-ethical level, conflicting values disallow us to manage a coherent and monistic theory of value. At the practical level, we cannot have a consistency in pursuit of certain values without sacrificing other values. These implications have become important in relation to our practical concerns at the level of deciding what to choose or what to compromise in our worlds. The only way we can resolve conflicts among values is to choose or compromise values. The practical implications of value pluralism are about these ways of confronting conflicts in the political sphere. To cope with disagreements in the affairs of politics is therefore a difficult but not an impossible task if we seriously understand the role of compromise.

## CHAPTER 3

### PLURALIST THEORIES OF LIBERALISM

In chapter 2 I explained value pluralism. In this chapter I put value pluralism in relation to liberalism as a political theory and explore the arguable connection between liberalism and value pluralism. Section 3.1 is a general introduction to the subject while in the following sections I discuss three different types of liberalism. Lastly, I conclude by discussing two criticisms of liberalism that can be made by Schmitt and Mouffe.

Berlin was the most popular thinker who introduced the idea that there is a close relationship between liberalism and value pluralism.<sup>177</sup> This close relationship is about the question Ferrell formulates regarding “the problem of justification”: “given the condition of value pluralism, how can one defend a commitment to any particular moral or political position?”.<sup>178</sup> Some thinkers, such as Crowder and Galston, follow Berlin’s formulation of value pluralism and his ideas in defending this relation, whereas some pluralists, such as Kekes and Gray, do not believe in such a close tie between value pluralism and liberalism.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Value pluralism has recently disputed in connection with political theory. George Crowder, “Value Pluralism, Diversity and Liberalism”, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 18, no. 3 (2015): 549.

<sup>178</sup> Jason Ferrell, “Isaiah Berlin: Liberalism and pluralism in theory and practice”, *Contemporary Political Theory* 8, no. 3 (2009): 295. In his article, Ferrell argues that Berlin’s views on pluralism, if not a full justification, can provide consistent and reasonable links to liberalism.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid. Besides, Talisse believes that liberalism cannot be derived from value pluralism. See Robert B. Talisse, “Does Value Pluralism Entail Liberalism?”, *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 7 (2010): 303–320.

### 3.1. Value Pluralism and Liberalism

3.1.1 deals with the definition of liberalism and liberal values with brief historical information on liberalism. 3.1.2 is about the significance of liberties, which aims to contribute to our understanding about why liberties matter, especially for the notion of ‘sensible compromise’ which is the topic of the next chapter.

After analyzing two notions of liberties, namely positive and negative, by making references to *Two Concepts* by Berlin in section 3.1.3, I mainly discuss three different versions of liberalisms, namely liberal pluralism, political liberalism, and agonistic liberalism.

#### 3.1.1. Definition of Liberalism, Limitation of Government and Liberal Values

It is not an easy task to give a common description of liberalism that liberal thinkers would agree on. There are also many versions of liberalism.<sup>180</sup> In *Cambridge Dictionary* liberalism is defined as “an attitude of respecting and allowing many different types of beliefs or behaviour”.<sup>181</sup> Such an attitude implies an openness to the diversity of beliefs, which means that liberalism has a claim to being a system of tolerance. Considering the definition, liberalism appears to give the most suitable description of a pluralistic political sphere as it provides the maximal guarantee for the plural ways of expression when compared to other political systems. The allowance of the plural ways of expression brings about conflicts and disagreements between different conceptions of the “good”. These conflicts are essential for a liberal community.

The following definition of liberalism (as a political theory) is given in *Cambridge Dictionary*, according to which liberalism is “the political belief that there should be free trade, that people should be allowed more personal freedom, and that changes in

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<sup>180</sup> Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, 199-200.

<sup>181</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/tr/s%C3%B6zl%C3%BCk/ingilizce/liberalism>.



society should be made gradually”.<sup>182</sup> As a political system, liberalism prioritizes liberties in the economic, political, and social spheres. Besides, liberalism applies the values of individualism to the public sphere and, together with these values, it sees the relationships between individuals as essential to shaping a society.

Another defining feature of liberalism is the relation it asserts between guaranteeing liberties and limiting political authority over individuals’ choices; and since there are degrees of limitation of government, there exists a variety of liberal systems. Limitation of government is a modern concern of political philosophy. The classical understanding of politics depends on a naturalistic view of humans and the state –two prominent philosophers of ancient Greek thought can be wonderful examples, Plato and especially Aristotle. Thus, I see these philosophers as political philosophers since their primary concerns are with the values of a political society. In this respect, ancient Greek thought, especially beginning with Socrates and followed by his pupil Plato and Plato’s pupil Aristotle, could be said to be characteristically political rather than being purely philosophical as it was politics that mattered to these thinkers.

This naturalistic approach is closely related to a rationally structured community in which humans can accomplish their ethical goals. According to Aristotle’s political thought, humans can pursue their ethical and rational goals in political life. These goals are defined for citizens within the political structure of a *city-state*. For Aristotle, a *city-state* as a political organization is natural and prior to individuals, which exhibits his naturalistic view of political philosophy.<sup>183</sup>

According to Aristotle’s political view, the rational character of a political organization signifies a strict regulation of society, which is exemplified by the “city-state”. In a “city-state” the ruler governs people by rational principles as they have the

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 4; 1253a19-125a39.

capacity of ruling -the rational part of the soul.<sup>184</sup> However this conception of political organization in terms of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled seems to me very outdated. The political thought that flourished in the Anglo world, especially in the thought of John Locke and the tradition descending from him, has a different approach to politics and the concept of government. According to this tradition of thought, the government is only an agent to the individuals' interests. In this perspective of politics, governmental action can be identified not by ruling but by protecting the liberties and rights of individuals. For instance, the protection of private property can be the objective basis of such a political organization. In the modern conception of government, the political organization is not described in terms of the rationality of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, rather it is described in terms of the self-interested rationality of the members of society and the protective role of government as well as the limitations to governmental action.

Each different form of liberalism takes one of the liberal values (such as liberty, equality, or democracy) to be a primary value of a society. For instance, classical and economic liberals, such as Locke, treat liberty as a central value. Locke's version is classified as "classical liberalism" as it has provided the foundation for and influenced other versions of liberalism. Classical liberals, such as J. Locke, I. Kant and J. S. Mill were the ones who associated individualism with a conception of the "good life".<sup>185</sup> Although having different notions of individualism, classical liberals agree that political life must be defined in terms of individualist values which promote the "good life".<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid, Book 3, Ch. 13 & 14. Aristotle conceives politics in terms of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. He argues that "rule over free people" is better than "rule by a master". Aristotle's conception of "the political" depends on the phenomenon of ruling: in the private sphere the ruler is the "master", i.e., the husband who exercise his power over slaves and even women who are subject to men according to Aristotle. In the public sphere, on the other hand, citizens as free men are ruled under the political authority of the city-state. "The political" is directly related to the "city-state" which means that the proper meaning of "the political" occurs in the public sphere where free citizens participate in political decisions and are governed by the laws of the city-state.

<sup>185</sup> Charles Larmore, "The Moral Basis of Political Liberalism", *The Journal of Philosophy* 96, no. 12 (1999): 603.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

In addition to liberty, which is the central value of liberalism, there are other values such as human rights, equality and justice that are appreciated in different degrees in so far as they are seen to be related to the realization of liberty. In Dworkin's comprehensive liberal thought human rights and equality appear to be the prominent values to establish a just society. For Republicans prioritize peace and consider the positive notion of liberty as required to achieve it, thus they make criticism of liberalism's negative notion of liberty.<sup>187</sup> Communitarians, such as McIntyre, Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor, are mainly interested in practice and practical issues, and they are more concerned about arousing the moral conscience of the community rather than merely relying on legal prohibitions or regulations.<sup>188</sup> Communitarians seem to highlight the values of the community and wish them to be the characteristics of the public sphere too.

Walzer thinks that the communitarian critique of liberalism is a strong alternative to liberal universalism.<sup>189</sup> However from the perspective of pluralism, the communitarian criticism of liberal universalism is problematic. When compared to "a-historical"<sup>190</sup> liberalism, the communitarian emphasis on cultural and historical changes that define values is meaningful; yet it supposes the possibility of comparing among different cultures, which will contradict the thesis of incomparability of moral cultures. The communitarian tendency that highlights the values of a community can be used to define a moral community to be superior to another.

Gray is against such a tendency in the sense that it cannot be used to make a comparison among moral cultures to value one over another. His criticism stems from

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<sup>187</sup> Robert Talisse, *Democracy After Liberalism: Pragmatism and Deliberative Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 24.

<sup>188</sup> See the case of pornography as an example (ibid, 27-9).

<sup>189</sup> Walzer sees communitarianism as a strong alternative to liberal universalism. See Michael Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism", *Political Theory* 18, no. 1 (1990): 6-23.

<sup>190</sup> Walzer states that liberalism's a-historical justification is found on the state of nature of the original position (ibid, 8). Liberalism's a-historical justification is based the presumption of a consensus about the "universality" of liberal values. Such a consensual approach will be criticized later.

the incomparability of values based on a strong position of pluralism: No moral view or community can be preferred above another one because of the absence of a “rational ground” to compare them.<sup>191</sup> I must note that Gray’s criticism also involves liberal cultures as a liberal culture can only be one of the political forms that human societies can take.

### 3.1.2. Significance of Liberties

Shklar defines the aim of liberalism, as political theorists would agree, to be securing “the political conditions that are necessary for the exercise of personal freedom”.<sup>192</sup> Exercising liberties is thus primarily important to liberalism as a political system. Shklar also states that except for objecting to interference with the liberties of others, no further claim is made by liberalism regarding how to exercise these liberties.<sup>193</sup>

Shklar argues that liberalism is based not on moral principles, but on “the physical suffering and fears of ordinary human beings”.<sup>194</sup> In her conception of liberalism, the negative notion of liberty has a central role and can be said to be the only acceptable understanding of freedom that liberalism applies. In her understanding, liberalism is limited to

politics and to proposals to restrain potential abusers of power in order to lift the burden of fear and favor from the shoulders of adult women and men, who can then conduct their lives in accordance with their own beliefs and preferences, as long as they do not prevent others from doing so as well.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> John Horton & Glen Newey, eds., *The Political Theory of John Gray* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), 29.

<sup>192</sup> Judith N. Shklar, “The Liberalism of Fear” in *Liberalism and the Moral Life*, ed. Nancy L. Rosenblum (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 21.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

Liberalism seems like a consequence of the insistence on protection from the violence that can come from authority. This is a political understanding of liberalism, which is appreciated throughout this thesis; yet it can be compared to its other versions such as moral liberalisms. It is not only political. Shklar emphasizes the crucial role of legal institutions in several places which are, for her, inevitable for securing the exercise of liberties and liberalism.

From the definition stated in the previous paragraph and from Shklar's words, we can infer the result that "personal freedom" has a central role to a political organization of people, and it is operative in a liberal democracy if protected by the law. One of the main concerns of this thesis is to discuss how it is possible to secure "personal freedom" without relying on a comprehensive and moral doctrine of liberalism. The question of securing the exercise of liberties seems challenging if the comprehensive and moral theories of liberalism are rejected in favor of pluralism. When value pluralism is taken into consideration as an ontological condition of values and as a problem of human worlds, any political theory is hard to defend on a moral basis. Value pluralism persuades us to accept political systems that respect pluralism. However, it is not possible to defend comprehensive and moral versions of liberalisms from a pluralistic viewpoint. Considering the implications of value pluralism, we should also re-define the relationship between liberties and liberal thought outside comprehensive frameworks.

If we want to be consistent with value pluralism, the only conclusion about liberties would be that they are the least compromised when they are confronted with other compromise-able values. For why liberties are compromised *the least* when they are in confrontation with other values, the argument comes from diversity. The argument from diversity begins with the premise that the liberty of expression cannot be exercised without pluralism. Since the complete realization of a value is impossible within value pluralism, then compromises must be made to realize values. Compromise and pluralism cannot be thought separately from each other. Thus, liberties are open to be compromised unless pluralism is to be gradually lessened. These compromises cannot be made one-sidedly; if they were made one-sidedly, this

would gradually lessen pluralism, and at the end there would be nothing left to compromise. Therefore, when compromises are *sensibly* made, liberties will be compromised the least.

### 3.1.3. Two Conceptions of Liberty: Negative and Positive Liberty

Berlin investigates mainly two senses of liberty in his essay “Two Concepts of Liberty” (1958): one is the negative sense, and the other is the positive sense. The negative sense of liberty, Berlin states, refers to the area in which we are free to do or to be what we wish to do or to be.<sup>196</sup> On the other hand, the positive sense of liberty concerns being the master of one’s own actions, and having the desire to be “self-directed”.<sup>197</sup> Accordingly positive liberty is closely connected to the concept of autonomy. Negative liberty is, instead, understood as the absence of prevention -not to be interfered by others in our actions.<sup>198</sup> In keeping with the Lockean tradition, the question posed here is whether we are free to act, rather than the question of whether the will is free -the question of whether the will is free concerns Scholastic Philosophers and, for Locke, it is “improper” and “a category mistake”.<sup>199</sup> On the contrary, positive liberty implies more than only a freedom to act and requires a higher principle that does not consist of empirical features. Berlin defines the positive sense of liberty in terms of notions like “self-mastery”, a “true” self, or “higher” freedom: These terms cause a coercive rationality that ignores the wishes of actors and examines

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<sup>196</sup> Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”, 4.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>198</sup> Another conception of negative liberty worth considering is Pettit’s conception of liberty as “non-domination”: Ian Carter, “Positive and Negative Liberty”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, section 3.2 Republican Liberty. Pettit’s suggests the conception of freedom as “non-domination” instead of Berlin’s conception of freedom as “non-interference” in Philip Pettit, “The Instability of Freedom as Noninterference: The Case of Isaiah Berlin”, *Ethics* 121, no. 4 (2011): 693-716. See also Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>199</sup> See section 5 “Free Will” in Samuel Rickless, “Locke on Freedom”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/locke-freedom>.

individual actions in relation to ‘rational goods’ such as “wisdom”, “fulfilment of duty” and “self-fulfillment”.<sup>200</sup>

The negative sense of liberty implies two things, as Berlin states: One is that the negative sense of liberty defines liberty in terms of non-interference by others; we are unfree if we are prevented by others from what we wish to do or to be. The other implication is that we are coerced if the area in which we act is controlled by others.<sup>201</sup> Berlin emphasizes that coercion must not be understood as an umbrella term for all types of inability. For instance, if I cannot run 10 meters per second or “cannot understand darker pages of Hegel”, these do not mean that I am coerced.<sup>202</sup> Coercion must be understood as a purposeful act of others to interrupt my ability to act. Thus, according to the negative sense of liberty, I will be described as uncoerced and free within the space where I can do what I wish to do.

Berlin’s conception of negative liberty is strongly connected to his criticism of the theories of positive liberty. Even though there are other concepts of liberty that Berlin also discusses in *Two Concepts*, the positive conception of liberty is the concept of liberty that is most strongly contrasted with the negative notion of liberty.<sup>203</sup> Berlin considers the negative notion of liberty in connection to the question of whether there is “coercion” by others.<sup>204</sup> The absence of external coercive intrusions by others that can interfere with one’s capability of acting will provide the space for the exercise of liberties so that negative liberty guarantees the maintenance of personal spaces.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”, 14-15.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>203</sup> Ryan states that *Two Concepts* must be seen to be making a greater contribution to our understanding of liberty than even Berlin imagines. This is evident from Berlin’s criticism of different concepts of liberty as he is quite capable of exhibiting their ominous implications in human worlds. Alan Ryan, “ISAIAH BERLIN: Political Theory and Liberal Culture”, *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* no. 2 (1999): 359.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> When negative liberty is taken in the Berlinian sense as “the absence of external coercion” then private property can be an example of securing distances between individuals by way of providing the sphere of liberty in which an external interference is not permitted.

Moreover, the negative notion of liberty sets the conditions for the political exercise of liberty. Therefore, the negative notion of liberty as the “absence of coercion” in Berlin’s definition seems to be one of the constituting features of a political society in which liberties are exercised.<sup>206</sup>

The notion of positive freedom takes the internal conditions of acting into account, such as being conscious of one’s wishes, reasons, and desires.<sup>207</sup> Within the notion of positive freedom people are said to be free if they are aware of these internal conditions which make them conscious of being a subject instead of an object. Berlin claims that this conception of freedom indicates the situation of “being one’s own master”, whereas the notion of negative freedom is to perceive freedom in terms of “not being prevented” by others.<sup>208</sup> According to Berlin, although these two different conceptions of freedom (positive and negative) do not seem to be logically distant from each other, they still conflict with each other.<sup>209</sup> Thus, they produce different consequences when applied to human worlds.

First, the positive conception of freedom endorses the conception of “self-mastery” which refers to a higher level of the human will. Such an understanding of self-mastery can be linked to Kant’s conception of the faculty of the will (which is rooted in the noumenal self), that can exempt itself from all empirical interventions and signifies a spontaneity denoting a rational capacity of performing moral actions. However, this conception of the moral subject may refer to an isolation which is expressed in Berlin’s words as follows: “I have withdrawn into myself; there, and there alone, I am secure, master of all I possess”.<sup>210</sup> Berlin states that the noumenal self is the demand for being protected from external obstacles, hence the noumenal self is like an “inner citadel”.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Berlin, *Liberty*, 52.

<sup>207</sup> Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”, 13.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.



The Stoic conception of freedom which focuses on the inner capabilities of one's self-mastery can be an example of such a concept of liberty. The Stoic conception of freedom can make someone who is captivated and chained in a dark room and unable to move anywhere, or someone living in repressive circumstances in which liberties are hardly allowed, appear free. Thus, from the political aspect, the stoic conception of freedom is useless because it has no contribution to the exercise of one's liberties. The practical form of liberty is, therefore, negative liberty. Thus, "being one's own master" may imply a complete disengagement with the empirical world (causal relations) and may refer to a "free" inner worldliness. At this point, the noumenal self in connection with self-mastery seems to be limited to an inner capacity belonging to human beings.

Second, Berlin draws attention to the fact that the positive conception of freedom as "self-mastery" splits the self into two categories: "the transcendent, dominant controller, and the empirical bundle of desires and passions to be disciplined and brought to heel".<sup>212</sup> One implication of this divided self is "the retreat to the inner citadel", which has been explained above. Another implication is "self-realization" in terms of the pursuit of a single path of rationality. The single path of rationality turns into the situation in which I cannot follow another path other than the "necessary" one. Thus, the positive conception of freedom employs a coercive notion of rationality by which 'human worlds' is conceived within the same rational rules and concepts. In regard to this coercive notion of rationality, Berlin says that we are taught to attain freedom using "critical reason, the understanding of what is necessary and what is contingent".<sup>213</sup> It may be understandable to apply such a method to geometry; yet, it becomes quite problematic, and even dangerous, when this method applies to history or sociology in relation to the attainment of freedom because it will be against pluralism.

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid, 22.

This method of attaining freedom in human worlds employs a rational whole, a “rational society” or a “rational state” which assumes the necessary principles of development which becomes “the positive doctrine of liberation by reason”.<sup>214</sup> Berlin’s criticism of Hegel’s, Marx’s and Rousseau’s conceptions of freedom highlights the collectivist aspect of their conceptions of the self which turns into a “super-personal entity” as “a State, a class, a nation or the march of history itself”.<sup>215</sup> The “real self”

may be conceived as something wider than the individual (as the term is normally understood), as a social ‘whole’ of which the individual is an element or aspect: a tribe, a race, a Church, a State, the great society of the quick and the dead and the yet unborn.<sup>216</sup>

Berlin describes the “real” self in relation to a “higher freedom”.<sup>217</sup> In each of these thinkers (Hegel, Marx, and Rousseau) we see different understandings of achieving a political unity. Berlin states that rational thinkers such as Spinoza, Hegel, and Marx, suggest solutions to eradicate domination in a rational society, because they believe that rational human beings respect rationality in each other and have no desire to dominate each other. Berlin contends that although their theories exhibit similarities and differences to each other, these thinkers commonly believe that “true” solutions based on a rational method reconcile with a “single whole” and a universal harmony.<sup>218</sup> According to these thinkers, in such a harmony there is no coercion; instead, “the freedom of rational self-direction” takes place for all, hence everyone is assumed to be a “liberated, self-directed actor in the cosmic drama”.<sup>219</sup> The pursuit of “unity” cannot be separated from the conception of “higher freedom” -in fact, it necessarily

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid, 26. “A rational (or free) State would be State the laws of which would be such that all rational men would freely accept them” (ibid).

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

requires the positive ideal of freedom. This understanding of liberation is to say that “to force empirical selves into the right pattern is no tyranny, but liberation”.<sup>220</sup> This means that liberty reconciles with law, “autonomy with authority”.<sup>221</sup> As can be seen, this understanding of freedom in connection to rationality (achieving the same rational nature in human beings) depicted here is against pluralism. Berlin reveals the characteristic features of demanding “unity”, expressed in his final words in *Two Concepts*:

To demand unity and certainty is perhaps a deep and incurable metaphysical need; but to allow it to guide one’s practice is a symptom of an equally deep, and far more dangerous, moral and political immaturity.<sup>222</sup>

The defense of positive freedom as “self-mastery” and “self-direction” is made on behalf of “human emancipation”. There must be a huge lack of foresight in such a defense when the severe consequences that the conception of rationality underlying positive freedom is likely to produce are taken into consideration. When carefully analyzed from Berlin’s perspective, positive freedom cannot lead to emancipation: it is not a liberation as positive freedom belongs to authoritarian views of politics and there would not be any “good” we could expect from such a conception of freedom. The defenders of positive freedom offer a complete solution to human history. Given that the realization of a value means the loss of another, the complete solution to human history as the ideal to which rationalist metaphysicians (those “from Plato to the last disciples of Hegel or Marx”) adhere is impossible; it is “a formal contradiction, a metaphysical chimera”.<sup>223</sup> Thus, the defense of positive freedom does not contribute much to the exercise of liberty which is what we wish for in a liberal pluralistic sphere of human worlds.

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>223</sup> Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”, 50. In rejecting such a “complete” solution and a “total harmony” of values, we acknowledge the practical realities “in which we are faced with choices between ends equally ultimate, the realization of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of others” (ibid).

Berlin is openly critical of positive liberty, yet he is also cautious when making criticism of the positive sense of liberty. Galston states that Berlin's fear is not of positive freedom itself, but of the very consequences of it:

Berlin's fear was that distinction between a higher and lower self, between the rational self and unreasoning desire, between true and false consciousness, would open the door for some groups to dominate others.<sup>224</sup>

Berlin seems to criticize positive freedom in the sense that it may serve as a useful tool, excuse, or purpose for dominating people by means of political manipulations and ideologies. Berlin, on the other hand, describes negative liberty as a "truer" form of liberty because of it recognizes value pluralism: Negative liberty is truer

because it recognises the fact that, when we choose one course of action or form of life, we may be forced to sacrifice to it another which is no less ultimate, and perhaps incommensurable with the former.<sup>225</sup>

Negative liberty is about the relations between individuals and "empirical selves" in the social realm (negative liberty, unlike positive one, applies to an empirical view of politics instead of metaphysical<sup>226</sup>). I find it important to pay attention to Berlin's criticism about "social freedom" or what could happen when freedom is linked with a social collective:

... liberty ... by being identified with the notion of social self-direction, where the self is no longer the individual but the 'social whole', that makes it possible for men, while submitting to the authority of oligarchs or dictators, to claim that this in some sense liberates them.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Galston, "Moral Pluralism and Liberal Democracy: Isaiah Berlin's Heterodox Liberalism", 90.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> See Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty", the footnote no. 25 in p. 51.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 40.

Berlin is counted to be in connection with individualism and in opposition to the totalitarian regimes that relies on the “social whole”.

The conception of liberalism this thesis has affirms the negative notion of liberty if it is grasped in connection to the possibility of communicating between individuals and exercising political action in the political sphere. In a pluralistic society where there is diversity, the existence of negative liberty enables individuals to communicate with each other. We can understand negative liberty as we see the limits of our actions through encountering objective constraints when engaging in them. In other words, conflict as a distinct relationship between values and, hence, the limited realization of values can give the clue to the relationship between negative liberty and maintaining communication among individuals.

#### **3.1.4. The Tie between Value Pluralism and Liberalism**

One camp following Berlin’s ideas on the relationship between value pluralism and liberalism defends that value pluralism entails liberalism. If value pluralism entails liberalism, then it means that only liberalism can be derived from the principles of value pluralism. In other words, if value pluralism entails liberalism, then liberalism gains its legitimacy from value pluralism.

If we say that value pluralism entails or necessitates liberalism, then it means that the diversity of values can only live within liberalism. In other words, only liberalism can allow diversity to exist.

Crowder has reformulated “the diversity argument” through another one: the argument from a negative conception of liberty -the diversity of values demands choice among values, which means that the diversity of values requires the liberty to choose. The liberty to choose is most widely allowed in liberalism; therefore, when the plurality of values and choice between values are of concern, it seems that value pluralism can be guaranteed and protected by liberalism. In this sense, especially for the pluralists who argue that the negative conception of liberty must be an essential characteristic of a

political system, liberalism can be the only political system in which the liberty to choose, hence pluralism is guaranteed.

Other than negative liberty, according to some liberal thinkers, autonomy as a liberal value can be prioritized considering value pluralism. Ramsay, for instance, states that individual autonomy can be appealing to those who recognize value pluralism.<sup>228</sup> According to Ramsay, when value pluralism become more apparent to people, the belief in society's choice to form the type of life is shaken.<sup>229</sup> In other words, for Ramsay, value pluralism strengthens and, moreover, prioritizes the value of autonomy. Therefore, he sees no other way than believing that individual autonomy should become a more significant value in a pluralistic society.<sup>230</sup>

Kekes thinks differently than Berlin, and other liberal thinkers, about the connection between value pluralism and liberalism. According to Kekes, liberals who consider a value as prevailing over other values cannot consistently embrace pluralism.<sup>231</sup> Prioritizing any value to another value is also inconsistent with pluralism. To resolve the inconsistency, as Kekes states, liberals distinguish two categories of values, namely "substantive" (virtues, purposes, and goods of an individual's life) and "procedural" (such as equality, liberty, justice, and the protection of human rights) values.<sup>232</sup> However, dividing values into such categories to resolve the inconsistency between prioritization and pluralism is problematic. Kekes expresses the problem clearly: "If liberals resolve the conflict by appealing to the overridingness of the fundamental liberal procedural value, then their position remains incompatible with pluralism, since pluralism excludes the overridingness of any value".<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Marc Ramsay, "Pluralism and Gray's 'Liberal Syndrome'", *Social Theory and Practice* 28, no.4 (2002): 553-4.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid, 567.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid, 568.

<sup>231</sup> Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism*, 202.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, 203-4.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 207.

We may conclude that, given value pluralism, the priority of any value is an inconsistent claim, and the universal validity of any political theory is highly questionable, including liberalism. As Kekes points out, although liberals reduce pluralism to substantive values, they should face the problem of incompatibility that happens among procedural values and offer an answer.<sup>234</sup>

### 3.2. Liberal Pluralism

Although Kekes thinks that liberalism cannot sufficiently accommodate value pluralism because such pluralism is maintained and reproduced at the procedural level, there are liberals who think that pluralism and liberalism can be compatible. Pluralists such as Crowder and Galston believe that liberalism can be supported and even grounded as a legitimate political system by value pluralism. Both basically rely on Berlin's liberal pluralism.

In his early essay "Pluralism and Liberalism" (1994) Crowder evaluates the arguments that purport to show that value pluralism can be a justification for liberalism: These arguments are based on the "intermediate values between pluralism and liberalism", and each argument is derived from a value, namely "tolerance, freedom of choice, humaneness and humanity, diversity, truth and truthfulness, and personal autonomy".<sup>235</sup> For example, in Berlin's argument from humaneness, by both pluralist thinking and liberalism, liberty is considered to be more "humane" than other values; hence a step from pluralism to liberalism is made. However, Crowder draws attention the problem with this argument, which is the same with the argument from choice, by pointing out the fact that if value pluralism is accepted, then then "humaneness, like choice, can be no more than one such value among others".<sup>236</sup> Although 'humaneness'

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 205-6. Schaber sees a possibility to solve conflict while he suggests some reasons for comparability. See Peter Schaber, "Value Pluralism: Some Problems" (1999). Further, on the relationship between monism and conflict and as to whether conflict entails plurality, see Michael, Stocker, *Plural and Conflicting Values* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, 1990), 241-48 in Part 3 "Plurality and Conflict".

<sup>235</sup> Crowder, "Pluralism and Liberalism", 296.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid, 299.

and ‘liberty’ are universal values, it does not follow, as Crowder says, that “we ought always, or ever, to prefer those values to their competitors”.<sup>237</sup> Moreover, according to Crowder, identifying human nature with the pursuit of freedom is “arbitrary”; human beings can also pursue other life forms and they can be plausibly envisaged to be conformists as “lovers of habit and routine”.<sup>238</sup> Stating this, Crowder aims to show that human nature can be “broad and rich enough to embrace all these tendencies” and appealing to “such a wide notion” as ‘human nature’ rules out “hardly anything at all”.<sup>239</sup>

In his early essay Crowder argues that these arguments fail to make a step from pluralism to liberalism and he concludes that pluralism

gives us no reason not to embrace values that have, by themselves or in combination with others, illiberal implications. We have no reason, as pluralists, not to prefer order and hierarchy to liberty and equality.<sup>240</sup>

In his later essay, contrary to the earlier one, “John Gray’s Pluralist Critique of Liberalism” (1998), Crowder argues that value pluralism can provide a ground for liberalism. In this essay he believes that, in accordance with the implications of value pluralism, liberal forms of life can be preferable to illiberal ones. In connection to this argument, Crowder states that the diversity of goods in a society is respected by liberalism the most and hence such a diversity “is best accommodated and celebrated by liberal societies”.<sup>241</sup>

Besides Crowder, the view that value pluralism can provide a support for liberalism is argued by another liberal thinker, William Galston. Galston follows Berlin in that a

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid, 300.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 299-300.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, 300.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid, 303.

<sup>241</sup> George Crowder, “John Gray’s Pluralist Critique of Liberalism”, *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 15, no. 3 (1998): 287-98, 296.



political theory must be evaluated in its moral engagements. What Galston argues is briefly that if value pluralism is true, then the liberty to choose (the negative notion of liberty) must be valued and the political system that most values the liberty to choose is liberalism; therefore, liberalism is the legitimate political system.

For Galston, liberalism gains its legitimacy in connection with value pluralism. Galston makes the step from value pluralism to liberal pluralism by using value pluralism as one of the supportive concepts and sources of a liberal theory.<sup>242</sup> Berlin's influence on Galston's view that political theory must be coupled with a comprehensive theory is obvious. In this respect, Galston accepts the conclusions of value pluralism, such as the irreducibility and heterogeneity of values, while he does not abandon a comprehensive ranking. In other words, Galston as a value pluralist believes that a comprehensive ranking which prioritizes some values does not undermine pluralism. He names the form of pluralism he endorses as "restrictive pluralism" according to which "certain values" can outweigh other values as they are more important.<sup>243</sup>

According to Galston's view, we should not forget that every political institution that organizes our political societies has had a background of legitimacy that came from a comprehensive discourse. Galston seems to believe that human values such as equality and liberty can only be defended by moral principles that are endorsed by comprehensive theories.

As Crowder observes, Galston's liberalism is a 'toleration-based' liberalism according to which toleration is the central value of a liberal political system that goes back to

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<sup>242</sup> Other two sources of a liberal theory are "expressive liberty" and "political pluralism". See William A. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism Political Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 28.

<sup>243</sup> Carl Lebeck, "Liberal pluralism — between autonomy, diversity and management", *ARSP: Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie / Archives for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy* 91, no. 1 (2005): 124.

“*Reformation liberalism*” associated with the Lockean tradition.<sup>244</sup> Galston is opposed to the concept of individual autonomy as an ideal value for liberal politics; instead he emphasizes the importance of “expressive liberties” that basically endorses a conception of liberty in which each individual and group must feel free to choose.<sup>245</sup>

Galston describes the political dimension of liberalism in terms of promoting the liberal public institutions. Galston’s political conception of liberalism can be understood in his statement regarding the difference between liberalism and civic republicanism in conceiving the worth of public life. According to Galston’s statement about this difference, if an intrinsic value is attributed to public life, then this will be rather the conception of public life which civic republicanism has; whereas liberalism has an instrumental account of public life.<sup>246</sup>

Thus, Galston embraces an “expressive dimension” of liberalism. This dimension also shows the difference between Galston’s liberal conception of public life and civic republicanism. Expressive liberties are protected by liberal principles but “need not be mirrored within civil associations”.<sup>247</sup> According to Galston, the dispute between a civic and expressive dimension of liberal democracy is about the disagreement regarding the concepts of citizenship they espouse. For Galston, attributing an intrinsic value to public life seen within the civic republican approach will result in more invasive public policies and less allowance of the expression of liberties, which is because of the too demanding conception of citizenship that civic republicanism has.<sup>248</sup> Such a demanding conception of citizenship works with a monist conception of “the good” which puts limits to the pluralism of goods. Galston believes that liberal

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<sup>244</sup> Crowder, “Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism”, 122. “Reformation liberalism” is one of the two concepts of liberalism discussed in the paper, the other is “Enlightenment liberalism” associated with Kant and Mill (Ibid, 123). These two concepts of liberalism are introduced and explained by Galston in “The Two Concepts of Liberalism” (1995).

<sup>245</sup> Crowder, “Two Concepts of Liberal Pluralism”, 124.

<sup>246</sup> Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 4.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid, 17.

politics should be committed to pluralism. Accordingly, a liberal state that accommodates the “expressive dimension” should not endorse a monist conception of “the good” and “ideals such as autonomy, critical rationality, and deliberative excellence”<sup>249</sup>; instead, it should allow the expression of different goods and identities. Thus the “expressive dimension” has a close connection with toleration.

According to Galston’s expressive conception of liberalism, civil associations must have the freedom to express their values in the private sphere (concerning their internal affairs). Galston argues that liberal politics or a liberal government should not be eager to impose beliefs on groups and interfere with the expression of different values in a society so long as “the core requirements of individual security and civic unity” are maintained.<sup>250</sup> Diversity must not be threatened and limited by public principles. However, Galston draws the line between a minimal morality and diversity as he says that

there is a basic distinction between the minimal content of the human good, which the state must defend, and diverse conceptions of flourishing above that baseline, which the state must accommodate to the maximum extent possible.<sup>251</sup>

Galston’s liberalism based on “expressive liberty” approves of the minimal conception of “the good” only in defining the public sphere, but it must not be imposed on individuals and groups who must feel free to choose their own conceptions of “the good” without being put under pressure by other individuals and groups.

### **3.2.1. Criticism of Galston’s Liberal Pluralism**

Galston as a liberal theorist believes that liberalism can be defended as a legitimate form of government based on value pluralism. Contrary to the implications I have

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<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 114.

drawn out from value pluralism, Galston defends that value pluralism can serve as the basis of liberalism. Galston develops his argument around the negative notion of liberty that he thinks to be the common feature of value pluralism and liberalism. The choice between values is necessary as value pluralism says that the realization of a value means choosing between values in conflict. Consequently, choosing is highly valued in value pluralism and the political system that puts the highest weight on choice is justified. This is how Galston justifies a “liberal theory of politics”.

As I have stated and explained in 3.1.3, the negative notion of liberty has a key role in the maintenance of communication. It has a close connection with value pluralism in the sense that different ways of expression (“expressive liberties”) require the liberty to choose. However, determining the negative notion of liberty as a superior value to others, determining any liberal value as superior to illiberal values, can be problematic for the incomparability thesis.

When we accept value pluralism, liberal values and liberty cannot be ranked as a higher value because of the incomparability of values. Thus, considering negative liberty as the prevailing value of political life can pose a problem for value pluralism. In this sense, Galston’s view that value pluralism must be the basis for liberal theory can be criticized. If values are incomparable as value pluralism says, then no value can outweigh another value, which seems to make the justification of liberalism contradictory.

The negative notion of liberty is criticized from a value-pluralist viewpoint in the sense that no value can be prioritized over another. On the other hand, the negative notion of liberty is a requirement for the possibility of communication as it secures the distance and space between individuals. Think of these two conditional statements: One is that if a single form of life cannot be imposed on individuals, then a political system that respects the liberty to choose and the diversity of lifestyles must be the only plausible political system. The other is that if a single form of life cannot be imposed on individuals and if value pluralism is true, then no political system can be defensible to be the only reasonable system, including liberalism. In the first statement

value pluralism is not assumed. However, some value pluralists defend liberalism based on negative liberty, that illiberal political organizations do not respect negative liberty and do not allow individuals to choose their own ways of lives. Value pluralism does not directly say or imply anything about the ‘unreasonableness’ of illiberal political systems. I believe that it is more plausible with the premises of value pluralism to accept negative liberty as a requirement of communication instead of using it as a basis of liberalism. The negative notion of liberty and liberty to choose must not be considered as a prevailing value if we take value pluralism into consideration seriously. Thus, I criticize the negative notion of liberty as a prevailing value of a political community, not as a requirement of communication.

A liberal political sphere is the realm of communication between conflicting values; and it is “liberal” because each different version of life must have a chance to express its values and exercise them whether it conforms to a liberal form of life or not. A collective lifestyle can embody different values than an individual lifestyle and individuals and groups have the equal right to choose and express their values.

There is also a problem with accepting that public life is maintained by liberal values. If liberal values are accepted in shaping the public sphere, then how can we be sure that they will not at the same time be imposed on other individuals’ and groups’ lives? The public sphere can be only liberal if the diversity of ends and values have the equal chance of expression and the equal condition of being subject to compromise. Thus, what I want to claim that liberal values do not have a privileged status that makes them exempt from being compromised.

To conclude, value pluralism, from the results I have attained, guides us to abandon any complete formulation of liberalism including comprehensive and moral accounts, as well as any determination of the political sphere with a central value. There is another (non-comprehensive) way of protecting liberties without setting the liberty to choose as a prevailing value of a liberal political system and without decreasing the importance of the liberty to choose so that it respects pluralism and its premises of incomparability of values. Value pluralism can be compatible with liberalism, yet

value pluralism cannot serve as a basis for liberalism for the reasons I have explained. Thus, I will examine a political rather than moral conception of liberalism.

### 3.3. Political Liberalism

Compared to value pluralists, Rawls has a different view in giving an account of liberalism as a political conception. The Rawlsian account of liberalism promotes principles and values in a political outlook and this view is a politically defined liberalism; in Rawls' terms, a *freestanding* liberalism.<sup>252</sup> In *Political Liberalism* (1993), Rawls' problem is to resolve the conflict "among a plurality of reasonable yet incompatible comprehensive doctrines".<sup>253</sup> Such a problem concerns "the problem of stability" about determining the principles of the basic structure of a just society.<sup>254</sup> In providing resolution to conflict, Rawls' political liberalism does not present a comprehensive or a moral doctrine or a theory to defend liberalism; it rather claims to be a non-comprehensive liberal perspective which conceives liberalism only in terms of political conceptions such as justice. Rawls develops the concept of justice from a consensus to form the basic institutions of a just liberal society.

Rawls implements a contractarian approach to derive the principles of justice, especially two main principles, which are fundamental to a society and the constitution on which people from different ideological and moral views can agree.<sup>255</sup> Thus, each person is considered to have a right to liberties (1<sup>st</sup> principle) and inequalities are

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<sup>252</sup> Regarding the debate between a comprehensive and a "freestanding" liberalism, Galston reports that Berlin presents alternatives to the traditional accounts of liberalism. William A. Galston, "Moral Pluralism and Liberal Democracy: Isaiah Berlin's Heterodox Liberalism", *The Review of Politics* 71 (2009): 85.

<sup>253</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, "Introduction", xviii-xx.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid, xix.

<sup>255</sup> It must be noted that Rawls' contractarian approach has a difference than the traditional approaches of social contract found in Hobbes and Locke: In Rawls's version of the contract theory it is not intended to give an anthropological and historical account of the arise of political authority; rather his conception of "original position" that his version of the contract theory introduces serves as a "device" by which a clarification of the concept of justice is intended to be provided (Talisie, *On Rawls*, 32).

arranged so that they are acceptable if they benefit the least advantaged (2<sup>nd</sup> principle).<sup>256</sup> In Rawls' picture of society, inequalities are tolerable and even meaningful in a politically well-organized system.

In Rawls's political liberalism we observe that virtues such as "reasonableness" and "tolerance" are realized within the political conception of justice and emerge in a liberal community as non-comprehensive.<sup>257</sup> Rawls describes the "political conception of justice" in a democratic regime.<sup>258</sup> Accordingly, liberalism, as a form of democratic regime, should take "intuitive ideas" to be "embedded in the political institutions".<sup>259</sup> As we see Rawls intends to defend liberalism on the basis of a political conception of it.<sup>260</sup>

The term "political" is a *freestanding* conception in which Rawls develops his liberal principles.<sup>261</sup> The liberal principles on which citizens agree are simply political. Rawls explains why these principles cannot be based on comprehensive doctrines by revealing the *fact* that conflict among comprehensive doctrines is unresolvable: "Citizens realize that they cannot reach agreement or even approach mutual understanding on the basis of their irreconcilable comprehensive doctrines".<sup>262</sup> It must be noted that, in Rawls, it is the principle of respect that the political principles come from, not the contrary. Larmore plainly states it: "Respect for persons lies at the heart

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<sup>256</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 5-6.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid*, 194.

<sup>258</sup> Rawls, "Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical", 224.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid*, 225.

<sup>260</sup> Gray defines all forms of liberalism as "universalist political theory". See John Gray, "Agonistic Liberalism", *Social Philosophy and Policy* 12, no. 1 (1995): 111 – 135.

<sup>261</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 140.

<sup>262</sup> John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited", *The University of Chicago Law Review* 64, no.3 (1997): 766.

of political liberalism, not because looking for common ground we find there but because it is what impels us to look for common ground at all”.<sup>263</sup>

The significance about Rawls’ liberalism is that liberalism must be only political in the sense that only political principles must operate as the basis of justice; classical tendencies, including philosophical and religious doctrines, must be abandoned.<sup>264</sup> Rawls aims to form and justify his liberalism around the notion of “overlapping consensus”. Rawls conception of “overlapping consensus” serves as a condition of a fulfilled “reciprocity” between citizens.<sup>265</sup> “Overlapping consensus” is realized by citizens not because they agree on the same reasons to justify justice, but because they all *justify* the political concept of justice by their own reasons based on the comprehensive doctrines to which they are committed.<sup>266</sup> Thus, “overlapping consensus” is attained in the political sphere.

The political concept of justice is, thus, “mutually” justified in different ways at the level of “public justification”; in other words, although reasons are private (based on citizens’ comprehensive worldviews) the realization of “overlapping consensus” seems to represent a public uniformity.<sup>267</sup> Rawls defines the liberal community in terms of a cooperative society shaped around the political concept of justice.<sup>268</sup> The

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<sup>263</sup> Charles Larmore, “The Moral Basis of Political Liberalism”, 608.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid, 605.

<sup>265</sup> Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, 340.

<sup>266</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 171.

<sup>267</sup> While criticizing Rawls’ “public justification”, Habermas thinks the contrary: although we can be sure that the political concept of justice is justified by all citizens, it does not follow that it has been done mutually or “jointly”. See Krzysztof Kedziora, “Habermas on Rawls and the normative foundations of democracy”, *European Journal of Social Theory* (2021): 8. Raz, however, goes further by stating that justice does not require an agreement or consensus to function; rather justice only requires pluralism as the availability of choice among incompatible ways of life. See Leslie Green, “Un-American Liberalism: Raz’s ‘Morality of Freedom’”, *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 38, no. 3 (1988): 320. Review of *The Morality of Freedom* by Joseph Raz.

<sup>268</sup> Rawls sees society to be “complete and self-sufficient scheme of cooperation” where persons do not simply choose to be in it (“Justice as Fairness: Political” 233); also, Rawls states that his political concept of justice is remodeling the doctrine of the social contract (ibid, 235).



political principles, *uninfected* by ethical principles or a comprehensive conception of the “good life”, that Rawls aims at, becomes acceptable by everyone.<sup>269</sup>

Although Rawls is in the Kantian tradition of liberalism, unlike Kant, he does not wish to ground his political liberalism on a metaphysical account; rather, he aims to accomplish a theory of justice on a “reasonably empiricist” account that is not based on a priori grounds.<sup>270</sup> The background comes from the Kantian conception of moral agency as Rawls treats individuals as sovereign and rational; yet Rawls’ liberalism is less demanding than the Kantian form of liberalism and is developed in terms of political notions instead of Kant’s metaphysical notions.<sup>271</sup> What must not escape our attention is that Rawls’ account of liberalism, as Ryan argues, still employs some abstract notions, such as the conception of humans as rational beings who choose the principles of justice behind a “veil of ignorance”.<sup>272</sup>

Rawls’s liberal account of justice requires the possibility of a “public consensus”. However, the notion of consensus can be problematic from a pluralist view of politics. How can pluralism produce a consensus? If a liberal theory aims to rely on pluralism, then it must either give up its pluralistic approach or completely abandon the idea of consensus. The clash between pluralism and the idea of consensus is obvious. Accordingly, a tension arises between a liberal theory that seeks to have a basis on the idea of consensus and pluralism. I believe that this tension and inconsistency arises from the expectation of a consensus. The inconsistency between a liberal theory that

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<sup>269</sup> The political principles which are *uninfected* with any comprehensive conception of the “good life” correspond to the political statements made in the public sphere -and hence I see them as open to compromise. However, Rawls’ aim to find a ground on which every citizen agrees seems to be in contradiction with a political community committing to pluralism. This problem will be discussed when I criticize Rawls’ implementation of “stability” in 3.3.1.

<sup>270</sup> Rawls “Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical”, 228 and see also Rawls, *Theory of Justice* (1999); See also P. Riley, “Neo-Kantian Epilogue: Rawls and Habermas” (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

<sup>271</sup> See I. Kant, “Toward Perpetual Peace” (1795).

<sup>272</sup> (Ryan, “The Liberal Community”, 99; Ryan states that a possible objection might be that Rawls’s conception of rational individual does not work in political context as successful as is does in the economic context. Rawls states that individuals in the original position are “theoretically defined” (Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, 127).

seeks to have a basis on the idea of consensus and pluralism continues unless a different form of liberalism is adopted instead of a quasi-moral version of liberalism like that of Rawls. In other words, a pluralist conception of liberalism can be possible unless it does not strive for consensus.

### **3.3.1. Criticism of Rawls' "Overlapping Consensus"**

The problem with comprehensive theories is that they endorse a single doctrine for grounding liberalism. Rawls' liberalism has a positive side when compared to comprehensive liberalisms in that it seeks for a ground that is not a comprehensive theory and an objective account of values.<sup>273</sup> Although Rawls' political liberalism does respect pluralism more and contains more pluralistic notions than any comprehensive theory of liberalism, there is also a related problem with Rawls' political liberalism. It is not as serious as in comprehensive theories but still serious enough to raise worries regarding a pluralistic view of liberalism.

While Rawls distinguishes between comprehensive doctrines and political concepts, he describes political concepts as *freestanding* which means that political concepts are the objects on which consensus is made: his political liberalism supports freestanding political concepts and does not endorse the truth of a particular comprehensive doctrine.<sup>274</sup> Accordingly, in a public discussion the truth of comprehensive doctrines is not the topic of discussion, instead the political point of view is expressed in political interaction.

Rawls asks whether social unity can be stable by his own conception of justice.<sup>275</sup> Thus it would be correct to assume that stability is what Rawls aims for while developing

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<sup>273</sup> Rawls's liberalism is not grounded on a moral theory ("Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical", 246).

<sup>274</sup> Jon Mandle and David A. Reidy, eds., *The Cambridge Rawls Lexicon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 126.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid, 250.

the notion of “overlapping consensus”.<sup>276</sup> Rawls does not comprehend stability in terms of a comprehensive account of liberalism; hence he does not define his concept of “overlapping consensus” in terms of a comprehensive moral doctrine. He thus suggests political concepts as an alternative to comprehensive moral doctrines so that concepts such as autonomy, for instance, are designated as political concepts, not as concepts belonging to a comprehensive moral doctrine. This political approach distinguishes Rawls from Kant and Mill.<sup>277</sup> These political concepts are also “reasonable” according to Rawls and serve as the basis of his notion of “overlapping consensus”. Rawls’s political liberalism aims to define reasonable principles on which citizens can agree. Thus, the accomplishment of consensus is managed not by a rational procedure, but by a political procedure that is implemented by reasonable persons.

As explained above, Rawls regards that “overlapping consensus” can be achieved by virtue of political and reasonable concepts. Rawls favors “the political” over the moral and the comprehensive as he sees justice as a matter of practical concerns and political consideration. Rawls emphasizes the political consideration of justice by “reasonably reliable agreement”.<sup>278</sup> Such a notion of consensus is expected to guarantee social unity, and hence stability under reasonable conditions. Thus, Rawls expects social pluralism to be unified and to reach a continual balance. This view is why I find his political liberalism problematic.

Reasonable concepts require a strong commitment; reasonable persons must be committed to their values as they hold their values steadily and firmly. However, stability and agreement on principles contradicts the possibility of compromise. public consensus will always be achieved at the expense of pluralism. Thus, in comparison to Rawls’ view, compromise rather than consensus may properly grasp the very sense of “the political” based on a pluralist approach. In a pluralist thinking of “the political”,

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<sup>276</sup> I will, again, discuss this stable notion of consensus from Gray’s critical perspective of it in 3.4.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid, 247.

<sup>278</sup> Rawls, *Theory of Justice*, 39.

communication in the political sphere is provided by means of compromise instead of consensus. Disagreements are *valuable*; not by reaching an agreement or consensus but by compromising with each other. Even a political concept can still pose a problem for pluralism if it is in search of perpetual stability. The search for an *ideal* form of agreement or consensus, is too demanding. Rather it should be acknowledged that conflict cannot be resolvable (Berlin states the same), and we should accept the existence of disagreements in a liberal community.<sup>279</sup>

Another issue about aiming at consensus in a liberal theory addresses comprehensive discourses that apply “truth” to public reasoning. Accepting “reasonable pluralism” in society, Rawls suggests a reasonable agreement that does not submit to the truth of a certain comprehensive doctrine in the attainment of political principles. Any notion of “reasonableness” would eventually act against the incomparability of truth claims: If we have the incomparability of truth claims, as an irreducible plurality implies, then we are incapable of measuring them according to a standard such as the legitimacy of liberal principles and conditions of stability.<sup>280</sup> An objection to Rawls on this point comes from Cohen: Cohen believes that “truth” matters in the public sphere. For Cohen, even though we keep disagreeing with each other, at least a political concept of “truth” should not be “excluded” from public reasoning.<sup>281</sup> While Rawls’ notion of reasonableness provides a better account of a pluralistic liberal community than

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<sup>279</sup> For more details about Rawls’ notion of “reasonable” as a resolution of disagreements see Hélène Landemore, “Beyond the Fact of Disagreement? The Epistemic Turn in Deliberative Democracy”, *Social Epistemology* 31, no. 10 (2017): 276-295, 281-82.

<sup>280</sup> Contrary to Rawls’ political liberalism that works without “truth”, Landemore maintains that disagreement should not end up with an “epistemic abstinence” or an avoidance of objectivity; this fact, according to her, assumes “political objectivism (Landemore, “Beyond the Fact of Disagreement? The Epistemic Turn in Deliberative Democracy”, 290). I conceive an irreducible plurality among truth claims and values. It does not make any important difference about the direction of my thesis to discuss whether the plurality among truth claims and values is foundational (on metaphysical level) or non-foundational (on decisional level). I leave this technical difference as another philosophical topic. Considering the political implications of value pluralism, we always will be at the position of compromise and recognize that the realization of one good requires the loss of another.

<sup>281</sup> For more details on Cohen’s concept of truth see Joshua Cohen, “Truth and Public Reason”, *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 37, no. 1 (Winter, 2009):2-42. On the criticism of Cohen’s conception of truth, I recommend Jethro Butler, “Finding Space for the Truth: Joshua Cohen on Truth and Public Reason”, *Res Publica* 23 (2017): 329–347.

Cohen's conception of "truth", still both Rawls' and Cohen's accounts rest on moral grounds when defending political liberalism.

The followers of the Hobbesian conception of politics are also cautious about "truth"-based politics.<sup>282</sup> While this thesis is obviously not Hobbesian, and it is even debatable that Hobbes can be considered as "the father of liberalism",<sup>283</sup> in the tradition of political thought beginning from Hobbes the relationship between politics and the concept of "truth" has been discussed by many. Hobbes' solution to disagreement occurring among equal individuals is an "absolutist State". In Hobbes, it is the authority -the Sovereign- that makes the laws- not the "truth".<sup>284</sup> The Hobbesian conception of the public sphere depends on the act of the Sovereign based on these laws. Hobbes' criticism of "truth" also includes its contemporary, and even modest conceptions.<sup>285</sup> Hobbes does seem to reject the concept of "truth" in shaping the public sphere. Regarding these discussions, I would argue that the public sphere, for the reasons I have repeated several times in the passages above, cannot be defined with the conception of "truth". Rather, it is only comprised of various goods and can be considered as the marketplace of ideas and opinions, which is even right for philosophical statements. Therefore, if we wish to attain a political conception of pluralism, all these ideas and opinions should be open to compromise in the public

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<sup>282</sup> Philippe Raynaud, "Truth and Power in Modern Politics", in *Does Truth Matter? Democracy and Public Space*, 56.

<sup>283</sup> As Shklar writes referring to Hobbes's political philosophy that "No theory that gives public authorities the unconditional right to impose beliefs and even a vocabulary as they may see fit upon the citizenry can be described as even remotely liberal." (Shklar, "The Liberalism of Fear", 24). However, this view can be challenged by those who believe that liberalism must depend on a philosophical and complete doctrine.

<sup>284</sup> *Leviathan* (Chap. 26). However, it must be noted that Hobbes accepts that anything which opposes to peace "cannot be true": the sovereign must consider what is required to maintain peace thereby civil war is prevented (Chap. 18). The thing I wish to emphasize is that Hobbesian conception of sovereign is much related to the practice of making laws and maintaining peace within it.

<sup>285</sup> Raynaud, "Truth and Power in Modern Politics", 59. See also Arendt's "Truth and Politics" in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: The Viking Press, 1961). She draws attention to the two distinct faculties in Hobbes: "'solid reasoning' and 'powerful eloquence,' the former being 'grounded upon principles of truth, the other upon opinions . . . and the passions and interests of men, which are different and mutable'" (ibid, 233).

sphere and should not be based on a conception of “truth”, nor should they be expected to conclude in a rational consensus.

A rational consensus, contrary to the pluralist conception of a political community, accepts a uniformity. Rawls utters a similar concern by addressing an objection to him. His concept of “overlapping consensus” is objected to because “the idea of political unity founded on an overlapping consensus must still be rejected, since it [overlapping consensus] abandons the hope of political community”.<sup>286</sup> His response to this objection is as follows:

To this objection, we say that the hope of [the] political community must indeed be abandoned, if by such a community we mean a political society united in affirming a general and comprehensive doctrine. This possibility is excluded by the fact of pluralism together with the rejection of the oppressive use of state power to overcome it.<sup>287</sup>

To put it in another way, a society unified by a comprehensive doctrine paves the way for an oppressive government in the pursuit of uniform values and goals.<sup>288</sup> A unified political society structured by a comprehensive doctrine would be oppressive as it excludes pluralism from the political sphere. Comprehensive doctrines in the hands of political power which aims at uniting the society around one of them serve as the most suitable means of accomplishing tyrannical goals. There are many of them in a society and they must have ways of conversation that produce peaceful consequences against their oppressive potentiality. Rawls observes the difficulty of deciding upon one of the incompatible comprehensive doctrines in shaping a society. That is also why Rawls

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<sup>286</sup> John Rawls, “The Idea of an Overlapping Consensus”, *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 7, no. 1 (1987): 1-25, 10.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> As example of oppression and uniformness of human values, the situation of Covid-19 fits well. We have experienced oppressive government and considerably dangerous degrees of state surveillance in the situation of Covid-19. Restriction procedures were an application of rationality; everything “seemed” rational, though against many humane things. During the pandemic, people have felt the oppressive power of uniformness as a univocal authority of medicine and science; and they have witnessed a deliberate exclusion of opinions as the forms of dissent were declared to be “conspiracy theories”. People have had difficulties with coping with covid-19 rules, not because they have become “fragile” by liberal policies, but because their demand for liberty has been cut off and they have found little place to compromise such regularities.

employs “overlapping consensus” and reasonableness as an alternative to a comprehensive doctrine.

As explained before, Rawls’ political liberalism aims to attain social unity. Such a social unity can be said to be guaranteed when consensus is embodied by a constitution. Accordingly, any consensus embodied by a constitution is expected to provide a stable ground and rely on stable principles -such as Rawls’ principles of justice. A public consensus embodied by such a constitution is to decide upon certain principles to function as core principles, so that a constitutional regime can endure. One problem with that conception of consensus is that if these certain principles are accepted to be outside the scope of compromise, and the stability of the public consensus is upheld as a major goal, then the public consensus will conform with a homogenous system. If a constitution tries to foresee and determine certain conditions under which it can be changed, and if a constitution declares that core principles are unchangeable, then it is not open to compromise, hence it is against plural ways of expression and closed to democratic discussion. A constitution which is a rigid form of consensus implies an “agreement” on principles that are accepted as uncompromised. If a constitution wants to distance itself from a homogenous system in favor of making room for democratic and free discussion, then it must not determine the certain conditions of change; rather, it must be subject to plural conditioning in human worlds and “vulnerable” to compromise among different political groups. Further, from a pluralist perspective, the constitution cannot be a prevailing consensus over “the political”; “the political” is tied to pluralism, hence political action performed not by a consensual politics or a constitutional principle but by compromise.<sup>289</sup>

Another problem, which is not as fundamental as the one described above, is that consensus on constitutional principles may not work efficiently for promoting the exercise of liberties and, moreover, may work against them depending on the policies of the government. For instance, North Korea’s constitution declares that every citizen

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<sup>289</sup> The concept of “the political” is discussed in detail in 4.1.1.

of it has a freedom of speech and of religious belief, whereas, in practice, the government restricts the exercise of such freedoms.<sup>290</sup> As seen, there are situations in which a consensus and a constitution may not guarantee liberties even if it aims at it by laying out principles in favor of them; instead, a possibility of compromise can do it.

All forms of communication involving the components of debate and compromise belong to the political sphere where political action is exercised. The guaranteeing principle of pluralism is not the centrality of liberal values, nor any consensus; rather it is the constant placing of compromise in the political sphere. In the political sphere conflicting different viewpoints can enter communication if they are “compelled” to compromise with each other. Compromise does not aim at stabilizing a value, nor an approximation to an agreed upon “truth”. It affirms the conflictual aspect of “the political” and yet provides resolution to conflict by rendering pluralism effective in the political sphere. Rational consensus may also be considered as a resolution to conflict; however, as this thesis argues, it contradicts the conception of “the political” since it aims at harmonizing pluralism.<sup>291</sup> Compromise, on the other hand, does not aim at harmonizing pluralism, rather it conceives pluralism in action. Thus, considering pluralism, I am arguing that we should leave the conception of consensus and affirm compromises in the political sphere.

### **3.3.2. Criticism of Rawls’ Justification of Liberalism**

Rawls’ political liberalism provides a non-comprehensive account of liberalism. However, it is still problematic from the pluralistic viewpoint. Although being a non-

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<sup>290</sup> North Korea is one of the countries that is labeled as “not free” by Freedom House. See the data of liberties in North Korea <https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-korea/freedom-world/2021>. For the Constitution of North Korea, [https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/DPRK\\_Constitution.pdf](https://www.hrnk.org/uploads/pdfs/DPRK_Constitution.pdf).

<sup>291</sup> “The political”, as it will be elaborated in the next chapter, has a conflictual aspect. Consensus can only hide such an aspect and arrange conflict around specific goals, and this maneuver is not properly “political”. The conception of “the political” as the conflictual aspect of a political community and against consensual approach of politics is influenced by Mouffe’s agonistic conception of “the political”, yet not limited to it. See “On the Political” in Chapter 4.



comprehensive account of liberalism, Rawls's political liberalism still seems to function as a validation of liberalism. Thus, in this section, I criticize Rawls' political liberalism as I claim that the validation of liberalism based on "reasonable" principles is not compatible with the consequences of value pluralism.

The ways of attaining the principles of political institutions are the main concern in Rawls' project. The agreement through which first principles of political institutions can be achieved is part of Rawls' "political constructivism of justice as fairness". Political constructivism is one of the conceptions of objectivity Rawls lists (the others are rational intuitionism and Kant's moral constructivism).<sup>292</sup> It is helpful to state that Rawls draws attention to the distinction between the conception of objectivity and the objective point of view: The conception of objectivity, is that which is related to political philosophy as it explains how agreement among reasonable persons is reached.<sup>293</sup>

In this conception of objectivity reasonable persons are expected to agree on the same principles. This conception of objectivity is not doctrinal but procedural. Rawls's political liberalism aims at a *procedural completeness* because it reduces pluralism into several principles that are declared "reasonable". In other words, the conception of objectivity as agreement on reasonable principles does not consistently represent a pluralistic characteristic; hence the objectivity as the so-called agreement seems to be a reworking of complete "rational" principles.<sup>294</sup> Reasonableness thus denotes rationality, as in Larmore's usage<sup>295</sup>, by narrowing the diversity of beliefs to several liberal principles. However, such liberal principles cannot exist without the exclusion of pluralistic values and cannot be compromised once determined. In this sense, liberal

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<sup>292</sup> Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, 110, §5.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, 111-2.

<sup>294</sup> Rawls believes that rational intuitionism can agree with political constructivism (regarding political values) in the sense that reasonable persons have an agreement on the well-reasoned principles (ibid, 113). The conception of objectivity as the agreement among reasonable persons may not be compatible with pluralism, especially with the incomparability thesis of pluralism.

<sup>295</sup> Larmore, "The Moral Basis of Political Liberalism", 602.

principles are attained by reasonable (and rational) individuals who seem to disallow compromise on these principles.

Rawls' political liberalism, though not comprehensive, also has a potential risk of falling into the same category of uniform accounts. It is not clear whether the reasonable principles are compatible with the pluralistic values of liberalism or with the commitments of a comprehensive liberal theory. The confusion stems from implementing a uniform standard for the legitimacy (or validity) of liberalism. Rawls's uniform standards consist of the principles of justice and a justification of liberalism. Mouffe draws attention to the same point as she wishes to show that Rawls takes liberalism to be the only legitimate political system that can be derived from "reasonable" principles -which are meant to be liberal principles- that cannot be fully distinguished from moral concerns.<sup>296</sup> Mouffe also states that a right-based approach does not provide the solution to the problem that she sees in Rawls' conception of "the political" -since "right" can only be derived from a comprehensive doctrine which would be inconsistent with Rawls' political liberalism.<sup>297</sup> An alternative approach, as an alternative conception of liberalism, must reject any uniform standard and can be only related to political pluralism in which liberalism has no uniform standard. In other words, liberalism must refer to a political community in which the notion "the political" finds its proper meaning and this proper meaning no longer carries out any goals of comprehensive and rational principles.

Abandoning any validating theory of liberalism does not mean abandoning liberalism; on the contrary, it means that liberalism can be achieved without a validating theory if the implications of value pluralism, namely compromise, are taken into consideration. No value should be imposed on individuals' lives as fundamental and prior if value pluralism is seriously considered. Liberalism conceived in pluralistic terms should treat values as *compromised adaptations of pluralism*, instead of treating them as in

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<sup>296</sup> Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 24.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid, 25. For Rawls anti-liberal principles seems to belong to the category of unreasonable principles and they cannot coexist with the liberal political organization without challenging it -as Mouffe emphasizes.

need of justification. In these consideration, a non-comprehensive, non-moral and properly political liberalism is attainable: this conception of liberalism is different than Rawls' conception of political liberalism for it does not aims at establishing stable principles and formulate a liberal theory based on these principles.

Abandoning validating theories of liberalism would be quite useful in defending a pluralistic liberal community. Such an attempt would have to make the following moves: First, we should give up the search for an objective theory in the sense that no theory can grant us the objective component without threatening pluralism; thus, we should also give up the notion of agreement on the principles –principles taken to be objective for a political structure.<sup>298</sup> Second, liberalism must not be assessed in terms of a systematic outlook, because the plurality of beliefs and values cannot be enclosed by any systematic attempt. The plurality of values does not allow us to have fully systematized theories. Systematicity, as Marino explains, requires few principles which, according to her, means that we must reduce principles to a few fundamental principles; however, this reduction of principles is not possible if pluralism is taken into consideration.<sup>299</sup> Liberalism must not be subject to theorization unless we intend to reduce plurality.

### **3.4. “Agonistic Liberalism”<sup>300</sup>**

Another pluralist camp, whose prominent figure is Gray, argues that liberalism cannot be grounded on value pluralism. If there is value pluralism, then liberalism can only be one of the governments among other alternatives. In other words, no political theory

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<sup>298</sup> Rorty employs a method of abandoning theorization of liberalism as he opposes any theory of legitimacy and any attempt of philosophical justification which he sees as “putting politics first and tailoring a philosophy to suit” (Rorty in “The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy”). My concern is also not grounding liberalism, yet my effort and conclusions are different from his.

<sup>299</sup> Marino states that value pluralism seems not to allow us for having fully coherent and systematic theories. See Patricia Marino, “Moral Coherence and Value Pluralism”, *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 43, no. 1 (2013): 117-135, 124-5.

<sup>300</sup> John Gray, “Agonistic Liberalism”, *Social Philosophy and Policy* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 111-135.

can triumph over another since no value must outweigh another one. The incomparability of values implies an incomparability of political theories.

Gray's intention, however, is not to present a relativism and a pluralistic scene of political systems; rather, he aims to oppose the liberal tradition and its effort which aims at the universality of liberal values and demonstration of liberalism as a legitimate political system. He seems to scorn the liberal project and has a different point of focus than liberal thinkers. From Gray's perspective we should expect something else from liberalism than an application of universal values. What we can expect from liberalism is about the ways in which a "peaceful coexistence" of conflicting lifestyles and plural values can be accomplished.

As explained in section 3.2, some liberal thinkers (Ramsay, Crowder, Galston) hold that liberal values are strongly promoted by value pluralism. Gray, however, thinks the opposite. Gray states that "doctrinal liberalism" (or comprehensive liberalism) cannot overcome the "unpleasant" consequences of value pluralism, namely incommensurability.<sup>301</sup> Therefore, the view that value pluralism enables us to prioritize liberal values, such as individual autonomy, should be mistaken. For Gray, liberal values, particularly individual autonomy, cannot claim themselves to be universally valid as value pluralism challenges moral individualism and the universality of liberal values. In light of these considerations, pluralism seems to have both an ontological and a functional role in Gray's thought. Gray is a true adherent of pluralism.

Before examining his pluralist perspective in detail, I shall give a description of the changing path in Gray's thought, which I find quite helpful as a guide for us to better understand his concepts and ideas. Crowder classifies Gray's thought into three successive periods: the first period is the "subjective" period in which Gray holds that choice among incomparable values is made subjectively. Subjectivity of choice

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<sup>301</sup> John Gray, *Post-liberalism: Studies in Political Thought* (London: Routledge, 1996), 287. Gray defines the four fundamental elements of "doctrinal liberalism" as "universalism, individualism, egalitarianism and meliorism" (ibid).

implies that there are no rational standards –so that choice is “radical” rather than “rational”.<sup>302</sup> The second period comes when Gray abandons the subjectivist approach and maintains a contextualist view of pluralism which makes rational choice possible under pluralism and it is the context that allows us to choose among incomparable values in order to resolve conflict –Crowder describes Gray’s position in this middle period as “culture-based conservatism”.<sup>303</sup> In the third period, Gray’s concern turns towards the clash between different moral traditions and suggests a form of politics in which parties can reach a common ground to achieve *modus vivendi*.<sup>304</sup>

Gray bases his concept of *modus vivendi*<sup>305</sup> not on a minimal conception of universal morality, nor on a universalist conception of liberalism, but on the premises of value pluralism, namely the incompatibility and incomparability of plural values.<sup>306</sup> However as Horton points out, Gray’s *modus vivendi* is not completely separate or free from moral elements, i.e., universal human goods and evils. Gray endorses the pluralist thesis of values; yet he does not radicalize the relativity of human goods. From Gray’s perspective, there seems to be diversity among different moralities, but nevertheless the human good can be defined in relation to human needs that are widely universal.

Gray sees that there are some evils that are not specifically defined in a single morality, or on a “consensus of beliefs”, but nevertheless indicating “a constancy in human

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<sup>302</sup> Crowder, “Gray and the Politics of Pluralism”, 176.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid, 176-7.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid. Crowder notes that *modus vivendi* may possibly be associated with a universalist view though it is not for sure (ibid, 180). He also states that Gray’s rejection of liberal universalism is based on his contextualism which he embraced during the middle period.

<sup>305</sup> For Gray *modus vivendi* corresponds to the peaceful living of diversity. For Gray’s explanation of *modus vivendi* see John Horton, “John Gray and the Political Theory of *Modus Vivendi*” in *The Political Theory of John Gray* (2006), 44. *Modus vivendi* is “consistent with many different moralities, but it is not infinitely expansive” (ibid, 45).

<sup>306</sup> Horton, however, argues that defending *modus vivendi* on a strong claim of value pluralism can be problematic: According to Horton, value pluralism is a controversial theory, and hence it would be better “to ground *modus vivendi* in a broader and less contentious range of considerations” (ibid, 46). I do not intend to expose the details on the discussion on *modus vivendi* since it is not my primary concern here. Further details about *modus vivendi* are in 3.4.2.

nature”.<sup>307</sup> Gray’s conception of evil that is common for all humans reflects a view pointing out the experiences that cause great sufferings and “make any kind of good life difficult, or impossible”, such as being tortured, separated from one’s friends and family, being humiliated.<sup>308</sup> Thus, Gray’s view of liberalism is not completely “demoralized”. However, these “universal evils” are not grasped within a minimal conception of universal morality since there is no single way to respond to them and it is possible to make different choices when encountering these evils.<sup>309</sup>

In short, Gray does not completely reject the universality of some of the human goods (some “virtues” such as “courage and prudence”) that are required for human happiness.<sup>310</sup> This does not have to mean that Gray would allow that which he criticizes, i.e., a universalistic liberalism, to be a legitimate political system for all humans. What he rejects is that there is a single morality that applies to all humans and there is a single political theory that is applicable to all human societies. Gray’s pluralistic approach denies the superiority of any morality and political theory over another. According to Gray, different moralities have different ways of dealing with the “human good”.

Gray’s agonistic liberalism abandons the idea that liberalism must have a universal claim on human conduct together with the “abstract universalizable principles”.<sup>311</sup> That is to say, Gray’s agonistic liberalism opposes not only universalism, but also traditional liberalism which is counted as a political form of universalism even though it comes with the name “liberal”. According to Gray, liberalism should abandon the conception of the “good life” if it wants to associate itself with the different ways of life. Diversity is the indication of liberty. Liberty is, thus, conceived in terms of

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<sup>307</sup> John Horton, “John Gray and the Political Theory of *Modus Vivendi*” in *The Political Theory of John Gray* (2006), 45. See also Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 66.

<sup>308</sup> Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 66 (examples given by Gray).

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>310</sup> John Gray, *The Two Faces of Liberalism* (New York: New Press, 2000), 8.

<sup>311</sup> Gray, “Agonistic Liberalism”, 114.

pluralism. Gray conceives no standard to classify these expressions of different ways of life: “On the agonistic view, ... there is no impartial or universal standpoint from which the claims of all particular cultures can be rationally assessed”.<sup>312</sup>

Pluralism can be interpreted as a condition of human worlds according to which, as Peter Jones states, human worlds are comprised of “different and conflicting beliefs and values”.<sup>313</sup> In consideration of pluralism, liberalism should give up its monist conception of the “good life” and take a pluralistic approach to political life. In this respect, Gray aims to develop an alternative liberalism and a liberal theory that abandons the monistic moral theories. He contends that value pluralism “animates” “agonistic liberalism”.<sup>314</sup>

Gray’s conception of liberalism recognizes the incomparability of conflicting goods. Thus, he establishes his liberal theory “not in rational choice, but in the limits of rational choice”. The “limits of rational choice” refers to the “rational incomparability” among the incommensurable values of options. According to Gray, we often must make choices “among goods that are both inherently rivalrous (and often constitutively uncombinable) and sometimes incommensurable, or rationally incomparable.”<sup>315</sup> The pluralistic notion of liberty, which is proclaimed in Gray’s agonistic liberalism, is a more adequate notion of liberty than the notion of liberty that we see in other forms of liberalism, such as Rawls’ political liberalism which I have explained and criticized in the previous sections.

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>313</sup> Peter Jones, “Toleration, Value-Pluralism and The Fact of Pluralism”, 191.

<sup>314</sup> Gray, “Agonistic Liberalism”, 124.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid, 116.

### 3.4.1. Analysis of Gray's "Agonistic Liberalism"

As said in the last paragraph in the previous section, Gray formulates his pluralist conception of liberalism, namely "agonistic liberalism", based on value pluralism and the diversity of incommensurable conceptions of "the good". However, Gray indicates that incommensurability does not signify "the Augustinian idea of the imperfectability of human things"; incommensurability rather tells us that we should completely abandon the idea of perfection.<sup>316</sup> In this sense, although having a clue of pluralist conception of liberty as I have described, Gray's agonistic liberalism seems to be more related to a non-traditional form of liberalism, yet it does not completely abandon the role of values in resolution.<sup>317</sup> Gray's contextualist view of pluralism addresses contextual and cultural values to be able to resolve conflicts; yet it is not his intention to fall into cultural relativism, that's why Gray develops a social theory with a strong claim of value pluralism. Developing his agonistic conception of liberalism, Gray makes a movement against the traditional forms of liberalism that he sees to be incompatible with value pluralism.

Gray's agonistic version of liberalism seems to be consistent when claiming that value pluralism must be in opposition to traditional forms of liberalism, as well as liberal universalism, that are based on universalist conceptions of human life, and that there is no rational resolution of conflicting values. The universalism of liberal values and a possibility of rational choice among values cannot be supported by a pluralistic view, especially because of the incomparability of values -which I have sufficiently discussed in the previous chapter. Compared to liberal universalists, Gray seems stronger in his arguments when asserting that a liberal universalism is invalidated by the pluralism of values.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid, 117.

<sup>317</sup> See FN 426 in 4.6.

<sup>318</sup> Crowder believes that liberal pluralists can "restate their position in the face of Gray's pluralist challenge" (Crowder, "Gray and the Politics of Pluralism", 180. Crowder, contrary to Gray's anti-liberal pluralism, concludes that pluralistic worldview is more compatible with liberal Enlightenment (ibid, 187). Gray's anti-liberalism represents his critique of the universalist liberal project. For a more detailed information regarding Gray's such an *anti*-attitude see Peter Lassman, "Pluralism and its Discontents:



Gray seems also consistent in his criticism of Rawls, especially in his criticism of Rawls' notion of consensus.<sup>319</sup> Gray describes Rawls' liberalism as "liberal legalism" and sees it as anti-political because it replaces politics with law -such an ironic criticism given that Rawls labels his conception of liberalism as "political".<sup>320</sup>

Gray's "agonistic liberalism" reveals another important point about modern political thought when making a criticism of the "universality of human reason. In modern politics, the "universal authority of reason" seems to have dominated the Western conception of the political theory. Thus, the Western conception of the political theory has had a close relationship with moral philosophy. Morality and politics are intertwined so that universalist principles determine both the moral and political sphere, especially in terms of the positive conception of liberty.<sup>321</sup> However I believe that the concept of liberty must be independent of any form of universalism if it will be evaluated in terms of pluralism.

The remedy to a strictly universalist and rationalist understanding of politics can be pluralism. The objectives promoted in the universalist and rationalist conception of politics have seemingly bad consequences, even though universalism and rationalism in politics is assumed not to necessarily lead to such authoritarian regime. The point, however, is that shaping a political organization around fundamental principles will eventually turn it into a uniform political organization in which everyone has to apply these principles in their individual lives. As it is seen, politics is not only about governmental action but about highly affecting individuals' lives and liberties. Therefore, an alternative way to monistic structures of politics, such as universalist

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John Gray's Counter-Enlightenment", in *The Political Theory of John Gray* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007): 99-113; 102; 104.

<sup>319</sup> Gray draws attention to the problematic characteristic of consensus and asks cleverly: "Does not any consensus change over time? If so, why should any moment in its development be privileged as the source of fixed principles?" (Gray, "Agonistic Liberalism", 123).

<sup>320</sup> Ibid, 124-5.

<sup>321</sup> Kant's political philosophy is a great example of the intricate relationship between morality and politics. See "Kant's Social and Political Philosophy" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, sections 1 and 2.

and rationalist political theories, can be the plurality and multiplicity of human worlds. Gray advances his grasp of political theory in an alternative way according to which the diversity among humans is quite relevant and attractive:

Human identities are plural and various in their very natures, as natural languages are plural and various, and they are always variations on particular forms of common life, never exemplars of universal humanity in terms of cultural diversity.<sup>322</sup>

As seen, Gray denies the concept of “universal humanity” as he respects cultural and even individual diversity. His criticism of the concept of “universal humanity” relies on his criticism of the Enlightenment thought based on the concept of universal rationality.<sup>323</sup> The concepts of “universal humanity” and rationality reinforce the tendency towards promoting uniform principles in political domain. Such universalist approaches will correspond to a uniformness of the political sphere; hence, as Gray also draws attention, they threaten diversity.

I confirm that Gray’s depiction of liberty has the closest form of a pluralist conception of liberty that respects and adheres to diversity.<sup>324</sup> Such a pluralistic notion of liberty has advantages when contrasted with to other forms of liberties that are found in traditional and classical liberalisms. On the other hand, there are some points about Gray’s “agonistic liberalism” that must be distinguished from the liberal perspective I am offering in this thesis. My position differs from Gray’s “agonistic liberalism” in two respects. First, Gray’s conception of liberalism does not grasp the full scope of political action because it still relies on some moral conceptions such as “peace” and “human good”. Second, his criticism of liberalism falls short of conceiving compromise as the means of having conversation in the political sphere. Gray says that

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<sup>322</sup> Gray, “Agonistic Liberalism”, 112; also, John Gray, *Enlightenment’s Wake* (Oxford: Routledge Classics, 2007), 98.

<sup>323</sup> Gray, *Enlightenment’s Wake*, 99-100.

<sup>324</sup> For Gray diversity is not a political option which we can affirm or object to; nor can it be taken as an implication of a political theory; it is simply a *fact* that “we should welcome and make the best of”. John Gray, “*Modus Vivendi*: Liberalism for the Coming Ages”, *New Perspectives Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (2008): 8-9.

the dispute between conflicting statements must eventually come to an end -and there must be “final and authoritative statements”.<sup>325</sup> “Final and authoritative statements” can undermine the pluralistic notion of liberalism and the role of political compromises. A pluralistic notion of liberalism that fully contain diversity in a pluralistic community must abandon moral notions in the political sphere and affirm political action.

### **3.4.2. Value Pluralism and *Modus Vivendi***

Liberal values do matter and are viable for everyone who claims to have the right to express their own beliefs and exercise their choices, yet liberal values cannot be universally and rationally validated. For instance, individual autonomy (that one is the master of one’s life and not to be subject to external forces) as a liberal value cannot be determined as a universally validated value, though it is important in the exercise of liberty (to some degree) but must be comprehended as a compromise-able value among the other values. Individual autonomy as a complete individual independency (more than a practical self-ruling), as a property of an ideal subject in morality, is hardly possible in human worlds where values are realized at the expense of other values and these realizations are infinitely conditional.<sup>326</sup> This is a result derived from value pluralism. No value (because of the incomparability of values) can be timelessly and transculturally (universally) authorized in human worlds by any comprehensive and political theory including liberalism. No political system, including liberalism, can have a morally privileged position among others.<sup>327</sup> Therefore, realization of a value is a matter of choice and compromise and it always be incomplete when realized. Thus,

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<sup>325</sup> Paul Kelly, “The Social Theory of Anti-Liberalism”, in *The Political Theory of John Gray* (2007), 38.

<sup>326</sup> Mill’s version of autonomy about leading one’s own life in accordance with one’s own decisions can be compared to Kant’s conception of autonomy in that Mill’s version of autonomy as against paternalistic interference (of the state) can be more relevant to the exercise of individual liberties and its compromise-able situations. Nevertheless, Mill’s conception of individual liberties based on the “harm principle” may not fully satisfy the needs of a pluralistic liberal community as I have already discussed. Kant’s concept of autonomy is criticized from a pluralist conception of human action in 2.2.1.

<sup>327</sup> As a result of value pluralism, Gray emphasizes, liberalism becomes deprived of submitting any “universal authority” over values. Zakaras A “Liberal Pluralism: Isaiah Berlin and John Stuart Mill”, 70.

a liberal community is characterized not by a unified system of values, but by compromise-able plural values. Thus, a liberal community is not a moral, but a political community and values are political.

This is not an imposed liberalism in the sense of imposing liberal values on individuals and groups, and not justified on moral grounds as it rejects any comprehensive theory of liberalism and comprehensive doctrine of the single conception of “human good”. The depicted liberalism here accepts the premises of value pluralism to celebrate the various ways of expression and their communication. Can such a conception of liberalism be considered in relation to *modus vivendi* -Gray’s conception of peace? Considering Gray’s agonistic liberalism, the answer could be partly yes because of rejecting the universality of liberal values, but with a contribution of some notions such as compromise. The concept of *modus vivendi* (or living in peace) can be a *consequence or product* of compromises. In this consideration, *modus vivendi* is not grasped as a comprehensive value to be justified in moral terms; rather it constitutes a political condition.

*Modus vivendi* must be grasped as the condition of “peace” not in the sense of living in harmony, but in the sense of living in a pluralistic political sphere that is attained by political action of conflicting views. Conceptions of peace may not be enough to meet the conditions of a pluralistic political sphere unless they treat pluralism as an effective constituent of the political sphere. A “peaceful” society can appear to be consisting of multiple comprehensive doctrines, but it may still not endorse and allow the plural ways of expression by way of political institutions. For instance, the number of parties in the political arena does not meet the sufficient condition for a pluralistic politics unless they have the equal chance of exercising the liberty of expression to contribute to a political community. Moreover, a despotic regime in which no conflict happens because of oppression can also exemplify peace and harmony, but this is not acceptable from a liberal standpoint since it does not allow the exercise of liberties. Thus, a peaceful society does not meet the sufficient condition for a liberal pluralistic politicalness presented in this thesis.

*Modus vivendi* has both pluralistic and liberal characteristics. When conceived in terms of an outcome, *modus vivendi* would be separated from morality and conform to politics with the emphasis on performing political action rather than mere tolerance and a peaceful coexistence of conflicting values.

### **3.5. Two Criticisms of Liberalism**

In this section I am going to examine two criticisms of liberalism in connection the concept of “the political”. The concept of “the political” in question basically belongs to Schmitt. Thus, in the first section I explain Schmitt’s criticism of liberalism. Next, I move to Mouffe’s criticism of liberalism within her agonistic conception of “the political” which originally comes from Schmitt yet takes another form.

#### **3.5.1. Schmitt’s Criticism of Liberalism**

Schmitt’s criticism of liberal politics addresses the belief that liberal politics can only provide temporary, occasional solutions –never being ultimately decisive. Schmitt also sees compromise as an essential feature of liberal politics; however, he contends that compromise cannot meet the demands of equality in democracy, and, according to him, only endorses struggle.<sup>328</sup> As Schmitt points out, liberalism means restricting the power of state or government in favor of individual freedoms and private property, which, according to him, is a negative thing since it causes the removal of the link between his conception of “the political” and the state.<sup>329</sup> For Schmitt, liberalism, especially commercial liberalism, reduces the political to economics, which does not advance any theory of the state. Therefore, in Schmitt’s thought, liberalism cannot even be a political theory.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>328</sup> Carl Schmitt, *The Conception of the Political*, tr. George Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), part 8.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid.

In Schmitt's understanding of politics, "the political" is such a strong and intense constituent that it transforms the nonpolitical (i.e., purely moral) into political situations and each "human grouping" is a sovereign "political entity". In Schmitt, the logic of "the political" relies on the distinction "between friend and enemy": politics cannot be thought separately from such a distinction to which all political actions and reasons can be reduced.<sup>331</sup> It must be noted that "friend-enemy" is not an abstract distinction since there is the real or concrete possibility of an enemy for each political entity. The concept of "enemy" signifies the "present possibility of combat" and is presupposed by the political entity. Thus, there is a coexistence with another political entity; coexistence of opposites; allowing the struggle of opposites in the political sphere. Considering the concept of "enemy" Schmitt develops, it is seen that Schmitt has a pessimistic vision of human nature, which is reminiscent of the Hobbesian depiction of the state of nature, and political theories must consider it.<sup>332</sup>

The logic of "the political" based on the "friend-enemy distinction" continues to exist in commercialism and the liberal economic world since it creates new "friend-enemy groupings". Schmitt states that "the political concept of battle in liberal thought becomes competition in the domain of economics and discussion in the intellectual realm".<sup>333</sup> As it can be seen, Schmitt tries to show that "the political" in terms of the friend-enemy distinction never ceases to exist in the liberal world but takes other shapes such as competitors in the economic arena. It must be noted that the version of liberalism Schmitt mainly criticizes is "individualistic" and "commercial liberalism" whose primary values are autonomy, autonomous market, and globalization. These

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid, part 2; also, in part 8 Schmitt's note.

<sup>332</sup> In Hobbes the pessimistic conception of man, i.e., the wicked nature of human beings is central to any political thought and a fundamental presupposition of any political philosophy -which, apparently, has its roots in the theological concept of "original sin" and the biblical narrative about humans' fall from grace when Adam was expelled from paradise. Even Kant's conception of human being contains the theological concept of the wicked human nature when he expresses the inclination to committing immoral in humans as the "propensity to evil"; yet, as the nuance of Kantian morality, humans always have the freedom to choose the good.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid, part 8.

values, according to Schmitt, result in “depoliticalization”, hence the state will lose its meaning, so does “the political”.<sup>334</sup>

It can be argued that Schmitt’s “friend-enemy distinction” corresponds to what has been analyzed as the conflict of values in the context of this thesis. But this thesis develops a certain notion of compromise as the workable resolution of conflict and as a liberal strategy to *form* “the political”. This means that where Schmitt sees the problem of “depoliticalization” we attain a solution.

### 3.5.2. Mouffe’s Criticism of Liberalism

Mouffe objects to “modern democratic political thinking” that believes in the development of politics which has purportedly resulted in humans’ tendency to cooperate rather than fighting against each other. Mouffe not only objects to this optimistic view of “modern democratic political thinking”, but also criticizes the role attributed to rationality in forming a peaceful democratic society:

an idealized view of human sociability, as being essentially moved by empathy and reciprocity, has generally provided the basis of modern democratic political thinking. Violence and hostility are seen as an archaic phenomenon, to be eliminated thanks to the progress of exchange and the establishment, through social contract, of a transparent communication among rational participants<sup>335</sup>

The optimistic view of modern democracy seems to depend on the rationalist and universalist conception of consensus, which makes it possible to form a contract or agreement among “rational participants”. This rationalist conception of consensus reinforces the expectation that modern democracy will yield favorable results from communicative procedures. However, as Mouffe points out, this faith in rational consensus expresses a misconception of democracy. Mouffe emphasizes the main

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<sup>334</sup> Schmitt, *The conception of the Political*, part 8.

<sup>335</sup> Mouffe, *On the Political* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 3-4.

characteristics of democracy to be a gentle form of “antagonism” and the conflictual condition of the political sphere.<sup>336</sup>

While developing her agonistic perspective of democracy, Mouffe uses Schmitt’s criticism of liberalism. As explained in the previous section, Schmitt severely criticizes liberalism since he sees liberal politics to be against his sense of “the political” which he displays by “friend-enemy distinction”.<sup>337</sup> Mouffe also grasps the sense of the political in terms of conflictual relations as she claims that democratic politics is stimulated by these relations among collective entities. However, for Mouffe, agonism constitutes the conflictual feature of “the political” in the form of “we/they relation”. In this respect, she is against “the post-political view” which she considers to be reflecting a situation in contemporary politics in which the division between the right and the left is erased.<sup>338</sup>

In this post-political period, any political system which aims at a rational uniformity, i.e., a rational consensus, among plural values seems to universalize its own interests and claim its interests to be the same with those of all rational beings. Mouffe aims to reveal the fact that such a uniformity will render the political system in question the single hegemonic power. She emphasizes the danger of such a uniformity for democratic politics and as a solution suggests multipolarity, i.e., the “plurality of hegemonic powers”, to be implemented instead of a unipolarity.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>337</sup> Schmitt’s conception of “the political” depends on the “friend-enemy distinction” (Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, part “The Relation between Liberalism and Democracy” in “Foreword: Dimensions of The New Debate Around Carl Schmitt”).

<sup>338</sup> Mouffe objects to the “post-political” perspective in that she refuses to consider politics to be carried out in a domain “beyond left and right” (Mouffe, *On the Political*, 4).

<sup>339</sup> Ibid, 6-7. From the Schmittian perspective, Mouffe explains the dangers of unipolarity through the example of terrorism: According to Mouffe, it has been a considerable increase in terrorist attacks after the “neo-liberal model of globalization” dominated the world (ibid, 81). Mouffe states that such a unipolarity in politics may not be the only reason to explain terrorism since there are multiple reasons for it. Nevertheless, what she wants to emphasize is that a unipolar world necessarily produces its “antagonistic” opponent because a unipolar construction of the world cannot be “inclusive” without excluding the factors that do not conform with it (Schmitt argues against the “complete inclusiveness” of liberalism, ibid, 78).



According to Mouffe the reason for why liberalism cannot grasp the pluralistic characteristic of the political sphere is its limited understanding of pluralism: there are so multiple values and perspectives that we cannot follow them all; yet liberalism assumes a non-conflictual cooperation among them.<sup>340</sup> Liberalism characterized by this assumption does not consist in an antagonistic conception of “the political”. As Mouffe states, the liberal assumption that conflicts occurring in a pluralistic public life can be resolvable by rational solutions is mistaken when seen from the antagonistic perspective which Mouffe believes to be the essence of “the political”.<sup>341</sup> From an antagonistic perspective of “the political”, any rationalistic conception of consensus is to negate the irreducibility of antagonism. In this perspective Mouffe comes close to Schmitt’s criticism of liberalism, particularly in the antagonistic conception of “the political”. Yet she develops her own conception of pluralist democracy by transforming Schmitt’s “friend-enemy distinction” to a “we/they relation”.<sup>342</sup>

Mouffe claims that democracy can be strengthened and “deepened” when conceived within the notion of “adversary”.<sup>343</sup> Mouffe’s conception of democracy depends on the antagonistic dimension of “the political” which cannot be ignored because the political arena is always constituted by hegemonic power relations -which means that democracy cannot be described in terms of non-adversarial and neutral features.<sup>344</sup> In Mouffe’s agonistic perspective of democracy, challenging existing power relations and trying to transform them seems to be the task of politics as it denotes the dynamism of the political struggle.

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Mouffe, unlike Schmitt, does not reject liberal democracy; she proposes her own conception of liberal democratic politics within an antagonistic and pluralistic outlook. Schmitt sees pluralism possible only between states and rejects its possibility within the state as he believes, within his understanding of democracy, there should be a “homogenous” people within the state (ibid, 14).

<sup>343</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>344</sup> ibid, 34.

From Mouffe's viewpoint, liberal democracy is not a political system that employs neutral and rational procedures; it instead involves hegemonic relations. These hegemonic relations can be transformed into new forms of relations. This transformation, as Mouffe argues, is possible by an adversarial model of democracy. Therefore, Mouffe's agonistic approach opposes the optimistic view of modern democracy and its assumptions, particularly those of liberal democracy such as that a rational agreement can be made among conflicting interests.<sup>345</sup>

Mouffe does not advocate for a politics that aims at destroying the existing political organization. The transformation can be accomplished in such a way that new political institutions replace the existing ones without completely abandoning liberal democratic institutions. The critical point is that, as Mouffe argues, the "consensual approach" that liberal democracy (especially the traditional liberal politics) pursues and aims to apply is not the only path we should necessarily follow.<sup>346</sup> This is understandable when she refers to the main difference between the "dialogical" and the "agonistic" perspectives: the "agonistic" perspective aims at challenging the existing hegemonic power and tries to replace it with the new one, that is, according to Mouffe, the politics deserving the name "radical" which is not "the revolutionary politics of the jacobin type, but neither is it the liberal one of competing interests within a neutral terrain of the discursive formation of a democratic consensus".<sup>347</sup>

Thus, the agonistic perspective Mouffe suggests differs from the "dialogical" one which intends to support a consensual democracy. Her view of democracy involves the idea of transformation according to which a power struggle happens between the opponents rather than a consensual communication. Such a transformation is necessary, according to Mouffe, because the so-called consensus conceals hegemonic power relations, and it can be carried out only if the subjects of democratic struggle

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<sup>345</sup> Mouffe states that many liberal theorists reject to recognize the antagonistic dimension of politics, as they consider it as a threat to the "realization of consensus" (ibid 29).

<sup>346</sup> Ibid, 51-2.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid, 52.

are “adversaries” whose political struggle with each other result in the defeat of the old dominant power and the establishment of the new one.<sup>348</sup> However “the radicalization of democracy” depicted here must not be characterized with the “Leninist tradition of total revolutionary break”, for Mouffe states that their understanding of “radical democracy” has a compatibility with “the maintenance of the institutions of the so-called ‘formal democracy’”.<sup>349</sup> What we should understand by “radical democracy” is that in the process of democratization (of democracy) the “hegemonic dimension” (of politics) cannot be ignored, for, according to Mouffe, hegemonic relations are constitutive of the political sphere. This constitutive element of the political sphere is, according to Mouffe, not grasped by the liberal and consensual approach to democracy, which is why she argues against them and responds to them within her agonistic perspective.

The illustration of her thesis is the rise of populist parties. Mouffe believes that the rise of populist parties in the political sphere shows that the adversarial model of democracy is the genuine model of democracy which cannot be detached from political practice. The political discourse which populist parties use fills the void occurring in the political sphere when parties do not enter the agonistic debate since the differentiation between existing political identities has been blurred by the universalistic assumptions underlying the traditional discourse of postwar liberalism; hence voters have become incapable of identifying their political stances.<sup>350</sup> As Mouffe states, the rise of populist parties and the influence of the political discourse populist parties use on people depend on the democratic demands that have been ignored by the traditional parties.<sup>351</sup> This situation, according to Mouffe, shows that when a dynamic democratic confrontation has disappeared in the political sphere people tend to believe in the “illusory hope” populist parties provide for them as the

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<sup>348</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid, 71.

political discourse populist parties and leaders use seems to be the only way through which people can express their democratic demands.<sup>352</sup>

The solution to this problem is, for Mouffe, creating a new “we” against “them” since politics always consists in the making of adversaries.<sup>353</sup> Thus, for Mouffe, the claim that democracy has made progress when it entered the “phase” in which the distinction between the left and right has been removed can be disproven by the rise of populist parties. The rise of populist political discourse in the political sphere is analyzed by Mouffe as follows: the rationalist and individualist model of politics liberal democracy endorses does not really work.

Moreover, Mouffe draws attention to the problem that arises when populist political discourse is met with a moralist reaction. According to Mouffe, the moralist reaction against populist parties is an “antagonistic” way of creating the “we/they relation”: extreme political discourses are evaluated labeled and considered as “moral evils” rather than being seen as political opponents. If the political agonism is replaced by moral antagonism, the agonistic form of democracy which considers opponents to be political adversaries rather than moral enemies is threatened.<sup>354</sup> Within the “post-political” outlook

hindering the creation of a vibrant agonistic public sphere, leads to envisaging the ‘they’ as ‘moral’, i.e., ‘absolute enemies’, thereby fostering the emergence of antagonisms, which can jeopardize democratic institution.<sup>355</sup>

The problem I have described above seems to occur when politics and morality are not separated from each other, and political statements are evaluated in moral terms

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<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid, 70.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

instead of being taken as political claims which are responded to with another political claim.<sup>356</sup>

In my perspective, the appearance of populist parties in the political sphere, in contrast to Mouffe's view, seems to be the indication of the hardening of the demarcation between the opponents' political discourses. The political discourse populist parties use arises when pluralism in the political sphere is revoked and when the political sphere goes toward monism. Populist parties create another form of monism against traditional parties, which results in a never-ending cycle. Thus, the adversarial model and the understanding of democracy based on the notion of "adversary" and agonism seems to have the potential to give birth to extreme political discourses. Moreover, the adversarial model seems not to have a cure for the worsened condition of democratic politics.

I want to emphasize that the reason for why democratic politics declines is because the pluralistic condition of democratic politics worsens. The pluralistic condition of democratic politics worsens because political parties dissociate from compromises that are to be *sensibly* made. By way of compromises democratic politics gains a pluralist form and democratic demands can be expressed without the need for extreme political discourses to re-appear.

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<sup>356</sup> The point stated in the sentence will be elaborated in 4.3.

## CHAPTER 4

### COMPROMISE IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE

So far, I have discussed that there is conflict between incommensurable values and explained the ways of dealing with this conflicting plurality in the political sphere employed by the pluralistic versions of liberalism. However, I have emphasized the problems with these pluralistic liberalisms and criticized them. In connection to these criticisms, I have indicated the need for a notion of compromise to properly accommodate pluralism in the political sphere. Thus, in this chapter I offer this thesis' perspective of liberalism through introducing the notion of 'sensible compromise'.

To resolve conflict between values compromise works like this: I wish to realize a value V. So, I must compromise values that are possibly in conflict with V. The realization of value V is being aware that values in conflict with value V must be compromised and making those compromises. Pluralists therefore draw attention to the importance of choice and compromise. Berlin, for instance, focuses on the key role of compromise in the sense that we must choose to resolve the conflict between values (see 2.3.3). Gray also mentions compromise when he suggests a way of resolution of conflict among different traditions. However, I do not see any further conceptualization and detailed explanation of compromise other than denoting its importance in politics in either Berlin's or other pluralists' philosophies.

Berlin's motivation for acknowledging the importance of compromise and choice stems from his belief that we have a moral obligation to avoid extremes.<sup>357</sup> I conceive

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<sup>357</sup> Cherniss & Hardy, "Isaiah Berlin", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, section 4.1.

compromise as a liberal and political aspect of action rather than a moral obligation. Thus, compromise can be understood as a necessary choice. It seems oxymoronic; yet understandable when the two aspects of compromise are taken into consideration: Compromise is necessary as a condition for the parties' communicating with each other<sup>358</sup>; yet it is a choice performed based on voluntary reasons.

#### **4.1. Compromise as Political Action**

When I talk about compromise, the emphasis is on the conflict and disagreement between values and ends. The reason for why I emphasize the conflict and disagreement is to take a separate (rather than collective) step to resolve it or try to see the reasons for making compromises.

Considering value pluralism (and the incomparability of values entailed by it), disagreement implies that the conversations around disagreements will be open-ended. In such open-ended conversations, compromises enable us to maintain communication as well as reaching practical results. As an attitude of accepting plurality and heterogeneity instead of homogeneous realities, compromise emerges as a means of resolution implied by value pluralism. To realize a value, we must compromise at least one or many other values. This means that we are in the process of realizing our objectives despite the disagreement of values.<sup>359</sup> Pluralism and compromise thus signify the dynamic feature of human relations and bring forth a considerable amount of choice and understanding in our relationships.

Other than compromise, toleration also makes communication between ours and others' conflicting values and ends possible. However, there are some problems with

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<sup>358</sup> The argument that compromises enable political actors to communicate relies on the premise that compromise increases the space of plural ways of expression, hence the exercise of liberty. Compromise increases negative liberty which is the requirement for communication between individuals and groups by stimulating diversity, thus communication becomes possible -as already explained. See 3.1.3 and 3.3.1.

<sup>359</sup> Jones has a different point of view about whether the source of disagreement is in pluralism. See Peter Jones, "Toleration, Value-pluralism, and the Fact of Pluralism", *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 9, no. 2 (2006): 197-8.

toleration. To begin, toleration has an inherent characteristic, as Gray reveals, namely being “judgmental” towards the object of toleration.<sup>360</sup> Toleration inherently possesses a judgmental attitude towards the object in question: I tolerate something because I already have a judgment about it which is the reason for toleration. Thus, one problem with toleration is that it does not genuinely correct the dogmatic attitude because of this inherent characteristic which Gray points out.

There is another problem with toleration. It is not a problem indeed but the inadequacy of toleration in performing political action. Compromise can solve this problem: When compared to toleration compromise is active with respect to the purpose of resolving conflicts. I conceive compromise as an engagement in political action, whereas toleration remains indifferent. Thus, toleration is far from enabling us to implement a genuine resolution; toleration can only be acceptable when it is reinforced by compromise.

Considering value pluralism, we are taught and advised that we cannot persist in the absoluteness of ideas, neither should we have an ideological inflexibility in realizing our values and our ends. We must see that we can only realize our values when we compromise another value. Further, we cannot dwell in the doctrinal depth of ideas; we must rather subject ourselves to grasp the influence of diversity and widen our perspectives, by means of entering communication in the political sphere. Communication enables us to get exposed to other views and see outside of our subjective perspectives. Compromise is what makes all this possible.

If conflict is inescapable in political life, then compromise must be the political action to realize political goals such as the goal of livability -which can be grasped as *modus vivendi* as an object accessible to all political actors. Otherwise, as the consequence of conflict, we live in the *real* possibility of physical violence -such a consequence with which Schmitt would see no problem.<sup>361</sup> However physical violence and any rigid

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<sup>360</sup> Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake*, 28.

<sup>361</sup> Robert B. Talisse and Scott F. Aikin, “Why Pragmatists Cannot Be Pluralists”, *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 41, (2005): 103.



concept in the political sphere that allows for its possibility threatens political life not only in terms of the security of life but also in terms of the liberty of expression. Talisse grasps *modus vivendi* in terms of toleration rather than agonism.<sup>362</sup> I believe that *modus vivendi* must not be seen only as toleration, but also as a pluralist achievement of diversity since it is produced by compromises as *engagement in political action*. Pluralism in the political sphere is supported if compromises are made, and if the political sphere is the realm where political discussions are held then it must require compromise.

In these considerations compromise carries out political engagements in democratic discussions; hence become political action. As political action compromise represents a practical interest in livable resolutions. By compromise we do not merely tolerate, but we achieve a liberal sphere in which we place ourselves within the realm of the plurality and diversity of opinions. Within the realm of the diversity of conflicting opinions compromise as political action provides the way of maintaining communication. With respect to the purpose of having communication between conflicting perspectives, which toleration cannot accomplish by itself, compromise is a political virtue in our relationships.

Compromise can also be interpreted as a type of political oratory happening between political actors as rivals in the political arena who aim at influencing the people who are the hearer of their communication. Aristotle believed in the value of political life because he saw such an important value in oratory, i.e., the value of political participation in making decisions about public affairs, and the influencing feature of opinions publicly uttered. According to Aristotle, the influencing power of opinions does not rely on merely arguments, but also depends on the appearance of the orator whose character should “look right”.<sup>363</sup> Thus, during a political oratory, conveying emotions to the public audience will have a more powerful effect on them who judge the speaker by way of those emotional connections. Not only does Aristotle make a

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, tr. W. Rhys Roberts, 69. [www.bocc.ubi.pt/pag/Aristotle-rhetoric.pdf](http://www.bocc.ubi.pt/pag/Aristotle-rhetoric.pdf).

long and elaborate discussion about emotions as a means of persuasion; but he also emphasizes moral features of personality to have an important role in persuasive arguments.

These elemental characteristics of political oratory (or political conversation) do not mean that they must be against rational reasons to convince the people about the beliefs held by the speaker. However, reasons alone are not the primary factors evaluated by others in communication. This implies that the development of trust in the reasons presented in political oratory involves a variety of factors, including the moral qualities the speaker holds. Thus, Aristotle emphasizes the character of political speakers and the bond between them and their hearers that have an immense role in persuasion besides the sole convincing power of reasons.

The connection between compromise and persuasion in political oratory is that rivals as political actors with the aim of persuading who hold opposing views may come to the result that they compromise their values. While conveying their values and ends, political actors as rivals hold different points of view that probably belong to different comprehensive doctrines. The conflict occurring between them requires them to compromise their values and ends as the conflict between them cannot be rationally and objectively resolved because of value pluralism. The pluralism of perspectives constitutes the political sphere involving the various forms of conversation and communication -one of which that comes forward is compromise. That's how the political sphere becomes effective in providing resolutions -since there are affairs in the political sphere to resolve and decide.<sup>364</sup>

In the political sphere political action is performed as compromise -for the reasons that I have explained in this section. Compromises thus help to provide resolutions in the political sphere. In this sense, values turn into their *compromised adaptations*. These compromised adaptations make the political sphere a pluralistic space of political claims where moral statements become political statements as they lose their

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<sup>364</sup> Aristotle explains why we need persuasive speeches: persuasive speeches in the public space are held because we should decide on the issues awaiting to be decided (ibid 106-7).

connection to comprehensive doctrines they have belonged to before compromise. Thus, in the political sphere compromised values and ends become the objects of political oratory and the pluralism of political claims is acknowledged through communicative relations.

To give an example of how values are realized as compromised adaptations in the political sphere, consider human rights. The realization of human rights does not depend on the outcome of a particular comprehensive doctrine, but on the application and treatment of human rights in different forms and contexts of plural politics. In the political sphere, human rights emerge as a political claim; that is, a right is no longer associated with a comprehensive doctrine, it is now a political conclusion and a compromised adaptation subject to plural politics. What I am saying does not exclude the moral dimension of human rights. What I intend to emphasize here is that human rights are no longer an object of moral and comprehensive doctrine to the extent that they are the subject matter of political relations. As shown in the example of human rights, values that emerge in the political sphere do not belong to moral debate, but to political debate in terms of being objects of political action.

#### **4.1.1. On “the Political”**

As noticed, the conception of “the political” has a central role to this thesis, hence must be subject to further analysis. In this section I examine the concept of “the political” in Mouffe’s and Arendt’s political thoughts and emphasize that this thesis’ conception of “the political” is constituted by plurality.

##### **4.1.1.1. Mouffe’s Conception of “the Political”**

Mouffe begins by drawing attention to the difficulty of speaking about “the political” in ordinary language. To understand the concept of “the political” the distinction she has made could be helpful: she draws the distinction between “politics” and “the political”. The former is the empirical field which political science deals with, and the

latter appeals to philosophical thinking about the essence of “the political”.<sup>365</sup> Mouffe expresses this distinction by utilizing Heideggerian vocabulary: she takes politics to belong to the “ontic level” while “the political” applies to the “ontological” one, so that “the ontic has to do with the manifold practices of conventional politics, while the ontological concerns the very way in which society is constituted”.<sup>366</sup> Mouffe considers politics as the practice taken “in the context of conflictuality provided by the political”.<sup>367</sup>

Mouffe develops her conception of “the political” around Schmitt’s critique of liberalism and the characteristics of democratic politics that she sees to be related to Schmitt’s criticism. Mouffe regards that democratic politics can be supported and strengthened not by endorsing a rational consensus that is the dominant view in liberal democratic thought, but by rejecting it.<sup>368</sup> According to Mouffe, the rationalistic attitude that liberal democracy maintains prevents us from recognizing “the nature of the political struggle”.<sup>369</sup> For Mouffe political identities are expressed in conflictual relations arising from the “diverse forms of social relations”.<sup>370</sup> The construction of political identities by way of this “conflictuality” is critically important for Mouffe because she sees it as an essential feature of political arena. Thus, Mouffe cares about Schmitt’s insight into “the friend-enemy distinction”, yet she contends that it must be grasped in its other forms in relation to democratic pluralism.

According to Mouffe the conflictual nature of “the political” must be seen to be conforming with pluralist democracy and this conflictual nature should manifest in a different form of relation other than the “friend-enemy relation”. Otherwise

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<sup>365</sup> Mouffe, *On the Political*, 8.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

<sup>368</sup> Chantal Mouffe, “Politics and Passions”, *Ethical Perspectives* 7, no: 2 (2000): 146-150; 146.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid. Mouffe’s argument (her criticism of liberal democracy) is in close relationship with Schmitt’s critique of liberalism (see 3.5.2).

<sup>370</sup> Mouffe, *On the Political*, 14.

one is left with the following alternatives: believing either with Schmitt in the contradictory nature of liberal democracy or with the liberals in the elimination of the adversarial model as a step forward for democracy. In the first case you acknowledge the political but foreclose the possibility of a pluralist democratic order, in the second case you postulate a completely inadequate, anti-political view of liberal democracy<sup>371</sup>

For Mouffe conflictual relations must be the key feature of democratic politics. They also constitute “the political”. The conflictual nature of “the political” is that which Mouffe shares with Schmitt; yet she does not intend to abandon democratic politics while she makes a criticism of liberal democracy which aims to eliminate such a conflictual mode. Mouffe acknowledges the antagonistic aspect of the political and democratic politics in terms of its “tamed” conception, which is “agonism”. This tamed conception of antagonism, as Mouffe states, requires considering another type of relation in which opponents, who accept that a rational consensus is impossible to attain, do not see each other as “enemies”; they rather see them as “adversaries” and recognize each other’s “legitimacy”.<sup>372</sup> By employing the category of adversary in opposition to the category of enemy, Mouffe intends to show that agonism instead of antagonism can go with democratic politics.

As it has been explained, from Mouffe’s point of view, the consensual approach to democracy lacks the capacity to grasp the essence of “the political”, which is “agonism”. Her conception of “the political” is reminiscent of Schmitt’s conception of “the political” in the sense that they share the common idea that the political is characterized with antagonistic elements. However, Mouffe’s conception of the political does not express a strong conception of antagonism; her conception of “the political” implies a public sphere in which opponents get into interaction not to reach a consensus but, on the contrary, to struggle with each other as they demonstrate power.

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid, 20. Mouffe’s conception of “the political” is distinguished from that of Schmitt in the sense that Mouffe develops her conception of the political around the notion of “adversary” according to which rival camps (opponents) recognize each other as “legitimate enemies”. Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (New York: Verso, 2000), 52.

#### 4.1.1.2. Arendt's Conception of "the Political"

Unlike Mouffe and Schmitt, some political theorists, such as Arendt, consider "the political" in a different direction in which the political is not characterized by antagonism and conflict. In Arendt's political thought "the political" is the field of freedom and the public engagement in political discussion. However, Arendt's conception of freedom must not be related to the liberal conception of freedom. The liberal conception of freedom focuses on individual choice and values, whereas Arendt conceives freedom to be exercised in the public space where the decisions taken concern the whole political community.<sup>373</sup> Thus, the concept of "the political" in Arendt's political thought refers to the public sphere where citizens use their freedoms to participate in the political activity concerning the political community's interests and values. In this sense, Arendt's conception of "the political" has the characteristics of "the classical tradition of civic republicanism".<sup>374</sup>

I have developed the concept of human worlds in close connection to Arendt's conception of the human condition while specifying it with the characteristics such as *pluralism*, *artificiality*, and *non-essential goods*. Likewise, the two perspectives, namely the one presented in this thesis and the one Arendt holds, stand back from defining "human being" in an essentialist outlook. To consider these features of human worlds Arendt's conception of action in its relation to the political sphere should be analyzed.

The essential and constitutive role of *action* seems undeniable for Arendt since "with word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world".<sup>375</sup> Arendt conceives

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<sup>373</sup> Maurizio Passerin d'Entreves, "Hannah Arendt", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2019), ed. Edward N. Zalta. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/arendt/>. Accessed April 20, 2022.

<sup>374</sup> See Patricia Springborg, "Arendt, Republicanism and Patriarchalism", *History of Political Thought* 10, no. 3 (1989): 499-523. Likewise, for the close relevancy of Arendt's political thought to the Romans and their political practice see Dean Hammer, "Hannah Arendt and Roman Political Thought: The Practice of Theory", *Political Theory* 30, no. 1 (2002): 124-149.

<sup>375</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 176.

plurality as the determining factor of *action* so that without plurality *action* is simply meaningless.<sup>376</sup> Arendt's conception of pluralism must not be confused with the liberal conception of pluralism. The liberal conception of pluralism forges a close bond between the liberal tradition and the pluralism of values. Such a close bond has been acknowledged by Berlin and liberal pluralists such as Crowder and Galston.<sup>377</sup> However, Arendt's conception of pluralism has a deeper significance in determining the political character of human action.

A key notion that aids us in understanding Arendt's notion of action is "natality". Arendt's conception of plurality, together with her conception of natality, add richness to her political thought and enhance her conception of "the political". In Arendt's conception of human existence, *action* is that which makes human beings unique. For Arendt, *action* expresses the uniquely human characteristic of natality. In Arendt's thought the uniqueness of human beings which finds its "immediate expression only in action and speech" begins by birth.<sup>378</sup> Thus, action like the birth of an individual is the realization of natality; and considering this conception of action, again in Arendt's thought, "speech" refers to the distinctness of every human being. In this sense, plurality is the condition of the realization of *action*.<sup>379</sup> According to Arendt in action and speech "we are dependent upon others, to whom we appear in a distinctness which we ourselves are unable to perceive".<sup>380</sup> The key role of pluralism in Arendt's political thought is understandable when her conception of action is acknowledged in connection with the relational aspect of her conception of "the political".

Arendt's conception of "the political" is more related to the physical factors of interaction, such as physical appearances of human beings in the public space as "an

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid, 175.

<sup>377</sup> See 3.2.

<sup>378</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 210.

<sup>379</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid, 243.

interacting bodily plurality”.<sup>381</sup> Thus, Arendt’s conception of action is a bodily performance and Arendt conceives the political within an interactive sphere where individuals are exposed to each other in body. Cavarero interprets Arendt’s material conception of politicalness by stating that “Arendt is first and foremost interested in the relationality of embodied political actors, not on the contents of their discourses”.<sup>382</sup> He then continues by stating that Arendt’s physical conception of relationality is the fundamental feature of direct democracy which he contrasts with “digital populism” and its claim about “absolute democracy”.<sup>383</sup> This point is important as Cavarero draws attention to the threat towards political life by making reference to Arendt’s criticism of “individualistic ontology of modern political tradition” – the threat that digital populism makes individuals isolated from each other that cancels the physicality of “the political”. The cancellation of the physicality of “the political” is worse than the situation that individualistic ontology makes “individual beings as abstract and atomized subjects”.<sup>384</sup> Arendt’s conception of “the political” which depends on a physical relationality enables plurality to become interactive and represents an openness and publicity as *exposedness* by which “the political” is realized.

This thesis affirms the essential role of action in the political sphere; yet there are differences between this thesis’ conception of political action and Arendt’s conception of action. These differences stem from the different conceptions of pluralism this thesis and Arendt hold. How, then, could his thesis and Arendt share anything in the concept of “the political” if they hold different conceptions of pluralism? The answer could partly be given from the perspective of liberty, and partly from the perspective of the extension of plurality. First, from the perspective of liberty, they seem to share less commonality, indeed the opposite conceptions of “the political” are presented. The reason comes from differences between the conceptions of liberty found in them. The

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<sup>381</sup> Adriana Cavarero, “Human Condition of Plurality”, *Arendt Studies* 2 (2018), 40.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.



traditional form of liberalism adheres to the negative form of liberty by which it defines relationships between individuals in the public sphere in an externalist outlook according to which freedom is being free from external interferences.<sup>385</sup> Arendt's conception of freedom cannot, however, be limited to the negative and positive notions of liberty. The most proper way to understand the conception of freedom is considering it in connection to her conception of action -the two conceptions are inseparably connected in her political thought. Accordingly, for Arendt, freedom is the fundamental principle of political life and *realized* in the world, particularly in the political domain.<sup>386</sup> Despite that both the liberal conception of freedom and Arendt's conception of freedom are developed in political thinking and adhere to pluralism, the conceptions of pluralism, the liberal, on one hand, and Arendt's, on the other, exhibit differences: The liberal conception of pluralism refers to the diversity in the public sphere and the liberty of expression among diverse values without restricting each other; Arendt's conception of plurality indicates a more ontological aspect of pluralism in that Arendt defines plurality with the concepts of "uniqueness" and "distinctness" of each individual born to this world. Thus, there occur different conceptions of "the political" associated with the different conceptions of pluralism (that of this thesis and that of Arendt) that rely on the different understandings of liberty.

Second, from the perspective of the extension of plurality this thesis's conception of "the political" and that of Arendt shares a common feature in the sense that when the public sphere is characterized by plurality, there will be occur more liberty and more space for action in political life. The conceptions of "action" and "speech" can be appropriated within the perspective of this thesis as follows. The liberty of expression as a form of speech is realized by way of pluralism and the political action is performed in a liberal community that maintains/supports the plural reasons of political action. The view shared by this thesis with Arendt's political thought can be that the exercise of liberty depends on pluralism.

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<sup>385</sup> See 3.1.3.

<sup>386</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 31.

## 4.2. Scope of Sensible Compromise

In this section, I first argue that the scope of sensible compromise covers more than a “minimal conception of rationality”. Next, I discuss the close relationship between sensible compromise and the attainment of a liberal political sphere.

To begin, the minimal conception of rationality defines a *minimum capacity* of having reasons. If such a minimum capacity of having reasons is taken to be something like a self-identical rational core in the human mind, then it cannot accord with the pluralist and liberal themes. These themes cannot work with a conception of rationality which is self-identical and not subject to plural conditions. The minimal conception of rationality can have a connection to compromise only when it is adaptive to a pluralistic politics. Sensible compromise engages with a capacity of having reasons including not only a rational code of behavior but various other sources of action. It can take non-rational values in hand together with rational ones and estimate them in terms of one’s ends. Therefore, sensible compromise executes a sensibility about having various reasons without being stuck with these reasons since they are always open to compromise.

To attain a liberal political sphere, we should aim at compromises in performing political action. Sensible compromise creates different ways of performing political action by allowing for choosing among various reasons and options for an action. This variety is why sensible compromise must be comprehended in political rather than ethical terms. Political claims, contrary to ethical ones, are open to compromise and so that political actors can communicate. Moral decisions take place in one’s private life; however, they must not be used to extend in the political sphere. If an ethical or comprehensive doctrine is extended to the political sphere, it will endanger variety and oppose to pluralism. To attain a liberal political sphere, we should allow compromises that remove rigidity and promote more possibility of communication. Sensible compromise, thus, displays the closest version of a political community.

Sensible compromise must be understood as an oscillation (a waving) between extreme points, rather than a steadiness. Extremism is the enemy of a liberal community. We need to avoid “black and white” thinking in the political sphere as much as we can and understand that engaging in political relations and communicating requires us to compromise our extremist attitudes.

Sensible compromise appreciates a *non-metaphysical* conception of human reason. This non-metaphysical conception of reason contrasts with the transcendental universal reason and departs from the positive conception of liberty when taking political action. Political action is associated with negative liberty instead of positive liberty in the sense that the political sphere is shaped by the relations of compromised values. These relations between compromised values must be understood as “external” relations in the sense that they do not concern the moral beliefs or the comprehensive values of the political actors. In this way, sensible compromise acknowledges a politics that excludes moral grounding and comprehensive doctrines since a moral justification of politics is outside of the pluralist perspective of value.

So far, I have discussed the scope of sensible compromise in relation to a minimal rationality and affirmed its political dimension and pluralist dimension, that is the avoidance of extremes. Regarding the sources that can limit the exercise of liberties, such as the society and the state, sensible compromise requires a more specific discussion. Therefore, sensible compromise must specify something about liberties.

Before jumping into the discussion about the exceptional status of liberties when compromising, I will present the weak and strong arguments for a liberal community.

#### **4.3. Weak and Strong Arguments: The Separation between Moral and Political Spheres**

In this section I compare two types of argument with each other. One type of those arguments is the moral (comprehensive) one that suggests a justification of liberalism based on morality. The other type can be named as the political argument that aims at

conceiving liberalism in connection to the political conception of action, such as sensible compromise. I try to show that the first type of argument is the weak one because it has moral assumptions which can be invalidated by value pluralism, whereas the second type of argument, the political one, offers a strong defense of a liberal community.

A liberal community is solely a political community, and, in a political community, sensible compromise corresponds to political rather than moral action. This claim presupposes the separation between moral and political spheres. In addition, value pluralism in this thesis is dealt with in its connection to the political rather than the moral sphere. Why is the political enough for us instead of the moral? The aim of politics is to find a way of peaceful living among various values and types of lives without implementing violence. Briefly, politics implies, as it aims at, a *livability in the absence of violence*.

On the other hand, morality has not a definite description. What is morality? Obedience to moral law? Performance of moral virtues? Achieving moral excellence? Following social customs? Nobody can tell which of these descriptions can truly depict what morality is. Thus, one problem is that we cannot have a precise definition of morality. There may be various types of government, yet a shared common purpose of governments can be said to be advancing the public goods (at least in a more social understanding of government). If moralities are told to direct humans towards a common purpose, such as “living the good life”, again this will fall under the description of excellence and it will belong to only a description of morality, among others.

Another problem is that morality requires justification, whereas the case is not the same with politics. Politics can have a commonly shared sense, and it does not need a justification -since it applies to different forms of governments. Thus, politics encourages people to employ means to accomplish the goal of livability of various forms of life in the absence of violence. Such a goal of livability can only apply to politics. Morality can lay a claim to this goal only if it is justified for all. However,

such a justification is impossible; besides it will lead the opposite way of livability of various incomparable lifestyles as it ends up in a homogenous society and lessens pluralism. A political sphere, unlike a moral sphere, has not much trouble with being satisfied with the plural ways of expression by means of compromises.

As I have explained in 2.3.1, Berlin grounds his account of liberalism on value pluralism and negative liberty.<sup>387</sup> Thus, it can be said that for Berlin political philosophy cannot be considered separate from moral philosophy. However, I only see a separation between them. Politics is related to the interactive and relational aspect of pluralism in human worlds. In politics we have discussions as we believe them to be the form of democratic discourse to solve our problems. Parties make compromises in the political sphere as soon as they seek for the goal of living together and securing their liberties, even if they are separated ideologically, mostly by their moral beliefs. Their endeavor aims to provide solutions from different perspectives to be contributive as different truths.<sup>388</sup>

Agreement between values may not be achievable but we may achieve some of our objectives in the political sphere by means of sensible compromise. This is what we can learn from value pluralism: Conflict cannot be rationally resolved; thus, compromise must be stimulated if we want our ends realized. In the political sphere compromises emerge as political action when they are *sensibly* made. The characteristics of values, namely incompatibility and incomparability, cannot be avoided simply by presenting a justification of a monistic outlook. Monism cannot be a solution to conflict; monism can only be the annihilation of plurality. Therefore, the

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<sup>387</sup> Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 48.

<sup>388</sup> When I say, “different truths”, I address different subjective interpretations of “reality”. However, “pluralism of truths” means something different than it: the former (“different truths”) refers only to the diversity of truths, whereas the latter (“pluralism of truths”) has deeper metaphysical and, mostly, epistemological implications, including the meaning and the properties of being true. “Pluralism of truths” involves many forms of discussions that stay outside of the scope of my thesis. For readers who are interested, I recommend Crispin Wright’s articles “Minimalism, deflationism, pragmatism, pluralism” (2001) and “A plurality of pluralisms?” (2013); Andy Yu “Logic for Alethic Pluralists” (2017); one of the good worlds on pluralism of truth theories Jeremy Wyatt & Michael P. Lynch, “From one to many: recent work on truth” (2016); and Ragnar van der Merwe “A Dilemma for Determination Pluralism (or Dualism)” (2020).

implications of value pluralism must be understood as the practical tool in the political sphere to resolve conflicts in the sense that parties should make compromises since they cannot fully realize their aims in the political sphere unless they use non-political aggressive means.

The advantages of the separation between the moral sphere and the political sphere are made manifest in the answer to the question of how the political statements become possible and freely expressed. The simple answer to it is not grounding political statements on moral theory, for two reasons. The first reason is that there is no way of universally justifying a moral theory because of the plurality of values and human worlds; and accordingly, moral theories must be counted as weak arguments for political statements. The second reason is that if liberalism is based on morality, say, on a superior reason over society, or, moral individualism and individual autonomy that are imposed on people and prescribed as the universality of individualism, then we come up with a systematized politics. A systematized politics based on moral principles has the risk of crushing diversity. The application of morality in the political sphere thus appears to be in contradiction with liberty and the use of liberties. Therefore, liberalism must not be based on morality if it wants to fully adhere to the exercise of liberties.

A 'liberal community' that I have been describing here must be encouraging for us to perform our choices without a moral imposition, which allows us to take political action. A political action, unlike a moral action, is conducted by completely liberal means, discussion, communicating and networking. Sensible compromise as a political action can employ these means. Compromise of values, unlike moral theories that require solid basis and certain rules of action, can yield a strong argument for defending and expressing one's opinions in the political sphere. The strong argument of a liberal community is to grasp sensible compromise as political rather than moral action. We cannot be satisfied only with toleration –as toleration can hardly be effective compared to compromise.

#### **4.4. Exceptional Status of Liberties in Compromising**

In this section I deal with liberties in relation to compromise and especially sensible compromise. It is important to understand that value pluralism may allow us to compromise liberties the least when confronted with another value that conflict with liberties. The exceptional status of liberties does not require any moral theory, but adherence to the incomparability of values, hence allowance of the expression of different values. Admitting the incomparability of values to be the defining feature of a pluralistic political community, we realize political action as sensible compromise. Thus, the incomparability of values and the exercise of liberties are inextricably linked to each other in the political sphere.

Therefore, what is exceptional about liberties is that liberties are compromised the least if compromises are made sensibly. The exceptional status of liberty must be understood not as having to do with liberty as a substantial value, but as a consequence of sensible compromise, which shows that even though liberties are still compromise-able, their compromise-ability is exceptional with reference to the feature of sensibility.

Liberties denote the exercise of the liberty to speak, the liberty to express, the liberty to move. Such possibilities are associated with the negative notion of liberty if it means that one's liberty of speech and movement depends on the condition that nobody is allowed to interfere with each other's liberties. In a society these liberties possibly conflict with each other in many ways and regulating them can be a matter of discussion, such as the lawful conception of action and governmental regulations. Before discussing these factors that can be relevant to the limitation of liberties in favor of protecting every individual's and group's liberty, I will tackle liberties in connection to the choice to lead a life. Liberties described in the first sentence are in connection with realizing one's values and one's ends.

The key role of liberties must not be considered as a commitment to individualism. Individualism as a moral doctrine would not allow for the compromise of individualist

values. In this thesis liberties are accepted not to be exempt from compromise and marked to be ‘the least compromise-able’ when compromises are made sensibly. To understand this point, i.e., the importance of liberties independently of moral individualism, I make a distinction between two approaches to liberties, namely moral and political.

Liberties can be compatible with value pluralism if they are considered in a political form rather than a moral one. I argue that the political conception of liberties can be defensible based on pluralism as an alternative to any utopian politics and any liberal notion of moral conception of liberties. The political conception of liberties considers action in political rather than moral terms. Considering action in political terms implies that individuals and groups are political entities in the political sphere and there is diversity among them. This political conception of action is closely related to the negative notion of liberty that is connected to the notion of compromise rather than moral obligations. The reason for why I believe so and why I see the negative notion of liberty to be more compatible with value pluralism and why it must be related to the possibility of communication has already been discussed in 3.1.3.<sup>389</sup>

The conception of liberty as various ways of expression can be linked to Mill’s conception of liberty in the sense that Mill contends that individuals are free in choosing their lifestyles. Nevertheless, Mill’s version of liberties can have its own problems when seen from a pluralist perspective that affirms only a sensible compromise when liberties are confronted with another value in the political sphere.

#### **4.4.1. Liberties and Society: The “Harm Principle”**

To analyze the reasons for why the exercise of liberties in its relation to the authority can be subject to restriction and compromise it is useful to understand Mill’s conception of liberty. Mill’s ideas on liberty cannot be separated from his utilitarian

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<sup>389</sup> For comparing this political view of liberty with the moral theme of liberty tackled by other liberal thinkers such as Locke and Kant within the positive conception of liberty see Jeremy Waldron, *The Right to Private Property* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 307-10, especially section IV “Freedom and Moral Duty”.



politics in the sense that the exercise of liberty must be consistent with the aim of increasing the amount of happiness in society.<sup>390</sup> Mill is an ethical utilitarian, and his politics applies the fundamental principle of utilitarian morality, namely the “principle of utility”. The “principle of utility” is applied in politics too in terms of the “greatest happiness principle” according to which the benefit of the whole society outweighs everyone’s own good.<sup>391</sup>

The main purpose of *On Liberty* is to seek for the legitimate reasons for why society can interfere with one’s liberties. When considering the ways in which one’s liberties are constrained, governmental action comes to mind first; yet, for Mill, there are two types of authorities or two sources of restriction by which liberty can be constrained: the government and the society.<sup>392</sup> In Mill’s version of liberty, individuals can exercise their liberties in pursuit of their own understanding of the good life. Mill’s conception of liberty is defined in terms of the appropriate regions of human liberty: he defines the proper sense of liberty as “pursuing our own good in our own way” (mainly related to self-regarding actions which are seen as harmless).<sup>393</sup> Therefore, “one’s self-regarding choices and activities must not be interfered with by state or society”.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>390</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (Bennett, 2017), Chapter 2, p. 5. Accessible on <https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/mill1863.pdf>. Accessed August 8, 2021.

<sup>391</sup> Mill’s utilitarian politics takes its key notions from Bentham, the prominent figure of Utilitarianism. In the way characterized by Bentham, the “principle of utility” as “greatest happiness principle” corresponds to the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people. See Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1780), Chapter 1 “The Principle of Utility”. Bentham also sees the “greatest-happiness principle” to be the proper basis of law (*Fragment on Government*, 1776). For the knowledge of laymen, happiness from the utilitarian perspective amount to the experience of pleasure and the absence of pain (Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 5). The justification of the “greatest happiness principle” is formulated based on the *good-ness* of happiness and its aggregation (ibid, 24).

<sup>392</sup> George Kateb, “A Reading of *On Liberty*”, in *On Liberty*, ed. David Bromwich and George Kateb (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 30.

<sup>393</sup> As Kateb writes, “individual sovereignty means the liberty of ‘self-regarding’ activity” (Ibid, 33).

<sup>394</sup> Ibid, 35.

By understanding the exercise of liberty in terms of one's self-regarding activity Mill seems to be affirming, presupposing indeed, different conceptions of "the good" in terms of "individuality". Mill

defended individuality, and even eccentricity, on the theory that they reflect the fullest development of our personalities. Such development, he argued, would promote both the happiness of each individual and the well-being of society.<sup>395</sup>

The diversity of goods not only amounts to the diversity of values and ends, but also makes possible the exercise of liberty. Therefore, the diversity of goods constitutes the necessary condition for exercising one's liberties -which is also acceptable within the Millian sense of liberty. Mill's support for the diversity of goods leads him to embrace social tolerance as an attitude towards it, which will be examined after a couple of paragraphs explaining and discussing the "harm principle".

In Mill's political thought, the "harm principle" specifies the category of cases in which liberties are justifiably restricted, or individuals can be rightfully prevented from acting in a way that could possibly cause harm. Liberty can be subject to interference and regulation when the consequences of the exercise of liberty cause harm to others. Accordingly, the "harm principle", contrary to the conception of self-regarding activities, concerns the scope of other-regarding actions. The "harm principle" is thus valid only when the others' good is of concern (so it is appropriate to call it the "harm-to-others" principle); hence, within Mill's thought, the interference with one's liberties can be justified only on the condition that one's actions cause harm for others.

When individual's own good is of concern, the interference is not permissible; one's own good is not a "sufficient warrant" for an interference with one's liberty.<sup>396</sup> Arguing or reasoning with individuals to convince them it would be better to do

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<sup>395</sup> Owen Fiss, "A Freedom Both Personal and Political" in *On Liberty* (2003), 179.

<sup>396</sup> Mill, *On Liberty*, 80.

otherwise is quite possible since there may be good reasons for them, but the same reasons cannot be used to force them to act in a way other than they wish to do (especially if their own good is of concern); thus, they should not be compelled to act otherwise.<sup>397</sup> Kateb summarizes this point as follows: “It is better for a person to go his own way, even to perdition, than to be improved or saved by paternalist compulsion.”<sup>398</sup> As can be seen, Mill’s conception of individual liberty allows individuals to choose to act as they wish unless their actions cause damage and harm to anyone except themselves. Therefore, liberty, in Mill and within his understanding of “harm”, corresponds to only self-regarding activity and in this sense, Mill is a strong defender of liberty.

Some state that Mill’s definition of harm is not very clear. Holtug, for instance, refers to “the problem of scope” to point out that the problem with defining “harm” deeply concerns the scope of exercising liberty. As a solution to this problem, Holtug suggests seeing the harm principle going through a “decision-procedure” rather than being a “criterion of rightness” because he believes that in this way utility will be “best promoted in the long run”.<sup>399</sup> A decision-procedure

allowing the state to sometimes depart from the Harm Principle – e.g. to prevent a person from severely injuring himself – will better enable the state to promote utility than a procedure that includes only this principle.<sup>400</sup>

When the “harm principle” is taken to be a “decision-procedure” the state can obtain a “flexibility” and extension on matters of coercion. Such an extension can widen the scope of compromise of liberty. His suggestion can anyway be relevant to the degrees of compromising liberties: Compromising liberties is allowable not only because it is

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

<sup>398</sup> Kateb, “A Reading on *Of Liberty*”, 60.

<sup>399</sup> See Nils Holtug, “The Harm Principle”, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 5, no. 4 (2002): 357–389; 381. Holtug’s suggestion is compatible with Mill’s conception of harm in *On Liberty* (ibid, see footnotes 45 and 46).

<sup>400</sup> Ibid, 382.

right not to intervene with liberties unless they cause harm to others, but also because it is a requirement to consider the wide range of reasons and concerns.

The “harm principle” does not come from a moral basis (such as natural law) or a strict commitment to individualism, but simply stems from the utilitarian approach to a society: Harming others would cause less happiness of individuals. The rationale for not harming others is purely utilitarian. Mill’s defense of liberty must be seen from a utilitarian perspective i.e., a society’s development. Thus, it would be an interesting way to see that Mill does not defend liberty based on a “liberal argument”, but merely based upon his utilitarian concerns.<sup>401</sup> In the utilitarian approach to liberties, Mill defends, in “Liberty of Thought and Discussion” in *On Liberty*, the idea that liberty of opinion must be protected from being restricted, especially because the liberty to speech contributes to get to “truth”.<sup>402</sup> However, Mill makes some exceptions for the liberty of opinion and lists some dangerous opinions that will harm people and whose expression may therefore be restricted. As an example, which Mill presents in *On Liberty*, the expression of an opinion that “corn-dealers are starvers of the poor” should be protected if it is conveyed through press; yet this opinion should be subject to restriction and “may justly incur punishment when delivered orally to an excited mob assembled before the house of a corn-dealer”.<sup>403</sup>

Mill tends to define the rights of an individual in terms of the “harm principle” and accordingly the exercise of individual liberty cannot be thought to have a distinct area from the domain where it can be restricted based on a specific condition. Drawing the distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding activities, we must appeal to the public domain. In the public domain the “harm principle” does not allow for any pressure upon individuals when their choices concern only their own good. Without violating the “harm principle”, according to Mill, all religious and political opinions

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<sup>401</sup> Piers Norris Turner, “‘Harm’ and Mill’s Harm Principle”, *Ethics* 124, no. 2 (2014): 324.

<sup>402</sup> Mill’s argument is as follows: “If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error” (Mill, *On Liberty*, 87).

<sup>403</sup> Mill, *On Liberty*, 121.

can and should be expressed without being subject to suppression either by authority or by society.

Mill is also a defender of social tolerance regarding the expression of opinions. Mill's defense of social tolerance is, again, an implication of his utilitarian politics. Allowing opinions to be expressed must be evaluated within the context of overall utility as they eventually make contribution to the process of gaining knowledge, and hence the progress of a society. If various opinions are restricted, then the public will lose the chance of learning from various opinions that, regardless of being right or wrong, can contribute to their knowledge.<sup>404</sup> This presents a practical rationale for toleration instead of a normative one. Mill strongly believed that liberty of opinions in the public discussions of people was essential for the progress of humanity. Such a practical benefit could be possible only by social tolerance. Social tolerance is not a value-in-itself to be promoted; it only serves the "principle of utility" as it contributes to the learning process of the society and the general welfare. Mill's utilitarian politics treats liberty not as a value-in-itself, but as a value to be benefited from for the good of the society. Mill defends that a free open environment like a "marketplace" of opinions provides useful consequences as, Mill believes, people would be encouraged to express their opinions and exchange them. It is apparent that the liberty of expression enables every human being to enjoy an energetic and lively discussion environment.

The "harm principle" can be read in the sense that one's liberty can be compromised when others' benefit is in question. Since Mill seems to aim at lessening social (as well as governmental) oppression on individuals by his theory of liberty in the form of the "harm principle", his purpose can be read as identifying the set of reasons for compromising liberty. In this reading, the "harm principle" seems good: The "harm principle" can be interpreted in terms of sensible compromise. However, sensible compromise of liberties must not be read as a direct implication of the "harm principle". The "harm principle" can be one of its applications, yet sensible compromise requires and supports a diversity that the utilitarian goal of increasing the

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<sup>404</sup> For Mill's argument for the liberty of opinion see FN 402.

overall good may not always be compatible. This is the point I will note about Mill's utilitarian theory of liberty: Contrary to the utilitarian justification of liberties, sensible compromise is more capable of grasping the role of liberties as it respects diversity more than does the promotion of utility.

Moreover, utilitarian politics and the justification of paternalistic interference, even if not intended in Mill, may justify encouraging individuals to achieve what they believe to be better in a monistic manner and hence evolve into forcing certain practices upon individuals to contribute to overall welfare. If Mill's conception of liberty within the "harm principle" opens the gate for such a justification of paternalistic interference, then it (together with his utilitarian approach) can endanger liberties since it can lessen the diversity of goods and lead to more compromising liberties (in favor of social good), hence it cannot be acceptable from a pluralistic version of a liberal society. Mill's utilitarianism will lead to a "perfectionist" version of liberalism that adheres to the universalization and promotion of certain values, which will be again rejected by value pluralism.<sup>405</sup>

Utilitarianism (coined by Bentham and popularized by Mill) has collectivist tendencies and collectivism reduces pluralism into a set of public values commonly shared. If utilitarian politics reduce values to a set of public values and pursues an overall end that is "justified" by utilitarian morality, then it exactly contradicts what is argued this thesis. Thus, my criticism of utilitarianism comes from the argument that a general aim cannot be pursued unless it is purely political and compromise-able.

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<sup>405</sup> Contrary to the perfectionism, anti-perfectionist approach (such as Rawlsian liberalism) to a liberal society adopts the view that individuals instead of a governmental authority should choose among the options to decide what is better for themselves - individuals must be free to pursue their own conceptions of "the good" (For why liberalism opposes perfectionism see Macleod "Liberal Neutrality or Liberal Tolerance?", 529-30). I am not saying that Mill is a perfectionist in the sense that what is believed to be better for individuals must be endorsed by an authority other than themselves. I am only emphasizing that utilitarian politics may have a potentiality of evolving into a perfectionist politics by the application of the overall utility principle and promotion of certain values (or goals).

Mill seems not to be endorsing any conception of uniformity other than the “utility principle” of utilitarianism in evaluation.<sup>406</sup> Although his commitment to the “utility principle” seems to have the tendency to potential uniformity, he still can be considered as a committed supporter of diversity and pluralism even if within the limits of utilitarian calculation. In conclusion, according to the view presented in this thesis, utilitarian aims can be taken into consideration only when they are evaluated in the rich extent of compromise and, especially, when sensible compromise is accepted for their realizations.

#### **4.4.2. Liberties and State: The “Minimal State”**

In this thesis, liberties are grasped in terms of the exercise of liberty in pursuit of individuals’ and groups’ ends. There can be said to exist two spheres of the exercise of liberties: One is between individuals and the state (also between individuals and the society as tackled in the previous section), and the other is between individuals themselves. The relationship between the individual exercise of liberties and the state can pose a problem in the sense that individuals’ values can clash with the values of the state. Individuals’ values also clash with each other, which is examined and discussed in 3.1.3. Now the topic of this section is mainly about the former sphere of relationship that is between individuals and the state: The role of compromise will be discussed when an individual interacts with the state (such as a court). I believe that Nozick’s thoughts on individual rights and his theory of the “minimal state” can be helpful to enter such a discussion.

Nozick is a famous libertarian thinker committed to the individual rights theory. His commitment to individual rights stems from natural rights theory (natural law) according to which individuals have natural rights from their very birth and these rights cannot be alienated and transformed (Locke is one of the liberal thinkers who describes

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<sup>406</sup> Riley contends that Mill’s doctrine of “higher pleasures” -those higher kinds of pleasure are “indefinitely or infinitely more valuable” than lower ones- opens the way for a pluralistic utilitarianism according to which diversity cannot be reduced to a single utility scale (Jonathan Riley, “Utilitarian Liberalism: Between Gray and Mill” in in *The Political Theory of John Gray* (2007), 22). He also notes that Mill’s pluralism is rejected by many commentators, including Gray (ibid).

natural rights in detail). In the liberal tradition individual rights occupy a key place, yet they are not independent of the moral engagements which belong to the natural rights theory.

Nozick writes in the “Preface” of *Anarchy, State and Utopia* that “individuals have rights and there are things no person or group may do to them (without violating their rights)”.<sup>407</sup> Nozick explains how the state arises in the natural state and to what extent the state can be justified regarding the protection of individual rights. He believes that the state can arise from anarchy (from the “nonstate situation”, i.e., the state of nature) “by a process which need not violate anyone’s right”.<sup>408</sup> For Nozick, only a minimal state can be justified without violating individual rights. In other words, as Nozick says, “the minimal state is the most extensive state that can be justified” – it is for sure that, according to Nozick, any extensive state that is more than a minimal state violates individual rights.<sup>409</sup>

Nozick’s political theory is based on moral assumptions, such as individual rights. According to Nozick the legitimate use of power must not violate individual rights so that any violation to individual rights is morally prohibited. Individual rights restrict the use of power; in other words, the restriction of governmental action is justified by the moral restrictions regarding what may and may not be done to individuals.<sup>410</sup> It seems that Nozick conceives the political legitimacy in connection with moral obligations as he believes that moral philosophy determines the boundaries of political philosophy.<sup>411</sup> In this sense Nozick can be counted among the comprehensive theorists of individual rights (comprehensive theory as covering moral, economic, social, and

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<sup>407</sup> Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), ix.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid, xi. Since anarchy is defined as a pessimistic situation in the “state of nature” (especially in the Hobbesian sense) it seems that the state is inevitable. The “minimal” criterion for the state must be found out after the state is accepted to be better than the nonstate situation (ibid, 5).

<sup>409</sup> Ibid, 149. See also James S. Coleman, Boris Frankel and Derek L. Phillips, “Robert Nozick’s *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*”, *Theory and Society* 3, no. 3 (1976): 437.

<sup>410</sup> Nozick, *Anarchy State and Utopia*, 6.

<sup>411</sup> Ibid.



political aspects of individual rights). Thus, Nozick's theory must be defended on moral grounds, if it will be a concern of a pure philosophical debate.<sup>412</sup>

I see, in Nozick, a subordination of political philosophy to moral philosophy. As I have argued in this thesis, political philosophy cannot be subordinated to moral philosophy because the political sphere is comprised of political statements. Moral statements denote a judgmental attitude, whereas political statements are debatable. Moral beliefs and commitments should remain private and merely concern individual's own life. Thus, I argue that the exercise of liberties and the legitimate power of state must be considered within the political sphere and only in connection to political action (i.e., sensible compromise). This way of seeing liberties is much relevant to a political conception of supporting liberties.

I must state that even though Nozick's theory must be defended on moral grounds, his theory must not be restricted to the question of morality and theory of individual rights. It must be taken seriously especially for its implications about the nature of the state and the connection of the state to liberties. A moral defense is inapplicable to the political sphere because reasons used in a moral defense are barely compromised. The political sphere as the sphere of conversation and debate requires compromise of reasons and values, and, most importantly, the liberty of expression. Thus, Nozick's theory of the state can be relevant to the discussions held in the political sphere without being necessarily referred to its moral principles.

Libertarianism as the minimal state theory (that no state can arise beyond the minimal state without violating individual rights and liberties), must be considered as a theory that sheds light on the true nature of liberalism and its different categorizations. For instance, the comparison between a liberal government whose primary concern is to

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<sup>412</sup> Thingpen and Downing's article may be helpful to the relevant discussion. Thigpen, Robert B. and Downing, Lyle A. "Rawls, Nozick, and the De-Politicizing of Political Theory", *Journal of Political Science* 9, no.2, Article 2 (Spring 1982): 70-80. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.coastal.edu/jops/vol9/iss2/2>. For the moral roots of Nozick's theory (especially the principle of self-ownership) and their criticism see Theo Papaioannou "Nozick Revisited: The Formation of the Right-Based Dimension of his Political Theory", *International Political Science Review* 29, no. 3 (2008): 261-280.

improve the exercise of liberties and authoritarian governments which aim at manipulating and controlling the society as a “whole” <sup>413</sup> can be helpful to see this point. Liberalism conceives the state as legitimate when it is limited to a field of action in terms of the legal use of force and protecting individuals’ properties (in Lockean sense<sup>414</sup>); whereas the political theories that, in contrast to a liberal conception of the state, advocate for an extensive state conceive the legitimacy of the state in terms of not merely restricting governmental power to a few actions, but ruling individuals’ decisions and actions. Thus, authoritarian governments and extensive modes of the state (than only a minimum one) share the same character of having control on the lives of individuals, which is against the liberal conception of the state.

#### **4.4.2.1. The “Minimal State”: Compromising Liberties the Least**

This section explores that whether the “minimal state” can be an example of employing sensible compromise in the political sphere. Basically, I argue that although the “minimal state” can be interpreted as an example of sensible compromise in terms of compromising liberties the least, sensible compromise must not be seen to be limited to a libertarian conception of the state. Sensible compromise maintains and stimulates the plurality of values and ends in the political field. Accordingly, sensible compromise should embrace pluralistic resolutions in the economic field. I am giving a couple of examples from the economic field in 4.4.2.2, such as redistribution and

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<sup>413</sup> Here authoritarian governments apply the political theories advanced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century which rely on the absolute authority of the state over individuals’ lives. Pierre Lemieux, the Canadian economist, writes: “The source of the similarity between the two ideologies [socialism and fascism] is that both want to impose politically-chosen ends on everybody.” Most types of socialism raised in the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be said to lead similar politics with fascist themes in terms of having a complete authority over the lives of individuals.  
[www.econlib.org/similarity-between-socialism-and-fascism-an-illustration/](http://www.econlib.org/similarity-between-socialism-and-fascism-an-illustration/). Accessed July 28, 2021).

<sup>414</sup> For Locke’s justification of political authority See Shannon Hoff, “Locke and the Nature of Political Authority” *The Review of Politics* 77, no. 1 (2015), 1-22. Locke’s theory of government seeks for the answer to the question on what basis political authority should be based; and the answer will require us to follow the path from “the state of nature” to a civil order and understanding the reason on which such a transition has been made (ibid, 4). Locke describes the types of freedom humans have in the state of nature, such as acquisition of property and getting involved into interaction with each other (ibid 8-11). The capability of agreement is the basis of political authority as Locke finds out and this notion of political authority is based on individuals’ consent that is the very reason for limiting the actions of government to the rule of law (ibid 15-16; 18-19). Therefore, living in safety becomes possible with the achievements of individual freedoms.

taxation to provide a clearer understanding about the ways in which sensible compromise applies.

Nozick's comprehensive approach to individual rights also applies to his conception of liberties. Nozick's conception of liberties is inextricably linked to his libertarianism in the sense that liberties are fundamental for him. Nozick is a libertarian deeply committed to the free-market system and its moral virtues, such as voluntary exchange and free enterprise. The moral code of the free market is based on the maximum exercise of liberties. The achievements as the consequences of the exercise of liberties are assessed objectively within competitive relations. This free-market system constitutes the moral background Nozick relies on in his political thoughts. In this sense, Nozick's libertarianism must not be considered as separate from his commitments to economic freedom. When compared to Rawls' political liberalism, Nozick is said to be a stronger defender of individual liberties. Both thinkers believe that the principles of the state should be determined by (rational) individuals; yet they differ from each other with respect to the question of which principles must be chosen. Nozick sees a contradiction between the two principles of justice Rawls endorses (those principles that arise behind a "veil of ignorance"). Nozick rejects the "difference principle" and supports liberties: Remember that for Nozick there cannot arise a larger state than a minimal state without violating individual rights, so that redistribution of wealth would be a violence to individual rights.

Nozick's theory of the "minimal state" can be an example of compromising the principle of distributive justice and equality in a societal system in favor of individual rights and liberties. However, the price paid for it is the lack of distribution of wealth to better off the economic and social conditions of the disadvantaged groups. It must also be stated that compromising "social justice", i.e., compromising bettering off the social conditions of the disadvantaged groups by way of a distribution of wealth, does not imply total liberty to individual rights (a total liberty to individual rights would mean an individual anarchism, which is not endorsed in Nozick). In other words, Nozick's theory of minimal state happens to be an example of compromising liberties the least: Because Nozick allows a minimal state and employs the principles of the just

acquisition (the “theory of entitlement”), individual rights happen to be the ‘least compromise-able’, hence the exercise of liberties is favored. The *balance* between the liberties and the (minimal) state is maintained by way of a sensible compromise that enables liberties to coexist with their legitimate restriction.<sup>415</sup> This reading of Nozick’s theory of “minimal state” can be a suitable interpretation of sensible compromise in the matter of supporting liberties.

To argue that nothing beyond a minimal state can arise without violating individual rights seems to be affirming that liberties are the least compromise-able and grasping the nature of sensible compromise. However sensible compromise must not be used to provide a justification of the “minimal state”. Although the theory of “minimal state” exhibits a good example of sensible compromise as it seems to conceive liberties to be the least compromise-able, this does not necessarily mean that libertarian politics is the “legitimate” political organization. Furthermore, as I have stated in the previous section, sensible compromise cannot be used to realize a single goal, such as maximizing the use of liberties; it involves the pluralism of reasons which is why it is labeled as ‘sensible’. Besides the political framework, in the economic framework too Nozick’s libertarian approach and his minimum conception of the state must be subject to sensible compromise and take distributive politics into account in this consideration.

Since the views put forward in this thesis are not based on a comprehensive version of liberalism or a libertarian understanding of autonomy, but on a pluralistic understanding and the claim that political action is a ‘sensible compromise’, liberties are not considered as a supreme value; they are regarded as practical components of the (pluralistic) public sphere that results from the manifestation of political action in the form of ‘sensible compromise’.

Even if the “minimal state” means accepting liberties to be ‘the least compromise-able’, the libertarian conception of the state cannot provide the sufficient condition for

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<sup>415</sup> I do not always use the term “compromise” as a means to “balance”; yet “balance” commonly refers the intended consequence of compromise implied in its definition. According to *Merriam Webster* “compromise” is defined as “to adjust or settle by mutual concessions” -the etymological origin of “compromise” comes from the late Latin word *compromissum* ‘a consent to arbitration’.

maintaining pluralism by maximizing the use of individual liberties. I will try to elaborate this point by explaining that sensible compromise may work in conformity with a more extensive state than a minimal one especially when considering redistributive policies to contribute to the exercise of liberties by way of the interference of the state with economic liberties.

Concerning the economic field, State interference can be a right policy from the perspective of sensible compromise without damaging a liberal conception of political life. In other words, sensible compromise can be compatible with government intervention and regulations on the market if it contributes to the plural ways of exercising liberties by bettering off social conditions (note that this is not an application of Rawls' "difference principle"). Thus, it must not be seen that the libertarian conception of state is the natural consequence of sensible compromise just because it aims at safeguarding liberties.

Sensible compromise is conceiving the result that compromises are made sensibly then liberties are compromised the least, which means that sensible compromise is not defined in terms of a single aim such as maximizing the use of liberties; rather it emphasizes the case that liberties are not exempt from being compromised. Sensible compromise can take various forms depending on plural conditions, not only does it supervise the most extension of liberties; rather it pays attention to the exercise of liberties for the sake of pluralism and diversity.

#### **4.4.2.2. Distributive Justice: Sensibly Compromising Economic Liberties**

Any theory of justice defined within a welfare state (especially Rawls') can be examined with a view to whether it may pose a problem for the exercise of political liberties. Why the welfare state can be a problem for the exercise of political liberties stems from the claim that political liberties are inextricably linked with economic liberties -as Harold Laski and Milton Friedman argue.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 8, Chapter 1 "The Relation between Economic Freedom and Political Freedom".

Friedman explains the close link between political and economic liberties by pointing out the effect of economic arrangements “on the concentration or dispersion of power” and the separation of economic power and political power.<sup>417</sup> When economic power “is joined to political power”, the concentration will be indispensable; however, if economic power is separated from political power, then “it can serve as a check and a counter to political power”.<sup>418</sup> Thus, according to Friedman’s argument, the free-market system deprives political power of coercion on individual lives since individuals freely cooperate with each other and during the development of the free-market system political liberties have got better.<sup>419</sup> The close relationship between political liberties and the free-market system the exercise of political liberties can be restricted by the welfare state because the welfare state occupies the political field more than its minimal version by way of economic interventions. In other words, wider conceptions of the state can deprive individuals of exercising political liberties.

Nozick believes that there can be suggested a theory of justice, i.e., “the entitlement theory”, compatible with a minimal state. Rawls’ theory of justice within the welfare state is, therefore, not the only option for justice. Nozick’s entitlement theory is the libertarian alternative to the welfare state concerning the “justice of holdings”: Just as invoking the principle of justice in acquisition, Nozick invokes the principle of justice in transfer -a just transition from one to another can make someone entitled to that holding.<sup>420</sup> Accordingly distribution can only be conceived as a transfer between individuals. Thus, Nozick rejects central distribution and argues that individuals are the ones who have the right of transfer goods.

Opposing Nozick’s libertarianism, the welfare state need not always be a bad choice for individuals. Distributive justice can be useful for exercising liberties: bettering off the bad conditions of disadvantaged groups by way of a distribution of wealth and

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<sup>417</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>419</sup> Friedman believes it to be shown by historical evidence (ibid, 10).

<sup>420</sup> Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, 151-2.

hence providing an expanded economic prosperity for a society can even benefit exercising liberties as it can increase the plurality of ends by way of removing the financial obstacles for enlarging the space for liberties. Sensible compromise must therefore not only be assessed from a certain perspective (or a single purpose), but it must take multiple aspects of human worlds, of course wisely considering the ways of practicing liberties in the political sphere.

The extreme use of economic liberties is opposed to sensible compromise (since sensible compromise is avoiding extremes) and there must be a line of balance. The welfare state can put a limit to their extreme usage which will be consistent with sensibly compromising economic liberties. Taxation is a fine example to putting limits against the extreme usage of economic liberties and supporting sensible compromise: Within a system of taxation, individuals compromise their profits (compromise of maximizing profit) and pay taxes. Meanwhile the state uses these taxes in favor of the extension of public goods so that the liberty to profit has been sensibly compromised.

Distributive justice tells us that the current economic system can be evaluated in terms of bettering off social conditions (such a need occurs when considering the increase in population and the decrease in resources). The efficient use of economic resources demands the requirements of creative production and the free market system -as the world currently follows. The improvement of this current economic system requires an understanding of the relationship between the exercise of political liberties and the state in terms of the degrees of governmental interference with economic activities. Such an improvement is not a matter of choosing between economic theories, rather it is a matter of improving conditions that can be accomplished by a sensible notion of compromise. Thus, the relationship between the exercise of liberties and governmental action is a matter of sensible compromise.

#### **4.4.3. Liberal and Non-liberal Values**

The aim of this section is providing an answer to the question of whether any liberal value requiring the exercise of liberty overwhelms any non-liberal value that is not

requiring the exercise of liberty without invalidating the incomparability thesis. In other words, the question is whether there is a way that a liberal value requiring the exercise of liberty can overwhelm a non-liberal value without having any privileged status. I argue that pluralism can be in conformity with liberal values requiring the exercise of liberty on the condition that liberties are sensibly compromised (i.e., liberties are compromised the least).

The reasons for why we are sensibly compromising liberties are supposed to convince us that an individual's liberty (and any liberal value requiring the exercise of liberty) can outweigh a non-liberal value (which does not require the exercise of liberty) without invalidating the incomparability premise of value pluralism. Individual choice as a liberal value in confrontation with non-liberal values such as obligations and duties, is expected to be sensibly compromised. To sensibly compromise individual choice means that individual choice is allowed to outweigh a non-liberal value with which it clashes. The reason for this is that these non-liberal values (oppression, duty) that are against individual choice will damage conversation, such as debate, discussion, and the equal right of expressing every political statement, hence damage the various ways of expression; and they make it impossible to realize a value, hence, the result will negatively affect the realization of political action. Individual choice is thus sensibly compromised because of both practical and pluralist concerns. If a value becomes duty or if an action becomes a necessity to perform, then it means that the value and the action are already taken to be superior to others regardless of the individual's choice, which contradicts incomparability and denies the practical role of choice.<sup>421</sup>

As can be seen, in this thesis, liberal values that require the exercise of liberty are not set as moral and comprehensive values, rather they are evaluated to be the *requirement* for keeping "the political". Accordingly, non-liberal values that do not require the exercise of liberty are evaluated to be against the possibilities of political debate, and the realization of a value. Obedience to authority as a non-liberal value is more

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<sup>421</sup> Concerning the practical role of choice see 2.3.4.1.



compromise-able because allowing its extension will lead “the political” and “compromise” to lose their meanings, which is contradictory. Therefore, liberal values that improve liberties can overwhelm any non-liberal value *not necessarily but sensibly*.

By way of sensible compromise without invalidating the premise of incomparability of value pluralism we can retain the exception of liberties. In accordance with the incomparability thesis, liberties are not argued to be a superior value based on a complete moral theory such as moral individualism or a universalist politics, such as classical liberalism.

#### **4.5. Compromise Instead of Consent**

Contrary to compromise, the concept of consent may not be adequate for maintaining diversity and pluralism. First, consent is not adequate for advocating and acknowledging diversity, since people can choose what is coercive by consent, which becomes an obedience by consent and suppresses the diverse ways of life. A despotic government can be legitimized by consent. In the public sphere a social value may be followed by the consent of people as a way of political life. This type of life may adopt a monistic way of life in which a consistent pursuit of a single conception of the good becomes a habit based on consent. Therefore, although the choices and decisions are made by consent, they are not sufficient for maintaining diversity.

In a liberal democratic state, the interests and preferences of individuals are “aggregated”, and conflicts between them are expected to be, by virtue of law (remember legality in Rawls) “reconciled”. However, the depiction that I have made in this thesis as to liberty is that it is a function of a political community in which individuals and groups must freely compromise to resolve conflicts that are not ultimately resolvable. Talisse criticizes liberal democratic society, as follows:

According to the communitarian/civic republican critique of liberalism, the democratic state must actively engage in building and sustaining proper communities; further-more, it must aim to protect communities and

their traditions, even if in some cases this involves a conflict with individual rights. Through the right kind of intervention and community support, democracy can be revitalized.<sup>422</sup>

After stating that liberalism has flaws by giving references to few authors, Talisse presents the conception of “after liberalism” instead of anti-liberalism, which means that he develops an approach in terms of liberalism to make criticism of liberal theory. In his own words:

That is, we must disentangle liberalism as a series of political commitments from the various liberal theories that have been proposed as philosophical articulations and defenses of liberalism. Many of the political commitments of liberalism will be retained in some form or another, while liberal theory will be criticized and rejected. When liberal theory is rejected but the key features of liberalism retained, the result is a theory that is “liberal” in the sense that was popular in the middle of the twentieth century and represented by figures such as Bertrand Russell, Morris Cohen, and John Dewey. A liberal in this sense is a political progressive who is committed to social democracy, self-realization, some mode of economic redistribution, and the free exercise of human intelligence in confronting social problems.<sup>423</sup>

As seen, without a liberal theory it is still possible for us to be a liberal person and defend a liberal community in which individuals and groups pursue their own values and affirm compromise as political action to widen the area of liberty. In my master’s thesis I have argued that compromise does not have the same meaning with “sacrifice”, and it can be positively made as a “voluntary agreement” between individuals.<sup>424</sup> I am now conceiving compromise with a different nuance: Compromise, for me, is not anymore addressing “agreement” based on consent but indicates the very act of compromising values. This notion of compromise enables individuals and groups to better attain a liberal community.

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<sup>422</sup> Talisse, *Democracy After Liberalism*, 7.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>424</sup> See 2.2.2.4 “Compromise versus Sacrifice” in “Moral Justification of Private Property” (Mert Atalay, M.A. Thesis, 2018).

#### 4.6. Compromise in Opposition to Coherence

Gray seems convincing in that liberalisms based on a comprehensive moral theory cannot be posited as the most legitimate form of government.<sup>425</sup> His claim that compromise is useful to provide the solution for a peaceful political community also deserves attention. However, “peace” is a value among other plural values and, as Crowder criticizes Gray, cannot be privileged.<sup>426</sup>

Crowder formulates his argument around the term “coherence” by addressing the coherence of incommensurable values at the social level, as well as the individual level, and his argument aims to present a possible way of combining the notions of “multiplicity” and “coherence”.<sup>427</sup> I see important risks in such an attempt, for it may curtail liberties, decrease diversity, narrow the range of differences, and allow centralization in politics. Crowder searches for a place between monistic regimes and a radical pluralism. Even a political sphere is an extension of a set of several values; this coherent understanding of liberalism endangers the plural expressions of values.

Radical pluralism excludes the notion of sensibility. However, value pluralism contains it. Sensible compromise as an engagement in political action can prevent reducing plurality and diversity of values to coherence and unity and enlarge liberties so that it allows us to *form* and *acquire* a *political community*. In some political situations, the difference between coherence and compromise can be eliminated when they offer the same solutions. For example, compromising a value can realize the core values of a society, thus compromise and coherence seem to agree in the same suggestion. The important thing is that coherence and compromise conceptually oppose each other. Therefore, unlike Crowder’s suggestion, the pluralist conception of multiplicity must conform to compromise, not coherence.

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<sup>425</sup> See John Gray’s “Agonistic Liberalism” (1995).

<sup>426</sup> For Crowder’s criticism of Gray’s conception of *modus vivendi* see Crowder, “Gray and the Politics of Pluralism”, 178. For Gray’s response to this criticism see Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, 25.

<sup>427</sup> Crowder, “Value Pluralism, Diversity and Liberalism”, 552-4.

Coherence indicates homogeneity, whereas pluralism of values implies pluralism of conflicting ends and diversity of lifestyles which do not exist in a coherence. Take two different ways of life: the life of an atheist and the life of someone pious. They aim at different conceptions of “the good” and these conceptions of “the good” cannot be comparable by a standard of higher good. If pluralism is fully acknowledged, one cannot make compromises to achieve a single purpose and coherence is unreachable. Values exist in disharmony. Recognizing the implications of the plural nature of values, we are situated in the position of choosing and compromising as to realize our chosen values.

Crowder sees practical reasoning (in relation to the Kantian sense of practical reason, as I understand) as essential to choosing between values, because, according to Crowder, “in the absence of practical reasoning our choices would be arbitrary and incoherent”.<sup>428</sup> However, I would object to this point since I replace ‘practical reasoning’ with ‘sensible compromise’ that involves plural reasons and pursues sensibility instead of a particular direction in accordance with a particular value, such as autonomy. I think that my argument regarding the requirement of sensible compromise in the political sphere is more capable of figuring out the implications of value pluralism. I conceive compromise not in direction to a value, nor in search for coherence or peace, but in relation to communication within this thesis’ pluralist conception of “the political”. In this sense, peace as aiming at living in a peaceful community corresponds to a *produced* consequence of compromises, not to an ultimate value.

#### **4.7. Sensible Compromise in the Political Sphere**

In this section, I present examples to be evaluated from the perspective of ‘sensible compromise’, including the evaluation of multicultural policy in relation to compromise in a pluralistic society. The notion of ‘sensible compromise’ has been

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<sup>428</sup> Crowder, “Gray and the Politics of Pluralism”, 186.

developed from the very implications of value pluralism and considers their use in the political sphere.

#### **4.7.1. Political Compromises**

The realm of compromises under consideration in this thesis is the realm of liberal politics and plural values. Compromise is a political compromise. Moral compromises, contrary to political ones, are not the matter of discussion in the sense that morality belongs to the private sphere; however, in the political sphere, compromises are made to resolve conflicts and make communication possible. What I am trying to say is that compromise must not be restricted based on moral norms. For instance, there is always a possible way to enter negotiation with a party which holds an “obviously” immoral position towards matters in the human worlds. We may need to posit a limiting condition for such a negotiation that can possibly prevent bad consequences, but such a condition would be justified not by morality, but by sensibility. Thus, we remain at the political domain while making sensible compromises.

#### **4.7.2. “Rotten Compromises”**

It can be argued that one must take morality and moral concerns into consideration when attempting to negotiate with another. Margalit argues that a negotiation made with an inhumane regime will be a “rotten compromise”. He sees “a rotten political compromise as an agreement to establish or maintain an inhuman regime, a regime of cruelty and humiliation, that is, a regime that does not treat humans as humans”.<sup>429</sup>

According to Margalit, to negotiate with leaders we should consider their attitude and policies in their home country before getting into any communication. Thus, it seems that he employs a principle that serves as a criterion to detect a rotten compromise. It seems that such a principle, i.e., treating humans as human, works as both an epistemological and a moral criterion to determine whether a compromise is a rotten

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<sup>429</sup> Avishai Margalit, *On Compromise and Rotten Compromises* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 2.

one or not. It is epistemological in the sense that we can know whether a compromise is a rotten one or not by applying it to politics. If we observe an incident in the political domain that violates this criterion, then we can decide that compromise with the authority that governs this political domain is a rotten one. It is moral in the sense that Margalit understands morality to be about how humans should be treated by virtue of being human. He sees an “inhumane regime” to be a violation of the basic assumption of morality -that is “treating humans as humans”.<sup>430</sup> In practice when making negotiations morality works as a strict criterion and in this sense Margalit strongly links morality to political action.

For Margalit racist regimes at their extreme are the examples of “not treating humans as humans” and compromises to maintain these regimes are the rottenest ones.<sup>431</sup> Margalit mentions the agreements made between France, United States and King Leopold II that involved trade benefits in the Congo in return for acknowledging Leopold’s “inhumane regime”.<sup>432</sup> According to Margalit, these agreements were completely wrong, and they should be labeled as rotten compromises. If compromise is defined within moral terms and from a moral perspective that takes the principle of humanity as “treating humans as humans”, compromises to maintain inhumane regimes cannot be acceptable, not even for any specific time, and it is totally right to condemn them.

Margalit also considers another case which he calls a “rotten compromise”, a compromise that did not take morality into account. This example of “rotten compromise” is the Munich agreement. Although Margalit sees it as a symbol of a rotten compromise, the Munich agreement, as he also states, was criticized because no concessions were made on Hitler’s part.<sup>433</sup> Moreover, the Munich agreement was an imposition applied on Czechoslovakia while it was not even an active party to the

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<sup>430</sup> Ibid.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid, 19.

agreement but the object of it. Britain and France were seeing Hitler as a threat, and to prevent a war they agreed on giving especially the Sudeten German region of Czechoslovakia to Germany under the control of Hitler. Hitler was the leader of a cruel regime, and, according to Margalit, this agreement was a rotten compromise because Hitler signed it.<sup>434</sup>

Although the Munich agreement did not constitute a proper example of compromise, since it lacked mutual concession, yet, for Margalit, it contained defects enough to be stated as a rotten compromise. Margalit thinks that the Munich agreement was a compromise because there was no coercion on Britain to sign it, which means that Britain did not surrender to a coercive act by Hitler.<sup>435</sup> However there might have been anticipated consequences on the occasion that the agreement was not signed. If we take the Munich agreement as a compromise, and as a rotten compromise, Margalit's explanation seems consistent from a moral viewpoint. According to Margalit, compromise must take morality (concerning the goods of humanity) into consideration if it wants to be a non-rotten one. However, as he states, it is not by definition that making an agreement with Hitler is a rotten compromise if it will save people's lives.<sup>436</sup> In this example, a sensible compromise would be formulated in the form of two conditionals: if it serves peace and an extended objective that anticipates good consequences by preventing a war, it can be counted as a *sensible* one. If it serves a prejudiced and one-sided aim, such as the cruel aims of Hitler, and provides their extension, then compromises cannot be counted as sensible.

As said above, Margalit's criterion to distinguish a proper compromise from a rotten one relies on the basic assumption of morality, i.e., "treating humans as humans". This basic assumption of morality can be correlated with the third formulation of Kant's "categorical imperative". The third formulation of the categorical imperative brings out the humanity of rational beings whether in ourselves or in other people, through

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid, 21-23.

the concept of the end-in-itself. According to this formula, human beings are ends in themselves, which means a person should not be treated merely as a means to an end.<sup>437</sup> This explains how we must understand the Kantian notion of humanity implied in the third formulation of “Categorical Imperative”: human beings are rational beings in the sense that they have the capacity to act from reason; therefore, they possess absolute worth –the intrinsic value as a basis of respect. As we see, Margalit’s conception of morality that takes the basic assumption of “treating humans as humans” seems to have the Kantian notion of humanity at its basis and a rational conception of action.

Thus, his conception of “rotten compromise” cannot be separated from the moral sphere. The moral limits he puts can be examined within a rational conception of humanity; however, its examination is not the subject matter of this section. The point about his argument is that compromise should take moral limits into account - especially on the ground of the value of humanity. This intertwined relation between morality and politics will, however, oppose the claim that the political sphere and the moral sphere are distinct areas. Such a separation between the moral sphere and the political sphere is essential to sensible compromise as political action.

According to my formulation of sensible compromise, moral principles do not have a role in negotiations and making compromises; instead, as I have argued, sensibility does. Compromises can be classified as either sensibly made or not sensibly made, but not classified with a moral reference. In this sense, sensibility is more responsive to diverse situations than those that are defined in moral terms and allows plural consequences in the political sphere.

#### **4.7.3. Politics of Compromise and Non-Compromise**

The politics of non-compromise is the politics of coercion and renders political action meaningless. North Korea’s dictatorship and the Taliban regime are the solid examples

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<sup>437</sup> Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 35-6. See also 2.3.2.2 for a detailed explanation about Kant’s conception of humanity.



of the politics of non-compromise in different degrees.<sup>438</sup> They exemplify the despotic regimes aiming at realizing uniform values and imposing them upon individuals and groups. Thus, they are political applications of uniformity not only because of their tendency towards non-compromise but because they are based on monistic principles such as the absolute authority of values. These monistic principles create a homogenous political sphere in which sensible compromise is ruled out.

The politics of compromise, on the other hand, involves pluralistic elements that allow political action. Walzer's argument of "critical engagement" can be a good example of the politics of compromise. Political movements, such as secularization projects, can engage with their plural alternatives and have a critical attitude by way of compromising their strong rationality. A strong rationality will always be opposed and challenged by its strong opponent alternatives. For example, "secular liberation hasn't been defeated, but it has been challenged in unexpected ways and with unexpected strength."<sup>439</sup> Walzer thus argues that liberators must be in a critical engagement with the old traditional values rather than totally negating (and attacking) them in order to accomplish the goal of liberation.<sup>440</sup> Beyond simply uttering the argument of "critical engagement", Walzer also says that there were such examples in the histories of national liberation, regardless of whether they had accomplished their goals. We must keep in our minds that the goal of liberation, in this sense, must be evaluated by its pluralistic alternatives open to alteration and further compromises. "Critical engagement" with the traditional values as a project of liberation would reach its maximum results because it holds a pluralistic view of societal acceptance of not only rationalistic values but also religious and cultural values that have historical roots and continuations; it hence brings about an allowance of compromised values in the political sphere.

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<sup>438</sup> Although these regimes exemplify the politics of non-compromise, in the circumstances of *realpolitik* they can exhibit the instances of compromise as political maneuvers due to the diplomatic international relations.

<sup>439</sup> Michael Walzer, *The Paradox of Liberation: Secular Revolutions and Religious Counterrevolutions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 32.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid, 131-3.

#### 4.7.4. Multiculturalism and Sensible Compromise

Another approach which should be distinguished from the view defended in this thesis is multiculturalism. Multiculturalism can be associated with cultural diversity. The degree of cultural diversity can vary from one society to another; yet in the political sphere cultural diversity usually implies a demand for respecting different values. The demand for respect for the diversity of values also means rejecting the ideal of unification and promoting the pluralistic structure. Considering this implication, we can observe the close affinity of multiculturalism with the idea of liberal toleration towards the values of different ethnic and religious communities. Liberal toleration may imply a situation in which cultures can exist without compromising their cultural and even ethnic identities -which is also related to the rejection of assimilation of minorities into the major culture. Protecting and respecting cultural diversity and the different values of communities are necessary parts of liberal politics.

From a liberal perspective, multiculturalism is said to have a relationship with the history of migration and widely concerns the liberty of expression of groups and minorities living in multicultural societies. Among the multicultural societies that are shaped by migration (immigrant accepting policies) there are United States, Canada, and Australia.

There were also multicultural societies in the past, such as the Ottoman Empire where we see considerable amounts of toleration shown towards different religious communities by Muslims.<sup>441</sup> The Ottoman Empire is a good example of a multicultural society in two ways: its multicultural characteristic is factual as it consists of various ethnic and religious communities; and institutional as it represents an “institutionalized cultural plurality”.<sup>442</sup> The “millet system” in the Ottoman Empire conserved and protected the values of non-Muslim religious communities; hence, though not being a liberal state in the modern sense, it can be seen as a good example of a multicultural

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<sup>441</sup> Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Malden: Polity Press, 2013), 5.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid, 8.

way of governing a pluralistic society. Moreover, the “millet system” exemplifies sensible compromise between the ruling authority and the minority groups.<sup>443</sup> At this point, I should underline the view that multicultural policies are undoubtedly fair if the political authority is content with the diversity and making sensible compromises to govern pluralistically -as in the example of the “millet system”.

Among contemporary societies, India can be an example of a multicultural society, “a deeply multicultural society”, where religious beliefs vary from the major world religions to the small-sized ones.<sup>444</sup> As Reddy states, the cultural and religious diversity is guaranteed by the Indian constitution according to which they are protected so that “no community is excluded or systematically disadvantaged in the public arena” and the Indian constitution “provides autonomy to each religious community to pursue its own way of life in the private sphere”.<sup>445</sup> Reddy points out that Indian multiculturalism “has been conjoined with federalism”, which endorses a political system in which ethnic identities are politically accommodated.<sup>446</sup>

These examples, as can be seen, show different aspects of multicultural societies. In relation to these examples, multiculturalism is evaluated to be in relation to liberalism insofar as it indicates the circumstances that require liberal toleration and compromises. For those who consider multiculturalism as a political philosophy according to which the state must organize its political institutions, it can be a part of liberal democracies in which the diversity of cultural values and individual rights are respected and protected. Many liberal thinkers, such as Kymlicka, hold that multiculturalism has a close relationship with liberalism. Kymlicka, for instance, believes that the justification of multiculturalism is given within liberal thought

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<sup>443</sup> For further information and relevant discussions see Anver M. Emon, *Religious Pluralism and Islamic Law: Dhimmīs and Others in the Empire of Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 4.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>445</sup> C Sheela Reddy, “Multiculturalism and Women”, *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues* 23, no. 1 (2019): 160.

<sup>446</sup> Reddy points out that Indian “multiculturalism has been conjoined with federalism (ibid, 161-2).

(especially that of Rawls).<sup>447</sup> However, multiculturalism is not necessarily derived from liberalism. Modood states that multiculturalism is not a “simply liberal idea” nor is it a “comprehensive theory of politics” in the sense that it is not “a political philosophy in its own right”.<sup>448</sup> Modood does not take multiculturalism to be derived of liberal policies; rather, he treats it within a democratic perspective that works in liberal democracies.<sup>449</sup>

Multiculturalism can be a useful political view for strengthening liberal toleration. On the other hand, a multicultural society represents a social pluralism in which no value or good of a community can be repressed by another value -which can be defended based on value pluralism. Different cultural and religious values are in a continual conflict, and they are irreducibly and incomparably plural. However, the criticism that can be made against multiculturalism is that in its extreme versions multiculturalism can endanger communication.

To begin, one of the implications of this thesis’ argument is that within a pluralistic political sphere compromise is encouraged for the sake of communication. Liberal toleration is perfectly compatible with sensible compromise. However, extremist factors, such as rejection of compromise and enclosed moral groups, seem not to contribute to communication. In this sense, uncompromising ethnic and cultural values endanger communication. What I am trying to emphasize is that at its extremes, such as ethnocentrism, any political theory falls into dogmatism. There are two reasons for why I am against the extremist versions of a multicultural approach. First, they contradict value pluralism because they overvalue cultural and ethical values. Second, they cannot depict a proper scene of plural realities (rather they represent “radically” distinct realities) and cannot provide a persuasive conversation.

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<sup>447</sup> Kymlicka first developed his thought within a Rawlsian scheme of justice, however he later abandoned this Rawlsian approach by adopting Margalit’s and Raz’s viewpoints on “national self-determination”. Sarah Song, “Multiculturalism”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/multiculturalism>. Accessed October 26, 2021.

<sup>448</sup> Modood, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*, 6.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid, 7.

Concerning the implementation of the democratic and communicative procedures, the second criticism of multicultural approach can also be related to the perspective that culturalist policies can lead to the consequence that cultural minorities may be pushed towards their closedness which is a problem for integrating the members of minority groups into public discourse. In relation with this criticism, Karademir points out that culturalist discourses intensify the closedness and opacity of minority cultures, make them vulnerable to powers that shape political life, and this endangers democratic procedures because culturalist approaches widen or stretch the distance between minority groups and the political sphere.<sup>450</sup> However, Karademir finds the solution by employing a “communicative rationality” according to which the validity of reasons depends on rationality and their rational acceptability.<sup>451</sup> From the pluralist perspective of this thesis reasons can vary not only in their accordance with rationality but also in accordance with a *sensibility* that allows various reasons to apply to the political arena where compromises are made to enable communication. Thus, from this perspective the values of minority groups are regarded to be subject to sensible compromise if they want to be a part of the political sphere (e.g., democratic debate) and this conforms to pluralism as it does not restrict the diverse discourses of cultural values to rationality.

Extremism is against compromise, therefore blocking communication. However, we must deal with the challenges of extremism in pluralistic societies. Extremism can be dealt with if extremist groups can engage with the democratic discussion. This perspective is called the “agonistic deliberative approach”, defended by Ercan.<sup>452</sup> According to this approach, a “deliberative process” is assumed in which different conflicting ideologies can express themselves and understand each other. To

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<sup>450</sup> See Aret Karademir, “Minority Rights and Public Autonomy: A Nonculturalist Argument for Accommodating Ethno-cultural Diversity”, *The Philosophical Forum* 52, no.2 (2021): 121–137. In connection to the same argument see another essay “The Case of Alevis in Turkey: A Challenge to Liberal Multiculturalism” by A. Karademir and M. Şen, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 21, no.1 (2020), 147-165. This essay makes a criticism of liberal multiculturalism in the sense that liberal multiculturalist policies cause an “isolation” of minority groups, hence keep them away from participating in public discussion.

<sup>451</sup> Karademir, “Minority Rights and Public Autonomy: A Nonculturalist Argument for Accommodating Ethno-cultural Diversity”, 124,5.

<sup>452</sup> Selen A. Ercan, “Engaging with Extremism in a Multicultural Society: A Deliberative Democratic Approach”, *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 12, no: 2 (2017): 9-21.

accomplish it, multiculturalism as respecting and concentrating on the “ethno-cultural *differences* in institutional terms” must be considered to enable extremist groups to engage with the democratic discourse.<sup>453</sup> However, Ercan sees a problem with multicultural solutions. Ercan states that multicultural solutions fail to recognize the cultural “differences” because of the logic adjusting the diversity to common principles or values.<sup>454</sup> Accordingly, multicultural solutions tend to establish common principles, say liberal values, which are not genuinely adopted by some of the minority groups who exhibit extremist and illiberal practices that violate liberal values. It looks like multicultural solutions reinforce the lines of liberal political institutions and expect minority groups to acknowledge them, which means that if minority groups want to express themselves, they must stay within these boundaries.

Such a situation that limits the practice of minority groups is also expressed within a discussion of the notion of tolerance: Emon draws attention to the role of tolerance in governing a pluralistic community consisting of various comprehensions of “the good” by allowing minority groups to lead their practices within the “room” that

may be made for minority group members to act in accordance with their traditions. The scope of that room, however, will be defined (and restricted) in terms of the law in accordance with majoritarian attitudes about the public sphere, the public good, and the polity as a whole.<sup>455</sup>

Tolerance as a multicultural policy seems inadequate to realize a genuine liberty of expression when it serves the law that allows differences only to be expressed within “the scope of that room”. Moreover, when tolerance, especially “the language of ‘tolerance’”, is associated with governance of the diversity by way of the law, then it is inevitable that it “operates as a cover that hides the operation of power on the bodies of minorities.”<sup>456</sup> Encompassing and majoritarian frameworks do not properly handle

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<sup>453</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> Emon, *Religious Pluralism and Islamic Law: Dhimmīs and Others in the Empire of Law*, 6.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

pluralism; they reduce it to a few principles or values either defined within the constitution or associated with the common public good. Thus, diversity and pluralism are not considered as an active part of the political sphere. The communicative aspect of pluralism in the sense of encouraging the plural ways of expressing different values is vital to a democratic public sphere. For democracy pluralism is necessary, but not sufficient. The sufficient causes that promote democracy are debating, exchanging ideas, and the expression of different goods within political interaction. Diversity and pluralism can be effective not because tolerance is maintained as the governance of minorities but because sensible compromise is performed.

If a liberal democracy is based on the un-compromise-ably promoted liberal values, it cannot grasp the effective aspect of pluralism. On the contrary, if a liberal democracy avoids the imposition of liberal values on individuals and groups, then it can grasp diversity and pluralism as effective forces. Compromise provides trust to minority groups, even though it is not practiced properly; it extends the “room” with many doors that are open to a future in which the political authority and diverse groups can communicate by compromise. Therefore, minority groups know that they can have their liberty of expression. Compromise brings trust and trust brings compromise. This reciprocal relationship improves liberties. It is important to see compromise as a part of political institutions and a political action.

The right to express diverse cultural values should take everyone’s equal right to the exercise of liberties into consideration. Minority rights are subject to sensible compromise in the sense that the maintenance of practices within a group or community can be “restrained” in favor of extending the possibilities of the exercise of liberties. Here I must draw attention to the point that minority rights’ subjection to sensible compromise must not be understood as a subjugation of minority values to liberal values. Minority rights’ subjection to sensible compromise must be understood within its practical benefit as nobody should be prevented to exercise political action. Let me demonstrate this with an example.

Everyone must have an equal right to participate in democratic discussion in the public sphere. In this sense, no value that restrains them from having this opportunity should be allowed to extend to the public sphere. For instance, as Reddy states, in a certain group women may not be as advantaged as men in terms of exercising liberties because of the cultural practices, such as “pressurising young women to accept arranged marriages”.<sup>457</sup> As can be seen, the discriminatory cultural values and practices pose a serious problem and such a problem concerns not only the private sphere, but also the public sphere. This is because the removal of the possibility of the exercise of liberty as depicted in the case of young women can be problematic to achieve a democratic and pluralistic society.<sup>458</sup> As a resolution of this problem known as “the paradox of multicultural vulnerability”, Reddy states that “minority rights should be subject to a negotiation process” in which “women’s interests and wellbeing are not compromised” when these rights are granted.<sup>459</sup> This “negotiation process” can be read as follows: the values of a minority group must be subject to sensible compromise if these values pose an obstacle to group members’ liberties such as the freedom of choice. This interpretation of “negotiation process” implies that a multicultural approach to such a minority group is subject to the consequence of sensible compromise, that is liberties are compromised the least.

“Social cohesion”, contrary to multiculturalism, emphasizes the need for building an “ethno-cultural similarity” and “a strong common identity”.<sup>460</sup> A liberal democracy that is built on these conditions will lead to a unified political community in which extremism and radicalization are expected to be prevented. As an exemplification of the ideal of building “social cohesion” and “harmony”, Ercan mentions the Australian

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<sup>457</sup> Reddy, “Multiculturalism and Women”, 157.

<sup>458</sup> If the practical role of liberties is evaluated in terms of utilitarian politics (i.e., promoting “x” as an overall utility), it should not be forgotten that making compromises is not put as a utilitarian goal. The primary concern is maintaining pluralism of goods. Thus, this thesis allows pluralism to make a political space where political action as sensible compromise can take its plural forms. For the evaluation of utilitarian politics from the perspective of sensible compromise see 4.4.1.

<sup>459</sup> Reddy, “Multiculturalism and Women”, 157.

<sup>460</sup> Ercan, “Engaging with Extremism in a Multicultural Society: A Deliberative Democratic Approach”, 12.



government's action plan called 'National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security' that focuses on Muslim communities. This action plan, as Ercan states, made young Australian Muslims vulnerable to violent extremism, hence seemed to fail to cope with extremism.<sup>461</sup> Going beyond multiculturalism and "social cohesion", Ercan offers an alternative solution to cope with the challenge of extremism from the perspective of agonistic pluralism that can employ deliberative democracy.<sup>462</sup> While offering this solution, she sees that the main point is to understand that conflicts arising from deep differences are "likely to persist, rather than disappear, in culturally plural societies".<sup>463</sup>

The importance of conversation between different cultures is highlighted in Ercan's view, and violent extremism can only be dealt with if we take the effective ways of conversation into account.<sup>464</sup> Among these effective ways of conversation, Ercan mentions moving away from the ideals of establishing a social cohesion and a unified political community, as well as abandoning consensus and stability, which are wholeheartedly shared by this thesis.<sup>465</sup> Ercan believes that violent extremism can be directed to a "constructive communicative process". In this consideration, Ercan's view that utilizes deliberative democracy and agonism to respond to extremism is fruitful. I believe that such an approach can be further improved if accompanies what I am arguing as the resolution of conflict. Sensible compromise as political action is considered as a strategic policy between the political authority and the different forms of life and as a communicative tool for the extremist groups, so that political relations become possible.

The conception of liberalism which employs sensible compromise can yield a position that goes further than Rawls' "political liberalism" in the sense that it conceptualizes

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<sup>461</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>465</sup> See my criticisms of Rawls's notions of "consensus" and "stability" in 3.3.1.

liberalism around political action and its pluralistic consequences instead of the conception of “stability”: it rejects both cultural relativism and any unresolvable agonism as it does not suggest an unresolvable pointless constant conflict in the political realm as it engages with sensibly compromised values. Conflicting values and their sensibly compromised adaptations are the active players and they do not put a “coercion” on each other. Comprehensive doctrines, relativism and extreme culturalism fail occupying a place in such a position that they can promote such dynamic and active elements.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

The main argument of this thesis is that conflicts among different perspectives in the political sphere are resolvable by sensible compromise. Multiple perspectives in the political sphere that adopt different conceptions of “the good” conflict with each other. If there are different ways of demanding the “good”, then it is useless to expect a “good society”, a “good morality” and “a good person”; what we should expect is the free expression of different forms of living a life if we estimate the conception of the “good”. Thus, any resolution of conflict should accommodate multivarious conceptions of “the good” in the political sphere instead of pursuing monist conception of “the good”.

Therefore, this thesis affirms that the genuinely viable resolution of conflict in the political sphere must be pluralistic. In this thesis I also argue that the exercise of liberties in the political sphere depends on diversity. In this respect, this thesis forms the connection between (value) pluralism and liberalism by virtue of the notion of “the political” which is assumed to be constituted by value pluralism. Such a connection is also formed by means of sensible compromise as the political conception of action which endorses neither a monistic nor a comprehensive solution but allows the presence of plural ways of expression and action. Thus, sensible compromise appears to be both pluralistic and liberal way of resolution to conflicts in the political sphere.

Value pluralism is the meta-ethical view that argues for these main statements: Values are irreducibly plural; they are in a conflict which cannot be resolved eternally, and values are incomparable to each other according to “a common scale of measurement”,

and a value cannot be set as a “higher value” rationally and universally. If we accept value pluralism, we should acknowledge that the realization of one value requires the loss of another and we lack a universal argument for ranking values. Thus, because of value pluralism, choices and compromises are necessary to realize a value. Incompatibility and incomparability of values encourage us to care more about our choices. Incomparable conflicting values stimulate us to discuss and ponder on our subjective beliefs, which leads us to choose between two options and make compromises. When two options are incomparable, we can realize an option at the expense of another and see the possibility of compromise. At this point, I see compromise as a profound implication of incommensurability or incomparability.

This thesis follows the main implications of incomparability. The requirement of choice and compromise will lead us to a conclusion where we need not end up with relativism and can enjoy the fruitful consequences of communication. While relativism stops at the existence of incomparability, the pluralist conception of political action developed in this thesis has sought to attribute an effective role to pluralism.

Another implication of value pluralism is that liberalism must be understood in political terms, rather than in terms of morality or comprehensive values. One of the main consequences that is argued in this thesis is that value pluralism cannot provide a grounding to a political theory. Any liberalism that is based on or deduced from a moral theory falls into the category of a comprehensive theory. Liberalism based on a moral theory would prioritize certain values such as autonomy as the defining values of liberal politics and would promote them at the expense of other plural values. However, this does not mean that we have a fully arbitrary conception of liberalism; on the contrary, we can have a pluralistic and political conception of it.

This thesis is about the political, not the moral. It is the political community, not the moral community, that makes values compromise-able. One implication of value pluralism, as I have tried to show, is that different conflicting perspectives can communicate with each other by way of compromise. Our perspectives exist in disharmony as they adopt different conceptions of “the good”; nevertheless, we can

communicate with each other on the condition that we compromise our values and ends. Compromise emerges to be the workable resolution of conflict; therefore, conflict resolution in the political sphere must be committed to compromise. Compromise occurs in the political sphere, not in the moral sphere.

Compromise enables us to communicate in the political sphere: Since values disagree, from the viewpoint of value pluralism we find ourselves in disagreement in shaping our worlds. If there is no fundamental value that is justifiable to pursue by everyone due to pluralism, then the only way is to attain possible ways of communication between clashing values. This calls for a considerable amount of liberty in our relationships. Conflict cannot be resolved permanently, and a final answer is not available due to value pluralism. A political sphere in which diverse values and ends can be freely expressed is realized by compromise that pays attention to accomplishable ends under the conditions of social diversity and pluralism. Thus, compromise will inevitably be a *regular pattern of communication* in the political sphere.

In the political sphere, subjective beliefs and ideological dogmas are expressed in political statements which happen to be compromised from that moment. Subjective beliefs, such as moral beliefs, are private, and nobody can be prevented from or accused of or condemned for having their own beliefs. Every belief is respectable unless they cause oppression and violence. Private beliefs can remain as uncompromised. There is no problem with it. However, they are not able to communicate in the public sphere unless they are open to be compromised. When compromised, they cannot remain as they were. Thus, all beliefs become political in the public sphere where we present not our moral commitments that are subjectively held and belong to our private lives, but we discuss by uttering political statements. When brought into the public sphere, subjective claims become political claims that are subject to be compromised. After that, their presence is not a matter of justification but of communication that is open to compromise. Compromise does not aim at a consensus of principles but on acceptance of a pluralistic political sphere.

In these considerations, a liberal person who embraces the arguments and ideas presented in this thesis is said to be disapproving the completion of values and appreciate the characteristics of human worlds.<sup>466</sup> Within these aspects we can argue as follows: Our values are incomparable by a universal standard and they conflict with each other; therefore, we perform political acts by compromising our subjective values. Compromised values enable communication between political actors.<sup>467</sup>

Compromise can be an effective use of political action, whereas toleration is a more of traditional notion as to realize liberties and is indifferent –or remains lesser active compared to compromise, which I have discussed in 4.1. Both are acceptable in solving problems of living together, yet my focus is on compromise and its eligibility/fitness; and a liberal political community in which how conversation with non-liberal groups (such as religious, cultural) be possible and how to *resolve* conflict. Liberalism can rely on both secular and religious reasoning.<sup>468</sup> Considering the plural ways of reasoning, compromise as political action takes an important role as individuals and groups engage with the public sphere through making compromises. Thus, individuals and groups become adaptive to a continual exercise of compromise in performing political action. Accordingly, the public sphere must not be only considered to be consisting of empirical facts, but also involving ideological engagements with and interferences into those facts; therefore, there will have to be continual adaptations of values and perspectives in the political sphere. It is, thereby, seen that the realm of compromises is the realm of “the political”.

Value pluralism, as I have explained, cannot legitimize liberalism and its universal aims. In other words, liberalism cannot be stated as the legitimate political theory

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<sup>466</sup> The four characteristics of human worlds are described in “Introduction”.

<sup>467</sup> See FN 358.

<sup>468</sup> “In *The Liberal Conscience*, Lucas Swaine undertakes the ambitious task of convincing theocrats to do so despite their distinctive value orientations. What stands in the way of such an attempt, he maintains, is the questionable belief that liberalism should be justified by secular reasoning alone — a view probably not shared by Hobbes, as Stephen J. Finn shows. Thus, Swaine argues that theocrats are in fact committed to freedom of conscience and hence to its political implications.” (From a review about Berlin).

based on value pluralism. The unlikeliness of legitimacy is problematic for liberalism because liberalism seems to require at least a minimal universalist morality. However, an ultra-version of pluralism, on the other hand, that can lead to relativism will endanger any universalist morality and hence undermine liberalism as a political theory.

To this problem can sensible compromise be a solution: when value pluralism is taken into consideration, it is possible by endorsing a sensible compromise: Sensible compromise is a political action that makes communication between conflicting values and ends possible. Sensible compromise allows us to bring our objectives into a communicable realm attained on political conditions rather than moral grounds. Values guide our ends, and therefore we should take their plurality and its ramifications into account in our efforts.

Sensible compromise implies a version of liberalism that does not take a moral and comprehensive doctrine as its basis, nor does it have a consensual approach. Such an implied version of liberalism must be grasped in political terms but also has differences from Rawls' political liberalism for the reasons I have discussed in 3.3.1. I do not formulate any theory of liberalism based on the conception of consensus, nor do I comprehend it as an application of a coherent set of values. I believe in the significance of compromise not as a "liberal value", rather as a warrant of political relationships. Compromise and the diversity of goods are two key aspects of a liberal political community. In this sense, liberalism has a relation with pluralism; the relationship between them is not a sort of justification, but a political connection.<sup>469</sup> Compromise as political action provides this connection. Thus, in this political understanding of liberalism, the rational notion of "consensus", even if not based on a comprehensive doctrine, has still problems as stated through the criticism of Rawls' conception of consensus; hence is abandoned.

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<sup>469</sup> See 3.2.1 for the criticism of the view that liberalism can be based on value pluralism; see also Gray's relevant objection to it in 3.4.

Sensible compromise is based on the plurality of reasons and must not be restricted to a rational theory of decision. Thus, sensible compromise does not require a certain concept of “rationality” as it operates sensibility which means that it applies plural reasons; “sensibility” affirms the plurality of reasons instead of only denoting a minimal rationality -which is explained in 4.2.<sup>470</sup> Neither does it apply the categories of “truth”; it instead applies a recognition of incomparable values and claims in their *compromised adaptations* to the political sphere.<sup>471</sup>

There are two major implications of the exercise of sensible compromise: One is reducing and avoiding/escaping extremes; the other is conceiving liberties as ‘the least compromise-able’ (the first is stated and explained in 4.2, the second is discussed within all details and aspects in 4.4).<sup>472</sup> The latter dimension applies to the confrontation between liberties and their possible restricting sources, namely the society and the state. Supporting liberties *without* relying on a moral or comprehensive theory of liberalism constitutes one of the key practical aspects of this thesis. In this thesis liberties are specified as the ‘least compromise-able’, which must be read in the sense that liberties have no privileged status that exempts them from being compromised. The pluralistic resolution of conflict can be accomplished not by means of a moral application of politics, but by applying a sensible compromise which leads liberties to be the ‘least compromise-able’. This enables us to recognize the significance of liberties in a political community without providing a moral support for them.

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<sup>470</sup> Nobody can claim that I argue for an anti-reason approach. By the sensible notion of compromise, I embrace a pluralistic approach to human action in the sense that there are plural reasons for an action none of which can be rationally estimated as superior to another. Sensible compromise denies narrowing down the human perspective, it rather promotes its improvement. The reasons for an action are only dependent on the choice of the actor who can still believe that there is no problem unsolvable by appealing to reason. Thus, within the scope of the thesis argument, rationality cannot be imposed and uniformly aimed at in communication, rather it is one of the dynamic components of communication. A strict rationality would be incompatible with the incomparability of values; thus, a minimal rationality can be acceptable if it will form a compromised version of rationality.

<sup>471</sup> The realization of a value has been said to have involved the “loss of another value” -for the relevant explanation see 2.3.3.

<sup>472</sup> See also 3.1.2 for “the argument from diversity” which I develop to explain why liberties are compromised the least in their relation to pluralism.



Regarding the former dimension (i.e., avoiding extremes), sensible compromise accepts no uniformness, neither monism nor absolute moralities that promote one way of living. By sensible compromise communication become possible in a pluralistic political sphere and pluralism as an active approach brings solutions to the problems in human worlds -that is a multi-perspectival approach to the problems seems critical. Disagreement and compromise together enable us to maintain a politically limitless and flexible public sphere. This means that we are in the process of realizing our objectives based on the disagreement of values. In an open-ended communication sensible compromise is maintaining liberties to be compromised the least to make communication possible; therefore, the public sphere becomes liberal and political relations are assessed in the liberal outlook.

Pluralism entails such a compromise, and this signifies the dynamic feature of human relations.<sup>473</sup> Resolution of conflict in the political sphere requires a communicative platform which is provided by compromise. There is no restriction of use of compromise in a tactical policy unless it aims to lessen pluralism. The possible and dynamic conditions of communication come from the implications of value pluralism; monist outlook of values cannot provide them.

What has been said and accomplished through the chapters is as follows: Chapter 2 has explored value pluralism, its main premises, and their political implications. Autonomy and a single conception of rationality have been evaluated in connection to pluralism. The universal conception of practical reason authorizing the universal moral law on the uniform principle of duty-based action, such as in Kantian morality, has been criticized and it has been argued that any justification of a universal moral theory is lost to pluralism. Thus, justification becomes impossible in morality.

Especially for the comprehensive theories, I have explained in 2.3 that objective criteria in morals seem inapplicable to human worlds so that any objectivity based on

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<sup>473</sup> Whether the source of disagreement is in pluralism see Peter Jones, "Toleration, Value-pluralism, and the Fact of Pluralism", *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 9, no. 2 (2006): 189–210.

moral concepts and principles cannot and also must not ground any political theory due to the discussions regarding the absence of a universal rationality and impossibility of justification of any single moral theory and discussions about the dangerous consequences of application of a monist conception of value in the political sphere. Moral theories are justifiable only if they are based on a monist concept or a fundamental value and this is falsified by value pluralism.

Chapter 3 has discussed different pluralistic accounts of liberalism; I have previously stated that there are liberal thinkers, such as Berlin and Galston, who maintain that value pluralism entails liberalism; which means that value pluralism can live within liberalism. In the criticism of “liberal pluralism”, it has been argued that no political theory that requires comprehensive values, such as liberal values, can be grounded on value pluralism. Rawls’s political liberalism has been analyzed through the assessment of its main concepts. Rawls suggests a political liberalism that is not based on comprehensive doctrine (decoupling liberalism from its comprehensive theories). Instead of a comprehensive theory of liberalism, Rawls endorses “reasonable pluralism” and offers “overlapping consensus”.<sup>474</sup> However, his suggestion of “overlapping consensus” can endanger pluralism in favor of stability, as I have discussed. Defining liberalism in terms of stability together with “truth” is too far from being worthy of having a pluralistic form of liberalism, since, as I have argued, stability cannot be compatible with compromise and pluralism.

In Chapter 3 I have also analyzed Gray’s “agonistic liberalism” which considers that liberalism cannot be legitimately derived from value pluralism; on the contrary, value pluralism endangers liberalism as it provides no basis for any political theory. Gray rejects the liberal projects that seek for a rational ground for liberal values. Gray’s pluralistic approach has inclined him to the opposite way of other liberal thinkers who believed value pluralism to serve a ground for liberalism.

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<sup>474</sup> Galston, *Liberal Pluralism*, 39.

Another agonistic perspective belonging to Mouffe, that is not liberal, has been examined. According to Mouffe “the political” is constituted with pluralistic and agonistic elements and she argue that the aim of democratic politics should be transforming antagonism into agonism since the main characteristic of democracy is to be conflictual. This thesis shares ideas with Mouffe’s agonistic perspective in the sense that “the political” is pluralistic, and also with “agonistic liberalism” about that traditional and universal conceptions of liberalism are not acceptable from the pluralist perspective. However, its difference from both lies in its intense relationship with sensible compromise.

Chapter 3 has also suggested that sensible compromise is political action, which is compatible with a pluralistic liberal public sphere. Mill’s defense of liberty is read within the scope of sensible compromise. Mill’s harm principle that indicates the cases in which the exercise of liberty can be interfered with and regulated could be an example of sensible compromise; however, it must not be thought that sensible compromise is based on and derived from such a principle. The “harm principle” can be an exercise of sensible compromise, yet sensible compromise does not specifically target utilitarian aims. I must note that Mill’s defense of the liberty of speech has a profound implication especially in relation to understanding pluralism and sensible compromise: no argument is worthy of having a value without its critique and no opinion is worthy of utterance without dissenting opinions. Dissenting opinions are the very indication of pluralism and the active usage of compromise. Besides the “harm principle”, the “minimal state” has also been read as an example of sensible compromise. Nozick’s theory of the “minimal state” exemplifies the situation in which liberties are compromised the least in the establishment of the state. However, I have argued that wider notions of the state than a minimal one that may interfere with economic liberties can be conforming with sensible compromise and the use of political liberties if they aid pluralism in the political sphere.

When the historic examples of compromises have been examined in Chapter 4, Margalit’s conception of rotten compromise has been evaluated within the scope of sensible compromise and sensible compromise has been distinguished from rotten

compromises in the sense that they have been made on sensible reasons. It has come up with this conclusion: Compromises are not limited to moral norms; yet they are made *sensibly*. Besides, Walzer's "critical engagement" has been interpreted as one of the different aspects of compromise and as an example of the politics of compromise within a critical approach to clashing ideologies.

This thesis' conception of "the political" confirms the conflictual and pluralistic condition of the political sphere; yet it does not define "the political" only within an agonistic outlook, it also emphasizes compromise as political action which does not aim at a consensus. Compromises are not made to endorse a rational consensus but to allow the extension of the diverse ways of expression in the political sphere *if made sensibly*.

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## APPENDICES

### A. CURRICULUM VITAE

**Name:** Mert ATALAY

**Home Address:**

**Phone (Mobile):**

**E-mail:**

**Areas of Specialization:** Value pluralism, liberalism, objectivism.

**Areas of Competence:** Ethics, political theory, history of philosophy.

**Education: PhD Student in Philosophy, METU** 2018-2022  
Thesis title: Value Pluralism and Compromise  
in the Political Sphere  
Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Barış Parkan

**M.A. in Philosophy, METU** 2013-2018  
Thesis title: Moral Justification of Private Property  
Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Barış Parkan

**B.A. in Philosophy, METU** 2008-2013  
Bachelor's Degree with 3.41

**PhD Qualifying:** November 2020

**Awards:** Bachelor's Honors Degree, 2013  
Graduate Courses Performance Award,  
2018-19 Academic year

**Languages:** English (advanced), Turkish (native)

## B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

Bu tezde ileri srlen, siyasal alanda ortaya ıkan farklı grşler arasındaki atışmanın belirli bir biimde tanımlanan siyasal eylem, yani ‘makul dn’ (sensible compromise) yoluyla zmlenebileceėi iddiası deėer oėulculuėunun (value pluralism) bir aıklaması iinde sunulur. Bu tezin ileri srdė argmana, yani siyasal alandaki atışmanın siyasal eylem olan ‘makul dn’ ile zmlendiėi iddiasına gre řunlar varsayılmıřtır: ilki, “siyasal” kavramı, dolayısıyla siyasal alan oėulculuk, yani deėer oėulculuėu tarafından oluřturulur; ikincisi de oėulcu olan siyasal alanda siyasal ilgi ve amalar atışır ve bu atışmaya bulunacak uygun ya da hakiki (genuine) bir zm sz konusu oėulculuėu dikkate almalıdır.

Giriřte ifade ettiėim iddia ile bu tez liberal dřnceden vazgemeden siyasal alanı liberal bir bakıř aısı iinde kavrar: bu tezde amalanan řey, liberalizmin ahlaki ve kapsamlı bir ėretisine dayanmadan, (deėer) oėulcu bir aıklama iinde “siyasal alan” kavramının liberal bir perspektife yerleřtirilmesidir.<sup>475</sup> Buna gre, bu tezde ileri srlen liberal dřnce (liberalism) ve deėer oėulculuėu arasındaki iliřki, liberalizmin tek uygun ynetim biimi olarak gerekelendirilmesi bakımından kurulmaz. Sz konusu iliřki, oėulcu unsurlardan oluřan ve oėul ifade biimlerine yer aan siyasal eylemi gerektiren bir siyasal alan kavramı iinde ele alınır.

İnsan dnyaları atışma ve anlařmazlık gibi oėulcu unsurlar barındırır. Dolayısıyla, insan dnyalarında sabit bir hakikatten bahsedemeyeceėimiz gibi, sabit bir deėer

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<sup>475</sup> Bu tezin kavradıėı oėulcu liberal grř, “liberal oėulculuk” ile karıřtırılmamalıdır; zira “liberal oėulculuk” grř deėer oėulculuėunu liberalizm iin kapsamlı bir deėer teorisi olarak temel alır ve onun zerinden liberalizmi gerekelendirir. Bu tez bu trden bir gerekelendirmeyi reddeder, nk oėulcu yaklařımın herhangi bir siyasal gerekelendirmeye imkn vermediėini kabul eder. Bu tezde benimsenen liberal grř deėer oėulculuėunu gereke zemini olarak grmek yerine, onun pratik imalarına ve bunun sonucu olarak da siyasal alanda ortaya ıkan eylem biimine, yani dne (tavize) odaklanır.

hiyerarşisinden de bahsedemeyiz. Değerler kültürle, medeniyetle ve çağlara göre değişken anlamlara sahip kavramlar olarak karşımıza çıkar. Bu değişim ve sabitliğin olmadığı görüşü kendisini pragmatistlerin yaklaşımında ele verir.<sup>476</sup> Ancak bu tez pragmatist geleneği takip etmez; değer çoğulculuğu ile bağlantılı siyasal alan ve liberal düşünce ile ilgilenir. Değer çoğulculuğunun tezi odur ki değerler gerçekleştirilmek üzere seçilir ve bir değeri gerçekleştirmek için diğer değerlerden ödün verilmesi gerekir. Seçim ve ödün, bir değeri gerçekleştirmenin vazgeçilmez araçlarıdır. Bu yönüyle ödün kavramı siyasal alanda çatışmaları çözümlemek için kullanılır. Ödün kavramının siyasal alanda kullanılması, siyasal olanın (siyasal alanın) değer çoğulculuğu tarafından oluşturulduğu iddiası ile açıklanmaya çalışılır.

Değer çoğulculuğunun yirminci yüzyıl literatüründe en bilinen savunucusu bir fikir tarihçisi ve siyaset teorisyeni olan Isaiah Berlin'dir. Bu tezde kabul edilen değer çoğulculuğunun önermeleri Berlin'in değer çoğulculuğunu esas almaktadır. Bu tezde, aynı zamanda, değer çoğulculuğu hakkında başka düşünür-yazarların (Kekes, Raz gibi) görüşlerine de yer verilmektedir. Berlin'in değer çoğulculuğunda iki ana varsayım öne çıkar. Bu varsayımlar şunlardır: Değerler birbiriyle çatışır (conflict) ve değerler indirgenemez bir şekilde çoğuldur (irreducibly plural). Daha açık bir şekilde ifade etmek gerekirse, Berlin, değerlerin birbirine veya tek bir temel değere indirgenmesinin mümkün olmadığı anlamında değerlerin çoğul olduğunu ve birbirleriyle uyumsuz olduğu (incompatibility) anlamında çatıştığını belirtir. Çoğulcu değerlerin çatışma özelliği, bizi hem gündelik yaşamda hem de siyasal alanda değerler arasında seçim yapmaya iter.

Kendisiyle çelişen bir ya da birkaç değeri kaybetmeyi göze almadan hiçbir değer hayata geçirilemez. Örneğin özgürlük ve eşitlik, ya da adalet ve merhamet gibi birbiriyle çatışan değerler söz konusu olduğunda, bu değerlerden birinin gerçekleşmesi diğerinden ödün verilmesi ya da diğerinin tehlikeye atılması yoluyla olur.<sup>477</sup> Dahası,

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<sup>476</sup> Pragmatistlerin, özellikle Rorty'nin pragmatist düşüncesinde ifade edildiği şekliyle, realist bir hakikati reddeden görüşünü paylaşmak dışında bu tezin pragmatistlerle ortak bir yönü bulunmaz.

<sup>477</sup> Berlin'in örnekleri.

birbirleriyle çatışan değerler arasında temel ve üstün bir değer tanımlanamaz. Çoğulcu değerler arasında birinin ötekine üstünlüğü ya da “daha iyi” olduğu evrensel bir ölçüte göre belirlenemeyeceği de değer çoğulculuğunun bir diğer sonucudur. Değerleri birbirine kıyaslayacak evrensel ve rasyonel bir ölçütün yokluğu değerlerin “karşılaştırılamazlığı” (incomparability) demektir.

Siyasal alanda değer ve amaçların çoğulluğu da benzer özellikler taşır: Kişilerin ya da grupların değer ve amaçları birbirleriyle çatışma halindedir, dolayısıyla siyasal alanda devamlı bir çatışma (conflict) ve anlaşmazlık (disagreement) hakimdir. Bu demek oluyor ki siyasal alan kendiliğinden çoğuldur ve siyaset bu çatışma ve anlaşmazlıkların bir çözümlenmeye ulaşması amacını taşır.<sup>478</sup> Bununla beraber Berlin değerlerin nesnel olduğunu da ileri sürer. Berlin’e göre bir “nesnel değerler dünyası” vardır. Mesela özgürlük, eşitlik, adalet gibi değerler nesnel olarak vardır. “Değerlerin nesnelliği” ifadesi ile Berlin, değerlerin her dönem ve her çağda aynı manayı taşıdıkları anlamında değil, peşinden gitmeye değer olmaları anlamında nesnel olduklarını kasteder. Örneğin Berlin’e göre bir kişi antik Yunan değerlerine yaşadığı dönem itibariyle ait olmayabilir, ancak kendini onların peşinden koşarken hayal edebilir. Yine de böyle bir durum, içinde yaşayamayacağımız kadar uzak bir alemin yalnızca bir hayalini ifade edecektir. Eski Yunan değerlerinin peşinden gitmenin anlamını kavramak neredeyse imkânsızdır, çünkü değerler olduğu gibi medeniyetler de karşılaştırılmaz ve anlamları değişmiş olan değerler bir “ad” olmak ötesinde nesnelliklerini sürdüremezler. Belki en fazla belirli bir kültür içinde, Gray’in kültürel değerler yaklaşımındaki gibi, anlamları kamusal yaşamda karşılık bulabilir.<sup>479</sup>

Bu tez, değerlerin gerçekleştirilmesi için seçim yapmak ve değerlerden ödün vermek gerektiği gibi değer çoğulculuğunun sonuçlarından yola çıkıyor. Bu seçim ve ödünlerin neye göre ve nasıl yapılacağı 2.3.4 te detaylıca tartışılan pratik bir sorunu işaret eder. Bu pratik sorunun siyasal alandaki karşılığı bu tezin ilerlediği esas

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<sup>478</sup> Siyaset ve ahlak ayrımı üzerinden, ahlakın herkesçe geçerli bir belirlenimi olmamasına karşın siyasetin belirli bir amaca yönelik “evrensel” geçerli bir tanımı yapılabileceği üzerine görüşlerim için bkz. 4.3.

<sup>479</sup> Bu konuya ilerde Gray’den bahsederken değineceğim.

noktadır. “Pratik olan” ve “siyasal olan” arasındaki ilişki şu şekilde olabilir: “Pratik olan”, yaşanılabilir çözümler üretmekle ilgili amaç ve eyleme dair, “siyasal olan” ise ödün gibi stratejik araçlar yoluyla siyasal amaçların iletildiği alana dair olabilir. Meta-etik ve ahlaki önermeler, ödün gibi stratejik araçlara tabi olmadığından siyasal alanı ilgilendiren siyasal eyleme konu olmazlar, dolayısıyla ahlaki iddialar siyasal düşüncede pratik anlamda yer almazlar.

Kamusal alan eğer kapsamlı bir öğretiyeye (a comprehensive doctrine) dayalı olarak biçimlenirse bunun siyasal alanda iletişimi gerileten sonuçları olur. Ödün verilemeyen değerlere sahip olmasından ötürü kapsamlı bir öğreti, çoğul ifade biçimleri (plural ways of expression) arasındaki iletişime engel teşkil edebilir. Kapsamlı ideolojiler çoğulculuğu gerileten baskıcı siyasal sistemlere dönüşürler. Dolayısıyla baskıcı siyasal rejimlerin eylem alanına dönüşme riskine açık hale gelen kamusal alanda özgürlükten, bu tezin anladığı anlamda özgürlüklerin kullanılmasından, bahsedilemez. Kapsamlı öğretiler ödüne imkân vermeyen değerler hiyerarşisine dayandığından bir siyasal eylem olarak ödün mümkün olmayacağından çoğulculuk kendisine etkin olacak bir alan bulamaz; çoğul ifade biçimleri özgürleşemez, çünkü ödün, kapsamlı öğretiye dayanan siyasal otorite yönünden devre dışı kalır, kişiler arasındaki ilişkiye de bu yansır ve ödün verilmeyen değerlere dayalı biçimlenen kamusal alan çoğulculuğu dışladıkça daha baskıcı ve tekçi olduğu ölçüde de totaliter bir yönetime dönüşür. Kamusal alana hâkim olan kapsamlı ve katı bir ideolojinin ürettiği siyaset, çoğulcu olmayan tek yönlü hedefler peşinde koşar. Bu durumda, çoğul ifade biçimlerine zarar verdiği ölçüde, siyasal sistemler siyasetin ruhunu, yani çatışmaları çözümleme gayretini taşımazlar. Bunun yerine, siyaseti baskıcı bir araç olarak kullanma eğiliminde olurlar.

Özgürlükleri merkezine alan liberalizm kapsamlı bir teoriye dayandırılarak savunuluyorsa da o noktada liberal değerlerin evrensel üstünlüğü de eleştirilmelidir. Çünkü değer çoğulculuğu kabul edildiğinde, değerlerden birinin gerçekleştirilmesi evrensel bir ölçüde dayandırılmaz; bir değer gerçekleştirilmesi bir seçim sorunudur ve diğer değerlerden ödün verilmesine bağlıdır. Dolayısıyla siyasal özgürlüklerin kullanılmasını birincil değer olarak kabul eden liberalizmi herhangi bir değer

üstünlüğüne bağlı kalmadan savunurken, esas olan şey liberalizmin kapsamlı bir öğretiye sahip olabileceği iddiasına tutunmak yerine, çoğulculuğun korunması ve özellikle de siyasal eylemin ortaya çıkmasında çoğulculuğun etkinliğine odaklanmaktır.

Siyasal anlamı içinde ele aldığım çoğulculuk şu demektir: kapsamlı öğretilerin kamusal alanda birbiriyle ilişkiye girmesi çoğulculuğun siyasallık meydana getirmesi ile mümkündür. Buna göre, kamusal alan çoğulcu olacaksa, yani, kamusal alanda çoğulculuğu ve farklı ifade biçimlerini korumak, farklı yaşam tarzlarının güvencesine sahip olmak istiyorsak, kamusal alanın herhangi bir ahlaki ya da kapsamlı öğretiye dayanarak biçimlendirilmemesi gerektiğini kabul etmeliyiz. Çoğulcu bir kamusal alanda kapsamlı öğretiler birbiriyle rekabet ve çatışma içindedir ve değerlerin kıyaslanamazlığı gereği evrensel bir araç yoluyla biri diğerine üstün kılınamaz. Birbirleriyle bu rekabet ve çatışma ortamında, yani demokratik bir siyasette<sup>480</sup>, ‘makul ödün’ olarak gerçekleşen siyasal eylem yoluyla iletişim kurabilirler. Bunun sonucunda farklı değerlerin ifade edilmesine olanak veren çoğulcu, özgür bir kamusal alan ortaya çıkmış olur.

Bu tezde ödün biçiminde ileri sürülen siyasal eylem kavramı keyfi değil makul bir ödüne karşılık gelecek şekilde kavranır. Bu anlamda, ‘makul ödün’ kavramı, keyfi bir ödün anlayışının karşısına konumlandırılır. Keyfi ödün anlayışı, dar ve çoğu kez tek tipçi bakış açısıyla sınırlı bir akıl yürütme yolunu izlemek dışındaki kaygılarla ilgilenmeye gerek duymazken, ‘makul ödün’ anlayışı, çoğul koşulları gözeterek geniş açılı muhakemeye yön verir. Başka bir deyişle, ‘makul ödün’, bizi tek taraflı amaçlarla sınırlamak yerine, çoğulcu unsurlara dikkat etmemizi gerektiren iletişim kanalları açar. Söz konusu çoğulcu unsurlar arasında mevcut değer çeşitliliğinin korunması ve farklı değerlerin ifade edilme olanaklarının sağlanması gibi durumlar sayılabilir. Bir örnek vermek gerekirse, farklı bedenler ve vücut tipleri ile karşılaşması moda endüstrisinin “güzellik idealinden” ödün vermesine ve moda endüstrisinde ürünlerin

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<sup>480</sup> Rekabet ve çatışmanın demokratik siyasetin temel ve zorunlu özellikleri olduğu iddiası Mouffe tarafından belirgin ve açık olarak ifade edilir ve bu iddia bu tezin siyasal olana dair kavrayışında da aynen paylaşılır.

çeşitlenmesine yol açabilir. Veya yerel özelliklerin çeşitliliği, küreselleşme sürecini, çeşitliliği teşvik etmek adına tek tipleştirici bir evrenselleştirmeden ödün vermeye yönlendirebilir.

Bu tez ‘makul ödün’ ün siyasal alandaki rolüne odaklanır. Değer çoğulculuğunun seçim ve ödün gerektirmesi, siyasal alanda ‘makul ödün’ e karşılık gelen siyasal eyleme dönüşür. Bu tezde tarif edilen siyasal alan kavramıyla öne çıkarılmak istenen unsurlar çoğulculuk ve siyasal eylemdir. ‘Makul ödün’ ün siyasal eylem olarak tanımlandığı siyasal alanda ilişkiler gerek kişiler ve gruplar arasında gerekse kişiler ve grupların siyasal otorite ile arasında, liberal ve çoğulcu biçimde karakterize olur.

‘Makul ödün’, birbirinden farklı, indirgenemez çoğullukta olan ve çatışan değerler arasında iletişim sağlayan siyasal eylem olarak ele alındığında, kamusal alan ‘liberal bir topluluk’ a dönüşür. Söz konusu ‘liberal topluluk’ özgürlüklerin siyasal eylem yoluyla kullanımının arttığı bir siyasal alana karşılık gelir. Siyasal alanda değer ve amaçlar ödün verilebilir siyasal iddialar haline dönüşür ve böylelikle iletişim mümkün kılınır. Siyasal iddialara dönüşen değer ve amaçlar, kapsamlı öğretilerce biçimlenen halindeki gibi kalamazlar ve siyasal eylem yoluyla iletişime girdikleri ölçüde değişikliğe uğrarlar. Siyasal alanda ortaya çıkan her iddia siyasallaşır. Bu demek oluyor ki siyasal alanda değerler siyasal eylem, yani ‘makul ödün’ yoluyla ödün verilmiş uyarlamalar haline gelir. Değerlerin siyasal alanda ödün verilmiş uyarlamalar olarak nasıl gerçekleştirildiğine bir örnek vermek için insan haklarını ele alalım. İnsan haklarının gerçekleştirilmesi, belirli bir kapsamlı öğretinin sonucuna bağlı değil, insan haklarının çoğul siyaset biçimlerinde farklı biçimlerde ele alınması ile uygulanmasına bağlıdır. Siyasal alanda insan hakları, siyasal bir iddia olarak ortaya çıkıyor; yani bir “hak” artık kapsamlı bir öğretiyle ilişkilendirilmemektedir, o artık siyasal bir sonuçtur ve çoğul siyasete tabi olan bir ödün verilmiş uyarlamadır. Söylediklerim insan haklarının ahlaki boyutunu dışlamıyor. Burada vurgulamak istediğim şey, insan haklarının siyasal ilişkilerin konusu oldukları ölçüde artık ahlaki ve kapsamlı bir öğretinin (indirgeyici bir evrensellik gibi) nesnesi olmadığıdır. İnsan hakları örneğinde görüldüğü gibi, siyasal alanda ortaya çıkan değerler, ahlaki tartışmaya değil, siyasal



eylemin nesnesi olması bakımından siyasal tartışmaya aittir ve bu yolla iletişim olanağına sahip olur.

Değer ve amaç çeşitliliğinin siyasal alanda mevcudiyetinin özgürlüklerin kullanılmasında gerekli olduğunu hatırlamalıyız. Bir başka deyişle özgürlükler, çeşitliliğin ve çoğulculuğun siyasal alanda yer kaplamasına bağlı olarak kendilerine yer açabilir. Ancak çoğulculuk ve değer ve amaçların çeşitliliğinin mevcudiyeti özgürlüğün kullanılması için yeterli olmayabilir. Özgürlüğün kullanılması pratik bir meseledir ve siyasal eylemin çoğul ifade biçimleriyle kullanılmasına bağlıdır. Bu anlamda siyasal eylem olarak tanımlanan ‘makul ödün’, özgürlüklerin kullanılmasında yeterli koşulu sağlar, çünkü ‘makul ödün’ çoğulculuğu esas alır.

Liberal demokrasi ve liberal teoride bireysel özgürlüklerin önemli bir yeri vardır. “Bireysel özgürlükler” ifadesi ile, ifade özgürlüğü, inanç özgürlüğü ve hareket özgürlüğü ya da hareket serbestisi gibi insanın kamusal alanda kullanacağı özgürlükler anlaşılabilir. Ancak “bireysel özgürlükler” kavramı özellikle liberteryen gelenek içinde kullanılan ve yalnızca özgürlüklerin kullanılması anlamına gelmeyen, bundan daha özel bir anlamı olan, “bireycilik ideolojisi” ile yakından ilişkili bir kavramdır. Dolayısıyla liberteryen ve bireyci gelenek içinde belirli bir kullanım alanı olan “bireysel özgürlükler” ifadesi yerine, bu belirlenimlerden ve çağrışımlardan bağımsız kılmak ya da ayırmak adına, özgürlükleri siyasal alanda çoğul ifade biçimlerine karşılık gelecek şekilde benimseyeceğim. Görüldüğü üzere, belirli bir ideoloji kapsamında yer almadan da özgürlükler, özgürlüklerin kullanıldığı siyasal alan ile doğrudan ilgilidir.

Liberalizm ifade çoğulculuğuna saygı duyan, farklı yaşam biçimlerini hoş görme potansiyelinin diğer siyasal sistemlerden daha fazla olduğu bir siyasal felsefedir.<sup>481</sup> Ancak şu var ki, değer çoğulculuğunun kabul edildiği durumda hiçbir değer bir diğerinden evrensel bir ölçüte göre önce ya da üstün geldiği iddia edilemeyeceğinden, özgürlüklere ilişkin liberal sav çoğulculuk tarafından sarsılmış gibi görünmektedir.

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<sup>481</sup> Bkz. Liberalizm tanımı.

Özgürlükle çatışan otoriter bir değerle özgürlüklerin kullanılması karşı karşıya kaldığında, özgürlükleri bu otoriter değer karşısında güvenceye alacak bir ölçüt elimizde bulunmuyor demektir. Özgürlüklerin diğer değerlere üstün bir değer olarak konumlandırılmaması, değer çoğulculuğunun bir sonucu olabilir; ancak bu durum, özgürlüklerin tehlikeye düşeceği anlamına gelmez. Özgürlüklerin tehlikeye düşeceği görüşü, çoğulculuktan ziyade, onların ahlaki ve kapsamlı bir teoriye dayandırılmadan savunulamayacağı görüşüyle daha yakından ilişkilidir. İşte bu, bu tezde göstermeye çalıştığım bir sonuçtur: eğer özgürlüklerin kullanılmasının, kapsamlı bir öğreti ve özgürlüğü üstün kılacak evrensel bir ölçüt aramak yerine siyasal alanda gerçekleşen ödünlerin makul olma özelliği ile ilişkisi kurulursa, herhangi bir kapsamlı öğretiye ve evrenselcilik iddiasına dayandırmadan çoğul ifade biçimleri olarak özgürlükleri desteklemiş oluruz.

Çoğul ifade biçimleri olarak özgürlükleri desteklemek, kullanımını engelleyecek bir değerle karşı karşıya kalındığında özgürlüklerin ‘en az ödün verilir’ (the least compromised or the least compromise-able) olduklarını kavramak anlamına gelir. Bunun nedeni, özgürlüklerin kullanılmasının ödünlerin makul olma ile ilişkisinde yatar: Özgürlükler, onların kullanılmasını engelleyen başka bir değer lehine sürekli olarak tehlikeye atılırsa, o zaman ödün kavramı anlamını yitirecektir: bu da siyasal eylemin yoksunluğu ile sonuçlanacaktır. Özgürlüklerin kullanılması negatif özgürlükle<sup>482</sup> bağlantılı olarak kişilerin özgürlüklerini kullanırken bir engelle karşılaşmayarak siyasal eylemi gerçekleştirmesidir. Buradan hareketle, özgürlükler değer çoğulculuğunun sonuçlarıyla, özellikle değerlerin karşılaştırılmaz olması sonucu ile uyumlu ve aynı zamanda çatışmaların çözümlenmesine dair tezin argümanı içinde ‘en az ödün verilebilir’ olarak ortaya çıkar.

Özgürlüklerin kullanılmasının kısıtlanabileceği haklı durumlar olabilir. Bu noktada özgürlüklerin ‘makul ödün’ ile ilişkisi ve ‘en az ödün verilir’ olma yönünden nasıl ele alınabileceğini daha iyi anlamak adına Mill’in “zarar ilkesi”nin uygulanmasına

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<sup>482</sup> Bu tezin perspektifinden negatif özgürlük öncelikli bir değer olarak konumlandırılmaz. Onun yerine iletişimin gerekli unsuru olması bakımından (bu nokta 3.2.1 de belirtilmiştir) ve makul ödünün siyasal alandaki rolüyle bağlantılı olarak savunulur.

bakmak yerinde olacaktır. Öncelikle Mill bir ahlaki faydacıdır (ethical utilitarian) ve onun siyasal görüşü faydacı ahlakın temel ilkesini, yani “fayda ilkesini” (“the principle of utility”) uygular. Faydacı siyaset eylemlerin sonucunu değerlendirmede toplumun genel yararını esas alır ve bir eylem sonuçları genel mutluluk miktarına olumlu katkı sağladığında doğru eylem olarak sınıflandırılır. Görünüşe göre faydacı siyaset, değerlerin karşılaştırılabilirliğini varsayıyor ve toplum yararına yönelik faydacı hesaplamada eylemlerin sonuçlarının öngörülebilirliğini savunuyor. Ancak onun varsaydığı değerlerin karşılaştırılabilirliği ve öngörülebilirlik iddiası pekâlâ değer çoğulculuğu açısından eleştirilebilir.<sup>483</sup>

Mill’in özgürlük üzerine düşünceleri onun faydacılığından ayrı değerlendirilemez. Mill’in *Özgürlük Üzerine (On Liberty)* adlı eserinin temel amacı, kişinin özgürlüklerine müdahale etmenin meşru yollarını aramaktır. Özgürlüklerin nasıl kısıtlandığı düşünüldüğünde, ilk olarak hükümet eylemi akla gelir, ancak Mill'e göre, özgürlüğün kısıtlanabileceği iki tür otorite veya iki kısıtlama kaynağı vardır. Bu kaynaklar siyasal otorite, yani devlet ve toplumdur. Mill'in özgürlük versiyonunda, kişiler özgürlüklerini kendi iyi yaşam anlayışlarının peşinde koşarak kullanırlar ve özgürlüklerini kullanırken kendilerine ilişkin (“self-regarding”) seçim ve faaliyetlerine devlet ya da toplum tarafından müdahale edilemez. Ancak kişilerin özgürlüklerini kullanmaları kendilerine ilişkin olmayıp diğer kimselere ilişkin olduğunda (“other-regarding”) özgürlüklerin kısıtlanması meşru olabilir. Başka bir deyişle, özgürlük, özgürlüğün kullanılmasının sonuçları başkalarına zarar verdiğinde müdahaleye ve düzenlemeye tabidir. Özgürlüğün müdahale ve düzenlemeye tabi olmasını ifade eden unsur “zarar ilkesi” (“harm principle) dir. “Zarar ilkesi”, kendini ilgilendiren faaliyet anlayışının aksine, diğerleriyle ilgili eylemlerin kapsamıyla ilgilidir. Dolayısıyla “zarar ilkesi” yalnızca başkalarının iyiliği söz konusu olduğunda geçerlidir. Bu nedenle bu ilkeye “başkalarına zarar vermeme” ilkesi de demek uygundur. Unutmamak gerekir ki başkalarına zarar vermemenin mantığı tamamen faydacıdır. Mill'in özgürlüğü savunması faydacı bir açıdan, yani bir toplumun gelişimi

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<sup>483</sup> Raz'ın bir eylemi gerçekleştirmeden önce seçimlerle ilgili karşılaştırılabilirlik eleştirisi.

açısından görülmeli ve “zarar ilkesi” nin daima genel refahın artırılmasına yönelik çalıştığı gözden kaçırılmamalıdır.

Mill, kişinin haklarını “zarar ilkesi” üzerinden tanımlamasını şu şekilde yorumlamak yanlış olmaz: kişiler bir başkasının eyleminin zararlı sonuçlarına maruz kalmadan özgürlüklerini kullanabilmeliler ve buna göre, siyasal otorite (devlet ya da toplum) özgürlüklerin başkalarına zarar vermesi halinde kullanılmasına müdahale ederek özgürlüklerin herkes adına korunmasını sağlar. Özgürlüğün kullanılmasının, özgürlüklerin belirli bir koşula göre sınırlandırılabilmesi alandan, yani kamusal alandan ayrı bir alana sahip olduğu düşünülemez. Kendine ve diğerlerine ilişkin eylemler arasındaki ayrımı çizerek, kamusal alanda özgürlüklerin kullanılması belirlenir. Kamusal alanda uygulanan “zarar ilkesi”, seçimleri yalnızca kendi çıkarlarını ilgilendirdiği ve başkalarına zarar vermediği takdirde, kişiler üzerinde herhangi bir baskıya izin vermez. Mill'in özgürlük anlayışı, eylemleri kendileri dışında herhangi birine zarar vermedikçe, bireylerin istedikleri gibi davranmayı seçmelerine, hatta bu yolda kendilerini mahvedecek olsalar dahi, izin veriyor gibi görünmektedir.

Yukarıdaki açıklamalar ışığında “zarar ilkesi” nin ‘makul ödün’ le ilişkisi kolaylıkla görülebilir: Mill, başkalarına ilişkin zarar doğuracak sonuçları dikkate alarak özgürlüklerden makul bir şekilde ödün verilebileceğini ima eder (bu makul ödünün bir yönüdür; diğer yönü özgürlükle çatışan değerlerden ödün vermedir). Mill'in “zarar ilkesi” ile ortaya koyduğu özgürlük anlayışı, kişiler üzerindeki otoritenin baskısını azaltmayı hedeflediğinden, amacı özgürlükten ödün verme nedenlerini daraltmak, yani özgürlükleri ‘en az ödün verilebilir’ haline getirmek olarak da değerlendirilebilir. Bu da demek oluyor ki Mill özgürlüklere sınır koyan “zarar ilkesi” ile aslında özgürlüklerin kamusal alanda kullanımını genişletmeyi hedeflemektedir. Mill'in özgürlüklere yönelik faydacı yaklaşımı ve bu yaklaşımın bir uzantısı olarak “zarar ilkesi”, faydacı bir perspektiften yaklaşmayan ‘makul ödün’ açısından yorumlanmaya oldukça uygundur.

Bununla birlikte, özgürlüklerden makul bir şekilde ödün verilmesi, “zarar ilkesinin” doğrudan bir sonucu olarak okunmamalıdır. “Zarar ilkesi” ‘makul ödün’ ün

uygulamalarından biri olabilir, ancak ortak iyiliği artırmaya yönelik faydacı yaklaşımın ‘makul ödün’ ile her zaman uyumlu olmayabileceği ve çeşitliliği desteklemekten ziyade genel refahın artırılmasına odaklandığından özgürlük perspektifi yerine toplumsallık perspektifine daha uygun düştüğü gözden kaçırılmamalıdır. Toplumsallık perspektifinde ortaya çıkan genel refahı artırmaya yönelik özgürlük anlayışı, tek bir amacı gerçekleştirme eğilimi nedeniyle çoğulcu bir siyasallık kavrayışını tam anlamıyla veremez. Özgürlüklerin faydacı gerekçelendirilmesinin aksine ‘makul ödün’, çeşitliliğe daha fazla yöneldiği için özgürlüklerin kamusal ve siyasal alanda rolünü kavramaya da daha yetkindir.

Özgürlüklerin kamusal alanda kullanımını ifade ederken, bu özgürlükleri “bireysel özgürlükler” ve bireyci ideoloji bağlamında gören liberteryen çağrışımları bu tezin liberalizm kavrayışından ayırmak istediğimi belirtmiştim. Bunun bir nedeni de liberteryenler için devletin bireysel özgürlükler önünde bir engel ve bireysel hakların da antagonisti olarak görülmesidir. ‘Makul ödün’ açısından kişiler ve devlet ya da siyasal otorite arasındaki çatışma bir “antagonizm” biçiminde değil, çatışan unsurların ödün verme ilişkisi olarak görülür. Ödün verme ilişkisi içinde bakıldığında özgürlüklerin kullanılmasında devlet bir engel ya da “birey” in düşmanı değil, kişilerin özgürlüklerini kullandıkları siyasal alanın unsuru olarak görülecektir. Siyasal alan devletle birlikte var olur, çünkü siyasal alanın yalnızca bireyler arasında tikel ilişkilerde ortaya çıkmadığı açıktır. Keza liberteryenler de devletin rolünü reddetmezler, ancak mutlak bazı unsurlar sebebiyle, doğal haklar gibi, oldukça sınırlandırılmış bir versiyonunu kabul etmeye yatkındırlar.

Liberteryen devlet anlayışını en iyi sergileyen düşünürlerden biri olan Nozick, “minimal devlet teorisi” ile net bir argüman ortaya koymuştur. Nozick, *Anarşi, Devlet ve Ütopya* nın önsözünde bireylerin doğal haklara sahip olduğunu söyler. Öyle ki bir başkasının ya da bir grubun bireylere karşı bu doğal hakları ihlal etmeden yapması mümkün olmayan şeyler olduğundan söz eder. Mesela bireylerin rızalarına karşı yapılacak herhangi bir eylem bireylerin doğal haklarını mutlaka ihlal edecektir; ya da bireylerin, liberteryen perspektife göre doğuştan sahip olduğu özgürlük ya da mülkiyet gibi haklarını ihlal etmeden o şeyleri yapabilmenin başka yolu yoktur. Nozick,

“minimal devlet” teorisi ile devletin doğal durumda nasıl ortaya çıktığını ve bireysel hakların korunması konusunda devletin ne ölçüde haklı gösterilebileceğini açıklamak ister. Nozick'e göre, “devlet dışı” durumdan “kimsenin hakkının ihlal edilmesinin gerekmediği” bir süreçle ortaya yalnızca minimal formda bir devlet çıkabilir. Başka bir deyişle, minimal bir devletten daha geniş olan herhangi bir kapsamlı devletin, bireysel hakları ihlal edeceği kesindir.<sup>484</sup> Bu durumda denebilir ki Nozick'in bireysel hakların ihlal edilmeden “minimal devlet” ten daha büyük ya da geniş bir devletin ortaya çıkamayacağı savının dayandığı ön varsayımlar bireyci etiktir. Bu durum rahatlıkla, siyaset felsefesinin ahlak felsefesine indirgenmesi olarak nitelenebilir.

Nozick'in "minimal devlet" anlayışı, bireysel hak ve özgürlükleri en üst düzeye çıkarmak için bir toplumsal sistemde adalet dağılımı ve eşitlik ilkesinden ödün vermenin iyi bir örneği olabilir. Bu anlamda da Nozick'in minimal devlet teorisi, özgürlüklerden en az ödün vermenin bir örneğidir, yani “minimal devlet”, bireylere tam bir özgürlük demek olmayan<sup>485</sup>, ancak bireysel özgürlüklerin kamusal alanda (gerek siyasal gerek ekonomik yollardan) kullanımlarını maksimize eden bir siyasal düzene işaret eder. Unutulmamalıdır ki bu tezin liberteryen devlet anlayışı ile ilgili bağı onu bir ‘makul ödün’ uygulaması yönünden ele almakla sınırlıdır.

“Minimal devlet” teorisi, özgürlükleri en az taviz verilebilir olarak tasavvur ettiği için makul ödünüm iyi bir örneğini sergilese de liberteryen siyasetin “meşru” siyasal örgütlenme olduğu anlamına gelmez. Ayrıca, özgürlüklerin azami ölçüde genişletilmesi gibi tek bir amacı gerçekleştirmek için makul ödün kullanılamaz; makul ödün amaçların çoğulluğunu içerir, bu yüzden 'makul' olarak nitelendirilir. Eğer liberteryenizm bireyin daha güçlü bir özerklik kavramını öne sürmek anlamına geliyorsa, bu tezin çoğulcu bakış açısından liberteryen siyaset anlayışını benimsemediği söylenir, çünkü siyasal alanda hiçbir değere öncelik verilemez ve

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<sup>484</sup> R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974).

<sup>485</sup> “Sosyal adalet” ten taviz vermenin, yani dezavantajlı grupların sosyal koşullarının servet dağılımı yoluyla iyileştirilmesinden özgürlükler lehine ödün vermenin, bireysel haklara tam özgürlük anlamına gelmediği belirtiliyor.

siyasal alan, bireyler ve devlet arasındaki ödün (taviz) yoluyla kurulan ilişkiler yoluyla var olur ve bu bakımdan çoğul değerler alanıdır. Bu tezde ileri sürülen görüşler, liberalizmin kapsamlı bir versiyonuna veya özerkliğin liberteryen bir kavrayışına değil, çoğulcu anlayışa ve siyasal eylemin ‘makul ödün’ olduğu iddiasına dayandığından<sup>486</sup>, özgürlüğe üstün bir değer gözüyle bakılmaz; özgürlüklerin kullanılmasına, siyasal eylemin ‘makul ödün’ biçiminde gerçekleştirilmesi sonucunda ortaya çıkan siyasal alanın pratik bileşenleri gözüyle bakılır.

Siyasal çerçevenin yanı sıra, ekonomik çerçevede de Nozick'in liberteryen yaklaşımı ve onun minimal devlet anlayışı makul ödüne tabi olmalı ve bu bağlamda dağıtıcı siyaseti dikkate almalıdır. Nozick'in bireyciliğe dayanan ve minimal devlet anlayışını benimseyen liberteryenizmine karşılık sosyal devlet yönünden alternatif olan refah devletinin, bireyler için her zaman kötü bir seçim olması gerekmez. Dağıtıcı adalet, özgürlüklerin uygulanması için yararlı olabilir: dezavantajlı grupların kötü koşullarının dağıtıcı ekonomik politikalar yoluyla iyileştirilmesi ve dolayısıyla bir toplum için genişletilmiş bir ekonomik refah sağlanması, amaçların çokluğunu artırabileceği için özgürlüklerin kullanılmasına fayda sağlayabilir (özgürlükler alanını genişletmek için mali engellerin kaldırılması). Bu nedenle, ‘makul ödün’ yalnızca belirli bir yönden (veya tek bir amaçtan) değerlendirilmemelidir; onun yerine, insan dünyalarının birçok yönünü ele alan ve böylelikle siyasal alanda özgürlükleri uygulama yollarını çoğulcu bir açıdan gören siyasal eylem olarak değerlendirilmelidir.

Mill'in “zarar ilkesi” ve Nozick'in “minimal devlet teorisi” üzerinde durmamın nedeni, bu liberal düşünürlerin özgürlüklerin kullanılması ile ilgili görüşlerin ‘makul ödün’ açısından ele alarak, ‘makul ödün’ kavramını siyasal otorite ve toplum ile kişiler arasındaki ilişkilerde daha iyi kavranmasını amaçlamamdır. ‘Makul ödün’ ün siyasal alanda uygulanmasının diğer değerlendirmelerine dair bir takım tarihi olaylar da örnek verilmiş ve detaylıca ele alınmıştır.<sup>487</sup>

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<sup>486</sup> ‘Makul ödün’ kavramı, siyasal alanda özgürlükleri kullanmanın liberal ve siyasal karşılığını veren bir siyasal eylem kavramıdır.

<sup>487</sup> Bkz. 4.7; 4.7.2.

Makul ödün, ahlaki bir zorunluluk olarak değil, siyasal alana girmek için gerekli bir siyasal eylem olarak “gerekliklidir”. Farklı ideolojiler arasındaki iletişim için ödün gereklidir. Bu anlamda ödün normatif değil, çoğulculuktan anlamlandıracağımız ve çeşitli değerleri benimseyen farklı yaşam biçimlerinin ifade edildiği bir siyasal topluluk elde edebileceğimiz gerçek strateji olarak esastır. Bu anlamda ‘makul ödün’ siyasal eylemin etkin yönü olarak ele alınır. Buna karşın “hoşgörü” siyasal eylemin kayıtsız (etkinliği zayıf ya da hiç olmayan) bir yönü olarak ele alınır.

Özgürlüklerin kullanımını kamusal alanda hoşgörü vasıtasıyla teşvik eden özgürlükçü bir hükümet de kapsamlı bir öğretiyeye dayanabilir. Bununla beraber, liberal hükümetler çoğul ifade biçimleri ile en az çatışan siyasal sistemlerdir. Dolayısıyla, bu tezin de konusu olduğu üzere liberalizmle ilgili sorun, ifade özgürlükleri ve farklı yaşam biçimlerine hoşgörü göstermesi açısından değil, belirli değerlere öncelik vererek onları üstün hale getirme yönünden değer çoğulculuğu ile çelişmesidir. Bu tez liberal ruhu terk etmez; onu, değer çoğulculuğunun sonuçları ve siyasetin çözümleme gayretini en iyi çalışır hale getirme yönünden ele almayı ve uygulamayı amaçlar. Daha önce söylediğim gibi liberalizm eğer kapsamlı bir öğretiyeye dayanıyorsa, mesela klasik liberalizmde olduğu gibi, değer çoğulculuğu ile bağdaşmasında problem ortaya çıkacaktır. Yalnızca klasik liberalizmde değil, liberalizmin evrenselci versiyonlarında da bu problem vardır.

Buna karşın, liberalizmi değer çoğulculuğu ile uyumlu gören liberal teorisyenler, Crowder ve Galston gibi çoğulcular, liberalizmin değer çoğulculuğu tarafından meşru bir siyasal sistem olarak desteklenebileceğine ve hatta temellendirilebileceğine inanır. Her ikisi de Berlin’in liberal çoğulculuğunu esas alarak liberalizm ve değer çoğulculuğu arasındaki bağa ilişkin görüşlerini dile getirmektedirler. Bu tezde daha çok Galston’ın liberal çoğulcu ya da liberal evrenselci görüşlerine yer verilmektedir. Galston’ın liberalizmi değer çoğulculuğuna dayanarak gerekçelendirmesi kısaca şu şekildedir: eğer değer çoğulculuğu doğruysa, seçme özgürlüğüne, yani “negatif özgürlük” kavramına (negative liberty) değer verilmeli. Seçme özgürlüğüne en fazla değer veren siyasal sistem de liberalizm olduğundan; buradan hareketle liberalizm meşru siyasal sistem olarak ortaya çıkar ve çoğulculuğu dikkate alsa da belli bir değeri



ya da “iyi yaşam” anlayışını öne çıkaran yönüyle “kapsamlı” (comprehensive) olduğu ileri sürülebilir.

Kapsamlı liberalizme alternatif olan çoğulcu bir liberal teori Rawls tarafından ileri sürülmüştür. Rawls’un liberalizm versiyonu belirli bir “iyi yaşam” kavramına dayanmaz ve birbirinden farklı iyi anlayışlarına devletin tarafsız kalması ilkesini benimser. Kapsamlı liberalizme bir alternatif olarak ortaya konulmasına karşın, Rawls’un “siyasal liberalizm” i (political liberalism) rasyonel ve ahlaki unsurlardan tamamen arınmış değildir; dolayısıyla, “siyasal liberalizm” kapsamlı bir öğreti olmasa da bu tezin değer çoğulculuğu açıklamasına tam uygun düşmemektedir.<sup>488</sup> Dahası, Rawls’un siyasal liberalizminde çoğulculuk, etkin özelliğiyle değil, daha çok siyasal alanda bir “görünüş” olarak ortaya çıkıyor gibi durmaktadır. Biraz daha açmak gerekirse: Rawls kapsamlı öğretilerin çoğulculuğunu kabul ederek, yani siyasal alanda kapsamlı öğretilerin birbirleriyle rekabet ve çatışma halinde bulunduğunu göz önünde bulundursa da aralarında sağlanabilecek bir anlaşmayı öngören, aslında siyasal bir rasyonalite teorisi sunar, o da ortak ilkelerde anlaşmaya varılan bir “örtüşen fikir birliği” (“overlapping consensus”) dir. Rawls’un “örtüşen fikir birliği” anlayışı aslında bir rasyonellik öngörmekte ve rasyonelliğe ulaşmak olarak sonucu belli olan bir süreç biçiminde ortaya çıkmakta ve çoğulculuk bu anlamda siyasal alanın bir “görünüş” ü olmaktan öteye geçememektedir. Rawls’un “örtüşen fikir birliği” eleştirilirken, ileri sürülen ‘makul ödün’ biçimindeki siyasal eylemin çoğulcu nedenlere bağlı gerçekleştiğinde ortaya çıkabilecek değişen sonsuz olasılıklı sonuçlarına dikkat çekilmek istenmektedir. Böylelikle çoğulculuk, belirli bir değer setini onaylamak yerine, siyasal eylemde bulunan ve rasyonel varsayıma tabi tutulmayan bir yönden kavranır.

Bu tez, değer çoğulculuğu kabul edildiğinde liberalizmin en uygun hükümet sistemi olarak ortaya çıktığını düşünen teorisyenlere (“liberal çoğulcular”) yönelik eleştiriler içermektedir. Bu bağlamda, çoğulculuğun olsa olsa liberalizmi diğer siyasal sistemler arasında ayrıcalıklı bir yere koymayarak, hatta çoğulculuğun liberalizmin evrenselci

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<sup>488</sup> “Siyasal” kavramı açısından da uygun değildir, bkz. Mouffe’nin Rawls eleştirisi.

iddiasını tehlikeye atabileceğini öne süren Gray'ın “çatışmacı liberalizm” perspektifinden yöneltilen eleştiriye hak verilir.

Gray liberal düşünürlerden farklı olarak, liberal değerlerin, örneğin negatif özgürlük ve otonomi gibi değerler, evrensel hakimiyetinin geçerli olamayacağını ileri sürer. Gray'e göre, yaşam biçimlerinin çeşitliliği içinde liberal yaşam biçimi yerel geçerlilikten ibarettir ve bundan öte bir konuma erişemez. Bu anlamda Gray geleneksel liberal teorilerin ve liberal evrenselciliğin karşısında durur. Gray'in çatışmaya yönelik çözüm önerisi onun nesnellik ölçütü olarak benimsediği kültürel değerler ya da bağlamsalcılıktan ileri gelir. Söz konusu bağlam, rasyonel seçimi mümkün kılan ve çatışmayı çözmek için karşılaştırılmaz değerler arasında seçim yapmamıza izin veren bağlamdır. Gray'in çatışmacı bir siyasal alanda bu çatışmayı çözecek bir proje anlamında da değerlendirilebilecek *modus vivendi* kavramı, bir siyasal sistemin evrensel değerlerini uygulamak yerine siyasal bir amaç olarak hizmet eder. Ancak ahlaki bağlantılardan tamamen arınmış bir kavram olarak da görülemez.<sup>489</sup> Gray'in görüşü, çoğulculuğun durumunu anlamak ve *modus vivendi*'nin başarısına ilişkin liberal kurumların pozisyonunu ele almaktır. Yani “*modus vivendi*” yi elde etmede başarılı olabiliyorsa liberal kurumlar meşruiyetini kazanır; aksi takdirde, çoğulculuk gereği, liberal kurumlar herhangi bir liberal teori yoluyla ve nihai bir liberal siyasal sistemin öğeleri olarak gerekçelendirilemez.

Gray'in siyasal bir sistem olarak liberal teoriye ve liberal değerlerin evrenselciliğine yönelik eleştirilerini paylaşmakla beraber, bu tez, Gray'in *modus vivendi* kavramını da tez argümanı çerçevesinde farklı bir bakış altında yeniden yorumlamaktadır. Değer çoğulculuğunu kabul eden bu tez, liberalizmin diğer siyasal sistemler arasında meşru bir siyasal sistem olduğu iddiasından vazgeçmek gerektiğini söylerken, Gray'in söylediği gibi liberalizmin yaşama biçimlerinden yalnızca biri olarak görülmesi gerektiğinden ziyade, *modus vivendi* ile şu ilişkiyi kurma eğilimindedir: ‘makul ödün’ yoluyla siyasal alanda çözümlenecek çatışmanın liberal değerleri gerçekleştirmeye imkân veren sonuçları doğurur ve bu sonuçlar arasında *modus vivendi*, uyum içinde

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<sup>489</sup> Horton'un Gray üzerine analizi, bkz. 3.4.

yaşama anlamında değil, uyumsuzlukların ödün yoluyla iletişime girdiği bir siyasal alan kavrayışına karşılık gelir. “Barış” çoğulculuğun amacı olamaz; çoğulculuk varsa, çatışma kaçınılmaz ve kalıcıdır. Eğer *modus vivendi* çoğulculuğun amacı olacaksa, uyum içinde yaşamayı temsil eden belirli bir değeri takip etmekten ziyade, siyasal eylemin bir sonucu olarak kavranmalıdır.

Bu tezin çok-kültürlülük ile ilişkisi detaylı olarak son bölümde geniş sayılabilecek bir yer vermek suretiyle anlatılmaktadır. Çok-kültürlülük kültürel çeşitlilik ile ilişkilendirilebilir. Kültürel çeşitliliğin derecesi bir toplumdan diğerine değişebilir; yine de siyasal alanda kültürel çeşitlilik, farklı değerlere saygı gösterilmesi talebini ima eder. Bu ima göz önüne alındığında, çok kültürlülüğün farklı etnik ve dini toplulukların değerlerine karşı liberal hoşgörü fikriyle yakın ilişkisini gözlemleyebiliriz. Liberal bir bakış açısıyla, çok kültürlülüğün göç tarihi ile bir ilişkisi olduğu ve çok kültürlü toplumlarda yaşayan grupların ve azınlıkların ifade özgürlüğünü geniş ölçüde ilgilendirdiği söylenir. Özellikle göçmen kabul eden politikaların uygulandığı çok kültürlü toplumlar arasında Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Kanada ve Avustralya sayılabilir. Geçmişte de çok kültürlü toplumlar vardı. Örneğin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda idarenin farklı dini topluluklara karşı önemli ölçüde hoşgörü gösterdiğini görebiliriz. Osmanlı imparatorluğu iki yönden çok kültürlü bir topluma iyi bir örnektir: çok kültürlü özelliği, çeşitli etnik ve dini topluluklardan oluştuğu için olgusaldır ve kurumsallaşmış bir kültürel çoğulluğu temsil ettiği için de kurumsaldır. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’ndaki “millet sistemi” gayrimüslim dini cemaatlerin değerlerini korumuş ve muhafaza etmiştir; dolayısıyla çok kültürlü bir politikanın çoğulcu bir toplumu yönetmesi anlamında iyi bir örnek teşkil eder. Ayrıca, “millet sistemi”, yönetici otorite ile azınlık grupları arasında gerçekleşen makul ödün örneğidir. Çağdaş toplumlar arasında Hindistan, dini inançların büyük dünya dinlerinden küçük boyutlu olanlara kadar değiştiği “derinden çok kültürlü bir toplum” olarak çok kültürlü bir topluma örnek olabilir. Bu örnekler, görüldüğü gibi, çok kültürlü toplumların farklı yönlerini göstermektedir. Bu örneklerle bağlantılı olarak, çok kültürlülük, liberal hoşgörü ve tavizler gerektiren koşulları gösterdiği sürece, liberalizmle ilişkili olarak ele alınır.

Liberal hoşgörü, kültürlerin kültürel ve hatta etnik kimliklerinden ödün vermeden var olabileceği adil bir durumu amaçlar; bu da azınlıkların ana ya da baskın kültüre asimilasyonunun reddedilmesiyle ilgilidir. Kültürel çeşitliliği ve toplulukların farklı değerlerini korumak ve saygı duymak liberal siyasetin gerekli parçalarıdır. Etnik kimliklerin kimliklerinden ve değerlerinden ödün vermeden var olması bu tezin siyasal eylem anlayışı ile çelişir görünüyor. Dolayısıyla bu noktada tezin eleştirisi ödün verilmemesinin aşırıcılığa meyletmesi halinde devreye girer. Etnosentrizm gibi uç noktalarında, herhangi bir siyasal iddia ya da kimlik kapalılığı dogmatizme düşer ve iletişimden uzaklaşır. Çok kültürlü yaklaşımın aşırılıkçı versiyonlarına karşı olmamın iki nedeni var. Birincisi, kültürel ve etik değerlere aşırı değer verdikleri için değer çoğulculuğuyla çelişirler. İkincisi, çoğul gerçekliklerin uygun bir sahnesini betimleyemezler; daha ziyade, “radikal” olarak farklı gerçeklikleri temsil ederler ve ikna edici bir iletişim alanı sağlayamazlar. Sonuç olarak, çok kültürlü politikalar, çeşitli değerlerin ifadesinin mümkün olduğu liberal bir siyasal alana ulaşmak için uygulandıkları için takdir edilmektedir. Bununla birlikte, azınlıklar ve devlet arasında ‘makul ödün’ e dayanan iletişim dahilinde analiz edildiğinde daha iyi anlaşılacak ve etkinlikleri daha iyi kavranacaktır.

Çoğulculukla en yakın ilişkilerinde bile hoşgörü liberalizminden öteye geçmeyen, dolayısıyla çoğulculuğu etkin rolünde kavrayamayan kapsamlı ve evrenselci liberal öğretilere dayanmayan bu tez, siyasal alanda çoğulculuğun etkinliğini siyasal eylem tanımıyla öne çıkaran bir değer çoğulculuğu açıklaması içinde sunulur. Bununla beraber, siyasal eylemin ‘makul ödün’ olarak tanımlanması ile bu tezin çoğulcu görüşü, salt çatışmacı (agonistic) bir boyut yerine liberal bir boyut içinde kavranmalıdır. Çatışmacı bir boyut yerine liberal bir boyutta kavranmasının nedeni, bu tez rasyonel konsensüse dayalı bir yaklaşımı (liberalizmin Rawlsçu versiyonunda bulunan gibi) kabul ettiği için değil, siyasal eylem biçimini ‘makul ödün’ olarak tanımladığı içindir. Yani fikir birliğine varmama durumu, siyasal alanı, Mouffe'un tasvir ettiği çatışmacı çerçevede sunulduğu gibi, “hasım” yaklaşımı içinde görmemiz gerektiği anlamına gelmez. Bunun nedeni ise, bu tezde öne sürdüğüm gibi, siyasal alanın konsensüse dayanmayan çoğulcu unsurlarla oluşturulduğunu liberal bir bakış açısı içinde kavramamıza yol açan ‘makul’ ödünlerdir.

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