

THEORIZING THE CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURALISM THROUGH TAYLOR'S 'POLITICS OF RECOGNITION'

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ABSTRACT

Theorizing the Concept of Multiculturalism through Taylor's 'Politics of Recognition'

Contemporary debates on multiculturalism, regardless of whether we speak of proponents or sharp critics, were greatly influenced by Charles Taylor's essay *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (1992). It highlighted the need for the right of recognition and identity, built on the assumption of universal dignity. This paper tries to answer the question – in connection with Taylor's essay – of the sources of the reasons for today's problems with the concept of multiculturalism, and to provide suggestions for alternative paths out of the present paradoxical circumstances.

KEY WORDS: multiculturalism, recognition, identity, difference, Charles Taylor, diversity

IZVLEČEK

Teoretska tematizacija koncepta multikulturalizma skozi Taylorjevo politiko prepoznanja

Na sodobne razprave o multikulturalizmu, pa če govorimo o zagovornikih ali ostrih kritikih koncepta, je močno vplivala razprava Charles Taylorja z naslovom *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (1992). V ospredje je postavila nujnost pravice do prepoznanja in identitete, ki jima je predpostavljeno univerzalno dostojanstvo. V prispevku skušam odgovoriti na vprašanje, kje – v povezavi s Taylorjevo razpravo – lahko tičijo razlogi za sedanje težave koncepta multikulturalizma in kakšni so predlogi za alternativne poti iz nastalih paradoksalnih okoliščin.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: multikulturalizem, prepoznanje, identiteta, razlika, Charles Taylor, raznolikost

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INTRODUCTION

Debates about organizing social relationships for living in a diverse society are currently at the forefront of social and political considerations, whether we discuss individuals and their rights in communities or majority/minority communities and relationships between them. The topic itself is not new and has been manifesting in one way or another – in the form of exclusivism or inclusivism in relation to difference – throughout human history. Similarly, the roots of multiculturalism do not lie in the 1960s, as related ideas can be found at least as early as the beginning of the 20th century, imbedded in the concept of cultural pluralism, while practice shows them to have been present far earlier within certain socio-historic contexts.

Regardless of whether we speak about proponents or sharp critics of the concept, Charles Taylor's essay *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (1992) greatly influenced the contemporary debates on multiculturalism. It highlighted the necessity of the right to recognition and the right to identity for both to assume universal dignity. In today's debate on multiculturalism the notion of dignity can no longer be avoided, ignored or overlooked. At the same time, it is often forgotten that dignity is an egalitarian concept, established universally while assuming agreement regarding fundamental human rights, and only as such protects the right to difference. Perhaps the inherent controversy of this concept is the reason for the problems that the theory of multiculturalism is encountering today, when some reject it entirely while others search for alternative interpretations that reach beyond the traps and contradictions in which it is entangled. In this paper I explore how dignity is defined in Taylor, how he understands difference, and what the relationship between them is. Does Taylor understand them as absolute categories or does he see them as mutually dependent? One particularly important question today is how to understand the right to difference and whether the right to difference has limits – at the level of both individual and community. In this paper I return to the dilemmas I discuss in my book *Multiculturalizem in migracije* [Multiculturalism and Migration] (Lukšič-Hacin 1999), which I have already placed into new contexts in the articles *Multiculturalizmi: varijante upotrebe pojma i njihova razmimoilaženja* [Multiculturalisms: variants of the use of the concept and differences between them] (2012) and *Pohlepa u kontekstima različitih multikulturalnih diskursa* [Greed in the context of various multicultural discourses] (2015). What is new in those two essays, as well as in the present paper, is primarily the context – today's socio-political dynamics in Slovenia and beyond, in which debates about the rights of people to dignity and difference don't define the basic concepts and relationships between them, but instead take them as self-evident, separate and absolute categories.

In *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (1992), Taylor sets discourse of recognition and identity as the starting point for the debate on multiculturalism as a concept for arranging social relationships in diverse societies. Recognition is understood as a vital human need. It is a necessity which is constitutively linked to identity, or in other words, with how individuals understand firstly who we are and secondly what are the fundamental traits that make us human. Thus the identity of a human (individual) or people (group) is constructed through dialogue in negotiations with the environment in which it is formed, and recognition from the environment is one of the key factors of this process. How the environment perceives us is constructed through the hegemonic relationship with the Other. Nonrecognition or misrecognition on the part of the Other can cause a self-destructive self-image of individuals or groups, when not only the destructive prejudices of the environment are unwittingly reproduced, but the even more destructive self-prejudice. Nonrecognition of identity is harmful; it is a form of pressure on the individual, a form of pushing the individual into destructive, reduced and harmful modes of being. (ibid.: 25)

Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. (...) Within these perspectives, misrecognition shows not just a lack of

due respect. It can inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred. Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need (ibid.: 25–26).

To illustrate the complexity of the problem, Taylor uses Hegel's dialectic of the master-slave relationship (ibid.: 26); here I should point out that it is only the internalized slave identity that makes a slave a slave, and that the slave is the one that gives the master the mandate of the master. The realization of the master-slave relationship is therefore only possible through the social construction of an imposed and destructive identity.

They have internalized a picture of their own inferiority, so that even when some of the objective obstacles to their advancement fall away, they may be incapable of taking advantage of the new opportunities. And beyond this, they are condemned to suffer the pain of low self-esteem. Their own self-depreciation, on this view, becomes one of the most potent instruments of their own oppression. Their first task ought to be to purge themselves of this imposed and destructive identity (ibid.: 25–26).

The key question for Taylor is how this can happen. What makes individuals internalize self-destructiveness and give someone, in a Hegelian sense, the mandate of the master, i.e. how can the circumstances that reproduce existing master-slave relationships be overcome? He looks for the answers in a historical perspective.

THE HISTORICAL ROOTING OF 'THE POLITICS OF RECOGNITION'

In his debate about historic dynamics, Taylor emphasizes two key changes that led to the inevitability of the modern preoccupation with recognition and identity. The first is the collapse of the social hierarchy, which was the basis for the phenomenon of honor (ibid.: 26), and the second the development of individualized identity, linked to authenticity, which appeared at the end of the 18th century (ibid.: 28).

Honor versus dignity

Taylor claims that in the collapse of the social hierarchy, one very important issue is the replacement of the phenomenon of honor with the phenomenon of dignity. In its ancient definition, honor was strongly linked to social inequality, when its existence and reproduction had to be justified (ibid.: 27). In situations like these it is a given that honor is not for everyone, and that this is just! The eighteenth century brings a gradual shift from honor to dignity. Taylor identifies Rousseau as the initiator of the new discourse on honor and dignity. He says that in addition to the two existing traditional paths available to contemplate the two concepts, Rousseau developed a third – he developed a discourse in which he completely rejected honor and introduced dignity, and he is the source of the thesis about the right of all the people to equal dignity. Taylor claims that Hegel developed the principle of equal dignity on the basis of Rousseau's explication of dignity, and developed the master-slave dialectic directly from it. The old discourse about honor has pride at the center, while for the new discourse about dignity the key is recognition by others. Thus dignity is constitutively defined through recognition, i.e. recognition is a constitutive act/process of dignity. The old hierarchical concept of honor broke down because it wasn't able to respond to new needs for recognition. It was replaced by a regime of mutual recognition (ibid.: 35–36, 48–51). Honor is a hierarchical concept and is tied to a narrow segment of the population and expressions such as Lord and Lady, while dignity is linked to democratic (liberal) society and tied to the concepts of Mr., Mrs. and Miss. Honor can be linked to lordship and the rule of the few, and dignity to its universal occurrence in all people, democratization and egalitarianism.

As against this notion of honor, we have the modern notion of dignity, now used in a universalist and egalitarian sense, where we talk of the inherent 'dignity of human beings,' or of citizen dignity. (...) It is obvious that this concept of dignity is the only one compatible with a democratic society, and that it was inevitable that the old concept of honor was superseded. But this has also meant that the forms of equal recognition have been essential to democratic culture. For instance, that everyone be called 'Mr.,' 'Mrs.,' or 'Miss,' rather than some people being called 'Lord' or 'Lady' and others simply by their surnames. (...) Democracy has ushered in a politics of equal recognition, which has taken various forms over the years, and has now returned in the form of demands for the equal status of cultures and of genders (ibid.: 27).

To sum up the collapse of the social hierarchy according to Taylor in a different way, it holds that honor is based on pride, which belongs only to the narrower group of 'more developed' people within the hierarchically structured social relationships of inequality. In contrast, dignity is universal, egalitarian and constitutively linked to mutual recognition within democratic social relationships.

If we apply dignity thus defined to the current discussions about multiculturalism we're witnessing, I should point out that it is often overlooked that the concept of multiculturalism based on the assumption of a universal egalitarian right to dignity internalizes the irreconcilable conflict between honor and dignity. As a theoretical concept it is thus in a necessarily irreconcilable conflict with social (sub)systems based on honor, hierarchy and social inequality. The concept of multiculturalism – as a model of organizing social relationships – isn't useful in and for such (sub)societies; it is in irreconcilable conflict with them and, to be even clearer, it opposes them and tries to change and surpass them in the name of universal dignity in the direction of democratization and social equality. Thus defined, multiculturalism fundamentally cannot be a defense of the (re)production of (cultural) systems based on honor and the hierarchical social inequality of which it is the very negation. Such use is not only incorrect and a manipulation of the concept, but is also its abuse, negation and abolition, because with it, the postulates of the very concept are negated.

Individualized identity and authenticity

The second important historic change Taylor mentions is the development of individualized identity linked to authenticity and internalized norms. He claims that it is only at the end of the 18th century that a change in the understanding of individual identity appears in a form in which we can talk about individualized identity and its authenticity.

We might speak of an *individualized* identity, one that is particular to me, and that I discover myself. This notion arises along with an ideal, that of being true to myself and my own particular way of being. Following Lionel Trilling's usage in his brilliant study, I will speak of this as the ideal of 'authenticity' (ibid.: 28).

Parallel to the processes of individualization and establishing individualized identity, a shift in public morality occurs, because it is no longer tied to God and external criteria of executing its principles.¹ Morality slowly connects to the 'voice within' and the internalization of norms. The inner policeman is

1 "The idea was that understanding right and wrong was not a matter of dry calculation, but was anchored in our feelings. Morality has, in a sense, a voice within. (...) To see what is new here, we have to see the analogy to earlier moral views, where being in touch with some source – for example, God, or Idea of the God – was considered essential for full being. But now the source we have to connect with is deep within us." (ibid.: 28–29).

established. Additionally, the idea of authenticity,² which also takes root at this time, becomes important. Taylor describes Rousseau (ibid.: 29) as the originator of the modern discourse on authenticity; while the essence of recognizing identity, he says, was developed by Hegel in his *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* (ibid.: 36). When developing the notion of authenticity, Taylor leans on Herder when he says that every one of us has their own original way of being human. The idea of authenticity is strongly present in the modern conscience:

This idea has burrowed very deep into modern consciousness. It is a new idea. Before the late eighteenth century, no one thought that the differences between human beings had this kind of moral significance. There is a certain way of being human that is *my way*. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's life. But this notion gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life; I miss what being human is for *me*. (ibid.: 30) "Being true to myself means being true to my own originality, which is something only I can articulate and discover. In articulating it, I am also defining myself. I am realizing a potentiality that is properly my own. This is the background understanding to the modern ideal of authenticity, and to the goals of self-fulfilment and self-realization in which the ideal is usually couched" (ibid.: 31).

Authenticity can also be presented as striving for originality, ingenuity or a unique way of being, and some sort of fear of conformity, pressure from the outside that can cause the loss of who I am. Here let me point out that 'nonconforming authenticity' thus positions itself in contrast to recognition, which constitutively needs a dialectical relation with its environment. I can only become what I am through a dialogue with my environment, and at the same time, the process has to be carried out so that I can be what I am in my own immanent, non-conforming way. This clearly reflects the contradictory manifestation and dynamics of social relationships which we can understand through the fact that only the universal has allowed the establishment of the particular/individual. This inevitable permanent contradiction is first realized through the socializing process on the external relationship of the self to the environment. The second contradiction appears with a delay in the course of socialization, between the authenticity and the 'inner policeman', as the latter is the internalization of the external social relationships, and thus the contradiction becomes immanent for the individual. Here, we should also point out that authenticity as such is also a historical construct which the individual internalizes in the course of socialization.

Taylor says that all this creates the basis of modern (bourgeois liberal) culture and new forms of conscience. Individualized identity, linked to the internalized norms and authenticity, strongly depends on the dialogue with an important other, who either recognizes it or not, and thus importantly fulfils it or not. Identity is also determined in the dialogue with the important other, particularly through internalized norms that are cultural/social in origin (ibid.: 33–34). Taylor warns that this problem occurs when there is non-recognition of 'me' as 'me' in a minority community and in my eyes. This necessarily has a feedback effect on identity. If, for example, a woman internalizes the image of her own inferiority and subordination, she becomes inferior and subordinate (ibid.: 25). He claims that any internalizing of stigma can influence identity and can cause stigmatization of a population. He explains that this happened, for example, in the time of colonial relationships, when value systems were established that were based on numerous negative stereotypes of the non-white populations (ibid.: 26). Such watershed historic moments are thus crucial, as they are the moments in which the process of formulating

2 "The notion of authenticity develops out of a displacement of the moral accent in this idea. On the original view, the inner voice was important because it tells us what the right thing to do is. Being in touch with our moral feelings matters here, as a means to the end of acting rightly. What I'm calling the displacement of the moral accent comes about when being in touch with our feelings takes on independent and crucial moral significance. It comes to be something we have to attain if we are to be true and full human beings." (ibid.: 28)

identity takes place on an intimate level, in constant dialogue and confrontation with the important other, when because of the demands for authenticity, social relationships are set as the key factors of self-discovery and self-affirmation. Through this relation, the individualized identity is placed into the conditions of even greater and more defining dependency on the social environment; however, this dependency is a lot less visible due to the internalization of the norms (inner policeman), but at the same time carries much more importance for the individual than it used to when social status and identities were understood to be self-evident. In a situation like this, stigmatization is amplified by the even more destructive self-stigmatization (*ibid.*: 36).

As we have already noted, the key question for Taylor is how this can happen. What is it that causes individuals to internalize self-destructiveness and give, in a Hegelian sense, to someone, somewhere, the mandate of master, i.e. how can one go beyond the circumstances which reproduce the existing master-slave relationships. Taylor searches for answers in a more concrete milieu and in his analysis moves from the general, more abstract level of thinking about a human being as an entity, to the level of socio-political systems or political communities (states).

FROM HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF CHANGE TO THE POLITICS OF MULTICULTURALISM

First of all, let me point out that in reality there are important differences between political systems in terms of strategies, policies and attitudes to life in diversified societies. Diachronic and synchronic perspectives present different models of organizing relationships/life in diversified societies: from a) complete denial and exclusion of people who are different through citing their underdevelopment and immanent inability to assimilate, where culture/society is understood through a hierarchical concept of culture (Morgan 1981); through b) a tendency of forced assimilation of others into the dominant culture/society, which is declared more developed (Morgan 1981); c) accepting differences and understanding different cultures/societies through a differential concept of culture (Benedict 1976), their acceptance through the idea of a melting pot, which has a built-in immanent danger of silent assimilation and disappearance of diversity; to d) the model of cultural pluralism/multiculturalism/interculturalism, where culture/societal norms are understood through the differential concept of culture (Benedict 1976); the right to dignity, respect, recognition and the need to retain diversity is emphasized, yet the universal similarity among people must not be forgotten. With his multiculturalism and politics of recognition, Taylor supports the latter.

After his analysis of historical changes in the field of identity formation, Taylor ponders the possibilities for a politics of multiculturalism that would enable the realization of the newly created social phenomena of dignity and diversity. From the universal level of analysis of the human condition he moves to a more particular level, that is to the level of policy, and observes, from a political perspective, the possibilities for implementing new principles of regulating relationships "in and between" socio-political-cultural realities. He adds citizenship and state to the mix of central categories of analysis (Taylor 1992: 38). He thus focuses his analysis on the state as a political community that should provide its members/citizens with a system of rights that would allow them the recognition of equal dignity and difference, which he links to the necessity that "the principle of equal citizenship has come to be universally accepted" (*ibid.*: 38). He uses historical changes to support the necessity of two politics – the politics of equal dignity and the politics of difference.

Within the first, the politics of equal dignity, the principle of the right to equal recognition plays an important role. This is an area in which the shift from honor to dignity led to the politics of universalism.³ The importance of the equal dignity of all citizens is emphasized. The rights and obligations of all become equal (ibid.: 36–38). The politics of equal dignity is necessarily based on the idea of the universal, egalitarian human potential:

The politics of equal dignity is based on the idea that all humans are equally worthy of respect. (...) Thus, what is picked out as of worth here is a *universal human potential*, a capacity that all humans share. This potential, rather than anything a person may have made of it, is what ensures that each person deserves respect." (ibid.: 41)

Taylor links the universal human potential to the concept of fundamental rights when he says: "But now the rights in question are conceived to be the fundamental and crucial ones that have been recognized as such from the very beginning of the liberal tradition: rights to life, liberty, due process, free speech, free practice of religion, and so on" (ibid.: 59). At the same time, he warns about the dangers of the concept of fundamental rights. On the one hand, fundamental rights are a precondition for universality. On the other, we have to be careful with the very definition and criteria of fundamental rights, and we must not forget their limits:

On this model, there is a dangerous overlooking of an essential boundary in speaking of fundamental rights to things like commercial signage in the language of one's choice. One has to distinguish the fundamental liberties, those that should never be infringed and therefore ought to be unassailably entrenched, on one hand, from privileges and immunities that are important, but that can be revoked or restricted for reasons of public policy – although one would need a strong reason to do this – on the other (ibid.: 59).

Taylor links the second of these politics, the politics of difference, to authenticity and individualized identity, yet he emphasizes that this is based on the politics of equal dignity. We could say that the politics of difference thus depends on it and can only be relayed through it. Hence the politics of difference cannot be taught as a separate, independent phenomenon, but can only be taught on the assumption of the politics of universal dignity, based on the universal human potential and respect for fundamental rights: "In the case of the politics of difference, we might also say that a universal potential is at its basis, namely, the potential for forming and defining one's own identity, as individual, and also as a culture. This potentially must be respected equally in everyone" (ibid.: 42).

So multiculturalism is understood through the politics of recognition, with the politics of recognition being defined as an intertwining of two mutually contradictory politics which are in the process of constant (contextual) negotiations of their mutual borders, yet at the same time the first is a prerequisite for the second. We also must not forget the complexity of the contradictory reality which we have already highlighted in the treatment of individualized identity (which is a part of the politics of difference), when a particular 'non-conforming authenticity' is set into a contradictory relationship with universal dignity (a part of the first politics) and dignity being at the same time a prerequisite for difference, yet can only be constituted through a dialogue with the environment, and is in inverse correlation with authenticity. This clearly reflects the controversial dynamics of social relationships, which we can also understand through the paradox that only the universal has enabled the establishment of the particular/individual.

3 Here, the key phenomenon is dignity, which he constitutively defines through recognition, i.e. recognition is a constitutive act/process of recognition; this – let us remember – contains an internalized inherent conflict with hierarchical honor and social inequality. For universal basic rights to discourse on dignity it is of key importance that dignity is universally, in an egalitarian manner and constitutively linked to mutual recognition within democratic social relationships.

These two modes of politics, then, both based on the notion of equal respect, come into conflict. For one, the principle of equal respect requires that we treat people in a difference-blind fashion. The fundamental intuition that humans command this respect focuses on what is the same in all. For the other, we have to recognize and even foster particularity. The reproach the first makes to the second is just that it violates the principle of non-discrimination. The reproach the second makes to the first is that it negotiates identity by forcing people into a homogeneous mold that is untrue to them (ibid.: 43).

Taylor links his thinking about the right to be different to cases of social minorities and diaspora,⁴ where at first he considers the rights of all social minorities (vulnerable groups), yet as he goes on he focuses on cultural minorities and forgets about others, for example the gender perspective, for which he has been reproached by some critics of his multiculturalism (Wolf 1992, Okin 1999).

THE TRAPS OF MULTICULTURALISM IN RELATION TO THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

In his essay on multiculturalism and minorities (he says very little about migration), Taylor sticks to the level of relationships between groups or communities and ignores the question of the position and rights of individuals within minorities. In this way, he becomes ambiguous. His multiculturalism comes across as a vindication of minority (cultural) groups even in cases when social inequality and subordination are (re)produced for individuals within these sub-societies/sub-groups, and their respect and dignity are not ensured – to mention only the polemics about the position and rights of women. Such understanding of Taylor's 'politics of recognition' quickly finds itself at odds with the bases that Taylor develops in the first part of his essay. Taylor's neglect of the question of the rights of an individual who finds him- or herself in a conflict situation with the society/culture to which she or he should belong, and the reduction of the analysis of the position of the minority to merely a cultural dimension, are the bases for numerous criticisms of Taylor's multiculturalism. Let me point out just two inconsistencies, which are very salient to this debate:

First, Taylor doesn't think about individuals who don't want to belong to their minority/majority. Thus people who don't position themselves within an ethnic/cultural community slip through the context of Taylor's understanding of their rights. Taylor only speaks about this once, in his criticism of Kymlicka and his multiculturalism, when he says:

Will Kymlicka, in his very interesting and tightly argued book *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (...), tries to argue for a kind of politics of difference (...). Kymlicka's reasoning is valid (perhaps) for *existing* people who find themselves trapped within a culture under pressure, and can flourish within it or not at all. But it doesn't justify measures designed to ensure survival through indefinite future generations. For the populations concerned, however, that is what is at stake. We need only think of the historical resonance of "la survivance" among French Canadians (ibid.: 40–41).

With this, Taylor does approach the problem of the rights of an individual at odds with the minority system, but other than refuting Kymlicka's positions, Taylor avoids further analysis, and nowhere in his discussion does he offer a response to the situations which Kymlicka discusses in the specific cases. I believe Taylor ends his discussion of this very important issue far too quickly – also because cultures are

4 Taylor speaks very little about migrations in his work (he also uses the concept of diaspora). For the most part, he discusses the situation of minorities. He only briefly discusses migrations and diaspora and the specifics of these populations (ibid.: 63–64).

not nature-given, but historically and socially constructed realities (Berger, Luckmann 1966). As Kuper points out:

This is why I insist that you don't belong to your culture, but it is imposed on you by a very authoritarian political movement with its national and nationalistic program within which you're disciplined every time you think differently, ask inappropriate questions or even want to get off (2005: 36).

So what, in Taylor's view, happens to people who don't want to belong to their culture, who rebel against the hierarchy and subordination they are ascribed within this culture? The subordinate status that is ascribed to them may even negate the universal human dignity and (re)produce a system of honor and social inequality that Taylor's politics of dignity and recognition was designed to surpass. What is the position of multiculturalism in the relation to the rights of people who are ascribed unequal statuses in the name of preserving culture (cultural tradition)? Taylor claims that the right to be different is based on a universal egalitarian dignity, the bases of which are fundamental human rights. What attitude should multiculturalism defined in this way take towards cultures that reproduce honor? Taylor offers no answers to these questions. Consequently, he also does not respond to the question posed in connection to the immanent conflict of the concept of universal dignity, which is a prerequisite for authenticity within the politics of difference, with the concept of honor. This raises the question of the relationship between universal dignity and honor, or what attitude should be held towards systems that are based on and (re)produce the concept of honor within hierarchical social relationships of inequality, of which dignity is a negation. Can principles of universal dignity truly serve as a vindication of the right to (re)produce systems of hierarchical honor of which they are a negation and with which they are in irreconcilable conflict, or are there limits to the use of the concept of dignity – in other words, is multiculturalism with the politics of recognition useless here? How can we understand the situation in which multiculturalism is supposed to protect the right to preserve a culture that is patriarchal and violates the rights of women, thus refusing them dignity? As I personally understand the first part of Taylor's discourse, fundamental rights and universal dignity are the prerequisite for the politics of difference, and only when the social conditions for the implementation of the first politics are secured can we defend the second politics and the politics to difference, so difference is not an absolute and independent category; the right to difference is preconditioned and these conditions set boundaries for it and establish contexts within which the right to difference can be constituted.

Second, Taylor uses the notion of culture, but doesn't define it. He only uses it as self-evident or given, as a static, impermeable structure rather than a dynamic process that is in constant interaction – internal interaction, and external interaction with other cultures when it comes to multicultural exchange, and the borders between them are changing. Similarly, he doesn't define the notion of civilization where the hierarchical concept of culture (Morgan 1981) rears up from the background, because he divides civilizations into developed and undeveloped when he talks about the "North Atlantic civilization" (Taylor 1992:71). Also problematic is his discussion about multiculturalism and identity, when he speaks about identity as a phenomenon which is connected exclusively to culture and forgets about other, non-cultural intertwining of identity both at the level of the individual and the level of community. With this he approaches the danger that social relationships are positioned into culturalism, which can also be understood as cultural racism. The anthropologist Kuper also warns about the problem of the definition of culture in the concepts of multiculturalism and the danger of culturalism in his criticisms, when he says he's afraid of the power people ascribe to culture. Culture is now touted as a new force that is all-inclusive and in multiple cases it has replaced economics, sociality and class. The concepts of culture and cultural difference are frequently used to explain wars, starvation, poverty, crime and mental illness. In this way it conceals the truth which was expressed, for example, by the notions of government, power, and social class, which described social relationships, social power relations and governing in another way. Kuper continues that the idea of culture is ambiguous and omnipresent, yet

at the same time very strong and cyclical. He sees a great difficulty in placing too much emphasis on values and symbols which can make us neglect or overlook material, biological, economic and social influences. This leads to a further issue:

The second part of the problem is the fact that cultural discourse imposes the often artificial or at least porous borders between different parts of the population and nations, but claims such borders to be static and firm and based on fundamental differences of origin. Even more, they even claim that they stem from the differences in people's identity, without which the people would lose their sense of who they are and what they want to do (Kuper 2005: 36).

Kuper rejects the idea of a static identity and its unconditional link to a single culture that is static, indispensable and of vital importance – he speaks about situations in which people share a common culture, but have different identities: “As an anthropologist I can claim without reservation that people can share a culture although they obviously don't share an identity,” (ibid.: 37) and warns that cultural identity cannot be a criterion for establishing rights. In his discussion on multiculturalism – in addition to the problematic of definition of the notion of culture – he warns that it is necessary to rethink cultural relativism. With respect to cultural relativism, Kuper says:

How can I agree with an idea that claims that there are different people living in the world with numerous cultures and different standards, which cause them to see the world very differently and respond to it differently, which means they cannot effectively communicate with each other? They are supposedly caught in a framework which it is not possible to step outside of. This claim seems questionable from the empirical point of view, since I, as a guest in many countries and in my scientific research, have always encountered astonishing similarities between people, be it in the cold and snowy regions of Antarctica, in hot Africa or in Europe. It is for this reason that I loudly proclaim the belief that most people, all around the world, have a lot in common (ibid.: 36).

Philips (2007) also considers the problem of the concept of culture within multiculturalism, particularly in connection with the position of women. Unlike Okin (1999), who rejects multiculturalism, Philips searches for a compromise, an alternative interpretation that would represent the rights of different social minorities, for instance culture and gender to mention only two. In the end she develops an idea of multiculturalism without culture, with a defense of the right of the individual to choose as a basic characteristic. In this way, majorities and minorities depend on the choices of individuals and their identifications with groups following the pattern of the concept of the “imagined community” (Anderson 2006). Of course, this discussion can be continued with the question of what constitutes individual free choice and whether it is even possible, if we start from the fact of the social construction of reality (Berger, Luckmann, 1966). And yet it is important that in this version of multiculturalism, in the entire context of social relationships among groups an alternative is provided for the individual, in which she or he can refuse the “ascribed” belonging. A similar, yet in a way very different alternative to multiculturalism, is offered by Parekh in his work *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, as he understands multiculturalism as “a perspective on human life” (2000: 336) and refuses to allow that it could be simply a philosophical theory or political doctrine. With this, the importance of dialogue and heterogeneity of cultures is emphasized – cultures differ from each other, but they are not only not internally homogeneous, they are heterogeneous and diversified (ibid.: 336–346). Lately, also in connection to the traps of understanding of the concept of culture and the danger of culturalism, there are growing tendencies to change the name of the multiculturalism/interculturalism model, to build upon it and move away from the “politics of multiculturalism” to the “politics of diversity”. In this way, it would be easier to avoid the danger of culturalism in organizing equal living in diversified societies (Manji 2014a, 2014b).

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this paper was to use Taylor's perspective to try to find an answer to the currently important question of how to understand the right to difference and whether this right has limits – both at the level of the individual and the community. How is dignity defined by Taylor, how does he understand difference, and what is the relationship between them? Does he understand them as absolute categories or does he place them in mutual dependency? What does all this mean for multiculturalism and what are the current alternatives if we shed the light on the debate on multiculturalism through the prism of the understanding of the concept of culture?

Alternative searches and thinking about how to continue with multiculturalism were presented in the closing part of the last subchapter, in which I refer to selected authors who present alternative approaches: Kuper, who says that the concept of culture needs to be redefined and the concept of cultural relativism rethought; Philips, who searches for possibilities for multiculturalism without culture, and whose basic postulate is the right of the individual to choose; Parekh and his search for the basis for multiculturalism "as a perspective on human life"; and newer trends of a total reversal from the politics of multiculturalism to the politics of diversity, championed for example by Manji (2014a, 2014b).

The response to the fundamental questions of the present essay is more complex. The contemporary problems of the theory of multiculturalism are linked to the complexity of the situation it deals with. The very reality that multiculturalism tries to encompass is complex. Besides, it derives from basic theoretical concepts (culture, gender, difference, equal opportunities, fairness etc.), and there are huge differences among different authors in the understanding of those concepts. These differences are sometimes explicit, but sometimes implicit and concealed. We must add to this the different "ideological bounds" of the authors of multiculturalism, who use the same categorical apparatus to actually defend different social orders. Today, for example, we often encounter Taylor's concepts of dignity, recognition, respect, and difference, and realize that their content and justification are forgotten. When defending the right to difference it is often forgotten that the prerequisites of the politics of diversity are universal, egalitarian dignity and universal human potential. Too much emphasis is placed on the fact that people are different from each other, while forgetting the basic assumption, i.e. the origin, of Taylor's debate – that we are first and foremost similar to each other. It is only within the assumption of strong similarity between people that we can also speak about the differences among us, about our right to be different and live respectfully in diversity – all while assuming we can choose our group affiliations ourselves and are not forced into them, and that no affiliation to a group causes social inequality and unequal treatment for an individual or a group. Multiculturalism is a theory based on the simultaneous existence of equality and difference, on a constant contradiction of dignity and authenticity, which works on the principle of the mutual interdependence of universality and particularity. This is frequently overlooked! This contradiction is what creates limits for the rights of individuals and groups in specific cases through regulated political processes of negotiation, as this is the only way a common political system, which joins different groups, communities and individuals into a single political and legal system, can stand. Without borders such a system could not stand. The borders of the political and legal system also limit the right to diversity, for example of cultural practices. Here, let us remember that cultures are not "given by nature", they're not static, they are internally heterogeneous (not homogenous) and have been forever in flux. They are not absolute. Cultures are processes which change and come into contact with each other. It follows from this that cultural difference is relative; it is a process and an interaction. This is also how we must think of culture: as a dynamic, constant process of interaction. Thus even multiculturalism, as a system of managing difference, cannot and must not be conceived as a system that protects static cultures. It must be seen as a dynamic process of managing dynamic, complex and procedural differences which are in interaction.

Yet 'cultural minorities' are not the only analytical category when describing a concrete reality. There are numerous other social minorities whose rights have to be equally respected. In concrete

reality, social minorities intertwine, and an individual is at the same time a member of several minorities – thus the respect and dignity of all, the right of all to difference, can only be conceived of through the connection of multiculturalism with an intersectional approach. This means that we're dealing with two types of intersection that interact to set the boundaries of social space; and it is only within this space that we can talk about the fulfilment of the preconditions for the realization of human dignity, which is a foundation of social heterogeneity, and as a consequence also the limit of enjoying the right to difference – the first one is the intersection of rights between different groups/communities, and the second the intersection of rights between individuals and the social groups/communities these individuals belong to.

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POVZETEK

TEORETSKA TEMATIZACIJA KONCEPTA MULTIKULTURALIZMA SKOZI TAYLORJEVO POLITIKO PREPOZNANJA

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Danes se pogosto dokazuje, da je teorija multikulturalizma ali zašla v slepo ulico ali da je preživeta. Težave teorije multikulturalizma so povezane predvsem s kompleksnostjo obravnavanega stanja, saj je kompleksna že sama realnost, ki jo multikulturalizem želi zajeti. Ob tem pa je teorija multikulturalizma izvedena iz bazičnih konceptov, kot so npr. kultura, spol, razlika, enake možnosti, pravičnost itd., ki jih različni avtorji različno opredelijo in so tako različne tudi njihove definicije multikulturalizma. Na sodobne razprave o multikulturalizmu, pa če govorimo o zagovornikih ali ostrih kritikih koncepta, je močno vplivala razprava Charles Taylorja z naslovom *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (1992). V ospredje je postavila nujnost pravice do prepoznanja in identitete, ki jima je predpostavljeno univerzalno dostojanstvo. Danes se pojmu dostojanstva v razpravi o multikulturalizmu nihče več ne more izogniti, hkrati pa se pogosto pozablja, da je dostojanstvo egalitaren koncept, utemeljen na univerzalni ravni ob predpostavki soglasja o temeljnih človekovih pravicah; šele kot tak omogoča zaščito pravic do razlike. V prispevku me zanima, kako je dostojanstvo definirano pri Taylorju, kako razume razliko in kakšen je odnos med njima? Ali ju Taylor razume kot absolutni kategoriji ali ju postavlja v vzajemno soodvisnost? Predvsem pa je danes pomembno vprašanje, kako razumeti pravico do razlike in ali ima pravica do razlike meje – tako na ravni posameznika kot skupnosti.