

Multiculturalism and respecting freedom

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Applied ethics in the Nordic context has flourished because of the enabling conditions of the different political contexts that contributors to the journal enjoy, as well as the disciplinary observance of academic virtues as critical thinking, inclusion of different perspectives, and curiosity in understanding the opposing views of others (Thorseth 2010, Alvarez 2014, Addis 1997).

Diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism have proven to be conducive conditions for free knowledge to flourish and enable people with different perspectives to mutually enrich their understanding of the meaning and purpose of social and political life. Multiculturalism has been a central project of the different constellations of progressive values. Kymlicka (2025) recently reflected on an enriched definition of multiculturalism as a many-faceted approach with two main dimensions: interpersonal and political.

The interpersonal dimension of multiculturalism is concerned with the lived interactions between groups. It seeks to combat stereotypes, prejudice, and intolerance and to cultivate attitudes of tolerance and respect. It promotes the development of intercultural competencies that enable citizens to engage positively with other group members.

The political dimension of multiculturalism, in turn, refers to the way that public institutions recognize, accommodate, and represent groups. This involves redesigning state institutions so that they serve and reflect all members of society and not just the dominant group. Kymlicka terms this pluralizing the state, which includes telling a more plural story of peoplehood so that state institutions are more inclusively representative of diversity.

Kymlicka illustrates multiculturalism at work in a range of geopolitics: the Roma in Eastern Europe, Indigenous peoples in Colombia, and Muslim immigrants in Britain. Each of these contexts presents different political challenges with regard to race, religion, language, and citizenship. The point is that multiculturalism does not have a singular past or future but multiple futures.

Kymlicka also notes that while multiculturalism has not eliminated prejudice or the privilege of dominant groups, societies that have taken up multicultural policies have done better in terms of inclusion and representation of minorities.

The challenges of multiculturalism are diverse. Its main goals are to respond to the challenges of the heterogeneous political and social situations in the world. Multiculturalism is not one thing and is different in different geopolitical contexts in order to address various challenges of race, religion, language, and citizenship. The success of multiculturalism is uneven because it depends on the nature of the

policy ecology in which it is embedded, especially in security and the welfare states' frameworks. Because of this, Kymlicka says that although multiculturalism has succeeded in taming the nation-state, its future is the post-state or post-nation political orders. Kymlicka tells us that multiculturalism made the nation-state more acceptable by constraining its tendency to champion a homogenous national culture. By emphasizing difference and diversity, multiculturalism helped transform the nation-state into an inclusive state that takes account of various cultural identities. However, the state and nation-state might not be the best sites of multiculturalism in the future. He envisions post-state or post-nation political orders that might deal better with diversity. Such political orders of the future might be able to transcend the nation-state and the state as we now know them so that they can better handle the challenges of diversity. This would involve thinking of ways of governance that go beyond the nation-state and the state as we know them.

This reflection is very relevant to making sense of the resurgence of populist and fascist politics in contemporary democracy. Tolerant policies that allow diverse political views to flourish and coexist also invertedly allow intolerant politics to take power and proponents of intolerant ideologies to get elected to government.

Limits of tolerance

Solutions to the problem of intolerance are not new. Those who claim rights to freedom should respect the freedom of others. No one is free to harm and limit the freedom of others. Because of this, tolerance has limits even in multicultural societies that employ tolerance as a key virtue of political discourse. Kymlicka, in fact, mentions that multiculturalism is not a solution to the problem of prejudice or intolerance. He argues that tolerance in multiculturalism is intended to help intercultural competencies to develop among citizens. Kymlicka states that the answer to the question of why we should be tolerant to other groups in multiculturalism, is that being tolerant will allow citizens to engage positively with different racial, religious, national, and sexual groups. According to him, this kind of tolerance is to be contrasted with the populist and conservative solution to the problems of diversity, which is intolerance of the other, keeping the privileges of the majority, and resisting change. Therefore, the challenge is to find the balance between the struggle for a multicultural nation state and the search for a post-state political order that could be better suited to accommodate diversity. He also argues that we should not give up on the struggle for multicultural nationhood in order not to leave the field entirely to local and/or cosmopolitan nationalism. He says that the danger of giving up the nation-state is that this could give rise to a strengthened nativist narrative. Therefore, he concludes that the struggle for multiculturalism should be continued, and this should be done with the awareness that multiculturalism does not eliminate but can tame the mechanisms of the nation-state. The vision of tolerance, in Kymlicka's opinion, is one of active promotion of an inclusive society and not one of mere coexistence. The other intolerance is populism, which rejects multiculturalism and promotes homogeneity and exclusion.

This first issue of *Etikk i praksis* for the year 2025 continues the journal's commitment to publishing papers that contribute to diverse perspectives on different ethical issues.

The first three articles discuss current controversial issues in the Norwegian context. The next two English articles deal with two different global issues,

discussing scarce resources in the context of war and intellectual property rights. An English translation of a previously published article is included in this issue.

Kontroversielle problemstillinger i norsk kontekst

I «Bør dødshjelp legaliseres i Norge?» foretar Morten Magelsen en kritisk lesning av Moen og Sterris «Aktiv dødshjelp. Etikk ved livets slutt».

Forfatteren tar utgangspunkt i Ole Martin Moen og Aksel Braanen Sterris bok «Aktiv dødshjelp. Etikk ved livets slutt», som argumenterer for legalisering av dødshjelp. Magelsen kritiserer forfatterne på bakgrunn av fem tema i dødshjelpdebatten, og påpeker at forfatterne ikke har lagt tilstrekkelig vekt på den moralske betydningen av selve dødshjelpshandlingen. Ifølge Magelsen vil legalisering av dødshjelp true profesjonsetiske holdninger som er nødvendige for lege-pasientrelasjonen, og han peker på at god palliasjon og klok behandlingsbegrensning kan redusere pasientens opplevde behov for dødshjelp.

Aksel Braanen Sterri og Ole Martin Moen svarer på Magelssens kritikk av deres bok «Dødshjelp bør legaliseres i Norge».

I dette bidraget gir forfatterne en kommentar til Magelssens artikkel «Bør dødshjelp legaliseres i Norge? En kritisk lesning av Moen og Sterris «Aktiv dødshjelp. Etikk ved livets slutt». Forfatterne kritiserer Magelssens bidrag på flere punkter, i vesentlig grad med utgangspunkt i hans fem spor-metode. Etter deres syn burde Magelsen i stedet vurdere hvorvidt forholdene Sterri og Moen viser til utgjør pro tanto-argument for å tillate dødshjelp. Forfatterne konkluderer med at motstandere av dødshjelp, som Magelssen, må argumentere for at eventuelle motargumenter mot dødshjelp er tilstrekkelig tungtveiende til at vi likevel ikke kan gjøre det som er nødvendig for å forhindre lidelse og respektere folks selvbestemmelse. Så langt har slik argumentasjon uteblitt, etter deres syn.

I «Medisinsk overaktivitet: Hva er det, hva er de etiske problemene og hva kan vi gjøre med det?», tar Bjørn Morten Hofmann utgangspunkt i det han omtaler som uønsket medisinsk overaktivitet. Slik overaktivitet karakteriseres av at den verken er nødvendig eller berettiget. På bakgrunn av biomedisinsk etikk generelt, og konsekvensetikk og pliktetikk spesielt, argumenterer forfatteren for at uønsket medisinsk overaktivitet mangler en moralsk begrunnelse. Et viktig mål med artikkelen er å vise at medisinsk aktivitet må knyttes til moralske mål om å redusere personers smerte, funksjonstap eller lidelse, for å sikre en bærekraftig helsetjeneste og bevare medisinenes moralske begrunnelse.

Exploring Value: Water, Knowledge, and Ethics

The article by Tatiana Gardashuk is dedicated to the problem of the many-sided value of water. She states that water is a very important resource for the biosphere and the life support system. The article discusses three classes of values: intrinsic, instrumental and relational. Intrinsic values are the values of water for water itself; instrumental values are the values of water for humanity; and relational values are the values of human relationships with water. The author focuses on the problem of water as a weapon, the object of which is the destruction of water's value, with special attention to the Russo-Ukrainian war. The water weaponization is considered as the use of water and water objects for premeditated damage, destruction and loss of water value, which leads to environmental, humanitarian and socio-economic disaster. The article draws attention to the negative

consequences of using water as a weapon: the destruction of ecosystems, violation of human rights and exacerbation of water conflicts. The author emphasizes the need to stop the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the need to develop strategies for water rehabilitation and international legal frameworks, which can protect water from destruction. In conclusion, the author notes the need to value and respect the value of water in order to propagate conflict-free cooperation and peacebuilding.

In his article “A New Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources, and Associated Traditional Knowledge”, Hans Morten Haugen explores the complex relationship between traditional knowledge and intellectual property rights. He discloses the historical misuse by the West of traditional knowledge and the granting of patents in disregard of the genuine source. In turn, these patents are annulled, as in the case of the appetite-curbing activities of the plant hoodia, the San people of Kalahari.

Efforts are put in place at international and national levels to protect traditional knowledge, such as the CBD and its protocols and guidelines as well as the 2024 WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources, and Associated Traditional Knowledge. Haugen explicates the necessity to protect traditional knowledge, share benefits, and promote the indigenous knowledge of the states. The WIPO Treaty requires that the source of traditional knowledge be disclosed in the patent application to avoid erroneous patents. National legislative development on traditional knowledge is also presented, for example India's Plant Variety and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 and Norway's legal measures for the Nagoya Protocol, which require information about the origin of the genetic resources.

The article acknowledges that the true benefit-sharing with Indigenous and local communities remains unfulfilled despite international and national efforts. Implementation of the benefit-sharing agreements has proven difficult and unmet by the objectives.

The last article “From harmonious altruism to contradictory feminism: an analysis of the consultation on compensation for egg donation”, written by Joar Røkke Fystro, is an English translation of the original Norwegian text (*Fra samstemt altruisme til motstridende feminisme: en analyse av høringen om kompensasjon for eggdonasjon*).

The article is an analysis of the Norwegian debate on compensation for egg donation after the Biotechnology Act was reformed in May 2020 (legalizing egg donation in Norway). The article focuses on the consultation on guidelines for compensation for egg donation and has three main themes: form and content of the motivation, equality, and the donor store. The challenge of financial motivation for donation is a key issue during the consultation, where it is accepted that the motivation for egg donation should be altruistic, i.e., not financially motivated. The article shows that similar arguments were used both to support a higher and a lower compensation. A particularly important role in the discussion was that of women's rights. The article shows that it is important to define terms such as altruism, voluntariness and financial motivation in order to understand the points of agreement and disagreement.

We hope that these articles will encourage readers to continue thinking critically about ethical challenges we face in their respective contexts. The journal continues to call for submissions that use ethical theories and principles to make sense of the different controversies we face in our society, ranging from politics,

science and technology ethics to the economy. We welcome submissions from different disciplines and viewpoints

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