

СТАТЬИ АСПИРАНТОВ И НАЧИНАЮЩИХ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЕЙ

THE PROBLEM OF TOLERANCE IN MODERN FOREIGN PSYCHOLOGY*

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The article deals with the basic theoretical concepts of tolerance, socio-psychological determinants of tolerance, fundamental and most widely spread in modern foreign psychology.

Key words: tolerance, theoretical concepts of tolerance, tolerance as a personal value, social attitude, personal trait, socio-psychological determinants of tolerance.

Psychology as one of the sciences studying the problem of interaction between an individual and society is focused on psychological aspects of that interaction. In particular, it is aimed at searching for those variables and factors that positively influence the individual's perception of society, his good integration and adaptation. Today one of those factors is tolerance. It is one of the main mechanisms of the individual's adaptation in the contemporary multicultural society that is necessary for the individual's better adaptation to society and effective development and functioning of the society in general.

In this work we would like to review the contemporary foreign investigations dealing with the nature of tolerance as a psychological phenomenon, as well as with the factors determining the individual's tolerance.

As to its nature, tolerance has been studied from different points of view in contemporary social psychology.

1. **Tolerance as a personal value** originating in philosophical concepts of human essence tracing back to works of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Michel de Montaigne, Francis Bacon and John Locke. The latter has written many works devoted to the problem of tolerance, for example, "A Letter Concerning Toleration" (1689) that upholds the importance of religious tolerance in society.

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2. **Tolerance as a social attitude** including three main components: cognitive, affective and behavioral. In this perspective, the scientists emphasize that the object of social attitude plays a certain role for the tolerance level of a person. In other words, while exhibiting more tolerance to some phenomena, we are inclined to exhibit less of that to other phenomena. For example, tolerance of a person may vary depending on whether the object of tolerance is the point of view or actual behaviour of the other person. Barbara Pasamonik notes that statistically tolerance to the views is much higher than tolerance to the behaviour of the other person [7]. In addition, Jorge Vala and Rui Costa-Lopes [9] investigating attitudes towards different groups suffering from stigmatization (AIDS patients, homosexuals and patients with personality trait disturbances) have proved that the level of tolerance towards those individuals has been much lower than that towards the representatives of ethnic and cultural minorities.

3. **Tolerance as a personal trait.** This approach puts bigger emphasis on personal dispositions rather than on social context characteristics. As an example of direct and indirect substantiation of tolerance as personal trait we can name many concepts of the individual: e.g. Adorno's theory of authoritarian personality (1950), depicting personality profile of an individual predisposed to prejudices and, consequently, to intolerance. It is also appropriate to mention the Big Five concept that was used by Caprara and his colleagues to draw up Alter Ego questionnaire. According to the existing hypotheses, such personal traits as "agreeableness" and "openness to experience" appearing in the above model are two fundamental factors that the concept of the individual's tolerance is based on.

Conceptual definition of tolerance varies depending on different approaches. Tolerance is both a social virtue and a political principle that allows for the peaceful coexistence of individuals and groups that hold different views and practice different ways of life within the same society [7]. Tolerance is a social attitude admitting that other individuals have the right to behave and think differently. This attitude is developed in terms of good feelings and similarity, and increases the level of acceptance of individuality [5]. Tolerance is a personal trait (or personal disposition), an integral characteristic of a person, which determines the person's ability to interact with the external world under problem and crisis conditions to retrieve neuropsychic equilibrium, achieve better adaptation, avoid confrontations and develop positive interrelations with both the inner and the external worlds [3].

According to the above approaches, the researchers refer to different theoretical models revealing the roots of tolerance. Depending on whether the main part is given to the subject or the society as the explanatory principle of tolerance, the theoretical models can be divided into two general approaches: psycho-sociological (individual) approach and sociopsychological (contextual) approach.

1. Psycho-sociological (individual) approach:

— cognitive complexity-simplicity as an explanatory principle of tolerance [9] is based on the idea that the individual's cognitive complexity defines his predisposition to view the social world as a complex, multidimensional and overdetermined, the acceptance of which, in turn, shows his tolerance;

— Adorno's theory of authoritarian personality (1950) depicts the personality profile of an individual having the following characteristic traits: uncritical attitude towards authorities idealized by the membership group, personal importance of social order and tendency to get suspicious towards individuals rejecting classical values, identification with a man set in authority or, quite the contrary, exaggerated assertion of strength and tenacity [5; 9]. According to Adorno's theory, all the above traits are laid down and developed in early childhood. Authoritarian personality profile is often used by researchers as a profile of an intolerant personality;

— complex social identity theory [9] refers to "the nature of subjective social representation of multiplicity of identities of identities within the membership groups". We can talk of high complexity of social identity if 'a person realizes that his belonging to the social group implies that the members of such social group are different individuals, and the general social representation of the group (as well as the social identity of its members) is the aggregate of all group identities'. Such complex identity of the endo-group is more integrative and contributory to tolerance development. In other words, "if we view our identity as the identity belonging to many different groups either associated with ethnic origin or not; as of the moment when we can see the fusion of elements and appreciate the contribution thereof in each of us, in our roots and our life path; there will emerge an absolutely new type of relationship with other people" [9].

2. Sociopsychological (contextual) approach:

— "Personal interests approach" [5] explains an individual's intolerant behavior (such as prejudice) from the point of view of its development in terms of competitions with groups and individuals perceived as a threat. This hypothesis is inseparably connected with the group threat theory that considers a sense of group threat to be an important source of prejudice. The central argument of the group threat theory is the fact that social groups are in constant competition for social and economic goods, thus the stronger is the competition, the stronger is the prejudice as a form of intolerance;

— Allport's contact hypothesis states that a freewill positive equal-status contact with members of another group leads to development of positive feelings to, perception of and attitudes to the group and its members [4];

— Dollard's frustration-aggression theory [9] says that acts of aggression (in our case this means intolerant behavior) most commonly result from a certain frustration. At the same time according to the theory aggression of an individual (a group) is in most cases directed at the minority groups as well as sensitive and vulnerable people ("symbolic aggression"). This hypothesis has become known as "scapegoat hypothesis" [9].

When turning to the search of factors that determine human tolerance, it would be reasonable to subdivide their vast variety into three groups; these are socio-demographic characteristics, psychological variables and social and political values internalized by an individual;

Socio-demographic variables in their turn may be subdivided into individual and contextual ones.

Individual socio-demographic variables include the following:

— in most surveys *age* as a socio-demographic variable has a positive relationship with an individual's tolerance level, i.e. younger people tend to demonstrate tol-

erance more often than old people [5]. In most cases researchers explain the fact by flexibility and open-mindedness inherent to young people. However, it is to be noted that there are surveys showing the opposite nature of the relationship between age and tolerance — old people are more tolerant than young ones [4]. Their authors tend to explain this phenomenon by the level of education, the role of which we will refer hereafter to;

— *sex* is another socio-demographic variable having complex relationship with tolerance. Some surveys prove that women are more tolerant [5], others show the opposite results. We see the reason of such contradicting results in methodological aspects of surveys, namely the role of the context and its subjective significance to the respondents. Thus, women turn out to be less tolerant than men when it is about their roommate in the student dormitory and more tolerant with regard to political and social views [5]. It is obvious that in the first case the subjective significance of the survey target (interpersonal communication) is much higher for women than for men and in the second case it is vice versa, which makes the comparison of tolerance levels without taking into account its “targets” unjustified;

— the *education level* has a positive relationship with the tolerance level — the higher is an individual’s education level, the more he or she is tolerant. This phenomenon can be explained by the ability of education to open people’s minds to stereotypes demystification and to give them new knowledge of positive aspects and sides of various social groups [4. P. 2];

— the *number of social contacts* of an individual is positively related to the tolerance level, that can be easily explained in terms of Allport’s contact theory;

— an individual’s *place of residence* is also statistically related to his or her tolerance level — city dwellers tend to be more tolerant than those who live in the countryside [5]. Researches find the explanation to such trend in a more accessible education and wider social networks of city dwellers;

— *participation in volunteer associations and clubs* results in higher tolerance level of an individual, especially when such organizations unite educated members and contain a high percentage of members representing minorities due to direct emotional discussion of the topic of interest being the main activity type of such organizations [4. P. 13];

— *social and ethnic identity* is also related to tolerance. In this case this, first of all, means belonging to a minority (a social or an ethnic one) concerned with a higher tolerance level;

Contextual socio-demographic variables are typical for the country and generally for the region an individual lives in:

— *a political system of the country* determines its residents’ tolerance level to a certain extent; i.e. nationals of democratic countries, as a rule, demonstrate a higher tolerance level than residents of authoritarian states [5];

— *economic welfare of a country/region* is connected to the tolerance level of its nation, with the character of the relation sheep being the opposite for the two levels — thus, the national economic welfare has a positive relationship with tolerance whereas on the regional level the relationship becomes negative [5]. So, residents of

poor regions of rich countries are the most tolerant whereas representatives of prosperous regions of poor countries are the least tolerant;

— the *number of human rights institutions* in the region is positively related to the nation's tolerance level [5], which is due to the activity of these institutions aimed at propagation of human rights and respect to the others;

— *unemployment* as a manifestation of an economic decay of a country is negatively related to the nation's tolerance level [5]. Such trend is most commonly explained in terms of the group threat theory;

— *religious* as well as *cultural affiliation* of a country/region also has an impact on its residents' tolerance — thus, according to surveys, members of the Catholic and Protestant churches have a higher level of tolerance than Orthodox Christians and Muslims [9].

Psychological variables include the following characteristics:

— *interpersonal trust* that is positively related to tolerance [9] encouraging an individual's trust in the society in general and a feeling of safety as opposed to perception of another individual as a potential threat;

— *religiousness* meaning the significance of faith in a person's life is related to tolerance level increase [5]. However, there are surveys, according to which religious people such as Catholics or Protestants are less tolerant and have more prejudices and stereotypes. When explaining the inconsistency, Sotelo (2002) made an attempt to define several dimensions of religiousness, thus, essential elements of religiousness (the faith as such) imply a higher tolerance level whereas external attributes of religion may in their turn contribute to the decrease of tolerance;

— *conservatism — openness to change* as the opposite poles of the first of the two bipolar dimensions of Schwarz's human values concept [8] have a negative and a positive relationship with an individual's tolerance level [9]. Such result is directly based on the character of the two above-mentioned greatest values reflecting a conflict between the desire for intellectual autonomy, freedom of action and focus on changes (openness to change), on the one hand, and obedience, determination to keep traditional practices and stability (conservatism), on the other hand;

— *self-transcendence — self-assertion* as the opposite poles of the second of the two bipolar dimensions of Schwarz's human values concept [8] also relate to the tolerance, positively in the case of self-transcendence and negatively in the case of self-assertion. In this dimension of values acceptance of others as equal to oneself and care for their welfare (self-transcendence) are opposed to following one's own interests and control over other people (self-assertion).

And finally, we included **social** and **political** values internalized by an individual into a separate group:

— *materialism — post-materialism* as the values concerned with intolerance and tolerance respectively [9]. Post-materialism combines in itself civil values and freedom as a value thus creating and enhancing a positive vision of the society whereas materialistic values give place to a tendency towards discrimination;

— *political conservatism* has a negative relation with tolerance [9]. In this respect a position, in the context of which political conservatism is treated as a special case of

socially motivated cognition aimed at reduction of fear, anxiety, diffidence and uncertainty and justification of the existing order and social inequality between groups and individuals, appears to be interesting;

— *democratic values* are positively related to an individual's tolerance level;

— *authoritarian values* and the value of obedience are negatively related to personal tolerance [5; 9], which is most often explained by scientists in terms of Adorno's authoritarian personality theory;

— *a cultural hierarchy of values*, namely dominance of either *individualism* or *collectivism*, is related to tolerance, i.e. higher tolerance is typical of individualism as opposed to collectivism [7]. From this point of view, tolerance is a secondary value based on such primary values as freedom, autonomy and self-development typical for individualistic societies. In collectivistic countries the main emphasis is on the value of authority, hierarchy, subordination, superiority of the state over the society and of the society over the individual, in such case tolerance is naturally not one of the primary values.

The goal of above review of modern English-language tolerance surveys from a theoretical point of view and from a perspective of various concepts, theoretical models and approaches, is to assist in developing an integrative view on the nature and the essence of tolerance as a notion, which is widely discussed in the modern society and science and on the interpretation of which even now there exists a lot of disagreement.

Without any objective of listing all the sociopsychological determinants of tolerance in mind, in this article we have also touched upon those, which are fundamental and most widely spread in modern western sources. To sum it up, it is worth mentioning that obvious numeric superiority of socio-demographic factors over psychological ones (12 in the first case versus 4 in the second case) seems to be inconsistent in view of Russian surveys carried out in this field that prove that the works dedicated to the latter are of an unquestionable interest and scientific significance [1; 2; 3]. On the basis of the performed analysis of Russian and foreign sources we are planning to carry out a complex research with the participation of our colleagues from Bordeaux 2 University, France.

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ПРОБЛЕМА ТОЛЕРАНТНОСТИ В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ЗАРУБЕЖНОЙ ПСИХОЛОГИИ

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В статье изложены результаты анализа проблемы толерантности в современной зарубежной литературе. Сделан акцент на наиболее часто встречающихся в современных западных исследованиях социально-психологических детерминантах толерантности, а также теоретических концептах и концепциях, проливающих свет на природу толерантности как социального и психологического феномена.

Ключевые слова: толерантность; концепции толерантности; толерантность как личностная ценность, социальная установка, черта личности; социальные и психологические детерминанты толерантности.