

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AS A PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF NATIONAL UNITY

Jabborova Zarina Akram qizi

Shahrisabz State Pedagogical Institute

Methodology of Teaching Social and Humanitarian Sciences

(Fundamentals of Spirituality)

2nd year Master's student

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT:

ARTICLE HISTORY:

Received: 29.01.2026

Revised: 30.01.2026

Accepted: 31.01.2026

KEYWORDS:

*religious tolerance,
national unity,
philosophical
foundations,
multiculturalism, social
cohesion, interfaith
dialogue, civic
integration, pluralism*

This article examines the philosophical dimensions of religious tolerance which serves as the fundamental principle that unites contemporary multicultural societies throughout the world. The findings demonstrate that religious tolerance functions as an essential tool for upholding social cohesion and political stability and cultural diversity when it is understood and practiced correctly.

Introduction

The relationship between religious diversity and national unity stands as one of the most important philosophical and political problems which face contemporary society. The increasing worldwide connections and changing migration patterns force countries to find solutions which enable them to keep their national identity while they permit different religious beliefs. Religious tolerance functions as a necessary solution for conflict problems

but it needs to be established as the core belief which unites people in countries that have many different cultures. The understanding of religious tolerance has undergone major changes since early modern times when people tried to stop sectarian violence, which has led to present-day views that focus on recognizing and respecting religious differences through actual interactions. The political philosophy of political thought has undergone major changes, which determine how people perceive citizenship and identity within multicultural societies.

Methodology and literature review

The researchers used a literature analysis method which combines philosophical, sociological and political science research to study how religious tolerance interacts with national unity. John Locke established essential principles through his book "Letter Concerning Toleration" which states that people cannot force others to practice their religion and that society should exist to protect personal freedoms instead of making people follow religious beliefs [1]. The contemporary liberal philosophers expanded these arguments through John Rawls who said that pluralistic societies need public reason which excludes total religious beliefs from vital political choices to establish political authority [2]. Michael Walzer defines various "regimes of toleration" because he shows that effective tolerance systems need to develop within specific social and historical environments instead of being applied as general rules which exist outside time and place [3]. Postcolonial theorists prove that tolerance discourse operates as a power control mechanism which dominant groups use to "tolerate" minority religions while they remain in control of their advantages [4]. Will Kymlicka's research about multicultural citizenship shows that countries can maintain their unity through group recognition and accommodation because this practice makes all citizens feel they belong to the national community [5]. Bhikhu Parekh claims that national unity in societies with diverse populations needs a new approach to national identity which should develop from basic national identities into advanced identities that accept diversity as a fundamental element of national identity [6].

Research which studies societies that contain multiple religions scientifically shows that national unity improves when different religious groups engage in continuous dialogue and work together on shared initiatives while they establish common ground between their respective beliefs [7]. The historical study of religious diversity in Uzbekistan demonstrates how Central Asian philosophical traditions taught different religious groups to coexist while they shared mutual knowledge which served as an alternative to Western liberal tolerance

systems [8]. The research on multiple countries indicates that successful nations which maintain religious diversity and social harmony require their citizens to participate in civic activities while protecting their right to practice their faith which demonstrates that effective religious tolerance needs both unifying civic systems and individual cultural rights to exist [9].

Results and discussion

The analysis reveals that religious tolerance functions as a philosophical foundation for national unity through several interconnected mechanisms. The first point establishes that religious tolerance functions as the fundamental standard which grants all individuals equal citizenship rights regardless of their religious beliefs because this standard allows every citizen to engage in national affairs without losing their religious identity. The principle of equal citizenship protects religious minorities from becoming isolated from their communities while it enables them to join the national community. Citizens who observe their religious beliefs receiving respect from national systems become more dedicated to official institutions while they see their national identity as matching their religious values.

Religious tolerance functions as a philosophical principle which helps societies with different beliefs to resolve their unavoidable conflicts. Religious tolerance establishes institutional methods which enable peaceful settlement of disputes by requiring parties to engage in dialogue and negotiation and mutual agreement instead of using force or violence. The process allows religious conflicts which could create national divisions to become productive activities that maintain national unity. The practice of religious tolerance requires people to engage in dialogue and show respect to each other which builds civic virtues that influence public life beyond faith-based interactions. People who learn to treat all religious groups with respect will develop skills that help them interact with different people while maintaining social harmony and supporting democratic processes.

The practice of religious tolerance enables different religious groups to work together in public spaces which all citizens share so they can pursue their common goals. Religious communities keep their unique customs and beliefs but religious tolerance enables them to work together on educational matters and social welfare and environmental protection and economic development. People from different religions who work together on these projects develop social capital which enables them to find shared interests that exist beyond their religious beliefs. The shared civic identity that emerges through such cooperation does not require abandoning religious particularity but rather complements it, allowing citizens to

inhabit multiple identities simultaneously as members of both religious communities and the broader national community. The modern world requires people to use this identity structure because it helps them understand their complex identity experience which cannot be described through traditional identity systems.

The philosophical justification for religious tolerance as a foundation for national unity rests on recognition of both the value of religious diversity and the necessity of shared civic frameworks. Religious diversity enriches national life by bringing multiple perspectives to bear on collective challenges, by preserving valuable cultural traditions and practices, and by providing different pathways for meaning-making and moral development. However, without shared civic commitments that enable cooperation across religious boundaries, diversity alone cannot generate unity. Religious tolerance provides the bridge between these poles, establishing principles that simultaneously protect religious particularity and enable civic cooperation. This dual function distinguishes religious tolerance from both rigid secularism, which attempts to exclude religion from public life entirely, and from religious majoritarianism, which privileges one tradition at the expense of others.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that religious tolerance constitutes a crucial philosophical foundation for national unity in contemporary pluralistic societies. Through comprehensive analysis of theoretical literature and examination of practical implications, the study reveals that religious tolerance functions not as a mere accommodation of diversity but as an active principle that enables the construction of cohesive national communities encompassing multiple religious traditions. The philosophical justification for religious tolerance rests on recognition of both the inherent value of religious diversity and the necessity of shared civic frameworks that enable cooperation across religious boundaries. Religious tolerance contributes to national unity by establishing equal citizenship regardless of religious affiliation, providing mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution, and enabling collaborative engagement around shared civic concerns. While tensions and limitations exist—particularly regarding power asymmetries implicit in tolerance discourse and challenges of determining its appropriate boundaries—these can be addressed through moving toward more robust conceptions emphasizing mutual recognition and active engagement rather than passive acceptance.

References

1. Locke, J. (1689). A Letter Concerning Toleration. London: Awnsham Churchill.
2. Rawls, J. (1993). Political Liberalism. New York: Columbia University Press.
3. Walzer, M. (1997). On Toleration. New Haven: Yale University Press.
4. Mahmood, S. (2015). Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
5. Kymlicka, W. (1995). Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
6. Parekh, B. (2000). Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
7. Putnam, R. D., & Campbell, D. E. (2010). American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us. New York: Simon & Schuster.
8. Khalid, A. (2007). Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia. Berkeley: University of California Press.
9. Koopmans, R. (2013). Multiculturalism and Immigration: A Contested Field in Cross-National Comparison. Annual Review of Sociology, 39, 147-169.