

# Reasoning in a multicultural society

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## ABSTRACT

Multicultural society as a way of being-with-others needs a certain form of public reasoning. Unfortunately, the current yet dominant form of public reasoning is infiltrated by biases from occidental culture. This mode of reasoning does nothing but uproot participants from their cultural identity for the sake of universal consensus. Multicultural society, however, consists of identities which are embedded in the individuals' cultural tradition. This sociological fact demands a richer form of rationality that does not deny the multiplicity of cultural values and embedded identities. We need a form of public reasoning which emphasizes cultural understanding rather than abstract consensus. We might call it a multicultural, contextualized and other-regarding form of public reason.

## KEYWORDS

Multiculturalism, multicultural society, culture, reason, public reason, occidental reason, communicative rationality, apodictic reason, ad hominem reason, value pluralism.

Social thinker Bhikhu Parekh argues that the last four decades of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of a cluster of intellectual and political movements led by such diverse groups as indigenous peoples, national minorities, ethno-cultural nations, old and new immigrants, feminists, gay men and lesbians, and the greens (Parekh 2000: 1). They promote practices, life-styles, views, and ways of life that are different from, disapproved of, and in varying degrees denied by the dominant culture. Although too disparate to share a common philosophical and political agenda, they are all united in resisting the wider society's homogenizing or assimilationist thrust based on the belief that there is only one correct, true, or normal way to understand and structure life's social, cultural, and political areas.

Multiculturalism is essentially a philosophy-based political agenda that demands the recognition of the multiplicity of cultural values. Multiculturalism emphasizes the need to recognize that each culture is a community of values

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