



Criteria And Limits of the Self-Determination Right in Multicultural Societies

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Article Info	Extended Abstract
Article type: Research Article	<p>Objective This study examines the criteria and limitations of the right to self-determination in multicultural societies, emphasizing the importance of cultural traditions rooted in language, religion, nationality, ethnicity, history, and geography. Modern anthropology challenges the notion of distinct cultural boundaries and advocates for the equality of all cultures. The issue addressed is how state authority can be shaped in multicultural societies to achieve justice and the rule of law. The main question is: What form should states take to achieve justice and the rule of law in multicultural societies so that the right to self-determination is realized for all diverse and distinct cultures?</p> <p>Methodology: The methodology of this study is based on a systematic combination of four analytical layers: First, through philosophical and theoretical analysis, the normative foundations and ethical justifications of this right within various schools of thought, such as natural law and social contract theory, are examined. Then, at the sociological and historical examination layer, the objective contexts for the formation and evolution of this right—including identity-shaping factors, the nation-state structure, and intra-societal dynamics within the framework of diverse societies—are studied. In the next step, a critical review of international legal documents and frameworks, from the UN Charter and the International Human Rights Covenants to the rulings of the International Court of Justice, charts the legal evolution of this right and its existing ambiguities. Finally, the research, through comparative analysis and case studies of governance models such as federalism, decentralization, and self-governance, evaluates the practical application and implementation mechanisms of the right to self-determination in multicultural societies. The ultimate goal of this integrative method is to move beyond a purely legal description and to offer a rich and contextualized understanding that reveals the capacities, limitations, and tensions in exercising this right within the complexity of the contemporary world.</p> <p>Findings: Based on the analysis presented in the article, the research findings can be summarized along several key themes: First, decentralized governance models such as federalism, self-governance, and decentralization have been identified as practical mechanisms for realizing the right to self-determination in multicultural societies, capable of respecting cultural diversity while preserving the territorial integrity of states. Second, the complex and often tense interplay</p>
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between the right to self-determination (particularly in its external form, such as secession) and the principle of territorial integrity is emphasized; international law generally does not support secessionist claims in societies with non-discriminatory and representative governments. Third, the criteria for exercising this right—including the definition of "a people," territorial connection, and the requirement of democratic legitimacy—are recognized as ambiguous and context-dependent. Fourth, the challenge of the "minority within a minority" indicates that any exercise of the right to self-determination must respect the rights of all inhabitants of the territory, including subgroups and non-members. Finally, the article concludes that internal self-determination (achieved through participation, cultural autonomy, and inclusive governance models) is a more suitable and less conflict-prone path for multicultural societies compared to secession, but its fair realization requires the design of flexible and context-sensitive political and legal frameworks.

Conclusion: Effective housing policies can play a significant role in reducing homelessness. Programs such as housing price stabilization, rent control, provision of interest-free loans, and special support for vulnerable groups are among the effective policies. A combination of structural and supportive measures is necessary to confront this crisis, including: the construction of affordable housing and stable financing for low-income groups, strengthening welfare policies and job skills training, and the cooperation of the government, civil institutions, and the private sector to reduce the class gap and the continuous collection and analysis of data for more precise planning. Overall, it can be stated that homelessness in the Karaj metropolis is not an individual phenomenon but a direct result of social inequality and weak housing policies. To mitigate this problem, a change in the approach to housing policies and a more equitable redistribution of resources are necessary. The experience of Karaj can be a model for other Iranian cities facing a similar challenge. Finally, only through structural reforms and the reinforcement of justice-oriented policies can effective steps be taken toward reducing homelessness.

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