

Markus Vogt | Arnd Küppers [Eds.]

# Proactive Tolerance

## The Key to Peace



Nomos



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Volume 69

Markus Vogt | Arnd Küppers [Eds.]

in cooperation with Rolf Husmann,  
Lars Schäfers and Ihor Vehesh

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## Introduction

Tolerance is one of the most prominent ethical principles of modern society. Hardly any other term is used so often by politicians, sociologists and media representatives. It is considered the guiding virtue of democracy, without which a free and pluralistic society is not possible. At the same time, tolerance is acutely endangered in late modernity by the advance of autortarian, identitarian and illiberal political models. Obviously, many people feel overwhelmed by the open society with its high degree of political, cultural and ideological differences and long for a homogeneous social space. We assume that the understanding of the principle of tolerance must evolve against this background in order to respond adequately to the widespread unease.

### *Further development of the concept of tolerance*

The majority of authors locate the origins of the idea of tolerance in early modern political theory, which was shaped by humanism, by the search for peace in the face of religious wars, by revolutions, and by liberalism. Within this framework, they consciously or unconsciously draw on the intellectual model of the social contract situated in this epoch, which calls for tolerance above all with regard to the stability and freedom of a community. Thus, then as now, it is usually described merely as a theory of flagrant conflict, as a social technique of coexistence under friction and disturbance. These theories do not shed any light on the run-up to and the emergence of conflict.

This explains why these approaches, as correct and important as the consideration of acute conflicts is, ultimately fall short, because they extinguish a fire that possibly need not have arisen in the first place. For it is inadequate to conceive of tolerance only in terms of appropriate behavior in the event of conflict, whether as toleration of another view (passive tolerance) or as defense against massively intolerant, for example racist or anti-Semitic, behavior (active tolerance). Much more important is how tolerance can have a preventive effect in the run-up to escalating conflicts. This crucial dimension of tolerance – we refer to it in this volume as

proactive tolerance – has received too little attention so far. It is precisely this gap that this volume attempts to fill.

*Ukraine as a Test Laboratory for the Challenges of Proactive Tolerance*

The anthology was produced as part of a project funded by the German Foreign Office called “Tolerance at Europe's Borders. The Example of Ukraine” and is the fruit of a cooperation between the Chair of Christian Social Ethics of the LMU Munich, the National University of Uzhgorod/Transcarpathia and the Catholic Social Science Center in Mönchengladbach. Due to the still high topicality and explosiveness of the subject, the project has entered the second round in 2021, in which the results of the numerous studies are to be followed by the first practical implementations on site.

One of the strengths of this volume is the knowledgeable examination of a place, its history, religious diversity, political structure and cultural characteristics. For theory-building around such a context-related concept as tolerance can hardly lead to (everyday) relevant insights without looking at the individual case. However, those who believe that this volume can only provide insight into Ukraine are mistaken. On the contrary, Ukraine is a textbook example that can be used to highlight resources and capabilities for more proactive tolerance in Western societies, but it can also be used to identify the challenges and difficulties of a plural society in late modernity.

Western Ukraine, in particular, has centuries of experience with high levels of intercultural, interreligious and political tolerance. It has gained its distinctiveness and cultural flourishing from the coexistence of different cultures and mentalities. The volume will trace these resources like seams. At the same time, Ukraine is torn apart by deep conflicts between West and East, between different Christian denominations and geopolitical interests. It is precisely this double face of potentials and threats that makes Ukraine a test laboratory for the viability of tolerance concepts. The traditionally high capacity for tolerance and its further practice and deepening under precarious conditions are a question of survival for Ukraine (Ihor Vehesh and Michael Fetko).

*The threat to freedom*

The Western community as a whole is also increasingly under attack. Be it because of agitations by foreign powers or because of the almost envious glances at a success story of authoritarian governments in the acute corona crisis. In any case, the West is increasingly uncertain of its identity. In this situation, self-assurance is called for. This volume therefore shows how closely freedom and tolerance are interwoven and shape Western liberal societies down to the last detail.

In this volume, Daniel Munteanu uses John Lock and John Rawls to show the roots of freedom and tolerance in liberalism. These ideas are closely linked to the idea of economic freedom in a social market economy, as Arnd Küppers makes clear. Limitless freedom, however, can be self-destructive. Therefore, freedom at the same time requires limits, which, however, do not arise externally, but from the fact that tolerance as a concept of freedom must be defended against intolerance and the attack on freedom.

The very freedom to which tolerance exhorts is currently endangered by the worldwide advance of authoritarian regimes. Their concept of internal unity and social identity as a homogeneous space is the opposite of tolerance. In this respect, the struggle for different concepts of society that currently characterizes the dramaturgy of world conflicts can be described as a trial of strength between tolerant, liberal and open models on the one hand and closed, authoritarian and intolerant models on the other.<sup>1</sup> The “authoritarian temptation” is great.<sup>2</sup> It promises to get rid of the uncomfortable complexity of the late-modern world with its manifold upheavals and its high degree of condensed plurality through populist simplification and compartmentalization. Tolerance offers an alternative to this by aiming to understand plurality as a “factor of the political,” as Katrin Boeckh makes clear. Today, this must be defended against a variety of threats, as can be exemplified by the hybrid war in Ukraine.

In the face of these uncertainties, the volume provides arguments for a liberal form of society, which it nevertheless combines with strong rules and a dynamic of social cohesion through open communication.

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1 Cf. Fukuyama 2019.

2 Applebaum 2020.

*Religious conflicts as a focal point of (in)tolerance*

In addition, the volume takes a look at another source of conflict that has increasingly preoccupied the Western world at least since the beginning of the third millennium. The phenomenon of religion, at times ephemeral in the twentieth century, is pushing back with force into the public sphere, whether through the immigration of deeply religious people from other cultures who live their religion peacefully, or through the burgeoning of Islamism and terrorism.

The concept of peace that has dominated modern societies since the religious wars of the 16th century, namely the pushing back of religious beliefs from the public to the private sphere, is thus proving to be inadequate in the “post-secular” era. The “return of the gods”<sup>3</sup> to the public sphere, however, is socially acceptable and in conformity with peace in pluralistic societies only if these are prepared to be tolerant. For this, neither the traditional concept of tolerance as toleration nor that of active tolerance in the sense of formal rules of conflict resolution is sufficient, but proactive tolerance is needed, which builds up spaces of trust through education and communication.

The systematic novelty of the concept of tolerance presented here is especially its theological dimension in the sense of “public theology”. So far, there is no scientifically founded elaboration on this dimension in the sense intended here. This is a considerable gap in research, since it is precisely the religious dimension that is once again at the heart of the challenge of tolerance today. For it must prove itself at the forefront in the clash of strong convictions, and thus also of religious worldviews and communities, i.e. in a discursive landscape electrified by the question of truth.

Proactive tolerance can transform the potentials inherent in the diversity of different convictions, mentalities and traditions from a supposed threat to truth and unity into a richness. It is precisely the proactive perspective, which takes the search for truth seriously and values convictions, that thus clearly differs from resignation to questions of truth or the pushing back of strong convictions and thus also of questions of faith into the merely private sphere. This is the point of the further development of the concept of tolerance into proactive tolerance, which is the basis of the volume presented here.

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3 Graf 2007.

The religious dimension is therefore not an arbitrary addition to the concept of tolerance, but a constitutive moment in order to open up its meaning for contemporary society. It leads into the core area of the theory. Precisely because religions often have such a hard time with tolerance, an unfolding of the concept cannot avoid taking a close look at it. This requires a considerable degree of readiness for self-criticism.<sup>4</sup>

### *Fratelli tutti as an encyclical for dialogue and proactive tolerance*

At the same time, religions can also be motivators for more tolerance. In them there is a special potential not only to justify tolerance in the abstract, but also to convey it narratively through stories (cf. Smytsnyuk on the basis of the Jewish philosophers of religion Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Buber). In addition, there are religions that focus on the human family as a whole and therefore urge a tolerant approach. Pope Francis, for example, recently called for fraternity and tolerance through dialogue in his social encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. Accordingly, tolerance is the path to peace on which humanity advances, driven by a culture of encounter at eye level and a culture of openness to the other as other. Tolerance thrives on a culture of debate that does not level differences, but understands them as the starting point for a common path toward humane development and as a learning process that cannot be completed.

Dialogue, to which Francis calls, also appears to the authors as the decisive vehicle of tolerance. We follow the logical premise of the Global Ethic project of the recently deceased theologian Hans Küng: “No peace between nations without peace between religions. No peace among religions without dialogue among religions.” This diagnosis underlies the role of very different levels of dialogue focused on in this volume. The volume sheds light on which institutions, which rules, which conditions dialogue requires in order to succeed.

### *Tolerance and truth in the media society*

As Aloys Buch points out, dialogue between religions about development cooperation, human rights and humanization of the world can be a suitable starting point for tolerance. Thus, according to Buch, decisive

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4 Cf. on this, for example, from a Christian perspective: Lesch 2017.

impulses for authentic, participatory and integral human development can already be found in Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, which other confessions can respond to constructively.

However, any dialogue – regardless of its subject – must be committed to certain rules and attitudes. The aberrations of post-factual communication in particular show how fundamental and indispensable orientation to the standard of truthfulness is for any conception of tolerance. For Ukraine, this is unmistakably expressed in the document “Longing for the truth that makes us free”.<sup>5</sup> Tolerance needs a culture of truthful memories and a reflective approach to history and the manifold violations that have occurred and often continue to have a hidden effect.

Similar standards must be formulated for communication in the mass media society. Tolerance needs a critical approach to digital media, as an opportunity to create a public sphere in civil society, but also with regard to the dangers posed by opinion bubbles geared solely to confirming one's own point of view, misinformation, and even cyber war (Lars Schäfers).

### *Tolerance needs rules and social places*

In part, even more is to be demanded compared to mere attitude and rules, sometimes even a juridification is required. Tolerance must also be legally concretized in complicated relationships of different claims that clash on the part of religions and denominations. In this respect, the enormous religious diversity in Ukraine offers a wealth of experience, but also an enormous challenge for transparent and fair regulations for cooperative coexistence. In this volume, therefore, Helmuth Pree explores the importance of tolerance as a principle in both secular and current canonical law.

Finally, it should not be overlooked that any dialogue requires an infrastructure of institutions and resources in order to succeed. Therefore, this volume also examines the sociological framework for dialogue. Thus, the question of public goods and social places is explored (Herbst/Vogel). Tolerance requires infrastructure and proper state administration to stabilize fair, cooperative, participatory and innovative coexistence and to ward off corruption. The core of “political cybernetics” in the sense of the art of

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5 Cf. Religious Information Service for the Ukraine (2020): Longing for the Truth That Makes Us Free, [https://risu.ua/en/longing-for-the-truth-that-makes-us-free\\_n103953](https://risu.ua/en/longing-for-the-truth-that-makes-us-free_n103953) (last access: 05–10–2021).

managing complex open societies is the ability to remain adaptive and to creatively process disturbances.<sup>6</sup> For this very purpose, proactive tolerance that meets divergent perspectives with curiosity and a willingness to learn can be a crucial medium. One fruitful way of learning tolerance can be seen in interreligious learning as Mansfeld/Schoch highlighted in their contribution. Learning together and about each other in interreligious groups facilitates the dialogue urgently needed in order to promote tolerance.

Through interreligious and intercultural dialogue processes in the spirit of proactive tolerance, tolerance can truly become a path to peace. Proactive-tolerant dialogues are what every society needs more and more urgently in the shadow of a policy of closure and social segregation that is advancing not only in Eastern Europe but in different varieties worldwide.<sup>7</sup> The present volume offers some – as we hope – groundbreaking ethical-systematic and interdisciplinary food for thought in this regard.

*Markus Vogt, Rolf Husmann, Ihor Vehesh,  
Myroslava Lendel, Arnd Küppers and Lars Schäfers*

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6 Deutsch 1963.

7 Cf. FT 9–55.

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## Conceptual Clarification



# Proactive Tolerance as a Way to Peace

## A Christian Social Ethical Definition of Tolerance as a conceptual basis for the project “Tolerance at the Borders of Europe – the Ukrainian Dimension”

*Markus Vogt and Rolf Husmann*

### *A. Aim of the text*

This text was developed during a project conducted at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Germany (LMU) and the National University of Uzhorod in Transcarpathia, Ukraine (UzhNU). This project is sponsored by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and part of a long term academic cooperation. The text is meant to be a systematic development of a concept of tolerance that can be applied practically in education and civil projects in Ukraine, especially in Transcarpathia in order to promote tolerance in a time of growing fear, discrimination, and aggression. Therefore, it wants to elaborate, what tolerance can mean and how it could be communicated being challenged by the concrete situation in Ukraine and growing doubts in society.

Although tolerance is seen as a key value in the Western hemisphere, many doubts arise, sometimes fueled by propaganda, whether tolerance would rather be a merely Western idea that enforces Western imperialism. On the other hand a lot of criticism may occur on a religious field as tolerance could easily be misunderstood as indifference or relativism. Thirdly, people might wonder if a religious approach is suitable when developing a universal tolerance model. Our aim is to show that those arguments cannot convince.

There are many different reasons that make tolerance a universal and indispensable concept: political-pragmatic reasons (securing peace), epistemological reasons (there is no last intersubjective knowledge of the truth) or ethical reasons (protection of freedom and human rights). Having said that tolerance is necessary in a democratic state: As democracy gets its dynamic from the controversy of opinions, dissenting opinions neither can be excluded without examination nor can be accepted without expressing dissent. In so far both sides of tolerance (passive in the sense of non-exclu-

sion, (pro-)active in the sense of dealing with different opinions) are a condition of democratic behavior. Democracy needs a culture of dialogue that prevents violent conflicts (not conflicts at all) and tensions from evolving hostility but that allows to transform these into understanding, cooperation and development. Tolerance can be a framework of this transformation and the virtue of democracy.

Concerning the fear of relativism one can state that the concept of tolerance should not be confused with a lack of interest or with indifference, since the agents of tolerance (except for the state) are not required to give up their personal point of view and the truth claims linked to their personal stance. Especially in the view of religious people one has to highlight that tolerance does not mean to give up religious truth claims. On the contrary: One can continuously see his or her religious world view as the truth and consider other opinions as false, but tolerance allows a religious person to find arguments that make dissenting opinions appear tenable despite of the personal convictions. For example: Although a person does not believe in God, I as a theist can accept his/her humanism as I see the good effects of it.

Our intention is that this text can be accepted universally by all people despite their religious or philosophical stance. Nevertheless we consider a Christian approach as an essential contribution to a concept of tolerance. The Christian approach to an understanding and a practice of tolerance is fundamental especially because it can turn out to be problematic as history has already shown. The Christian approach has been full of tensions and shows a late learning-process. The question of tolerance has often escalated in the context of religion. A theory of tolerance without any theologically grounded relation to religious truth claims and its problematic side would overlook a real history of conflict and would therefore be ethically unsatisfying and incomplete. Nevertheless, the ambiguous history of Christianity, a history of both tolerance and intolerance, leads us to the logical core of a tolerance-concept: One should not play off strong convictions that are often linked to a religion against the willingness to deal with dissenting opinions, convictions and practice. Strong convictions are an indispensable part of societies that will not go extinct. Instead, tolerance is a way of peaceful coexistence of dissenting strong convictions that is demanding every agent in society (also the churches) to contribute to. Finally, Christian narratives and principles can promote tolerance as well as secular and humanistic perspectives. The aim is to arrive at a

“humanism of the other human being”<sup>1</sup>. This is at the heart of the biblical faith and goes even beyond tolerance in so far as it aims at radical openness to other human beings: especially foreigners, those of a different belief and those who suffer. This could be a common ideal for both Christians and humanists.

Having clarified the necessity of a concept of tolerance, we want to describe a model of tolerance that we consider appropriate for the situation in Ukraine.

## *B. Systematic Development of the term*

### *B.1 Differentiations concerning the term “tolerance”*

From the original understanding of the term, ‘tolerance’ had a narrow scope and meant to endure a physical or moral harm.<sup>2</sup> It merely related to the discrepancy from target values. Due to some experience of religious intolerance the term tolerance became one of the crucial political concepts in the Age of Enlightenment. Today the meaning of the concept has broadened: It now refers to respectful acceptance of diversity of individuals, groups and organizations in a community that may arise from different religious attitudes, worldviews, ethnicities, languages, sexual orientation, opinions, behavior, and values.

We consider tolerance to be an attitude and behavior that a subject conducts in the view of different objects of tolerance. As we have already seen, the objects of tolerance can range from characteristics and opinions to behavior of another person or group of people. This extensive meaning is highlighted in The UNESCO Declaration of Principles of Tolerance (1995) as follows: “Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human” (Art. 1 I). Only those characteristics can serve as objects of tolerance that make a difference between the tolerated individual and the tolerating subject.

Tolerance as attitude and behavior is a complex phenomenon as it contains two contrasting components.<sup>3</sup> There is of course a denial component in the sense that one does not agree with the opinion or behavior of

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1 Levinas 1989.

2 Dehn et al 2005: 461–464.

3 Forst 2017: 32–37.

someone else and considers it to be false. On the other hand this denial does not go so far that there is no place for acceptance. One can still find arguments (that might not count as much as those against the dissenting stance) for the dissenting opinion or the different behavior so that one can accept other positions as tenable despite disagreeing with them (acceptance component). This might seem paradoxical at first sight but the reasons for accepting or denying lie on different levels: As the reasons for denying are part of an individual and particular ethos, the reasons for accepting an opinion belong to a universal moral that is based on the idea of mutuality and reciprocity. The particular ethos relies on cultural aspects and individual values, on that not everyone is agreeing, whereas moral depends on a universal view and therefore is based on a formal moral that everyone can logically comprehend. Moral arguments will and should not reverse the individual disagreement but allow everyone to accept a plurality of behavior and opinions.

The tolerant attitude and behavior are also complex as they can be differentiated by the motivations the subject of tolerance shows when acting tolerant. Those motivations can be systematized in a three stage model as the following chart points out:

<b>passive tolerance</b>	<b>mere toleration</b>
<b>active tolerance</b>	<b>respect</b>
<b>proactive tolerance</b>	<b>appreciation</b>

It begins with a first passive stage, which is about merely tolerating behavior, opinions, attitudes, etc. of other human beings and about foregoing violence. It is not about finding positive aspects in dissenting opinions or different behaviors. A merely tolerating subject only intends to swallow down aggression. This is basically tolerant behavior because of pragmatic reasons, such as the necessity to live together in a community or the aim of a peaceful coexistence of different groups in a society. It is considered to be a passive tolerance because it is not focused on getting engaged with people but rather to coexist with them peacefully.

In addition there is a second level of tolerance that is based on respect for individuals: Respect for each personality forces everyone to give reciprocal and universal reasons for everyone's duties. As I realize that every human being has equal rights, it becomes obvious that every duty that I want others to comply with forces me to comply with them, too. Moreover, respect includes that the truth claim of the individual ethos is not exclusive but open so that in the eyes of the individual human being dissenting

opinions appear tenable. Tolerance lives up to the capacity and willingness to take the stance of another person and to respect different experience and the independent individuality of every person. This stage can be defined as active as it demands a communication between the different groups and individuals in society. In this sense the UNESCO understands tolerance as “active attitude” (Art. 1, II).

Finally, there is a third concept of tolerance that characterizes tolerance as appreciation. This means to recognize different opinions as expression of a pluralistic society and as riches to a community. This stage goes beyond the respect concept as it does not only recognize the dignity of the person but also recognizes the worth of the different opinions and actions. This stage can be characterized as proactive because it prevents the growth and escalation of conflicts by building up trust between different groups through communication. Proactively tolerant people seek communication because of a free, self-determined decision and because they have a positive interest in other human beings.

Those two concepts of respect and appreciation require an openness to have the own pictures and convictions changed. This is intrinsically linked on the one hand to the insight that one sometimes may misjudge and on the other hand to the readiness to learn continuously. The active and proactive tolerance can be characterized as openness to dialogue. Respect can be seen as openness to the necessary social dialogue that manages the way different people can get along with each other securing individual freedom, equal rights, and respect. Appreciation instead goes even beyond because dialogue is highly esteemed by the people as a form of individual enrichment. Although both types of tolerance aim at dialogue, they are neither aiming at giving up one's own point of view nor at equalizing one's opinion with another. On the contrary (pro)active tolerance demands a settled identity that cannot be shaken by a dissenting opinion or different behavior in order to enable them to take part in a dialogue that allows a change of perspective and a learning process. Moreover, (pro-)active tolerance allows taking an individual stance and deciding for an individual practice more consciously. Active and proactive tolerance mean to defend tolerance by advocating the protection of freedom rights. Only because of the (pro-)active component tolerance can be distinguished from mere indifference, lack of principles or the non-committal avoiding of decisions and demarcations.

## B.2 Ethical assumptions and rules of the concept of tolerance

After we have defined tolerance as a broad concept that refers to nearly every kind of difference between two individuals and described the components and the different stages of tolerant behavior, we would like to highlight those theoretical assumptions and principles that underlie our concept.

Our concept of tolerance is based on three ethical assumptions:

Tolerance is a “*conflict-term*”<sup>4</sup> because it is only relevant in situations of dispute between different convictions, interests and practices. Tolerance does not dissolve those conflicts but limits the destructivity of the dispute or – in the best case – brings about a positive dynamic. (Therefore we spoke about tolerance as a means to prevent violent conflicts.) Tolerance as a conflict-term means that tolerant behavior can only be analyzed in contrast to intolerance. Therefore it is important to examine all parameters that determine intolerant attitudes of one social group towards another. This allows us to propose new methods and ways of implementation in societies of all different kinds.

The concrete shape of tolerance has to be adapted to a specific *situation* since it is a practical demand of conflict parties. Therefore a concept of toleration has to formulate concrete recommendations and imperatives (contextuality and concretion). It is most likely that there is a variety of possibilities how to implement an adequate concept of tolerance in a distinct society. Although a concrete concept may differ from the others there is a core of the concept that cannot be given up.

From an epistemic point of view the term ‘tolerance’ alludes to a *tolerance of ambiguity* in the view of the meaningfully plural reality.<sup>5</sup> Therefore there is a certain acceptance of the ambiguous in order to cope with reality. Christian tolerance opposes a naive and fundamentalist thinking reducing the complexity of the world to clearness. This way of thinking is currently exercised by the identitarian movement and threatens the social coherence. Tolerance is required in order to see the plurality of cultures, worldviews and conceptions of man in a society not as a threat but as riches. It can be stated that identities in themselves show tensions and are complex and dynamic so that they often cannot be put in an antagonistic contrast to other identities. Fights between social groups become severe when the definition of an identity becomes hermetically secluded.

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4 Forst 2017: 12–23.

5 Bauer 2018: 13–16.



The concept of tolerance as it is presented in this text contains some normative rules:

1. Tolerance is based on the principle of *reciprocity*: I must concede those rights that I demand for myself also to others. This corresponds with the Golden Rule that can be found in most of the cultures and religious communities (e.g. in the Bible: Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31). The decisive means to promote tolerance is open and sincere dialogue. This includes the right to a personal opinion that is not waived when one is mistaken. Without such a right (with limitations) a pluralistic society cannot develop. Reciprocity means that every person has the same rights and therefore every action or decision that might limit the freedom of another person has to be justified either by the state or an individual person that is imposing a limit to this very freedom. On the other side every person whose freedom has been limited has a right to ask for a justification. This justification can only be given by universal moral arguments that reflect the equality of human beings. Such a justification cannot be founded on particular ethical values and therefore only formal moral arguments on the basis of the idea of equality can convince. If someone is denying the “right to justification”<sup>6</sup> and therefore the relevance of moral reasoning, his understanding of tolerance remains void and injustice is an imminent danger.

2. Tolerance as a communicative phenomenon can be described as a mutual process. Mutuality demands to indicate that all communication participants are equally important for establishing tolerance. Therefore tolerance is based on the idea of parity that can be promoted through a process in which all communication partners make use of the opportunity to take part in this process. Securing and using the opportunities of active participation is necessary in order to balance the communication process. Tolerance can never be one-sided and has to be mutual.

3. Tolerance does *not mean acceptance without limits*: Social injustice does not fall within the scope of tolerance. The UNESCO sees the violation of human rights as boundaries of tolerance: “Consistent with respect for human rights, the practice of tolerance does not mean toleration of social injustice or the abandonment or weakening of one’s convictions.” (Art. 1 IV).

4. Tolerance must be understood as a “*fundamental demand for justice*”<sup>7</sup>. It helps to operationalize the often undefined use of the term “justice”

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6 Forst 2017: 597.

7 Forst 2017: 615–629.

by focusing on a criticism of injustices that deprive people from their rights to freedom and participation. Tolerance gains social effects when it prevails in the fight against social injustices with adequate means and does not lead to indifference in the view of injustice. Moreover, the protection of minorities belongs to the primary principles of justice according to this concept of tolerance. This idea will be explained more detailed in a following passage.

The concept of this text is put into a Christian perspective of fulfillment and progression that goes even beyond tolerance and connects the concept intrinsically with the aim of peace. This implies some key points:

1. From a Christian perspective tolerance is to be put into an *eschatological horizon*: Till the fulfillment of the world there will be differences in opinion: Therefore until then everyone is urged to exercise tolerance. As long as the kingdom of God has not come to its fulfillment and is only secretly present, tolerance is seen as a crucial Christian virtue. The Christian reasons for tolerance are not based on an epistemological skepticism or a particularistic relativism, but on the acceptance that intersubjective reason is limited in ethical questions of truth, so that a space for reasonable differences is gained (*pluralism*). Tolerance as virtue requires the capacity to take distance from one's own point of view and to recognize the limits of one's judgment.

2. Tolerance includes a non-secluded dynamic of an *intensifying process* of tolerance. With this in mind tolerance can be seen as a pragmatic reasonable rule or behavior on a first step. On a second step it can be characterized as a moral duty in the language of fundamental-ethical discourse.

3. From a Christian point of view the *biblical peace ethics* can provide a chance to develop the understanding of tolerance with success. Peace ethics understood as the method of "love of de-enemification"<sup>8</sup> expresses a practical and deep meaning of tolerance. This ethics aims at overcoming hostility by not getting involved into the propagation of violence and disregard. Gandhi is a formidable example. By acting peacefully he showed the world and his oppressors that their behavior is unjust and victimizes him. By that he made injustice as such visible and allowed his oppressors to find a way out of the friend-enemy-thinking pattern.

4. Especially in the context of a so-called *clash of civilizations scenario* the here presented understanding of tolerance can show its *importance on the field of peace politics* as it helps to reveal and overcome problematic thinking patterns (e.g. friend – enemy). By deconstructing thinking patterns

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8 Lapide 1984.

(as e.g. a conception of an enemy) tolerance supports an appreciation of plurality and aims at a constructive dealing with differences. The outcome is peace within a community as well as outside.

### *C. Practical Reasoning*

The discourse cannot stop with a theoretical reflection on tolerance but has to put the question of application. The essential question of the application-discourse is that of the context of a specific conception of tolerance. For different networks and kinds of human relationships, for different societies, situations and ages the adequate concept of tolerance looks different.

In order to adapt the abstract concept to the concrete requirements of a certain society a practical conception of tolerance has to cope with four challenges:

It has to specify the framework that is needed in a society so that tolerant behavior can evolve. This is mainly a question of discourse-conditions. It should be guaranteed in a society that there is freedom of speech, effective protection of personal rights. Tolerance is intrinsically connected also with some core values, such as domestic security, justice, peace as well as inclusion, integration and social cohesion in a polyethnic, multi-religious and multicultural modern society.

A practical concept of tolerance has to specify the basis model: Therefore one has to ask for concrete reasons that can be given in a society in order to promote the necessary component of acceptance: Why should someone tolerate a dissenting stance? It should analyze the reasons of denial and differentiate between acceptable and immoral reasons (e.g. racism, because it neglects the dignity of every human being). Also it should formulate specific demarcations of tolerance: What kind of opinion or behavior cannot be tolerated because it is social injustice?

A concept needs to consider the relevant agents in a society that can contribute to the development of tolerance. Therefore it is important to formulate concrete duties and tasks.

A concept of tolerance can only be implemented if tolerant behavior is motivated strongly. Therefore the concept has to deal with the question how it is possible to motivate tolerant behavior and which means can be successful in a specific society to motivate individuals.

The last two aspects of a practical conception of tolerance need further explanation that shall follow in the following chapter.

### *C.1 Analysis of agents*

The application discourse about tolerance remains shapeless if the principles of responsibility-ethics are not considered and the question of subjects and objects of tolerance is not addressed. Subjects of tolerance are persons as natural conviction-holders, associations of people, societies and states. Objects of tolerance are opinions, actions, aims and convictions. Only by addressing the subjects and objects of tolerance the term 'tolerance' can be given a concrete and committal status in society.

In the following the text focuses on different agents in society and their contributions, duties, and rights in the context of tolerance.

#### *C.1.1 Agent state*

An important agent is the state as it can guarantee the framework of tolerance but has to act very prudently in order to save the free and democratic society:

The state should be neutral in the view of religion and worldviews. Only a neutral state saves the right to a religious and cultural self-determination of the people. It makes a peaceful coexistence within a pluralistic society possible as the power of the state cannot be misused to discriminate against a specific minority. In this context only those rules should be made law by the State that are based on reciprocal, universal reasons that principally everyone can agree on. This safeguards the state's neutrality.

There is only tolerance in a world of conflicts and powers. Therefore tolerance bears also a component of power. As the state is a major bearer of power it should make only prudent use of it. Legislation and restrictions should be minimized to those areas where it is necessary for the common good and for the protection of the rights of individuals. Only if the state keeps a liberal and free regime tolerance can flourish.

The boundaries of tolerance are the boundaries of justice. Therefore the state should comply with the idea of equal treatment. Applying the principle of differentiated equal treatment, it becomes clear that equal things have to be treated equally and objectively unequal things unequally so that tolerable opinions and behaviors are to be tolerated whereas intolerable things cannot be tolerated (Rainer Forst). Having this in mind the state must forbid discrimination and protect minorities, especially in the view of political rights, and concede to them a certain degree of autonomy in a (federal) society, a right to political representation and a certain basic support that might be necessary to persist in a different majority-society.

A major task of the state is to establish the framework that is needed for a liberal and plural society. Basically this means at least to create opportunities that allow communication between different groups in a society. Tolerance can only be achieved if a peaceful coexistence can be secured for different social groups and if a dialogue between those groups can be made possible. Moreover, it is essential to form a cooperation based on the mutual values among all social subjects irrespective of their distinguishing features and positions in society. Furthermore, the state should watch over the political process that the interests of minorities are treated respectfully.

Those abstract duties of the state mean for the concrete process of legislation: Tolerance cannot be made a detailed legal duty by state law so that the individual freedom extinguishes. Only severe violations against rights of others can be sanctioned by state. Moreover, as tolerance is a key aim for a peaceful pluralistic society, the state is urged to promote social commitment for tolerance by creating a framework that allows learning and practicing tolerance. This includes government funding for projects that are promoting tolerance.

Tolerance is not everything. Tolerance can secure a peaceful coexistence of several different groups in a society. But it cannot achieve political, social and cultural integration. For this a basic consensus on justice is needed in society as well as a culture of communication about the different ideas of a good and meaningful life. Therefore the capacities of the state are limited, too. The state needs civil commitment and social agents like churches that bring about change in a society. In this sense the former German Constitutional Justice *Böckenförde* is right that the state lives from conditions that it cannot guarantee by its own legal means.<sup>9</sup>

### *C.1.2 Agent citizens*

In our concept of tolerance a major role is attributed to the citizens as the state cannot guarantee tolerance in the end. There are four main tasks that citizens can fulfill:

Citizens should commit themselves to the cause of tolerance, especially if tolerance and liberal democracy are threatened. Therefore tolerance can be seen as a civic virtue because it demands the citizens to fight courageously against violations of tolerance and to take responsibility for each other. A liberal democracy has to be defended when the foundations of

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9 Böckenförde 1976: 60.

tolerance are questioned and intolerant and illegal behavior is spreading in the shadow of tolerance.

Citizens should be open to dialogue. As we have already pointed out, tolerance can only evolve in a society if there is a sincere and respectful dialogue between the different individuals and social groups.

Citizens should reflect critically on their behavior and ask themselves if their expectations for legislation respect the principle of reciprocity. They should wonder if restrictions that might be imposed on the liberties of individuals can be justified by reciprocal and universal arguments.

Pluralism in a society will never be without frictions. Therefore a society does not only need respectful behavior but also some wiggle room for every individual. Citizens should pay attention to the insight that every individual needs a certain degree of distance (especially in the urban context) so that different lifestyles can coexist in everyday life (Uwe Wenzel).

### *C.1.3 Agent science*

For the application of a tolerance concept in a society the interdisciplinary dialogue especially with political science, sociology, social psychology, and history is needed. Leading questions and priorities for a scientific dialogue about tolerance are:

It is necessary to analyze how societies deal with ethnical, linguistic, and sexual pluralism, how the relation between the majority and minorities in a society develops and which historical events and narratives influence tolerance or intolerance in a society.

Scientists should consider the deep structure of intolerance. Especially discrimination in everyday life is a hidden source of intolerance that has to be unveiled. All social-psychological deep phenomena have to be taken into consideration in order to understand why human beings tend to make someone a scapegoat or develop a concept of an enemy.

The most important roots of intolerance are fear and unsettled identities. In the context of general social modernization of humanity, societies all over the world struggle with various types of xenophobia. In the view of building identities and personal behavior within a society insecurity and lack of orientation contribute to unsettled identities and finally to a growing intolerance towards alien convictions and behaviors. A practically orientated model of tolerance has to cope with these challenges in order to promote tolerance effectively in society.

Researchers should focus on limits and boundaries of tolerance which are determined by the system of values and norms of a particular society.

Due to the contextuality of tolerance it is necessary to specify not only particular conditions and rules but also definite factors, states and properties of societies which either support the development of tolerance or impede it. In a second step one should add practical measures that can be taken in a particular society in order to promote tolerance.

For the purpose of an adequate concept it is very important that scientists cooperate with local professionals because they provide special knowledge of regional conditions of tolerance formation.

#### *C.1.4 Agent churches, religious communities and theology*

As cultural identity is often linked to religious content, there are major tasks that have to be undertaken by churches, religious communities and theology.

Religious leaders should clarify that tolerance should not be misunderstood as indifference or relativism. The prejudice that tolerance is nothing but the loss of truth is an obstacle to tolerance in a pluralistic society.

Tolerant behavior can be trained by dialogue. Therefore religious groups should install dialogue panels on all levels from the leaders to the members of a parish so that prejudices between different religious groups can diminish.

Religion can contribute by motivating tolerant behavior. Why motivation is needed and how it promotes tolerant behavior is explained in the following chapter.

#### *C.2 Resources and motivation for a tolerant behavior*

It belongs to the practical dimension of a tolerance concept that it has to fit in the concrete situation of an ethical pluralistic society. A formal concept that essentially is based on the principles of reciprocity and universality in the view of legislation tends to run dry in a pluralistic society as the formal principles are not supported by the ethical convictions of different social groups. Therefore pedagogical, religious and civil motivation of tolerant behavior plays a major role.

As a consequence the moral and formal concept of tolerance needs to be completed by a narrative ethics that provides resources and motivation. It is required to develop individual ethical points of views so that all individuals can appreciate the formal process of organizing a fair life in society

and the formal rules of a tolerant cooperation. A narrative ethics can fulfill four functions: It can give reasons for an ethical behavior, it can train the moral perception of reality, it can give orientation in life and serve as the symbolic horizon of meaning for a human existence.<sup>10</sup> The narrative ethics can contribute an affective and motivational component (personal meaning, personal orientation in life, values) in order to make people approve the formal moral concept of tolerance. Educational programs, religious practice and civil commitment can support the necessary learning process of passive, active and proactive tolerance.

#### *D. The tolerance-concept and the situation in Ukraine*

The cultural diversity in the multi-ethnic border area Ukraine belongs to its strengths. For centuries different ethnical and religious groups have lived peacefully together. Especially Transcarpathia has become a laboratory of interconfessional, interreligious and intercultural communication because of its history. A current source for motivation for tolerant behavior can be seen in the experience that tolerance worked out and peace in society prevailed.

Therefore one can state with good reasons that multiculturalism has the potential to build up a tolerant society. This idea can serve as the basis for solutions of many Ukrainian problems. The pluralism of political, confessional, ethnical identities is a mere reality in Ukraine. The coherence and peace in society need an effective concept of tolerance.

Social ethics has developed a three steps model to deal with practical challenges: See, evaluate, act.

##### *D.1 See & evaluate*

It is necessary to see and to understand the specific problems and challenges in order to recognize the hidden potentials that enable us to find a solution. These solutions can only be found by a in depth analysis. After having analyzed the situation one has to evaluate the findings on the basis of the ethical groundings we presented above. In the view of the situation of Transcarpathia and Ukraine we would like to highlight the following aspects of tolerance as a way to peace:

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10 Fischer 2007: 236.



The society needs and has the right to oppose the hybrid warfare, which manipulates opinions and stimulates separatism and internal tensions, as well as the military aggression and the disregard of the territorial integrity of the country. One has to take into consideration that a war cannot be won only by military means. The internal feeling of uncertainty has to be fought against. In the end the question is about the identity of Ukraine in between Europe and Russia. As Ukraine is marked by Eastern and Western characteristics due to its history, the unity can only prevail under the condition of tolerance of ambiguity and hybrid identities.

Describing the theme of tolerance in Ukraine *in the light of the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine* demands to emphasize both the hybrid nature of Ukraine and the process of forming a negative image of Ukraine and Ukrainians in the eyes of Russians and vice versa. The practical study of tolerance will facilitate resistance to negative imagery on which Russian propaganda is based.

Corruption and opaque networks of power and dependency, the lack of stable structures in the state and in the civil society of Ukraine as well as the fast economic, social and ecological transformation-process leave many people unsettled. Tolerance needs foremost civil courage in connection with the rule of law and freedom as well as a modernized administration that allows on top of that the establishment of dialogue-processes between state and citizens. Tolerance should not be confused with indifference but show an active commitment in favor of human rights as the value basis of a tolerant society.

There is an imminent danger that the suggestion of reconciliation between Russia and Ukraine turns out to play down the committed injustice and could discourage Ukrainians that suffer from the unlawful actions undertaken by Russia. In this sense a concept of tolerance for Ukraine has to highlight the boundaries of tolerance: Right does not have to give way to injustice. Hostile aggression that threatens the territorial and political integrity of a state is not tolerable and has to be named injustice and to be condemned as such. At the same time everyone has to hold out his hand to the people in Ukraine that sympathize culturally with Russia. Protection of minorities is an indispensable component! Refusing intolerable behavior does not mean that one loses respect for the legitimate wishes of other people in a society. This is a complicated mission!

The analysis should focus on the significance of *ethnic stereotypes and prejudice for a growing intolerance in Ukraine*. Moreover an interethnic relations study on various levels at the same time in polyethnic and multi-religious Transcarpathia can bring about new insights as well as a comparison between the situation in Ukraine (which is divided today by people's atti-

tude to “the Russian world”) and modern Europe, where definite difficulties occurred in the process of supranational community creation. Russia is not only manipulating Ukrainian society but also other European societies. The Russian Federation supports the right-wing parties in Europe. The Russian state aims at splitting the European community and *deepening the interior conflicts by fueling xenophobia*. Those means belong to the arsenal of hybrid warfare that is impeding tolerance significantly.

As part of the civil society churches can assume an important role as they could highlight the importance of tolerance. In order to fulfill this task the churches should overcome the interior conflicts first. Moreover, new divisions should be avoided and tolerance in face of conflicts (e.g. of interests and identities among the people) should be trained. As churches enjoy high esteem and trust they can easily become places where tolerance can be trained: e.g. in sermons, educational work for tolerance in schools and in the media, training of mediators and establishment of effective communication platforms.

## *D.2 Act: Perspectives for implementation of tolerance*

After analyzing and evaluating, concrete measures should be proposed in order to implement a model of tolerance. We would like to propose an educational model that could be one conclusion to the analysis of the situation in Ukraine. Ukraine needs a broad educational and pedagogical program in order to promote tolerance. This project should focus on four tasks:

1. Rules for social interaction should be defined. As we have pointed out before, tolerance needs a respectful dialogue that is based on rules. These rules have to be reciprocal and universal. The need for universally acceptable rules should be explained in this context.

2. The participants in this program should learn about the historical, social, psychological and political backgrounds of intolerance. It should take into consideration *the problems of particular ethnic minorities of Transcarpathia*. This can make them more resistant to intolerance.

3. The participants should build up their own identity and learn about different identities. This allows them to formulate reasonable arguments why they disagree with dissenting opinions (denial-component of tolerance). On the other hand this allows them to formulate arguments why they think the dissenting opinion is tenable and acceptable (acceptance-component of tolerance). In this context it could play an important role to

deal with building up a nation's identity that can contribute to a positive personal formation as long as the nation's identity is not discriminative.

4. The project should offer different arguments and narratives that can motivate tolerant behavior so that the participants are not only informed but also encouraged to behave tolerantly.

The educational project should be developed as a *practical and theoretical program for Ukrainian higher education institutions* as well as a program for *families, territorial communities and organizations* that focuses on the specific requirements of these institutions.

The proposed education program is one measure that should be applied in order to promote tolerance in a society under pressure. It is obvious that it is only a contribution to a complex and long process but we strongly believe that it is a necessary step to take in order to secure peace.

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# Tolerance – An Issue of Christian Social Thought

## Contexts, approaches, prospects

*Alois Job. Buch*

A phenomenological approach towards tolerance, in a broader sense, may start with looking at its definition. All the more because definition does not mean just a descriptive term since it also reveals how something is being conceived and which views or perspectives are associated to it, i.e. in this case the *concept* and *idea* of tolerance. In this regard, excerpts from dictionaries can be quite useful, especially when they record a variety of meanings, like e.g. (a) “the willingness to accept behaviour and beliefs that are different from your own, although you might not agree with or approve of them”, and (b) “the ability to deal with something unpleasant or annoying, or to continue existing despite bad or difficult conditions”<sup>1</sup>. Though ‘ability to deal’ as well as ‘willingness to accept’ contain an *active* element, particularly the latter also implies some *passive* connotation, this virtually in line with the first two stages of motivation for tolerance as presented by Markus Vogt and Rolf Husmann within their three-tier model<sup>2</sup>.

In addition, even from a dictionary-based preliminary insight it is obvious, that description, reflection and conversation concerning tolerance must never be separated from contexts, approaches, and prospects, including religious backgrounds, that affect its practical and theoretical significance<sup>3</sup> – which can also be seen in the historical development of the term.<sup>4</sup> Based on this observation, and focused on socio-scientific, anthropological as well as ethical references,<sup>5</sup> the following is not intended to trace the ramified history of interpretation of tolerance, but rather to discuss some

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1 Cambridge Dictionary (2020): Tolerance – <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/tolerance> (last access: 7–9–20).

2 Cf. Vogt/Husmann 2019: especially 6.

3 Further insights into this, by referring both to historical contexts and systematic reflections, are provided by: Werbick 1996.

4 Cf. e.g. Forst 2011: especially 530–532.

5 This focus includes any ‘humane’ significance of tolerance, like the political and cultural one, whereas some further connotations of tolerance, like in technology or medicine, are left aside.

select views of tolerance as an issue of Christian social thought, with some specific reference to Ukrainian aspects of the topic – with regard to the latter, however, explicitly from an external perspective and thus aware of the necessary caution and of unavoidable limitations associated with it.

### *I. Contexts: framing the understanding and acceptance of tolerance*

As to the contextual dimension, especially the social connotation of tolerance seems to be very enlightening. This is because even in its very common perception as individual commitment and as acceptance of something ‘different’ tolerance appears as a rather *social phenomenon*, much more than its (limited) individual meaning at first indicates. Focussing on this, only three aspects will be mentioned in more detail: *Firstly*, commitment and acceptance of this kind, similar to intolerance, imply *relationality*, since it is about acting or reacting in regard of something that is ‘socially’ represented by other people or institutions. In addition, more important, whenever tolerance attains societal and political significance, beyond remaining just a private matter, it remarkably depends on and is influenced by the respective social and institutional framework – generally and most important by the political system and by socio-cultural conditions at large, but more specifically and in no way independent from the socio-political setting also by dominating realities of public discourse, education and formation.

A *second* context framing tolerance, though not unrelated to the one just mentioned, can be called the ‘*cultural*’ context. This means that idea and practice of tolerance usually are deeply rooted in historic backgrounds as well as in people’s life stories, and thus are embedded in personal and collective memories as well as in individual and joint experiences. Depending on the key characteristics dominating these memories and experiences, namely either restricting or fostering basic ingredients of real tolerance, like for instance freedom and diversity of opinion as well as the ability to deal with criticism and conflicts etc., they would contribute to either shutting down or freeing up respective social and individual resources. This kind of ‘cultural genetics’ as a framing factor should not be underestimated, it can be discovered in almost all societies, and it may be powerful

and lasting as can be observed particularly from the sophisticated processes in so-called ‘countries in transition’<sup>6</sup>.

In this respect, as far as Ukraine is concerned, some relevant elements can be named. Very selectively only so much in catchwords: Time and again it is pointed out that part of the cultural imprints in Ukraine is the experience of having been forced to live under ‘foreign rule’ which characterized life in not inconsiderable phases of history up to the Russian dominated Soviet decades in the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>7</sup> still vividly present in the people’s memory – an experience which all in all can be perceived as rather complicated and partially contradictory, that is to say as in some way a ‘non-Ukrainian’ imprint though not simply without Ukrainian involvement.<sup>8</sup> And all this has also left lasting traces in the history of Christians and of the churches – they are in a certain way an essential component of the Ukrainian ‘cultural imprint’ -, and it continues to have its effects in still today’s quite complex relationship of the Christian churches.<sup>9</sup> As another quite influential part in more recent Ukrainian life history – though not simply comparable with the first one e.g. in its temporal dimension, however not less partially contradictory – may be considered the experience of what can be called ‘liberation processes’ since 1991, in particular the so-called ‘Orange Revolution’ (2004)<sup>10</sup> followed by the ‘Maidan Revolution of Dignity’ (2013/14)<sup>11</sup>.

A *third* contextual element of tolerance is the presence or absence of an active *civil society*. This foremost since precisely in communities and societies that are actively shaped by civic initiatives and civil society institutions the social life as well as the public discourse are remarkably influenced and even characterized by the experience of and the dealing with multifold and diverse views, opinions, convictions, etc., and also with

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6 The term ‘countries in transition’ (or in ‘transformation’) often refers to processes of economic development (usually compared so so-called developing countries, and especially directed to ‘free market economy’). However, in the context of this essay ‘transition’ is meant in a broader sense, which (especially with respect also to Eastern Europa) would include processes of profound change in almost all socially relevant areas like politics, legal system, social services, economy, media, education, religion, culture etc.

7 A concise, informative overview on this is provided by: Kappeler 2009; cf. Kappeler 2015.

8 Further on this, stressing important differentiations: Schnell 2014: especially 13–15.

9 For more see: Turij 2012.

10 See a kind of analysis as well as an eyewitness-report by Mayzar 2005.

11 Shveda/Park 2016: especially 86–88.

acknowledgment of others in their difference. This again can be illustrated in regard to Ukraine, not only by recalling the fact that civil society, which in parts of the country had some favourable environment in Ukraine's history, did practically disappear or not exist during Soviet times, but even the more by looking at the emergence of important parts of organized civil society since then<sup>12</sup>. Examples of the latter are respective initiatives that inter alia inspired the before mentioned 'revolutions', and furthermore civically oriented institutions in the areas of social- and health-care, of education, and in the cultural sector.<sup>13</sup> Not to forget, that an emerging civil society is not only providing a setting for tolerance formation, it also provides a quite concrete demand for lived tolerance. Particularly in view of significant regional specificities as well as of cultural, linguistic, religious and even ethnic plurality and diversity,<sup>14</sup> accompanied by almost irreconcilable differences due to one-sided or biased interpretation of history – all of which as a matter of fact for decades was to quite some extent hidden or covered up by ideologically forced 'unity' – according to experts Ukrainians were and still are facing a double challenge of fostering tolerance. One is the citizens' part, individually as well as in social groups or entities, to build up civil society with its various approaches and competing values and orientations, and to engage in it – what *per se* requires tolerance, and what precisely in this regard turned out to become a serious learning process e.g. in creating mutual respect between groups originating from the Western or Eastern part of the country. On the other hand, the society at large and in particular the state are challenged to provide the legal and political framework for civil society as an important source for practising tolerance, which would include not accepting it just

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12 Cf. Ghosh 2014: especially 2–6 (with particular mentioning of historic roots of civil society in parts of the country on 6). -

13 Examples for this are, in part originating from a Christian background: Ukrainian Social Academy (USA), with its special program 'Social Innovation Management' (<https://social-academy.com.ua/en/> – last access: 07–02–2020); Certificate program of the Institute of Leadership and Management (for Non-for-profit organisations, NGO's etc.), run by the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) – <http://international.ucu.edu.ua/students/international-students/non-degree-programs/> (last access: 07–02–2020); Dzherelo Children's Rehabilitation Centre in Lviv – <https://www.uuarc.org/our-programs/aid-to-orphans-orphanages/dzherelo-children-s-rehabilitation-centre/> (last access: 07–06–2020); also the series 'Ecumenical Social Week', e.g. on "Dignity, Service, Solidarity. Towards renewed country" (2017) – <http://www.esweek.org.ua/en/ecumenical-social-week/10-esw> (last access: 07–28–2020).

14 For more see the essay: Portnov 2014.



as a kind of necessary evil but guaranteeing and at best even fostering it for the sake of peaceful and respectful living together and thus of a vital, open, and participative democratic society and its institutions.

As shortly mentioned already, religion has its own role in framing tolerance. This applies actually to all societies; it applies particularly to Ukraine too, obviously already because of the given religious situation.<sup>15</sup> That's why it is useful to take a closer look at this dimension of the issue, generally and with only a few clues regarding Ukraine.

## *II. Approaches: Christian interpretation and encouragement of tolerance*

In view of the specific importance of tolerance for respectful and peaceful shaping of living together as well as of understanding and dialogue among cultures, religions and peoples also the contribution of those institutions is crucial which are able and willing to engage in socio-ethical orientation. This applies inter alia to Christian Churches whose mission and ministry essentially include a commitment to human dignity, justice, and peace. That's why the Churches are supposed to participate in respective discourses and, moreover, to embark upon the provision of ethical principles and norms for moral consideration, decision, and action. In a similar way this applies to theology, too, – in this case to Christian social sciences which deal systematically with issues of Christian social thought.

The following does not intend to go into how or to what extent the idea and the concept of tolerance has been addressed and treated in the history of Christianity and particularly of the church(es) – be it with firm support, with an attitude of reluctance, or at times with scepticism or rejection<sup>16</sup>. Rather, by reference to a few mainly contemporary texts, documents and statements, which make tolerance a subject of discussion – not necessarily in an explicit conceptual sense, but in its content –, from Christian approaches exemplarily a little light should be shed on respective interpretation of and commitment to core values of society, to social preferences and to social structures which underlie what is meant by tolerance and which ultimately make it possible. To be more precise, what tolerance is all about is being mirrored in the three documents selected

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15 Enlightening aspects in this context are discussed by: Arjakovsky 2009.

16 Cf. with regard to some key aspects in this context Hilpert 2001: especially 95–101. – As an overview, focused on insights from history of (occidental) history of theology is presented by: Stöve 2002. For more details regarding tolerance and intolerance in history of Christianity see: Angenendt 2007: especially 232–370.

here in the context of different approaches and accentuations of Christian social thought, mainly by dealing with features of living together, by reflecting on central value orientations of a humane society, and by contemplating the framework of international, intercultural, and interreligious exchange and dialogue: specifically, in a more comprehensive perspective on 'integral human development' (1), then in regard to 'truth', as a subject anyway closely linked to tolerance (2), and finally in the context of a broader statement concerning a 'Christian social ethos' (3) – each of them providing fundamental approaches that are supplemented by Christian interpretations. Since the thematic accents of these different approaches do not reveal their connection to the topic of tolerance at first glance, it makes sense to let the respective texts themselves speak in more detail.

1. As a first example of Christian interpretation of tolerance can serve *Caritas in veritate*<sup>17</sup>, an encyclical by Pope Benedict XVI. In this document the interaction between different cultures, systems and religions is considered as one focal point especially in an overall and global perspective of human development. Although the concept of tolerance is not specifically mentioned, this encyclical, as in a way an elementary text, illustrates essential aspects of the topic of tolerance by referring to the foundations of Catholic social teaching. The introduction provides an important key to this text by saying: “charity which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law [...] is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine” – and it “is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones).”<sup>18</sup> More precisely, “this doctrine is a service to charity, but its locus is truth”<sup>19</sup>; hence, “‘*Caritas in veritate*’ is the principle around which the Church's social doctrine turns”<sup>20</sup>, and at the same time “is a great challenge for the Church in a world that is becoming progressively and pervasively globalized”<sup>21</sup>, particularly for the Church's social mission that is committed to ‘truly’ “integral human development”<sup>22</sup>.

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17 CiV.

18 Ibid. 2. – In a similar way one can distinguish (the ‘personal’, the micro-social’, and the ‘macro-social’) areas of impact of ‘intolerance’, cf. Häring/Salvodi 1998: 20–26.

19 CiV 5.

20 Ibid. 6.

21 Ibid. 9.

22 Ibid. 9. – Cf. also, mainly in a global perspective, no. 23 and no. 78.

This principle approach – bound to the dedication to “love and forgiveness, self-denial, acceptance of others, justice and peace”<sup>23</sup> – has a number of quite far-reaching implications for the concept and design of social and political frameworks, that affect essential elements of what tolerance aims at and what it constitutes, but at the same time of what makes tolerance also necessary: (a) *A rationale of Christian anthropology*, inspired not least also from biblical grounds,<sup>24</sup> which “has the particular characteristic of asserting and justifying the unconditional value of the human person” as well as human ‘dignity’; thus development cannot be called really humane “if it does not involve the whole man and every man”<sup>25</sup> and if it is not aimed at “authentically human social relationships of friendship, solidarity and reciprocity”<sup>26</sup>; consequently “the equality between men and [...] giving stability to their civic coexistence”<sup>27</sup> are (reasonably) required, as is (theologically) “the establishment of authentic fraternity”<sup>28</sup> – this according to “the *principle of gratuitousness* as an expression of fraternity.”<sup>29</sup> (b) *A socio-ethical concept of a social order* that underlines the significance of the democratic character of state and society, shaped by human rights and particularly by “freedom”<sup>30</sup> as well as by “true social justice” and “solidarity”<sup>31</sup>, moreover by “the right to religious freedom”<sup>32</sup> including the “the right to profess one's religion in public”<sup>33</sup>, and, not least, by “cultivating openness to life”<sup>34</sup>; consequently, this concept comprises (also) “safeguarding the needs and rights of individual migrants and their families”, particularly since “every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance”<sup>35</sup>; the economic area does not remain unaffected

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23 Ibid. 79.

24 Cf. *ibid.* 45: “On this subject the Church's social doctrine can make a specific contribution, since it is based on man's creation “in the image of God” (Gen 1:27), a datum which gives rise to the inviolable dignity of the human person and the transcendent value of natural moral norms.”

25 Ibid. 18.

26 Ibid. 36.

27 Ibid. 19.

28 Ibid. 20.

29 Ibid. 34.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid. 25; cf. also no. 38.

32 Ibid. 29.

33 Ibid. 56.

34 Ibid. 28, cf. also no. 44 and no. 75.

35 Ibid. 62.

by all this – e.g. in view of “destructive” effects when one-sided concepts lead “to economic, social and political systems that trample upon personal and social freedom”<sup>36</sup>, and especially given dangerous developments like “systemic increase of social inequality” from which “not only does social cohesion suffer, thereby placing democracy at risk, but so too does the economy, through the progressive erosion of ‘social capital’: the network of relationships of trust, dependability, and respect for rules, all of which are indispensable for any form of civil coexistence.”<sup>37</sup> (c) *The guarantee of the citizens’ participation*, particularly by means of ‘civil society’ activities,<sup>38</sup> which have a special role (also in regard to economy) since they precisely represent in their own way gratuitousness, solidarity and trustful equal co-operation between people with different perspectives and experiences, and also personal responsibility;<sup>39</sup> this confirms, as in other areas, that “the principle of the *centrality of the human person*”<sup>40</sup>, which is complemented by interdisciplinary, hence also theological “*deeper critical evaluation of the category of relation*”<sup>41</sup>, remains crucial for any development and therefore is essential in all sectors and at all levels of individual and societal life, specifically in view of globalization: “Underneath the more visible process humanity itself is becoming increasingly interconnected; it is made up of individuals and peoples to whom this process should offer benefits and development, as they assume their respective responsibilities, singly and collectively”<sup>42</sup> – the latter, together with solidarity, being a fundamental element of subsidiarity as part of respectful, participative design of society.<sup>43</sup>

Finally, since *the facilitating and promotion of intercultural dialogue* has its own weight in regard to the framework of tolerance, it is interesting how this topic is being addressed. According to the encyclical such dialogue on various levels is arising from respect and, “if it is to be effective, has to set out from a deep-seated knowledge of the specific identity of the various dialogue partners”. It thus should serve avoiding “that cultural groups coexist side by side, but remain separate, with no authentic dialogue and therefore with no true integration.”<sup>44</sup> Despite insisting on the necessity

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36 Ibid. 34.

37 Ibid. 32.

38 Cf. ibid. 24.

39 Cf. ibid. 38.

40 Ibid. 47.

41 Ibid. 53.

42 Ibid. 42.

43 Cf. more in-depth reflection on this ibid. 57 and 58.

44 Ibid. 26; cf. e.g. ibid. 53 and no. 59.

of “adequate discernment” the encyclical stresses not only, that also other than Christian “cultures and religions teach brotherhood and peace and are therefore of enormous importance to integral human development.”<sup>45</sup> Yet beyond this (in regard to actors in development cooperation) it points at the necessity of taking “into account of their own or others’ cultural identity, or the human values that shape it”<sup>46</sup>; and moreover it reflects on “dialogue between faith and reason” as “the most appropriate framework for promoting *fraternal collaboration between believers and non-believers* in their shared commitment to working for justice and the peace of the human family.”<sup>47</sup> Apparently, this way of addressing intercultural dialogue fits with the encyclical’s basic view on human development, according to which the “theme of development can be identified with the inclusion-in-relation of all individuals and peoples within the one community of the human family, built in solidarity on the basis of the fundamental values of justice and peace.”<sup>48</sup> Concerning this view, like in other areas, a lot “depends on the underlying system of morality.”<sup>49</sup> In this respect, as can be taken from the above, important references for the contribution of Catholic social teaching as outlined also in this encyclical are the so-called ‘social principles’ of personality, solidarity and subsidiarity,<sup>50</sup> altogether oriented towards the common good.<sup>51</sup> This is what actually forms the inspiring background of the (insofar specific) interpretation of central determinants of tolerance as well as of the accompanying encouragement to shape individual action as well as social conditions accordingly.

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45 Ibid. 55.

46 Ibid. 59.

47 Ibid. 57; the encyclical refers in this context particularly to: GS 12. – Regarding the sources of dialogue, the encyclical underlines the importance of the ‘universal moral law’: “This universal moral law provides a sound basis for all cultural, religious and political dialogue, and it ensures that the multi-faceted pluralism of cultural diversity does not detach itself from the common quest for truth, goodness and God.” (Civ 59).

48 Ibid. 54. – Cf. also EiE: Focussed on a view of global cooperation in a European perspective, which itself is supposed to become “a new model of unity in diversity, as a community of reconciled nations” (no. 109), this exhortation is claiming Europe to “become *an active partner in promoting and implementing a globalization ‘in’ solidarity*. This must be accompanied, as a pre-condition, by a kind of *globalization ‘of’ solidarity* and of the related values of equity, justice and freedom” (no. 112).

49 Ibid. 45 (with regard to economic ethics).

50 In addition, in the context of solidarity and subsidiarity, ‘sustainability’ could be mentioned too – cf. *ibid.* 48, 50.

51 Cf. *ibid.* 7.

2. Another example of a Christian approach to dealing with matters concerning tolerance is the document headlined “*Longing for the Truth That Makes Us Free*”<sup>52</sup>. It can be called in a way a special document, since it was prepared within the Ukrainian context and signed by a number of Christians from different Churches and denominations – “faithful of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine, the Association of Missionary Churches of Evangelical Christians of Ukraine, and the Council of Independent Evangelical Churches of Ukraine”<sup>53</sup>; the first signatory is Myroslav Marynovych, a former political prisoner, currently President of the Institute of Religion and Society at the Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU) in Lviv. This document, which continuously clearly mirrors Eastern spirituality foremost in the way of combining analytical with theological and especially biblical reflection, raises a lot of issues and concerns regarding the given situation in Ukraine. However, tolerance related topics are intensively taken up too – not surprisingly in view of the inherent, though rather complicated relation of tolerance and ‘truth’<sup>54</sup>.

Right at the beginning, the authors stress their intention to “seek consensus across Ukraine.”<sup>55</sup> Here already the importance of reflection on truth, contrasted by “deception, hatred and violence”, becomes obvious. This precisely in regard to dealing seriously with views on truth as a central moment of tolerance – the more since the Slavic concept of ‘truth’ means, “in addition to *veritas*, also ‘law’”, and consequently ‘post-truth’ as one of the signatures of our times “is synonymous with ‘lawlessness’, ‘post-law’ and ‘post-justice’.”<sup>56</sup> Beyond that, it is stressed that for Christians

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52 Longing for the Truth That Makes Us Free, 04–16–2020, Religious Information Service of Ukraine (RISU) (2020): <http://oou.org.ua/2020/04/16/longing-for-the-truth-that-makes-us-free/> (last access: 07–10–2020).

53 Ibid. Introduction.

54 It’s interesting to note the ‘headline’ of quite basic considerations concerning this issue by Mensching 1955: especially 18, 127–138.- By no means coincidentally ‘truth’ in the Ukrainian context is also closely related to issues of religious persecution, cf. Persecuted for the Truth 2017 (cf. *ibid.* 5). – Cf. also EiE, with a broader ecumenical perspective: Since these “witnesses, and particularly those who suffered martyrdom [...] came from different religious traditions, they also shine forth as a sign of hope for the journey of ecumenism” (*Ibid.* 13).

55 Longing for the Truth That Makes Us Free, 04–16–2020, Religious Information Service of Ukraine (RISU) (2020): <http://oou.org.ua/2020/04/16/longing-for-the-truth-that-makes-us-free/> (last access: 07–10–2020).

56 Ibid. Chapter I, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph: The state of the world we live in. – Regarding socio-ethical aspects of ‘post-truth’ see also: Buch 2019.

“truth is a living relationship, treating others as themselves, not merely an ‘idea’ – because an ‘idea’ all too quickly becomes an ideology.”<sup>57</sup> Therefore, being aware that ‘lawlessness’ actually “destroys the essence and institutional foundations of our society” and also that “lying and hatred are an impetus to violence, and together, they constantly push humanity into the abyss”<sup>58</sup>, particularly Christians, while longing for truth, have to prevent themselves from backwards thinking, since this “often translates into a rejection of change, innovation, and modernity”<sup>59</sup>. Aligned with this, the Christian response has also clearly to avoid turning “away from the principles of democracy” and of becoming “trapped in fundamentalism”<sup>60</sup> as well.

Regarding Ukraine, the document provides the authors’ view on the foundations of the concept of politics in neighbouring Russia, part of which from Ukrainian experience – with reference to other observers – is identified as ‘hatred’. In a general perspective this leads to a rather principle statement, again by firstly illustrating the opposite of tolerance: “Hatred inevitably causes aggression”<sup>61</sup>, whereas, positively put, an appropriate ‘faithful’ non-ideological approach comes into view – namely “where the four principles of a just society are upheld: respect for human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good.”<sup>62</sup> Here the document, by referring to the ‘social principles’ of Christian social thought too, rightly points at the overall ‘purpose’ and intention also of tolerant co-existence, e.g. by stressing “a sincere belief in dialogue”<sup>63</sup>, thus interpreting its true rationale and at the same time underscoring its significance. Finally, the document becomes rather concrete by underlining a Christian way of

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57 Longing for the Truth That Makes Us Free, 04–16–2020, Religious Information Service of Ukraine (RISU) (2020): <http://oou.org.ua/2020/04/16/longing-for-the-truth-that-makes-us-free/> (last access: 07–10–2020), Chapter I, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph: Ontological foundations of truth.

58 Ibid. Chapter I, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph: The state of the world we live in. – In another context the document says: “As applied to society, Jesus’ most important message is a warning against violence, falsehood, and hatred.” (Ibid. Chapter IV, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph: How can we win the struggle against the industry of lies?).

59 Ibid. Chapter I, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph: The state of the world we live in.

60 Ibid. Chapter III, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph: The “ownership of truth” trap.

61 Ibid. Chapter II, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph: Ukraine’s experience: a clear confrontations between truth and error.

62 Ibid. Chapter III, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph: The “ownership of truth” trap.

63 Ibid. Chapter III, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph: The “political correctness” or “dialogue at any price” trap. – Consequently, a real dialogue of this kind is “not at the expense of truth” (ibid.).

fighting “a world full of malice, unrighteousness and injustice” and its protagonists: definitely not “through counter-hatred”, instead “Christians should preach a peace based on truth and justice”.<sup>64</sup> – While emphasizing the special reference to the ‘social principles’ as well as peace and dialogue as basic elements of social interaction, this document illustrates from a Christian perspective the wider context of what tolerance (and intolerance) is about, and how this kind of interpretation can inspire and encourage commitment to human dignity, peace and justice.

3. The third text chosen here again has its own background: “*For the Life of the World. Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church*”<sup>65</sup>, published by the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate<sup>66</sup>. This quite extended document addresses a wide range of socio-ethical topics; the authors call it a ‘document’ on the social ethos, but “with the caution and the humble acknowledgment that it is in many respects quite inadequate as a comprehensive statement of the social ethos of the Church.”<sup>67</sup> The reference to this document in the present context will focus on a few select parts that are specifically related to questions and topics associated with tolerance.

In its introduction the document recalls the basic Christian approach, according to which “through communion with God as Trinity, human beings are also called into loving communion with their neighbors and the whole cosmos”<sup>68</sup>, and consequently “our spiritual lives, therefore, cannot fail also to be social lives. Our piety cannot fail also to be an ethos.”<sup>69</sup> Linked to this approach are a number of consequences which are no less

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64 Ibid. Chapter II, 3rd paragraph: The “security” and “peace” trap. – In line with the ‘spiritual’ shaping of this document, it concludes (what actually is a statement) with a call for ‘spiritual mobilization’ in order to oppose what would endanger humane development of society: “Falsehood and deception are a global and systemic phenomenon, pervasive and seemingly invincible.” (Ibid. Conclusion).

65 *For the Life of the World. Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church* (2020), <https://www.goarch.org/social-ethos> (last access: 07–11–2020).

66 The origin is reported more precisely by „Nachrichtendienst Östliche Kirchen (NÖK)“: “This document was composed by a special commission of Orthodox scholars appointed by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (who ranks as first-among-equals among the hierarchs that comprise the Orthodox Church) and blessed for publication by the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.” – Nachrichtendienst Östliche Kirchen (2020), <https://noek.info/publikationen> (last access: 07–11–20).

67 *For the Life of the World. Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church* (2020), <https://www.goarch.org/social-ethos> (last access: 07–11–2020), § 79.

68 Ibid. § 2; cf. also § 62.

69 Ibid. § 3.



fundamental and at the same time directly affect basic orientations of social life in which tolerance has its place or to which tolerance should contribute. Just to mention some of these consequences:

(a) Though from a theological point of view “all forms of human government [...] fall short” of God’s Kingdom<sup>70</sup>, Orthodox Christians living in countries shaped by “civil order, freedom, human rights, and democracy [...] should [...] actively support them, and work for the preservation and extension of democratic institutions and customs within the legal, cultural, and economic frameworks of their respective societies.”<sup>71</sup> (b) Any ‘sentiment’ “for one’s own culture” is acceptable only “so long as it is [...] allied to a willingness to recognize the beauty and nobility of other cultures, and to welcome exchanges between and fruitful intermixtures of all cultures.” This includes, that “any form of nationalism” as well as any violence resulting from it or from other one-sided views etc.<sup>72</sup>, are clearly rejected, even as ‘contradictory to the Gospel’ – which, according to the document “must [...] be emphasized at the present moment, on account of the unexpected recrudescence in much of the developed world of the most insidious ideologies of identity, including belligerent forms of nationalism and blasphemous philosophies of race.”<sup>73</sup> (c) In addition, faithful as well as the Church as a whole should “not fear” but “promote” and value the richness of plural society, they “should rejoice in the dynamic confluence of human cultures in the modern world [...] and take it as a blessing that all human cultures, in all their variety and beauty, are coming more and more to occupy the same civic and political spaces.”<sup>74</sup> (d) Finally, in a way complementary to this promotion of pluralism the document claims, conversely, respect and non-discrimination of religion within those democratic societies, which would exclude religion being “relegated to the private

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70 Ibid. § 9.

71 Ibid. § 10. Cf. also § 12: “Orthodox Christians must recognize that a language of common social accord, one that insists upon the inviolability of human dignity and freedom, is needed for the preservation and promotion of a just society”.

72 Cf. *ibid.* § 47: “The Church rejects all violence — including defensive acts — that are prompted by hate, racism, revenge, selfishness, economic exploitation, nationalism, or personal glory.”

73 Ibid. § 11. – The document underlines this by also pointing at problems existing within some communities in this regard: “And yet, sadly, the rise of new forms of political and nationalist extremism has even resulted in the infiltration of various Orthodox communities by individuals committed to race-theory. The Orthodox Church condemns their views without qualification, and calls them to a complete repentance and penitential reconciliation with the body of Christ.” (*ibid.*).

74 Ibid. § 12; cf. also § 81 and 82.

sphere entirely” – this not least since “ethical convictions do not evolve in conceptual vacuums, and religious adherence is an inseparable part of how a great many communities and individuals come to have any notions at all of the common good, moral community, and social responsibility.”<sup>75</sup> That’s why the Church also is ready to involve itself in “cooperation with political and civil authorities and organs of state in advancing the common good and pursuing works of charity”<sup>76</sup>, and to “struggle against injustice” – which, in view of respective involvement, altogether should also “serve to remind Christians that this commitment to the common good [...] is the true essence of a democratic political order.”<sup>77</sup> Obviously this argumentation from an Orthodox point of view reminds in some respects of what was exemplified before about the explanations of the Catholic social doctrine regarding integral human development.

With regard to more specific themes that are closely related to tolerance, a number of very basic, but nevertheless quite concrete statements can be found in this document. This applies especially to the positioning of Orthodox Christians within plural or diverse realities in society. For instance, by general reference to a fundamental theological view – i.e., “Orthodox Christians must remember that all human beings are living and irreplaceable icons of God”<sup>78</sup> – the document shows itself clearly worded with respect to the significance of human rights, wherein the reason given is particularly noteworthy: “Orthodox Christians should support the language of human rights, [...] because it preserves a sense of the inviolable uniqueness of every person, and of the priority of human goods over national interests, while providing a legal and ethical grammar upon which all parties can, as a rule, arrive at certain basic agreements.”<sup>79</sup> Not only the terms used here, but also the addressed topics correspond to important arguments and views that can currently be found in the general social-ethical discussion about tolerance too. The further reasoning presented in this text seems even more accentuated, stressing that it “is a language

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75 Ibid. § 13; cf. also and more in detail *ibid.* § 64, and, from a more general perspective, in the concluding part § 80. – Concerning ‘displacing religion from the public space’ cf. Legutke 2014: especially 295–300.

76 For the Life of the World. Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church (2020), <https://www.goarch.org/social-ethos> (last access: 07–11–2020), § 14.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid. § 12.

79 Ibid. – For further explanation, esp. concerning Christian roots of today’s language of human rights, see also § 61; for concretisation of ‘human rights’, quite a number of them closely related to tolerance, see: Ibid. § 63.

intended to heal divisions in those political communities in which persons of widely differing beliefs must coexist. It allows for a general practice and ethos of honoring each person's infinite and inherent dignity<sup>80</sup>. Though also here the term tolerance is not used, its content and meaning is well grasped by mentioning clearly its relation to violence respectively peace: "For Orthodox Christians, the way of peace, of dialogue and diplomacy, of forgiveness and reconciliation is always preferable to the use of violence [...]. The highest expression of Christian holiness in response to violence is perhaps found in those who strive every day to create understanding and respect among persons, to prevent conflict, to reunite those who are divided, to seek to create economic and social mechanisms for alleviating the problems that often lead to violence, and to welcome and care for those who are marginalized and suffering."<sup>81</sup>

On the whole, it is worthwhile to notice that all three documents referred to here, though born out of different backgrounds and influenced by various Christian traditions, apparently provide to quite some extent similar approaches to the topical area of tolerance, despite their respective characteristics and a certain degree of variation in clarity. They thus are a source of encouragement to shape social and political conditions at all levels in such a way that what tolerance means can be made possible and concretely realised. They contribute to its interpretation as well, which not surprisingly broadly corresponds to general ethical arguments, and at the same time they show its specific religious inspiration as well. This is not least due to hermeneutic and epistemological foundations of Christian social thought and specifically of Christian Social Sciences – foundations, to which for instance within Catholic social teaching explicitly is made reference: "Open to the truth, from whichever branch of knowledge it comes, the Church's social doctrine receives it, assembles into a unity the fragments in which it is often found, and mediates it within the constantly changing life-patterns of the society of peoples and nations"<sup>82</sup>; a rather

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80 Ibid. § 12. – Though this essay's focus is on the general outline of how the topical area of tolerance is addressed, it should be mentioned that this document from Orthodox social teaching applies basic insights in person's dignity (and hence the demand for respectful integration or for non-discrimination, and to fight intolerance and its environment) also to very specific issues like protection of vulnerable children (Ibid. § 16), sexual orientation (Ibid. § 19), relation of women and men (Ibid. § 29), the elderly (ibid. § 30), the poor and disadvantaged (Ibid. §§ 33, 34, 37), racism (Ibid. § 41), violence/peace (Ibid. §§ 43–25).

81 Ibid. § 49 (in the context of war, capital punishment, and force – however, as basic statement it is in a way a true description of the sources of tolerance).

82 CiV 9.

similar statement can be found in Orthodox social thought (related to technology and science): “Perhaps the Church’s first concern, in seeking to understand the rapid technological developments of late modernity, and in attempting to secure her role as a place of spiritual stability amid the incessant flux of scientific and social change, should be to strive to overcome any apparent antagonism between the world of faith and that of the sciences.”<sup>83</sup> With respect to specific circumstances in which the problem and the challenge of tolerance in Ukrainian society seems to be embedded, not only the just mentioned recognizable similarity is quite significant, which is shown in the different forms of Christian social thought; even if some clarifications are probably expected regarding the mutual relationship between status and acceptance of the text within Orthodoxy, in view of the special situation of the Christian denominations it is not less important that such commonalities emerge particularly in the text on Orthodox social teaching too. This the more, since quite some fundamental principles of this teaching, especially in regard to dialogue, are applied also to “sustained dialogue with Christians of other communions”<sup>84</sup>, and since this teaching – though in its own, and theologically specific way<sup>85</sup> – even reaches out “to religions different from ours”<sup>86</sup>.

### *III. Prospects: practising tolerance, spurred by virtues*

From the above it is clear that also Christian interpretation underlines the importance of the concept of tolerance as well as the demand for tolerance. In ethical terms indeed both dimensions matter, as do the individual and the institutional respectively social connotations of tolerance, in each case mutually interrelated.

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83 For the Life of the World. Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church (2020), <https://www.goarch.org/social-ethos> (last access: 07–11–2020), § 71.

84 For the Life of the World. Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church (2020), <https://www.goarch.org/social-ethos> (last access: 07–11–2020), § 51, cf. also § 54.

85 The specific theological context is explicitly mentioned: “[...] This indissoluble and inalienable relationship between the heavenly polity of the angelic powers and saints and the earthly life of the Church in the world provides the essential rationale underlying the ethical principles of the Gospel and the Church; for those principles are nothing less than a way of participation in the eternal ecstasy of worship that is alone able to fulfill created natures and elevate them to their divine destiny.” (Ibid. § 79).

86 Ibid. § 54, cf. also § 55 and esp. § 59 (where the fundamental rules of dialogue are explicitly applied).

With regard to *practical implementation*, particularly in awareness of the complexity of tasks and challenges in this field, from what has been said so far about contexts and approaches it is obvious that development of tolerance is also, and not least, closely linked to the given political order, to the prevailing social climate, but also to personal attitudes – note, on principle of all and everybody, be it individual citizens, social actors, or political protagonists. Ultimately, tolerance is also an essentially ethical topic and, in view of its realization, also has moral significance; this at least, provided that tolerance is not only understood as a concept, but as a challenge to concrete action and to the corresponding organization of social and political life and the associated institutional conditions – in short: provided that, in addition to theoretical clarification, it is also about practiced tolerance. However, tolerance in its practical meaning in life is not just a matter of respective behaviour and action, it also includes efforts to lay foundations and to develop abilities that enable promotion for tolerance; it thus is in any case also a subject of education and formation. Especially from the point of view of the Christian Social Sciences the field of education is by no means insignificant for the humane development of society and for ethical orientation effective in it. Without questioning the importance of any part of the just mentioned complexity, and not underestimating particularly the role of institutions also in educational matters, this last section will concentrate just on addressing a few content-related prospects for the shaping of the social and moral environment that can be considered favourable for individual and societal dedication to tolerance, at best in its full meaning which would include proactive tolerance in terms of ‘valuing’ and ‘appreciating’ the ‘diversity of opinions as expression and richness of a plural society’<sup>87</sup>. Hence it is about efforts of ‘ethical formation’ in terms of promoting basic orientation for the development of overall humane relationships at all levels, and especially of fostering viable prospects for practised tolerance.

From a socio-ethical point of view it seems particularly important to prepare and create an environment that can be seen as fertile ground for the rise of tolerance – here understood as a kind of attitude which would run like a thread through all areas of personal behaviour, social and political activity and institutional settings. If tolerance is considered in this sense, fundamental ethical virtues that require special attention can also come into view – namely such virtues that underlie in a way and also can spur sustainable commitment to tolerance in all areas of social

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87 Cf. Vogt/Husmann 2019: 6.

and political life, regardless of whether and to what extent tolerance itself should be understood as a virtue<sup>88</sup>. Also against the background of the contexts and approaches discussed above, special importance should be attached at least to three virtues ‘underlying’ and ‘inspiring’ tolerance:

(a) *Openness for dialogue*: As a virtue, openness for dialogue concerns much more than communication skills. In essence, it does actually not mean a specific action, but rather an attitude, which is expressed by the term ‘openness’ – and therein lies its ethical significance as well as its effect on tolerance. This becomes even clearer when one considers the opposite of this attitude, namely phenomena such as intentional speechlessness, refusal to communicate or to respond to individuality of others, or even self-isolating extreme individualism (as a potential downside of ‘pluralism’)<sup>89</sup>, all of which contain an element of inner disposition or basic attitude too, and which may occur on an individual, social and institutional level. In any case, the willingness to engage in dialogue contrasts also clearly with new forms of ideologization that can be observed in today’s societies and in politics, which often basically deny complexity and ultimately proof to be intransigent and incapable of communication.

Real dialogue, which is based on the virtue meant here as a sustainable ability serving the moral good of humane living together and which necessarily belongs to practised tolerance as an important element in this, is concerned with the exchange of or confrontation with differing positions and views – and thus at the same time with the relationship to those who hold such different points of view. That’s why such dialogue, like respective openness, involves two dimensions: dedicated exchange and, perhaps first and foremost, attentive listening. With regard to the latter, a remark (albeit in a different context) made by Byung-Chil Han, a Korean-German philosopher, can be rather enlightening: ‘The time’, he argues, ‘in which there was still *the other*, is over’, being replaced by what may be named ‘terror of sameness’<sup>90</sup>, emerging in a kind of ‘formless mass’<sup>91</sup>; in contrast, according to Han in the ‘future there may be a new profession, which would be called listener. Being paid for, the listener gives the other a

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88 For instance Vogt/Husmann 2019: 3, call tolerance ‘a key virtue of democracy’, as well as a ‘Christian virtue’ (9); they also talk about tolerance as virtue in the plural – namely about ‘passive tolerance’ and ‘proactive’ tolerance as ‘virtues of democratic behaviour’ (ibid.).

89 For more see: Buch 2013.

90 Han 2018: 7.

91 Ibid.

hearing [...]. Listening means a specific activity.<sup>92</sup> And Han adds: 'No community can ever develop without [...] listening.'<sup>93</sup>

Phenomenologically it is obvious how much dialogue in the end aims at real encounter with others – a dimension whose additional religious and specifically theological connotation (which in regard to the 'neighbor' is also biblically well founded) is not to be overlooked. This also ties with what the above mentioned encyclical 'Caritas in veritate' says about the 'category of relation' in the context of truly human development – and that in the sense of a desideratum of profound theological reflection<sup>94</sup>. Moreover, 'openness for dialogue' is, in a certain sense, a rather 'demanding' virtue, because it can only serve as an ethical disposition if the action inspired by it concerns dialogue in all seriousness, that is, if it does not aim at levelling out differences or creating uniformity. Instead, serious dialogue implies preparedness and willingness for mutually respectful conversation about diverse views, attitudes, and beliefs, and it moreover requires even to cope with disputes and – in a proactive way – to creatively solve conflicts, still without neglecting underlying differences that may probably even remain unsolvable. Or, to put it positively, dialogue becomes a means of practised tolerance precisely when it respects the meaning, the value and the perspective of different arguments and positions – which however does not indicate whether and to what extent these arguments and positions are agreed or disagreed with.

It is important to notice that apparently the criteria of such dialogue apply also to the contribution of Christian social thought to discourses about just, respectful and altogether humane orientation of community life and of interrelation of societies and cultures<sup>95</sup>; this means more concretely, it is about participation in respective discourses by providing rational and communicable insights and arguments without neglecting one's

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92 Ibid. 93.

93 Ibid. 98.

94 Cf. CiV 42. – See also: Buch 2016.

95 In a different context (although closely linked to the given topic), namely in regard to Christian studies and ecclesial universities, a very general and fundamental statement by Pope Francis can be found: One of the criteria of revival of these studies "is that of wide-ranging dialogue, [...] as an intrinsic requirement for experiencing in community the joy of the Truth and appreciating more fully its meaning and practical implications" – which requires "a culture of encounter [...] between all the authentic and vital cultures" and hence would include believers and non-believers; quote from: VG 4.— VG is meant as an 'adaptation' of the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*, by Pope John Paul II, April 15, 1979 (cf. VG 1), the statement on dialogue refers also to CiV 4.

own convictions and their specific religious motivation<sup>96</sup>. In the case of Ukraine, this can be clearly seen for example in the above-mentioned texts on tolerance requirements in view of the challenges and conflicts there. From an international point of view one enlightening illustration of this is the reference to ‘dialogue’ as made in the encyclical *Laudato si*: While critically refusing to simply follow “an efficiency-driven paradigm of technocracy” the encyclical stresses that “in view of the common good, there is urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life.”<sup>97</sup> This leads Pope Francis, by quoting his predecessor’s statement with respect to peace, to suggest: “For new models of progress to arise, there is a need to change ‘models of global development’”<sup>98</sup>. In regard to dealing with conflicts and to handling crises this would include a “politics” in its widest sense “which is far-sighted and capable of a new, integral and interdisciplinary approach [...]”<sup>99</sup>.

(b) *Willingness to forgive*: This is probably a virtue particularly significant for engaging in and committing oneself to tolerance – next to other values and attitudes within which justice, and in a certain sense mercy too, are of special importance. Again, what is meant by this virtue can be further clarified if the opposite of this attitude is taken into consideration. Phenomena in contrast to ‘willingness to forgive’ are e.g. attitudes of exclusive fixation on historical burdens, insisting on accusations – in part linked to bondage to hopelessness of own failures –, and focussing on injustice committed and suffered as irreconcilable trenches, up to an attitude of retaliation.

Certainly, in view of the enormous burden and suffering caused by violence, wars and oppression which characterize not least the history of large parts of Europe and partly reach up to the present times, especially in Ukraine too, there may be plenty of reasons not to open up to the willingness to forgive. Indeed, especially against such a background, the willingness to reconcile remains a very great challenge – for individuals and for societies at large. In any case, the attitude of an inner readiness to forgive can be very conducive to real tolerance as an important element of respectful and just shaping of plural societies, of international cooperation and of the relationship between denominations and religions.

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96 Cf. Buch 2000.– See also in regard to significance of theology within ‘secular’ ethics, and in particular to tolerance, Merks 2020: 350–354.

97 LS 189.

98 LS 194 – with reference to the Message for the 2010 World Day of Peace: Benedict XVI 2010 – Cf. also CiV 30 and particularly CiV 31.

99 LS 197.



Not surprisingly and for good reasons the Churches and the Christian Social Sciences are also dealing with the task and challenge of forgiveness, well-founded with regard to biblical references and at the same time integrated into a broader and fundamental *theological* context<sup>100</sup>. That's why respective documents refer to willingness to forgive in view of quite different areas, like ecumenical relations<sup>101</sup>, peace and reconciliation<sup>102</sup>, universal peace<sup>103</sup> etc. – all of which rely on attitudes and settings that enable real tolerance.

(c) *Readiness for responsibility*: Not only phenomenological ethics reveals responsibility as indeed basic, in particular since it is part of the driving forces of moral motivation, practical judgment, decision and action<sup>104</sup>. Therefore, readiness for responsibility as a virtue is also fundamental for any commitment to tolerance and for lived tolerance as well. Efforts in ethical discourses and formation that aim at clarifying the meaning of this virtue and at inspiring to open up to it are of utmost importance for vital social and political life in democratic societies. This particularly since in practical terms this virtue includes at least two elements: the creation or sharpening of a good sense of responsibility *and* the willingness to assume concrete responsibility – the latter quite literally, in the given context by responding conscientiously to the challenge to care for essential ingredients of humane living together, of which tolerance is a remarkable one. The opposite phenomenon of readiness for responsibility is an attitude of avoiding or even refusing responsibility, which in the end can be called a vice, foremost with respect to active participation as one of the essential requirements of democratic life<sup>105</sup>.

Evidently, this kind of readiness for responsibility is in some way closely linked with the so-called 'social principles' as reflected in Christian social thought. Quite remarkably, like a short summary of what this is all about, and how clearly it is embedded in theological anthropology, the encyclical

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100 Cf. e.g. Pr 18,12–14; Mt 18,21–35; Col 3, 12–13. – Cf. the short, yet nuanced overview on this matter: Vorländer 2000.

101 Cf. UUS, especially no. 2.

102 Cf. PDMP 1, 3, 6, 7 etc.– See also, referring to a specific document on forgiveness: Pékala 2018. Furthermore (containing in the annex the German version of the letters exchanged in 1965): Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz 1978.– See also, in a specific European approach: EiE 112: "peace [...] can be ensured only by opening up new prospects of exchange, forgiveness and reconciliation between individuals, peoples and nations."

103 Cf. PT 171.

104 Cf. e.g. Hartmann 1963: especially 1–3, 810.

105 For more comprehensive reflection on this see: Buch 2008: especially 133–139.

'Pacem in terris' includes a paragraph entitled "An attitude of responsibility", which says: "Man's personal dignity requires besides that he enjoy freedom and be able to make up his own mind when he acts. In his association with his fellows, therefore, there is every reason why his recognition of rights, observance of duties, and many-sided collaboration with other men, should be primarily a matter of his own personal decision. Each man should act on his own initiative, conviction, and sense of responsibility, not under the constant pressure of external coercion or enticement. There is nothing human about a society that is welded together by force."<sup>106</sup> According to the principles of Christian social thought this attitude of responsibility can be understood as being deeply implanted in the human being as a person – in theological terms: created in the image of God, being called to co-responsibility for creation -, but as it can grow and flourish within a favourable societal climate it can also be ruined or even die due to hampering political and social contexts, like e.g. in societies that were deeply scarred by the so-called 'homo-sovieticus concept' as the predominant societal framework over decades. Concerning present times, the above mentioned document on 'truth', though from Ukrainian background, states rather generally in regard to the vast destroying effects of 'post-truth': "Consciousness as such is destroyed – and as a result, the personal and socio-political life of people is being destroyed as well."<sup>107</sup>

Finally, this reference to conscience, in the context of one's own shaping of life in all its dimensions, leads to the core of the ethical phenomenon in general. Responsibility and conscience are ethically closely linked to each other, as well as the latter to virtues in general, i.e. also to the virtues considered here, which as truly moral and at the same time social and democratic attitudes can strongly and permanently inspire practiced tolerance. Consequently, the development of such fundamental virtues in the sense of forward-looking prospects of tolerant coexistence, precisely because this is intended to serve social and political life as a whole, is by no means to be regarded as a matter of individual commitment alone. Rather, especially when it comes to the meaning of upbringing and education as envisaged here, this should be understood as a task and obligation of society as a whole – supported also by state framework

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106 PT 34.

107 Longing for the Truth That Makes Us Free, 04–16–2020, Religious Information Service of Ukraine (RISU) (2020): <http://oou.org.ua/2020/04/16/longing-for-the-truth-that-makes-us-free/> (last access: 07–10–2020), Chapter I, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph: The state of the world we live in.

conditions, at least in societies that are committed to tolerance and to value orientations that are associated with it.

### *Conclusion*

After all, what has been said has confirmed this: Tolerance, in its different motivations and dimensions, generally concerns essential principles and requirements for a 'humane', fully inclusive and respectful social interaction in communities characterized by many disparities and varieties, as well as for a corresponding social and political order. In this sense, tolerance is a characteristic of a functioning plural society and a democratically constituted polity; it is also highly significant in shaping international and global cooperation. At the same time, it is linked to values, and it requires respective value options for any concretization. Their theoretical as well as ethical-practical reflection is, as became clear from the considerations on contexts, approaches and prospects, also the subject of Christian social thought and of the Churches' social teaching.

Taking into account the most enlightening distinction and relation of 'passive', 'active' and 'proactive' tolerance, from a Christian point of view an additional moment and in a way a step further would be to dedicatedly *promote tolerance and respective moral attitudes* – as an essential, in any case an unavoidable element of fostering integral human development of all and everybody, at all levels of social life and in any dimension of political dialogue and action. The contribution of Christian social thought, though presenting in the best 'critical', i.e. discerning way its own views by also referring to theological insights and sources, is not aiming at a kind of very own and entirely unique concept of tolerance. It is instead a contribution inspiring the opening up to an integrative view on the issue, which includes also 'faith-based' reflections as long as they claim and proof to be presented by means of rational, methodologically consistent, and hermeneutically competent argumentation. In doing so, Christian social thought as well as the Churches' social teaching are challenged to contribute to respective debates while clearly recognizing and addressing seriously the presence of diverse views, options, and convictions in plural societies and also within Christian communities. The insight common to the above-mentioned documents that this contribution does not only concern a service to society *ad extra*, but also includes a task of the faith-

ful's critical self-assurance *ad intra*, underlines as such the importance of tolerance as a theme of Christian social teaching.

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## Proactive Tolerance

### A Deeper Understanding of Proactivity

*Rolf Husmann*

The social climate in Germany has become rougher, more polarized and more hysterical. Calls for cohesion from societal authorities have become more pleading and the search for togetherness in diversity is becoming more and more urgent. Many see the solution in the magic word of tolerance.<sup>1</sup> But how can this word be filled? With the concept of proactive tolerance, which grew out of a socio-ethical project in western Ukraine,<sup>2</sup> a basic and concrete concept of tolerance was presented, which is fed by an attitude of appreciation. This term enables a perspective on how peaceful coexistence can be sustainably promoted in a plural society like ours, which is why it is worth the effort to deepen the understanding of this term.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to provide the concept of proactive tolerance with a substructure that facilitates the understanding of its peculiarity. This text approaches the meaning based on the actual usage of the term proactivity in other sciences in order to emphasize the particularity of proactive tolerance in contrast to passive and active tolerance. After this outer encirclement of the term, its inner center should be explored. Two digressions serve this purpose: an exemplary one on the person of Gandhi and a philosophical-sociological one on the current discussion about the theory of resonance. Since the concept of proactive tolerance was developed in particular against the background of different religions and world views, the religious communities as actors who can promote proactive tolerance are the last thing to look at, in other words the practice and implementation of proactive tolerance should be examined.

“Anyone who determines the development of an event and brings about a situation through differentiated advance planning and target-oriented action” acts proactively when one lends his ear to the definition of the *Du-*

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1 The former president of the Federal Republic of Germany Joachim Gauck has released recently a book with the title “tolerance” (Gauck 2019).

2 Vogt/Husmann 2019.

den.<sup>3</sup> The first images that the informed reader can see, as soon as the term proactivity is mentioned, come from various areas: but above all from the disciplines of management and planning. To name just a few examples: In the area of reputation management, managers are required to proactively meet criticism of the company. The proactive strategist of a company is not reactive and waits for a request from management, but looks for ways to reduce costs and increase profits. And proactive management figures in a company are dealing with tomorrow's challenges already today. All of these examples revolve around people as proactive actors.<sup>4</sup>

But that is not the only possible variant. The word “proactive” is also associated with computer or social systems in economics and business informatics: Algorithms have the ability to proactively shape the design of environments in a city with a view to future challenges in order to provide an intelligent solution for living together in the city.<sup>5</sup> But economic and social systems must also prove to be proactive and agile if they want to be resilient, i.e. resilient in the face of harsh processes of change and (unforeseen) adversities.

Another usage of the term can be found in psychology. There, the term of proactivity is also used differently than it is used in the area of management. In psychology the use of the term is mainly focused on the rationality of the individual action of a person. In addition to the importance of proactivity for resilience<sup>6</sup>, which is also highlighted by psychologists, one speaks for example of proactive aggression in children.<sup>7</sup> When children slam doors with all their might, clamor, and stomp because they want the chocolate they have been denied, they are using aggression to achieve a specific goal. Of course, it doesn't have to stop at the banal and tangible example of chocolate, much more often it is less haptic goals such as attention and recognition.

The concept of proactive tolerance has not yet appeared in the debate. However, it is particularly suitable for working out nuances of the dazzling container term tolerance, which cannot be described exhaustively by the concepts of passive and active tolerance. The concept of proactive tolerance is similar to the examples above because it is similar to them with its preventive and forward-looking character. Tolerance is a concept

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3 Duden (2019): Art. proaktiv (translation R.H.), 2019, <https://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/proaktiv> (last access: 12-21-2019).

4 E.g. Ternès/Runge 2015; Krumeich 2018.

5 Cf. Andrushevich et al. 2015.

6 Cf. Maiwald 2017.

7 Cf. Görtz-Dorten 2019: 251–261.



of conflict and tolerant behavior clearly emerges as a necessity in conflict. But tolerance is also relevant in the forecourt where conflicts arise and can prevent the outbreak of violent conflicts there. The effective means of proactive tolerance is dialogue, in which the actors get to know and understand each other. Information is exchanged that can be helpful in resolving future conflicts. Looking at the previous examples, a parallel becomes obvious: Even the proactive reputation manager or strategist is always on the lookout for information that will potentially be relevant in the future. In addition, the peculiarity of proactive tolerance is that it takes into account both the individual dimension, as it has been highlighted by the examples of the manager or the egoistic child, and the societal dimension (systemic dimension) and thus integrates these dimensions (individual and systemic).

Although there are many similarities between the general understanding of proactivity and the specific meaning of proactive tolerance, decisive differences remain: Proactive tolerance is not remotely pragmatic and calculating, as the examples from management suggest. It is not about obtaining an advantage and therefore only seeking as much dialogue as it makes economic sense, considering the cost of dialogue in relation to the gain in peace in society. It would be also a functionalistic misunderstanding if one wanted to explain the proactivity of tolerance, as proactivity is understood in proactive aggression, because proactive tolerance is more than just a behavior practiced solely for the purpose of another goal (social peace). On the contrary, proactive tolerance is not so branchy, but is essentially based on an appreciation of the other person and the plurality in society. Insofar as tolerance always has a personal touch, because it refers to an attitude towards other people, it is never purely rational and pragmatic or simply reduced to an ethical minimum, and thus proactive tolerance differs significantly from active and passive tolerance. These differences need to be worked out more clearly in order to understand more precisely the specifics of proactive tolerance.

### *Proactive tolerance as distinct from passive and active tolerance*

Using an analogy, the differences can be shown particularly easily. If there is a fire in a building, a fire truck races to the source of the danger and tries to bring the source of the fire under control. The fire brigade reacts to an already existing fire outbreak. On the other hand, a mother puts sun cream on her children in summer before visiting the lake to protect them from the dangerous UV radiation to which they may be exposed if they cannot

find a place in the shade. In contrast to fire fighting, putting on lotion is a preventive action, because the danger from UV radiation does not yet exist and may or may not occur.

Just as fire fighting and sun protection differ, so too are active and proactive tolerance. While active tolerance affects an existing conflict and tries to contain it by setting rules, the task of proactive tolerance is to act in advance, regardless of when and whether a conflict arises. Because even taking action in advance can noticeably minimize the risk of a (violent) conflict.

Just as sun cream multiplies the natural protection of the skin, so too can proactive tolerance strengthen mechanisms and attitudes in society that make it possible not to let conflicts escalate at all. The decisive factor for this is the attitude of appreciation as a characteristic of proactive tolerance, because it enables dialogue, getting to know each other, and the will to communicate, but also interest and openness for the other. If such a process takes place in advance, then alienation, fear, and escalation can be soothed or avoided in advance.

It is just as clear, however, that a proactive tolerance is less controlled and less precise, but rather has a broad effect for all eventualities. It is the same and no different with fire and sun protection: While fire fighting is precisely geared towards the cause of the fire, the use of sun protection is much more indeterminate; you don't even know whether the sun is still shining or if there are clouds and a thunderstorm is approaching. The sun cream has its effect, the only question is whether the danger against which it is supposed to work will arise or not. And yet the use of a preventive measure is reasonable and sensible. In terms of the ability to steer, one can also speak of proactive tolerance and active tolerance that active tolerance is calculative, whereas proactive tolerance is generous appreciation.

### *Proactive tolerance as exemplified by Gandhi*

The uniqueness of proactive tolerance can finally be grasped with the example of Mahatma Gandhi. The Indian freedom fighter and devout Hindu shaped the paradigm of nonviolent resistance like no one. His aim was to conduct a resistance<sup>8</sup> with means that correspond to the end, which has

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8 Cf. Weingardt 2007: 223–227. The terms “Ahimsa” as “renunciation of violent acts and of threatening with violence” and “Satyagraha” as “power of truth” or “power of love” are the decisive terms.

already become a commonplace in the vernacular: The end never justifies the means. Gandhi was not concerned with just keeping a clean slate or keeping the potential for violence and thus the dangers for his supporters and the Indian population low. No, the bottom line for him was that violence is simply not a suitable means. Violence is not compatible with love, the love of truth. Gandhi loved the truth and, in his opinion, a love of truth demanded the renunciation of violence. There is a basic conviction in this that is much deeper than that you cannot beat anyone to a wedding and that forced marriages are hardly successful. Love is the respect for something that one does not want to control, because any control would rob it of its independence.

Gandhi was also aware of a second point: Truth invites love.<sup>9</sup> Because she is attractive, you can't turn a blind eye to her. He believed in the power of symbolic acts that open everyone's eyes – for truth and for justice. It is precisely against this background that the famous Salt March is understood. Against the arbitrary and oppressive prohibition of unauthorized salt extraction, the group went together with Gandhi to the waterside in order to extract the precious salt out of the sea. Nobody uses violence, nobody is quick-tempered. But the action has a subtle attraction; it is the persuasiveness of what really moves people.

After all, in the interests of proactive tolerance, Gandhi had friendly exchanges with the British colonial rulers even before the symbolic deeds and tried to be appreciative. During his time in South Africa and India, he saw the role of sport, especially the football game, in how different social groups can be connected and borders (including racial segregation) can be overcome.<sup>10</sup> It was the first steps of getting to know each other and of appreciation that made understanding, non-violence and also communication with the powerful acts of drawing possible.

Gandhi's method of non-violence is thus exemplary for what is to be understood by proactive tolerance and what can also be characterized in the words of Pinchas Lapide as "love of deenemification"<sup>11</sup>. The love of deenemification is about rethinking the supposed opponent by being caring about the other. As Gandhi showed his appreciation for the British

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9 "If you want to find the truth as God, the only way is love, that means renunciation of force.", a quote that is commonly attributed to Mahatma Gandhi (translation R.H.).

10 Cf. FIFA Weekly (2010): Mahatma Gandhi – Fussball-Legende, 10–22–2010, <https://de.fifa.com/news/mahatma-gandhi-fussball-legende-1322011> (last access: 2–19–2020).

11 Lapide 2010: 298 (translation R.H.).

while playing football, he was able to break through established friend-foe schemes and created an opportunity for getting to know each other. In this way, proactive tolerance with the attitude of appreciation should break through fossilized conflict patterns, create new interest and understanding, so that tolerant action can bear fruit in a society.

### *Proactive tolerance and response*

The exemplary excursus on Gandhi has illustrated the characteristic mode of action of proactive tolerance in an individual case. Behind this, however, are structural relationships that can be discovered in every human-environment-relationship and make the mechanism of action of proactive tolerance understandable.

In the current debate about human-world-relationships, Hartmut Rosa's contribution stands out. He links the question of subject and environment with the question of a successful life. The happy life is an interaction of subject and world. It is decisive to what extent the subject succeeds in appropriating the world. Rosa characterizes the successful relationship as a resonance: people and the world "touch" each other and emotions and expectations are awakened in people so that they can look at the world with interest and work in the world to bring about a visible change: "Resonance is a form of world relationship formed through affection and emotion, intrinsic interest and the expectation of self-efficacy, in which subject and world touch and transform each other at the same time."<sup>12</sup>

Rosa specified three aspects of the response in order to prevent misunderstandings. On the one hand, a resonance relationship requires independence (of subject and world) and thus that the world contains something fundamentally inaccessible, so that the relationship to the world is not a mere echo of the subject's own ideas and desires, but remains diverse in itself. In addition, subject and world must – to a certain extent – be a self-contained system that can be affected by an input but develops its own voice. It is easy to draw a parallel to Niklas Luhmann's system theory, in which systems always process information according to their own rules and translate it into their coded language.<sup>13</sup> After all, resonance is not an emotional state that is defined by the emotional content that is transmitted. Rather, the content is indifferent and resonance happens

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12 Rosa 2016: 298 (translation R.H.).

13 Cf. for the term autopoietic systems: Luhmann 1984.

independently from the content of sensation, as the mere interaction of subject and world enables self-perception and thus resonance. This is why tragedies can trigger resonance despite their sad content.

In contrast, alienation is the counterpart of resonance, but not its negative. It is true that the failure of the world-subject-relationship triggers alienation. Alienation is therefore the “form of the world relationship in which subject and world are indifferent or hostile (repulsive) and therefore internally disconnected. Therefore, alienation can also be defined as a relationship that is lacking connectivity (Rahel Jaeggi).”<sup>14</sup> But there is no resonance when the alienation is erased. Nor can alienation be thought of as an absence of resonance. Rather, they are mutually dependent and the mix of rejection and attraction enables differentiation, depending on which prevails. Only the complete absence of resistance would prevent resonance. An illusory idyll, in which everything is beautifully colored in harmony, does not allow anyone to be touched. Rather, resonance stands under the sign of a hope: How dissonances in a piece draw the listener's attention and he hopes that the melody will resolve itself in a cadenza at the end. The same applies to conversations in which people do not show their personal opinion, in which they always speak to the other person: Isn't that just a mere echo of your own talk? It is not an authentic encounter that contains value, arouses interest. And the genuinely committed conversation partner will see his words as flat metal and his efforts as in vain. Rather, resonance occurs when an honest discussion develops in which arguments and points of view are exchanged, regardless of whether a common solution is found in the end. Then the exchange of thoughts is no longer meaningless.<sup>15</sup>

Experiences of repulsion require a feeling of resonance. But there is also a second. We need a fundamental trust in the response, namely that the above conversation partner has something meaningful to say. Only if we grant this advance of trust we can really come to a deeper understanding. Here Hartmut Rosa refers to the leap of faith that one has to grant a text so that its meaning becomes accessible.<sup>16</sup> In this respect, a dialectical movement can be identified.<sup>17</sup> It begins with a trust in resonance, but the experience of repulsion is also necessary in order to differentiate between nostrification (appropriation) and a transformation of the world,

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14 Rosa 2016: 316 (translation R.H.).

15 Cf. Rosa 2016: 321.

16 Cf. Rosa 2016: 324.

17 Cf. Rosa 2016: 325.

because only the latter leaves the world in its ultimate unavailability. The contradiction is thus the spin that turns the spiral of the subject-world relationship further.

From these general remarks on Rosa's concept of resonance, the main effects of proactive tolerance can be highlighted. Proactive tolerance aims to create relationships between people and groups who are strangers to one another. Therefore, the principles can be easily translated here. Proactive tolerance is about respecting the independence and resistance of the other. It is not about equalization or an idyll of harmony. Many behaviors and views remain permanently alien to us. Only an honest discussion that highlights common aspects and differences can only enable the interlocutors to experience that they are taken seriously, that their opinions and arguments are heard. This experience of self-efficacy and interest is the basis for trust to emerge and grow in a society. Why is this so important? Mistrust prevents or makes it difficult to reach an agreement on political issues, which, however, definitely require a quick and pragmatic solution. The seeds of mistrust bear the seeds of fear of strangers, incomprehension, demarcation behavior and, in the end, intolerance and excesses of violence. So proactive tolerance is *cum grano salis* enabling a resonant relationship between different people in a society.

### *The special role of religions in proactive tolerance*

Proactive tolerance is a special form of tolerant behavior. For the effective implementation of proactive tolerance, religions play a special role, as it has already been generally emphasized elsewhere with regard to tolerance as a whole.<sup>18</sup> Following current debates on the role of religion in conflicts in the field of political science and conflict research, four aspects will be singled out that illustrate the extent to which religions make a solitary contribution to proactive tolerance.

It has been widely discussed that religions can be used as a means of exacerbating conflict. Religions can be modified as ideologies for attacks and terrorism. You can unleash special motivational powers and thus increase the willingness to fight. In addition, when conflicts unleash globally and are no longer just conflicts between two states, but a conflict between

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18 Cf. Vogt/Husmann 2019.

different blocks or world orders, religions can mark a phase boundary between the blocks as an identity marker.<sup>19</sup>

Recently, however, religions have also been perceived as conflict mediators that, as honest brokers, can mediate authentically in conflicts due to their political independence.<sup>20</sup> Religions also have the opportunity to understand the religious dimension of conflicts. Through the usual way of life and belief, they can fall back on a fund of ways of acting that are not understood as political statements. This way you create a new channel. The atmospheric significance of religion through its rituals can also be understood as reassuring. In addition, religious representatives often have a higher level of credibility, at least in political matters, because they are assigned a special ethical and moral qualification that makes them appear independent from political interests. Moreover, there is a special emotional ability that can also express the deeper dimension of conflicts (sacrifice, responsibility, justice) in words. Furthermore, church actors are not regarded as being sent by political interests and also not as appeasement in the sense of humanism, which can make it easier for those involved in the conflict to start a dialogue.

Religions are also particularly suitable actors in proactive tolerance because they are open to ethical and concrete thinking. While in active tolerance, moral-abstract rules are formulated that can be constructed on the basis of reciprocity and generality. Proactive tolerance needs to be about sharing ethical beliefs. Christianity is particularly capable of this. It brings with it clear material-ethical ideas, but it is compatible and open to both formal-moral argumentation and other material-ethical concepts: "Against this background, ethics compatible with pluralism does not aim at leveling validity claims. It differs from the indifferent coexistence in renouncing the search for the better alternatives. Rather, it is based on an appreciation of cultural, social, scientific and moral diversity, because this is perceived as an opportunity to get to know different options for interpretation and action and to decide on the better one."<sup>21</sup> With this attitude, Christianity can be a good dialogue partner: "Moral pluralism is more than the juxtaposition or opposition of ethical convictions that are incompatible. It can also refer to complementary perspectives that complement each other and give rise to in-depth communication"<sup>22</sup>.

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19 Cf. Weingardt 2007: 414f.

20 Cf. Weingardt 2007: 392–403.

21 Korff/Vogt 2016: 629 (translation R.H.).

22 Korff/Vogt 2016: 629 (translation R.H.).

Finally, religions emerge as particularly suitable because they contain narratives and ethical ideas that can motivate proactive-tolerant behavior.<sup>23</sup> Only those who can arouse and maintain interest in others can promote proactive tolerance. Religions have clearly demonstrated the ability to do this through their readiness for interreligious dialogue.

In addition, religions have a special competence to tolerate ambiguity in view of the fact that the world is ambiguous.<sup>24</sup> Religions educate their members in multiperspectivism. One can interpret the phenomenon from within the world, one can interpret it religiously. This competence is necessary to deal with the diversity of different cultures.

Religions make a particularly valuable contribution to the implementation of proactive tolerance. But the concept of proactive tolerance is universal and human. Proactive tolerance is an attitude of appreciation and openness, which develops a fulfilling subject-environment relationship, which ensures peaceful coexistence, and which lets decent and joyful human relationships grow.

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23 Cf. Vogt/Husmann 2019; MacIntyre 1984: 215–219.

24 Cf. Bauer 2018.



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# The Duty of Tolerance as Duty of Public Civility

## Religious and philosophical insights for a culture of convivence and political responsibility

*Daniel Munteanu*

*For Presiding Bishop Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm*

“Man’s capacity to live in and for community  
is the Image of God”<sup>1</sup>

In this paper I will focus on aspects of political philosophy as considered by two main representatives of political liberalism, John Locke and John Rawls. Whereas John Locke uses the notion “duty of tolerance”, John Rawls speaks about a “duty of public civility”. Rawls concepts of “public reason” and “reasonable pluralism” allow us to understand tolerance as responsibility both of political and of moral reason as well. Furthermore, I would like to reflect on some resources for a culture of tolerance, as culture of convivence<sup>2</sup> and political responsibility from a Christian point of view. What is the sense and significance of a culture of proactive tolerance? Why is the duty of tolerance a duty of public civility? Why is tolerance a duty and a sign of political responsibility?

### *Introductory remarks on the meaning and understanding of tolerance*

We live in a time that is characterised by intolerance, violence, national, confessional, and economic egoisms and first-ism (America first etc.). In this context, a culture of tolerance sounds promising, healing and peace-building.

The definitions of tolerance vary from “toleration of people, actions or opinions that are rejected for moral or other reasons” to “acceptance of the ‘other’ and stranger” and “leeway for technical and statistical measurement

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1 Rawls 2009: 193.

2 Sundermeier 2012.

inaccuracies".<sup>3</sup> From a historical point of view tolerance has many aspects: "an exercise of love for the other who errs, a strategy of preserving power by offering some form of freedom to minorities, a term for the peaceful coexistence of different faiths, who share a common core, another word for the respect for individual liberty, a postulate of practical reason, or the ethical promise of a productive pluralistic society".<sup>4</sup> Tolerance can be seen both as political virtue and as a way of life.<sup>5</sup> There is indeed a difference between the understanding of tolerance as moral virtue or as political virtue of civil duty. The concept of duty involves the social reason that each member of the society has to act according to the principles of toleration. As a civil virtue tolerance has roots in the moral philosophy.

In patristics, the term tolerance is used as a synonym for patience and "believer's ability to suffer", "tolerantia passionis".<sup>6</sup> Martin Luther spoke of "tolerantia Dei" as "incomprehensibil(is) tolerantia (...) et sapientia"<sup>7</sup>, in the sense that God is tolerant to human misbehaviours.<sup>8</sup> John Calvin defined tolerance as "gentleness of the spirit" ("mansuetudo animi").<sup>9</sup> During the Renaissance, the concept of tolerance was related to religious freedom and pluralism of religions. Here, a meaningful aspect is the concept of equality of all people before God, on which the demand for tolerance and for freedom of consciousness are founded.<sup>10</sup> A society should tolerate "religious heterodoxy" because nobody can be forced to practice a specific religion. Religious identity is a matter of belief, not of political coercion.<sup>11</sup> Tolerance is not only a positive side-effect of civilisation, but mainly a duty of every human being for his or her fellowman, a fundamental premise of a just and well-ordered society.

One of the most influential philosophical writings concerning tolerance was "A Letter Concerning Toleration" by John Locke. John Locke was "one of the greatest philosophers in Europe at the end of the seventeenth century".<sup>12</sup> He distinguished between religious and civil tolerance. For

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3 Gabriel 1998.

4 Forst 2017.

5 Heyd 1996: 4f.; see: Bobbio 1992: 93: "So tolerance is the result of an exchange, a *modus vivendi*, a *do ut des*".

6 Schlüter/Grötter 1998.

7 Tietz 2009: 122.

8 Schlüter/Grötter 1998: 1254.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid. 1254.

11 Ibid. 1255f.

12 Uzgalis 2019.

him tolerance is a “chief characteristic mark of the true church”.<sup>13</sup> Tolerance has to be cultivated both by the Church and by the state in order to achieve the commonwealth.

### *1 Religious tolerance as “business of true religion” according to John Locke*

In the vision of John Locke the Church of Christ cultivates “the regulating of men’s lives according to the rules of virtue and piety”.<sup>14</sup> True religion cultivates the human being for a pure and holy manner of life, for “benignity and meekness of spirit”, for charity and compassion.<sup>15</sup> As orientation and foundation for a Christian *lifestyle of respect and tolerance*, for a *culture of friendship and kindness*, John Locke introduce the definition of Christ as “Prince of Peace”, who sent out his apostles “not armed with the sword, or other instruments of force, but prepared with the Gospel of peace, and with the exemplary holiness of their conversation”.<sup>16</sup>

*Christian tolerance* is therefore founded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as *Gospel of peace* and ought to become a *modus vivendi*. Christian faith means to embrace the principles of kindness and charity in your heart. Faith is a matter of love, not of coercion. To be Christian means to practice love, not to persecute, to destroy and to “kill other men upon pretense of religion”.<sup>17</sup> John Locke criticizes the “burning zeal for God” and “salvation of souls” of the others that leads to cruelties toward mankind. “Burning zeal” is religious fanaticism that destroys the others who are not conforming to a specific orthodoxy. The truth of the Church of Christ is not violence, but charity and love.<sup>18</sup> Nobody has the right in the name of Christ to compel others to profess a certain doctrine or faith. Persecution and cruelty aren’t conform to the principles of Christian faith.<sup>19</sup> “The toleration of those that differ from others in matters of religion is so agreeable to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to the genuine reason of mankind, that it seems monstrous for men to be so blind, as not to perceive the necessity and advantage of it, in so clear a light”.<sup>20</sup> A true Church cannot persecute

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13 Locke 2003: 215.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid. 217.

17 Ibid. 216.

18 Ibid. 217.

19 Ibid. 218.

20 Ibid. 217.

other people “and force others by fire and sword to embrace her faith and doctrine”.<sup>21</sup> Ecclesiastic authority is based on “conviction and approbation of the mind”, not on force that “belongs wholly to the civil magistrate”.<sup>22</sup>

There are indeed *limits of toleration* in the Church. If one member disrespects the principles of faith, the ecclesiastical authority does have the right to excommunicate this person. Anyway this person cannot be deprived of any civil goods or of civil rights.<sup>23</sup> “No private person has any right in any manner to prejudice another person in his civil enjoyments, because he is of another church or religion. All the rights and franchises that belong to him as a man (...) are inviolably to be preserved to him. (...) No violence nor injury is to be offered him, whether he be Christian or pagan”.<sup>24</sup>

John Locke mentions a *fruitful aspect of intolerance*. Each Church or religious community should be *intolerant with all members that do not respect the virtues of tolerance*. The Church should *educate* their adherents to practice tolerance and the church should correct or condemn every intolerant behaviour of their members even with the last instrument of excommunication: “It is not enough that ecclesiastical men abstain from violence and rapine, and all manner of persecution. He pretends to be a successor of the apostles assumes the office of teaching, is obliged also to admonish his hearers of the duties of peace and good-will towards all men; as well towards the erroneous as the orthodox; towards those that differ from them in faith and worship, as well as towards those that agree with them therein. (...) I will not undertake to represent how happy and how great would be the fruit, both in church and state, if the pulpits everywhere sounded with this doctrine of peace and toleration”.<sup>25</sup>

We can find in John Locke’s philosophical foundation of tolerance some ecumenical principles of a *culture of interconfessional and interreligious convivence*: “Peace, equity, and friendship, are always mutually to be observed by particular churches, in the same manner as by private persons, without any pretence of superiority or jurisdiction over one another”.<sup>26</sup> For John Locke every church is a “free and voluntary society”.<sup>27</sup>

Another way of achieving tolerance in society is for him to stay aware about the distance to absolute truth and true orthodoxy. “Every church

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21 Ibid. 222.

22 Ibid. 223.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid. 224.

25 Ibid. 227, 223.

26 Ibid. 224.

27 Ibid.

is orthodox to itself; to others, erroneous or heretical". The decision about the true orthodoxy or heterodoxy belongs only to God as "Supreme Judge".<sup>28</sup>

### *1.1 Boundaries of ecclesiastical power as logical reasons for a culture of tolerance*

1. *Absolute truth* is an illusion due to the fact that each Church, each religion promotes its own orthodoxy as genuine or true. Besides, God is the Supreme Judge presiding over the religious truth of each church and each religion. "I cannot but wonder at the extravagant arrogance of those men who think that they themselves can explain things necessary to salvation more clearly than the Holy Ghost, the eternal and infinite wisdom of God".<sup>29</sup>

2. According to John Locke the Church has to avoid violence, sword and oppression of other people on account of their different believes. Each Church ought to promote a *culture of peace, of charity and respect* of the human being. True Christian Church promotes a decent form of life, moral edification and "holiness of life".<sup>30</sup> Therefore it ought to be or cannot be but tolerant, i.e. a vivid source of tolerance.

3. *Civil rights and civil affairs*: According to John Locke a tolerant society can be achieved, if each Church respects the civil rights: "Nobody therefore, in fine, neither single persons, nor churches, nor even commonwealths, have any just title to invade the civil rights and worldly goods of each other, upon pretence of religion".<sup>31</sup> John Locke argues that the church should focus on worshipping of God, on the salvation of the souls and not on civil affairs.<sup>32</sup> In his view the Church has "no connection at all with civil affairs"<sup>33</sup> but this opinion is limited by his own statement on the contrary that every religion has a responsibility to cultivate the duty of tolerance, that has an immediately impact on the civil society. Each Church has to promote civil peace. The path towards a culture of peace is built on the respect for the rights of the others. All people have common rights, the "same benefit of the laws", the same benefit of civil

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28 Ibid. 225.

29 Ibid. 253.

30 Ibid. 232.

31 Ibid. 226.

32 Ibid. 233.

33 Ibid.

peace or of a peaceful society.<sup>34</sup> This understanding of the *universality of civil rights* is crucial for a peaceful society: “neither pagan, nor Mahometan, nor Jew, ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the commonwealth, because of his religion. (...) Shall we suffer a pagan to deal and trade with us, and shall we not suffer him to pray unto and worship God? If we allow the Jews to have private houses and dwellings amongst us, why should we not allow them to have synagogues? Is their doctrine more false, their worship more abominable, or is the civil peace more endangered, by their meeting in public, than in their private houses?”<sup>35</sup> According to John Locke preconceptions like inclination to tumult and civil war of the members of other religions have to be corrected. He shows that the Christian religion was “turbulent and destructive of the civil peace” in history.<sup>36</sup> The main cause of tumults and civil wars is not religion but the “refusal of toleration to those that are of different opinions”.<sup>37</sup>

4. *Freedom of conscience as natural right*: Both religious and civil authorities are responsible for promoting the respect of the freedom of conscience. Religious societies are “free societies”. Nobody can be forced to believe something. “Every man (...) has the supreme and absolute authority of judging for himself”.<sup>38</sup> This privatization of religious identity and religious issues seems indeed a historical necessity of those times, in order to avoid religious conflicts. Eternal happiness and salvation of the souls is not a state’s task. Religious communities have to respect the liberty of consciousness. Besides this privatization of religion or religious matters, John Locke is aware of the social and civil meaning of moral actions. By promoting a culture of tolerance, both religion and state have to contribute to public peace. John Locke argues that “liberty of consciousness is every man’s natural right (...) and nobody ought to be compelled in matters of religions either by law or force”.<sup>39</sup> Universal respect for the liberty of conscience is actually the foundation of all Churches liberty in the society. To respect the liberty of conscience of a human being involves also respecting the liberty of religious societies.

5. *Human dignity*. Locke’s political philosophy has anthropological premises according to which each human being is “free, equal and inde-

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34 Ibid. 248.

35 Ibid. 249.

36 Ibid. 250.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid. 242.

39 Ibid. 246.



pendent” by nature.<sup>40</sup> “Every man has an immortal soul, capable of eternal happiness or misery. (...) the care of each man’s salvation belongs only to himself”.<sup>41</sup> John Locke presents the idea of “immortal soul” as an argument for the *untouchable dignity of the human being*.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, each human being has by nature powers of reason, more precisely *natural reason*. The fundamental law of nature as “common law of reason” is written only in the human soul.<sup>43</sup> This dignity of all mankind as rational soul has to be respected by both state and religious communities. Every man is free to decide about his or her eternal salvation and happiness. Besides the political power cannot dictate against the liberty of consciousness. A person can “abstain from the actions that he judges unlawful (...); men are not in these cases obliged by that law, against their consciences”.<sup>44</sup> For Locke, the law of nature is normative, because it leads human beings as free and rational to their wealth. “Reason and law, freedom and commonwealth” are intimately linked or interdependent.<sup>45</sup>

### *1.2 Civil tolerance as “business of magistrate*

i.e. laws”

John Locke distinguishes between state and church. The “business” of the state, i.e. of “civil magistrate” or “civil government” is to assure “civil interests” like “life, liberty, health, and indolency of the body; and the possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like”.<sup>46</sup> The “laws of public justice and equity” establish the preservation of people’s rights. The jurisdiction of the magistrate has nothing to do with the salvation of souls, but only with “civil concerns”.<sup>47</sup> By defending human rights and equality by law, the civil government contributes to the commonwealth, i.e. to a free and prospers society. This distinction between the “business” of the Church and the “business” of the state seems to be essential in Locke’s vision for a tolerant society, that promotes

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40 Ibid. 141; see also: Rawls 2012: 42.

41 Locke 2003: 241.

42 Ibid.

43 Rawls 2012: 180.

44 Locke 2003: 243.

45 Rawls 2012: 181f.

46 Locke 2003: 218.

47 Ibid.

religious tolerance. Without religious neutrality of the civil government and respect for the boundaries of religious and political jurisdiction, there cannot be any respect for the liberty of faith. “The care of souls cannot belong to the civil magistrate, because his power consists only in outward force: but true and saving religion consists in the inward persuasion of the mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God. And such is the nature of understanding, that it cannot be compelled to the belief of any thing by outward force”.<sup>48</sup>

Religious freedom is, therefore, a freedom of conscience and the liberty of mind that cannot be convinced by penalties. Penalties cannot produce belief or change man’s opinion. For Locke, another way or *strategy in order to promote a tolerant society* occurs when the political power has been denied any religious grounds. Civil power is not founded in God’s grace. Therefore, no government has any duty to propagate a specific religion or to defend the interests of a specific religious community.<sup>49</sup> John Locke rejects any religious foundation of political power, for practical reasons. If the state regards him as empowered by grace, it would act to establish by force a specific religious grace and rationality.<sup>50</sup>

## 2 *Justice as fairness and tolerance. John Rawls’ contribution to a public culture of tolerance*

John Locke’s understanding of tolerance had a historical impact on political philosophy. John Rawls, “the most distinguished liberal political philosopher of at least the last half century, (...) has quite explicitly adopted this defense as model for how to ground a coherent conception of social justice on a full recognition of the equal right to see, value, and live differently of all adult human beings”.<sup>51</sup> One of the main questions of John Rawls was about “how reasonable citizens and people might live together peacefully in a just world”.<sup>52</sup> John Rawls is considered one of the most important political philosophers of the twentieth century<sup>53</sup> with “the richest and most complex contractual account of ethics yet

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48 Ibid. 219.

49 Ibid. 226.

50 Ibid.

51 Dunn 2003: 273.

52 Rawls 1999: vi.

53 Wenar 2017.

advanced”.<sup>54</sup> He underlined in his writings very often the interdependence between justice and tolerance and proposes an understanding of “justice as fairness”.<sup>55</sup> “No other work in modern political philosophy has placed the link between justice and tolerance more clearly in the foreground than John Rawls’ Political Liberalism – the work that deserves a special place in the continuation of the modern discourse on tolerance”.<sup>56</sup> Without justice there can be no tolerant society. A just and fair society needs to overcome “unjust war and oppression, religious persecution and the denial of liberty of conscience, starvation and poverty, (...) genocide and mass murder”.<sup>57</sup> “Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust”.<sup>58</sup>

For John Rawls *tolerance is a virtue of justice*. He shows that a society needs to be just, i.e. fair. Without social justice, there can be no peace and tolerance at all. A just society needs at the same time *institutions* that preserve *basic freedoms* like freedom of thought and of consciousness<sup>59</sup>, religious freedom, political freedom, constitutional liberties and equal justice.<sup>60</sup> Justice as fairness is for Rawls the first *virtue of social institutions*.<sup>61</sup> Such institutions have to be considered a fundamental structure of society.<sup>62</sup> For Rawls there are many pragmatistical aspects of a just society: “The Theory of justice as fairness sees the society as an endeavor of cooperation for reciprocal benefit”.<sup>63</sup> A fair society needs the public structure of institutions in order to promote fair equality of political, economic and social rights.<sup>64</sup> A world without tolerance is a world of totalitarianism or of atomistic individualism, of alienation, and of “egoistic aloneness”.<sup>65</sup>

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54 Williams 2006: 78.

55 Rawls 1999: 3.

56 Forst 2003: 615.

57 Ibid. 7.

58 Rawls 1999a: 3

59 Rawls 1979: 223ff.

60 Rawls 1999: 9.

61 Rawls 1979: 19.

62 Ibid. 74.

63 Ibid. 105.

64 Ibid. 227.

65 See: Gregory 2007: 185.

Tolerance serves in this sense as foundation of fair social cooperation, i.e. of a “culture of the social”.<sup>66</sup>

Rawls’ idea of justice as fairness shows the importance of equal rights (like liberty of conscious and of thought). In a just society, all citizens have the same rights, enjoy the same degree of freedom (like freedom of moral, of thought, of faith, and of religion).<sup>67</sup> “The state is not allowed to favor a religion” and no member of a specific religious community is to be disadvantaged due to his religious belonging. The duty of the state is to protect the equal freedom of speech, of thought, of religion, and of consciousness of every citizen. This guarantees free access to political activities and offices. The state assures the people to be protected from discrimination and to enjoy the same civil rights in a free society.<sup>68</sup> The state has the duty to assure the same conditions of moral and religious freedom.<sup>69</sup>

There are four aspects urgently needed for a fair and tolerant society. Each human being, as a free subject, wishes a just and tolerant *system of political and social institutions* that allows him to develop as a free subject. Secondly, such a just and tolerant system is affirmed by each subject as expression of his own will. Thirdly, the free will needs to be educated by public institutions in a way that respects him or her as a free subject of the society. These institutions that will educate the free will have to be expressions of the free will.<sup>70</sup>

## 2.1 *The nature of the rational social world*

A main way how we can shape of our social world is by *education* and *political culture*. Our society is defined by “historical, social and economic circumstances”.<sup>71</sup> In these contexts a *creative imaginary* of the political philosophy can show or procure new practical political possibilities. Our social and political world can be constructively marked by a “realistic utopia”.<sup>72</sup>

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66 Rawls 2005: 14.

67 Ibid. 241.

68 Ibid. 253ff, 249f.

69 Ibid. 242.

70 Rawls 2003: 450f.

71 Rawls 1999: 5.

72 Ibid. 8.

According to Rawls *public political culture* of the society faces the fact of “reasonable pluralism”, i.e. “the fact of profound and irreconcilable differences in citizens’ reasonable comprehensive religious and philosophical conceptions of the world, and in their views of the moral and aesthetic values”.<sup>73</sup> Due to this real and complex pluralism a “well-ordered society” needs a regulative public concept of justice as “public agreement” or “overlapping consensus”.<sup>74</sup> Rawls’ solution is the concept of justice as fairness, which assumes that society has to be a “fair system of social cooperation”.<sup>75</sup> Such a society regards and promotes all citizens as “free and equal persons” whose acts are lead by the “idea of reciprocity” and “rational advantage”.<sup>76</sup> A society – well-ordered according to the principle of justice as fairness – is a “form of social community”, a “social community of social communities”.<sup>77</sup> “Reciprocity is a moral idea situated between impartiality, which is altruistic, on the one side and mutual advantage on the other”.<sup>78</sup> Tolerance as duty of reciprocity contributes to the “regulation of conduct”.<sup>79</sup>

Due to this, tolerance can be understood as premise for a fair society and social cooperation as well.<sup>80</sup> Tolerance, reciprocity and justice as fairness build the “basic structure of society”.<sup>81</sup>

*Reasonable pluralism and diversity can be seen as a positive chance for the society.* There are “different cultures and traditions of thought, both religious and nonreligious” that are to be respected.<sup>82</sup> Here, Rawls affirms a “reasonable pluralism” that “allows a society of greater political justice and liberty”.<sup>83</sup> Therefore he proposes consequently his own theory only as a way to a greater justice in a contemporary and future society.<sup>84</sup> It is worth both for individuals and for a society to promote a culture of tolerance. Only such a culture of reciprocity, of fairness, and of equality

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73 Rawls 1999: 132: “The fact of reasonable pluralism – the fact that a plurality of conflicting reasonable comprehensive doctrines, religious, philosophical, and moral, is the normal result of its culture of free institutions”.

74 Ibid. 32.

75 Ibid. 5f.

76 Ibid. 6.

77 Rawls 1979: 14, 572.

78 Rawls 2001: 77.

79 Ibid. 6.

80 Rawls 2005: 15ff.

81 Ibid. 16; see: Audard 2007: 35f: “The motivational basis of justice: mutual advantage, impartiality and reciprocity”.

82 Rawls 1999: 11.

83 Ibid. 12.

84 Ibid. 10.

contributes to prosperity, sociality, and cooperation. In this sense tolerance is not only an ideal but a civic historical responsibility of everyone for the common wealth. Tolerance is, in this regard, a basic form of “reasonable overlapping consensus”.<sup>85</sup>

Tolerance belongs to the “framework of the public social world”<sup>86</sup> and means to respect the voice, the rights and the dignity of the other. As duty of public reason, i.e. as duty of civility, tolerance is both a political and a moral virtue. The political dimension involves the affirmation of political justice and of its intrinsic values. As moral virtue, tolerance is a fruit from within of a religious, philosophical, or moral tradition. Rawls’ concept of political justice (as openness towards or empowerment by different resources of the reasonable pluralism) is tolerant and tolerance-promoting. His ethics of justice is tolerant and a philosophy of justice at the same time.

One meaningful foundation of his philosophy of tolerance is also his anthropology with the affirmation of the *untouchable dignity of each human being*: “Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason justice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others. It does not allow that the sacrifices imposed on a few are outweighed by the larger sum of advantages enjoyed by many. Therefore in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled”.<sup>87</sup> Justice as fairness and basic structure of the society has to serve to this untouchable dignity of the human being. Rawls concludes the inviolable dignity of human beings through the idea of an original fair society based on a fair contract under the conditions of the “veil of ignorance”. Justice like tolerance is a *social rationality*. As *moral subject*, each human being has a *sense of justice* or of social cooperation.<sup>88</sup> Social justice like tolerance serves to promote a fair society with fundamental rights and duties and cannot be reduced to a closed ethical system, due to the reasonable pluralism of our world.<sup>89</sup>

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85 Ibid. 62.

86 Ibid. 53; see: Vogt/Schäfers 2021, 8f

87 Rawls 1999a: 3.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid. 15: “Justice as fairness is not a complete contract theory”.

## *2.2 Human dignity and the moral powers of rationality*

One of the anthropological premises of Rawls' philosophy is the understanding of individuals as "free and equal moral persons"<sup>90</sup>, "capable of acting both reasonably and rationally", and "capable of taking part in social cooperation among persons so conceived".<sup>91</sup> For Rawls the understanding of "moral persons" as "rationally autonomous agents of construction" involves the affirmation of the rational autonomy and of a "public conception of justice" that regulates a society.<sup>92</sup> Tolerance belongs to the very foundations, norms, or "basic structure of society (...) in which everyone accepts, and knows that others likewise accept, the same first principles of right and justice".<sup>93</sup>

As reasonable and rational beings, persons have moral powers and moral duties. John Rawls' social ethics is marked by the trust in the *communicative capacity of reason* or in moral persons as reasonable beings: "Public reason further asks of us that the balance of those values we hold to be reasonable in a particular case is a balance we sincerely think can be seen to be reasonable by others. (...) this preserves the ties of civic friendship and is consistent with the duty of civility".<sup>94</sup> Due to the consistent and intrinsic power of rationality, the duty of civility means also "a willingness to listen to what others have to say and being ready to accept reasonable accommodations or alterations in one's own view".<sup>95</sup> As *duty of civility*, tolerance is also a process of getting more tolerant, more reasonable. Openness for public reason as such means openness for the other persons as reasonable, free, and equal citizens. Tolerance or duty of civility is also a cultural duty of respect of the untouchable dignity of the other people. Therefore, Rawls describes the duty of civility as central for his concept of public reason, i.e. as an "ideal of democracy".<sup>96</sup>

In a constructivist approach of moral or justice as fairness, persons are regarded as equal "rational agents of construction"<sup>97</sup>, able of "political reasoning (...) within a political culture".<sup>98</sup> To understand each human

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90 Rawls 1980: 518, 521; cf. Taylor 2011: 59f.

91 Rawls 1980: 518.

92 Ibid. 520f.

93 Ibid. 521.

94 Rawls 2005: 253.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Rawls 1980: 516.

98 Ibid. 517.

being as free and equal moral person is a fundamental premise of the “public culture of a democratic society”.<sup>99</sup> One of the main questions regards the discovery and formulation of “the deeper bases of agreement (...) embedded in common sense”.<sup>100</sup> This approach is per se tolerant and essential for tolerance: “The search for reasonable grounds for reaching agreement rooted in our conception of ourselves and in our relation to society replaces the search for moral truth interpreted as fixed by a prior and independent order of objects and relations, where natural or divine, an order apart and distinct from how we conceive ourselves. The task is to articulate a public conception of justice that all can live with (...)”.<sup>101</sup>

According to Rawls there are two main moral powers of persons:

“The first power is the capacity for an effective sense of justice, that is the capacity to understand, to apply and to act from (and not merely in accordance with) the principles of justice. The second moral power is the capacity to form, to revise, and rationally to pursue a conception of the good. Corresponding to the moral powers, moral persons are said to be moved by two highest-order interests to realize and exercise these powers. By calling these interests ‘highest-order’ interests, I mean that, as the model-conception of a moral person is specified, these interests are supremely regulative as well as effective. This implies that, whenever circumstances are relevant to their fulfilment, these interests govern deliberation and conduct. Since the parties represent moral persons, they are likewise moved by these interests to secure the development and exercise of the moral powers.”<sup>102</sup>

We can distinguish in this text many constructive issues that concern the topic of tolerance. All these moral powers of rational agents serve for a fair cooperation in a just society. Tolerance can be seen here as a force of social connectivity, due to its intrinsic implications in sustaining reciprocity and mutuality. Tolerance is worth and necessary for each participant’s rational advantage as rational and free agent of the society. Each human being as moral person has moral powers that can be described also as moral responsibilities.<sup>103</sup> At the same time each person is a “self-originating source of claims”.<sup>104</sup> The duty of tolerance as duty of public civility means to respect each moral person as free and reasonable “source

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99 Ibid.

100 Ibid. 518.

101 Ibid. 519.

102 Ibid. 525.

103 Ibid. 545: Rawls describes freedom as “responsibility for ends”.

104 Ibid. 545, 548.



of claims". The mentioned moral powers need to be respected by all members of the society, due to the principle of equality, liberty, and dignity. "The capacity to understand, to apply and to act from (...) the principles of justice" and "the capacity to form, to revise, and rationally to pursue a conception of the good" are "supremely regulative" and "effective". Moral powers are not only capacities of moral persons but also regulative interests that "govern deliberation and conduct". It is quite difficult to understand how Rawls can keep an open system of moral deliberation and growth of the human being. He assumes that "a well-ordered society is a closed system".<sup>105</sup> For him there is a so called "background justice" or it is necessary to establish such a "background justice".<sup>106</sup> This justice is present and builds a *basic structure of the society*, only when people are treated as equal moral persons.<sup>107</sup>

### *2.3 Tolerance as "duty of civility" and public reason*

As *animal rationale* each human being has "powers of reason, intellect, and moral feeling"<sup>108</sup> and therefore the responsibility to try at least to contribute to the practical and cognitive horizon of a *culture of tolerance*. Indifference for tolerance would presume indifference for justice, fairness, equality, reciprocity, social cooperation, etc. Responsibility for tolerance and responsibility for the social world can be indeed described as *duty of public civility*: "citizens are to think of themselves as if they were legislators and ask themselves what statutes, supported by what reasons satisfying the criterion of reciprocity, they would think it most reasonable to enact".<sup>109</sup>

John Rawls' differentiated perception of public reason as fact, ideal and duty is very creative and helpful to understand the meaning of *proactive toleration*. As citizens, we belong to a society with an established public reason. This public reason is not divine, but empowered by citizens. We act in conformity with public reason if we like to be reasonable citizens. At the same time, there is a *public duty* of everyone to contribute to the universe and universality of the historical public reason:

"When firm and widespread, the disposition of citizens to view themselves as ideal legislators, and to repudiate government officials and candi-

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105 Ibid. 536.

106 Ibid. 529, 562.

107 Ibid. 529.

108 Rawls 1999: 60.

109 Ibid. 56.

dates for public office who violate public reason, forms part of the political and social basis of liberal democracy and is vital for its enduring strength and vigor. Thus in domestic society citizens fulfil their duty of civility and support the idea of public reason, while doing what they can to hold government officials to it. This duty, like other political rights and duties, is an intrinsically moral duty".<sup>110</sup>

Tolerance is a "moral duty" for a common good idea of justice.<sup>111</sup> Tolerance is the only way to mutual respect of religious, philosophical, moral, and political pluralism. Tolerance is the way to and the foundation of a reasonable and decent society.<sup>112</sup> In such a society all members are equal, "decent and rational, as well as responsible and able to play a part in social life".<sup>113</sup>

The "duty of civility" means to contribute to the "public reason" from or with our own "background culture". A "background culture" includes, for Rawls, "the culture of churches and associations of all kinds, and institutions of learning at all levels, especially universities and professional schools, scientific and other societies".<sup>114</sup>

As citizens, we have a "duty of civility" as duty to "act from and follow public reason"<sup>115</sup>, due to the fact that this public reason is open to plural ways of reasoning and marked by the "reasonable overlapping consensus"<sup>116</sup> of different traditions or families of reason. John Rawls rejects a closed concept of public reason. There cannot be a "fix public reason once and for all in the form of one favored political conception of justice".<sup>117</sup> A free society needs not only a public reason but also "public reasoning" from within a different secular or religious reason. For instance, Rawls differentiates between "two ideas of toleration": "One is purely political, being expressed in terms of the rights and duties protecting religious liberties in accordance with a reasonable political conception of justice. The

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110 Ibid.

111 Ibid. 71.

112 Ibid. 63f; see: Förster 2014: 45f., 111f.

113 Rawls 1999: 66.

114 Ibid. 134, footnote 13.

115 Ibid. 135.

116 Ibid. 143.

117 Ibid. 142: "Political liberalism, then, does not try to fix public reason once and for all in the form of one favored political conception of justice. That would not be a sensible approach. For instance, political liberalism also admits Habermas discourse conception of legitimacy (...), as well as Catholic views of the common good and solidarity when they are expressed in terms of political values".

other is not purely political but expressed from within a religious or a non-religious doctrine".<sup>118</sup> This calls Rawls a "reasoning from conjecture".<sup>119</sup>

The duty of civility is for Rawls a moral duty, with certain premises like "willingness to listen to another" and willingness to fairness: "The ideal of citizenship imposes a moral, not a legal, duty – the duty of civility – to be able to explain to one another (...) how the principles and policies they advocate and vote for can be supported by the political values of public reason. This duty also involves a willingness to listen to another and a fairmindedness in deciding when accommodations to their views should reasonably be made".<sup>120</sup>

To summarize, Rawls' conception of tolerance is deeply connected with his understanding of justice as fairness, equality, and liberty of conscience: "Where justice as fairness to make an overlapping consensus possible it would complete and extend the movement of thought that began three centuries ago with the gradual acceptance of the principle of toleration and led to the nonconfessional state and equal liberty of conscience. (...) To apply the principles of toleration to philosophy itself is to leave to citizens themselves to settle the questions of religion, philosophy, and morals in accordance with views they freely affirm".<sup>121</sup>

Toleration as duty of public civility is a *duty of mutual respect*, a virtue of *reconciliation*. As public duty it involves a public use of rationality that leads to a "reasonable overlapping consensus".<sup>122</sup> The principle of toleration enjoyed a wide acceptance as the "only workable alternative to endless and destructive civil strife".<sup>123</sup> Political liberalism "seeks common ground and is neutral in aim", but still "encourage[s] certain moral virtues. Thus, justice as fairness includes an account of certain political virtues – the virtues of fair social cooperation such as the virtues of civility and tolerance, of reasonableness and the sense of fairness".<sup>124</sup> One of the most important contributions of a culture of tolerance consists in its attempt to overcome different forms of discrimination.<sup>125</sup> Rawls underlines that tolerance is not only a matter of practical rationality or "imperative of rea-

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118 Ibid. 152.

119 Ibid. 152.

120 Rawls 2005: 217.

121 Ibid. 154.

122 Ibid. 157f.

123 Ibid. 159; see: Bayle 2016.

124 Rawls 2005: 194.

125 Ibid. 195.

son”<sup>126</sup>, but also a matter of “feeling that sustain fair social cooperation”.<sup>127</sup> A culture of *mutual toleration* allows an atmosphere of *mutual trust*. Tolerance is therefore more than conformity with the practical rationality. It involves confidence and loyalty not only to the political justice but also to different religious, philosophical or moral values and principles. One can describe the duty of public civility as *loyalty to the principle of mutual tolerance*, enabling to respect the fact of pluralism.

#### 2.4 Tolerance as public reason and public use of rationality

A communicative way to understand tolerance as milestone for a *culture of communication* is to show its *rational character*. For Rawls, goodness involves rationality.<sup>128</sup> Due to this tolerance is mainly a political virtue for the public goodness of convivence, of peace and mutual respect.

Rawls describes three aspects of *public reason*: “Public reason (...) is public in three ways: as the reason of citizens as such, it is the reason of the public; its subject is the good of the public and matters of fundamental justice; and its nature and content is public, being given by the ideals and principles expressed by society’s conception of the political justice”.<sup>129</sup> In this context, tolerance is not a private option but a *duty of public use of rationality* from different background cultures, “from within (...) own reasonable doctrines”.<sup>130</sup> Each of us has a *moral duty of civility*<sup>131</sup> as “*duty of fair play*”.<sup>132</sup>

We live in different worlds that are simultaneously co-existent in the spatio-temporality of our different contexts of the present time. This *post-modern awareness* of huge and complex horizons of plurality of traditions,

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126 Rawls 2016: 25.

127 Rawls 2005: 195.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid. 213.

130 Ibid. 218.

131 Ibid. 217.

132 Rawls 1999b: 117ff; 195: “Players in a game do not protest against there being different positions, such as that of batter, pitcher, catcher, and the like, nor to there being various privileges and powers specified by the rules. Nor do citizens of a country object to there being the different offices of government such as that of president, senator, governor, judge, and so on, each with its special rights and duties. It is not differences of this kind that are normally thought of as inequalities, but differences in the resulting distribution established by a practice, or made possible by it, of the things men strive to attain or to avoid.”

ways of life, understandings, and the diverse nature of being and thinking makes tolerance a key virtue of public reason, of civility, and of religious authenticity as well. An increasing awareness about the texture<sup>133</sup> of reality and truth can help us to become more tolerant. Speaking with John Rawls, tolerance can be regarded as a utilitarian tool of “amour-propre”<sup>134</sup>: everyone is interested in and looking for a stable, secure and peaceful society. Each society as such needs inner harmony (see Plato’s eudaimonistic ethis).<sup>135</sup> Plato, for instance, thought that the *structure of justice* is similar between an individual and a state organisation.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, tolerance has to be promoted by individuals, by society and by religious and philosophical reason as well. We need indeed a *common sense on tolerance* as a foundation of a “civic culture”, that allows “political, economic, and social cooperation”.<sup>137</sup> The premise of this undertaking is the trust in the human ability to find rational and cooperative solutions to the problem of violence and intolerance. Each socio-cultural solution needs the process of cultivation by education of the new generations.

Is there an end to this process of education? If we refer to John Rawls’ concept of “moral learning”, this process is perpetual, individual, and social. This means that not only individuals need to be open or active subjects of moral learning but also corporative identities like societies, religions or other collectives. In this context, I would like to mention the meaning of “cultural memory”, a remarkable contribution of Jan Assmann.<sup>138</sup> A *culture of tolerance* is not possible without “healing of memories”, i.e. without a critical analysis of the historical and real conflictual potential of religious absolutism, fanaticism, and fundamentalism. Religious wars, persecution, inquisition, colonialization<sup>139</sup>, holocaust are indeed confirmations of the “demonic madness” of the mankind.<sup>140</sup> “Yet

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133 See: Munteanu 2020: 329–351.

134 Rawls 1999a: 34.

135 Schriefl 2017: 290–294.

136 Platon 1998: 63: “We speak of justice both in relation to the individual as well as to the whole state”. Plato compares individual and state with small and capital letter; 167: “The same elements that are found in the state also dwell in the soul of each individual and in the same number”.

137 Ibid. 19.

138 Assmann 1999.

139 Buzzi 2017: 113: “the Christian conquistadores” wiped out “entire pre-Columbian cultures”. “Terrible violence occurred – in spectacular contradiction to the Christian faith (...). An analogous story could be told regarding the first Christian missions in the Far East”.

140 Rawls 1999a: 22.

we must not allow these great evils of the past and present to undermine our hope for the future of our society as belonging to a Society of liberal and decent Peoples around the world. Otherwise, the wrongful, evil, and demonic conduct of others destroys us, too, and seals their victory. Rather, we must support and strengthen our hope by developing a reasonable and workable conception of political right and justice applying to the relations between peoples”.<sup>141</sup>

A culture of tolerance as common sense (as a result of a social and political agreement) creates an *atmosphere of equality* and of respect for the free, independent and equal people, that share the same dignity, liberty of conscience and equal human rights. A culture of tolerance presupposes some basic moral and political values about the relations between citizens. One of these values is the “criterion of reciprocity”.<sup>142</sup>

“When political liberalism speaks of a reasonable overlapping consensus of comprehensive doctrines, it means that all of these doctrines, both religious and nonreligious, support a political conception of justice underwriting a constitutional democratic society whose principles, ideals, and standards satisfy the criterion of reciprocity. Thus, all reasonable doctrines affirm such a society with its corresponding political institutions: equal basic rights and liberties for all citizens, including liberty of conscience and the freedom of religion”.<sup>143</sup> All other doctrines that do not agree with the principles of a free society “are not tolerable. Their principles and ideals do not satisfy the criterion of reciprocity, and in various ways they fail to establish the equal basic liberties”.<sup>144</sup> Rawls emphasizes that “unreasonable doctrines are a threat to democratic institutions”.<sup>145</sup> Besides, it is necessary for citizens to keep their devotion to the ideal of public reason in order to contribute to the “vitality of the public political culture”.<sup>146</sup> This means that a duty of public civility involves the duty of tolerance, of reciprocity, and of dialogue with members of different traditions.

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141 Ibid.

142 Ibid. 132.

143 Ibid. 172.

144 Ibid. 173.

145 Ibid. 178f.

146 Ibid. 175.

### *3 Religious resources for a culture of tolerance*

John Rawls' understanding of tolerance as foundation of a just society is deeply connected with the concept of reciprocity. The duty of tolerance as duty of public civility is actually a duty of reciprocity or mutuality in and for a fair society. There are many ways to promote or illuminate reciprocity from a Christian point of view. One of them is the concept of "communion of a communicative freedom", promoted by Heinrich Bedford-Strohm.<sup>147</sup> He underlines not only the meaning of pluralism from the perspective of pneumatology as "productive force of communion"<sup>148</sup> but points out different contexts of reciprocity: reciprocity of agape, reciprocity of "self-forgetfulness" love of my neighbour, reciprocity of the Golden Rule, and eschatological reciprocity.<sup>149</sup> These powerful resources for tolerance and reciprocity contribute to a "social culture of solidarity".<sup>150</sup> The issue of tolerance is a matter of structural justice.<sup>151</sup> Successful social structures of the modern societies are *structures of reciprocity*.<sup>152</sup> A meaningful aspect of Christian understanding of reciprocity might be the existential one. Reciprocity makes mutual recognition possible and leads to a fulfilled human existence: "to become for your neighbour a Christ" (M. Luther) means a christocentric view on a "reciprocal human being" (*"reziprokes Menschsein"*).<sup>153</sup> Another central aspect of reciprocity from the point of view of Christian social ethics is the duty to *shape reality* (*"Wirklichkeitsgestaltung"*)<sup>154</sup> like "love through structures"<sup>155</sup> in order to grow more justice and commonwealth. Reciprocity has a "community founding significance" (*"gemeinschaftsstiftende Bedeutung"*).<sup>156</sup> This transformative reciprocity is empowered by "the passion for justice".<sup>157</sup>

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147 See: Bedford-Strohm 2018.

148 Ibid. 324f.

149 Ibid. 237ff. Eschatological reciprocity can be understood as a creative vision of the eternal social life transfigured by the divine sociality as perfect rationality of supreme love.

150 Ibid. 444.

151 Blattner 1985: 368: "The uprise towards tolerance means for ethics the uprise towards a changed structure"; 371: "Ethics of tolerance as a culture of relationship".

152 Bedford-Strohm 2018: 368, 379.

153 Ibid. 281.

154 Ibid. 35.

155 Ibid. 320f.

156 Ibid. 375.

157 Ibid. 377.

From a Christian point of view, we can speak about the creative potential of *protological* and *eschatological imagination*. Both in paradise and in “heaven”, i.e. in God’s Kingdom, we find images of the conditions of perfect coexistence, reciprocal respect, love, openness, dialogue, and justice. The world of paradisiacal condition is a world full of fresh light, optimism, energy, innocence, and expectations. Both perspectives, the one of paradise and of eternal Kingdom, are marked by the concept of God’s presence and divine unmediated immediacy.

### 3.1 *Tolerance as an emergence process*

In the process philosophy, tolerance is understood as a process. The Heidelbergian theologian Michael Welker speaks of emergence processes initiated and sustained by the Holy Spirit, who creates new and complex conditions.<sup>158</sup> The work of the Spirit is creative, re-creative and peacemaking. Furthermore, without justice, there is no peace. An important prerequisite for peace and justice is the liberating experience of the new, fleshly heart. The healing work of the Spirit breaks up the imperial monocultures – religious, nationalistic, racist, sexist etc. and creates sensitivity for differences as well as for “poly-individual diversity and abundance”.<sup>159</sup> The longing for power, narcissism and egoism can be overcome only in the *force field* of the Spirit.<sup>160</sup> The creative work of the Spirit reinforces a context-sensitive and liberating “ethos of free self-withdrawal”.<sup>161</sup> The Spirit of God enables “understanding” “in the midst of the rich diversity of human languages, cultures, traditions and visions of the future. The Spirit of God awakens joy in the power fields of faith, hope and love”.<sup>162</sup>

True tolerance is thus understood in process theology as the will and action of God, who as force field enables human participation and actions. Without the force field of love, faith and hope there is no creative tolerance. Any form of successful tolerance can also be described as anticipation of God’s Kingdom. Therefore, Christian theology offers exciting resources

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158 Welker 2010: 170: “The emergence processes initiated by the power of the Spirit enable those affected by their work to act independently and, at the same time, to radiate to their surroundings in a way that bears witness to them”.

159 Ibid. 34f.

160 Ibid. 39ff.

161 Ibid. 224, 232.

162 Ibid. 312.



for a culture of tolerance, with eschatological orientation and rationality “as in heaven, so on earth”.

### *3.2 Tolerance as an intersubjective attitude*

In my opinion, a vivid culture of tolerance cannot be prescribed. Rather, it has to do with the personal, intersubjective affirmation of a *culture of affective communication*. Without an “attitude of intersubjective openness”, no affective communication is possible that takes the affectivity or emotions of others into account.<sup>163</sup> Even Rawls recognises the importance of the sphere of affectivity or affective communication as part of “moral constitution of the human nature”.<sup>164</sup>

The affirmation of tolerance as capable of intersubjectivity means the assumption of a mutual, affective and in this sense truly reciprocal participation in the basic attitude of the other. This way of “consentire” might be regarded as a premise for the establishment of true sociality. The self-commitment to tolerance as a duty of civility cannot be established as a “public reason” without an intersubjective validity or affirmation justice. Values of *community*, *justice* and *sociality* needs to be affirmed both by individuals and by society. The principle of reciprocity, i.e. “mutual tolerance”, belongs to the “normative-epistemic justification of tolerance”.<sup>165</sup>

### *3.3 The ability of people to relate and their obligation to relate*

The theological anthropology underlines the inviolable dignity of the human being as *imago dei* even today, without drawing conclusions for the *social responsibility*. I see one of these consistent and direct conclusions in the necessary self-commitment to an *ecumenical culture of tolerance*, *self-limitation*, and the *acceptance of the other in his otherness*. This might be described as internalization of a “social grammar of responsibility”.<sup>166</sup> The perception of the intersubjective nature of man as well as of truth is significant in this context. A conception of truth as intersubjectivity leads to overcoming intolerance in Church and society. Such an effort to portray

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163 Tugendhat 1993: 296.

164 Rawls 2012: 623.

165 See: Buddeberg/Forst 2016: 11, 25f.

166 Vogt 2019: 39f.

God as Holy Trinity, absolute community of love, highest rationality and empathy, can be found in Dumitru Staniloae's Theology, who called the mystery of God "structure of supreme love" and "intersubjectivity".<sup>167</sup>

Theological relational anthropology understands the person not only as capable of relations but also realized by the plenty of intersubjective relations. Christian anthropology hereby affirms the human rights to relationship, to participation, to recognition. The understanding of the transcendental, inviolable relationality offers a new perspective or a new quality of relationality and tolerance. Due to man's uniqueness, likeness to God and ability to relate, human dignity is inviolable from the very beginning as a dignity bestowed by God. Thus, every person has an intrinsic, inviolable value as a person that needs to be respected by other people.<sup>168</sup> This is a central anthropological premise of tolerance.

### *3.4 The human being as cultural creation and creator of culture*

Today's cultural anthropology describes man not only as a creation of culture, but also as an active and free creative subject of culture. It is known that individual philosophers and theologians have been able through their creative power and ingenuity to shape cultures over millennia. Classic examples are Plato and Aristotle, who are now recognized as champions of philosophy. A. N. Whitehead goes so far as to esteem the whole Western philosophy as a footnote to Plato and Aristotle. Theologians like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, the Cappadocian Fathers, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas shaped theology over centuries. The "intense thinker and sharp dialectician, gifted psychologist and brilliant stylist and ultimately passionate believer Aurelius Augustine" created a synthesis between Christian faith and Neoplatonic thinking, "an epoch-making theological macro-model for almost a millennium".<sup>169</sup> A paradigm or model of explanation involves a "constellation of theological premises, concepts, values".<sup>170</sup>

"The development of new forms of thought out of the content of faith"<sup>171</sup> is possible and necessary. Today's feminist theologies state that a change of paradigms is necessary, due to the fact that some theological premises strengthen certain patriarchal ideologies that have led to sexism,

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167 See: Staniloae 1998: 245; Munteanu 2003: 157f.

168 Ibid. 133.

169 Küng 1984: 54.

170 Ibid. 53.

171 Welker 2010: 224, footnote 3.

oppression, marginalization and discrimination of women in Church and society.<sup>172</sup> Therefore, cultural and theological structures of thought and all preconditions of our thinking need a thorough revision so that a *cultural and political ethos of liberation* can be realized. An *ethos of liberation* “does not only express who we are, but also constitutes who we are”.<sup>173</sup>

Every theology and every understanding of justice and tolerance is “situated”, i.e. in a certain place, in a certain context, in a certain culture, with a certain language and own vision. By affirming certain texts or interpretative traditions, we situate ourselves as human beings and acquire an identity. What happens when the knowledge systems or cultures we grow up in are *discriminatory, patriarchal, sexist, racist, ideological*? How can such cultural sins and *crypto heresies* be eliminated or overcome?

One possibility would be the conscious perception and identification of the societal-social and political problems of our society and our time. In a discriminatory society, common sense cannot be normative or reliable for just action because the discriminatory habit tarnishes common sense. “People converge in their beliefs about *x* because they are suitably sensitive to truths about *x*.”<sup>174</sup> The reflexive perception alone is not enough to unleash processes of transformation. An ideology establishes a “system of knowledge and rule” that Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza calls “structural sin”.<sup>175</sup> “Ideology can be defined in summary as the making of sense and meaning in the service of power. Ideology structures how we see and make sense of the world. It is thus a range of meaning-making practices that determine what counts as reality, how things really are”.<sup>176</sup> A rising aware-

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172 Schüssler Fiorenza 2007: 158f; 76: Schüssler Fiorenza describes “patriarchy as a pyramidal, political-cultural (...) system of domination structured by gender, race, class, religious and cultural affiliation, and other historical formulations of domination.”

173 Ibid. 71.

174 More 1993: 218.

175 Schüssler Fiorenza 2007: 134: “Such structural sin is composed of three elements: 1. it is practiced and realized through the institutional injustices, dehumanizing measures, and collective discriminations. 2. it is not recognized as injustice because it is legitimized and perpetuated by the dominant cultural-religious symbols, value systems, and discourses such as theology. 3. Structural sin creates a collective and individual consciousness that is alienated from itself. This alienated consciousness is perpetuated as self-evident and natural through kyriarchal ideology; it is internalized and appropriated through education, media, and socio-religious socialization.”

176 Ibid. 135.

ness and a “theoretical visualization” of the complex interrelationships that an ideology establishes are required.<sup>177</sup>

The *academic discourse*, thus, bears a historical responsibility with regard to the production of knowledge as a contribution to the *humanization of the world* and man. In my opinion, this kind of knowledge production is also involved in the establishment and awareness of the significance of *proactive tolerance*. It is about promoting a culture of equality that supports a *political ethics of peace*. Given all the positive dynamics of proactive tolerance, we must not disregard athematic intolerance. A culture of tolerance is vis-à-vis intolerance, discrimination, injustice, racism, sexism, violence, and the like intolerant behaviour. A limitless tolerance cannot be tolerated, due to “the right not to tolerate the intolerant”.<sup>178</sup> Therefore, the description of tolerance as a “conflict term”<sup>179</sup> is quite appropriate, although the intrinsic rationality (“Sitz im Leben”) of tolerance lies in overcoming conflicts.

Proactive tolerance thus represents *liberation of the human being*, namely liberation from one’s own ignorance, aggressiveness, ideological blindness, and religious-cultural ideologies. There is no proactive tolerance without an *education to tolerance*, in the basic attitude of respect for the voice and the dignity of the other.

As a contribution to a polyphonic, pluralistic culture of difference, proactive tolerance thrives on the cultural and religious resources of different traditions.<sup>180</sup>

### 3.5 Ecumenical culture of proactive tolerance

Values have a connective function, just like language, memory, and hope. People who share the same values are consciously or unconsciously connected with each other. Proactive tolerance represents a cultural horizon that is integrative, connective, and identity-forming. By affirming proactive tolerance as a “key value of modern, plural societies” and as a “key virtue of democracy”<sup>181</sup>, the ecumenical horizon of peace-building tolerance and the living culture of conviviality emerge and exist.

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177 Schüssler Fiorenza 2007: 69–71f.

178 Plesu 2004: 29, quotation from Popper; see: Härle 2008: 132ff; Ricoeur 2000: 26f.

179 Vogt/Husmann 2019: 7.

180 See: Munteanu 2020: 329–351.

181 Vogt/Husmann 2019: 3.

We can describe proactive tolerance also as one of the “kingdom’s values”.<sup>182</sup> Tolerance does not exist and cannot exist alone but only in connection with justice (“basic justice”) and freedom, with economic, social and cultural human rights.<sup>183</sup> The philosophical-political concept of tolerance also needs a connection with the *living sources of spirituality*. That is, there is a unity between *spirituality* and *political practice*: “The affairs of this world, including economic ones, cannot be detached from the hunger for spiritual nourishment in human hearts”.<sup>184</sup> Tolerance includes a “sense for transcendence” and an imitation of God’s justice who “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45).<sup>185</sup> “In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas”<sup>186</sup> is a well-known tolerance promoting sentence of the ecumenical wisdom.

### *3.6 Social and self-conditioning for tolerance*

As a social being, everyone is subject to social conditioning. Attitudes, thoughts, ideas, and emotions of the individual person find no thematic expression without the horizon of sociality. “Mind is the appearance of significant symbols in behavior. It is the acceptance of the social process of communication by the individual”.<sup>187</sup> “Through society, the impulsive animal becomes a rational being, a human”.<sup>188</sup> In *social behaviorism*, the importance of language as the foundation of identity is underpinned. One thinks “only in the context of language”.<sup>189</sup> As humans, we live in

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182 See: Harakas 2007: 107.

183 Bedford-Strohm 2018a: 89f, 100f.

184 Der Wirtschaftshirtenbrief der katholischen Bischöfe der USA, in: Bedford-Strohm 2018a: 58.

185 Plesu 2004: 30; see: Schmidinger 2015: 26: further sources in the New Testament – Luke 6, 27–36; 6, 37–38.

186 de Dominis 1617: 676; see:

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/In\\_necessariis\\_unitas,\\_in\\_dubiis\\_libertas,\\_in\\_omnibus\\_caritas#cite\\_note-buch-QcVFAAAAcAAJ-676-1](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_necessariis_unitas,_in_dubiis_libertas,_in_omnibus_caritas#cite_note-buch-QcVFAAAAcAAJ-676-1).

187 Mead 1978: 25.

188 Ibid. 28.

189 Mead 1978: 41; see: Schleiermacher 1977: 77: “no one can think without words. Without words the thought is not yet finished and clear”; 78: “The individual is conditioned in his thinking by the (common) language and can think only those thoughts which already have their designation in his language”; see: Wittgenstein 2019, 67, 141: “The boundaries of my language mean the boundaries of my

linguistic communities that shape our thinking, our identity, and our self-image. Each Church is a community of memory, of understanding, of interpretation of reality but also of responsibility.<sup>190</sup> “The ability to use language requires a shared capacity to see similarities, but (...) the capacity to see ethical similarities goes beyond anything that can be adequately be expressed in language”.<sup>191</sup>

Moral codes and social structure belongs together.<sup>192</sup> The *sociology of knowledge* shows that the human being cannot be and act without the social sphere to which he or she belongs. Each human being is socially conditioned, not only intellectually but also morally. Therefore, the sense of justice mentioned by Rawls needs to be embedded in the social horizon of community. Without language and community, each human being is blind and not able to think properly. Tolerance is a fragile concept as democracy is, too.

A contemporary *culture of tolerance* as culture of convivence and political responsibility can be creative and influent only if it takes into account the historical and fragmentary nature of the human knowledge (*conditio historica*).

### 3.7 *Tolerance for understanding – tolerance as creative power for responsible shaping of the society's social structure*

Each moral philosophy needs a “set of ideas” in order to realize a cognitive “picture of ethical thought”. Moral philosophy can help to “recreate ethical life” or at least to “understand it”.<sup>193</sup>

The concept of “proactive tolerance” can serve as meaningful “embodied rationality” of this “picture of ethical thought”.

The premise of duty of tolerance is a necessary step for a rationally reflective way of life both for individuals and for the entire society as such. An essential question of the individual and social ethics is: “How one should live”? How should individual and social life look like, so that those circumstances are worth living under? How can we contribute to more justice, equality, and tolerance in the society? How can the society

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world”; Durkheim 2020, 642: “A man who does not think in concepts cannot be a man, for he would not be a social being”.

190 Bedford-Strohm 2018a: 139.

191 Williams 2006: 97f.

192 See: Bryant 1996.

193 Williams 2006: viif.

contribute to protect human rights, human dignity, and human equality? A culture of tolerance is necessary for both individuals and collectives. Without tolerance, there cannot be peace; without justice, there cannot be tolerance. On the one hand, a culture of tolerance can establish the rule of reciprocity and its rationally persuasive meaning. On the other, we need to accomplish *the duty of tolerance as duty of public civility* even when this reciprocity is missing, i.e. when this rule of reciprocity is disobeyed or ignored by the others. Even though reciprocity is missing, the duty of tolerance is a duty of self-respect.

Our society is a “social construction” that needs resources for tolerance and convivence in order to be civilized. A culture of tolerance cannot be established without institutions of justice. In a “well-ordered-society”, as Rawls mentioned above, we need to trust and to establish such institutions of law and order, like a “Supreme Court”, as public embedded and constitutional established realities of social justice, of equal rights, and of equal dignity.

Even a secular or utilitarian society can promote “virtues” of sociality, solidarity, and respect with its own frames of structural rationality. Each kind of socialization involves cultivation of some kind of virtues or basics of an “ethical thought”. Even a society of robbers needs some rules in order to coordinate activities effectively. The law of tolerance is the minimal virtue of a society interested in decency and peaceful convivence. John Rawls’ theory of justice as fairness shows that “ethical egoism” or self-interest does not necessarily need to come into conflict with the commonwealth. In matters of tolerance, justice, fairness, and reciprocity, all members of the society can benefit from the cultivation of those individual and social virtues as well.

Where does this “duty” originate? Is the concept “duty of tolerance” a deontological pattern of ethical thought? The Kantian roots of Rawls’ ethics of fairness are more than evident. Besides, we cannot reduce the duty of tolerance to a deontological way of thinking that is meaningful only in such system of ethical reasoning.

One can describe both “duty” and “tolerance” as concepts that are open to different sources of ethical reasoning. “The drive toward a *rationalistic conception of rationality* comes (...) from social features of the modern world, which impose on personal deliberation and on the idea of practical reason itself a model drawn from a particular understanding of public rationality. This understanding requires in principle every decision to be

based on ground that can be discursively explained”.<sup>194</sup> This means that we cannot impose definitive concepts or ideals of rationality on the public or public reason. Public reason and ethical way of reasoning need to be affirmed, confirmed by people’s experience, as it will be explained below.

“We are dependent on concepts such as ‘human dignity’ and ‘human rights’ that are open to interpretation and justification. Only in this way can there be a basis for intercultural dialogue. Only in this way does the possibility of overarching consensus remain open”.<sup>195</sup> Similar to the concept of *human dignity* or *human rights*, the concept of *tolerance* has to be regarded as “begründungsoffen” (open to justification) as well. If we take into consideration the “retarded love” between Christian ethics and human rights<sup>196</sup>, we need to openly appreciate the historical achievements of secular reason. Secularisation has a positive and a historical significance: “Overall, the development towards a secular and religiously neutral state has proven to be a blessing. Religious freedom can only be guaranteed if the state does not identify with a particular religion. (...) The state can be completely secular precisely because society is not completely secular. Yes, the state has to be consistently secular precisely because society is not obliged to be consistently secular. Only thanks to the secularity and neutrality of the state can society offer that free space in which the coexistence of the religious and the secular is possible. Religious peace can only succeed in a secular state”.<sup>197</sup>

Religious and secular reason ought to stay open and dialogical, in order to avoid intolerance. “*Pathologies of religion*”<sup>198</sup> like fundamentalism<sup>199</sup>, fanaticism, or terrorism can be healed by the light of reason. “*Pathologies of reason*” (like the use of atomic bombs or research with human embryos<sup>200</sup>) can be corrected by the light of religious cognition. A “polyphonic correlation” between faith and reason should serve as foundation of a culture of tolerance.<sup>201</sup>

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194 Ibid. 18.

195 Bedford-Strohm 2011: 19; Vögele 2008; Huber 2015.

196 Bedford-Strohm 2011: 10f.

197 Huber 2015: 9, 11.

198 Ratzinger 2005: 56f.

199 See: Boff 2007; see: Decker 2012: 143: “Mass persecutions of witches and sorcerers organized by the authorities have only occurred in European history”; see: Grün Schloss 2009: 163ff.

200 See: Ratzinger 2005: 56f; Habermas 2001; Bedford-Strohm 2004: 121–140.

201 Ratzinger 2005: 56f.



In order to understand the “duty of tolerance as duty of public civility”, we need at the same time to accept and to promote the *public significance of religion*. We can speak with Heinrich Bedford-Strohm about a public responsibility or “public mandate” of the Church to be a “public voice for moral and humanity”.<sup>202</sup>

To be “salt of the earth and light of the world” is hard work for one's own cultivation and humanization of the world, as well as for the social shape of the Church and society.<sup>203</sup> The “social structural change of the public”<sup>204</sup> needs the orientation knowledge and the cultural formative power<sup>205</sup> of the Christian tradition. Public Theology serves as illuminating power and moral reasoning. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm speaks about Public Theology as communicative “pastoral”, “discursive”, “political-consultative” and “prophetical”.<sup>206</sup> “If civil discourse is something like the 'beating heart' of society (Bert von den Brink), then the value orientations, on which it is based, can be understood as the oxygen without which this discourse would soon come to a standstill. Places, such as churches, where they are reproduced again and again and continuously nurtured, would then be something like the lungs of society. Only in such places, where discourses also develop affective binding effects, consensuses, generated by argumentation, can develop action-motivating effects.”<sup>207</sup>

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202 See: Heinrich Bedford-Strohm 2015: 13.

203 See: Wolfgang Huber 1991: 645: “The orientation of the church’s action to the commandment of love, its understanding as social diakonia, finally also excludes the separation of the political responsibility of the individual Christian from the political responsibility of the church. The responsibility for peace, justice, joy, the responsibility for the reduction of violence, of bondage and of need is not only a responsibility of the individual Christians, but a responsibility of the church as 'earthly-historical form of existence of Jesus Christ.’”

204 Jürgen Habermas 2019a: 225ff.

205 See: Heinrich Bedford-Strohm 2015: 28; see: Wolfgang Huber 1991: 623: “1. The public action of the church is service to the public claim of the gospel; the publicity of proclamation is therefore the core of all public action of the church. 2. the public action of the church is diaconal action; it is the attempt to correspond in being for others to the being of Jesus for others”.

206 See: Heinrich Bedford-Strohm 2015: 47f: he underlines “four dimensions of the public speech of the Church”; see: also Vogt/Schäfers 2021, 8f.

207 Heinrich Bedford-Strohm 2018: 458.

### 3.8 Tolerance as ethical disposition to structure intersubjective relations

The concept of tolerance can become an ethical force or powerful reason that regulates conduct, ethical behavior, “ethical dispositions”, and “reactions to others”.<sup>208</sup> Words are meaningful only if their rationality is internalized in someone’s own worldview. Practical reason and reason as such can transform the self and the society, i.e. the personal and social life, only if they reach the deepest levels of “internalization”. Internalization of virtues as interpersonal or political rationalities means both “self-control” and “dispositions of action, desire, and feeling”.<sup>209</sup> As virtue of practical reason, tolerance can promote or inhibit certain reactions to other people. It can be described as an “intelligent disposition” or cultural instrument that intelligently forms the intelligent conduct of the rational agent. If we act rationally, our behaviour is rational and we live a rational life. Only then we are rational beings. Commitment to tolerance is commitment to the rational patterns of communicative reason and justice.

A *rational conversation* is possible only if there is something like “minimal trace of an ethical consciousness”.<sup>210</sup> Tolerance and culture of tolerance are desirable even from the perspective or in virtue of our own interest. It serves as foundation of a well-ordered society and for an atmosphere of peace, of trust, and of reciprocity. Some of the premises of tolerance deal with the *self-awareness* as responsible person in the society and with the *principle of impartiality* that harmonize the interests of different persons: “The idea of a rational agent is not simply the third-personal idea of a creature whose behavior is to be explained in terms of beliefs and desires. A rational agent acts on reasons, and this goes beyond his acting in accordance with some regularity or law, even one that refers to beliefs and desires. If he acts on reasons, then he must not only be an agent but reflect on himself as an agent, and this involves his seeing himself as one agent among others. So he stands back from his own desires and interests, and sees them from a standpoint that is not that of his desires and interests. Nor is it the standpoint of anyone else’s desires and interests. That is the standpoint of impartiality. So it is appropriate for the rational agent, with his aspiration to be genuinely free and rational, to see himself as making rules that will harmonize the interests of all rational agents”.<sup>211</sup>

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208 See: Williams 2006: 35f.

209 Ibid. 35.

210 Ibid. 28.

211 Ibid. 65f.

We live, think, and act *in the shadows* of our influential ancestors that might be described also as founders or initiators of the *moral language*<sup>212</sup>, of “moral grammar”, or “moral topography”.<sup>213</sup> Each language is a kind of logical landscape that involves a *semantic structure of the reality*. For each human being, tolerance sounds differently due to the different experience and specific levels of understanding. On the other hand, we can speak about “sematic axes” like tolerance, justice, liberation, or “implicite axioms”.<sup>214</sup> An analysis of the “inferential structure of a language”<sup>215</sup> increases the meaning of the language as a code of mutual behaviour. As human beings, we do not grow up in an entirely natural world but in an already ethically shaped world that we assume during the processes of socialization through which we receive cultural, or religious identity. Our self-understanding, our expectations, and orientation are deeply marked by reasons embedded in words, in sanctified or “holy” images. On the other hand, each culture is dynamic, caught in a process of effective interference with other cultures: “Cultures, subcultures, fragments of cultures, constantly meet one another and exchange and modify practices and attitudes”.<sup>216</sup>

We need to bear in mind that a culture or cultivation of tolerance is also confronted with dangerous psychological processes of disinformation or spiritual malformation: “If you were to be brainwashed by a certain religious group, you would strongly identify your interests with those of the group”.<sup>217</sup> A culture of tolerance has to deal with ideologies or realities of “brainwashed believers”. In awareness of the real dangers of nationalism, religious fanaticism, and terrorism, a culture of tolerance is the only way or tool for peaceful coexistence. Tolerance has to be accepted as virtue of a just society and as medicine or therapy for a disordered world. “We need to live in society (...) and if we are to live in society, some ethical considerations or other must be embodied in the lives of quite a lot of people”.<sup>218</sup> Tolerance belongs to the minimal “set of values” or minimal moral standards of a civilized society, like a sense for justice. Tolerance is necessary not only for the development of human personality or psychological health, but also for the human happiness and well-being

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212 Ibid. 85. At the other hand each of us has his own personal shadows.

213 See: Taylor 1996: 207.

214 Bedford-Strohm 2018a: 146, footnote 30.

215 Peregrin/Svoboda: 4.

216 Williams 2006: 158.

217 Ibid. 42.

218 Ibid. 45.

in a peaceful world. Tolerance is an achievement of the human culture and a civic duty or virtue of political and religious responsibility. Tolerance is at the same time a matter of *duty to oneself*, a “self-regarding obligation” as rational agent. As responsible subjects, we need to take into account the positive human potential. There are huge possibilities of shaping the social world that are waiting to be realized. These possibilities of a better, just world can be seen also as a duty corresponding to the claims of self-respect and of respect towards other rational agents, and as obligation to fight for a just society for rational human beings.

Without “corrective reflection” we cannot be a “reflective self” with “reflective deliberation” and “reflective freedom”.<sup>219</sup> For our own sake and the sake of our social world, “prereflective beliefs” and “prereflected dispositions”, that at the very first glance seems to be self-evident truths, should be filtered by the “reflective self” through ethical judgments or intellectual analysis<sup>220</sup> even as “self-interested rational choice” that respects a fair equality and the liberty of the others.<sup>221</sup> Mature *ethical thought, experience, and life* are characterised by a “reflective equilibrium”<sup>222</sup>, a process and a result of searching coherence. Another aspect of mature ethical thought, experience and life is the “inferential reasoning”, that allows to establish “standards for acceptable inference”, “rules of inference”, and “inferential practice”.<sup>223</sup> For instance, a world in which sexual, ethnical, or social discrimination belong to the “common sense” of a specific tradition, due to different colonializations of the mind, only a “reflective equilibrium” might be helpful. This reflective equilibrium does not mean that only a secular rationality is responsible for the present and future social world. Religious reasoning and secular rationality are complementary, boundary expanding, and communicative through the medium of reason.<sup>224</sup> According to the Christian faith the world is not only “in need of improvement”, but it is also able to be improved.<sup>225</sup> For instance, the *eschatological imagination* as anticipatorily rationality is a critical and creative rationality at

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219 Ibid. 68f.

220 Ibid. 69–73.

221 Ibid. 78f.

222 Williams 2006: 99; Daniels 1996; Pogge 2007: 162f.

223 Daniels 2020.

224 Bedford-Strohm 2018a: 139.

225 Ibid. 143f.

once. On the other hand, there is a “pre-structure of understanding”<sup>226</sup> that keeps the religious truth and imagination meaningful and creative.

We need to believe that through a critical and self-critical process of intercultural dialogue, liberation from pathological premises of our intellectual landscape might follow. Each interreligious and interdisciplinary dialogue opens “inferential landscapes”<sup>227</sup> that allow new levels or fields of rationality, tolerance, and justice. Contemporary *paradigms of theology*<sup>228</sup> like liberation or feminist theology, for instance, make clear, that wrong hermeneutics have malicious social consequences. “Patriarchal symbolism of God serves to legitimize and strengthen patriarchal social structures in the family, society and church”.<sup>229</sup>

To summarize, a culture of tolerance can enjoy or be marked by many fields of thought or traditions of thought. Religious tolerance has to be tolerant and open-minded towards the secular resources of tolerance and vice versa. One can describe tolerance as rooted in the common sense or common language or common imagination. We can also differentiate between a bottom-up and a top-down tolerance, i.e. a tolerance from the historical reality and a tolerance from above as an inspiring imagination of a perfect society. Both roots of tolerance, from the experiences of the past and from the anticipation or creative imagination of the future, should serve to achieve a greater tolerance, justice, and liberty in the world. Both imperatives of reason and of faith lead and should lead to a tolerant ethical wisdom and ethical behaviour. We can describe both imperatives as a duty or responsibility in front of the human creative potential to strive for a better world. Pro-active tolerance does not only involve mutual respect but also an *appreciative recognition*<sup>230</sup> of the other in his or her otherness. Proactive tolerance can be defined as an essential *duty and identity marker of Christians*, who ought to be “children of love and peace” and should hereby contribute to the establishment of peace and justice in the society through a *culture of convivence*. “What is peace? What else than the loving disposition towards our fellow. And what is the contrary to love? Hatred,

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226 Habermas 2019: 193: “The pre-structure of understanding is universal – in all cognitive performances the moments of draft and discovery complement each other”; see: Durkheim 2020, 108: “Today it is generally acknowledged that law, morality, scientific thought itself came from religion”; cf. Bedford-Strohm 2018a: 143, footnote 24.

227 Peregrin/Svoboda 2017: 137f.

228 See: Bosch 2011.

229 Johnson 1994: 61.

230 Klein 2014: 63f.

wrath, anger, jealousy, vindictiveness, hypocrisy, disaster provoked by war” (St. Gregory of Nyssa).<sup>231</sup>

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231 Tsetsis 2007: 57; see: Harakas 2004: “He who seeks peace, seeks Christ, for he is the peace” (St. Basil). St. Basil’s understanding is similar with John Locke’s description of Christ as “Prince of Peace”.

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# **Tolerance, Peace and Democracy**



# Christian Peace Ethics and Its Relevance for Tolerance and Reconciliation in Ukraine

Markus Vogt

The goal of tolerance is to make peace possible. This does not mean the absence of differences, but the willingness to deal with them nonviolently and fairly. In his most recent encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (2020), Pope Francis primarily lays out the important role that dialogue and the awareness of fraternal togetherness play in order to make peace possible. It is mainly a peace encyclical, that has considerable implications for Ukraine as well. In Ukraine the decisive factor, however, is not the dialogue with Islam, which is particularly emphasized in the encyclical, but rather the dialogue between the different Christian denominations on the eastern borders of Europe where religious, cultural, and national differences overlap.

To the extent that religion is always a factor in the formation and ascription of identity, the churches are at the center of the conflicts. In the sense of proactive tolerance, they have an obligation to actively contribute to understanding and reconciliation and to oppose the instrumentalization of religion for social exclusion. This can only succeed if they deal self-critically with their own ambivalences and if they differentiate between what is central to their self-image and what is of secondary importance. It is important to rediscover that peace is the center of the Christian message and the point of departure for every effort in reconciliation and tolerance.

## 1. *The difference between ideal and reality*

According to the Christian understanding, the commitment to overcoming conflicts is a necessary consequence of believing in God. Because he, as a universal God, unites all peoples in a human family. As a merciful God, he protects the rights of the weak, the oppressed, and the stranger in a special way. Reconciliation with God enables reconciliation with human beings and vice versa. It aims at overcoming the structures of injustice, sin, and violence. According to the claim, the whole history of God with his people is a “project to overcome violence [...], the conception of the presence of God and the image of God cannot be detached from this

dynamic”<sup>1</sup>. Peace ethics concerns the center of the Christian self-image and thus of the church. In this way, peacemaking becomes a test of the vitality of faith.

Despite the universal mandate for peace, the history of Christianity is full of violence. It is therefore controversial in research whether the monotheistic religions actually contribute to peace and non-violence. Beyond the appeals for reconciliation and peace, there is obviously also considerable potential for violence in the religions.<sup>2</sup> Monotheism, in particular, has come under suspicion: The awareness, that one's own God is the only one and one's own faith is absolutely true, has often been and is becoming the cause of violence. The absolute setting of one's own system of meaning and morals in the monotheistic religions is a constant source of conflict.<sup>3</sup> In terms of cultural history, the tradition of ritual sacrifice may also conceal a hidden tendency to violence.<sup>4</sup> However, there is also the thesis that violent myths have the function of deriving (catharsis) potential for aggression and are therefore more likely to be associated with nonviolent ethics. A scientific examination of Christian peace ethics must critically examine such questions and ambivalences.<sup>5</sup>

This ambivalence in the relationship to peace and violence can be observed in most religions: On the one hand, the ideal of peace plays a central role in the self-image of almost all faith communities. On the other hand, forms of confession were and are often a medium of sharp demarcation against the “unbelievers” and an “escalation factor” for violence.<sup>6</sup> In view of the “new religious intolerance”<sup>7</sup> that is fueling the current world conflicts, this is of high ethical and political explosiveness. In the Ukraine, the mixture of religion and nationalism in particular creates a highly explosive tension.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, however, there is a growing interreligious and intercultural understanding, both in the universal Church – there in particular strengthened by the current Pope (FT) – and in Ukraine – represented here, for example, by the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Communities.

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1 Freistetter/Wagnsonner 2010: 38 (translation M.V.).

2 Cf. Angenendt 2018.

3 Cf. Assmann 2003.

4 Cf. Girard 2006; Palaver 2004; Palaver 2020.

5 Cf. Altner 2003; Stipp 2017; Palaver 2020.

6 Cf. Rittberger/Hasenclever 2001.

7 Nussbaum 2013.

8 Cf. Boeckh/Turij 2015.

In all of this, the characteristic differences between the world religions and within them between different denominations, types of piety and historical epochs should not be neglected. It is precisely through the variety of different manifestations that religions, denominations and types of piety can complement and enrich one another.<sup>9</sup> Gandhi's connection of the Hindu principle of non-violence (Ahimsa) and the biblical ideal of love for one's enemies became famous. From this, Gandhi developed the civil society concept of nonviolent resistance, which in the 20th century became the most important strategy for the fight against unjust systems of rule. The success of such strategies depends on the context. In general, however, a Christian ethics of peace does not mean renouncing argument, resistance, and struggle. Rather, it aims to civilize the forms in which conflicts are carried out. In order to prove itself as a force of orientation in the current antagonisms of world society, it must combine interreligious, intercultural, civil society, and social science approaches.<sup>10</sup>

## *2. For an enlightened religion*

A lasting challenge to Christian peace ethics is the theory of the “clash of civilizations”<sup>11</sup>, according to which the global conflicts of the 21st century arise essentially from the clash of cultures – and thus also of religions – for self-assertion. At first glance, it initially seems a plausible diagnosis that the conflict between the “Christian Occident” and Arab-Islamic cultures is at the center of current world conflicts. At the same time, however, there are good empirical reasons to reject this thesis: Often different religions and cultures could and can coexist peacefully for centuries. The Austro-Hungarian multiethnic state, which also led to a cultural boom in the region of today's Ukraine and ensured the peaceful coexistence of different denominations and religions, is a shining example of this. Only when the instrumentalization and ideologization of religious, national, and cultural identity constructions is added does the contrast become politically relevant and potentially explosive.<sup>12</sup> Religion is usually not the cause, but an escalation factor of violence.<sup>13</sup> It was often and is still repeatedly abused by

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9 Cf. Küng 2001; Küng/Kuschel 2001; Vogt/Thurner 2017.

10 Cf. Girard 2006; Heidenreich 2006; Heinrich 2006; Vogt 2013; 2015; 2018; 2020a; Schockenhoff 2018: esp. 578–740.

11 Huntington 2002.

12 Cf. Sen 2007.

13 Cf. Rittberger/Hasenclever 2001: 161–163 and 180–193.

political claims for power as well as generalized external attributions. Nevertheless, the religions today have to examine self-critically whether they consistently enable their followers to practice tolerance, reconciliation, peace and non-violence. In view of the political explosiveness of mixing up religion and violence, they should actively defend themselves against being believed, taught or abused as a justification of war.

There is a need for enlightened religion. Striving for peace, the religions have an obligation to stick to: “No peace between the nations without peace between the religions. No peace between religions without dialogue between religions.”<sup>14</sup> The critical analysis of religious thought patterns that lead to the legitimization of violence is a necessary part of the defense of free democracies. This is a scientific, educational, and likewise social task.<sup>15</sup> If religions want to be peace-building, they must not evade critical consideration of their ambivalences. A religion that is clear-minded about its own ambivalence has to develop an awareness of the “ambiguity of the world” and thus of “tolerance for ambiguity” and the appreciation of diversity.<sup>16</sup>

Enlightenment, which enables a constructive and critical handling of the differences between diverse religious claims to truth, is the best “antidote” against fundamentalist ideologies. It opposes, for example, an assertion of religions for political claims to power as well as generalized enemy images towards those who have a different belief or do not believe at all. However, enlightenment should not be equated with a secularist concept, but should also include self-critical openness to what exceeds reason and what the state cannot guarantee.<sup>17</sup> Even if an enlightened perspective views the role of religions in peace as ambivalent, they will recognize that religion is and will remain an integral part of societies. Therefore, the religious factor remains highly relevant in order to understand and cope with the current world conflicts. This can be clearly seen in current examples.

International terrorism in particular cannot be defeated by military means alone. The same is true for the conflict in Ukraine: At its core, it is not about rational political interests (Russia, too, has probably done more harm than good to itself through its aggression, at least economically and in terms of foreign policy), but rather a religiously and nationalistically

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14 Cf. Küng 1990: 102f.; cf. also Altner 2003: 81–96.

15 Cf. Heinrich 2006; Beestermöller 2007: 335–339.

16 Cf. Bauer 2018: 31–40.

17 Cf. Böckenförde 2007; Kress 2008.



charged identity conflict.<sup>18</sup> The churches play a significant role in this.<sup>19</sup> It is a task of scientific theology to counter the functionalization of religion for political conflicts.

According to Christian belief, tolerance in identity conflicts not at all means giving up one's own point of view. Rather, tolerance needs the ability to deal with differences. The recognition that there are lasting differences is one of their defining features.<sup>20</sup> Cultural and religious identities should therefore not be blurred, but perceived as enrichment. This places high demands on the ability to reflect as well as on the constant endeavor to educate and dialogue.<sup>21</sup>

### *3. Won wars do not mean that the peace has been won*

Enlightened peace ethics begins with a sober and comprehensive analysis of the current conflicts. The first thing to do is to look at the “evolution of violence in the 20th and 21st centuries”.<sup>22</sup> Peace and respect for human dignity are now endangered in a new way by the removal of any constraint of war<sup>23</sup> in the form of terrorism, hybrid wars and excesses of violence in the context of state collapse. Traditional security policy does not provide sufficient answers for this. New forms of precautionary peacekeeping, closely interwoven with political and civil society initiatives, are needed. International law, intercultural competence and human ability to reconcile are of key importance in order to win not only the war, but also peace.

In relation to Ukraine, the complex aggression that is currently emanating from Russia is a profound test of the fight for peace. This must reckon with direct and indirect attacks and destabilization strategies at all levels. But Christian peace ethics does not retreat to a position of passive defenselessness in the name of reconciliation and pacifism. It proves itself in clever measures of resistance and a sober assessment of the behavioral patterns as well as the strengths and weaknesses of all actors involved. A necessary stabilizing factor in view of the threat is the cohesion between the different groups in Ukraine – be it between the West and East Ukrainians, the

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18 Cf. Golczewski 2018; Hnyp 2018; on the moral grammar of conflicts of recognition: Honneth 1992.

19 Cf. Julian 2018.

20 Cf. Forst 2017.

21 Lähnemann 2001: pp. 217–238; cf. Leimgruber 2007.

22 Cf. Münkler 2017.

23 Cf. Münkler 2002.

different ethnic groups, the churches and in dealing with the numerous internally displaced persons. It is important to preserve and promote this. That is why the corruption that destroys the functioning of the state must be combatted. This struggle demands courage. It is a central test for the struggle for inner peace and social cohesion in Ukraine. The tempting option of compensating for the weakness of social cohesion through a common external enemy image harbors an enormous danger. The diversion of aggression to the outside world is a popular pattern of populist and authoritarian politics, which is currently also endangering peace, solidarity and the opportunities for international cooperation in Europe.<sup>24</sup>

In order to maintain social cohesion, a vigilant handling of the manipulation of public opinion by the (digital) media is necessary. The war is also often fought with one-sided information and images. Journalists as well as representatives of science and churches have a crucial task here to contribute to enlightenment. More human resources should be made available to expose fake-news. It would be naive to believe that the “battle for Ukraine”<sup>25</sup> is being waged solely with traditional military means. It is just naive to believe that it can be won without military protection. The new forms of hybrid and asymmetrical warfare are a challenge for the society as a whole.

It is precisely against this background that the complexity of the Christian understanding of peace turns to be highly topical: A war can be won with weapons. In order to win lasting peace, however, a cultural debate about justice, power control, and social cohesion is also required. The Christian ideal of peace is not naive and unworldly, but comprehensive. However, it can be used to distract from the necessary sober analysis of the relative conflict situations. This is why Jesus' message of peace needs to be translated into one's own time in order to be lived out credibly and politically developed as a liberating force in response to concrete threats to peace. An important translation is the respect for the unconditional dignity of all people, regardless of national, gender or religious affiliation. This idea has proven itself in modern democracies as the basis for peaceful coexistence and can ultimately be described as “the secret of peace”<sup>26</sup>. The “Revolution of Dignity” on the Maidan in 2013 also made clear the measure of human dignity and the sovereignty of the people against inca-

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24 Cf. Vogt 2017.

25 Cf. Justenhoven 2018.

26 Cf. John Paul II 1999; PT; FT.

pacitation by corrupt rulers for Ukraine.<sup>27</sup> In essence, it is not about the question of political alliances, but about the values of dignity, freedom and peace. These are indivisible and anchored in the core of the Christian faith. That is why I would like to put the Christian ethics of peace at the center of my further remarks.

#### *4. Biblical Perspectives*

Peace is a key biblical concept. It occurs 135 times in the Old Testament and 48 times in the New Testament.<sup>28</sup> What is specific about the biblical approach is the understanding of peace as a “work of justice” (Isa 32:17).<sup>29</sup> Programmatically, peace is thought of as justice, happiness, salvation, welfare and community, all of which can be understood as aspects of the term “shalom”. The Bible is exciting because this comprehensive focus on peace is always confronted with the human tendency to violence. Man does not live in paradise; his everyday life is shaped by the constant presence of conflict and violence. Instead of glossing over violence, the Bible asks radically about its forms and causes. “The Bible tears up the disguise of violence.”<sup>30</sup> Mercilessly it shows how the omnipresent tendency of man to violence threatens the order of creation and coexistence. Such a sober perception of the many facets of violence is the first prerequisite for dealing with it humanely.<sup>31</sup>

The essence of the Christian message culminates in love of one's enemies, which does not aim at defenselessness, but rather on “active love of hostility” in the sense of a strategy that seeks to win the enemy as a friend.<sup>32</sup> Jesus' request, if someone “slaps you on the right cheek, hold the other out to him too” (Lk 6:29), does not mean a violent confrontation, but a situation of shame (namely the shameful blow with the back of the hand, otherwise we would be talking about the left and not the right cheek hit by a right handed person). Such a gesture of contempt is rejected through self-control and precisely not by engaging in a violent confrontation. The commandment to love one's enemy is the “culmination of the

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27 Cf. Andruchowytch 2014.

28 For the following cf. DBK 2000: No. 12–33.

29 Cf. Otto 1999; Biberstein 2004.

30 DBK 2000: No. 27.

31 Cf. Vogt 2012; Vogt 2020a.

32 Cf. Lapide 1987.

ethics of Jesus”<sup>33</sup>. It does not meet the enemy in the form of an aggressive trial of strength, but in the readiness for reconciliation, renunciation of violence and protection. The attitude of love for one's enemies, however, remains morally qualified only as long as it differs from resignation and passive, defenseless “slave morality”<sup>34</sup>.

Freud also attaches his criticism of Christian morality to love of enemies by interpreting the commandment as an inhibition of aggression by the super-ego that completely contradicts the original nature of man. It inevitably leads to a less inhibited discharge of aggression towards outsiders.<sup>35</sup> Enemy love aims at disenfranchisement and arises from its own kind of courageous strength. The ethos of non-violence, which grows from the depths of Christian faith, means “an active-walking force that attacks and overcomes human evil at its roots”<sup>36</sup>. A condition for the compatibility of combative and non-violent attitudes is the willingness not to evade injustice at the expense of others, to show solidarity not with those in power but with those who suffer. From a biblical point of view, love and mercy go together. The reconciling power of God's mercy becomes life force when people allow themselves to be infected by it and enable them to use it as the measure of their actions.<sup>37</sup>

Mercy is not passive, but aims to actively restore justice. Even if the combative impulse of the Christian principle of love – at least in the biblical texts – remains pre-political, it is still a starting point “of the events and processes on whose breeding ground the real political changes in the situation arise”<sup>38</sup>. The peaceful revolution in the Eastern European countries, which led to the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, cannot be understood without this pre-political, but by no means apolitical, participation of Christians.

##### *5. On the history of the Christian ethics of peace in the papal magisterium*

After it had been considered incompatible in the early church to be both Christian and soldier, from the 4th century onwards the church was ready to assume the role of the state religion and to compromise. Their peace

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33 Gnllka 1986: 187.

34 Nietzsche 1968: 295–297.

35 Cf. Freud 1974: 191–270, esp. 239f. and 265.

36 Korff 1985: 186.

37 Cf. Kasper 2016.

38 Havel 1990: 39.

ethics have been reduced in part to criteria under which waging a war is fair. Since there is no room here to trace the various developments in Christian peace ethics in detail, reference is only made to the three peace encyclicals *Pacem Dei munus* (1920) and *Pacem in terris* (1963) and *Fratelli tutti* (2020).

After the disastrous experiences of the First World War, whose end was perceived by many not only as a defeat, but also as an insult and loss of their identity, the Apostolic Circular of 1920 exhorts the victorious and the vanquished to reconcile. This is a prerequisite for lasting peace and must be permanently secured by a League of Nations. The focus of the 1963 circular is the recognition of universally valid and indivisible human rights as the basis of peace. *Pacem in Terris* advocates overcoming the institution of war: "That is why it [...] is contrary to common sense to regard war as the appropriate means of restoring violated rights."<sup>39</sup> This approach is taken up and deepened again in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the "Church in today's world".<sup>40</sup> According to *Gaudium et Spes*, the use of military measures can only be justified if it is assigned to the goal of creating a peace order for all peoples involved on the basis of a generally recognized and binding international law and respect for human rights.<sup>41</sup>

*Fratelli tutti* is the third peace encyclical of the Catholic Church. Pope Francis understands cross-border fraternity as a prerequisite for peace in a world characterized by "aggressive isolation".<sup>42</sup> What urges the Pope to speak out today is his diagnosis that peace, cohesion and democracy are acutely threatened in the contemporary world. According to the Pope's dramatic diagnosis, the situations of violence "have so multiplied in numerous regions of the world that they have taken on the features of what could be called a 'third world war in stages'".<sup>43</sup> Peace in no way excludes differences in perspectives, interests, and habits, but rather presupposes the protection of the respective peculiarities as well as the ability to confront.<sup>44</sup> For Francis, peace is based on the "mere fact of possessing an inalienable human dignity"<sup>45</sup> and a "culture of tolerance"<sup>46</sup>. Francis understands peace as a process that presupposes an incessant endeavor for dialogue, under-

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39 PT 67.

40 GS 77–90.

41 GS 79–84.

42 FT 9f.

43 FT 25; see also: FT 259.

44 Cf. FT 100.

45 FT 127; cf. also FT 233.

46 FT 192.

standing, and encounter, which he describes as “manual labor”<sup>47</sup>. It is “patient work in the search for truth and justice, which honors the memory of the victims and gradually opens a common hope that is stronger than vengeance”<sup>48</sup>.

Pope Francis speaks out radically in favor of an outlawing of the institution of war: “Therefore we can no longer regard war as a solution, for the risks will probably always outweigh the hypothetical benefits that have been ascribed to it.”<sup>49</sup> “The whole point is that with the development of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and the tremendous growth of new technologies, war has achieved an out-of-control destructive power affecting many innocent civilians.”<sup>50</sup> According to Francis, the end of the Cold War was not used sufficiently to create lasting peace because there was a lack of awareness of the common fate in the interdependent world of late modernity.<sup>51</sup>

Francis focuses on the relationship between religion and violence in a differentiated way:<sup>52</sup> “Sometimes, in some groups of whatever religion, fundamentalist violence is unleashed by the imprudence of their leaders.”<sup>53</sup> But the commandment of peace is deeply inscribed in religious traditions, he said. The sincere and humble worship of God is not compatible with discrimination, hatred, and violence, but aims at respect for the inviolability of life, respect for the dignity and freedom of others, comprehensive reconciliation and loving commitment for the good of all.<sup>54</sup>

## 6. *Christian commitment to peace in practice*

The actual meaning of Christian commitment cannot be sufficiently deduced from the theoretical writings on peace theology, but can only be understood in the context of peace movements. The peace movements supported by the faithful have given impulses for historically significant reconciliation processes – e. g. for the peaceful turnaround in Central-East-

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47 FT 217 and FT 228–235.

48 FT 226.

49 FT 258.

50 FT 258.

51 Cf. FT 260.

52 Cf. FT 281–285.

53 FT 284.

54 Cf. FT 283.

ern Europe in 1989, for which there is no historical precedent and which can be described as the “miracle of history”.<sup>55</sup>

In the 20th century, there was a broad Christian peace movement that was largely supported by women. The Peace League of German Catholics was founded after the end of the First World War in 1919 and immediately after the horrors of the Second World War in 1945, the international Catholic Pax Christi movement and in 1958 the interreligious peace movement “World Conference on Religion and Peace” (WCRP) educated. Characteristic elements of this multi-layered peace movement are:<sup>56</sup>

1. Resistance to military nationalism and limitation of nation-state armaments policy;
2. Promotion of international understanding and alternatives to military-based security policy by civil society;
3. Demands for an expansion of peacekeeping under international law and international criminal jurisdiction;
4. Concepts for nonviolent resistance, civil disobedience and social defense against structural violence;
5. Organization of social peace services to promote social justice, intercultural reconciliation and to break down images of the enemy.

The initiatives undertaken by the Community of Sant'Egidio to end armed conflicts have found worldwide recognition. Time and again, they have been and are present at focal points of apparently hopeless conflicts in Africa, Kosovo or the Middle East and do a valuable service of mediation and confidence building. The impulses for regular meetings of high-ranking religious representatives are of particular importance.

Countless dissidents in the former Eastern Bloc countries have given their non-violent resistance to the totalitarian regimes a testimony to their belief in freedom, human dignity and peace. Many have paid with their lives. According to the Christian view, their sacrifice was not in vain, but became the nucleus of hope for freedom, justice and peace.

## *7. Humanitarian intervention and “Responsibility to protect”*

Time and again, the Popes' annual messages of peace have dealt with the tasks and limits of securing peace in the face of “ethnic cleansing”, such as

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55 Cf. Biser 2003.

56 Cf. Donat 1983.

in the former Yugoslavia, and genocide, such as in Rwanda. In his message of peace for the year 2000, for example, John Paul II begins with the ambitious principle of the human family. "There will be peace to the extent that all of humanity succeeds in rediscovering its original vocation, to be a single family in which the dignity and rights of persons of every class, race and religion as prior and priority over all differences and types."<sup>57</sup> This requires a "complete reversal of the point of view in which concepts and practices that regard the nation or state as absolute and therefore all others subordinate values, be overcome"<sup>58</sup>. Crimes against humanity, therefore, cannot be viewed as internal affairs of a nation.<sup>59</sup> The Pope justifies humanitarian intervention with the "principle of non-indifference", which assigns a new and important role to the service of the soldier, precisely in a gospel-inspired view.

The postulate of humanitarian intervention, in order to protect the population from violent states and non-state actors, to provide refugees with a minimum level of security and to disarm aggressors, leads to a persistent peace ethic debate with regard to the danger of creating a very broad legitimization framework for wars (Hoppe 2004). The humanitarian interventions in Bosnia-Herzegovina on behalf of the UN Security Council were found to be correct and necessary in numerous church statements<sup>60</sup>, while the statements on the military intervention in Kosovo were much more restrained. Above all, criticism was expressed that the lack of a UN mandate could undermine the UN's monopoly on force<sup>61</sup> and that the non-military means of understanding had not been adequately exhausted. Doubts were also expressed as to whether the action was necessary, productive, and appropriate in terms of its means. Humanitarian intervention needs a procedure that makes it impossible for individual states to block joint action on the basis of particular interests or, conversely, to pursue their own interests under the pretext of humanitarian goals.<sup>62</sup>

An important further development of the concept of humanitarian intervention is that of the responsibility to protect (often abbreviated as R2P). This begins with a redefinition of the principle of sovereignty, which is understood as the responsibility of the state to guarantee the well-being of the citizens subordinate to it by virtue of its personal or

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57 John Paul II 1999: No. 5.

58 Ibid.: No. 6.

59 Ibid.: No. 7.

60 Cf. Freistetter/Wagnsonner 2010: 45–47.

61 DBK 2000: No. 154.

62 DBK 2000: No. 154; cf. Beestermöller 2003; Bohn/Bohrmann/Küenzlen 2011.



territorial sovereignty.<sup>63</sup> In fulfilling this responsibility, he is supported by the international community, which has a subsidiary responsibility to protect. However, if the political leadership of a state is unable or unwilling to protect its citizens from serious human rights violations, the international community of states may and must intervene to protect the threatened population. In accordance with the United Nations Charter, it has civilian and military resources at its disposal for this purpose, the use of which is decided by the Security Council. Compared to the concept of humanitarian intervention, the R2P expands the scope of action, that the international community commands, to react and intervene in serious human rights violations. If a state does not fulfill its sovereign obligations, it will lose the right to remain spared from foreign interference.

Genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing are identified as serious violations of human rights, which the subsidiary responsibility to protect can help to prevent. The responsibility to protect was largely developed by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) in 2000/2001 and officially recognized by the United Nations in 2005. According to the ICISS draft, the R2P is divided into three partial responsibilities: the Responsibility to Prevent, the Responsibility to React and the Responsibility to Rebuild.<sup>64</sup> The classic criteria of the Just War (*bellum iustum*) apply as a prerequisite for the legitimate use of military means:

1. Legitimate authority: A legitimate authority is required that allows humanitarian intervention (mostly the United Nations Security Council).
2. Right intention: The intervening states must primarily have the motive to prevent and stop human rights violations.
3. Last resort: A military humanitarian intervention must be the last resort.
4. Proportional means: The proportionality of the means that is made use of must be considered.
5. Reasonable prospects: There must be a realistic prospect of success for the mission.

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63 Cf. Verlage 2009.

64 International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty 2001.

## 8. *Paths and priorities of peacekeeping in relation to Ukraine*

Instead of a summary, twelve priorities for securing peace from a Christian perspective are to be named and applied to the current situation in Ukraine. The criteria outlined here are taken as a basis, with a church official criteriology<sup>65</sup>, a positioning of the Vienna Institute for Religion and Peace<sup>66</sup> as a background Analyzes of the current “fight for Ukraine”<sup>67</sup> serve.

1. Non-military attempts to resolve conflicts have to be prioritized generally. War is legitimate only as the ultimate means after careful consideration and when all other options are or are likely to be unsuccessful. This requires the support of a neutral, legally legitimized agency. In response to the annexation of Crimea, economic sanctions against Russia play a key role. These do not work quickly, but they can be a considerable means of exerting pressure in the medium and long term. It is important to maintain these measures permanently and untouched by your own interests. In the entire field of diplomacy, it must be made clear that Russia is harming and isolating itself with such a behavior by which Russia is breaching international law.

2. For the current conflict in Ukraine, it is not so much the UN that has such a key role as mediator, but primarily the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Under the chairmanship of the Swiss Heide Tagvialini, the trilateral contact group (Ukraine, Russia, OSCE) was established as a discussion forum, which had been made possible by the Minsk Agreements, among other things.<sup>68</sup> The German Chancellor was also heavily involved in the talks. Increasing diplomatic pressure to comply with this agreement has priority and is the benchmark for all further action.

3. Conditions and limits for the recognition of a war as just are: Order by an authority legitimized under international law; defense against or correction of an injustice that is contrary to international law; right attitude / goal setting in alignment to just peace and reconciliation; limiting violence to the minimum necessary; clear time limit and chances of success of the measures. The annexation of Crimea by Russia is a violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and therefore a grave injustice. It violates

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65 CCC 2307–2330.

66 Freistetter/Wagnsonner 2010: 43.

67 Justenhoven 2018.

68 Zeller 2018: 164–172.

the Budapest Memorandum (1994), under which Ukraine was expressly assured of this integrity in return for voluntarily renouncing nuclear weapons. Ukraine has the right to self-defense.<sup>69</sup>

4. The annexation of Crimea and the military influence in Donbass by Russia violate current international law. Ukraine is entitled to international aid.<sup>70</sup> However, it is not a classic symmetrical war between states, since elements of an internal conflict (albeit one that has been fueled from outside) are virulent. There are good reasons to be cautious about the “low-intensity war”<sup>71</sup> with the proclamation of martial law and an international expansion of the military conflict. Not the refusal of solidarity in military support, but the struggle to find a balance between the necessary readiness for defense and the avoidance of an uncontrollable international expansion of the conflict in Ukraine must be the yardstick of international action.

5. In the waging of inevitable military conflicts, the rules of international law and the monopoly of the United Nations and the actors legitimized by them must be strictly recognized. The authority of the United Nations and the UN Security Council must not be bypassed, even if it is in urgent need of reform. At the same time as military actions, all means of international diplomacy must be exhausted. The goals of de-escalation must not be forgotten. The sober assessment that it is not likely that the annexation of Crimea can be reversed in the short term should not be suppressed. Ukraine needs a stable balance of power and resistance to a war of attrition. This should also be kept in mind in all international support measures.

6. Since avoiding an international expansion of the conflict has high priority, indirect support should be preferred to direct intervention. Help with military training, arms deliveries and support for various forms of civil society resistance are useful. The focus of German engagement in international responsibility has traditionally been in the non-military area. There are many opportunities for solidarity for Ukraine in the current conflict, including from the German side, which have not yet been adequately exploited. These should also be strengthened in our own interest and in defense of the European peace project. Passive tolerance in the sense of appeasing Russia, which lacks the courage to clearly identify injustice as such, does not help. The basic ethical axioms of international law are not

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69 Cf. UN Charter: Art. 51.

70 Ibid. Art. 39ff.

71 Münkler 2005.

negotiable. This applies to everyone who breaks international law; that was the case, for example, in the Iraq war.<sup>72</sup>

7. Armed resistance only makes sense as part of a comprehensive diplomatic and civil society resistance to aggression. What is particularly important here is a commitment against the manipulation of public opinion. Since Russia is hoping for approval, especially from the Russian-speaking population, the country is also very active here in Ukraine. This needs a counterbalance through more human, structural, and financial resources for professional journalism. Scientifically based analyzes as well as international reports are a necessary element of raising awareness against fake news. Last but not least, increased measures for broad-based political education and solid information transfer are indispensable.

8. If the human rights of a population group are massively violated over a prolonged period, the international community has a duty to engage in humanitarian intervention. The rules of ethically legitimate use of force must be observed. In particular, through the experience of the genocides in Rwanda and the Balkans, the paradigm of humanitarian intervention against pacifist ideals has prevailed in both the political and church ethics of peace.<sup>73</sup> More recently, this has been further developed under the ethical guiding principle of “responsibility to protect”. The duty of humanitarian intervention is strictly limited to genocide and serious crimes against humanity. If these criteria are interpreted strictly, they are not yet directly applicable to the situation in Ukraine. However, vigilant international observation and preparation are required in order to be able to intervene early and preventively, if necessary.

9. Since the Ukraine conflict is part of a multi-layered struggle for a new world order,<sup>74</sup> it cannot be resolved in the long term without the creation of an international legal and peace order with a universal security policy perspective. This is a political priority in the early 21st century. The reform of the World Security Council is of primary importance here, which today no longer adequately reflects the balance of power in the world and is abused by the powerful, especially through their right of veto, as an instrument of unilateral dominance politics. The renationalization of American politics has created a vacuum that has to be compensated for by intensifying the diverse supranational interdependencies.<sup>75</sup> It is current-

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72 Cf. Beestermöller 2003.

73 Cf. Hinsch 2006; Schockenhoff 2018: 673–695.

74 Cf. Münkler 2017: 264–300.

75 Schockenhoff 2018: 639–665.

ly being discussed whether a European Security Council would also be needed to increase the EU's ability to act. The various institutions that are involved in security policy (including UN, NATO, OSCE, EU) must be coordinated in a complementary manner.

10. All measures must be oriented towards the goal of just peace<sup>76</sup>, i.e. also consider social, economic, and political aspects and integrate them strategically. The restoration and safeguarding of the rule of law in Ukraine against the rampant corruption and self-enrichment of a few oligarchs at the expense of the people is a contribution to peace and social cohesion that should not be underestimated. Social peace in Ukraine is currently also massively threatened from within. Here, too, there is a risk that outwardly directed aggression is intended to divert attention from internal conflicts. That is why the classical church doctrine that justice and peace cannot be separated is highly topical. Resistance to the expropriation of popular sovereignty through corruption requires independent, critical media as well as moral education and the promotion of legal awareness. The churches and religious communities can make a significant contribution to this. It is about empowerment and education for democracy as a pillar of just peace.

11. Lasting peace needs forgiveness and reconciliation. These cannot simply be achieved through amnesty for war criminals, but require interpersonal encounters and the "healing of memories". Often the experience of injustice, hurt, and violence is the cause of new violence. Reconciliation is the root of peace. Here the churches and religious communities have an original task, since reconciliation always also has a religious dimension. At the same time, however, it is also highly relevant socially and politically. In the Ukraine it is ultimately about reconciliation between the different values, cultural mentalities, and social guiding principles within the borders of Europe. Reconciliation is to be distinguished from harmony and can be interpreted as a reconciled difference in the claim of tolerance. It does not mean resigning subordination to a repressive power, but presupposes sovereignty and active tolerance. Since the social principles are often understood as the systematic core of Catholic social doctrine and ethics, but the central theme of peace has not yet occurred at this level, I propose that reconciliation should be included in the series of social principles of the Catholic Church.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. DBK 2000.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Vogt 2020b; to the concept of reconciliation as the core of the ethics of peace cf. PDMP.

12. In the future, peace strategies must provide more professional resources for intercultural conflict prevention and follow-up care. For the Ukraine, the scientific analysis of the very different identity constructions and the role that religions play in this are of central importance.<sup>78</sup> The theological criticism of a nationalist claim to the Christian faith is an important peace service that the churches have to perform. This also includes developing a well-founded concept of tolerance in the relationship between religions, ethnic groups, and cultures. The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Communities is an important actor here. The traditional religious plurality in Ukraine has strong potential for a policy of peace, which, however, must always be re-activated through places of understanding.<sup>79</sup>

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78 Cf. Golczewski 2018; Hnyp 2018.

79 Cf. Rap 2015; Boeckh/Turij 2015.

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# Tolerance, Political Liberty and Democracy: Social Recognition and Belonging

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In 2019, the Protestant and the Catholic Churches in Germany published a joint declaration with the title: “Fostering Trust in Democracy”. There, quite at the end of the text of 50 pages, it says: “Democracy can only succeed if it is embedded in a culture of mutual tolerance and acceptance.” This seems obviously true at first sounds. However, on closer inspection, some questions arise: Which kind of tolerance is meant? Is acceptance a general characteristic of tolerance or an enhanced form of tolerance? And finally, is tolerance a mere virtue of democratic citizens or can it also be established as an institutional feature of democracy? A differentiation of the several varieties of tolerance may help in answering these questions.

## *1. Four concepts of tolerance in relation to democracy*

In his magisterial study “Toleration in Conflict”, Rainer Forst distinguishes four conceptions of tolerance, which he explicitly relates to the political context. The first conception, which he calls the “permission conception”, “designates the relation between an authority or a majority and a minority (or several minorities) which does not subscribe to the dominant system of values. Toleration here means that the authority (or majority) grants the minority the permission to live in accordance with its convictions so long as it – and this is the crucial condition – does not question the predominance of the authority (or majority).”<sup>1</sup> Forst names the Edict of Nantes as an ideal-typical example for this first rudimentary type of tolerance. With regard to democracy, the permission concept of tolerance obviously is insufficient, as it does not guarantee the political and legal status of citizenship on the basis of equal rights. Minorities are only allowed to stay insofar as they do not disturb, irritate or even question the majority, but they are not accepted and regarded as equals. Under these

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1 Forst 2013:27.

conditions, democratic coexistence, interaction, and cooperation between majority and minority simply are not possible, as this kind of permission tolerance is “not reciprocal: one side permits the other certain deviations provided that the political dominance of the permission-granting side is not infringed upon.”<sup>2</sup>

As a second type of tolerance, Forst lists the “coexistence conception” of tolerance. This type is similar to the first one insofar as its main concern is to avoid conflicts in society. What changes, however, is the relationship between the different societal groups. “The toleration relation is [...] no longer a vertical one, as in the permission conception, but a horizontal one”. That means, the different parties and groups – especially in cases when they are equally strong – accept their coexistence in their own interests and “consent to the rules of a *modus vivendi* in the shape of mutual compromise.”<sup>3</sup> This concept represents a kind of an attitude of Hobbesian pessimistic liberalism, which is not primarily based on certain strong values but on a realistic world view. Forst himself relates it to Judith Shklar’s concept of a “liberalism of fear”.<sup>4</sup> Such an attitude may occur in a democracy. But, on the other hand, it is questionable if this approach provides a sustainable foundation for democracy, since a group or a party that becomes stronger may be tempted to terminate the social contract and to pursue dominance over the others. For this reason, the coexistence conception of tolerance only offers a very fragile democratic resource.

The third type, which Forst names the “respect conception” of tolerance, seems to offer a more promising basis for democratic togetherness. The respect type of tolerance is morally grounded in an attitude of mutual respect between the citizens and different societal groups. “The tolerating parties respect one another as autonomous persons or as equally entitled members of a political community constituted under the rule of law.”<sup>5</sup> This approach implies the classical-liberal separation of the private and the public sphere. The members of the community may have very different religious and cultural backgrounds as well as controversial ethical and ideological convictions in private, but they recognize one another as equal citizens in the public square. “The person of the other is *respected*; her convictions and actions are *tolerated*.”<sup>6</sup>

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2 Ibid. 28.

3 Ibid.

4 See: Shklar 2004.

5 Forst 2013: 29.

6 Ibid. 30.

Finally, Forst names a fourth type of tolerance: the “esteem conception”, which he describes as “a more demanding form of mutual recognition” since this type of “toleration means not only respecting the members of other cultural or religious communities as legal and political equals but also esteeming their convictions and practices as ethically valuable.”<sup>7</sup> This conception is similar to Markus Vogt’s and Rolf Husmann’s understanding of “proactive tolerance”, which they characterize by the term “appreciation”.<sup>8</sup> That approach is often encountered in the context of the discussions on multiculturalism and identity politics. With regard to liberal democracy, this esteem conception is not merely the enhancement of the respect conception; it is a significantly different approach that brings with it a decisively divergent understanding of liberal democracy. Charles Taylor even identifies “two incompatible views of liberal society”<sup>9</sup>.

## *2. The classical-liberal understanding of democracy and the limits of public tolerance*

The respect conception of tolerance corresponds to the classical liberal model, which Taylor names as “liberalism of rights”<sup>10</sup>. The proponents of this concept do not deny that mutual recognition between citizens is valuable in a democracy. But as they insist that all citizens are treated as equals under the law without any exception, they are of the firm conviction that such mutual recognition must not be enforced by the government through legislative or administrative coercion.

### *2.1 The right to be intolerant*

With regard to the principle of equality under the law, doctrinaire liberals demand a “difference blindness” of legislation and administration. In particular, they reject the approach to balance and to correct historically grown discriminations by legislative or administrative measures of “reverse discrimination” or “positive discrimination”, as it is, for example, established in the affirmative action policies in the USA, a landmark of which

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Vogt/Husmann 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor 1994: 60.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

was the Civil Rights Act of 1964. When Friedrich August von Hayek, one of the great liberal thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was asked in an interview about his opinion of the affirmative action policies, he answered:

“civilization rests on the fact that people are very different...and unless we allow these differences to exist...we shall stop the whole process of evolution...if you try to make the opportunities of all people equal you eliminate the main stimulus to evolution.... What you explained to me about the meaning of affirmative action is the same dilemma which egalitarianism achieves: in order to make people equal you have to treat them differently. If you treat people, so far as government is concerned, alike, the result is necessarily inequality; you can have either freedom and inequality, or unfreedom and equality.”<sup>11</sup>

Hayek makes a clear distinction between discrimination by the state and discrimination by private persons. Discriminating laws as well as discriminatory administrative action are in his view incompatible with the liberal idea of citizenship: equal freedom under the reign of law. But by the same argument, he opposes any laws prohibiting discrimination between private citizens. In his opinion, that would be an inadmissible interference in the freedom of citizens. Under the reign of liberty and the rule of law, he believes, there should be neither apartheid law nor affirmative action.

Milton Friedman, another liberal mastermind of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sees it the same way. He writes that “the man who exercises discrimination pays a price for doing so. He is, as it were, ‘buying’ what he regards as a ‘product’. It is hard to see that discrimination can have any meaning other than a ‘taste’ of others that one does not share.”<sup>12</sup> That taste may be morally disgusting and other citizens may utterly reject it, but Friedman is of the firm opinion that the liberal state has no right to forbid it.

“I believe strongly that the color of a man’s skin or the religion of his parents is, by itself, no reason to treat him differently; that a man should be judged by what he is and what he does and not by these external characteristics. I deplore what seem to me the prejudice and narrowness of outlook of those who tastes differ from mine in this respect and I think the less of them for it. But in a society based on free discussion, the appropriate recourse is for me to seek to persuade them that their tastes are bad and that they should change their views and

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11 Quoted by Diener 2013: 33. The interview can be listened here: [http://hayek.ufm.edu/index.php?title=Tom\\_Hazlett](http://hayek.ufm.edu/index.php?title=Tom_Hazlett)

12 Friedman 1962/2002: 110.

their behavior, not to use coercive power to enforce my taste and my attitudes on others”.<sup>13</sup>

## *2.2 Power must be limited – also democratic power*

For the avoidance of misunderstandings: Friedman as well as Hayek leave no doubt that the “the struggle for formal equality, i.e. against all discrimination [...] remained one of the strongest characteristics of the liberal tradition.”<sup>14</sup> But at the same time, they are of the firm conviction that the principle of legal equality of all citizens under the rule of law prohibits any legislation that serves particular interests and benefits only certain groups. “Liberalism merely demands that so far as the state determines the conditions under which the individuals act it must do so according to the same formal rules for all. It is opposed to all legal privilege, to any conferment by government of specific advantages on some which it does not offer to all.”<sup>15</sup>

Basis of this view is a classical liberal understanding of liberty in the Whig tradition. The Whigs were the party of the Glorious Revolution, their world view was shaped by the writings of John Locke and further developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, above all David Hume and Adam Smith. Hayek distinguishes this classical English liberalism from the younger Continental liberal movement which had its origin in the French Revolution and its program of creating a totally new state and society. This led to an early association of the liberals and the democracy movement in Continental Europe. While the classical British liberalism, in Hayek’s words, had an “evolutionary” character, the Continental type followed a more “rationalist or constructivist view which demanded a deliberate reconstruction of the whole of society in accordance with principles of reason.”<sup>16</sup>

The chief concern of the liberals in the Whig tradition has always been the protection of individual freedom against arbitrary coercion by the state. The form of government, on the other hand, was not a focus of the Whig program. The limitation of state power is necessary in a monarchy as well as in a democracy. In Friedman’s words, “political freedom means

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13 Ibid. 111.

14 Hayek 1978: 141.

15 Ibid. 140.

16 Ibid. 119.

the absence of coercion of a man by his fellow men. The fundamental threat to freedom is power to coerce, be it in the hands of a monarch, a dictator, an oligarchy, or a momentary majority. The preservation of freedom requires the elimination of such concentration of power to the fullest possible extent and the dispersal and distribution of whatever power cannot be eliminated – a system of checks and balances”.<sup>17</sup>

The democratic and the liberal movement were most of the time closely associated and even, as Hayek writes, “often indistinguishable”<sup>18</sup>. But it is also important for him to emphasize, that limiting power is the main goal of liberalism and that democratic power must also be limited just like all other forms of power. “Democracy is essentially a means, a utilitarian device for safeguarding internal peace and individual freedom. As such it is by no means infallible or certain.”<sup>19</sup>

### *2.3 Negative freedom and the egalitarian temptation*

In his famous inaugural lecture held in 1958 at the University of Oxford, Isaiah Berlin distinguishes two concepts of liberty: negative freedom and positive freedom. Friedman, Hayek and other (neo-) classical liberals are uncompromising advocates of a strictly negative understanding of liberty. Freedom in this sense “becomes positive only through what we make of it. It does not assure us of any particular opportunities, but leaves it to us to decide what use we shall make of the circumstances in which we find ourselves.”<sup>20</sup> Political freedom in the sense of democracy or even “freedom from” fear and want, on the other hand, Hayek strictly distinguishes from this individual freedom. Rather, he believes that these different concepts are often in conflict and contradiction with each other.<sup>21</sup>

That is also the reason why Hayek has always been regarding the egalitarian tendencies of democratic societies with great suspicion – not only the aspiration for equality of outcome, but also the concept of equality of opportunities. Good or bad luck depends on circumstances with regard to which people are – often from birth already – very differently placed. The

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17 Friedman 1962/2002: 15. Hayek describes the “state of liberty or freedom” very similar: “The state in which a man is not subject to coercion by the arbitrary will of another or others”, Hayek 1960/2001: 58.

18 Hayek 1978: 142.

19 Hayek 1944/2007: 110.

20 Hayek 1960/2001: 70.

21 See: Hayek 1960/61: 106.



egalitarian mastermind John Rawls speaks of a “natural lottery”, and he is firmly convinced that the outcome of this natural lottery “is arbitrary from a moral perspective”.<sup>22</sup> Hayek does not deny this, but – in contrast to Rawls – he firmly believes that the ideas of social justice and equality of opportunity are incompatible with the concept of individual freedom. To achieve real equality of opportunity, Hayek writes, a “government would have to control the whole physical and human environment of all persons, and have to endeavour to provide at least equivalent chances for each; and the more government succeeded in these endeavours, the stronger would become the legitimate demand that, on the same principle, any still remaining handicaps must be removed – or compensated for by putting an extra burden on the still relatively favoured.”<sup>23</sup> Hayek concedes that also for a liberal mind the demand for equality of opportunity seems to be fair and understandable at first glance. But on second thought, he is convinced that this is “a wholly illusory ideal, and any attempt concretely to realize it apt to produce a nightmare.”<sup>24</sup>

His strong advocacy for the concept of negative liberty does not mean that Hayek is not aware of the importance of civic virtues like tolerance and cohesion for a strong and vivid democracy. In fact, the opposite is the case. Explicitly Hayek writes that “it must remain an open question whether a free or individualistic society can be worked successfully-if people are too ‘individualistic’ in the false sense, if they are too unwilling voluntarily to conform to traditions and conventions, and if they refuse to recognize anything which is not consciously designed or which cannot be demonstrated as rational to every individual.”<sup>25</sup> But nonetheless, Hayek’s fear of the totalitarian menace is too great for him to make concessions to the concept of positive freedom and to the idea of promoting civic virtues such as tolerance by the state and institutionalizing them through legislation and administration.

### *3. Positive freedom, social recognition and democracy*

Charles Taylor thinks, that this fear-driven notion of freedom as an exclusively negative one, “rules out of court one of the most powerful motives

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<sup>22</sup> Rawls 1971/2005: 74.

<sup>23</sup> Hayek 1982/2013: 247.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Hayek 1948: 26.

behind the modern defence of freedom as individual independence, viz., the post-Romantic idea that each person's form of self-realization is original to him/her, and can therefore only be worked out independently."<sup>26</sup> Especially in today's pluralistic, highly diverse, multicultural societies, this kind of rigidity is becoming increasingly inappropriate.

### *3.1 Positive freedom as a precondition of living democracy*

The concepts of positive liberty and democracy seem closely related, insofar as both are concerned with the goal of people being their own masters. The difference with liberalism is seen in the fact that the aim is not to limit but to justify and to legitimize government power. And liberals like Hayek or Berlin fear that a power perceived as legitimate could threaten to become limitless, even totalitarian in the end.

Taylor criticizes this as a one-sided fixation on a caricatural understanding of positive freedom, as it could only be held up by some leftist esotericists. He instead recalls the republican tradition of classical liberalism that we find, for example, in Tocqueville and "according to which men's ruling themselves is seen as an activity valuable in itself, and not only for instrumental reasons."<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Tocqueville was already aware that mere negative freedom would be insufficient to safeguard togetherness and the common good in a society. On the contrary, he expressed his concern that people "no longer attached to one another by any ties of caste, class, guild, or family, are all too inclined to be preoccupied with their own private interests, too given to looking out for themselves alone and withdrawing into a narrow individualism where all public virtues are smothered."<sup>28</sup> Unlike the doctrinaire liberals and fanatics of the free market the French philosopher was convinced that only the value of political freedom and civic virtues could protect such a society from despotism.

"Liberty alone can effectively combat the natural vices of these kinds of societies and prevent them from sliding down the slippery slope where they find themselves. Only freedom can bring citizens out of the isolation in which the very independence of their circumstances has led them to live, can daily force them to mingle, to join together through the need to communicate with one another, persuade each

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26 Taylor 2006: 142.

27 Ibid.

28 Tocqueville 1856/1998: 87.

other, and satisfy each other in the conduct of their common affairs. Only freedom can tear people from the worship of Mammon and the petty daily concerns of their personal affairs and teach them to always see and feel the nation above and beside them; only freedom can substitute higher and stronger passions for the love of material well-being, give rise to greater ambitions than the acquisition of a fortune, and create the atmosphere which allows one to see and judge human vices and virtues.”<sup>29</sup>

This short section makes clear that Tocqueville's concept of political freedom is as well not identical with that of democracy. That is already understandable just from the circumstances in which he wrote his book *The Old Regime and the Revolution*: under the impression of the coup d'état and the authoritarian regime of Napoléon III. The French people had submitted to his dictatorship by an overwhelming majority in two referendums. In this respect, the difference between Tocqueville and Hayek lies less in the awareness of the danger of totalitarian aspirations of democratic majorities than in a different understanding of positive resp. political freedom. Hayek understands it purely formally as “the participation of men in the choice of their government, in the process of legislation, and in the control of administration.”<sup>30</sup> For Tocqueville, however, political liberty goes beyond this; it is not purely formal, but it is a republican value that is comprehensively directed towards the preservation of a free *res publica* and must be internalized by the citizens. Political freedom in this sense is not merely dependent on formal procedures such as elections, but requires corresponding republican virtues on the part of the citizens (*citoyens*, not *bourgeois*).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a liberal of this republican tradition in the line of Tocqueville was Raymond Aron, who was a critic of Hayek's doctrinaire liberalism and his one-sided understanding of freedom. Just like Tocqueville 100 years earlier, Aron was very concerned after World War II that Western European prosperous societies were losing that awareness of civic virtues. In an interview in 1981, he therefore feels compelled to remind Europeans that “in a democracy, individuals are at the same time private citizens and citizens of the state.”<sup>31</sup> He explicitly refers to Tocqueville in this passage. “There is a text by Tocqueville in which he says that Americans can be passionate about personal happiness on the

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29 Ibid. 88.

30 Hayek 1960/2011: 61.

31 Aron 1983: 238.

one hand and very patriotic, that is concerned for the public good, on the other. That is the characteristic of a living democracy.”<sup>32</sup> Under the threats of the Cold War, this was a main concern of Aron with regard to the future of liberal democracies: “When the second element is no longer present, one must ask history to be lenient with those who have forgotten the lessons.”<sup>33</sup>

### 3.2 *Esteem, social recognition and belonging*

Political freedom, then, is a matter of active citizenship, participation, and common good orientation. The willingness to embrace these civic virtues, however, has its own preconditions, especially in modern pluralistic and culturally diverse societies. Necessary is a feeling of belonging and that cannot be achieved with mere tolerance according to the respect conception. Rather, the feeling of belonging arises from social recognition, as expressed in the esteem conception of tolerance.

In modern, functionally differentiated society, an individual can no longer define his or her identity through social roles, as was the case in earlier times. Charles Taylor relates this modern concept of identity to the idea of authenticity, “which calls on me to discover my own original way of being. By definition, this way of being cannot be socially derived, but must inwardly generated.”<sup>34</sup> The German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, the mastermind of the theory of functional differentiation, expresses the same thought when he states: “The individual can no longer be defined by inclusion, but only by exclusion.”<sup>35</sup> But at the same time he emphasizes: “The fact that one no longer owes one's individuality to social inclusion but to social exclusion is a system-theoretical statement. It says nothing about causal dependencies. People can still live only in social contexts, and in modern society this is no less true than it used to be – perhaps with more alternatives and choices for the individual, but also with an immense increase in the ways in which one is dependent.”<sup>36</sup>

Taylor explains this dialectic of modern identity resp. individuality and social relatedness resp. interdependency by referring back to the studies of the social psychologist George Herbert Mead. He emphasizes that the “crucial

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32 Ibid. 237.

33 Ibid.

34 Taylor 1994: 32.

35 Luhmann 1993: 158.

36 Ibid. 159–160.

cial feature of human life” still “is its fundamentally *dialogical* character.”<sup>37</sup> And at the same time this is the reason, why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others.”<sup>38</sup>

### 3.2.1 *Spheres of recognition and tolerance*

Also the social philosopher Axel Honneth tries to explain the intersubjective conditions of the constitution of social identity, building on the work of Mead. The concept of recognition is thereby central to his theory. Honneth adopts and modifies Hegel's model of a threefold division of the human community into family, state and society and derives from it three essential spheres of recognition: an emotional, a legal and a social sphere. The most elementary form of recognition is love, as it is shown to one's spouse, one's own children, or even close friends. At this “first level of its practical relation-to-self, the individual is recognized as precisely this, as an individual whose needs and desires are of unique value to another person”<sup>39</sup>. Love is concern for the well-being of the loved one for his or her own sake. And although there is “always [...] an element of moral particularism” inherent in this special kind of relationship, Honneth, following Hegel, sees in it “the structural core of all ethical life.”<sup>40</sup> Only the affirmation of one's own identity experienced in love “produces the degree of basic individual self-confidence indispensable for autonomous participation in public life.”<sup>41</sup>

The second level of legal recognition refers to the modern conviction which regards all people as free and equal beings. On this level, “the individual is recognized as a person who is ascribed the same moral accountability as every other human being”<sup>42</sup>. Social identity and self-respect are here based on the acknowledgement of the legal status of civic equality. That legal status is not to be understood statically, but dynamically. What constitutes the legal recognition of a person and a citizen, Honneth emphasizes, is not finally determined once and for all, but depends on the historical and cultural state of knowledge of a community. What's

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37 Taylor 1994: 32.

38 Ibid. 34.

39 Honneth 2005: 52.

40 Honneth 1995): 107.

41 Ibid.

42 Honneth 2005: 52.

more, the “essential indeterminacy as to what constitutes the status of a responsible person leads to a structural openness on the part of modern law to a gradual increase in inclusivity and precision.”<sup>43</sup> With regard to the different conceptions of tolerance, this type of legal recognition could be related to the respect conception. It is about mutual acceptance of legal equality but not about appreciation of difference and particularity.

Finally, at the third level of social recognition, “the individual is recognized as a person whose capabilities are of constitutive value to a concrete community”<sup>44</sup>. Thus, it is about social esteem which, in regard to one’s practical self-relation, forms the basis of her or his self-esteem. The difference between legal and social recognition is that, at the second level of recognition, a person is recognized in his or her characteristics, which are common to all human beings and thus make him or her a person with fundamental rights, while, at the third level, he or she receives social esteem because of his or her special characteristics, which distinguish him or her from other persons. Honneth writes, that “for this kind of recognition, which has the character of a particular esteem, there are no corresponding moral concepts in the philosophical tradition, but it may well be a good idea to refer here to concepts such as ‘solidarity’ or ‘loyalty’”<sup>45</sup>.

The proposal made in this paper, is to make a link between the idea of social recognition and the esteem conception of tolerance, as both are about appreciation of individual particularity and of social difference.

### *3.2.2 Politics of recognition and esteem-tolerance for democratic togetherness*

The described dialectics of modern individuality and social relatedness is the reason why social recognition as well as tolerance are indispensable for the togetherness of people in today’s societies, as one’s sense of her or his social identity depends on the social network to which one belongs (or not). And the feeling of belonging does not only depend on a certain legal status, e.g. the passport, but moreover on respect, esteem, and social recognition.

That poses great challenges especially for multicultural societies. The biggest problem in this context is that in today’s Europe, a lot of members from minorities, especially from Muslim communities, feel rejected by

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43 Honneth 1995: 110.

44 Honneth 2005: 52.

45 Ibid.

the majority and therefore withdraw in parallel societies which provide warmth to them. Their feeling of not belonging is not always the result of concrete experiences of discrimination, but rather of the self-perception of being “different” from the surrounding majority, for example, because one has a different name, another religion, or a different skin color than most of the people around her or him. Although people with hybrid identities are normally no longer addressed as “foreigners” today, but rather in a politically correct manner as “people with a migration background”, even the “harmless” question “Where are you from?”, which may often derive from honest interest, reinforces the self-perception of otherness if it is repeated regularly. Children and adolescents in particular can be maneuvered into a real social dilemma by such mutually reinforcing perceptions of themselves and others.<sup>46</sup>

In Germany, this phenomenon involves e.g. a large number of people with Turkish roots. There are 2.5 to 3 million ethnic Turks living in Germany which counts about 3.7 to 4.2 percent of the total German population. Almost half of them have a German passport. Nevertheless, the feeling of not belonging to German society is widespread among these people. According to a survey conducted in 2016 among people with Turkish roots living in Germany, almost half of those interviewed agreed that Islamic commandments were more important to them than German laws.<sup>47</sup>

The American philosopher Martha Nussbaum sees the reason for this in the understanding of the nation that has developed historically in Europe. “Ever since the rise of the modern state, European nations have understood the root of nationhood to lie first and foremost in characteristics that are difficult if not impossible for new immigrants to share. Strongly influenced by romanticism, these nations have seen blood, soil, ethnolinguistic peoplehood, and religion as necessary or at least central elements of a national identity. Thus people who have a different geographical origin, or a different holy land, or a different mother tongue, or a different appearance and way of dressing, never quite seem to belong, however long they have resided in a country.”<sup>48</sup>

Traditional immigration countries such as the United States, where most people are descended from ancestors who themselves came to the country as migrants at some point, have a different concept of the nation,

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46 See: Foroutan/Schäfers 2009: 12.

47 Pollack et al. 2016: 14.

48 Nussbaum 2012: 13.

which is based less on ethnic or cultural homogeneity than on common ideals and goals. These countries see themselves less as a cultural community and more as a political community. Nussbaum advises Europe to further develop its self-image in this direction in order to achieve a modern idea of a living democracy for a highly diverse and multicultural society. This would require that even members of minorities feel that they, with their own origins, history and culture, belong to this society and this democracy. And that is the reason why modern liberal democracies need a culture of esteem-tolerance and a policy of recognition.

Such culture and policy do, as Charles Taylor points out, in no way mean compromising the basic political principles of liberalism or even denying the Christian origins of the Western culture. "Liberalism can't and shouldn't claim complete cultural neutrality."<sup>49</sup> But recognition politics takes seriously the sense of marginalization felt by many people with an immigrant background. At the same time it has to deal with the fact that a lot of them have cultural roots which may question the philosophical principles of the Western concept of liberalism and democracy to some extent.<sup>50</sup> Esteem-tolerance in this context does not mean that every other cultural custom has to be recognized of equal value or even acceptable, but that it is in any case worthy of attention and that there is no alternative to dialogue. "There must be something midway between the inauthentic and homogenizing demand for recognition of equal worth, on the one hand, and the self-immurement within ethnocentric standards on the other."<sup>51</sup>

## Conclusion

The classical liberalism of rights developed the idea of equal citizenship under the rule of law as one of the essential foundations of modern democracy. In earlier times of traditional and culturally homogeneous societies and states, this may have been a sufficient concept. But in today's highly individualized and diverse, multicultural societies we need a more saturated idea of democratic togetherness. This requires a strong concept of political freedom including a culture of esteem-tolerance and, at the level of democratic institutions, a policy of recognition.

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49 Taylor 1995: 62.

50 See: Ibid. 63.

51 Ibid. 72.



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# Proactive Tolerance as a Social Resilience Factor in the Context of an Anti-Identitarian Social Ethics

## An Exploration on the Basis of a Social Psychological Understanding of Identity

*Lars Schäfers*

For a long time now, the world has been characterised by deep uncertainties in the sense of multiple upheavals and crises. With the Corona pandemic, they have reached a new peak. The pandemic acts as an accelerator of insecurities, fears, populism and fundamental criticism of politics, society, and the media. These fears and an accompanying fundamental distrust in democratic institutions are being nurtured and exploited especially by movements and parties of the right-wing populist-extremist spectrum in Europe. The post-socialist Eastern European states in particular have a reputation today as strongholds of populism.<sup>1</sup> And indeed, right-wing populist-nationalist parties are often strong in Eastern Europe, and in some countries, they also assume offices in the government, e.g. in Poland and Hungary as the former models of the transformation from socialism to democracy. The rise of these parties and movements in the 2010s, along with an increasing response to their nationalist identity politics,<sup>2</sup> represents a dangerous adversity for the values of pluralist and liberal democracies.<sup>3</sup> In the wake of the drastic experiences with the Corona pandemic, there is therefore a renewed debate about how societies and individuals can become more crisis-resistant, or in modern terms: more resilient.

This diagnostics of the contemporary forms the background for the following Christian social-ethical reflections, inspired by the concept of proactive tolerance, which was developed within the framework of the German-Ukrainian project “Tolerance at the European frontiers – the dimension of Ukraine”. Within the project, tolerance was examined as a “key virtue of democracy”<sup>4</sup>. The necessity of a well-founded definition of

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1 Cf. for example von Beyme 2019.

2 Cf. on this instructive and clear Müller 2019.

3 Cf. Fukuyama 2019.

4 Vogt /Husmann 2019: 3.

the concept of tolerance, as was undertaken within the framework of the Ukraine project under the term “proactive tolerance”<sup>5</sup> arises not least from the fact that this is a container concept, which, as key virtue for modern pluralistic societies, can be attested a high normative value. The downside is that tolerance often remains blurred in its diverse contexts of use and can degenerate into an inflationary buzzword. The term resilience, which will be the focus of this article, shares this fate of a buzzword with a steep career, into which many different semantics can be placed. The concept of identity can be added to this series of container terms, not least because of an inner logic. Accordingly, the modern – and today variously discussed and interpreted – key concepts of tolerance, resilience, and identity span the horizon of reflection of the present article. All three terms have a special relevance in multiple crisis and conflict situations like the present ones. It is the aim of this article to put all three terms into a hermeneutic relation.

This contribution begins with the presentation of a social-psychological concept of identity according to Heiner Keupp and Jochen Sautermeister (1). This concept combines personal and collective identity patterns on an empirical basis and implies the procedural search for a resilient identity at the intersection of the psychic inside and the social outside. On this basis, a brief presentation of the concept of resilience follows after an interpretation that also mediates the individual-ethical perspective with a social-ethical view on the basis of the resilience studies conducted by Clemens Sedmak (2), which can be linked to a social-psychological understanding of identity. As right-wing politics challenges the resilience of identities, a further development of the specifically socio-ethical dimension is needed. Therefore I will undertake an investigation at recent research on a decidedly anti-identitarian social ethics<sup>6</sup> as a normative framework concept for the present reflections (3). Finally, the outlaid reflections will be condensed and summarized once again and I will draw references to the role of the concept of proactive tolerance (4). After all, however, only a few milestones can be pointed at, and this selection out of a broad field is condemned to remain fragmentary, provisional. Nevertheless, there are resilient answers to be given which will certainly stimulate further thinking.

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5 Cf. fundamentally Vogt/Husmann 2019. Cf. also the contribution by Rolf Husmann in this volume.

6 Cf. the articles in issue 1/2020 of the social-ethical online journal “Ethik und Gesellschaft”: Becka 2020; Lesch 2020; Möhring-Hesse 2020.

This article chooses as starting point of reflection the current critical situation in which the supposedly crisis-proofed collective identity are promoted particular by right-wing populist forces<sup>7</sup>, with the aim of unifying<sup>8</sup> and combating plurality. This choice has been made because this phenomenon is an almost worldwide mega-trend of recent years that endangers democratic core values such as tolerance. In terms of identity theory and ethics, the following will therefore deal with the concept of resilience, which will be further developed. I will focus on the content of the term and on the potential, described by it: the potential of being able to behave in and through permanent disturbances and social and cultural processes of change in such a way that future disturbances can also be overcome, while preserving one's own identity.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the topic of resilience and identity is consistently depending on the normative reflection of the correlations between person and society. A social-psychological understanding of identity – including a meta-normative bridging function between the personal and the societal sphere – is helpful in this regard. One can also say that the question of identity is about the “moral structure of the individual in the social”<sup>10</sup>.

### *Social-psychologically determined personal identity*

The complex question of identity is above all a modern phenomenon. But the meanings and definitions of identity are so diverse that a clarified concept seems almost unobtainable. Following closely the thinking of the theological ethicist and psychologist Jochen Sautermeister as well as the social psychologist Heiner Keupp, a social-psychologically determined understanding of personal identity will be presented here. It is based on Erik Erikson's use of the concept of identity for the psychosocial development of the human being, in which experiences of loss and crisis play a central role.<sup>11</sup>

According to Keupp, identity unfolds through a subjective construction process in which individuals seek a “fit between the subjective 'inside' and

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7 On the definition of right-wing populism, especially in contrast to the principles of a pluralistic, tolerance-based democracy, cf. especially Müller 2017.

8 Cf. especially Bauer 2018.

9 Cf. to this approach Frankenreiter 2018: 180.

10 Cf. Hunold 1993.

11 Cf. Erikson 1973.

the social 'outside'"<sup>12</sup>. This understanding of process-based identity work as "fitting work"<sup>13</sup> in the course of a person's various phases of life is shaped by the respective complex conditions and contextual preconditions, and also limitations in society. In interactions with other persons, this process-based identity work usually involves an unconscious attempt to maintain an identity balance<sup>14</sup>, in which the person on the one hand wants to keep in touch with the socially mediated expectations and requirements of others, but on the other hand also wants to assert his or her own singularity as a person.

If the person is succeeding in this lifelong procedural balancing and integrating act again and again, the false form of a fragile and diffuse identity – as well as that of a rigid, supposedly unchangeable identity – is equally avoided.<sup>15</sup> Thus, identity has the character of a meta-norm.<sup>16</sup> However, the actual or supposed questioning of one's own personal and cultural identity in times of instability and multi-layered processes of change, as it is currently the case, makes identity a problem – and thus a task because of its permanent fragility.<sup>17</sup> According to Sautermeister, the normative goal of an identity that can be certified as having integrity "always implies an awareness of the difference and strangeness of the ways of acting and the lifestyles of people who strive to live together in mutual recognition despite all their differences."<sup>18</sup>

A pressed and questioned identity, on the other hand, will easily accept a supposedly strong, stable and unambiguous collective meta-political identity offer<sup>19</sup>, such as that of right-wing populists and nationalists. Therefore, the political and social conditions as well as cultural and religious resources of meaning are relevant for creating successfully an inclusive personal identity in recognition of their necessary plurality. This marks the specific object of social-ethical reflection, because, according to Walter Lesch: "Since social contexts and individual questions of identity are closely connected, the topic is also social-ethically relevant and can only be outsourced at the price of an unworldly social theory. This is especially evident in the return of the identity problem in the distorted expressions

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12 Keupp 2017: 201.

13 Keupp 2017: 201.

14 Cf. Krappmann 2005: 9.

15 Cf. Sautermeister 2017: 51.

16 Cf. Sautermeister 2013: 202ff.

17 Cf. Sautermeister 2017: 49.

18 Sautermeister 2017: 51.

19 Cf. Frankenreiter 2018: 190ff.

of identitarian excesses.”<sup>20</sup> Social ethics as a normative theory of social structures, from a social-psychological identity-theoretical point of view does the job of analyzing and identifying the social and structural conditions that are “necessary for a free and responsible identity work of all individuals under the respective social conditions.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it is compulsory to examine identitarian politics as a captious collectively oriented resource for the identity of the individual. Since these identity resources are usually opposed to the values of a liberal, pluralistic democracy characterized by tolerance, and since they are therefore destructive, it is important to ask, from a normative point of view, how societal defenses against the anti-democratic forms of these identity politics can be strengthened. This is the starting point for my reflection on a socio-psychologically and social-ethically interpretable understanding of resilience. This will then be integrated into the normative framework of a correspondingly resilience- and tolerance-promoting anti-identitarian social ethics.

*Resilience according to Clemens Sedmak: An identity-practical and individual-ethical grounded...*

Resilience is a much-used broad-spectrum term<sup>22</sup>. Literally, the dispositional term resilience means something like: “to return to the original state.”<sup>23</sup> It originated in the natural sciences and was first used in the human sciences, particularly in psychology. In the meantime, however, it has also made a career in politics, social science and social ethics. The concept of resilience, with its considerable breadth of reception<sup>24</sup>, is particularly popular in times of crisis,<sup>25</sup> when individuals, but also societies, are challenged in their powers of resistance: “In view of the growing awareness of the diverse global risks and challenges facing today's societies, the question of preventive 'protective factors' has increasingly been raised in recent years, which enable the social system to deal with manifold unpredictability and to withstand various crises.”<sup>26</sup> Resilience discourses, which are currently being conducted on an interdisciplinary and societal

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20 Lesch 2020: 9.

21 Sautermeister 2017: 58.

22 Schneider/Vogt 2016: 181.

23 Schneider/Vogt 2016: 182.

24 Cf. Weiß et al. 2018.

25 Cf. Vogt/Schneider 2016: 180f.

26 Fathi 2019: 25.

basis, are a contemporary diagnostic indicator of a growing awareness of upheaval and crisis, but also of solutions, for which the concept of resilience seems to be attractive.

The Christian ethicist Clemens Sedmak developed a concept of resilience that links its political and social dimensions with the inwardness of the subject of action. According to Sedmak, resilience is a “competence of adversity”<sup>27</sup> and thus “a certain form of dealing with adversities (stresses, disturbances, pressures, disruptions) in a prosperous way”<sup>28</sup>. Sedmak emphasizes the central importance of the inwardness of the human being for its identity formation. In his approach to epistemic resilience, Sedmak refers above all to the inner-psycho preconditions of resilience. Sedmak understands identity in this context as the self-concept in relation to the environment, including the ability to deal constructively<sup>29</sup> with external circumstances in the sense of identity work<sup>30</sup> with resilience as an inner strength that can be cultivated.<sup>31</sup> Resilience thus enables one to “flourish under adverse circumstances, especially when familiar stability has been lost.”<sup>32</sup>

*...and social-ethically advanced concept of resilience.*

Not only individual but also collective subjects can exhibit resilience in this sense. A society can be a “resilient society.”<sup>33</sup> With Neil Adger, social resilience can be defined “as the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change.”<sup>34</sup> However, it must be added that internal stress and disturbances of a society have to be managed, too. In times of multiple crises<sup>35</sup>, the model of a “multi-resilient society”, equipped with a

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27 Sedmak 2016: 236. Sedmak develops a very comprehensive understanding of (epistemic) resilience in his study “Innerlichkeit und Kraft” (Innerness and Power), which can only be reproduced in a few basic features in the following.

28 Sedmak 2016: 235.

29 Cf. Sedmak 2013: 69.

30 Cf. Sedmak 2013: 33f.

31 Cf. in detail Sedmak 2013: 226ff.

32 Sedmak 2016: 236.

33 Cf. on the term Ostheimer 2017 in the context of the socio-ecological discourse. Cf. also Sedmak 2013: 375.

34 Adger 2000: 347.

35 Cf. Vogt 2017: 308, following Ulrich Brand.



“basic robustness” against crises,<sup>36</sup> is even more obvious. According to Sedmak, social cohesion, and thus an important precondition for a society's resilience, can otherwise be damaged.<sup>37</sup> Sedmak therefore characterizes social resilience as connectivity, as the inner cohesion in a well-ordered society, which must be characterized by a sense of justice and trust.<sup>38</sup> Right-wing populist identity politics, which leads to social difference by using a criterion of demarcation, has such an understanding of social cohesion and social resilience in mind that only homogeneous groups can represent.

On the political level, Sedmak is concerned with “deep politics”: This means that politics is shaped from a culture of personal inwardness.<sup>39</sup> In this context, specifically political emotions also play an important role.<sup>40</sup> This politics provides the members of the society with the necessary resources and the needed framework conditions to develop their own inner identity in openness to the diversity of identities in a society<sup>41</sup> and thus to be less susceptible to closed collective identity offers.

Therefore, in the following, in the sense of a concretization of Sedmak's<sup>42</sup> abstract thoughts, such “right-wing” identity politics<sup>43</sup> will now be considered in more detail. It will be used as an example to illustrate the extent to which tolerance can be interpreted as a social resilience factor against the background of closed identity constructions.

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36 Cf. Fathi 2020.

37 Cf. Sedmak 2016: 242.

38 Cf. Sedmak 2016: 242f.

39 Cf. Sedmak 2013: 361ff.

40 Cf. Vogt 2017.

41 Cf. Sedmak 2013: 363.

42 This is illustrated by himself in Sedmak 2013, however, with a variety of concrete examples of individuals who have developed an appropriate resilience.

43 In contrast to such “right-wing” identity politics, which essentially aims at the collective defense of (majority) privileges in a society, “left-wing” identity politics, in clear contrast, are concerned with the organization of minorities and the fight against their discrimination and oppression (cf. Riedl 2020). Resilience and tolerance are also important in such minority identity politics, but in the context of the objective of recognizing minority identities and not as defenses against (supposed) majority identities.

*Right-Wing Identity Politics as a Challenge to Social Resilience*

The offer of right-wing collective identity politics seems to be seductive especially in times of multiple crises, complex contexts and the accompanying experiences of identity poverty<sup>44</sup>. According to the Second Vatican Council, identity temptations can be seen as a current sign of the times, which therefore requires a Christian-social-ethical research.

Those identity offers – with demarcating-intolerant semantics and a moral claim to sole representation of a nation or a people<sup>45</sup> – are to be unmasked as mere constructs. Walter Lesch describes them pointedly as follows: “identitarian fictions of state and society lack any empirical basis. They exaggerate the splendor of one's own culture and exaggerate the threat of masses supposedly ready to rush in. They polemicize against minorities and diabolize their claims in grotesque disaster scenarios.”<sup>46</sup> Since these mostly anti-pluralistic and anti-democratic<sup>47</sup> identitarian politics from the right-wing populist spectrum are opposed to the values of a liberal democracy based on plurality and tolerance.<sup>48</sup> The main task of an explicitly anti-identitarian social ethics is to deconstruct identitarian metapolitics and, at the same time, to offer alternative identity-creating interpretive schemes.<sup>49</sup> However, there is a serious danger that, in pursuing a fundamental critique of populist identity politics, one is in turn pursuing identity politics: One “should not react to populists symmetrically, according to the idea: Because you exclude, we now exclude you. Here one would fall precisely into the trap of opposing a populist identity politics with a liberal one, the morally good collective against the other, bad characters.”<sup>50</sup>

An anti-identitarian social ethics unfolds an open concept of collective identity that does not dissolve into a total identification, but constructively takes up the needs associated with collective identities (such as belonging somewhere, community, and orientation in their ambivalence) and works on them in dynamic pendulum movements.<sup>51</sup> Based on the social-psychological approach described above, which sees personal identity in procedu-

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44 Cf. Sedmak 2013: 363.

45 Cf. Müller 2019: 18.

46 Lesch 2020: 14.

47 Cf. on these central dimensions of right-wing populism especially Müller 2017.

48 Cf. Fukuyama 2019.

49 Cf. Möhring-Hesse 2020.

50 Müller 2019: 21.

51 Cf. Becka 2020: 20.

ral-dynamic interaction with social claims and collective identity offers, the importance of the latter should not be ignored or even demonized. Experiences of identity poverty and the need for its alleviation have to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, it is necessary to critically reinterpret, if not deconstruct, collective identity offers, especially where destructive identity politics is pursued with them.<sup>52</sup>

According to Sedmak, a critical reinterpretation of collective identity can succeed, for example, on the basis of a narrative mediation of social resilience.<sup>53</sup> Such an approach can take shape, for example, in the form of a cultural conception of identity that does not understand itself in terms of demarcation (from those on the outside), but rather feeds on the very opposite attitude as a constitutive element of identity.

*Excursus: Brague's narrative identity of Europe as a counter-draft to the right-wing populist concept of the Occident*

The narrative identity of Europe developed by Rémi Brague is a particularly noteworthy example of such a “cultivation of narrative resilience”<sup>54</sup>, also and especially against the problem horizon of right-wing identity politics in Europe. Brague's approach<sup>55</sup> does not define Europe in relation to people from other cultural backgrounds by demarcation. According to him, one of the roots of European identity, from the time of the ancient Romans onwards, was to be open towards the foreign and to allow oneself to be enriched. For the identity work of the individual it implies the ability to transcend oneself: no demarcation and no devaluation of foreign cultures and identities, but the critical, but fundamentally tolerant and proactive confrontation with them. Brague calls the mode of such a personal practice of the individual in this Roman attitude “self-Europeanization”<sup>56</sup>. Especially with regard to identitarian politics, which cultivates the narrative that Europe's identity as a “Christian Occident” must be defended against Islam and refugee migrants, coming from the outside, Brague's narrative appears as a constructive counter-concept.<sup>57</sup> With this cultural narrative, the “Christian Occident” is not understood in accordance with

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52 Cf. Becka 2020.

53 Cf. Sedmak 2016: 237.

54 Sedmak 2016: 237.

55 Cf. Brague 2012.

56 Brague 1996: 99

57 Cf. from a social-ethical perspective, in detail Schäfers 2016.

the right-wing populist identity proposition as a demarcation against “the others.” Moreover, Christianity often functions as a partial element of an outwardly closed understanding of Europe and the Occident by right-wing populist movements. Their supporters sometimes justify this by claiming that it is their intention “to pursue Christian goals and to stand up for human rights, persecuted Christians or the ‘Christian Occident’.”<sup>58</sup> This is another reason why Christian social ethics in particular must face this problem in the format of an anti-identitarian social ethics.

*Conclusion: Proactive tolerance as a social resilience factor*

This article explores the links between the three key concepts of identity, resilience, and tolerance. The starting point is the finding that questions of identity are of great importance today, both for the individual and for society. In times of multiple crises, unifying collective identities are attractive, which supposedly simplify the difficult process of constant identity work for the individual, cultivating his inwardness in constructive confrontation with the social context. According to the understanding presented here, the competence of resilience helps both the individual and society to resist such seductive offers and to develop further despite adverse circumstances. From the point of view of social ethics, the issue of identity is about providing the individual access to social resources that promote his or her identity work. This requires an appreciation of a diversity of identities in an open and plural society. Especially proactive tolerance, as developed in the Ukraine project, is a virtue that can foster this attitude. In this respect, it can be described as a social resilience factor. Proactive tolerance means an appreciative, committed interest in plurality, in those who think and live differently. In this respect, it prevents the emergence of conflicts by building trust.<sup>59</sup> Proactive tolerance creates the possibility of reciprocal dialogue, which in the best case is cultivated as mutual enrichment. This requires consolidated individual-personal identities “which do not feel threatened by deviating opinions or other forms of behavior”<sup>60</sup> and a society's identity that is decidedly understood as open and plural. The need for this is evident in view of the resonance that anti-pluralist right-wing

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58 Strube 2015: 25. Sonja Angelika Strube is the person in Germany currently doing the most thorough empirical work on the intersection of parts of conservative streams of Christianity and right-wing populist ideology.

59 Cf. Vogt/Husmann 2019: 6f.

60 Vogt/Husmann 2019: 7.

populist identity politics has. A decidedly anti-identitarian social ethics deconstructs such collective identity offers without negating the needs of people for a successful cultivation of identity and the overcoming of identity poverty. Social ethics has to prove that a constructive identity culture can rather only develop sufficiently in liberal, pluralistic democracies. According to Sedmak, societies can gain resilience competence if they build up inner cohesion and connectivity despite the plurality that has developed. In pluralistic societies, proactive tolerance is therefore an important target value in order to promote resilience-enhancing cohesion.

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# Tolerance as a Question of Public Goods and Social Places

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An essential characteristic of our society is its plurality. Social milieus, lifestyles and forms of life, subcultures, social movements and regional conditions have been continuously differentiating for several decades, so that individuals are becoming increasingly dissimilar in their realities of life. Social development trends, such as demographic, technological or ecological change, give this differentiation process an additional boost. At the same time, structural inequalities are becoming more pronounced: Social differences between “above” and “below” are increasing. Wealth is growing and child poverty is becoming more entrenched. More and more people fear for their share of social prosperity. Infrastructures are crumbling. Services of general interest are decaying. Entire (rural) regions see themselves left behind, while social, economic and ethnic segregation divides major cities.<sup>1</sup> These inequalities threaten social cohesion to the extent that forms of mutual tolerance and reconciliation of interests are called into question. The fact that racism, hatred and incitement dominate social media and violent excesses against minorities, refugees and the homeless disturb the public, weakens cohesion as a subjective experience and trust in the social environment.

In addition, there are growing differences in the structure of public institutions in rural areas as well as in urban centers. They are linked to opportunities for participation and determine living conditions. When the bus only runs once a day, the local elementary school closes, or a visit to the relevant administrative office requires a half-day's drive, the sense of social participation and balance of interests erodes. Deficits in services and institutions that are fundamental to everyday activity are correlated with a lack of common good. Expectations of alignment are disappointed, experiences of difference are nurtured, and a sense of grievance arises. The dismantling of social infrastructures weakens and endangers cohesion. The more pluralistic and open the social fabric becomes, and the more it becomes disconnected and unequal, the more urgent the need for forms of social integration. The question of how to maintain social cohesion in

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1 Cf. Kersten et al. 2019.

an open society is increasingly becoming a crucial one. Against this background, the following article argues that the lowest common denominator in a complex, lifeworldly and culturally differentiated society is based on shared, democratic institutions and infrastructures. To the question of what binds open societies together and promotes tolerant attitudes, one answer is public goods and Social Places.

### *Tolerance as a relational skill*

In times of profound social upheaval, divisions and polarization, democratic guardrails are needed: Strengthening cohesion is therefore indispensably linked to stable democratic values and attitudes. Alongside diversity, openness, trust and solidarity, one of them finds expression in the value or normative practice of tolerance. Tolerance<sup>2</sup> is a key virtue that enables democratic behavior.<sup>3</sup> It enables cooperative coexistence in societies in which “the plurality of cultures, worldviews, and views of humanity [] is understood not as a threat but as a richness”<sup>4</sup>. This attitude of mind is based on voluntariness and it has both a “rejection component” and an “acceptance component.” Other values, views, behaviors or ways of life are recognized but not shared. According to this, tolerance<sup>5</sup> has a functionalist moment for living together in a democratic society.<sup>6</sup> In order to develop tolerant attitudes, people depend on structural conditions. They need to relate to each other, to meet and experience each other in order to have positive lifeworld experiences with “the others.” This is where the contact effect comes into play, according to which personal contact between different social groups under certain conditions leads to a reduction of

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2 There are various ethical, religious and philosophical approaches to the concept of tolerance. Relevant systematisations can be found in Forst 2017 and Vogt/Husmann 2019.

3 Cf. Vogt/Husmann 2019: 3.

4 Ibid. 8.

5 Critical voices, however, see the performance of the concept of tolerance as limited: effective relationships of domination are faded out, because “only the powerful can afford tolerance, the powerless cannot tolerate the powerful, they can only duck” (Heitmeyer 2002: 272). Exaggerating the meaning of the term would be a gateway to interpret social inequalities as diversity, to become indifferent to it and thus to ignore and tolerate its systematics and structure (cf. *ibid.*).

6 Cf. Forst 2017: 32 ff.

stereotypes, devaluations, demarcations and xenophobia and promotes the development of trust and tolerance.<sup>7</sup>

But if a lack of reference is to be transformed into the ability to relate, people need appropriate spaces and framework conditions. Encounters depend on public and social infrastructures that offer opportunities for contact. An “institutional framework” is crucial for the development of tolerance and cohesion.<sup>8</sup> It needs firmly installed pathways to other social circles. In short, it needs a framework of public goods.

### *The value of public goods*

Public goods are understood to be services and institutions on which citizens absolutely depend for their free development in a democratic society and with a view to the equality of their living conditions. These include education and training facilities, medical care, mobility and security, transparent administration and legally bound jurisdiction. In this context, it is important to note that public goods are of a different quality and significance than common goods. Common goods (commons) start from the friendly idea of discursive understanding and mutual solidarity. Public goods, on the other hand, are always related to a state and legal order. Thus, questions of power, the assertion of interests and the ability to reach a consensus come into play to a much greater extent. In any case, public goods, unlike commons, are in need of a state.<sup>9</sup> They lay the foundation for the usually unquestioned everyday actions of people.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, public goods also tend to become self-evident – and thus to fall out of social and political consciousness. Quite wrongly, because their integrating function deserves full scientific and political attention despite their unpretentious appearance.

Public goods resemble a second nature of differentiated, technologically and infrastructurally highly developed societies. The fact that we receive medical care, that our children can attend schools, that we can use roads and transport routes safely and reliably, that we do not have to buy police protection, advice and social support or even access to justice – we take all this for granted.<sup>11</sup> But it is precisely this infrastructure framework

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7 Cf. Allport 1954.

8 Cf. Vogt/Husmann 2019: 12.

9 Cf. Vogel 2007.

10 Cf. Böhnke et al. 2015.

11 Cf. Vogel 2007.

that forms the preconditions of social cohesion! Public goods serve the common good and the public spirit. They convey trust in the social environment because they are accompanied by the possibility of leading a future-oriented life in equal living conditions.

The value of public goods is that their existence enables cohesion and is at the same time an essential prerequisite for a functioning democracy.<sup>12</sup> Public goods represent the idea of equalization and equivalence, of “social equalizing”, as Angela Kallhoff writes in her book “Why Democracy Needs Public Goods”.<sup>13</sup> According to Kallhoff, they materialize ideas that are linked to a coexistence in society that is oriented toward democratic, constitutional and welfare-state principles. According to Kallhoff, public goods have a strong normative side – especially when their value is discussed, it is not only about the quantity of goods, services or institutions, but also about the quality of living together.

### *Perspectives on public goods*

If we emphasize this normative side of public goods, then questions of distribution also come into view and questions of priority and privilege. To whose benefit and possibly to whose burden are public goods, services, institutions provided? Who finances them? Who benefits from them, who bears them without being able to use them? What social equalization effects, but also: what inequality effects do they produce? As this perspective suggests, public goods are objects of conflict. Ever since they were established, they have been at the crossroads between the state's performance of its tasks, civic demands and entrepreneurial activities.

When we talk about public goods from a social science perspective as a basis for enabling cohesion, we must also consider them in terms of their conflictual nature. This is largely due to the fact that they are subject to change. Especially in times when social disparities are gaining in importance, when demographic change is challenging the relationship between young and old, when infrastructures of energy supply and transport infrastructure are developing into core issues of public negotiation, public goods are becoming a field of conflict. They are far more than a beacon and the air we breathe. There is no municipal catalog of public goods that can be opened and worked through. They change with society,

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12 Cf. *ibid.*

13 Kallhoff 2011.

which is itself changing. And this change is taking place in demographic, sociocultural and technological terms, particularly in the municipality and local area. A key factor in their dynamic form is the fact that public goods are produced at different times by different people under different conditions. This brings into play the perspective on the actors, the labor force. Public goods are not just there, they have to be produced again and again. This requires personnel who educate, provide, advise, dispense justice, plan and safeguard – and do so with a certain quality and professionalism. The perspective must also be directed to the producer side, which brings concrete production conditions into view: High-performance public goods require a working environment that is conducive to performance and attractive. The question of assuming responsibility for public goods is not just abstract and often empty rhetoric about the relationship between the market, the state and civil society. It is also the question of attitude, of professional self-image, of the consciousness of those who work as teachers, as medical professionals, as counselors, as law officers, as public service providers. Where, if not in these places of work, do we expect work ethics, commitment and professional knowledge – and not just job culture and service by the book.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, the connection between public goods, the common good and social cohesion has a temporal dimension: On the one hand, public goods have a conserving, security and supportive side. But they are also the capital of the future, with the help of which socio-economic balances in aging societies with growing socio-spatial disparities can be established and new socio-ecological challenges (new mobility and energy supply concepts, organization of regional economic cycles, etc.) can be shaped. Public goods as results of a policy of the “common good” are a change to the future, they have innovative power and illustrate creative potentials that are inherent in a society. In this time-relatedness of public goods, which are produced in the past and further processed in the present for the benefit of the future, their hybridity is shown in a special way. For they develop as future resources and future investments and thus in a complex and tense field of state, municipal, market-related and civic activities. Whether water supply, public services, care or medical services – public goods have different actors that change in the course of history and can be shaped in many ways with a view to the future. In this way, public goods as historically shaped resources and as a change toward the future also strengthen local

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14 Cf. Schultheis et al. 2014.

democracy and social cohesion. As future-related goods, they unfold their value for shaping society and generational responsibility.<sup>15</sup>

*The Concept of Social Places: New Infrastructures for Social Cohesion*

Services of general interest and public goods are motors of social and territorial cohesion. This relationship is becoming increasingly conflictual because the distribution and provision of public goods responds to spatial differentiation processes. Out-migration, ageing, migration and the fragmentation of the world of work provoke spatial disparities and experiences of difference. Not only are the differences between urban and rural areas increasing. Inequality between municipalities is also growing within rural areas.<sup>16</sup>

The federal political and constitutional goal of striving for equal living conditions for all citizens (Article 72(2) of the Basic Law) finds itself challenged by fundamental social changes: While urban agglomerations are booming, attracting younger people and causing rental prices to skyrocket there, numerous rural regions are shrinking in return and becoming demographically homogeneous areas characterized by visible vacancies. In places where high migration rates and a rapidly ageing population are a social reality, there is a growing sense of hopelessness. Dwindling public transport networks, dwindling leisure activities and dwindling clubs characterize the attitude to life. Particularly in rural areas, there are conflicts over the use, distribution and management of services of general interest and public goods. Their successive dismantling always means a loss of places of encounter and social participation – and therefore a threat to social cohesion.

But there are new social constellations that make more than a virtue of necessity and find their own local answers to infrastructural gaps. Social Places are one of these responses. They emerge in many forms in very different regions of the country and respond to specific spatial problems, such as vacancy, lack of tourism, loss of public space. They are preceded by civil society ideas, voluntary initiatives or concepts that think against the trend and thus enable regional scope for action in a creative and innovative way. The basis is formed by the resources, the potential and the commitment of citizens in concrete terms and of regions, municipalities or

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15 Cf. Vogel 2020.

16 Cf. Fink et al. 2019.

districts in general. Social Places do not necessarily have to be a physical place or a project, but rather initiate processes that go beyond themselves by addressing different actors and forming networks.

Nevertheless, these Social Places depend on certain institutional prerequisites and framework conditions so that they can emerge and be stabilized. Five points should be mentioned here:

First, they depend on a functioning public infrastructure and an efficient administration. They need a public framework, legal certainties and a guaranteeing administration. Social Places do not develop against or without public structures, but with them.

Secondly, the possibility of not only installing a project but initiating a process is crucial, as it is not about enabling temporary projects again and again, but about setting processes in motion that can have a sustainable effect according to the precautionary principle. A change in funding policy away from project funding to process funding is overdue here.

Thirdly, for the initiation and stabilization of Social Places, above-average committed and innovative actors are required. No one can be forced into voluntary work, but they can be encouraged! Citizens who do not just sit back and do nothing need appreciation and space.

Fourthly, another central point is openness in the administration for participatory processes and innovative cooperation. Conflicts can arise in the development of Social Places, which do not have to be destructive, but can have productive effects for the respective places and regions. It would be helpful to have the administration “on screen” as an important partner in the production of cohesion and to recognize its role as a democratic infrastructure.

Finally, fifthly, Social Places need supra-regional attention and involvement. Only then do they function and not develop into representatives of local narrow-mindedness and parochial politics. Social Places need networks and recognition beyond the narrow local context.

The “Concept of Social Places” (CSP) emphatically defends the principle of equivalence of living conditions, the guarantee of public goods even in so-called structurally weak regions and the comprehensive provision of services of general interest in line with needs. It stands for new forms of social and territorial cohesion. It helps to find social balances in times of growing socio-structural and socio-spatial inequality. Social Places are social crossroads. This is where people meet, this is where bridges are built between their worlds, this is where the public sphere is established, this is where social participation and co-creation is possible. In pluralistic societies, it is important to create spaces and opportunities for interaction, exchange and yes: also to tolerate each other. The existence of Social

Places enables tolerance, paves the way for further individual democratic attitudes and has a positive effect on social cohesion. A policy that aims to create democratic infrastructures and institutions has to think from the local perspective and to make Social Places a priority. It must create a public framework in which civil society can develop.

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# Tolerance and (Social) Market Economy

Arnd Küppers

At first glance, it seems downright absurd to make a linkage between market economy and tolerance. Is the market not rather the place of manifold discrimination and humiliation? And isn't it true that the market has transformed our community into a hierarchical consumer society?

## 1. Discrimination and exclusion in the market

Economists have known for a long time that people have a tendency to emphasize their social status through consumption. The American economist Thorstein Veblen discussed this reality as early as 1899 in his famous *Theory of the Leisure Class*. He used the term “conspicuous consumption”<sup>1</sup> to describe the phenomenon that people prefer to pay premium prices for luxury goods and services instead of buying cheaper “normal” products and services with similar quality and benefits. The aim of such behavior is to publicly display one's wealth, in Veblen's words: “Conspicuous consumption of valuable goods is a means of reputability to the gentleman of leisure.”<sup>2</sup>

The morally negative aspect of such conspicuous consumption is not only that it obviously implies the “element of waste”<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, it establishes a kind of socio-economic hierarchy and it can be the reason for discrimination when people are excluded from enjoying certain goods because they are too poor to buy them. In rich, developed countries, it might be branded clothes or the latest smartphone. Those who cannot afford such prestigious objects are discriminated against by their peer group – and this is not only the case among teenagers. Zygmunt Bauman goes so far as to regard present society as a “society of consumers”, the “most prominent feature” of which he considers to be “– however carefully

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1 See: Veblen 2007: 49 et seq.

2 Ibid. 53.

3 Ibid. 60.

concealed and most thoroughly covered up – [...] the transformation of consumers into commodities.”<sup>4</sup>

Yet, the market does not only exclude people from enjoying prestigious goods. The poorest of the poor in this world often cannot even afford the necessities of life. “Such an economy kills,” Pope Francis wrote in his first Apostolic Letter *Evangelii Gaudium*. “Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.”<sup>5</sup> This papal accusation is true especially with regard to the “bottom billion”, those people who live in countries isolated from and ignored by the world market. They fall more and more behind and often fall apart. In an unprecedented prosperous world they “are stuck at the bottom” without any perspective for an improvement of their situation, and they “are living and dying in fourteenth century conditions.”<sup>6</sup>

Hence, there are certainly reasons to regard the market as a place of discrimination and intolerance. On the other hand, that thesis seems quite strange if you think more carefully about it. After all, the modern idea of tolerance is historically rooted in the idea of liberalism – just like the market economy. Rainer Forst rightly writes that “this liberal justification of tolerance reaches its culmination in Locke’s work.”<sup>7</sup> John Locke was the intellectual father of *Whig liberalism*, a tradition which was revived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by neoliberals like Friedrich August von Hayek. But could it really be possible that one and the same intellectual movement has created institutions of tolerance in the political sphere and institutions of intolerance in the socio-economic sphere? In any case, it might be worthwhile to have second thoughts about it.

## 2. Economic liberalisation as liberation and anti-discrimination program

First of all, it should be noted that the pre-liberal economy, which was not organized through markets, had a lot of discriminatory structures as well. In pre-modernity, production, services, and trade were strongly determined by the feudal order and the guild system. In the feudal system,

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4 Bauman 2007: 12.

5 EG 53.

6 Collier 2008: 3.

7 Forst 2013 : 209.

prevailing in the agrarian sector, the peasants were personally unfree and economically completely dependent. And the guilds regulated access to most professions in the cities; they controlled quantity and quality of products and services; they dictated the prices for the customers and the wages of the journeymen. These circumstances completely contradicted the ideals of the Enlightenment era: autonomy and self-determination. And it was due to the intention to realize precisely these ideals in the economic sphere that free choice of profession and freedom of trade were introduced first in England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and in most other European countries during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In her impressive trilogy on the bourgeois era, the American economist Deirdre McCloskey has shown that it was not material changes, inventions, or new production methods that led to the explosion of prosperity in Europe and North America since 1800. Rather it was these values and its egalitarian impetus which enriched the world. "The modern world was not caused by 'capitalism' which is ancient and ubiquitous [...]. The modern world was caused by egalitarian liberalism, which was in 1776 revolutionary, being at the time most prevalent in places like Netherlands and Switzerland and Britain and British North America – though even in such islands of liberalism a minority view. Then it spread. The Great Enrichment, 1800 to the present, the most surprising secular event in history, is explained by a proliferation of bettering ideas springing from a new liberalism".<sup>8</sup>

The bourgeois era brought with it an enormous surge of freedom, and forces were released that produced a prosperity the world had never seen before. This economic growth could only have happened because, from then on, inventors and entrepreneurs were much less restricted by social resentment and institutional constraints than in previous eras. For example, that British men could relatively free enter into the different lines of business, was one of the key reasons why the Industrial Revolution took place in Great Britain at first. Compared to other European countries, "Britain gradually created a much more level playing field for its potential businesspeople."<sup>9</sup> Under these conditions, people have been able to develop their ideas much more freely. Hence, the decisive factor was the liberation of the people who had been despised and thwarted for centuries by narrow-minded monarchs, noblemen, clergy, town councilors, and guild

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8 McCloskey 2017: XV.

9 Acemoglu et al. 2019: 585.

masters, and who were now able to develop their full creativity and to set about transforming the world with courage and energy.

As a result, the bonds of the economy in Europe were loosened and an unprecedented economic uplifting took place. This “uplift happened most significantly not to the aristocrats or the landlords, but to the commoners, your ancestors and mine,”<sup>10</sup> McCloskey writes. Alois Schumpeter wrote something similar as early as 1942:

“[T]he capitalist engine is first and last an engine of mass production which unavoidably means also production for the masses [...]. Electric lightning is no great boon to anyone who has money enough to buy a sufficient number of candles and to pay servants to attend to them. It is the cheap cloth, the cheap cotton and rayon fabric, boots, motorcars and so on that are typical achievements of capitalist production, and not as a rule improvements that would mean much to the rich man. Queen Elizabeth owned silk stockings. The capitalist achievement does not typically consist in providing more silk stockings for queens but in bringing them within the reach of factory girls in return for steadily decreasing amounts of effort.”<sup>11</sup>

In this regard, market economy and free competition have obviously eliminated many structures of intolerance and discrimination. The reason is, at least to some extent, the calculated thinking of the market. As whoever makes a good offer on goods or services which are demanded, can establish his or her business on the market. Whereas resentment and intolerance increase transfer costs and do not pay off for the individual market actor. It is therefore economically rational to be tolerant on the market. Hence, the social inclusion of discriminated minorities usually can be achieved faster and better in the economic system than in other spheres of society. Only in a free market economy, the unorthodox, eccentrics and even the lunatics have basically the same opportunities as everyone else – and there is no doubt that some of the most successful entrepreneurs in economic history fall into this category of nonconformists.

And the market economy has brought enormous benefits not only for entrepreneurs, but also and above all for consumers. As mentioned above, in former times, the prices were often dictated by guilds and other cartels. In this respect, the turn to market economy and to classical economics brought about a veritable paradigm shift, as true competition on the market prevents such cartel arrangements and ensures customers the best ser-

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10 McCloskey 2017: 37

11 Schumpeter 2012: 79.

vices at the most favorable price. “The fundamental assumptions on which the teachings of the classical economists hung were that production served exclusively to fulfil consumption, that the consumer’s interests represented the sole directly justifiable economic interests and that in particular the producer’s interests could only be taken into account inasmuch they satisfied the needs of the consumer.”<sup>12</sup> For this reason Franz Böhm rightly described competition as the “greatest and most ingenious instrument of disempowerment in history”<sup>13</sup>.

So after all, is it perhaps the other way around? Are competition and market economy rather preconditions of tolerance and non-discrimination? Some assertions are false in a way that even their opposite is not true. Yes, market economy eliminated some traditional forms of intolerance and discrimination, but it has also given rise to new ones.

### *3. Discriminating mechanisms and effects in free market economies*

The discrimination that takes place in the market is different from that which occurs in other spheres of society. “Normal” intolerance in social interaction usually refers to certain deviating characteristics of people, e.g. their religion, their disability, their cultural background or their sexual orientation. Those who follow the economic rationality of the market behave indifferently, i.e. tolerantly, towards such characteristics of people. Nevertheless, there is discrimination on the market as well. But this is hardly compatible with the traditional concept of intolerance, which always has an affective connotation of aversion. Market discrimination, on the other hand, is emotionally cool, it remains in the mode of calculated thinking and excludes people solely on the basis of a lack of economic resources and competitiveness. For those affected, however, this form of discrimination is no less humiliating.

#### *a) Rawls and the injustice of the liberal meritocracy*

On closer inspection, the meritocracy of the bourgeois market and the competitive society is not so much morally superior to the pre-modern aristocracy with its despicable intolerant social structures. This insight is

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12 Böhm 1982: 107.

13 Böhm 1961: 22.

the starting point of John Rawls' epoch-making *Theory of Justice*. Many coincidences determine people's chances in life: whether they are born to rich or poor parents; whether they belong to a social minority or to the majority society; whether they are healthy or sick; whether they are disabled or not; whether they are more or less intelligent; whether they are blessed with loving parents and gain a basic trust in life or not. Rawls speaks of the "natural lottery", meaning that fate often causes no less discriminatory inequality than birth rights in earlier times. The people enter the market with these very different preconditions and the pure market economy does not change anything about them. On the contrary: For those favored by fate the market offers almost unlimited opportunities to develop; for the others it exposes them to competition in which they often find it difficult or impossible to keep up. Therefore, Rawls is firmly convinced that the outcome of the natural lottery "is arbitrary from a moral perspective. There is no more reason to permit the distribution of income and wealth to be settled by the distribution of natural assets than by historical and social fortune."<sup>14</sup>

There may be, of course, many counterexamples, but on the whole one can say that market competition regularly has the effect that those who are anyway on the sunny side of life have success and become even better off, whereas those who are less fortunate often have big problems to keep up or to improve their social position – an experience which may lead to the feeling of humiliation and discrimination. The point is: while the general level of prosperity in free market societies may be higher than elsewhere, there are also bigger material differences, i.e. a higher degree of inequality.

#### *b) Piketty and the problem of growing inequality*

In recent years there has been growing discussion about this phenomenon of inequality in free market societies. This debate was not least stimulated by the French economist Thomas Piketty and his book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, first published in French in 2013 and in 2014 in English and other languages. It became one of the most popular and most discussed economic bestsellers of the last decades. The American economist Paul Krugman wrote in the New York Times that Piketty's study "will be the most important economics book of the year — and

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14 Rawls 2005: 74.

maybe of the decade”.<sup>15</sup> After this verdict of the popular Nobel Prize laureate, Piketty was hyped up and became a kind of an economic pop star. The international financial crisis and the European debt crisis made Piketty the man of the hour.

Three decades after the start of the neoliberal revolution, led by the governments of Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the USA, there is rising criticism of capitalism all around the world. Even protagonists of the neoliberal revolution became somewhat skeptical of their former credo. Charles Moore, for example, a companion of Thatcher and her official biographer wrote in 2011: “I’m starting to think that the Left might actually be right.”<sup>16</sup>

Piketty and his research team collected an enormous amount of data based on which they can show the development of wealth and income differences over a period of nearly 200 years, from 1820 to today. The study shows a growing concentration of income and wealth among the top 10 % of households since the 1980s. The reason is that in recent decades the rate of return on capital has been significantly higher than the rate of economic growth. And Piketty’s thesis is that this trend will continue, unless it will be stopped by far-reaching political interventions. He is firmly convinced that such political measures are absolutely necessary and more concretely he proposes a global system of progressive wealth taxes. He argues: “When the rate of return on capital exceeds the rate of growth of output and income, as it did in the nineteenth century and seems quite likely to do in the twenty-first, capitalism automatically generates arbitrary and unsustainable inequalities that radically undermine the meritocratic values on which democratic societies are based.”<sup>17</sup>

Piketty’s study is anything but anti-capitalist. If his analysis is right, he rather shows that one of the promises of capitalism fails, i.e. the promise of more equality. For example, Milton Friedman, one of the masterminds of the neoliberal revolution, writes: “The great achievement of capitalism has not been the accumulation of property, it has been the opportunities it has offered to men and women to extend and develop and improve their capacities. [...] Another striking fact, contrary to popular conception, is that capitalism leads to less inequality than alternative systems of organization and that the development of capitalism has greatly lessened the extent of inequality.” But Piketty delivers a lot of data and arguments just against

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15 Krugman 2014.

16 Moore 2011.

17 Piketty 2014: 1.

this assertion. He gives evidence for a dramatic concentration of wealth in the last decades and offers a persuasive interpretation of this development. He shows that the egalitarian tendency of the post-world-war-era was an exception in the history of capitalism, which was caused by certain regulatory policies and tax policies, and he recommends such policies for the future again.

#### 4. *The concept of Social Market Economy*

Piketty's main concern is that growing drastic inequalities and the abuse of economic power could undermine the democracy and its institutions, which are based on egalitarian presuppositions. In historical perspective, it could be argued that this happened in Germany during the Weimar Republic. The economy was dominated by aggressive interest groups, powerful corporations, and cartels, that ruthlessly pushed through their interests and cared neither about fair competition nor about democratic rules. It was the firm will of the founding fathers of the social market economy to draw the right conclusions from these experiences. So they wanted to draw up an economic system which "would be the counterpart of political democracy,"<sup>18</sup> as Ludwig Erhard wrote, the first German minister for economic affairs after the Second World War. He described the program of the social market economy as virtually revolutionary: "I wished to remove all doubts about my aim, which was to create an economic structure within which it would be possible to lead ever widening circles of the German people towards prosperity. Determined to overcome the old conservative social structure once and for all, I planned for a broadly based mass purchasing power."<sup>19</sup>

##### *a) Ordoliberalism: fair competition and the limitation of economic power.*

In the international debate, there are certain misunderstandings about the concept of social market economy. A lot of people outside Germany tend to confuse the terms "social" and "socialist". But the attribute "social" in the concept of social market economy is not meant to be a restriction of the market freedom. Originally, "social market economy" was nothing

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18 Erhard 1958: 128.

19 Ibid. 1.



more than an advertising slogan. After the Second World War, a lot of Germans were full of distrust against capitalism. The hyperinflation of the early 1920ies as well as the Great Depression of the early 1930ies caused severe social and political disruptions. As a result, a majority of Germans pleaded for a “third way” between discredited capitalism and dictatorial communism after the war. In this atmosphere, the attribute “social” proved to be quite useful to convince the Germans of the advantages market economy would provide.

In the view of the founding fathers of the social market economy, however, the attribute “social” should indicate that unrestricted market competition is neither the best way to reach economic efficiency nor to realize social justice. Minister Erhard and Walter Eucken, the economist who probably influenced him most directly, were liberals without compromise and advocated free domestic and international markets.<sup>20</sup> The crucial difference from other liberal economists laid elsewhere. The fundamental ordoliberal assumption is that a competitive market economy does not emerge and is not sustained by itself. Eucken writes: “A free economic and social system does not arise of its own record, especially during the age of industrialization and mechanization. That is one of the lessons manifestly taught us by history. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, people recognized that political freedom ought to be backed by constitutions containing prudent guarantees and legal freedom by codified laws. At the same time, they believed that a truly free economic order could evolve of its own record. In truth, the principles governing a well-functioning and free economic system resemble those for the State and the legal system. The structures of economic growth cannot be left to *laissez-faire*.”<sup>21</sup>

Eucken’s conclusion is that a free market economy as well as the State needs a constitution: an economic constitution, for which he uses the term “*ordo*”, the Latin word for “order”. For this reason, Eucken and his German fellow neoliberals were called “ordoliberals” and their theoretical concept “ordoliberalism”. The *ordo* in the sense of Eucken is a regulatory framework for economic activities. The legal constitution in a democratic state guarantees the rule of law in the State, and the regulatory framework in the sense of ordoliberalism secures the rule of law on the market.

In a study from 1939, Eucken lays out that in the classical liberal perspective market economies are based on some fundamental principles: private property, freedom of contract and competition. Hence, the classical

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20 See: Mierzejewski 2004: 18.

21 Eucken 1982: 270.

liberal economists pleaded for reforms to establish these principles in the economic system. But, as Eucken explains, their mistake was that “they believed and hoped that a simple system of natural freedom [...] could bring into being a well-ordered competitive economy.”<sup>22</sup> They did not see or, perhaps better to say they did not foresee that free markets are unstable, tending to self-destruction, and above all that they are continually threatened by the abuse of power. But Eucken is convinced that at least, since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, these degenerations of the market economy could not be ignored any more.

“It may be the case that an economic constitution is intended to shape an economy or part of it, but that in fact the economic system does not correspond, or not completely, with the constitution. This is a characteristic of the later part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. According to the basic principles of most modern economic constitutions, there is supposed to be private property and freedom of contract and competition. The actual economic systems supposedly based on such an economic constitution in fact diverge more and more from these principles. To an increasing extent, for example, ‘freedom of contract’ is used to abolish competition by means of cartel agreements. The governing principle of competition is thus contradicted by the actual development of important sectors of the economy, for example, in the coal and iron and steel industries. Freedom of contract is often used to alter the form of the market and build up concentrations of economic power. ‘The simple system of natural freedom’, contrary to expectations, does not bring about a competitive order.”<sup>23</sup>

With respect to this analysis, it should be quite obvious that, for Eucken and his fellow ordoliberals, the market activities cannot be left to laissez-faire. Yet, the ordoliberal counter-concepts to laissez-faire are neither central planning nor state interventions, but “*Ordnungspolitik*”, “ordo policy”<sup>24</sup>. The main goal of ordo policy is to establish an “ordo”, i.e. a framework of rules for the market competition. These rules shall not restrict, but on the contrary guarantee, secure, and sustain the competitive freedom in the market against its tendencies to self-destruction.

Erhard emphasizes that the concept of ordo policy has nothing in common with the ideas of state interventionism. The interventionist state

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22 Eucken 1992: 83.

23 Ibid.

24 The German term “*Ordnungspolitik*” is often translated as “regulatory policy”, which is correct in some respect but at the same time the cause of new misunderstandings. For this reason, I prefer the translation “ordo policy”.

intervenes in the market and, by doing so, undermines free competition. In contrast to that, Erhard compares the role of the state in the ordoliberal concept with that of a “supreme judge”. As an enthusiastic football-, resp. soccer-fan he uses the metaphor of the game: “I believe that, as a referee is not allowed to take part in the game, so the State must not participate. In a good game of football it is to be noted that the game follows definite rules; these are decided in advance. What I am aiming at with a market economy policy is – to continue with the same illustration – to lay down the order and the rules of the game.”<sup>25</sup> By this comparison, Erhard wants to point out a crucial aspect of the ordoliberal approach: the distinction between rules and actions. Ordo policy takes place on the level of rules, but not on the level of actions. In other words: Ordo policy is about establishing a framework of rules for the market, whereas direct state interventions shall be avoided or are only acceptable in extremely exceptional cases if they are at all.

This kind of ordo policy is – according to the concept – all about securing economic freedom as well as social justice, as “only changes in rules can change the situation for all participants involved at the same time.”<sup>26</sup> And therein lies the reason why the limitation of power is the first purpose of ordo policy. Erhard writes, “The opposite pole to economic freedom is represented by strongly marked economic power.”<sup>27</sup> Therefore Pierre Larouche and Marten Pieter Schinkel are right with their assertion that the ordoliberal ideal pursued by ordo policy is “a free market without economic power”<sup>28</sup>. The total absence of power shall lead to the (ideal) conditions of “perfect competition” (“*vollständige Konkurrenz*”)<sup>29</sup> on the market. And the only acceptable form of competition on a perfect competition market is what Eucken calls “competition on the merits” (“*Leistungswettbewerb*”<sup>30</sup>).

The decisive problem is the concentration of economic power itself and that does not depend on the hands it is concentrated in. Since economic power can be abused by the State – as in the case of centrally planned State economies as well as by private actors as in the case of cartel agreements – the ordoliberal conclusion is: “Therefore it must be ensured by law that the advantages of a competitive economy are not wiped out by the disad-

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25 Erhard 1958: 102.

26 Luetge 2016: 9.

27 Erhard 1958: 127.

28 Larouche/Schinkel 2013: 9.

29 Eucken 2004: 246.

30 Ibid. 247.

vantages (which have been proved historically) of a serious concentration of power.”<sup>31</sup>

The abuse of economic power is not only unfair and insofar immoral, but it also leads to manipulation of prices. And this means nothing less than the destruction of the price system, which is, as Friedrich Hayek stresses, the central “mechanism for communicating information”<sup>32</sup> in market economy. Erhard writes:

“The market price, which in a perfect competitive economy cannot be dictated by a single market partner, could be wilfully changed by concentrated economic power, and with it the market trend, to the advantage of influential power groups, who could consciously and artificially control it. A price thus determined for a market organized on monopolistic lines is no longer a ‘datum line’ to which individuals have to adapt themselves to retain their ability to compete, but it can only be determined according to individual judgement and so manipulated. From it naturally grows the danger of cheating the consumer, but also the danger of national misdirected investment, and the possibility of a curtailment of technical and economic progress.”<sup>33</sup>

Following this, he describes the three key elements of the *ordo* policy program; “(a) preserving, to the greatest possible extent, competition between companies; (b) preventing the abuse of monopoly power in markets where complete competition is impossible; and (c) by creating a State organ to supervise and, if necessary, to influence markets.”<sup>34</sup>

#### *b) Welfare policy and social iredics*

The fundamental idea of the social market economy is, by Alfred Müller-Armack’s much cited statement, “to combine the principle of freedom on the market with that of social balance.”<sup>35</sup> *Ordo* policy is intended firstly to secure this freedom on the market. It is as well a necessary, but not sufficient condition to achieve the goal of social justice in a market economy. In order to realize social justice, an additional welfare policy is rather necessary. While emphasizing the primacy of the free competitive economy, this need for welfare policy is explicitly acknowledged by the ordoliberals.

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31 Erhard 1958: 127.

32 Hayek 194: 526.

33 Erhard 1958: 128.

34 Ibid.

35 Müller-Armack 1956: 390.

In this respect, the concept of ordoliberalism differs significantly from the libertarian ideas of the Austrian School (Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich August von Hayek) or the Chicago School (Milton Friedman). Eucken writes: “Even an *ordo* policy that focuses on the human person cannot take into account the individual case as such; but every mistake, be it an action or an omission, ultimately has an impact on the existence of the individual person. Therefore, beyond competition policy, provisions are needed to fill in gaps and mitigate hardships.”<sup>36</sup>

Eucken particularly mentions the labour market and the social situation of workers and employees, which is absolutely right. Freedom of contract is one of the basic principles of economic liberalism. But freedom of contract only works if the self-determination of the contracting parties is ensured, which is only the case if no significant power or information asymmetry exists between the parties.<sup>37</sup> However, such an imbalance of power is a typical characteristic of the employment contract. Therefore, labour law is necessary to balance this imbalance. That applies especially to the system of collective bargaining. The German philosopher Jürgen Habermas is not exaggerating when he writes: “The legal institutionalization of collective bargaining became the basis of a reform politics that has brought about a pacification of class conflict in the social-welfare State. The core of the matter was the legislation of rights and entitlements in the sphere of work and social welfare, making provisions for the basic risks of the wage labourers’ health and compensating them for handicaps that arose from the structurally weaker market positions (of employees, tenants, consumers, etc.)”<sup>38</sup>

The example of the employment contract already shows: Welfare policy in the sense of social market economy is not only about redistribution, but it is also – and above all – about equal opportunities and inclusion. As early as 1950, Müller-Armack emphasized that the social market economy is not a mere socio-technical concept, but part of a broader program of “social irenics”.

“It concerns the once more apparent opportunity to transform the market economy (which is in fact a many-sided organizational instrument) into a ‘social market economy’. I have attempted elsewhere to explain the nature of such a social market economy, which is by no means synonymous with simply reliance on the greater productivity of a free organiza-

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36 Eucken 2004: 318.

37 See: Grunsky 1995.

38 Habermas 1987: 347.

tion. On the contrary, any free system requires appropriate safeguards to give it the form consistent with present-day moral convictions. In this case, too, thinking in irenic terms means being able to see the problems from different perspectives, to be aware of the essential objectives and to be familiar with the technical principles on whose basis social aims can be more realistically achieved.”<sup>39</sup>

In this concept of the social market economy, the social is not simply an appendage, but an integral part of the market. This means that market processes themselves shall be ordered according to certain ethical principles and rules. Thus the social state is more than merely the ambulance which collects the wounded from the battlefield of the free and unrestricted market competition. Rather, socially responsible *ordo* policy is, in the first place, about developing a framework for fair and just competition on the market. This implies fair conditions of contracts. And beyond that, welfare policy in the sense of social market economy is about providing a life of dignity and inclusion for those who cannot keep up in the market competition because they are too old, too young, too sick or seriously disabled. In a social market economy everyone is indispensable and no one must be left behind.

The social market economy has a social-ethical fundament and is oriented to the common good. Today, considering the climate change, the ecological renewal of our economic system is one of the most pressing demands of the common good. For this reason, the social market economy is facing the challenge to combine not only any more freedom and social balance, but also to implement sustainability as third element into this concept in the future. But as the climate change is caused by worldwide emissions, focusing on the national economy is not sufficient anymore. This necessity to think and act beyond the national economy and in a global scale, is obviously the factor which differs most strongly from the challenges the pioneers of the social market economy were facing after the Second World War.

In this context, it remains important to consider: The irenic formula of the social market economy implies that *ordo* policy, besides economic efficiency, also pursues social justice and, going along with it, social consensus. With regard to the ecological transformation of the social market economy, this demands that ecological policy programs need to consider not only the steering function of measures such as carbon dioxide pricing, but also fairness and social balance of the burdens associated with them.

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39 Müller-Armack 1982: 358.

That, as well, is – and will be even more in the future – a matter of social iredics.<sup>40</sup>

## *5. Conclusions*

From a historical perspective, the introduction of the free market led to the vanishing of many intolerant and discriminatory structures in the economic system. But on the other hand, it also caused new different forms of social discrimination. People who do not have enough money are excluded from enjoying certain consumer goods and cannot fully participate in societal life. It's true free markets increase prosperity and the gross national product, but they also give rise to economic inequality in a society. Great economic inequalities may lead to abuse of power, social conflicts, and could even thwart the egalitarian promises of democratic citizenship. Therefore, free markets in themselves cannot be considered per se a catalyst for tolerance.

The concept of social market economy tries to give answers to these challenges of free market economy; it seeks “to combine the principle of freedom on the market with that of social balance.” Ordo policy is intended to secure balance of power and fair competition on the market. The welfare state as an integral part of the concept shall prevent poverty, mitigate hardships and secure the social inclusion of all citizens. The German founding fathers of the social market economy regarded their concept not only as an economic theory and system, but as part of an overall renewal program for the German society after the Nazi tyranny and the Second World War. That was, as Müller-Armack called it, a program of social iredics: for well-being, social balance, freedom, tolerance, and togetherness.

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40 See: Küppers 2018: 6.

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# **Religious Tolerance in Eastern Europe**



# Religious Plurality as a Socio-Political Factor in the Ukraine

*Katrin Boeckh*

## *Introduction*

The development of inter-confessional and -religious ties in Ukraine during the last decades is a remarkable example for the positive effect of religious tolerance. This example is even more striking, as the churches themselves initiated a closer collaboration in an ecumenical spirit, after having been hindered to establish ties among each other during the decades of the Soviet church repression.

This study will focus on the ethic dimension of tolerance, on tolerance as “virtue of democracy” and as a social principle. It will also show that tolerance can be misused demonstratively to enforce political claims. In this context, tolerance functions as a tool of power – not only in the Soviet era, but also in the decades after the end of the Soviet regime. Alas, tolerance does not work, if it is only a political norm or its “application” is demanded by regulations or laws. Tolerance in its full dimension can only exist if it is practiced voluntarily – independent of whether the actor is conscious about this notion or not. Real tolerance presupposes the recognition of “the other” in full knowledge about its essential nature. Real tolerance can only function if it prevails on both sides, meaning that each of both “tolerant partners” accepts the other with the same intensity. These aspects of active and pro-active tolerance became visible in the discourse between churches and religious communities in Ukraine at the moment, when, after the fall of communism, it became possible to get in touch with each other.

Generally, the confessional and religious situation in Ukraine is interesting for the conceptualization of Christian tolerance, as there is a huge number of churches and religious communities and a large variety of different creeds, confessions and religions. In the year 2018, in whole Ukraine, 35.162 parishes of more than 100 different religious communities

had been registered by the state authorities.<sup>1</sup> According to these numbers, that do not include the numbers of believers within the parishes and the religious communities, the largest number of parishes belong to the Orthodox Church and her different branches: 12.437 parishes adhered to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (of the Moscow Patriarchate; UOC-MP), 5.363 to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate (UOC-KP) and 1.171 to the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC). Then 3.470 parishes were part of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, 442 of the Greek Catholic diocese of Mukachevo in Transcarpatia, while the Roman Catholic Church comprised 943 parishes. 2.816 parishes were Baptist, 2693 parishes were Evangelical Christian, 1.070 Adventist, 83 Lutheran, 129 Reformed, 1.496 Charismatic, 287 Jewish, 265 Muslim, 63 Buddhistic, and many smaller groups.<sup>2</sup>

Generally, religiosity among the population in Ukraine remains on a very high level: during the years 2010–2018 about 72 percent of the population confess a religious adherence.<sup>3</sup>

While the Ukrainian government registers the number of parishes of different religious communities, the exact numbers of their believers are not counted. A survey in 2018 provided information on the believers among the approximately 44 million Ukrainians:<sup>4</sup> 67.3 percent of the respondents identified themselves as Christian Orthodox (28.7 percent UOC-KP; 12.8 percent UOC-MP; 23.4 percent “just Orthodox believers”; 0.3 percent UAOC; 0.2 percent Russian Orthodox Church (as distinct from the UOC-MP); and 1.9 percent undecided; 9.4 percent as Greek Catholic; 2.2 percent as Protestant; 0.8 percent as Roman Catholic; and 0.4 percent as Jewish. Further 7.7 percent declared to be “simply a Christian”, whilst 11 percent stated that they did not belong to any religious group. Smaller religious communities were formed by Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists. Later in 2018, when the Ukrainian government together with UOC-KP, UAOC, and some bishops, representing the UOC-MP, asked the Ecumenical Patri-

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1 The religious organizations in Ukraine (as of 1 January 2019), in: Statistics on Religions (2019), [https://risu.ua/religiyni-organizaciji-v-ukrajini-stanom-na-1-sichnya-2019-r\\_n97463](https://risu.ua/religiyni-organizaciji-v-ukrajini-stanom-na-1-sichnya-2019-r_n97463) (last access: 11–17–2020).

2 Ibid.

3 Razumkov Center (2018): *Osoblyvosti relihijnoho i tserkovno-relihijnohosamovyznachennja Ukraïns'kykh hromadjan: tendentsii 2010–2018rr.* (informacijni materialy), Kiev, [https://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2018\\_Religiya.pdf](https://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2018_Religiya.pdf) (last access: 11–17–2020).

4 Ukraine 2018 International Religious Freedom Report (2018), <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/UKRAINE-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf> (last access: 11–16–2020).

archate for autocephaly, the number of Orthodox identifying themselves as adherents of the UOC-KP increased to 45.2 percent, while 16.9 percent of the respondents declared themselves as members of UOC-MP, and 33.9 percent perceived themselves “just as Orthodox believers.”<sup>5</sup>

These numbers cannot be taken for granted. It is astonishing that, only about three decades after the end of communist atheism, so many residents of Ukraine declare themselves religious. This also sets Ukraine apart from the most part of the post-socialist countries in Eastern Europe, where the population defines itself less and less religious.<sup>6</sup> In addition, in Ukraine, a historical development can be observed: Here, the real non-existent tolerance towards churches turned into an active support for their existence, as well by the government as by the church members, despite of many political upheavals of which the post-Soviet transformation phase is the last one.<sup>7</sup> All this makes the situation in Ukraine an interesting case study for tackling aspects of religious tolerance, particularly because a broad interdenominational as well as interreligious competition is dominating here, in contrast to neighbouring Russia, where religious plurality is currently not considered worthy of promotion and is even seen as a threat. With this in mind, religious tolerance in nowadays Ukraine cannot be regarded as something natural. Scrutinizing tolerance as a historical category in the Ukraine, this study will demonstrate that, despite of their struggle of life under Soviet oppression, the majority of the churches in Ukraine found a way to establish connections to each other after the end of the Soviet regime. By creating even a common political body, they became more and more an active factor and a moral instance in contemporary political life. This will be evolved in two sections: The first part will analyse the tense situation for religions and churches within the Soviet State, while the second part will focus on the initiatives of churches and believers in the framework of the independent and pluralistic Ukraine.

### *1. No Religious Tolerance in the Soviet Union and the Soviet Ukraine*

While Marxism actually anticipated the automatically vanishing of religions during class struggle, the Bolsheviks did not wait for this to happen.

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5 Ibid.

6 In 1998, only in Romania, Poland and Croatia less people than in Ukraine declared to be atheists: see: Tomka/Zulehner/Toš 1999: 207.

7 See: the historical stages of the formation of religious plurality in Ukraine in: Boeckh/Turij 2015.

Immediately after the October Revolution in 1917 they launched their attack on all churches with different degrees of intensity. The biggest enemy of the Bolsheviks was the ancient regime – the tsarist monarchy. So the Orthodox church, traditionally a supporter of autocracy and an “instrument of the class enemy”, became a main target for the Bolsheviks since their seizure of power in the Russian capital Petrograd.

Lenin’s decree from February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1918 on the separation of church and state and of school and church was the first of a huge amount of regulations that strictly limited religious life and punished any kind of actual or alleged transgression. The churches lost their status as legal persons, they were prevented from educating pupils in schools, their properties were seized and thus, churches and monasteries were deprived of their material basis for living. The next step was the elimination of church hierarchy and clerics. Until 1920, at least 28 bishops of the Orthodox Church had been murdered, thousands of priests, monks, nuns, and active laymen were sent to forced labour camps. One special camp for clerics (and other political prisoners) was located in the White Sea, on the islands of Solovki archipelago – the main site of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s book “The Gulag Archipelago”.

The political repression also affected the Orthodox communities in Ukraine, where in 1918, a short living national republic had been proclaimed. In Kiev, a non-canonical church council was held in 1921 and the Ukrainian autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) was established under its auto-consecrated metropolitan Vasyl Lypkyvs’kyj (1864–1934). Although the Russian Orthodox Church did not recognize him, the UAOC became very active in the early 1920s. Claiming to represent a Ukrainian national church, it quickly gained followers among Ukrainian intellectuals and lower clergy, but also among the rural population. It is roughly estimated that around one third of the Orthodox believers in Ukraine followed the UAOC, whereas two thirds followed the Russian Orthodox Church. The Soviet regime did not intervene against the UAOC at first since this denomination was obviously weakening the Russian Orthodox Church, but at the beginning of the 1930s, the clerics of the UAOC were arrested and the church was liquidated fully.

By Stalin’s rise to power, a new phase of church persecution was introduced. While more and more bishops and priests were sent to labour camps, in the religious communities laymen became growingly active and tried to step in political functions; party authorities perceived this as an



assault and danger for the political system.<sup>8</sup> So the “Law on Religious Associations” of 1929 was a full attack on lay activists in the parishes as it prohibited each form of social, missionary and charity activities. Church buildings were closed in masses, clergymen were increasingly persecuted and interned as “enemies of the people”. Religious life was only possible within very narrow limits, if it was after all. Shortly before the Second World War, it seemed that the organization of the Russian Orthodox Church had almost been destructed. The other churches and religious communities suffered the same fate, so the hierarchy of the Catholic Church had been deleted after a show trial under the pretext of political accusations against 17 Catholic representatives in Moscow in 1922. Here, two of them were sentenced to death, and while Archbishop Jan Cieplak (1857–1926) was pardoned, Monsignore Konstanty Budkiewicz (1867–1923) was shot dead. The remaining defendants were sentenced to long prison terms. The Catholic Church was specifically suspect to the regime because its highest representative, the Pope, had his seat abroad, beyond Soviet control, and also, because it was considered a national Polish church. The high effort that the Soviet State invested in liquidating religious appearances and representatives, was rooted in the fact that it took into account the reaction of the Western countries and of the population within the USSR, for the permanent atheist propaganda had in no way caused the masses to suddenly lose their religion. So, here it becomes clear, that there was no state tolerance towards churches and believers. Clerics were condemned as “enemies of the people,” and in no case as religious persons, which would have caused at least the discontent of many still existing believers in the Soviet Union. Alas, religious beliefs were not exterminated among the population, and in some cases, also party members did not refrain from their confession.

Until the collapse of the Soviet system, the Soviet authorities cultivated a contradiction of what they said and what they did instead, as they treated religious representatives as “criminals” and brought them before a judge, while the Soviet government claimed to be generally tolerant towards religions. Accordingly, the so called “Stalin Constitution” of 1936 (in force until 1977) declared freedom of religion and conscience. As to its Art. 124, in the USSR, “for the purpose of guaranteeing the freedom of conscience for the citizens, the church is separated from the state and the school from the church. The freedom to practice religious cults and the freedom to conduct anti-religious propaganda are granted to all citizens.” Art. 135

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8 Freeze 2012: 49.

about the right to vote proclaimed additionally, that there was a “universal suffrage: all citizens of the USSR who have reached the age of 18 have the right, regardless of their race and nationality, creed, level of education, residence, social background, financial situation and previous activity, to participate in the elections for the deputies and to be elected, with the exception of the mentally ill and persons who have been convicted by the court in disregard of the right to vote.” In fact, often enough, people who were condemned because of their beliefs, were forbidden to vote – the question of voting in a one-party-system, such as the Soviet Union was one, is not raised here.

Remarkably, the Soviet Union laid much stress on demonstratively propagating a high level of religious freedom in the country and the alleged religious tolerance. This is in fact an important hint on the still existing religiosity of the masses. So in the Soviet Union, a facade democracy was maintained with pseudo-tolerance towards religion, but in reality, nobody could refer to the legal rights of believers, as the state authorities used violence to prevent it.

The consequence of the massive and general religious repression was that the churches lost their most important front figures and their most loyal representatives. As official contacts between different churches were not possible, and each church struggled for its very existence, “ecumenism” could not develop. It was an unparalleled blood toll, that the churches in the Soviet Union had to pay; nothing similar can be found in European church history. Especially the Orthodox Church in the states that followed the USSR has not been able to recover from this destruction to this day.

There was only a more tolerant episode during World War II, when the enemy from the outside forced the regime to concede more wiggle room to the churches. A short phase of liberalization began for the churches and the faithful, both in the occupied territory of the USSR, where the German invaders also eased the church repression to a certain degree, and in the non-occupied Soviet territory, the “home front”. Here, Stalin used the mobilizing power of the Orthodox Church to motivate the population to take action against the external enemy. In return for the assurance of submission and loyalty to the Soviet power, he allowed the election of a patriarch. So Sergius I. was appointed patriarch of Moscow and Russia in 1943, but died already in 1944. Public confession of faith and attending masses became also easier during the war. At the same time, new state authorities were introduced: The “Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church” and the “Council for the Religious Cults” (meaning all other churches) were to secure the surveillance of the religious activities.

They closely collaborated with the secret police, handing over information on the churches and on religious actors.

After the end of the war, church repression began again. A clear sign was the destruction of the Greek Catholic Church in Western Ukraine, that had been invaded by the Red Army in 1939 for the first time, until it became eventually a part of Soviet Ukraine after 1944/45. Here, the Greek Catholic Church in Galicia goes back to the Union of Brest in 1596, while the Uniate Church of the Carpathian-Ukraine originated in the Union of Uzhhorod in 1646. They appeared particularly threatening to the Soviet government: First, because the Pope as their highest authority resided outside the country's borders and foreign contacts were suspected of having an undesirable political influence on the population. The other reason why Stalin persecuted the Greek Catholic Churches was that they had been a national factor for Ukrainians since the 19th century and they had a big influence on the population. So they were dissolved by force: in Galicia after a "pseudo synod" in L'viv in 1946, in Carpathian Ukraine with a mere declaration after a holy mass in 1949. Those priests, monks, nuns, and believers who refused to break away from it had to face punishment. Hundreds of thousands of believers were affected, as well as the members of the orders and priests, many of whom were interned and sent to labour camps in the East of the Soviet Union. According to the Greek Catholic Church, ten bishops, 1,400 priests, 800 nuns, and thousands of lay people were violently killed under Soviet rule. Cardinal Josyf Slipyj (1892–1984) was the only bishop to survive a long camp imprisonment. In 1963, he was released and exiled to Rome, where he died in 1984.<sup>9</sup>

While one church was suffering, another benefitted from political measures: The Russian Orthodox Church in western Ukraine experienced an upswing due to the ban on the Greek Catholic Church, because the regime had determined that the Orthodox Church should incorporate the Greek Catholic believers, clergy, and their church buildings. This ultimately led to the fact that there were more Russian Orthodox Churches in western Ukraine than in Russia (the return of these parishes during the 1990s was not free of conflict). It is part of the tragedy for the Russian Orthodox Church that Moscow played it off to the detriment of the Greek Catholic Church. Alas, this is not the only example for the fact that the communist government repeatedly understood very well how to instrumentalise

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9 His successor, Grand Archbishop of Lviv Myroslav Ivan Liubachivskyj (1914–2000), returned to Ukraine only in 1991. As to the liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine, see: *Persecuted for the Truth* 2017.

church communities for its own purposes. But despite of all violent attacks, Moscow could not prevent that the Greek Catholic Churches in western Ukraine went into the catacombs and established a broad network of secret believers. The underground church in western Ukraine was the largest of its kind in the entire Soviet Union.

In the USSR, churches and religions were persecuted almost until they vanished completely from the scene. Until the late 1980s, believers were sentenced to long prison terms and received labour camp sentences because they belonged to dissident circles, because they were critical of the state, and because believers refused to serve in the military by joining the Red Army. Nevertheless, shortly before Mikhail Gorbachev who introduced a policy of political reforms (“perestroika”), in Ukraine, more than 6.000 officially registered religious communities existed – one-third of the number of religious organizations in the whole of the Soviet Union.<sup>10</sup>

When Gorbachev conceded policies of political opening and of “new thinking”, he also included steps for religious tolerance by the still atheistic Soviet state. He recognized the relevance of Christian values such as peace, environmental protection and lively discussions on political failures. The legalization of the Greek Catholic Church in western Ukraine played a role in the evolution of an increasingly tolerant attitude towards churches in public life in the Soviet Union during perestroika. While in 1989, the state authorities counted approximately 650 former Greek Catholic priests, monks, and nuns in the western part of Ukraine and sharply criticised “anti-social and extreme” propaganda by religious “extremists”,<sup>11</sup> this assessment reflected the observation, that the underground Greek Catholic Church always had supported human rights activists.<sup>12</sup> Dissidents repeatedly articulated the issue of the legality of the Greek Catholic Church. Gorbachev finally conceded it and announced it on December 1, 1989 when he met the Polish Pope John Paul II in the Vatican, who understood well how to deal with the Soviet leadership.<sup>13</sup>

Gorbachev also passed a law on freedom of religion and conscience shortly before the fall of the Soviet system on the first of December 1989. It was for him that religion and churches in the USSR became tolerable in the last instances of the Soviet Union. As his political attempts to reform

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10 Yelensky 2012: 307.

11 Central'nyj Derzhavnyj Archiv Hromads'kych Ob'jednan' Ukraïny (CDAHOU), Kiev, fond 1, opys 32, delo 2556, ark. 12–13: O religioznoi obstanovke /po sostoianiiu na 1.01.1989 goda/. 21.01.89

12 Yelensky 2012: 323.

13 See: Mikrut 2020.

the Soviet system failed, in December 1991, the end of the USSR was decided.

It is purely speculative to figure out what would have happened, if the Soviet regime had not been aggressively atheistic, if it had allowed the churches to fully cooperate with its authorities, and if church leaders were active political forces from the beginning of the Soviet Union. One probable scenario would have been a stronger commitment by the Soviet people and perhaps even the protraction of its collapse. But this remains merely speculative as well.

## *2. The institutionalization of post-Soviet religious tolerance in the Ukraine*

In 1991, Ukraine declared its independence as a state. This created a new political basis for the activities of the churches in the country whilst being confronted with the challenges of a more and more pluralistic and democratizing society. Religious freedom was guaranteed from the beginning, although, only in 1996, it was secured in the new Ukrainian constitution. Its Article 35 reads:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of personal philosophy and religion. This right includes the freedom to profess or not to profess any religion, to perform alone or collectively and without constraint religious rites and ceremonial rituals, and to conduct religious activity.

The exercise of this right may be restricted by law only in the interests of protecting public order, the health and morality of the population, or protecting the rights and freedoms of other persons.

The Church and religious organizations in Ukraine are separated from the State, and the school from the Church. No religion shall be recognized by the State as mandatory.

No one shall be relieved of his or her duties before the State or refuse to perform the laws for reasons of religious beliefs. In the event that the performance of military duty is contrary to the religious beliefs of a citizen, the performance of this duty shall be replaced by alternative (non-military) service.”<sup>14</sup>

Religious freedom in Ukraine also created a new fundament for the growing confessional and religious plurality gaining momentum after the end of the Communist regime. In the 1990s, the religious landscape in

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14 Wikipedia (2020): Constitution of Ukraine, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution\\_of\\_Ukraine\\_1996](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Constitution_of_Ukraine_1996) (last access: 11–14–2020).

Ukraine changed rather drastically. Traditional and non-traditional religious communities grew and a number of new religious communities gained popularity, e.g. evangelical churches. This was a novelty for the Ukrainian believers. A similar development in Russia was hindered by a restrictive state policy.<sup>15</sup>

Church communities have been an object for politics in Ukraine since 1991, but at the same time they also became politically active themselves. For Ukrainian politicians, the churches in Ukraine were an important factor as they were highly respected among the population, that otherwise shared only a weak common historical experience, with cultural and linguistic differences in the whole country especially between East and West, but also between the centre and the provinces. So one aim that united all post-Soviet Ukrainian presidents was the attempt to establish a unified Ukrainian Orthodox church in order to strengthen the Ukrainian national identity, to build up the idea of a nation, and to promote the integration of the population. That endeavour became reality in 2019, when the autocephaly of the “Orthodox Church of Ukraine” was recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, uniting the hitherto not recognized Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kiev Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. That step alone required the willingness to discuss with each other and mutual tolerance in the previously divided orthodoxy of the country, which for a long time did not seem possible, as the churches themselves from 1991 onwards had to settle long lasting conflicts between themselves:

The Orthodox Church in Ukraine experienced the separation of several national directions that did not recognize each other, when Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine was confronted with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kiev Patriarchate, established in 1992. Before that, in 1990, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church had been re-established.

The Greek Catholic Church, on the other hand, has been in a dispute with the Holy See, because the relocation of the seat of her leader, the Grand Archbishop, from L’viv to Kiev went too slowly. The relationship between the Catholic and Orthodox churches was also burdened with a conflict, because the Greek Catholic Church pressed for the return of church property that had been expropriated since 1946 and had been given to the Orthodox Church. Initially, this was even accompanied by fights among the believers of the churches. Another problem was that

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15 Karpov 2020: 308–311.

the Russian Orthodox Church was used by the Russian government as an instrument to exert influence over Ukrainian politics.<sup>16</sup> This continuum has been preserved from the Soviet era.

The open discussion between the churches became institutionalized when the churches in Ukraine established a common platform: The All-Ukrainian Council for Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO; also: Ukrainian Council for Churches and Religious Organizations/UCCRO), which was created in 1996. It is a common organ of 90 % of the religious communities in Ukraine meeting regularly with a rotating leadership. The list of members of the Council in 2020 comprises the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (in unity with Moscow Patriarchate), the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Roman-Catholic Church in Ukraine, the All-Ukrainian Union of the Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, the Ukrainian Pentecostal Church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Ukrainian Christian Evangelical Church, the Ukrainian Evangelical Church, the Trans-Carpathian Reformed Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ukraine, the Union of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine, the Religious Administration of Muslims of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Bible Society.<sup>17</sup>

Politically independent, it comments on major issues of Ukrainian politics, on behalf of all of its participating churches, meaning from a mere religious standpoint, which can differ from a secular-political point of view. As an umbrella organization it is a channel for church interests and a bridge to get into dialogue with politics and politicians, that the Council is constantly seeking. Special commissions underline its activities in cooperation with media, in social affairs and in questions regarding the restitution of socialized religious properties. The Council cooperates especially with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Defense.

It is also a valuable and effective tool for resolving conflicts among the churches themselves and externally. Especially after the Orange Revolution 2004/05 and after the Euro-Maidan 2013/14, inter-religious and inter-denominational contacts increased with the help of the Council.<sup>18</sup> It is a visible bearer and promotor of religious tolerance as photos in the media

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16 Yelens'kyi 2013: 285–286, 418–422.

17 VRCIRO, <https://www.vrciro.org.ua/en/council/info> (last access: 12–4–2020).

18 See: Boeckh 2016.

show frequently sessions of the council and their discussions, uniting the religious leaders around one common table.

In its own words, the UCCRO is “as an interfaith institution, aiming to unite the efforts of various denominations to focus on the spiritual revival of Ukraine, coordination of interfaith dialogue in Ukraine and abroad, participation in a legislative process on church-state issues, and the implementation of comprehensive charitable actions. [...]”

The Council of Churches gives special attention to and calls for the establishing of social justice, freedom of peaceful assemblies, religious freedom, and other fundamental human rights, including the fight against corruption, protection of public morality, providing a social protection for the vulnerable and poor, promoting the fair and transparent elections.”<sup>19</sup>

Common interests shared by each AUCCRO member are peacekeeping on a national and personal level, the freedom of religion, the care for families, life protection and other social issues. In personal meetings with leading politicians, parliamentary groups and the state president(s), the AUCCRO expresses its position in concrete aspects of financial support for the needy, but also in domestic violence, that has risen under COVID-conditions, for the religious support in the army, and for issues of violations of religious freedom within Ukraine and abroad. The Council also establishes contacts with political, diplomatic and religious organizations abroad, e.g. with ministers in Israel, with the Prime Minister of Canada, with government officials in Berlin, with religious leaders in the USA and with religious leaders of Russia in Norway.<sup>20</sup>

The position of the Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate remained problematic. Whilst the other churches in Ukraine expressed themselves more and more independently from politics, the Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate was and is an extended arm of Moscow’s foreign policy. This issue is particularly critical in relation to the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Crimea, which has been annexed by Russia in violation of international law in 2014, and in the “People’s Republics” of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine, which are strongly influenced by indirect and direct Russian military help. From a Europe-wide perspective, religious persecution is currently prevailing here like nowhere else. This is a step backwards in Soviet times, and the new rulers here make no effort to hide this:

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19 VRCIRO, <https://www.vrciro.org.ua/en/council/info> (last access: 12–4–2020).

20 VRCIRO, <https://www.vrciro.org.ua/en/council/info> (last access: 12–4–2020).



Religious freedom has come to an end in Crimea, for the now prevailing Russian legal situation hardly allows Muslim, non-Orthodox Christian, Jewish and other communities to exist. Their followers are being bullied: For example, the FSB security service searched students in a Muslim medrese for evidence of a “Muslim danger” and the visitors of a liturgy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kiev Patriarchate were attacked by hooligans and declared as “anti-Russian”. According to a Crimean human rights group, until November 2020, more than one hundred Muslim Tatars were fined for allegedly “missionary activity”.<sup>21</sup>

In Donetsk and Luhansk also a lot of pressure is put upon “non-Russian” Christian churches: In May 2014, the leadership of the “Donetsk People’s Republic” declared the Russian Orthodox Church the predominant faith. This was also actively supported by priests of the Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate. For the pro-Russian rebels, the Russian Orthodox Church is an important momentum of identity, lacking other elements that could unite them and the population of the occupied zones. Each other confession and religion is accused “to spy” for the “fascist government” in Kiev or the West. Fearing religious persecution, thousands of Muslims and Jews have left the areas under rebel leadership.<sup>22</sup> Catholic and Protestant representatives were beaten and imprisoned, churches were devastated. All other religious communities are severely restricted in their activities by threatening or kidnapping their clergy or by raids during church services. Greek Catholic priests are intimidated, captured and tortured to leave their parishes.<sup>23</sup> A similar situation with evangelical pastors. In June 2014, militants from the “Donetsk People’s Republic” murdered

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21 In the occupied Crimea, another mosque attendant accused of ‘illegal missionary activity’, 13 November 2020: RISU (2020), [https://risu.ua/en/in-the-occupied-crimea-another-mosque-attendant-accused-of-illegal-missionary-activity\\_n113461](https://risu.ua/en/in-the-occupied-crimea-another-mosque-attendant-accused-of-illegal-missionary-activity_n113461) (last access: 11–14–2020).

22 Sabra Ayres, In rebel-held Donetsk, religious intolerance grows. Religious groups that are not Russian Orthodox go underground or shutter their doors amid persecution (March 17, 2015), in: Al Jazeera America (2020), <http://america.aljazeera.com/multimedia/2015/3/in-rebel-held-donetsk-religious-intolerance-grows.html#:~:text=Before%20the%20conflict%20started%20last%20year%2C%20post-Soviet%20Ukraine,years%20of%20being%20suppressed%20by%20the%20communist%20government> (last access: 11–26–2020).

23 UGCC priest was seated in electric chair in Donetsk, 22 December 2014; RISU (2020a), [http://risu.org.ua/en/index/all\\_news/community/freedom\\_of\\_conscience/58548/](http://risu.org.ua/en/index/all_news/community/freedom_of_conscience/58548/) (last access: 11–16–2020).

a pastor from the Renewal Church in Mariupol.<sup>24</sup> In the same month, armed men under Russian command kidnapped and murdered four members of an Evangelical Church in Sloviansk, Donetsk Oblast.<sup>25</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses have been kidnapped and mistreated repeatedly in Donetsk and Luhansk since 2014, as they refuse the use of weapons. Religious buildings have been vandalized, confiscated, and turned into "offices" of the rebel regimes.<sup>26</sup> Generally, in the zones in the East of Ukraine, the anti-terror zones, religion is instrumentalised as a means of power by the new dominating forces, tolerance is alien to this situation. Nowadays in Ukraine, two opposing zones of religious tolerance are prevailing: the occupied area in the east with an anti-tolerance position, while the churches on the free territory of Ukraine have found a common ground for dialogue.

As to the concept of tolerance among Ukrainian churches and religious groups, the following aspects can be highlighted that led the historical path to the actual situation:

Religious tolerance seemed to be that detrimental for the Soviet state, that the Bolshevik regime repressed each church organization from the beginning. At the same time, it did not allow inter-confessional and inter-religious contacts, so that an ecumenical understanding could not develop.

After the end of the Soviet Union, religious tolerance among the churches did not arise at once. It needed the help of religious leaders

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24 Statement of Heads of Evangelical Protestant Churches of Ukraine on Religious Persecutions in Donetsk and Luhansk Regions (2014), on 8 July 2014, <http://euromaidanpress.com/2014/07/22/statement-of-heads-of-evangelical-protestant-churches-of-ukraine-on-religious-persecution-in-the-donetsk-and-luhansk-oblasts/> (last access: 11–16–2020).

25 Euromaidanpress (2014): Chronicle of Terror: Religious persecution by pro-Russian militants in east Ukraine, 19 August 2014, <http://euromaidanpress.com/2014/08/18/chronicle-of-terror-religious-persecution-by-pro-russian-militants-in-east-ukraine/> (last access: 12–18–2020).

26 See the report of the Institute for Religious Freedom (Kiev) (2018): Religious Freedom at Gunpoint: Russian Terror in the Occupied Territories of Eastern Ukraine. Analytical report on the situation in regard to religious freedom and religiously motivated persecution in the separate territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation. September 2018, 2018.10.24-IRF-Report-ENG.pdf (last access: 11–26–2020). See also the report with testimonies and interviews of witnesses and victims of religious persecution in Eastern Ukraine: Institute for Religious Freedom (Kiev) (2015): When God becomes the Weapon. Persecution based on religious beliefs in the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. April 2015, [http://irf.in.ua/files/publications/2015.04\\_Report\\_Religious\\_persecution\\_in\\_occupied\\_Donbas\\_eng.pdf](http://irf.in.ua/files/publications/2015.04_Report_Religious_persecution_in_occupied_Donbas_eng.pdf) (last access: 11–26–2020).

to find a common organizational structure that united most of the existing religious groups. Especially the external shock of the Euro-Maidan in 2013/14 has renewed this impetus for the churches in Ukraine to collaborate and to strive together for a peaceful coexistence and for human rights, democracy, and freedom.

In the actual situation in Ukraine, religious tolerance is not guaranteed in the occupied territories in the East and on Crimea. Here, literally the Soviet regime of religious repression is rebuilt, that allows only the existence of the Orthodox church of Moscow Patriarchate.

In the pluralistic state of Ukraine, the churches and religious groups set up their own political institution representing the overwhelming majority of all churches. Here, tolerance is the key factor, as small churches are regarded as equal partners of the bigger churches. This is a clear example for the observation that religious tolerance is not based on the same quantitative measures of all participants, but it is a shelter for the weaker side, thus stabilizing social peace even under politically unstable conditions.

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# The Concept of Tolerance and its Relevance in Ukraine

*Ihor Vehesh*

Tolerance is one of the key conditions in the harmonious development of a society. On one hand tolerance can be described as an effective mechanism of understanding between different social communities, and on the other hand, it is one of the most important paradigms in modern scientific and philosophical discourses. Its worldwide implementation became possible only in the conditions and circumstances of recent history. After all, only in the late twentieth century the growing importance of tolerance led to the adoption of the “Declaration of Principles on Tolerance” at the UNESCO conference, the introduction of the International Day for Tolerance, and encouraged a gradual and persistent implementation of the basic principles of tolerance in a number of Western countries. Due to the growth of relevance a number of different platforms discussing issues related to tolerance/intolerance have been created, and concrete steps have been taken in order to build a space of tolerance in the particular areas of public life in developed countries. In addition, the intellectual circles of European countries are aware of the fact that democracy as a fundamental value of Western civilization can not be fully realized without taking into account the conceptual structure of the idea of tolerance. Modern theories of democracy, that emphasize the protection of minority rights in the view of the interests of the majority, are highlighting the connection between democracy and the conceptualization of tolerance. This broadens our view of tolerance and let us consider the socio-political context of this term.

The idea of tolerance appeared in history for the first time at the dawn of Modern Age, when Reformation and the birth of political theories laid the foundations of liberalism. However, ideas close to tolerance were expressed long before the Modern Age, in fact, they were part of the cognitive discourse throughout the history of human civilization. Of course, at different times and in different communities, this discourse was colored differently, but at all times the necessity of tolerance was a common conviction. Tolerance has always been considered an extremely important human virtue that required effort and work.

The principles of tolerance are the foundations of peace and stability, which were built by the best representatives of human civilization since

ancient times (from the principles of the Christian ethics of peace to the humanistic ideals of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment), but gained their more systematic, meaningful and holistic form not so long ago (XX-XXI centuries). Despite its centuries-old presence in philosophical treatises and scientific researches, tolerance for the general public has been discovered relatively recently. This, of course, leads to heated discussions about understanding the essence of this definition, discussions in which different approaches to interpretation give this category its semantic emphasis. Anyway, despite the variety of approaches to the interpretation of tolerance in modern science all of them can agree on the idea of mutual respect. The “other” can and should be treated with the same respect I would appreciate to be addressed with and the other should enjoy the same rights as I am enjoying.

Despite the significant evolution that the concept of tolerance has undergone in its development, the countries of the former socialist camp were able to join the world trends on this issue only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Therefore, broad, diverse discussions on the interpretation of the concept of tolerance, as well as discussions on the starting points of various concepts of tolerance became possible in the post-Soviet space only after 1991, when socio-political scientific discourse was cleansed of theoretical postulates of dominant ideology. As a result, a number of countries, including Ukraine, lag slightly behind the general Western trends, as a whole period of discussions and theoretical confrontations (almost three quarters of a century) has been missed.

This omission is a serious flaw, because in transitional societies, which include of course Ukraine, the issue of tolerance (in various areas – from cultural to political) is extremely important. After all, the circumstances that arise in transitive societies inevitably cause contradictions and conflicts, which often exceed the limits of tolerant attitude. Various political actors (from statesmen to civil society) enter into socio-political communication with vague and unprotected rules, which makes it impossible to understand each other within civilized boundaries and increases the tendency to violent actions and counteractions.

In the Ukrainian context, the issue of tolerant cooperation in the socio-political sphere includes necessarily the following aspects:

- 1) The problem of interaction between generations (the older generation, part of whose life fell on the times of authoritarianism of the Soviet system, and the younger generation, which identifies more with the post-authoritarian worldview and is closer to the values of democracy and cultural progress). This confrontation can be considered both on a political level and on a cultural one, because in this case we are talking about a



conflict of worldviews, a conflict of life models. Young people tend to be individualistic, because they are born in a space shaped by democracy and a free market, while the older generation remains in the position of mental collectivism, in which the role of the individual, freedom and responsibility are greatly diminished, and the role of the state machine embodies a paternalistic model of social interaction. Compared to the older generation, the younger generation is characterized by the ability to accept more easily innovations, by social mobility and an active attitude towards changes in global trends regarding social, political and cultural progress. Dialogue between the two generations of Ukrainian society will require time of preparation and social efforts. One key element of this dialogue must be tolerance.

2) The problem of interaction between the East and the West of Ukraine is that they differ significantly in cultural, mental and political terms. This is why S. Huntington called righteously Ukraine a “cleft country”. These differences do not concern only the language and religion, but also the idea of the role and place of Ukraine in the global civilization, the point of view on its further social development and its course in the global political process. Western Ukraine has always tended to strive for European values, while a large part of the population in the East of this country is leaning to Russia as an “older sister”, as political and cultural authority – despite a century of colonization. Even now, after Russia has annexed Crimea and the regular Russian army has invaded the Donbass region in 2014, this orientation has not changed radically. Therefore, we have to deal with discussions about the civilizational choice that Ukraine is facing with regard to the aggravation of the conflict, a delicate discussion that in one way or another touches the issue of various political and cultural opinions that differ from one region to another. It is important that these discussions should be based on the principle of tolerance and should be focused on finding common ground concerning the socio-political, economic and cultural development of Ukrainian society. The model of interaction of polarized forces, proposed by the concept of tolerance, is essential in this context.

3) It can be recognized a radically irreconcilable struggle of different political parties, which perceive each other not as opponents in an open and honest democratic struggle, but as outright enemies, who are the bearers of “foreign values” and who will attack “my” values “with their” values and deny the relevance of my convictions. In such cases, the competition of political parties becomes so extreme that the methods of confrontation sometimes lead to violent actions. Exacerbation of confrontations between different political forces of Ukrainian society often leads to total rejection

of each other, although the roots of this conflict is merely a fundamental misunderstanding caused by differences in language, ideology, political dreams. Resolving these contradictions in the short term is impossible, because it is a type of issue that can only be resolved democratically over years and decades. Therefore, there is an urgent need to apply a practice of political tolerance, which would keep the tension of political confrontation within civilized borders.

4) The conflict with Russia was and will remain a mayor obstacle to tolerant communication between the two countries and among Ukrainians between pro Russia and pro European forces. In this context, the priority is not so much the issue of tolerance as a concept of peace, because it is almost impossible to build a space of tolerance on ground occupied by war and annexation. Only after war has finally ended and peace has been restored, it will be possible to construct a space of tolerance. Of course, this will be extremely laborious and time-consuming as the wounds inflicted by the war will be still fresh, but preparations for this large-scale work have to begin now. It will depend not so much on the format of future post-war cooperation with Russia (although it is also an extremely important component, as Russia and Ukraine are sharing a border which is thousands of kilometers long) as on the stability of Ukraine's political system.

This set of problems, which are only the tip of the iceberg, because there are many more, requires a strengthening of political tolerance in Ukrainian society, otherwise disintegration will only intensify and conflicts will spread and will threaten ultimately the democracy in Ukraine.

In this regard, there is a need for gradual implementation of mechanisms of tolerance in the Ukrainian socio-political space:

1) Creation of platforms for the promotion of "active" tolerance in educational institutions and the media, because these are the key information channels through which public opinion is formed and that are creating possibilities of interaction.

2) Preparation of educational programs and realization of trainings on political tolerance for civil servants and politicians who are holding positions of various levels in public authorities and in local self-government in Ukraine. The issue of tolerance, learning and adoption of its key principles, is primarily a question of education. Therefore it is required a use of pedagogical methods and various teaching techniques. In this respect, there is an urgent need to develop and use the latest educational approaches and techniques to implement tolerance.

3) Establishing a peaceful dialogue between representatives of different identities of Ukrainian society, long and persistent work in search of common goals and guidelines that will help to overcome misunderstandings

and contradictions. In this context the role of the “third party” which is not participating in the confrontation and which will involve moral authorities from civil society (from priests to publicists) will be to promote a broad civilized dialogue between all sides of the conflict by creating a space for this dialogue and following the rules of discourse.

4) Search for the best practices of political tolerance taking into consideration both the Ukrainian political system and the experience of foreign political communication, which would crystallize the expediency, effectiveness and profitability of tolerance for the broad circles of Ukrainian society.

Political tolerance is one of the important steps towards the implementation of “active tolerance” in a broad context. This is a necessary step that for societies in transit (and societies of a delayed transit) can on the one hand facilitate the process of democratization, the process of overcoming the corruption and on the other hand this step will be a solid foundation for the further formation and functioning of a sustainable society. Ukraine needed this step for a long time, but was looking at it as it was a secondary factor – economy comes first and culture and values are second. At the same time there can be no order in this issue because the cultural component and the values (which include “active” tolerance) are as important for the democratization of the political sphere as the economic one. “Active” tolerance teaches different political actors to act together and only after having learned this concept it is possible for different groups of Ukrainian society to work together to overcome the situation of political, economic and any other crisis. The formation of Ukraine as a successful European country is impossible without the awakening of its society, which is in a situation of socio-political isolation, collective indifference and growing intransigence. Of course, Russia’s role in growing this intransigence is also considerable, but it would be much weaker if Ukrainian society was stronger. This requires the first steps, and it is clear that these steps must be educational.

Factors that characterize the possibilities of creating a space of tolerance in Ukraine:

1. Religion. Despite some religious differences Ukrainian society is largely Christian and therefore Christian ethics (based on love and peace) is understood and welcomed by a great part of the society. This suggests that the adoption of the concept of tolerance as well as the creation of a space of tolerance in the Ukrainian society will have a fairly strong basis. Such important elements of Christian ethics as forgiveness, acceptance, and nonviolence are the fundamental principles from which the very idea of tolerance grows. Thus, we can assume that the religious consciousness

of a large part of the Ukrainian population will be an important factor in establishing the concept of tolerance in the wider social and political environment.

2. Multiculturalism and polyethnicity. Ukraine, as a country with a large number of national minorities, has a positive experience of coexistence of these minorities, e.g. in the polyethnic Transcarpathian region, where Ukrainians, Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, and others easily coexist. However, historical experience must always be approached with caution, because, as the Ukrainian researcher Vitalii Khanstantinov notes, “for all its attractiveness and significance, the historical past cannot be the main consolidating factor for modern Ukrainian society. First, the historical path of each of its large communities has significant differences... Second, detailing the past in the relationships of such communities cannot so much consolidate as provoke unpleasant issues”<sup>1</sup>. Thus, tolerance will work more effectively here as a value, that does not so much appeal to the partly controversial past as it focuses on the construction of a peaceful future.

3. Request for large-scale integration of Ukrainian society into the system of values and norms of the Western hemisphere. After the revolutionary events of 2014, the vast majority of Ukrainian society demonstrates a desire to strengthen the process of rapprochement to the countries of the European Union. This intention is reflected in a number of reforms that are taking place in Ukraine with varying degrees of success. The reforms are aimed at bringing Ukraine as close as possible to the standards of Western countries. This will open opportunities not only for economic and legal changes in Ukrainian society, but also for cultural and mental ones. The phenomenon of tolerance will work more effectively in a space that is culturally closer to it.

4. The war in Donbass offers an occasion to understand the confrontation of different identities in Ukraine as well as to move this confrontation into a tolerant course. Despite all the tragedy of the situation in Donbass, this war gave Ukrainians the opportunity to look at themselves from the outside to comprehend their positions and orientations, to become more aware of their role and place in the world. Having gained this bitter experience, Ukrainian society has also gained knowledge on how to build relationships between different social groups, which models of interaction work to preserve Ukraine, and what exacerbates destructive tendencies in

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1 Khanstantinov 2009: 41.

it. Of course, the model of tolerant communication is the primary goal in this context.

5. The conflict with Russia is contributing to destabilize the situation in Europe and poses the question how to develop a format of tolerance in a “hybrid” war. There is a need for a clear understanding that tolerance in wartime is not a sign of weakness, but rather a consolidating factor which allows former politically intolerant identities to unite. In addition, it is necessary to begin to develop a tolerant perception of Russians and Ukrainians with a pro-Russian stance. Again, this is primarily needed not so much in order to build up potential relations with the Russia, but to maintain peace within Ukrainian society.

Thus, the gradual introduction of the concept and practice of tolerance in the Ukrainian socio-political space will not only strengthen the appreciation of democracy in Ukraine and bring the political system closer to the European models, but it will also create an effective mechanism that enables the society to solve internal contradictions and conflicts. For modern Ukrainian society tolerance is not only one choice of many possible alternatives of socio-political and cultural development, but rather the necessary decision that our country has to make and that is decisive for its well-being in the future.

However, it is also necessary to reconsider the peculiarities of Ukraine’s development, its history, and the conditions in which Ukrainian identity is formed, because it is under these conditions that the concept of tolerance will have to function. In this case we are talking about developing a concept of tolerance that would take into consideration the Ukrainian reality and would be flexible enough to effectively implement the principles that are the basis for building a space of tolerance. It is for this purpose that the concept of proactive tolerance was developed within the framework of cooperation between German and Ukrainian scientists<sup>2</sup>. It includes a set of principles and values that are vitally important for the peaceful and effective development of any society including, of course, the Ukrainian society.

In societies with different levels of development, history and specific cultural codes, the concept of “tolerance” is defined by a different understanding. The broad implementation of tolerance in the culture of thinking and behavior of different peoples also requires mandatory consideration of specific conditions that determine their lives, and also the goals, aspirations, and even illusions that move them. In this regard, the issue

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2 Vogt/Husmann 2019.

of tolerance and its discussion in Ukraine can be considered quite extensive. However, it also remains indisputable that fundamental principles, underlying the concept of tolerance (respect for the “other”, the attitude to interact with the “other”), are unconditional priorities of modern Ukrainian society.

Ukraine, having declared a course for European integration, trying to reach the European standards and follow European values, however, faces a number of problems related to understanding the importance of the idea of tolerance and its implementation in the domestic socio-political space. In this context, it is possible to clearly outline a set of challenges that may hinder the effective implementation of proactive tolerance in Ukraine.

1. *Definitive question.* Despite the fact that the Ukrainian scientific elite has confidently used the definition of tolerance for a long time, this concept causes misunderstanding and even outright resistance in certain circles of Ukrainian society. This situation appears strange, because the concept, which aims at overcoming contradictions and calls for peaceful cooperation, becomes a source of contradictions in Ukrainian society. The idea of tolerance implies respect for another, if he does not infringe on my rights, and in general tolerates my identity. However, the question “Should I be tolerant?” often includes another question in Ukrainian society: “To whom shall I be tolerant?” This question is to some extent intolerant, and the answer to it usually indicates exceptions depending on different social groups. And this highlights first of all another very important issue – the issue of a tolerant person. And who is she – a tolerant person? What is it like to be a tolerant person? For example – can we consider a person to be tolerant if he or she is only tolerating a specific identity, but at the same time is completely intolerant to another identity? Can this person be described as tolerant or not? In the Ukrainian reality the assertion of the principle of tolerance will inevitably involve the construction of a certain type of personality that is ready to get rid of internal barriers for the sake of becoming a tolerant person. In this context, we will not try to construct mainly a space of tolerance, we will rather work on the formation of a tolerant person.

2. *The level of civic culture* of Ukrainian society. Despite the experience of two revolutions over the last 15 years, which have demonstrated the activist potential of Ukrainian citizens, the Ukrainian society instead as a whole needs still considerable effort to develop a stable culture of civic participation. Elements of the Soviet mentality in the minds of many Ukrainians, legal nihilism, underdeveloped individualism will make it somehow difficult to implement proactive tolerance in Ukraine. However, there has already emerged a whole generation of young people, that have

no experience of living under colonialism, for whom independence and autonomy are an ordinary attribute of their lives, and freedom is seen not as an acquired value but as a habitual routine. For these people, participation in socio-political processes and broad social interaction with various “other people” does not provoke any difficulties. The environment of the youth could potentially be more receptive to the idea of proactive tolerance.

3. *Geopolitics*. What Ukraine faced in 2014 was geopolitics in its purest form, it was a classic of geopolitics from the time of Karl Haushofer. Categories that have not been used in Europe since the Second World War have re-entered the scientific and broad social discourse – annexation, occupation, territorial conquest, etc. This raises a very pertinent question: Is tolerance possible where geopolitics operates? Is it possible to implement tolerance during the implementation of certain geostrategies? Is tolerance stronger than geopolitics? Even if we answer all these questions positively, this does not remove the question of geopolitics as a significant obstacle. In modern Ukraine, the discourse of tolerance cannot pass this barrier. After all, one of the most important issues in modern Ukraine is the issue of war, which is the result of Russia's aggressive geostrategy. Therefore, the ethics of peace, which is directly embedded in the concept of proactive tolerance, must play a key role in finding ways for peaceful communication between the sides of the conflict. However, at the same time it must be understood that the ethics of forgiveness and acceptance involves the inclusion of two sides, because in order to be forgiven, one has to apologize first. And the question arises here again: Is forgiveness possible in an area of aggressive geostrategy?

We must understand that while we will try to construct a space of tolerance in Ukraine, while we will unite Ukraine with the idea of tolerance, our militant neighbor will implement its geostrategy at the same time, which has got an opposite aim – the strengthening of tendencies of intolerance, disintegration and destruction. However, it is also important to understand that tolerance is not a weakness, it is an effective force that can unite different communities. Thus, geostrategy acts on discord, but tolerance – on unity. Geostrategy can lose in a competition with another geostrategy, but tolerance has the advantage that it works for everyone, it is impossible to lose in the area of tolerance, because it protects the fundamental convictions and aims, not the temporary ones offered by geostrategy. This is its unconditional advantage.

4. *Institutional barrier*. There are social institutions that can contribute to the implementation of the concept of proactive tolerance – the church, the media, the institute of education. In modern Ukrainian conditions the

question should not rather be whether these institutions will be able to be effective translators of proactive tolerance, but how much they will strive for multiplication. The churches in Ukraine, regardless of their confessional affiliation, have always been wary of the concept of tolerance in which they saw a threat to traditional values. Despite the kinship of Christian ethics and the concept of tolerance the churches in Ukraine have always tried to distance themselves from the definition of “tolerance” as a mechanism of cooperation with “others”, those who, for example, do not share the doctrine of the church, or those who are treated by church as the propagandists of a “sin” (sexual minorities, proponents of abortion). This fear is embedded in the centuries-old policy of the churches, which have always tried to separate the “faithful” from the “infidels”, “ours” from “others”. Of course, with such a policy, the idea of tolerance will remain alien to the churches in Ukraine. That is why, before the church in Ukraine can become a translator of the idea of tolerance, the church itself must be convinced that tolerance is not a hostile idea that undermines church teaching. In turn, institutions of media and education could be active translators of the concept of proactive tolerance, as they have no barriers in the form of doctrines. At the same time, it is necessary to realize that the stability of the media and education as institutions capable of transmitting ideas will be undermined by the economic conditions of their existence in Ukraine. Social, political and economic crises will reduce the range of activities of these institutions. The education sector, being in a state of reform, is currently experiencing a period of reduction and optimization, which, of course, will affect its functional capacity. However, one may hope that these reforms will strengthen the institution of education. This might allow a qualitative implementation of important ideas for society, which, of course, includes the idea of tolerance.

Putting it into a nutshell, it is necessary to understand that the challenges facing the implementation of the concept of proactive tolerance in Ukrainian society should not be seen as obstacles that cannot be overcome. Rather, they are natural factors in the development of any transformational society, especially a society at war. Of course, this complicates the task of constructing a space of tolerance, but in the case of Ukraine, it makes this goal even more desirable.



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# Interreligious Dialogue as a Power of Ukrainian Civil Society

*Michael Fetko*

## *1. Religions in Public Discourse*

In the 18th century, in his play “Nathan the Wise” Gotthold Ephraim Lessing demonstrated not only the first ideological drama (“Ideendrama”) but also a valuable message of religious tolerance among three monotheistic religions. He has developed an idea that all three monotheistic religions are of same importance and they are really the religions of equal value. Their significance is measured by their contribution to social cohesion. Yet there is no real religion which has control over the truth, and every argumentative claim to absoluteness is doomed to failure. Probably in a thousand years it will be possible to say which religion has the truth but until that point in time a religion should be helping people kindly and demonstrate its persuasiveness in practical humaneness. Lessing’s description clearly characterizes ethical dimension and attitude. Though, it does not mean that religions neither have their own face nor their own identity. Lessing focuses on preserving the traditions and identity of each religion. His motto is: A person is a human being first of all, and then a Christian, Jew or Muslim.<sup>1</sup>

Later, Soviet atheism encouraged many to fight against religion and attempted to reduce the scope of religion to private homes or even forced many to say goodbye to religion in general. (“Religion is the opium of the people” — Karl Marx; “We must combat religion — that is the ABC of all materialism, and consequently of Marxism” — Vladimir Lenin; “There is no God” — Yuri Gagarin).<sup>2</sup> Today, the so-called “new atheism” (Richard Dawkins) strongly criticizes religion in the same way and also encourages to renounce their faith. In his monograph “The God Delusion” (2007) Dawkins is very critical especially about the three Abrahamic world religions. He believes that faith in God in all its forms is irrational, and

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1 Cf. Lessing 2004: 20ff.

2 Beljakova/Bremer 2016: 55f.

religion is antiprogressive, violent, destructive and usually has serious negative impact on society, and is the root of all evil.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, Germany's most famous contemporary philosopher Jürgen Habermas presented his interpretation of European intellectual history in his new two-volume "History of Philosophy" (2019). He pays tribute to the "unpaid semantic content" of religion, which can be found in worship, sacraments, rites and symbols. Religious experience remains "a thorn that sticks in the flesh of the modern era, which surrenders to the desire for untranscendental existence."<sup>4</sup> According to Jürgen Habermas, religious teachings have "a chance for survival" in the modern era only if these religious teachings are "practiced in the worship rites of the community, which means that they will also be assimilated in the existential sense".<sup>5</sup> When Habermas talks about the importance of worship, rites and symbols, he probably means other religions besides Christianity. It is important for him that a lively practice of faith should exist in these places, and thus there will be a meeting and experience of and specific reference to transcendence. A ritual is, so to speak, the main symbolic place for visualizing and experiencing transcendence in a community. Liturgy stands in the center because people come together for this transcendent experience. Rituals are not only motivating or regulatory actions, they also have potential for giving hope and comfort.<sup>6</sup>

Although Habermas calls himself "religiously unmusical" and the theme of religion stands out in his philosophical works, he has never ignored the issues of religious tradition, and starting with his early works, "Theory of Communicative Action" (1981) and "Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy" (1992), he has demonstrated his "cautious interest" in religious matters. However, after September 11, 2001 the theme of religion becomes central

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3 Dawkins 2010: 389 ff. For detailed scientific analysis of critical reactions/responses to the book by Dawkins from English-speaking authors (eg. Lennox, John: Gods undertaner. Has science buried God? 2007; McGrath E. Alister: The Dawkins Delusion?: Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine, 2007; Ward, Keith: Why there almost certainly is a God: doubting Dawkins. 2008; Robertson, David: The Dawkins Letters: Challenging Atheist Myths.) and from German-speaking authors (Schröder, Richard: Abschaffung der Religion? Wissenschaftlicher Fanatismus und die Folgen. 2008; Lohfink, Gerhard: Welche Argumente hat der neue Atheismus? 2008; Körtner, H. J. Ulrich: Evolution, Ethik und Religion. 2010; and others) see: Swarat 2017: 97–131.

4 Habermas 2019: 807.

5 Habermas 2019: 669.

6 Cf. Küng 2010: 138–140.

not only in scientific but also in public discourse. Islamism as the root of these terrorist attacks has raised many questions, fear, scepticism, and even denial of religion, as the attacks have shown the “dark side” of religion, what it is capable of, and its destructive potential. Shortly after this terrorist attack Habermas held a lecture entitled “Faith and Knowledge” in Frankfurt am Main (on the occasion of accepting the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade Union, 2001) and later in 2004 he had a discussion on this topic with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) in the Catholic Academy of Bavaria in Munich. In his publications and discussions of that time and in recent ones Habermas promoted the “translation” of religious semantic potentials in a secular context. Such attempts of translation are necessary to prevent the danger of losing sense that is constantly menacing modern societies. While considering the theme of religion, he searches for the resources needed to cement the society in the face of social disintegration, moral deficit and crisis of democracy in the political community. New alliances between secular rationale and faith are needed. Habermas believes that religion has a lot to say and offer to our world and our time, and we must rediscover this potential (the impulses coming from it) using a mutual process of translation.<sup>7</sup>

Besides, he warns that if religions fail to find “modus vivendi” with secular society, there will be a danger of fundamentalist narrowing, which – in extreme cases – can even lead to terrorist attacks similar to 9/11. On the other hand, the idea of Samuel Huntington about “The Clash of Civilizations” did not come true, but it did not become outdated as well. His analysis of Turkey or rather its return to Muslim civilization<sup>8</sup> is especially relevant today after the decision of the Turkish court and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to turn the “Hagia Sophia” in Istanbul from a museum back into a mosque.<sup>9</sup> The competition of Arab-centric and Turkish religious ideologies, cultures and identities which is observed in the countries of Central Asia is becoming more and more relevant for Western Europe, especially for Germany after the European migrant crisis of 2015, because Turkish Islam dominated in Germany before 2015,

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7 Cf. Habermas 2002: 23; see also: Habermas 2005: 32.

8 Cf. Huntington 1997: 169. Turkey is often called a “bridge” which is partially located on the European continent, but at the same time differs from Western Europe because it is shaped by Islam. In Huntington’s work Turkey is not a part of Western Europe.

9 Cf. <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/tuerkisches-gericht-erlaubt-nutzung-von-hagia-sophia-als-moschee-16855254.html> (last access: 08–25–2020).

and after 2015 Arab and other religious movements became more prominent which will definitely result in the diversification of German Islam. But it can also lead to possible misunderstandings and confrontations.<sup>10</sup> However, in Germany and Europe thanks to the research of Islamic theologians like Mouhanad Khorchide and his current publication “God's false lawyers. The betrayal of Islam” (2020) there is a movement for the reform of manipulated Islam, against its instrumentalization and for a return to the “original” state of Islam as a religion that sees a person not as an object but as a subject, and that views God as loving, compassionate and neither punitive nor restrictive.<sup>11</sup>

These and other events are the recent examples of religions regaining popularity in our post-secular age. These events pose new challenges not only to Muslims but also to Christians and thus to interreligious and inter-faith dialogue. In order to avoid the realization of Huntington's idea and putting the commonwealth at danger, all societal groups must learn to live together. We need successful examples of new dialogue between culture, religion and faith. After all, religion as a social institution can both play a destructive (disintegrative) role leading to intercultural and interreligious conflicts and perform a constructive (consolidating, integrative) function promoting unity, freedom, stability and peaceful coexistence in society. Dialogue and tolerance in the field of religion can ensure peace, harmony and social stability in the countries where there is religious pluralism. The example of Ukraine makes it clear that religious plurality means an opportunity and enrichment on the one hand because now, three decades after the end of communism, around 70 % of Ukrainians declared themselves religious in 2019. All religions and denominations are developing well and enjoying a high level of trust in society.<sup>12</sup> But on the other hand, religious diversity has been a conflict factor in Ukraine for many years and since 2013 there has not only been an identity conflict between the so-called “Russian world” and the “Ukrainian world”, but the religious factor plays a very important role here.<sup>13</sup> That's why Hans Küng's thesis is more relevant today than ever before, especially in the view of Ukraine: “No world peace without religious peace! No religious peace without dialogue

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10 Cf. [https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/debatte-um-deutschen-islam-zwischen-ko-ran-und-grundgesetz.724.de.html?dram:article\\_id=467685](https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/debatte-um-deutschen-islam-zwischen-ko-ran-und-grundgesetz.724.de.html?dram:article_id=467685) (last access: 08–25–2020).

11 Cf. Khorchide 2020: 9.

12 Cf. Boeckh 2019: 246.

13 Cf. Mykhaleiko 2015: 78 f. See also: Zabirko 2018: 63–77.

between religions! No dialogue between the religions without knowledge of their own traditions!”<sup>14</sup>

## *2. Religious Affiliations in Ukraine*

Famous contemporary sociologist of religion José Casanova characterizes the Ukrainian religious landscape as “the most pluralistic religious market in Eastern Europe.”<sup>15</sup> Ukraine is one of three areas (the Middle East, i.e. the area of Palestine, the Balkans and Ukraine) in which Christians, Muslims and Jews have lived side by side for more than a millennium. Great religions have met there and each of them has its roots in that same soil, that is, they are rooted in the history and culture of that country.<sup>16</sup> This religious pluralism and a high competition in Ukraine are the key to a better understanding of the current cultural, social and political processes. It is interesting that no church or religion is predominant in Ukraine, unlike it is the case in other Central and Eastern European countries. A high level of freedom of faith and religion helps avoiding discrimination of religious minorities.<sup>17</sup> Despite the fact that Orthodox Christians make up the largest religious community in Ukraine, they do not represent one cooperative unity, and until 2018 they were divided into three large jurisdictions, namely 1) the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, 2) the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and 3) the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. At the unification council in Kyiv which was held in late 2018, two jurisdictions (Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church) merged into one structure called “The Orthodox Church of Ukraine.” So, currently two large Orthodox churches exist in Ukraine: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. There is also a small group left of those who affiliate with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, which had agreed to unite first, and then announced that it did not recognize the decision of the unification council.<sup>18</sup> But Christians were not the only that

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14 Küng 2008: 13.

15 Casanova 1996: 9; Casanova knows Ukraine very well because his wife is Ukrainian. Therefore, he visits Ukraine very often and speaks the Ukrainian language perfectly.

16 Cf. <http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/news.html?newsID=87289> (last access: 08–25–2020).

17 Cf. Jelensky 2015: 214.

18 Cf. Bremer 2019: 252f.

underwent great shifts due to the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia and the outbreak of warfare in Eastern Ukraine (Donetsk, Luhansk) in 2014, but also Jews were affected – as well as Muslims who due to the fact that Crimean Tatars practice Islam live up to now in communities on the Crimean Peninsula.. Of course, most of them stayed on the Crimean Peninsula, but some (approx. 10 %) moved and settled in Kyiv and other regions as internal refugees. The same thing happened to Jews who had lived in Eastern Ukraine.<sup>19</sup> Many students from Africa, India and other countries, who studied in Donetsk, Luhansk, and other cities of Eastern Ukraine, also moved to Western Ukraine after 2014 and continued their education at universities there.<sup>20</sup>

In accordance with the sociological survey carried out in October 2019:<sup>21</sup>

- 66 % of Ukrainians consider themselves “believers” (compared to 57.8 % in 2000; 71.4 % in 2010; 76.6 % in 2014)
- 12 % swing between “belief and non-belief” (respectively: 22.5 %, 11.5 %, and 7.9 %)

a total of 97 religious institutions are registered in Ukraine (in addition to traditional churches, new evangelical and neo-pagan communities).

<b>Confessional affiliation among religious people in Ukraine</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2019</b>
Orthodox	66.0	68.1	70.0	64.9
Greek-Catholic	7.6	7.6	7.8	9.5
Roman Catholic	0.5	0.4	1.0	1.6
Protestant	2.0	1.9	1.0	1.8
Jewish	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1

19 Cf. Moroz 2015: 12f.

20 For example, since 2016 Uzhhorod National University has a medical faculty No. 2 where foreign students are taught in English only. Currently, there are about 2000 students from Africa (mostly Christians and Muslims) and India (mostly Hindus).

21 Center Razumkova (2019), Релігія і Церква в українському суспільстві: соціологічне дослідження-2019. [Religion and the Church in Ukrainian society: sociological study-2019], [http://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2019\\_Religiya.pdf](http://razumkov.org.ua/uploads/article/2019_Religiya.pdf) (last access: 08–25–2020), p. 12.



<b>Confessional affiliation among religious people in Ukraine</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2019</b>
Muslim	0.7	0.9	0.2	0.1
Buddhist	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0
Just Christians	6.9	7.2	6.3	8.0
do not belong to any religious community	15.3	13.2	12.5	12.8
other	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.3
not answered	-	0.3	0.5	0.1

### *3. Interreligious Dialogue as a Power of Ukrainian Civil Society*

After the political change in 1989 and declaration of independence of Ukraine in 1991, the religious and social situation transformed dramatically. Ukraine's "religious renaissance" started with the adoption of the law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations"<sup>22</sup> (1990) after years of persecution and displacement of religion from public space in the USSR by the Soviet authorities. Nevertheless, as noted by Ukrainian religious studies scholar Viktor Jelensky, even in Soviet times Ukraine was not a "religious desert" because people's religiosity and activity of underground churches were not completely eradicated.<sup>23</sup> The new political system and new legislation on freedom of religion opened the way for religious organizations to register their communities and supported their transformation into strong civil society institutions. After all, religious organizations or churches enjoy a high level of trust and credibility among Ukrainian society and belong to the most important public institutions,<sup>24</sup> which along with other components of civil society directly affect the course of social and political processes and harmonization of the social system. But two clarifications should be provided here.

From the point of view of sociology, religions or churches are perceived as a part of civil society, which certainly contributes to a better understanding of their social mission. In fact, the status of religion or church should

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22 Cf. Vasin 2020: 7.

23 Cf. Jelensky 2015: 221.

24 Cf. Boeckh/Turij 2015: 6.

not be reduced to the sphere of civil society only because their potential and essence as a community of faith and moral values transcend the immanent civil society. From the Catholic point of view, the essence of church as God's people is supported by its transcendental nature, unique and divine basis. So, the sociological concept of religion or church is necessary as an auxiliary concept, but religion or church as reality is difficult to comprehend from a sociological perspective. Therefore, they should not be reduced to a purely secular dimension.<sup>25</sup>

What is civil society? There is still no consensus in the scientific literature on the definition of "civil society", so neither on what it means and what functions it performs or ideally should perform. Civil society has become a central concept for preserving and developing democracy. Since the format of this article does not allow comprehensive study of the content, essence and different philosophical traditions of the civil society concept, we will limit ourselves to a general definition of civil society given by Merkel and Lath: "Civil society exists in a pre-state or non-state sphere of activity and consists of numerous pluralist [...], voluntarily established organizations and associations [...], which articulate their specific material and normative interests and are autonomously organized. Civil society occupies the space between the private sphere and state. Its articulated objectives concern always the *res publica*. Thus, actors in the civil society are involved in politics, yet without assuming state posts. Correspondingly, groups that exclusively pursue private goals (families, enterprises, etc.) are as little a part of civil society as political parties, parliaments and state administrations are. [...] [Civil society] is not a homogeneous "actor". Rather, it is heterogeneously structured to the extent that it displays a pluralistic melting pot of vastly different actors, who do, however, share a certain minimal normative consensus. This is based principally on the recognition of others (tolerance) and on the principle of fairness. [...] Together with an alignment with public affairs and an orientation towards communicative action, the civil consensus creates the genuine nucleus of civil society that can also be found at the individual level in the formation of a civic spirit."<sup>26</sup>

This understanding of civil society (civil society institutions cannot be limited to a list of organizations formally recognized by the state) provides grounds for the participation of religious organizations, religious communities or churches in civil society and its formation. Religion has a great

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25 Cf. Marx 2015: 19f.; Palaver 2009: 64.

26 Merkel/Lauth: 22–23.

potential in uniting people to defend human values, rights and freedoms of the country's citizens and to affect social and political processes (development of democracy and ideas of freedom) because religion is also a communicative community in a specific sense.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the fact that the origin of Western civilization is closely connected with Christianity or, more precisely, with monotheism ("In the beginning there was faith: faith in the *one* God. The rise of the Western World required more than just monotheism, but without it the Western World could hardly be explained.")<sup>28</sup> religions or churches were not involved in the development of civil society in most of the European countries, and sometimes the civil society even developed in spite of resistance from their part. In this context Ukraine has become an exception. There religions and churches supported the civil society and protests at first during the Orange Revolution (2004/2005) and then even more actively during Euromaidan (2013/2014), and thus they committed themselves in the process of developing and strengthening the civil society. The role played by churches and religions "in the protests was not marginal, but central. This in fact would have been more characteristic of the pre-modern era than of a secular one. [...] This is an extraordinary example of the constructive role played by religion in transforming a post-totalitarian society into a democracy."<sup>29</sup> In the course of the Euromaidan events, religions and churches took the part of Ukrainian society. Priests came between the parties to the conflict during violent confrontation and called for reconciliation and appealed to the troops not to use weapons against civilians. Monasteries and churches were not only a place of prayer but also houses of solidarity and a shelter, where medical care and food were provided.<sup>30</sup>

Since 1996 the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (UCCRO) has been an important platform for interfaith and interreligious dialogue but also for the dialogue with the state and civil society.<sup>31</sup> This Council plays a very important role as there is probably no

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27 Cf. Jelensky 2015: 213ff.

28 Winkler 2015: 25.

29 Hovorun 2014, 394; 400.

30 Cf. Hovorun 2014: 394f.

31 The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (UCCRO) was established in December 1996 as an interfaith institution, aiming to unite the efforts of various denominations to focus on the spiritual revival of Ukraine, coordination of interfaith dialogue in Ukraine and abroad, participation in a legislative process on church-state issues, and the implementation of comprehensive charitable actions. The (UCCRO) operates on the basis of equality and equal rights of its members, respect for internal guidelines and traditions of all present

such Council in any country of the world that unites not only different churches but also different religions. One can say that the ground for consent and successful work of UCCRO are the principles of the social teaching of the Catholic Church, namely human dignity, subsidiarity, solidarity and the common good. During a meeting between Pope John Paul II and the representatives of UCCRO at the occasion of a papal visit to Ukraine in 2001, Pope John Paul II noted that the responsibility of UCCRO is very high because “Ukraine is a laboratory of ecumenism.”<sup>32</sup> UCCRO made a great effort to achieve a consent during Euromaidan events and then during the illegal annexation of Crimea and Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine. UCCRO’s constructive positions promoted the observance of constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, effective dialogue between the government, the civil society, and the opposition in search for non-violent ways out of the crisis. This handling, in fact, guarded the basic principles of democracy. UCCRO representatives have become the voice of the Ukrainian people in the international arena during their joint visits to the European Parliament, USA, Israel and other countries. Religious and church leaders had numerous interviews with foreign journalists and met with many ambassadors from different countries and with representatives of the diplomatic corps to tell the truth about the events in Ukraine.<sup>33</sup> Their active role, their solidarity and particular

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religious organizations in Ukraine, which operating within the Constitution of Ukraine. The UCCRO is independent of the government of Ukraine, political parties and other non-governmental organizations. As of November 2016 the UCCRO includes 16 churches and religious organizations and 1 interchurch organization; including Orthodox, Greek and Roman Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical churches as well as Jewish and Muslim religious unions. Consequently, the Council of Churches represents more than 90 % of the all religious organizations in Ukraine. According to the UCCRO’s Statute, council members preside at meetings in turn, that helps distribute work between those responsible for the organization of the Council’s Secretariat and coordinate ongoing joint activities occurring between meetings, <https://vrciro.org.ua/en/council/info> (last access: 08–25–2020).

32 Cf. <https://ostkirchen.info/die-ukraine-ist-ein-oekumenisches-laboratorium/> (last access: 08–25–2020).

33 Cf. Звернення Всеукраїнської Ради Церков і релігійних організацій з нагоди Дня Соборності та Свободи України. [Address of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations on the occasion of the Day of Unity and Freedom of Ukraine]. January 22, 2014, [https://old.irs.in.ua/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1330%3A1&catid=50%3A2v&Itemid=78&lang=uk](https://old.irs.in.ua/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1330%3A1&catid=50%3A2v&Itemid=78&lang=uk) (last access: 08–25–2020).

practical charitable/humanitarian aid have proven that religion deserves to be highly trusted by all citizens and that it contributes to the consolidation of Ukrainian society. "Ukraine has demonstrated that religion and the Church should not be an obstacle in the process of formation of the civil society, but it should be its catalyst instead. So, a civil society grounded on religious values is possible."<sup>34</sup>

"Libertas Center for interreligious dialogue" which was opened on May 7, 2013 in Lviv is also worth mentioning here. Libertas Center is a non-profit organization which aims at promoting interconfessional and interreligious dialogue and understanding in Ukraine and abroad. By applying scholarly research and innovative thinking to interfaith issues, the Center aims at the objective of protecting the right to and the exercise of religious freedom, establishing connections among confessions and religions in the area of academic learning, respect, and cooperation in social projects. Libertas Center is actively cooperating with the John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue, KAICIID Dialogue Center, The Russell Berrie Foundation, The Institute of Ecumenical Studies of the Ukrainian Catholic University, Sant'Egidio and numerous other centers and projects for training of future leaders of interfaith and interreligious dialogue.<sup>35</sup> Collegium Orientale (CO<sub>r</sub>) in Eichstätt/Germany where many students from Ukraine have studied and are currently studying also makes an important contribution to the training of leaders of interfaith and interreligious dialogue for the Greek Catholic and Orthodox Churches. CO<sub>r</sub> is the only one in the world internationally and interdenominationally oriented, ecumenically open seminar, which is aimed at all Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches. One focus of the CO<sub>r</sub> is the ecumenical service for the unity of the separated churches.<sup>36</sup> Not least should be mentioned the Open Orthodox University of St. Sophia the Holy Wisdom, which opened in 2016 in Kyiv. This institution makes a very important contribution to the development of interreligious, interdenominational dialogue as well as dialogue with civil society. Open Orthodox University is not a classic university and not a religious organization, but is a non-governmental organization made up of representatives of different religions and denominations as well as non-religious persons who deal with educational activities. It is a platform

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34 Melnyk 2016: 116.

35 Cf. Dzyubansky 2020: 70f.

36 <https://www.collegium-orientale.de/startseite/> (last access: 08–25–20).

for the dialogue between different people, scientists, philosophers and theologians on the problems of the present and the common future.<sup>37</sup>

Ukrainian society is “post-genocide” one.<sup>38</sup> It is a kind of product of the mass violence of 1914–1945, socialism, Holodomor, Holocaust, Nazism, Communism and later the Chernobyl disaster. That means hunger, wars, fear and ecological problems. Family of almost every Ukrainian has faced a severe trauma in its history and this causes problems in their family, alcoholism, violence, apathy, and lack of initiative. These traumas are integrated to the DNA of the Ukrainian society. Nevertheless, when Ukrainians find themselves in a different context, they take care of themselves very well.<sup>39</sup> That is why many religions and churches put much effort into giving hope and life purpose to break this “vicious circle” and establish a “virtuous circle” together with civil society and the state. This is manifested primarily in the work of churches with children, youth and laity. They are encouraged not only to work actively in the church community, but also to participate in civil society and political life. Responsibility, solidarity, dignity, and leadership are the main subjects to work on with young people and laymen.<sup>40</sup>

After 2014 the theme of interreligious dialogue, especially between Christians and Muslims, has gained relevance. Indeed, the situation differs from that of Western Europe because Ukrainian Muslims are not migrants, and have long been integrated into Ukrainian society. On the other hand, there are no radical Muslim groups in Ukraine.<sup>41</sup> The Mufti of the Muslim Spiritual Directorate of Ukraine Said Ismagilov has an optimistic view on the development of the dialogue between Muslims and Christians: “The Revolution of Dignity and subsequent tragic events in the Crimea and Donbas pushed Ukrainians to discover the Muslim community of our country. The Muslim community of our country did not sell our Homeland. First it stood up to protect the dignity, freedom and its rights, and since March – to protect Ukraine. I believe these tragic times initiated the shaping of not declarative, but real relationship between Muslims and Christians. [...] One can say that the dialogue was not on the agenda

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37 <http://oou.org.ua/about/> (last access: 08–25–2020).

38 Cf. Mace 2003.

39 Cf. Zincenko 2018.

40 The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church is the most active in these matters. See: Комісія УГКЦ Справедливість і Мир 2014 [Kommission der UGKK für Gerechtigkeit und Frieden 2014]: 7f.; see also: Синод Єпископів УГКЦ 2018 [Bischofssynode Der UGKK 2018].

41 Cf. Rohdewald 2015: 402ff.

before that moment. For all 23 years each religion has been busy with its own affairs and reviving its religious life after the times of aggressive atheism. They have been “observing” each other. Maidan and war have accelerated the uniting of all Ukrainian society and actualized the necessity of interreligious dialogue. So it is now more relevant than ever before. And appropriate. It is necessary to start a dialogue and joint projects to the benefit of Ukrainian society.”<sup>42</sup> The Jewish-Christian dialogue in Ukraine has also improved considerably in recent years. For example, the Chief Rabbi of Ukraine Moshe Reuven Asman sent a personal letter to “Yad Vashem” in January of this year, asking that Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church Andrej Sheptytsky (1865–1944) be recognized as the Righteous Among the Nations.<sup>43</sup> When it was reported in Russian media at the end of 2019 that in Ukraine there would be the largest anti-Semite group in Europe, Moshe Reuven Asman contradicted this information and said that the level of anti-Semitism in Ukraine is lower than in Western Europe, and pointed out that an overwhelming majority of Ukrainians even voted for a Jewish president Volodymyr Zelenskyj. Former Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman was also Jewish.<sup>44</sup>

For sure, in times of crisis and war not only the dialogue between Muslims and Christians but also interfaith dialogue improved, as it was observed on Euromaidan when representatives of all confessions and religions held speeches and prayed together on the stage on Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kiev. However, there remains a very long way in order to establish an honest and deep dialogue, and the dialogue on the Maidan should not be idealized too much. Dialogue is often called a common road to peace, harmony and justice. Christoph Böttigheimer believes that “Dialogue between religions should represent more than just communication and coexistence based on partnership. Theological and philosophical dialogues make sense only if the problems of the Truth are not excluded, and the dialogue is deemed to be and used as a tool for joint search of the Truth.”<sup>45</sup> In another case he expresses his opinion from the Christian point of view: “Only that persons are worth of dialogue who take their own religion seriously and join the appropriate meetings with people of

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42 Moroz 2015: 12, 14.

43 <https://synod.ugcc.ua/data/golovnyy-rabyn-ukrayny-prosytyad-vashem-vyznatty-mytropolita-andreya-sheptytskogo-pravednykom-narodiv-svitu-2293/> (last access: 08–25–2020).

44 Cf. <https://www.stopfake.org/de/manipulativ-ukraine-sind-die-grosten-anti-semiten-in-europa/> (last access: 08–25–2020).

45 Böttigheimer 2009: 515f.

another religion with full understanding of own faith. Honest dialogue means that information about the central content of the Gospel and Christian testimony of the Truth is not hidden by others.”<sup>46</sup>

The impulses and initiatives coming from Pope Francis, Patriarch Bartholomew, Patriarch Kirill and Ahmad Mohammad Al-Tayyeb can be very useful on the way to not only true interfaith and interreligious dialogue, but also true dialogue with civil society. The Catholic Church has many years of experience, many developed tools and practices of interreligious and interdenominational dialogue. “*Nostra Aetate*” (1965) and “*Unitatis Redintegratio*” (1964) are two important documents that are considered to be the basis for dialogue from a Catholic perspective. For Pope Francis is dialogue very important, just as it is for his two great predecessors St. Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI Pope Francis writes in “*Evangelii Gaudium*” (2013)<sup>47</sup> and his famous social encyclical “*Laudato si*” (2015) about a dialogue between religions, politics, science and economy. He invited all people from different religious traditions to a dialogue.<sup>48</sup> Pope Francis quotes not only the Bible, official documents of the Catholic Church, regional and national bishops' conferences, but also the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew and the Islamic Sufi Ali Al-Khawwas.<sup>49</sup> In the apostolic constitution “*Veritatis Gaudium*” on the church universities and faculties (2017), Pope promotes dialogue as a central method of theology.<sup>50</sup> Remains unforgettable a historic first meeting of Pope Francis with Patriarch Kirill, the head of Russian Orthodox Church and signing the joint declaration in Cuba on February 12, 2016.<sup>51</sup> But also the historic meeting of Pope Francis and the Grand Imam

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46 Böttigheimer 2009: 485.

47 Cf. EG 162–258.

48 LS 163–201.

49 Cf. Fetko 2018: 82f.

50 VG 5 (p. 26f.); See also about dialogue as a method of theology: Francis (2019): Speech at the conference “Theology after *Veritatis Gaudium* in the context of the Mediterranean”, Place for the Papal Theological Faculty of the Southern Italy (Naples), [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/june/documents/papa-francesco\\_20190621\\_teologia-napoli.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/june/documents/papa-francesco_20190621_teologia-napoli.html) (last access: 08–25–2020).

51 Cf. Joint Declaration published under the unofficial title ‘We are bishops and brothers’, *L'Osservatore Romano* 7 (Friday, 19 February 2016), The full text in the official English translation can be accessed URL online at [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco\\_20160212\\_dichiarazione-comune-kirill.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco_20160212_dichiarazione-comune-kirill.html) (last access: 08–25–2020).



of Al-Alzar, Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, in Abu Dhabi, when both signed in February 2019 a joint document on “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.”<sup>52</sup>

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew, the head of the Greek Orthodox Church, is very active in the interreligious and interdenominational dialogue compared to other numerous Orthodox churches in the world. His encounters with St. Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and representatives of other religions and denominations did a lot for the development of the ecumenical movement. Even now, there are often mutual visits by Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew and their representatives in the Vatican and Istanbul. In his speech at the University of Fribourg/Switzerland in 2017 Patriarch Bartholomew said that “true dialogue is a gift from God. According to St. John Chrysostom, God is always in personal dialogue with people. God always speaks: through the prophets and the apostles, through the saints. [...] Dialogue is a means of communication and the key to today's theology. Today theology is called not to shut itself off, but to open itself up to other university sciences in an interdisciplinary approach in order to bring in the ever-current message of the renewal of persons and creation in Christ. We have tried to illustrate this by turning, on the basis of our experience in the Ecumenical Patriarchate, to inter-Christian dialogue, inter-religious dialogue and the dialogue with society and the sciences of today.”<sup>53</sup>

Also the Patriarch of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Svyatoslaw Shevchuk, tries not only to build bridges in interreligious and interdenominational dialogue in Ukraine, but also between three countries Poland, Russia and Ukraine. In his book “Dialogue Heals Wounds” he talks about the current difficult period of Ukrainian-Polish and Ukrainian-Russian relations. This book should work as a promoter of dialogue, because we know too little about each other, and this is a paradox of the modern information world. “Unfortunately, we do not know how to dialogue today,

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52 Cf. A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together (2019), [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco\\_20190204\\_documento-fratellanza-umana.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html) (last access 08–25–2020).

53 Bartholomaios: The Dialogue as the key to today's theology. Lecture by His Holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch, at the University of Friborg/Switzerland on April 24, 2017, [https://www3.unifr.ch/iso/de/assets/public/files/Dokumentation/Memoria/Memoria%202017/Tagungen/Vortrag\\_Bartholomaiois\\_D.pdf](https://www3.unifr.ch/iso/de/assets/public/files/Dokumentation/Memoria/Memoria%202017/Tagungen/Vortrag_Bartholomaiois_D.pdf) (last access: 08–25–2020), p. 1;10.

we live in a world of monologues, we do not know how to hear another person, even when he thinks differently than I do. I am convinced that dialogue is a very important element of universal culture that we must find in itself. We do not need to be afraid of dialogues, in particular we do not need to be afraid of dialogues with God and with our neighbor, even when he is different from me and thinks differently. Dialogue heals. Dialogue is wound therapy. And this can be confirmed by modern psychologists. We sometimes need to express our pain, our doubts, but so often we lack someone to listen to us. Let this be our effort, it is a ministry for the healing of wounds both Ukraine and Europe will be blessed by our Lord God. Because he is the one who heals, and we want to be a good tool for him.”<sup>54</sup>

Interreligious dialogue and religious pluralism are with no doubt a great chance for further democratization of the state. In one of his interviews with Ukrainian media already mentioned one of the world's top scholars in the sociology of religion Casanova said that “we need many churches to build a really sustainable democracy.”<sup>55</sup> Interreligious dialogue is a power of Ukrainian civil society as it was illustrated particularly by the example of Euromaidan and in recent years. On Maidan all groups managed to find a common language with each other, no one engaged into conflicts. Later, all religions and churches together with the civil society and volunteers were united in the effort to assist internally displaced persons (about 2 million) and to help soldiers and population of Eastern Ukraine. Even Pope Francis called for a special donation campaign across Europe (in all Catholic churches in Europe) in 2016, and the money was collected for the needy population in eastern Ukraine. This special donation campaign was unique in European history.<sup>56</sup> Also the Patriarch Kirill, the head of Russian Orthodox Church, appealed in a personal conversation to Russian President Vladimir Putin with a request to support the proposal and help in the exchange of prisoners in Donbass. “We discussed all these topics with you, I know that you take the fate of people close to your heart [...] The role of the Church in such conflicts is, of course, primarily humanitarian. People are suffering, are the victims of this difficult conflict, which really leads to the suffering of so many. [...] Therefore, for my part, I would like to ask you to also support this idea. Together, perhaps we could

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54 Cf. Shevchuk/Tomasik 2018: 78.

55 <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/29946986.html> (last access: 08–25–2020).

56 [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2016/documents/papa-francesco\\_regina-coeli\\_20160403.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2016/documents/papa-francesco_regina-coeli_20160403.html) (last access: 08–25–2020).

all carry out such a wonderful action.”<sup>57</sup> A few weeks later, a successful exchange of prisoners took place.

By defending freedom, human dignity, tolerance and mercy for the needy and poor, religions and churches of Ukraine have proven their understanding of the “signs of time” and have given hope to all those who suffer from hatred, violence, intolerance, injustice and war what they will continue to do so. They have become a compass of tolerance in the transformation processes of Ukrainian society. An interesting fact is, that if we compare interreligious dialogue and interfaith dialogue in Ukraine, it has to be said that interreligious dialogue in Ukraine is at a very good level and relations between religions can be a good example of interfaith dialogue, where unfortunately there are still a lot of problems.<sup>58</sup> The ecumenical dialogue in the world between churches and world religions shows that there are good prospects for dialogue especially on an ethical level.<sup>59</sup> Experience from the recent history of Ukraine gives hope that good cooperation between the churches, religions and the civil society is possible, especially on social-ethical, charitable and diaconal issues. Ukraine as the most pluralistic religious country in Eastern Europe has many opportunities not only to create stability in the country, but also to become a model of religious peace in Europe. In Lessing's “Nathan” the main characters finally discover that they are members of a family. Jews, Christians and Muslims are united in a family. That is Lessing's dream of a religiously reconciled humanity. Scientific Exchange with Ukraine on tolerance, peace, solidarity and democracy can make an important contribution to this goal.

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57 <https://www.pravmir.ru/patriarh-kirill-poprosil-prezidenta-podderzhat-predlozhenie-ob-obmene-plennymi-v-donbasse/> (last access: 08–25–2020).

58 Cf. Fylypovych/Horkusha 2020: 29ff.

59 Cf. Fetko 2018: 91f.

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# Tolerance for Ukraine: Interreligious Insights

*Pavlo Smytsnyuk*

In this chapter I will attempt to address two questions. First, why do churches in Ukraine and beyond have difficulty with embracing tolerance?<sup>1</sup> I will argue that one of the reasons is the ambiguity of liberal tolerance and modernity as a whole, of which tolerance is a key element. Second, what theological resources can help churches to foster a proactive tolerance? I will argue that the correct theological approach implies the recognition of, and respect for, the limits of our understanding. Moreover, a proactive interest and engagement with the ‘other’ helps us to understand our own tradition more profoundly.

My aim in writing is that not only the content of my reflection, but its very method, reflect acceptance of the ‘other’. Therefore, I have chosen two voices, belonging to a different tradition from my own, to lead me in my reflection on tolerance. I will engage with two Jewish thinkers, Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Buber, who are both connected to Ukraine. Buber, who was born in Vienna, spent his youth in Lemberg (Lviv): His grandfather Salomon Buber raised him after the divorce of Martin’s parents.<sup>2</sup> Levinas spent five years of his early childhood in Kharkov (Kharkiv).<sup>3</sup> His family fled there from Kovno (Kaunas), when it had been occupied by the Germans during the First World War. I would suggest that Christians in Ukraine and beyond can learn a lot about the issue of tolerance from these two sages of the Jewish tradition.

Throughout my reflection, I will draw on one text by each of these authors. Levinas’ essay, entitled “Desacralization and Disenchantment”

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1 By tolerance, I mean acceptance of people, identities, views and beliefs, with which one does not agree. As Adam B. Seligman points out, if we do not reject the latter as “wrong, unreasonable, or undesirable” “we would not need to be tolerant towards [them]” (Seligmann 2000: 133). This moment of disagreement is a key characteristic of tolerance, which distinguishes it from other concepts. It is indicative that Raimon Panikkar proposes translating “tolerance” as “patience” – thus the aspect of bearing a “burden”, which accompanies acceptance, is preserved. See: Panikkar 1979: 19–36.

2 Mendes-Flohr 2019: ch. 1.

3 Critchley 2004: xv.

presents several images and associations, with which the topic of tolerance can be approached.<sup>4</sup> The essay is dedicated to the topic of sorcery and contains Levinas' commentary on a passage from the Talmud about the use of magic in order to deceive. A Mishnaic norm, that regulates it, and to which Levinas' essay is an extended commentary, reads as follows: "The sorcerer, if he performs an act, is subject to penalties, but not if he merely creates illusions. [...] Two people pick cucumbers: One of them is subject to penalties, the other is exempt; the one who performs the act is subject to penalties, the one that gives the illusion of it is exempt."<sup>5</sup> Levinas' text also comments on the punishment to be inflicted upon sorcerers who violate the above rule. A key story here is that of Ov and Yidoni, necromancers and casters of spells, interrogated by Saul on the eve of an important battle.

In *The Way of Man*, Martin Buber recalls a beautiful Hasidic anecdote by Rabbi Bunam about Rabbi Eizik from Cracow.<sup>6</sup> Rabbi Eizik has a repetitive dream in which he is told to go to Prague and search for a treasure hidden under a bridge. Finally, Eizik decides to go, arrives in Prague, but views it impossible to dig under the bridge, since the bridge is guarded by soldiers. The captain, who sees Eizik wandering every day, gets curious and approaches Eizik to find out what he is doing. Eizik tells him about his dream, at which point the captain makes fun of him, saying that he, as well, had a dream about a treasure hidden under the oven at the house of Rabbi Eizik in Cracow. Of course, the captain says, he is not so stupid as to act upon his dreams. Eizik listens carefully, returns home and finds a treasure under the oven of his own house.

At first glance, these stories have nothing to do with the issue of tolerance and post-secularism. However, if one scrutinizes these texts in the right way, they are very illuminating. Levinas himself invites readers to play with the texts, to "tease" those texts, "which invite teasing [*sollicitent la sollicitation*]; without it, they remain silent or incongruous."<sup>7</sup> These are the instructions I intend to follow throughout this chapter.

But before I develop my two arguments, let me situate my analysis within the context of Ukraine. Since the independence of Ukraine in 1991, the religious situation in the country has been characterized by

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4 Levinas 1994: 136–160. The essay was published in Levinas' *Nine Talmudic Readings*, an English edition, which includes two French publications: *Quatre lectures talmudiques* of 1968 and *Du sacré au saint: cinq nouvelles lectures talmudiques* of 1977.

5 *Sanhedrin* 67a-68a, cited in Levinas 1994: 136.

6 Buber 1951: 39–41.

7 Levinas 1994: 143.

a high level of religious freedom and pluralism. The latter made the Ukrainian case unique amongst its neighbors, where usually one denomination plays a dominant role (as is the case in Russia, Romania, and Poland). In Ukraine, several Orthodox jurisdictions co-existed with two Catholic churches (one of the Latin and another of the Greek tradition), a variety of Protestant denominations, and traditional Jewish and Muslim (Crimean Tartar) populations. Although this plurality led to a general environment of tolerance, inter-confessional conflicts were not unusual. In the 1990s, Western Ukraine became a battleground between the Orthodox and Ukrainian Greek Catholic Churches, when the latter finally came out of the underground, following decades of Soviet persecution. This made Ukraine a 'stumbling stone' between Rome and Moscow, and, for a long period, blocked ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in 2018 has also led to conflicts. These sometimes violent outbreaks have occurred between those Christians, on the one side, who wanted to join this Church, and those on the other, who decided to remain in unity with the Patriarchate of Moscow. There are still remaining problems such as xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and Russophobia.<sup>8</sup> Another context in which there is a need for more tolerance is that of LGBT+ people; in this field the churches with their accent on the defense of 'traditional family values' struggle to find a way of making members of this group feel respected and welcome.<sup>9</sup> In this chapter, I do not intend to analyze the status of tolerance in Ukraine. I would rather reflect on the problems related to a more general embrace of tolerance by religions and would like to propose some theological arguments from an inter-religious perspective on why religions should be promoters of a proactive tolerance within society.

### *Age of Confusion*

Let me start by addressing the question of why churches sometimes find themselves reluctant to be active promoters of acceptance of diversity of different worldviews, values and identities. The Christian theological tradi-

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8 Mierzejewski-Voznyak 2018. An objective evaluation of many of the issues mentioned above remains problematic, as is an evaluation of Ukrainian society's progress on these issues, partially due to the fact that discussions on these topics are often instrumentalized in the propaganda battle between Ukraine and Russia (as well as some other neighbours).

9 Martsenyuk 2012; Madrigal-Borloz 2020.

tion (which entails the doctrine of the Trinity lending space for differences even within God himself, and the teaching that human beings are the image of God) could be a key conceptual contributor to the defense of tolerance.<sup>10</sup> However, today we witness – both in Ukraine and beyond its borders – a tension between two camps, Orthodoxy and some factions within Catholicism and Protestantism, on the one hand, and the advocates of tolerance, on the other. I am referring, in particular, to aspects such as: the question of acceptance of the religious and ethnic ‘other’, modern liberalism, human rights as a discourse, and some of its implications, as well as attitudes towards human sexuality and sexual identity.

One could argue that one of the problems is that some churches struggle to evolve beyond the logic of the Constantinian age, and fail to acknowledge their own marginality.<sup>11</sup> It would seem, however, that the post-Constantinian age, the modern *novus ordo saeculorum*, is also not unproblematic, and that the concept of liberal tolerance, as part of modernity’s package, is profoundly embedded in ambiguity.<sup>12</sup>

It is on this ambiguity that I wish to reflect in more detail, by engaging with Levinas. In his “Desacralization and Disenchantment”, whose point of departure, as I mentioned earlier, is magic, Levinas offers a brilliant exposé of ambiguity – especially relevant in our age which is marked by an abundance of fake news. “Sorcery”, Levinas teaches us, “is the mistress of appearance.”<sup>13</sup> The aim of true religion is the disappearance of sorcery. It requires an “attempt positively to separate the true from appearance, maybe even to separate the true from the appearance *essentially* mixed with the true.”<sup>14</sup> This idea is illustrated by two stories from the Talmud, which speak of deception provoked by the use of magic.<sup>15</sup> Both stories teach us that we need to be prudent and to test the information we encounter.

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10 Of course, Christianity also has a certain record of promoting intolerance and persecution of dissidents. See, e.g., Filoramo 2011; Stroumsa 2011.

11 Cf. Demacopoulos/Papanikolaou 2017.

12 For a critical approach to modernity from a theological perspective, see: D’Costa 2009; Cavanaugh 2009.

13 Levinas 1994: 141.

14 Levinas 1994: 141.

15 “Rab was telling Rabbi Hiyya: ‘Once I saw an Arab cutting a camel into pieces with his sword. Then he beat a drum before it and the camel came back to life.’ Rabbi Hiyya responded: ‘Did you find blood and dung (after this performance)? It was only an illusion.’ One day Ze’iri went to Alexandria, in Egypt, and bought himself an ass. When he went to give it something to drink, the spell broke and he found himself sitting on the boards of a gangway. Then the others said to him: ‘If you weren’t Ze’iri, we wouldn’t give you back your money. For here no one

But Levinas goes further. He takes them as an image of the modern world: “Nothing is identical to itself any longer. That is what sorcery is: the modern world; nothing is identical to itself; no one is identical to himself; nothing gets said for no word has its own meaning; all speech is a magical whisper; no one listens to what you say; everyone suspects behind your words a not-said, a conditioning, an ideology.”<sup>16</sup> Finally, sorcery, Levinas argues, “has some new mode of existence, between being and nothingness, in the madness of human minds.”<sup>17</sup> I believe that in contemporary populism, in politics run by comedians, but also in religious fundamentalism, in its sporadic use of terror, we can discover the madness Levinas presciently spoke of.<sup>18</sup>

What does this have to do with the churches feeling uneasy about the modern principle of tolerance? I would like to argue that tolerance is feared as an instrument of the world in which Christianity is marginalized and in which the defense of rights can become a step towards the ideological exclusion of dissidents (in this case those in the Church).

Let me start by pointing out that modernity came as a great challenge to Christendom. Here is how Luis Dumont describes the modern departure from the conception of religion as the place of the highest provider of value and identity: “medieval religion was a great cloak – I am thinking of the Mantle of Our Lady of Mercy. Once it became an individual affair, it lost its all-embracing capacity and became one among other apparently equal considerations, of which the political was the first born. Each individual may [...] recognise religion [...] as the same all-embracing consideration as it used to be *socially*. Yet on the level of social consensus or ideology, the same person will switch to a different configuration of values in which autonomous values (religious, political, etc.) are seemingly juxtaposed, much as individuals are juxtaposed in society.”<sup>19</sup> Vincent Descombes, commenting on Dumont, rightly points out that this modern change “implies the *principle of secularism*,”<sup>20</sup> in the sense, that religion must become a matter of individual, private choice, and separated from the state – the new *res publica*. Now, it would not be difficult to see why the latter would want

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buys anything without first testing his purchase by water.” (*Sanhedrin* 67a-68a, cited in Levinas 1994: 138).

16 Levinas 1994: 152.

17 Levinas 1994: 147.

18 Todd Phillips’ movie *Joker* might serve as a parable on both populism and fundamentalism.

19 Dumont 1971: 32.

20 Descombes 2016: 166–67 (emphasis in the original text).

religions to be tolerant. The unity of the nation-state – which serves to cement the new *res publica*, Dumont's "Mantle of Our Lady", which unites all of its citizens, – would be endangered if *private* differences between its members acquired excessive social force. This has already been pointed out by Rousseau, who, in the concluding chapter of *The Social Contract*, entitled "Civil Religion", argued that religious intolerance poses a threat to the state and should not be tolerated: "It is impossible to live at peace with people who we believe to be damned; to love them would be to hate God who punishes them. [...] Wherever theological intolerance is allowed, it cannot but have some effect in civil life [...]. We should tolerate all those which tolerate others, as long as their dogmas have nothing contrary to the duties of a citizen. But whosoever dares to say, 'Outside the Church no salvation', ought to be driven from the State."<sup>21</sup> The logical conclusion of this is that religion should be *depoliticised* in a Schmittian sense of the word.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it gives the state the authority to be the arbiter of which ideas are to be considered "tolerant", which are "intolerant" and which should be "driven from the State."

Should the above account of the genealogy of modern tolerance prove correct, it is no wonder that churches may be skeptical toward the principle of tolerance. They may consider modernity – and tolerance as part of modernity's package – as inimical towards religion. Tolerance can be seen as a way of keeping religion out of social life and as an attempt to marginalize religion, if not to make it disappear. Such a perception seems to be especially apt in contexts, which have experienced religious persecution. For example, in Soviet Ukraine and other socialist countries,

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21 Rousseau 2002: 253. Cf. De Roover 2016: 240–241. Apart from the link between the privatisation of religion and the rise of the modern state, it has been argued that secularism and interiorisation of religion constitute the 'secularisation' of Protestant religiosity. See: Seligman 1993: 28.

22 Depoliticisation is defined by Carl Schmitt the as incapacity to make a friend/enemy distinction, which leads to the ceasing of existing politically (Schmitt 2007: 49). Hugh Nicholson, drawing on Schmitt, argues that a "modern theological project" (i.e. pluralism and tolerance), which consists of "freeing religious conviction from the manifestations of social antagonism" should be understood as "a ramification of the larger cultural processes of neutralization and depoliticization" leading to "the displacement of religion as the controlling domain of culture" (Nicholson 2011: 50). See also: Saba Mahmood, who claims that the declining Ottoman Empire followed a European example by "the implementation of these concepts [religious liberty and minority rights] aim[ing] less at instituting interconfessional tolerance than at establishing the principle of state sovereignty and reorienting the parochial loyalties of its subjects to the emergent nation-state" (Mahmood 2016: 25).

faith had been driven not only out of the public sphere but, in many cases, out of the sphere of legality – into the underground and into Gulags. Now, this past experience colors the churches' current reactions to any attempt to limit their public presence, authority, and attempts to dictate the Church's discourse. This has an effect on how the principle of tolerance is perceived – namely, as an ambiguous and suspicious practice. Paradoxically, communities that had been victims of intolerance face the temptation to reject tolerance or, even worse, becoming intolerant themselves.<sup>23</sup>

Another argument, raised against tolerance, is its foundation in individualism and its prioritization of the individual over society. Greek Orthodox theologian Christos Yannaras argues that the promotion of the difference of opinions inevitably “undermine[s] the functional cohesion, the creative dynamism, or the cultural productivity of a specific social group”, and transforms a *koinonia* (community, united by a mutual worldview) into a *societas* (unity whose purpose is the attainment of utilitarian goals).<sup>24</sup> Adam Seligman, a Jewish thinker, adds that the principle of liberal tolerance is “contradictory, for it involves a refusal to advance a politics of the good while at the same time resting on at least one very clearly defined principle of the good, that of individual autonomy.”<sup>25</sup> In brief, in a world in which churches feel threatened by modernity, tolerance is suspected of promoting its own ideology, rather than making space for those it claims to protect.

Furthermore, the suspicion, that there is an ideological drive behind tolerance, is felt far beyond the realm of religion. Ashish Nandy, reflecting on the South Asian situation, claims that through the concept of secular

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23 The history of the church's intolerance repeats itself. Consider the following observation by Karl Marx: “Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce” (Marx 1972: 10). This image is well suited to describe the ecclesial history of intolerance. The first, ‘tragic’ instance is that of the fourth century AD, when, in the course of one generation, Christians went from being the persecuted to the persecutors (Cf. Filoramo 2011). The second, ‘farcical’ moment is the present situation in Eastern European countries: In the context of unprecedented religious freedom, ironically, churches often practice intolerance, while lamenting that they are the ones being persecuted by the powers of modernity and secularism.

24 See: Yannaras 2011: 63–66.

25 Seligman 2000: 136. See also Slavoj Žižek, who claims that “it is only modern Western capitalist culture for which autonomy and individual freedom have a higher status than collective solidarity, connection, responsibility for dependent others, and the duty to respect the customs of one's community” (Žižek 2008: 662).

tolerance, the modern state and elites silence and even justify violence against non-compliant members of society as well as poor and rural populations.<sup>26</sup> Wendy Brown criticizes liberal tolerance for being an instrument through which the modern state imposes itself as a universal culture, superior and more powerful than any other culture, thus depoliticizing local cultures and differences.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Slavoj Žižek argues that through liberal tolerance, “differences, conditioned by political inequality, economic exploitation, and so on, are naturalized and neutralized into cultural differences, different ways of life, which are something given, something that cannot be overcome but must be merely tolerated.”<sup>28</sup> In brief, tolerance is suspected of being an instrument which attempts, quite contradictorily, to both protect differences *and* more importantly, to ‘swallow’ them and make them irrelevant. “Homogenize to hegemonize”, as Amartya Sen puts it.<sup>29</sup>

I hope this may provide some of the background to understand the reasons for suspicion of tolerance. At this point I would like to propose two examples of how these dynamics condition the attitude of the Christian churches in Ukraine towards tolerance. My first case is related to the suspicion of LGBT+ rights. Although Catholic social teaching is officially in favour of respect and against “unjust discrimination”<sup>30</sup>, there has been almost no positive sign of acceptance of homosexual people from the leaders of Ukrainian Catholics or other Christian denominations.<sup>31</sup> One reason could be the fear that a gesture of support of a legal ban on

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26 Nandy 1998: 177–194; Nandy 1997: 157–176. Nandy also argues that since this tolerance has done more harm than good, religions should be looking for resources of respect and acceptance of the other, within their own traditions.

27 Wendy Brown also claims that “deployment of tolerance by the state is in part a response to a legitimacy deficit and, in particular, to its historically diminished capacity to embody universal representation. Tolerance discourse masks the role of the state in reproducing the dominance of certain groups and norms, and it does so at a historical moment when popular sensitivity to this role and this dominance is high” (Brown 2006: 83–84).

28 Žižek 2008: 660. See also Seligman, who argues that within the framework of liberal tolerance, “all conflicting views are reduced to matters of taste or aesthetics” (Seligman 2000: 135).

29 Sen 2005: 313.

30 CCC § 2358; cf. AL § 250–251 (pp. 190–191).

31 This is true of Catholicism more generally. As Patricia Jung argues, “the [Roman Catholic] Church has not focused much of its considerable political energy on reducing the scope of these abuses [against homosexual persons] or exploring the reasons for the persistence of hate crimes related to sexual identity within society” (Jung 2007: 195).



instances of “unjust discrimination” and its enforcement, might imply that homosexual activity is morally acceptable.<sup>32</sup>

A second example regards ecclesial life in the context of the conflict with Russia. Some churches are reluctant to raise their voices in defense of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) because of the suspicion – often well informed – that the latter uses religious narratives in order to promote political ideologies and serves as a soft power tool for the Kremlin’s influence in Ukraine.<sup>33</sup> Even calls for peace and reconciliation within the context of the ongoing military conflict are not immune from ideological interpretations. The problem here is when a narrative is *both* religious and political. In fact, post-secularity is an age, in which the strict modern distinction between the political and the religious does not function any longer (provided it ever did), and the two spheres tend to be in a perichoretic relationship.<sup>34</sup>

What is clear from both mentioned cases of intolerance, is that there is a fear within the churches that tolerance diminishes the value of truth – giving truth the same value as opinions that are considered erroneous.<sup>35</sup> This leads us to the question of relativism, indifference to truth, and fake news. The mixture of truth and appearance, mentioned by Levinas, is, I would like to argue, the very essence of what we call today post-truth. In fact, post-truth or fake news are not exactly non-truth, they are the illusion of truth. A recent document on post-truth, *Longing for the Truth That Makes Us Free*, produced by a group of Ukrainian scholars under the leadership of Myroslav Marynovych, points out the extent to which post-truth, in the modern world, is linked to illusion: The problem is that, today, fake news appears “plausible, but [is] no less untrue.”<sup>36</sup> Zygmunt Baumann and Leonidas Donskis, in a brilliant dialogue on the fluidity of the modern concept of good and evil, argue that, what is new today, is that “the present-day liquidized evil is hidden from sight and avoids being spotted, as well as [it puts an obstacle to the] recognition of what it is and

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32 Jung 2007: 196.

33 See: Hovorun 2014: 163–172; Mulford 2016: 89–107. Cf. Smytsnyuk 2021: 69–89.

34 See two case studies: Kalaitzidis 2002: 357–379; Zubrzycki 2006.

35 A critique of this aspect of tolerance can be found in Christos Yannaras (Yannaras 2011: 63–66).

36 Religious Information Service of Ukraine (2020), *Longing for the Truth That Makes Us Free*, [https://risu.ua/en/longing-for-the-truth-that-makes-us-free\\_n103953](https://risu.ua/en/longing-for-the-truth-that-makes-us-free_n103953) (last access: 05–10–2021).

what it pretends.”<sup>37</sup> In brief, post-truth, as Levinas’ sorcery, creates *illusion*: illusion of reality, illusion of fact.

However, the fact remains that both cited cases of the lack of proactive tolerance – towards LGBT+ and the Moscow Patriarchate – manifest the ambiguity suggested by Levinas. Here, both the actors’ words, and their interpretations are subjects to accusations of being “a not-said, a conditioning, an ideology.”<sup>38</sup>

Although we happen to live in a world influenced by skepticism, I would not consider indifference and relativism as necessary implications of tolerance. There are certainly ways in which tolerance may appear to be synonymous with relativism. However, if one understands tolerance as in part the acceptance of another’s right to believe or act in a certain way, with which one disagrees, – this very disagreement, the ‘burden’ of such acceptance, will prevent us from falling into indifference or relativism.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, acknowledging the ambiguous character of modernity and tolerance, the church, rather than rejecting them a-critically altogether, must approach them with discernment.

I would suggest that this conclusion is relevant to various modern Christian attitudes to tolerance. Sometimes the churches are so focused on the past, that they are unable to see modernity’s progress in a positive light. But in our world of illusion, not only the fake-news maker is the sorcerer but also the fundamentalist. In the post-secular age, like in Stephen King’s *Pet Sematary*, the once dead can come back to life again – but as monsters, as demonic shadows of what they had been before they died. This tells us something about truth and identity – if they are just copy-pasted from the past into the present – they will be nothing but a necromantic ideology.

### *Can tolerance be grounded theologically?*

In the second part of my chapter, I would like to push my argument further, and address the question of whether tolerance can be grounded theologically. In the following I will give two reasons to embrace tolerance: the limits of theological understanding and the benefit of proactively learning from the ‘other’.

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37 Bauman/Donskis 2016: viii.

38 Levinas 1994: 152.

39 Cf. Panikkar 1979; Seligman 2000: ch. 5.

Let me turn to Levinas. One of the types of sorcery Levinas refers to is necromancy: Saul, on the eve of an important battle, orders a necromancer woman to bring up dead Samuel to question him about the outcome of the battle (1 Sam. 28). Levinas uses the story to point out the trouble in going beyond our limits: "Sorcery is the fact of looking beyond what is possible to see. It is to go beyond the limits within which one must stay, when truth approaches, [it implies] not to stop in time. [...] Sorcery is the curiosity which manifests itself, when the eyes should be cast down: indiscretion regarding the Divine; insensitivity to Mystery; clarity projected unto something the approach to which requires some modesty [...] and, finally, [claims about] certain forms of the sexual life itself."<sup>40</sup> Levinas continues: "it is the excess of knowledge itself, that which is beyond what can be borne in truth, the illusion which derives from the unbearable truth and which tempts from the very depths of the truth; [...] the perversion of all those able to rise to the true, of all those who assemble at the foot of Mount Sinai."<sup>41</sup>

Now, back to our question of tolerance. I wonder whether in some cases, when our societies, institutions and churches absolutize certain principles, they do not go beyond what they really see and know. Should not the fact that the church has been gifted with Revelation, be also balanced against the fact that she is its keeper, not its owner, and that Revelation is not there to provide all the answers? Are we really sure that human sexuality is such an open book, that we can make infallible judgments with such ease? Should we not be more modest?

Adam Seligman invites us to exercise "certain skepticism or tentativeness, a modesty perhaps toward our own epistemological claims."<sup>42</sup> He claims that even "a single religion, with its built-in tension between reason and revelation, between knowledge and faith does also tend to undermine that taken-for-grantedness of the beliefs and values of modernity", as it does with its own beliefs.<sup>43</sup> Raimon Panikkar, a Catholic theologian, engaged in dialogue with Asian traditions, also insists on tolerance as a way

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40 Levinas 1994: 145. This quotation seems to be proleptically grasping one of the problems of the modern Christian stance towards modernity and tolerance. Paradoxically, in many contexts the very definition of what constitutes a good Catholic (or a Catholic *tout court*) is an attitude towards human reproduction and sexuality. This was clearly visible in connection to the 2020 electoral debates in the USA.

41 Levinas 1994: 145.

42 Seligman 2000: 134.

43 Seligman 2000: 138–141. The quotation is from p. 138.

of recognizing the limits of our understanding.<sup>44</sup> Tolerance, understood in this way, saves us from the temptation of becoming totalitarian, i.e. attempting to enclose human experience in its totality. Panikkar proposes a parable of the weeds – left to grow freely until the harvest (*Mt.* 13) – as an evangelical foundation of tolerance, adding that a Christian not only should be tolerant towards what exists outside of herself, but also towards one's own imperfections. I would suggest that the parable of the weeds is also interesting because it brings us back to the ambiguity of our age. The weed (or dandelion) is not just a harmful plant. The peculiarity of the weed is that until the moment of harvest, it is indistinguishable from wheat, and by pulling it out, the wheat can be damaged. It is not going beyond the parable's message to suggest that, what was truly religious and what was a deceitful travesty, will become known only on the last eschatological day.<sup>45</sup>

The last point, in relation to this, is the one touched upon by Seligman, when he argued that religious epistemology has the potential to challenge the taken-for-grantedness of modernity. I would like to suggest that understanding our limits can be something that religion can teach the secular world. Monism and oversimplification are a common problem for both political and religious praxis.<sup>46</sup> Contemporary populism as well as fundamentalism have been criticized for providing simplistic answers to human powerlessness and anxiety.<sup>47</sup> The American philosopher Martha Nussbaum in her recent book, *The Monarchy of Fear*, invites us to lead an "examined life", lived in "humility about how little we really understand", combined "with a willingness to listen to others as equal participants and to respond to what they offer."<sup>48</sup>

I would like to suggest that this reflection on the limits of our understanding can be 'secularised' in a way that fits into principles of the political and social life. Jürgen Habermas rightly points out that "the eschatological impulse of a [Judeo-Christian] political theology [...] can serve [...] as a reminder of the temporal dimension in which we raise normative

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44 Panikkar 1979.

45 On *eschaton* as the revelation of the fullness of truth, see: Zizioulas 2011: 39–83.

46 As Domenico Bilotti rightly points out, "fundamentalism, understood as systematic and premeditated exclusion of all differences with respect to one's point of view, exists within religions, economic and financial circuits, the agencies of political participation" (Bilotti 2014: 74, translation P.S.).

47 On populist simplification, see: Rosanvallon 2011. On fundamentalism, see: Greenfeld 2006. Ram-Prasad 1993: 285–309.

48 Nussbaum 2018: 10. Nussbaum draws heavily on Socrates here.

claims.<sup>49</sup> Habermas, drawing on Johann Baptist Metz, emphasizes that both eschatology and a vision of the history of salvation, which develops dynamically “can sharpen our awareness of the fact that the democratic process is also a learning process, one often blocked by a deficient sense of what is lacking and what is still possible. Any democratic constitution is and remains *a project*.”<sup>50</sup> This epistemological anti-absolutism of religion could become the contribution of theology to political life. To conclude, in the process of determining what our approach to tolerance should be, before uttering anathemas and condemnations, we should remind ourselves of our limits, and exercise epistemological modesty.

The last point I would like to make is that we should not stop at acknowledging the limits of our understanding, but rather be proactively tolerant – going towards the ‘others’ and learning from those, with whom we disagree. Here, I would suggest, an engagement with Buber can help us.

At the beginning of the chapter, I referred to the story about Rabbi Eizik, who went to Prague only to discover that he had a treasure at his home in Cracow. The interpretation which Buber gives to this Hasidic story is that the truth about oneself, one’s identity, one’s “authentic existence”, and mission can be found only at one’s home: “There is something that can only be found in one place. It is a great treasure, which may be called the fulfillment of existence. The place where this treasure can be found is the place on which one stands. [...] We [...] strive to find – somewhere – what we are seeking. Somewhere, in some province of the world or of the mind, except where we stand, where we have been set – but it is there and nowhere else that the treasure can be found.”<sup>51</sup>

Now, this ‘home’, to which Buber is referring, is not necessarily one’s religious or cultural tradition. Buber’s emphasis is on the idea that one’s existential mission should be directed towards everyday’s life within one’s family and community. At the same time, the message is very clear: One should be focused on the environment, where one lives, and on the situation, in which one is immersed, rather than looking ‘outside’. Buber’s interpretation of the story is thought-provoking. I would like to argue, however, that the story contains an important intuition, which Buber did not notice or did not consider worth developing. This point consists in going ‘away’, going to meet the ‘other’, as a condition of finding one’s

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49 Habermas 2011: 28.

50 Habermas 2011: 28 (emphasis in the original text).

51 Buber 1951: 41–42.

authentic self. Buber is right in emphasizing that the treasure lies in Eizik's house. However, in order to discover this, Eizik needs to go to Prague. Without this trip he would never know, where he should look for his treasure. Moreover, the existence of the treasure is not revealed to Eizik alone, but also to the captain of the guards – and the captain's treasure does not lie in Prague – but in Cracow. The latter's mistake is to think that going away is purposeless.

I would therefore suggest that the key message of Rabbi Eizik's story is not only about one's 'identity' or the 'truth', that can be discovered at one's home and in everyday's life, but that in order to attain one's truth and identity, one needs to travel abroad, see other traditions and talk to other people. Without this journey one will never appreciate 'home'.<sup>52</sup>

The lesson here is that the 'other', the 'foreigner', helps us to understand who we are. She is the *conditio sine qua non* of understanding ourselves. Moreover, our relation to the 'other' (religious, ethnic, gender, ideological) makes us who we are. Tolerance should not constitute an attitude of 'ignoring' but rather of looking at oneself through the 'other'. Within the field of religion, this proactive tolerance can express itself in ecumenical or inter-religious dialogue or comparative theology.<sup>53</sup> A Christian can learn from the ways a 'foreign' religious tradition exercises understanding and reflection – without having to make a judgment on the validity of the 'foreign' tradition. In this sense, one can step out of one's own tradition into a new one, "learning from – rather than merely about" this tradition. Then one comes back with fresh insights, a better understanding of one's own tradition, and sometimes ideas, which challenge this tradition.<sup>54</sup> The other tradition becomes a mirror, in which one can see oneself and perhaps notice some ugly features. But the idea of 'going abroad' should not be limited to a religious field. It can be extended to the ethnic, gender or ideological 'abroad' – and in every case it can help us to understand ourselves better. Russia can become a mirror for Ukraine, in which it can

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52 I suggest that such a reading is all the more appropriate, as far as it represents Buber's own life journey – from his Hasidic childhood in Lviv to despising Hasidism, interest in secular Judaism, secular art and culture, oriental religions – and, only subsequently, a return 'home', to his grandfathers' Hasidism. This 'U-turn' has been well documented in Buber's recent biography by Paul Mendes-Flohr, and might provide an interpretation key to the Rabbi Eizik's story, even if it was not explicitly envisaged by Buber himself (Mendes-Flohr 2019: ch. 4).

53 For a general introduction to the method of comparative theology, see: Clooney 2010.

54 Drew 2012: 1042.

see both its virtues, and vices. LGBT+ can become a mirror for both the good and evil of the 'traditional family'.

To conclude, the modern world is a *locus* of ambiguity and deception, and Ukraine is no exception to this predicament. Through the concept of tolerance – the liberal nation-state may be able to impose itself as the highest value. In this context, tolerance becomes a battlefield between religion and secularism, between the common good and individualism, between truth and relativism. It is thus comprehensible, why the churches in Ukraine and beyond resist or reject tolerance. I argue, however, that such a choice is too simplistic. Theology should discern the ways in which tolerance could be accepted, and the modality in which it can be articulated based on theological values, such as an awareness of the limitation of our understanding, and the necessity of proactively approaching the 'other'.<sup>55</sup>

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# **Tolerance, Law, Media and Education**



# Tolerance – From a Canon Law Perspective

*Helmuth Pree*

## 1. *Introductory Remarks*

It is common knowledge, that the term “tolerance” developed mainly on the basis of the confrontations of different religious beliefs.<sup>1</sup> The meaning of “tolerance” and the cases of application were subject to change through the ages of the Catholic Church. Besides that, tolerance can be seen from different points of view and assumes different nuances depending on the context, subject or discipline in which it is used, e.g. as a moral attitude, a pedagogical principle, a political guide-line or a philosophical idea. The concept of tolerance must be seen and interpreted in relation to individuals as well as to communities – as an attitude and/or a behavior of and towards individuals and groups or communities.

Even if we focus on the question of the juridical relevance of this concept, we have to take into account that the notion “tolerance” notably differs depending on whether we speak of it as an element of Canon Law – which is essentially based on and bound by its religious fundamentals – or as an element within the legal order of a democratic constitutional State that respects the fundamental rights of the human person and therefore has to be religiously neutral.

Prior to exploring the status and importance of tolerance in Canon Law and its possible consequences, it seems to be unavoidable to represent the key feature of tolerance. This endeavor to present a definition of “tolerance”, at least concisely, will be carried out from a juridical point of view: Is “tolerance” by its very nature a legal norm/rule or at least a principle of law? (2) The next chapter (3) is dedicated to the roots of the idea of “tolerance”, especially in view of Canon Law. The subsequent pages deal with “tolerantia” as a legal term in present Canon Law (4). The final remarks present a resume, but also try to point out, what tolerance in Canon Law stands for, and to demonstrate the possible consequences both within the Church and by applying the attitude of tolerance as a maxim *ad*

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1 Cfr. Schreiner 1990: 445–605; Höffe 2008: 315–317; Brieskorn 2010: 509; Hilpert 2001: 95–101.

*extra*, i.e. as an unavoidable basis for interconfessional, interreligious and intercultural dialogue (5).

The given limits of this article do not allow a closer and deeper analysis and exploration of the arguments put forward. Therefore these reflections only draw up a concise compilation of the questions involved and would rather stimulate a further discussion.

## 2. Tolerance – its basic elements from a juridical point of view

“Tolerance” is a relational notion: it moves within the relationship between individuals, individuals and communities, and between communities, whenever man-made differences (in particular: diversity in religious and/or political belief, personal attitudes and behavior)<sup>2</sup> seem to be non acceptable to the respectively other side of the relation, and tries to regulate and arrange this relationship by means of a mutual acceptance. This acceptance exists in two degrees, depending on whether one reacts only in a passive way and renounces any countermeasures (passive tolerance; in Canon Law: *dissimulatio*), or he recognizes the adversary together with his different attitudes as something positive (positive tolerance).

Thus, tolerance refers to the different beliefs or behaviors as well as to the respective persons or communities that share this belief. In reality, the other person/community and her belief present themselves as an inseparable unity, but we have to treat the two elements apart from each other. The immediate object of tolerance is the belief or conviction which, in itself, is not acceptable for and not shared by the tolerant person. To define tolerance as the relationship between two beliefs (incompatible with each other)<sup>3</sup> would end up in denying tolerance altogether. The relation between two different beliefs or doctrines is not a personal relationship, but the objective question of the material compatibility or incompatibility, independent from subjective beliefs. Tolerance as a principle and attitude qualifies an interpersonal relationship in view of dissenting opinions or beliefs, and is therefore related to the concept of law.

Law, by its very nature, regulates the interpersonal relations of persons on the basis of the “*sum cuique*”, i.e. everyone must be given what is

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2 In contrast to natural or physical evils, like physical pain and suffering, natural disasters etc. In these circumstances, the virtue required is not tolerance, but *patience*.

3 This comes true in particular, whenever the idea of tolerance is put in relation with an *absolute truth*. Any kind of tolerance against an absolute truth as such is hardly conceivable or even impossible. Cfr. Krämer 1984: 113.

owed to him by justice (*debitum ex iustitia*). The compulsory character “ex iustitia” is due to a special title, e.g. contract, unlawful damaging, respect of the person’s dignity and human rights etc. The law with its rights and duties is the object of justice, is the “*ipsa res iusta*” according to Thomas Aquinas.<sup>4</sup>

Tolerance as an interpersonal relation meets the sphere of law inasmuch as it safeguards the fulfillment of duties towards other people, so that they receive what is owed to them by reasons of law in several important sectors of human life. Tolerance is always connected with the rights of the other people; the respect of their freedom (of thought, of belief etc.) is owed to them. Tolerance necessarily moves within this frame: the rights/freedoms of one are limited by the same rights/freedoms of other people (and other communities). Nevertheless, tolerance is not a legal rule, but a moral-juridical principle of law that refers to a large number of different issues or objects owed to the other people (*debita ex iustitia*, in many different situations). But the Constitution of a State and other laws that protect the human dignity and the right to the free development of one’s personality can be seen as manifestations or consequences of the idea of tolerance; in other words: tolerance can give rise to the creation of concrete enforceable rights and duties. Besides that, tolerance can serve as a principle for interpreting the exercise of one’s rights and its limits, as well as a principle for weighing up between the positive and the negative aspect of the religious freedom, and for harmonizing the range of fundamental rights in case they are in conflict against each other (e.g. between religious freedom and freedom of art).<sup>5</sup> This conflict needs to be solved in a way that safeguards a maximum of tolerance in favor of both parties involved.

It is in the nature of tolerance that this principle cannot be applied to people who fight against tolerance, especially by brute force or violence. Otherwise tolerance would result in destroying itself.

Tolerance must not be confused with any kind of indifferentism or relativism. These attitudes are not at all required as prerequisites of tolerance, nor are they manifestations of tolerance. On the contrary, tolerance as the deliberate recognition of other persons as different (from some points of view) requires the own identity (i.e. a solid and well based conviction in the fields of belief, attitudes, convictions and behavior) of the one who

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4 STh II-II, q. 57. This is a “realistic” theory of law that avoids a positivistic as well as a pure naturalistic theory. Thus, law is not an external, artificial addition to human relations, rather it’s them *immanent*. For a more detailed explanation of the “juridical realism” see: Schouppe 1987; Errázuriz 2000; Hervada 2013.

5 Cfr. Püttner 1977; Krämer 1984; Steiner 1987.

practices tolerance; otherwise tolerance would not be possible due to the lack of a real contra position.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. *The roots of the idea of tolerance*

#### a) *In the history of Canon Law*

We leave aside the question of tolerance of the Church “ad extra”, and restrict our short remarks on tolerance as a relationship between the Authority of the Church and the faithful, in view of the compliance with the discipline of the Church and Canon Law. Instead of analyzing the sources of Eastern (“oikonomia”) and Latin Canon Law – especially in its classic period from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century – in all details and systematically<sup>7</sup>, we will restrict ourselves to the most distinguishing features and some important examples.

#### aa) *Catholic tradition*

In classic Latin Canon Law in the Middle Ages and therefore in the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, the most important source of Canon Law until the Codex Iuris Canonici 1917, “tolerantia” is present in several different contexts and questions, as a principle within the legal order of the Church.<sup>8</sup> In the “Decretum Gratiani” (ca. 1140)<sup>9</sup> the *quaestio* 4 of *Causa* XXIII is dedicated to the problem of tolerance in the hands of the Church’s authorities. Gra-

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6 “Toleranz bedeutet nun: die andersartige Überzeugung ertragen, selbst wenn man sie nicht teilt. Toleranz ist noch keine Stellungnahme zur Wahrheit, sondern bleibt eine Forderung der Mitmenschlichkeit. Sie setzt eine eigene Überzeugung voraus und räumt dem Mitmenschen das ihm von Natur aus zukommende Persönlichkeitsrecht ein, sein Leben entsprechend seiner Überzeugung zu gestalten. Insofern steht Toleranz auch nicht im Widerspruch zum Absolutheitsanspruch des christlichen Glaubens”: Gründel 1986: 98.

7 Cfr. Olivero 1953; Condorelli 1960.

8 In this context, we do not deal with the development of the principle of tolerance as a matter of theological thinking generally during the history of the Church. See for this: Schreiner 1990; Angenendt 2018.

9 The original title is *Concordia discordantium canonum*. This collection of sources of the first millennium is regarded as the starting point of the science of Canon Law (Canonistic). It is the first of five parts of the *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (published in 1580). Cfr. Gaudemet 1994: 389–401; Fantappiè 2011: 101–110.



tian distinguishes between two groups of addressees: the faithful (tolerance within the Church) and persons “qui non sunt nostri iuris” (tolerance of the Church ad extra).<sup>10</sup> The numerous sources presented by Gratian in *quaestio* 4 deal exclusively with tolerance within the Church, especially towards heretics. Gratian’s doctrine on this argument is not coherent: he presents many sources in favor of tolerance<sup>11</sup>, but many others against it<sup>12</sup>. These last ones contributed, together with the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas<sup>13</sup> (persistent heretics are not to be tolerated, but must be eliminated), decisively to the intolerance of the Church in the late Middle Ages and the modern age towards heretics.

But the question of tolerance did not touch upon heretics alone, but upon other kinds of infringements of the Church’s discipline, too. Tolerance in law is distinguished by the following characteristics: the Authority intentionally allows the infringement of a law (but not of divine law) without granting a permission or dispense, in order to avoid a worse evil or the loss of a good.<sup>14</sup> The law remains in force; the tolerated act is not approved, and remains illicit, but proves to be the lesser evil compared

10 Decr. Grat., Dictum Gratiani post C XXIII, 4, 16.

11 Decr. Grat., C XXIII 4, 1–35. E.g: *Tolerandi sunt quidem mali pro pace, nec corporaliter ab eis recedatur...* (c. 1); *Quantus arrogantiae tumor est, quanta humilitatis et lenitatis oblivio, arrogantiae quanta iactatio, ut quis aut audeat, aut facere se posse credat, quod nec Apostolis concessit Dominus, ut zizania a frumento putet se posse discernere?* (c. 14). This argument, referring to Mt 13, 29–30, has been of particular importance (hold up e.g. by Augustinus) whenever the idea of tolerance has been defended by the Church. *Ecce quod crimina sunt punienda, quando salva pace ecclesiae fieri possunt; in quo tamen discretio adhibenda est. Aliquando enim delinquentium multitudo diu per patientiam ad poenitentiam est expectanda: aliquando in paucis est punienda, ut eorum exemplo ceteri terreantur et ad poenitentiam provocentur* (dictum post c. 25).

12 Decr. Grat., C XXIII 4, 36–54 and C XXIII 5.

13 Also Thomas distinguishes between non-christians and faithful: *Infideles qui nunquam fidem susceperunt, ut Judaei et gentiles, nullo modo sunt ad fidem compellendi; at infideles, haeretici et apostatae sunt cogendi, ut id adimpleant quod promiserunt*: STh II-II q. 10 a. 8 (*conclusio*). STh II-II q. 11 a. 3 (“Utrum haeretici sint tolerandi”): *qui vero post secundam correptionem in suo errore obstinati permanent, non modo excommunicationis sententia, sed etiam saecularibus principibus exterminandi, tradendi sunt*. Angenendt 2018 comments Thomas’ position as follows: “Faktisch bedeutet das einen offenen Bruch mit der ganzen zuvorigen Tradition, der zufolge in Glaubensdingen physische Gewalt wie erst recht die Tötung der Häretiker verboten waren” (102).

14 STh II-II q. 10 a. 11: “(Sic ergo et) in regimine humano illi qui praesunt, recte aliqua mala tolerant, ne aliqua bona impediuntur, vel etiam ne aliqua mala peiora incurrantur”.

with what would happen if the tolerance would not be granted (therefore it is called “*permissio comparativa*”). Thus, tolerance is the middle course between “*rigorem et dispensationem*”.<sup>15</sup> This understanding of tolerance remains until the XX<sup>th</sup> century and is practised by the Holy See, too.<sup>16</sup>

*bb) Orthodox tradition*

On the basis of the New Testament<sup>17</sup> and the teaching of the Church Fathers<sup>18</sup>, the Orthodox Churches distinguish two ways in the application of the law: its literal application (“*akribeia*”), i.e. the strict obedience to the written norm, and the principle of “*oikonomia*”, which is the exceptional non-application of a legal norm in a given case, due to the particular circumstances, for mercy in imitation of God’s mercy, on the basis of and as an expression of freedom and love, for the sake of the salvation. There is no definition and no regulation of “*oikonomia*” (this would be against its nature), but it is left to the discretion and responsibility of the bishop and of the Father confessor to decide in every single case on the application and on the effects of “*oikonomia*”.<sup>19</sup> “*Oikonomia* is the essence of the Orthodox Church. There are certain instances in the life of the Church and her faithful, in which *akribeia* becomes a supreme injustice and, more generally speaking, the worth and significance of the pastoral

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15 Nilles 1893: 247–256.

16 Nilles 1893 presents numerous examples for the whole period from classic Canon Law up to the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century. Cfr. also Di Pauli 1912: 250–269; 397–414.

17 E. g. Mk 2, 27: “The Sabbath was made for the good of man; man was not made for the Sabbath.” 2 Kor 3,6: “The capacity we have comes from God: for it is he who made us capable of serving the new covenant, which consists not of a written law, but of the Spirit. The written law brings death, but the Spirit gives life.”

18 Rodopoulos 1986; L’Huillier 1983; Archondonis 1983; besides that, the whole volume KANON XXIV (2016) with its 26 contributions is dedicated to “*Oikonomia, Dispensatio and aequitas canonica*”; Anapliotis 2019.

19 Therefore *oikonomia* is notably different from the *dispensation* according to the latin Canon Law, which is legally defined and regulated, also as far as the application and the effects are concerned (cfr. cc. 85–93 CIC; cc. 1536–1539 CCEO). It is in the nature of things, that “*oikonomia*” cannot be applied towards the truths of faith and divine law. It is, for example, made use of in questions concerning the recognition (or not) of mysteries (sacraments) celebrated (incorrectly or even invalidly) within or outside the Orthodox Churches, or when to decide on the reception of heretics, schismatics and *lapsi* into the Orthodox Church. Cfr. Archondonis 1983.

and soteriological principle of *Oikonomia* are so great in the fulfilment of the entire saving work of the Church, that this is placed above the very *akribeia*; the latter, as a notion also, is submitted to *Oikonomia* and does not prevail over it.”<sup>20</sup>

*Oikonomia* also finds application in the theological and ecumenical dialogue<sup>21</sup> and is therefore a basic principle for the relationship between Church authority and the faithful as well as in view of the relations of the Orthodox Church and the orthodox faithful *ad extra*.

In comparison with the idea of tolerance, the principle of *oikonomia* is a specific ecclesiastical, soteriological instrument and a means to a pastoral, salvific end. Nevertheless, within the area of application of *oikonomia*, the recognition of the other person as a value in itself that has to be accepted, and thus the idea of tolerance is implied. This comes true in particular, whenever Orthodox Churches, based on *oikonomia*, enter into an ecumenical dialogue; for dialogue necessary requires the recognition of the other side in its diversity.

#### *b) Biblical and other theological roots*

Tolerance as an attitude towards each other is undoubtedly an immediate consequence of the second part of the great commandment to love: “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mk 12, 31; Lk 10, 27). But the most special, outstanding and significant biblical text – in view of the history of effectiveness, too – is the parable of the weeds, that goes: “... ,Do you want us to go and pull up the weeds?’ they asked him. ,No‘, he answered, ,because as you gather the weeds you might pull up some of the wheat along with them“ (Mt 13, 28 f.). This parable must be interpreted and understood together with the command to replace cursing with blessing: “Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you” (Lk 6, 28).<sup>22</sup>

The II<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council has brought about a significant and irreversible change in the way of looking at things in several important questions. In view of tolerance, the following three “changes of course” are of particular importance:

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20 Archondonis 1983: 49f.

21 Archondonis 1983.

22 Cfr. also Mt. 5, 45; 13, 49; Rom 12, 14; 1 Petr. 3, 9. Angenendt 2018: 16f. and 22–25. To the sources of tolerance inside the Church see also: Brinkmann 1980: 13–116.

(1) The opening up of the Church towards the whole world and its needs, instead of an isolated and self defending position against the “bad” world; inclusion instead of exclusion; dialogue instead of isolation.<sup>23</sup> This way of thinking is to be found especially in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* and in the decree *Ad Gentes*.

(2) The principle “unitas in varietate” and “varietas in unitate” is closely connected with the aforementioned element that entails the opening up of the Church towards plurality without giving up her own identity and mission. The Church has to scrutinize the signs of the times and to interpret them in the light of the Gospel (GS 4; 11); has to face all the differences and contexts of human life as ways that help to find out the truth more and more. Thus, the Church has to communicate with everybody and has to take up all the problems and views and to scrutinize them in the light of the faith. Thus, she remains able to communicate the faith with the people of our age, from which she receives a variety of helps (GS 44/3). Therefore, variety is now seen as enrichment, not as a dangerous threat to the unity of the Church. This is valid within the Church (not only within the Catholic Church [OE, LG 13], but in the relationship to the other christian denominations, too: decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*) and *ad extra* as well (in relation to other denominations and religions, philosophies etc.). On the basis of Vat II the philosophies, the sciences, the culture, the society, the religions and the history are to be understood as *loci theologici (alieni)*.<sup>24</sup> The Holy Spirit is at work not only inside, but also outside the visible structure of the Church, where we can find elements of the true and the good (LG 16 f., NA 2). This new course-setting of the Church also entails the need of communication and dialogue.

(3) The personalistic turn: the centrality of the human person is highlighted throughout the teachings of Vat II<sup>25</sup>; chapter 1 of the first part of GS (12–22) is headed: *De humanae personae dignitate* (The dignity of the human person). *Dignitatis humanae* (DH) declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom, and that this right has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person (DH 2). The declaration DH awards the right to religious freedom in all its aspects to the religious

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23 Cfr. Gründel 1986: 85–106.

24 Besides the *loci theologici proprii*, such as the Holy Scripture and the Apostolic Tradition, the Magisterium, theology, liturgy, *sensus fidelium* etc. Cfr. Hünermann 2003: 207–251.

25 “Etenim principium, subiectum et finis omnium institutorum socialium est et esse debet humana persona, quippe quae, suapte natura, vita sociali omnino indigeat” (GS 25).

communities, too (DH 4). This is not less than a paradigm shift in regard of the understanding of tolerance.

Up to the XX<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholic Church bluntly denied any right of the human person to religious freedom and freedom of conscience.<sup>26</sup> The point of reference in the matter of tolerance has always been the absolute truth (which the Church is thought to be in possession of), not the dignity of the human person. But according to Vat II (DH), the point of reference is the human person with its inalienable right to freedom based on the dignity of the person itself.<sup>27</sup> This dignity rightfully claims not to be just “tolerated”, but to get recognized and protected. To tolerate a person would be in contrast to her dignity; her religious or political belief can be tolerated (without giving up the own belief with its claim to be true).<sup>28</sup> The Church in this world does never possess the full and absolute truth, for truth is not a Corpus of unchanging doctrines, but needs to be realized in life and enriched by human experience of all kinds and times (cf. the *loci theologici*). This kind of openness of the concept of truth is not a threat to the integrity of the faith.<sup>29</sup>

On the basis of DH we need to distinguish (not separate) between the other person that has to be unreservedly accepted for her human dignity on the one hand, and the belief of this person (or community) that seems to be non acceptable, on the other hand. The consequences of this distinction for Canon Law will be made clear in the last part of this article.

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26 Isensee 1987: 296–336; Hilpert 1991: 151–153; Mantecón 2012; Pohle 1899: 1867: “Ein gleich verwerfliches Heilmittel gegen die Intoleranz bildet das vom Liberalismus vorgeschlagene Prinzip der schrankenlosen Gewissen- und Cultusfreiheit, d.i. der staatlichen Anerkennung oder Duldung aller Religionen und Culte. Ganz abgesehen davon, dass dieses auf dem Boden des krassesten Indifferentismus erwachsene Prinzip bestimmt gegen die katholische Glaubenslehre verstösst (vgl. Encyklika Pius IX. *Quanta cura* vom 8. Dec. 1864 ...), läuft dasselbe auch den klarsten Grundsätzen des Naturrechts stracks zuwider”.

27 Brinkmann 1980 points out that tolerance is not in contrast to the claim of the absolute truth defended by the Church (118–168) nor to the hierarchical structure of the Church (169–227); both elements require tolerance that prevents the Church from becoming an authoritarian or totalitarian system. Fundamental rights of the faithful would be necessary and would be manifestations of “coagulated tolerance” (228–270). Cfr. Commissio Theologica Internationalis 1985.

28 “Ohne sich selbst und ihren Wahrheitsanspruch zu relativieren, kann und muss jetzt die Kirche vorbehaltlos für die Religionsfreiheit eintreten, weil es dabei um die Würde des Menschen geht. Die Wahrheitsansprüche konkurrierender Religionen müssen toleriert werden”: Heinzmann 2008: 405.

29 “Die Autorität der Wahrheit darf der Autorität dessen, der sie zu verkünden hat, nicht unterworfen werden”: Heinzmann 2008: 407.

c) *Human dignity as the basis of tolerance*

The official recognition of the right of the human person to religious freedom as founded in the very dignity of the human person by Vatican II (DH) is irreversible. It is a firm milestone in the development of the Church's dealing with the idea of tolerance. Human dignity is the most solid fundament of the aforementioned right, since this dignity itself is based on the truth according to which every man is created "ad imaginem Dei" (Gen 1,26), is endowed with a conscience – the most secret core and sanctuary of a man, where he is alone with God (GS 16) – and is raised up to a divine dignity. This dignity is definitely due to the Incarnation of God's Word in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>30</sup>

Besides, the christian faithful receives, by baptism, the dignity and freedom of the sons of God.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the human dignity of the faithful is elevated to the supranatural level and assumes a new quality. This is not a second dignity, besides the "natural" one, just as human being; it is the human dignity raised up and made perfect on a supernatural level. This new quality, together with the nature of the Church and its mission, entails that the features of tolerance inside the Church<sup>32</sup> and its juridical structure are different from the tolerance of the Church *ad extra*, e.g. towards other religious communities and their beliefs.

4. *Tolerance in present Canon Law*

As far as the Canon Law of the Orthodox Churches is concerned, we have to refer to the explanation of the concept of "oikonomia" within the Chapter on the "roots of tolerance in the history of Canon Law" (3.a).<sup>33</sup>

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30 GS 22 declares: "In the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light... Human nature as He assumed it was not annulled, by that very fact it has been raised up to a divine dignity in our respect, too." Cfr. GS 12; Hilpert 1991: 94–98.

31 "Populus ille messianicus ... habet pro conditione dignitatem libertatemque filiorum Dei in quorum cordibus Spiritus Sanctus sicut in templo inhabitat": LG 9/2. Cfr. Leo the Great: "Agnosce, o Christiane, dignitatem tuam": PL 54, 192. Cfr. c. 208 CIC, c. 11 CCEO; Hervada 1994.

32 E.g. in the relationship between authority and dissenters in matters of faith and customs, especially if they hold a pastoral or teaching office in the Church.

33 Cfr. also Anapliotis 2016: 233; Anapliotis 2019.

The CIC/1983 uses the term “tolerare” only once in c. 5 § 1: Customs contrary to the prescriptions of the Code normally are suppressed, unless the Code expressly provides otherwise or unless they are centenary or immemorial customs which can be tolerated, if, in the judgment of the ordinary, they cannot be removed due to the circumstances of places and persons. But the Code does not in any way regulate neither the concept nor the range of application of tolerance. The CCEO does not even mention this legal institution.

But, as we have seen, it is present in Latin Canon Law as part of its legal heritage (*traditio canonica*). In this regard c. 6 § 2 CIC states: Insofar as they repeat former Canon Law, the Canons of this Code must be assessed also in accord with canonical tradition.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the concept of tolerance, used in c. 5 § 1 CIC, is to be understood in present Canon Law in the sense of the respective canonical tradition (above 3. a): the Authority deliberately is indulgent towards infringements of human Canon Law without thereby legitimizing them as lawful. The illegitimacy remains, but the person concerned is granted a certain protected space of action and gets subjectively entitled to remain in the tolerated behavior until further notice. Granting tolerance most probably falls within the competence of the administrative authority in the context of the application of law, on condition of the existence of a correspondingly important reason: to avoid greater evil or to prevent the loss of a greater value/good. Infringements of *ius divinum* can never be tolerated.

In Canon Law, tolerance is one of several instruments of flexibility of law, such as *aequitas canonica*, dispensation, privileges, dissimulation (passive tolerance) and *epikia*.<sup>35</sup>

They all aim to adapt the application of law to the concrete needs of the persons involved in a case, in order to make sure that Canon Law reaches its ultimate and proper goal: the *salus animarum*, which is the supreme law in the Church (c. 1752 CIC).

## 5. Resume and Prospect

From a juridical point of view, tolerance is midway between dissimulation (i.e. intentionally ignore the infringement of a rule, passive tolerance, and

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34 This rule intends to safeguard the necessary continuity of present Canon Law with its own tradition. Cfr. Pree 2012.

35 More in detail: Pree 2000; Pree 2019.

refrain from countermeasures in order to avoid greater evil) and positive approval (recognition) of a fact.

*a) Tolerance in present Canon Law*

Several rules of the Codes in force require tolerance implicitly, as a precondition, although they do not use the term “tolerance” or “tolerare”, e.g. the duty of bishops to treat non catholics with love (c. 383 §§ 3 and 4 CIC; c. 192 § 3 CCEO); or the rules on ecumenism<sup>36</sup>; or the dignity of the human person (which entails the tolerance of dissenting opinions and beliefs) as a matter of the Church’s teaching office<sup>37</sup> or the recognition of customs contrary to existing laws (c. 26 CIC; c. 1507 § 3 CCEO).

Tolerance as a determined legal institution is expressly provided only in c. 5 § 1 CIC (customs contrary to the prescriptions of the Code can be tolerated on particular conditions). In virtue of c. 6 § 2 CIC, tolerance as a legal institution is thus present in the legal order of the Church.

*b) What tolerance in Canon Law stands for – Consequences*

The breakthrough into the official recognition of religious freedom by Vat II has been made possible by anchoring it in the very dignity of the human person (DH 2); instead of refusing it with reference to the authority of the absolute truth. Religious freedom must not be seen in contrast to the truth. Truth and freedom cause each other: truth is the basis of freedom: “the truth will make you free” (John 8, 32); and freedom is indispensable for grasping and realizing the truth, which can be accepted (and kept up) only by a personal, free assent.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Vat II highlights the dignity of

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36 Cfr. cc. 383 § 3, 755 CIC; 902–908 CCEO; Pont. Consilium ad unitatem christianorum fovendam, Directory on Ecumenism (25.03.1993).

37 Cc. 747 § 2, 768 § 2; cc. 595 § 2, 616 § 2 CCEO.

38 *Every man has the duty, and therefore the right, to seek the truth in matters religious in order that he may with prudence form for himself right and true judgments of conscience, under use of all suitable means. Truth, however, is to be sought after in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature... Moreover, as the truth is discovered, it is by a personal assent that man are to adhere to it.* DH 3. Cfr. also DH 9 and 10.



the human person and its freedom without eliminating or reducing the demands of the truth.<sup>39</sup>

This relationship between human dignity, truth and freedom is crucial for the understanding of tolerance in Canon Law, because it allows to distinguish within human relations, between the human person and his beliefs.<sup>40</sup> Tolerance never refers to other persons, but only to the beliefs, convictions and ways of behavior of other persons or communities. In terms of law: We owe the other persons the tolerance (respect) of their beliefs, because we have to recognize and protect their dignity as human persons.

On this basis, two dimensions or functions of tolerance come to light:

*(1) Tolerance as a moral attitude*

Tolerance should be seen as a virtue of everybody, especially of the faithful, as a necessary consequence of the second part of the great commandment to love: to love the neighbor as yourself (Mk 12, 31; Lk 10, 27). This love necessarily requires the respect of the other person's conviction or belief (within the general limits of tolerance), even if this conviction in itself seems to be not acceptable. This virtue is to be exercised towards everybody, towards the other faithful within his own Church, too. In the context of religious beliefs and convictions, tolerance is not a hindrance to bear witness to one's own belief or conviction, but is able to protect oneself from any kind of dishonest "proselytism", because tolerance harmonizes the respect of the dignity and freedom of the others with one's own freedom to give away one's faith.<sup>41</sup> The virtue of tolerance is of particular importance also inside the Church, e.g. to prevent from destructive and disgraceful polarizations between groups of different convictions and

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39 This doctrine takes into consideration man's inability of fully grasping the truth, which is not a product of man's intelligence. It needs to be realized in life and gets enriched by human experience (cfr. the *loci theologici*), and is open to be formulated in different manners and words: DV 2–8; UR 4, 14–18; LG 13.

40 Cfr. Commissio Theologica Internationalis 1985.

41 *However, in spreading religious faith and in introducing religious practices everyone ought at all times to refrain from any manner of action which might seem to carry a hint of coercion or of a kind of persuasion that would be dishonorable or unworthy, especially when dealing with poor or uneducated people. Such a manner of action would have to be considered an abuse of one's right and a violation of the right of others* (DH 4).

interests, like between faithful which follow a conservative or traditionalist view and faithful with more or less progressive attitudes.

Tolerance is, as a moral attitude, a guiding principle for the exercise of one's own rights.

Tolerance takes into account the moral weakness and sinfulness of men and tries to solve possible conflicts resulting from it.<sup>42</sup>

## (2) *Tolerance as a moral-juridical principle*

At the juridical level, tolerance serves as a general principle of law<sup>43</sup>, i.e. a moral-juridical guideline as a basis and structuring principle of Canon Law, and therefore a multi-functional principle both inside the legal order of the Church and with regard to the relations ad extra (with non-catholic persons and communities; with secular institutions). In the same way that justice (*iustitia: suum cuique tribuere*) is an indispensable prerequisite for love (*caritas*), tolerance proves to be a prerequisite (or even an essential element) for justice.

### aa) Ad intra

Regarding Canon Law itself, human dignity should be expressly recognized, since it is the irrefutable basis of tolerance.<sup>44</sup> Apart from this, Canon Law must harmonize the freedom of the faithful (the exercise of their rights) with keeping up the unity and identity (of the Church and its mission) in the essentials, in order to safeguard and protect the internal bonum commune and the necessary discipline. Religious freedom

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42 "Das Toleranzethos nimmt den Christen in seinem "Status viatoris" ernst, es rechnet realistisch mit seinen Schwächen und seinem Versagen und versucht in den daraus resultierenden Konfliktsituationen jedem Christen das ihm Zustehende zukommen zu lassen; damit dürfte es nicht wenig zum innerkirchlichen Frieden beitragen": Brinkmann 1980: 279.

43 Cfr. Pree 2003.

44 The *Schema* "Lex Ecclesiae Fundamentalis" (1969), i.e. the draft of a Constitutional Law of the entire Catholic Church, provided: "Ecclesia omnibus et singulis hominibus utpote ad imaginem Dei creatis dignitatem personae humanae propriam recognoscit, itemque officia et iura quae ex eadem profluunt agnoscit, atque, omnium hominum vocationis ad salutem ratione, etiam tuetur" (can. 3). The project of this planned law has been given up, and the quoted Canon has not been taken over into the CIC/1983. More in detail: Pree 2016.

of the faithful inside the Church<sup>45</sup>, due to the confessional character of the Church, notably differs from the concept of religious freedom as a fundamental right in the relationship between citizen and State authority in the legal orders of the religiously neutral States. Therefore, tolerance in Canon Law is objectively limited, depending on the constellation in which the question might arise. The following five constellations may serve as examples:<sup>46</sup> (1) the relation between the authority and the faithful: the authority has to combine tolerance with the own duties towards the faithful. In questions of discipline, tolerance is possible within certain limits, as has been said above. (2) The relation between the faithful: dissenting opinions and religious practices are to be tolerated within certain limits. The argument about questions of the *bonum commune* in the Church should give rise to fruitful and objective discussions and to the formation of a public opinion inside the Church. (3) The relation between the Superior of an Institute of consecrated life and the members of this Institute; the vows leave their mark on the mutual rights and duties. (4) The relationship between catholic parents with their duties of education and their minor children. (5) The relationship between the diocesan bishop and the priests and deacones of his diocese on the basis of canonical obedience (cfr. c. 273 CIC; c. 370 CCEO).

In all these relations tolerance can take place, but in each of them in a different manner.

It is to be emphasized that acting within the limits of its own competence or within the legally granted freedom (exercise of rights) can never be the object of tolerance. The authority does not “tolerate” the exercise of the rights of the faithful (but has to acknowledge and protect them), and the faithful must respect the rights of the others (cfr. c. 223 § 1 CIC; c. 26 § 1 CCEO). The question of tolerance towards convictions, customs or behavior that one cannot accept, arises, whenever these convictions are esteemed as illegal, illegitimate or even *contra fides et mores*.

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45 The faith can be taken on only in full freedom, without coercion. But after having taken on the faith and won insight into its truth, there is no legitimate way back or any right to give up the truth. Cfr. C. 748 §§ 1 and 2 CIC; c. 586 CCEO. Cfr. Errázuriz 1991.

46 In reality, each of these relations is a complex of different mutual rights and duties. Within the given limits of space it is not possible to deal with each of them in detail, but only selectively. It would need separated investigations, in as far tolerance is to be put into practice in the different fields of the mission of the Church, e.g. in questions of liturgy, faith, discipline, forms of spirituality etc.

Furthermore, inside the Church tolerance as a moral-juridical principle can serve as a principle guiding the exercise of everybody's own rights, especially in view of the limits of its legitimate exercise; and also as principle for adequately coordinating rights and duties inside the Church in cases of their conflicts.<sup>47</sup> Above that, tolerance is a necessary precondition for the formation of a public opinion in the Church and for the development of the *sensus fidelium*. It helps to bring about an intra-ecclesial, legitimate pluralism<sup>48</sup>, which is not a danger to the identity of the Church, but rather a manifestation of life and of the richness of gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>49</sup>

bb) Ad extra

With regard to the relations between the Church and other denominations or religions, it should be underlined that tolerance towards the different beliefs, convictions and customs (within the general limits of tolerance) is an indispensable prerequisite for any kind of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue. Many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of the Church's visible structure (LG 8; UR 3 and 4). The authentic traditions and theologies of other Churches and religious communities belong to the possible *loci theologici* in the true sense of the teachings of Vat II.<sup>50</sup>

Tolerance – with its inherent distinction between the person(s) or communities on the one hand and their religious or ideological beliefs on the other hand – is the fundament of any kind of contact, negotiation and cooperation between the Church and secular Institutions like States, particularly if they are States with an official religion (or ideology) of State.

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47 With regard to the possible functions of tolerance in secular law: Krämer 1984: 117–121.

48 Gründel 1986: 100 states: "Pluralismus steht unter dem Diktat der Fülle; er lässt in fairer Konkurrenz auch den anderen gelten, weiß sich einer Wertordnung und dem Gemeinwohl verpflichtet. Ein solcher richtiger Pluralismus geht fair mit dem Andersdenkenden um, lehnt jede Benachteiligung oder Ausschaltung des Gegners um eigener Interessen willen ab, müht sich um Einheit. Dagegen wäre es Ausdruck eines schlechten Pluralismus, wollte man den eigenen oder den gegenständlichen Standpunkt ideologisieren, Tagesfragen zu Grundsatzentscheidungen, Ermessensfragen zu aufgeblähten Systemen machen. Gerade Kirche sollte jener Ort sein, in dem solche polaren Spannungen in Achtung und Liebe ausgetragen werden: Kirche als ‚Ort des Gespräches‘," with reference to Egenter 1978.

49 Cfr. UR 17.

50 Hünermann 2003: 223–251 and 275.

Taking into account all the dimensions tolerance might have in Canon Law, this virtue and principle could become a stimulating factor for any kind of other legal system for the sake of a peaceful coexistence of all religious communities and cultural groups within Ukraine. Each “player” in this “game” within the State would be a winner – for the benefit of the *bonum commune* – and thus for the benefit of all.

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# Constructive (Peace) Journalism as a Mediator of Proactive Tolerance – a Media-ethical Perspective

Lars Schäfers

## *Introduction: The societal functions of journalism*

It is the genuine responsibility of journalists to decide which news item about which event is worth publishing, in which way and from which perspective. It is a matter of orientation towards the so-called news values<sup>1</sup> and the question: What is relevant for the public? Due to the increasing power of algorithms and the confusion caused by information floods on the internet, but also due to the restrictions on freedom of the press in numerous countries worldwide and the often one-sided propaganda coverage of conflicts and wars, the question arises: Which journalism is relevant for the public?

One of the tasks of relevant journalism is to bring *transparency*<sup>2</sup> to social conditions in compliance with the standard of *objectivity*<sup>3</sup> and to enable people to participate in the public sphere conveyed by the media and in the democratic culture of discourse and opinion.<sup>4</sup> Horst Pöttker therefore sees journalism as a profession “which concentrates its services on the task of providing correct and important information to the largest audience possible in order to create an optimum of publicity and transparency of social processes and conditions.”<sup>5</sup>

Another central task of quality journalism is *criticism* and *control*.<sup>6</sup> It is not undisputed, but nevertheless very often affirmatively spoken of journalism as a “fourth power” – in addition to the three state powers (Executive, Legislative and Judiciary) of a free democratic constitutional

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1 On news value theory see: Schulz 2011: 92.

2 It is essential for journalistic transparency that the intention of the statement, genre and format are made known (cf. Funiok 2011: 131).

3 Objectivity is “a central journalistic norm [...], which refers to reporting that is “object-oriented”, i.e. describes events in the world “adequately” and does not distort them.” (Bentele 2013: 246).

4 Cf. Meier 2018a: 17.

5 Pöttker 2018: 71.

6 Cf. Meier 2018a: 16.

state.<sup>7</sup> The control function of journalism over these powers can actually be a particularly effective form of power, inasmuch as critical, investigative research manage to expose bad decisions, corruption and scandals in state, society, and especially among the economic and political elites. In order to be able to optimally fulfil this public task journalists must be able to work independently, freely without censorship or restrictions, and must keep their distance from government offices. Professional journalism is responsible for a correspondingly well-founded information offer. That is its central function in a democratic society. This also and especially includes the information from bad news for the purpose of initiating debates in society: “negatively influenced journalism is a self-purifying power of democracy”<sup>8</sup> and one of its correctives.<sup>9</sup> *Negativism*<sup>10</sup> is therefore one of the essential news values.

However, the reporting pattern of *Constructive Journalism* criticises this news value. Constructive Journalism is based on the thesis that an excess of negative news leads to a *negative bias* of media reports that ultimately has a negative impact on the audience and society.<sup>11</sup> According to the Mediamalaise theory<sup>12</sup>, too much bad news for example cause a dangerous level of distrust in democracy and its proper functioning. *Peace Journalism* is a specific type of Constructive Journalism with regard to the specifics and problems of journalistic coverage in war and conflict situations.<sup>13</sup> But because Peace Journalism is older, it can be understood as the “older sister” of Constructive Journalism, which is its “younger big brother”.

This article examines this type of journalism from a media ethics perspective, starting from the journalistic principle of *responsibility* as a central key concept of media ethics.<sup>14</sup> Constructive and Peace Journalism will be briefly introduced and critically discussed here. Against the backdrop of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the article also outlines the extent to which the attitude of *proactive tolerance*, as developed and conceptualized by Ukrainian and German scholars from various disciplines in the project “Tolerance at the European frontiers – the dimension of

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7 Cf. critically for example Boverter 1989.

8 Sauer 2015: 177.

9 Cf. Bohrmann 2018: 318.

10 Cf. Pürer 2015: 61,63.

11 Cf. Haagerup 2015; Kepplinger/Weißbecker 1991.

12 Cf. Oscar 2013.

13 Cf. also Krüger 2019 on this categorisation: <http://journalistikon.de/konstruktiver-journalismus/> (last access: 07–22–2020).

14 Cf. Pürer 2014: 150.

Ukraine”<sup>15</sup>, can be combined with the concerns of Peace Journalism. In this context, the question will be examined in more detail to what extent Peace Journalism with its constructively prospective thrust can serve as a possible mediator of proactive tolerance.

*The big brother: Constructive journalism as a reporting pattern*

The meaning of the term Journalism can only be laid down by a pluralistic description.<sup>16</sup> Its *reporting patterns*<sup>17</sup> are no less diverse and display very different orientations. Constructive Journalism is still a young reporting pattern. However, there is a growing number of media in which it is used in different ways and there are also already initial positive empirical findings regarding the popularity of constructive journalistic formats.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, a detailed scientific media-ethical analysis of this concept against the background of the dominance of negativity in media reporting and its effects on media recipients is still a desideratum,<sup>19</sup> as scientists only did empirical research in this field.<sup>20</sup>

The Danish journalist Ulrik Haagerup, together with his colleague Cathrine Gyldensted, is considered a prominent detractor of negatively reporting journalism. They are pioneers of the concept of Constructive Journalism in Europe. According to Haagerup, “If it bleeds, it leads” is the common motto of sensational journalism.<sup>21</sup> “The negative orientation of the media therefore endangers the political process and democracy,”<sup>22</sup> is Haagerup's thesis. This way of media reporting draws the eye away from politics and poses an obstacle to social commitment. The media recipients' ability and willingness to act decreases and they lose the capacity to consider reported problems in a solution-oriented manner and, if necessary, to

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15 Cf. Vogt/Husmann 2019.

16 The plurality of definitions of journalism as a “profession with blurred edges” and as a social functional system is also reflected in the diversity and emergence of journalism theories, see: Löffelholz/Rothenberger 2016.

17 Reporting patterns “describe variants of role models and professional views that have become part of journalists' personal attitudes, editorial routines and general professional culture” (Meier 2018b: 7); on the diversity and concept of reporting patterns see also: Meier 2018a: 194ff.

18 Cf. clearly arranged some examples in Meier 2018b: 9f.

19 Cf. as a preliminary study Schäfers/Sautermeister 2018.

20 Cf. as overview Beiler/Krüger 2018: 170ff.

21 Cf. Haagerup 2015: 14.

22 Haagerup 2015: 28.

become active themselves. Thus this way of journalism is inhibiting the further development of a society. Haagerup wants to contribute to a more balanced and less one-sided coverage in the media. Therefore, the classic journalistic questions, Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why?, How? and For the sake of which? are supplemented by the question of What now?<sup>23</sup> Constructive Journalism thereby aims at effects on three levels: Solution awareness and well-founded optimism among recipients (micro-level); increase of range, multiplication of positive associations that recipients have with the media brand (meso-level), and social progress through solution-oriented hopeful perspectives on existing problems (macro-level).<sup>24</sup> Constructive Journalism is thus a self-reflexive journalistic approach that considers its pragmatic dimension constitutively and prospectively taking responsibility for an impact-sensitive selection of information.

Constructive Journalism has ever since been the subject of controversial discussions among communication scientists and journalists. The basic direction of criticism of Constructive Journalism can be summarized as the rejection of a mere replacement of the negative bias of media reporting by a positive bias.<sup>25</sup> Therefore representatives of Constructive Journalism reached the consensus that a complete abandonment of the news factor “negativity” has to be rejected.<sup>26</sup> Also, Constructive Journalism is not aiming at replacing classical journalism, but rather at supplementing it.<sup>27</sup> It is also a controversial question whether Constructive Journalism is necessary at all, whether it is compatible with the common professional standards of journalism, and whether it can be implemented in journalistic practice accordingly.<sup>28</sup> There is a danger of being overtaxed and overestimated, which goes hand in hand with political activism and a mentality of world improvement and thus contradicts the journalistic mandate to report neutrally.<sup>29</sup>

The ethical question of social consequences of journalistic practice arises when, in contrast to Constructive Journalism, too many “bad news” encourage recipients to be pessimistic about the solution of political and social problems and keep them passive with regard to their own commitment, participation in democratic discourse, and the compromise-oriented

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23 Cf. Meier 2018b: 6.

24 Cf. Krüger 2016: 98.

25 Cf. Sauer 2015: 178.

26 Cf. Haagerup 2015: 196.

27 Cf. Sauer 2017a: 27.

28 Cf. Ruß-Mohl 2016: 138.

29 See clearly arranged: Sauer 2017b: 29f.

solving of political challenges.<sup>30</sup> Particularly in the current media and publicity changes, public value concerns<sup>31</sup> cannot be discussed without considering the responsibilities of the actors involved in the structuring fields of media production, distribution and reception that are relevant to media ethics.<sup>32</sup>

Against the background of these problems, Constructive Journalism aims to contribute to more quality and trustworthiness of the media. It tries to answer the question, why the characteristics of Constructive Journalism are necessary conditions for mass media and journalism in order to fulfil their role and function in democracy and society. Journalistic media can see the debates on “fake news” of recent years as an opportunity to specifically restore previously lost trustworthiness through a stylistic and substantive reorientation of reporting, so that the media can be seen again as guarantor of verified information. These debates as well as the criticism of Constructive Journalism outlined above point out that, from a normative point of view, realism in reporting in accordance with the logic of journalistic function and the regulative principle of objectivity remains indispensable. It is quite central that this is not an epistemological, but rather a regulative understanding of objectivity. On the basis of a reconstructive approach, objectivity can be understood as a (partial) reconstruction of reality through media that can be verified intersubjectively in principle and is carefully understood as an approximation.<sup>33</sup>

#### *The older sister: the peace journalistic idea as a constructive reporting pattern*

Due to the existence of a whole pool of similar or emerging reporting patterns, the co-developer of Constructive Journalism, Cathrine Gyldensted, speaks of it as an “umbrella term”<sup>34</sup>. Peace Journalism is understood here as a specific variant of the umbrella concept “Constructive Journalism”. Altmeyden et al., on the other hand, assign Peace Journalism to the reporting patterns of Advocacy Journalism.<sup>35</sup> And indeed, Peace Journalism is at least also oriented towards advocacy as it gives hostile or oppressed and powerless social groups the opportunity to bring their own views and

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30 Cf. Wolling 1999.

31 Cf. Beiler/Krüger 2018.

32 Cf. Altmeyden/Bieber/Filipović 2019.

33 Cf. Bentele 2016: 62.

34 Quoted according to Grüner/Sauer 2017: 8.

35 Altmeyden/Evers/Greck 2018.

concerns into the media public. A journalistic focus on the suffering and on victims of all those involved in the conflict also has genuinely the character of advocacy.

The aim of Constructive Journalism is to help solving problems. The aim of Peace Journalism is to help solving conflicts. Peace Journalism is one of the oldest constructive journalistic concepts. The Norwegian social scientist and founding father of peace and conflict research, Johan Galtung, spoke for the first time in the 1970s of Peace Journalism as the solution-oriented alternative model to war journalism, that is oriented by escalation, violence, and victory,<sup>36</sup> and which primarily follows the logic of measuring strength. The juxtaposition of these two conflict reporting patterns, which were conceived as antagonistic, can be teleologically described as follows with Altmeyen et al.: “Whereas in war journalism victory represents the end point of reporting and it devotes itself to a new source of conflict, peace journalism aims at a sustainable non-violent solution and demands post-war reporting.”<sup>37</sup> In this sense, Galtung contrasts Peace Journalism as “high road” with the “low road” of conventional sports stadium-like war reporting.<sup>38</sup> Similar to representatives of Constructive Journalism, Galtung also bases his approach on the news value theory, “according to which international news is selected according to similar criteria as national or local news. Negative events (e.g. disasters, riots or coups d'état) are considered particularly interesting.”<sup>39</sup> According to this approach, Peace Journalism, like its big brother, relies on a lower orientation of the news value “negativism”.

Peace Journalism, however, does not represent a uniform model.<sup>40</sup> The different approaches are based on different concepts of peace, violence and non-violence, which cannot be described here in detail.<sup>41</sup> In principle, however, this conflict-sensitive journalism is always about solution-oriented and thus peace-promoting reporting, especially in polarized situations such as conflict and war. Like its “big brother”, Constructive Journalism, Peace Journalism also has a very specific “standard of fact presentation”<sup>42</sup>. This journalistic communication is essentially based on de-escalation, avoids stereotypes, works towards linguistic disarmament and can there-

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36 Cf. Wetzstein 2018: 10.

37 Altmeyen/Evers/Greck 2018: 185.

38 Cf. Galtung 1998: 3ff.

39 Kempf 2019: 5f.

40 Cf. the four different models according to Altmeyen/Evers/Greck 2018: 184ff.

41 Cf. for example Kempf 2019.

42 Altmeyen/Evers/Greck 2018: 179.

fore possibly be a suitable (complementary) genre of journalism for the situation in Ukraine.<sup>43</sup> In view of the conflict and its duration, a long-term establishment and promotion of Peace Journalism would be needed there. To propose Peace Journalism in relation to the Russia-Ukraine conflict is ultimately based on the thesis that a particularly decisive field of conflict in the context of this conflict is the struggle for the sovereignty of interpretation in the media. According to the media ethicist Thomas Hausmanninger, the general power differentials must be taken into account here, which in this form can essentially be identified in the age of the Internet as follows: "Media production determines what is communicated (agenda setting), and distribution determines to whom it is accessible. Both thus constitute communicative power. Power also arises at the level of reception: "Whoever can appropriate media products receives more communicative power."<sup>44</sup> Censorship, manipulation and intimidation of journalists are added to this as the price of this struggle for interpretative sovereignty and communicative power. These negative consequences point to the necessity of a new view of a more moderating and mediating role of the media.

### *Responsible Peace Journalism – explication of the ethical perspective*

Positional reporting patterns such as Peace Journalism with its specific societal demands usually pose particularly urgent journalistic-ethical questions.<sup>45</sup> From a media-ethical point of view, the key ethical category of the journalist's *responsibility*<sup>46</sup>, which is interpreted in specific areas, is an obvious starting point for normative reflections on Peace Journalism. According to its intention, Peace Journalism can be described as a responsible journalistic approach to wars and conflicts.<sup>47</sup> In this context, responsibility can be understood primarily in the sense of an impact assessment, taking into account the moral intrinsic value of journalistic actions<sup>48</sup> with regard

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43 Cf. Meier 2018a: 200; Bilke 2008.

44 Hausmanninger 2005: 262.

45 Cf. Altmeppen/Evers/Greck 2018: 178.

46 See: Bayertz 1995: 4. See on the status of the key category of responsibility for applied ethics: Honnefelder 2016: 665ff.

47 Cf. Wetzstein 2018: 9.

48 Cf. for example Birnbacher 2017: 190.

to the conflict situation and development.<sup>49</sup> The normative idea of Peace Journalism with Irmgard Wetzstein can also be further specified, in critical contrast to the conventional way of reporting on conflicts, as a “journalism committed to peace and reconciliation, forming a social awareness of non-violence and seeing itself as the antithesis of war reporting, which is often criticized as propaganda.”<sup>50</sup>

The journalistic-media-ethical concept of responsibility presented in this text is more or less understood as a “regulative guiding principle” of a “second-line ethics” in which, according to Wolfgang Wieland, subject areas are regulated “whose boundaries and basic norms are already predetermined.”<sup>51</sup> These basic norms for responsible Peace Journalism include first and foremost *objectivity* and *transparency* as already mentioned. Similar to the “umbrella concept” of Constructive Journalism, the normative debate continues on whether Peace Journalism thwarts central quality journalistic values and norms that are part of the journalistic-professional-ethical “basic law”, especially the norm of objectivity, whether its programmatic approach is allowed to belong to a journalist's field of activity at all and whether it is even feasible.<sup>52</sup> A further basic problem of media ethics arises in the adequate concretization of the concept of responsibility for the purpose of action orientation. The theological ethicist Gerfried Hunold noted that empirical communication science research with its theoretical hermeneutics “remains contourless, despite all the convergence of efforts, not only in its epistemological but also in its practical results. What should remain possible and responsible under which conditions?”<sup>53</sup> In answer to the question of what behavior is responsible for the media, the concrete contexts with their conditions and constraints under which journalists find themselves in practice are often not sufficiently considered in theory.<sup>54</sup> Responsibility, however, requires contextual concreteness if it is not to be a general, powerless appeal.<sup>55</sup> Contextual sensitivity is necessary, especially in view of the high normative objectives of Peace Journalism, so that it remains realistic and does not tend towards an activism that impedes rather than promotes the long-term goal of conflict resolution and peace.

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49 Cf. Funiok, Rüdiger 2011: 41; on the subject of Ethics of Attitudes and/or Responsibility in journalism cf. Kepplinger/Knirsch 2000.

50 Wetzstein 2018: 9.

51 Wieland, 1999: 95.

52 Cf. Wetzstein 2018: 15.

53 Hunold 2001: 3.

54 Cf. Pürer 2014: 151.

55 Cf. Funiok 2011: 63.



In any case, the authorities to which journalists have to answer in terms of objective and transparent reporting (within the framework of their individual possibilities of action) are the people for whom they report (their audience), but, furthermore, especially in war and conflict reporting the people about whom they report.

In addition to the questions of desirability and feasibility, there is a further media-ethically relevant aspect: the limited journalistic scope of action caused by the context of the system and thus structural incompatibilities of peace journalism, which consequently stem from the logic of media function. In analogy to the voluntary self-control of the media institutionalized on a structural level, for example in the German Press Council, peace journalistic responsibility is also initially about a voluntary "normative self-commitment of the subject"<sup>56</sup>, i.e. of the individual journalist. The journalist's professional role-specific sense of responsibility is particularly challenging in view of the publicity of his or her actions.<sup>57</sup> However, this individual responsibility cannot be separated from the editorial-institutional and structural level of the media subsystem's function for society and its subsystems in the sense of a graduated responsibility<sup>58</sup>.

An understanding of Peace Journalism in which the central subject of action is the individual journalist might ignore the system-theoretical dimension<sup>59</sup> together with the functional dynamics and attentional logic of the media as the determining factors and the origin of possible incompatibilities. The advocacy role of Peace Journalism collides heavily with the claim of objective reporting<sup>60</sup>, especially in the case of one-sided partisanship in a lobbyist manner.<sup>61</sup> The implementation of the peace journalistic idea of constructing a media mediated peace discourse is therefore sometimes a (too) big challenge,<sup>62</sup> especially for journalists alone. Without integration into a broad network of civil society, for example, the peace journalistic ideal runs the risk of remaining ineffective before the horizon of the respective conflict or war.

Nadine Bilke's approach seems to be more promising.<sup>63</sup> She wants to profile Peace Journalism as quality journalism. She assigns the central val-

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<sup>56</sup> Kaufmann 1992: 41.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Heesen 2011: 270

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Brosda 2010: 266.

<sup>59</sup> For system-theoretical approaches in media ethics see: Scholl 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Altmeppen/Evers/Greck 2018: 183.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Bilke 2008: 261.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Wetzstein 2018, 16.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Bilke 2008.

ues and criteria of journalistic quality such as objectivity, transparency and relevance to the “conflict sensitivity of journalism as a key criterion”<sup>64</sup>. In this sense, Kempf defines the central peace journalistic objective as “ensuring the quality standards of truthful, objective and neutral reporting even in times of conflict and crisis”<sup>65</sup>. In view of the drawings made here, from a media-ethical perspective the most responsible way to understand and practice Peace Journalism consistently as quality journalism is to weaken some of the weaknesses of this reporting pattern. Peace journalists as well as constructive journalists must remain self-reflective and guided by the demand for objectivity. The tension between the norm of objectivity and a consistent desire for peace cannot simply be resolved in the end.

*Constructive (Peace) Journalism and Proactive Tolerance in the Context of the Ukrainian Conflict – Attempt at a Synthesis*

In a pluralistic and functionally differentiated society, journalism can contribute to tolerance as a key virtue of democracy by allowing as many groups in a society as possible to participate in public discourse. *Proactive tolerance* as an explicit appreciation of the factual diversity of opinions, viewpoints and life plans in a society, without having to relativize one's own standpoint or identity, is characterized by its conflict-preventing and potentially de-escalating effect.<sup>66</sup> This attitude also characterizes Peace Journalism through balanced reporting that does not easily take sides unilaterally in conflict situations.

Looking at the current status quo of the media system in Ukraine, the need for a fundamental renewal of journalism there becomes clear. The media and the democratic-ethical functions of journalism mentioned at the beginning are comparatively weak here: In the ranking of press freedom in 2020 of the organization “Reporters without Borders”, Ukraine currently occupies only the 96th place out of 180 of all countries examined.<sup>67</sup> With hundreds of radio stations and print media, Ukraine's media landscape is admittedly diverse. But editorial offices are usually under pressure here. In recent years, for example, most major television stations have

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64 Altmeyden/Evers/Greck 2018: 188.

65 Kempf 2019, 5. McGoldrick, on the other hand, is critical of the objectivity norm for the cause of peace journalism: See: McGoldrick 2006.

66 Cf. Vogt/Husmann 2019.

67 Cf. the country report Ukraine by Reporters without Borders: <https://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/ukraine/> (last access: 05–28–2020).

been bought up by powerful oligarchs. They then dictated the content of political reporting and thus silenced critical programmes. Ukrainian media are also bullied by the granting of state licenses. Expectations of reform directed at the new president Volodimir Selenski have been “at best partially fulfilled. The media landscape is highly polarised, and the vicious circle of violence against media workers and impunity is unbroken. In addition, there is judicial harassment and threats by nationalist groups.”<sup>68</sup>

In relation to the first question at the beginning of this article, this means from the point of view of media ethics: Such a largely unfree and gangly journalism is only of limited relevance to the audience, or rather: to the pluralistic audiences of a society. Under the conditions of a hardly existing freedom of the press and information, journalists are like gatekeepers who do not or cannot allow gates to be opened to critical and explosive information. In such a situation, media coverage and the creation of a public sphere in which the broad spectrum of a diverse society is given space are not guaranteed. These are therefore the most urgent construction sites on the Ukrainian journalism and media system. The establishment of Peace Journalism here must only go hand in hand with the solution of these problems, which as a whole prevent independent, critical, and transparent journalism in the country.

Solution orientation instead of a focus on victory is the guiding perspective that Constructive Journalism as Peace Journalism brings to conflict reporting. It is not intended to replace war and conflict propaganda with mere peace propaganda, but rather to consistently keep the classic standards of quality journalism guided by transparency and objectivity. As a graduated responsibility not only of the journalistic subjects of action, but also of the editorial offices and journalistic companies and institutions, it also applies to a self-reflective professional journalistic quality assurance. Furthermore, Peace Journalism as a special variety of Constructive Journalism is carried by proactive responsibility, in that the consequences of reporting for the further development of a conflict are taken into account constitutively and constructively. It implies proactive tolerance as a concept of conflict: “Tolerance does not solve these conflicts, but it can reduce their destructive power to a tolerable level and at best give them a positive, constructive dynamic.”<sup>69</sup> A proactive concept of tolerance understood in

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68 <https://www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de/ukraine/alle-meldungen/meldung/journalisten-unter-druck-von-vielen-seiten/> (last access: 05–28–2020).

69 Vogt/Husmann 2019: 7.

this way requires contextualization and concretization.<sup>70</sup> Promoting this within reporting can be a contribution of a quality Peace Journalism.

Taking into account the above-mentioned factors and prerequisites, Peace Journalism can also contribute to the media communication of proactive tolerance in conflict situations, but also in advance in conflict prevention. This can be achieved by conveying a principally moderating attitude towards the plurality of religions, cultures, ideologies and political convictions that goes hand in hand with the specific understanding of proactive tolerance. A basic condition for functioning Peace Journalism, however, is a generally high level of professional ethics in the journalistic system of a country in accordance with the regulatory principle of objectivity of self-reflective journalists. To enable transparency and participation, to exercise criticism and control and, in accordance with the main concept of Constructive Journalism, to search for well-founded perspectives of hope in social problems and conflict situations, is a minimum requirement. Peace Journalism would ultimately lose relevance and trust if the professional ethics and the systemic conditions and restrictions in journalism in a country as a whole were to pose a major problem.

Peace Journalism is no substitute for classic quality journalism in view of the Ukraine-Russia conflict. However, it can be promising as a complement to it, provided that it remains committed not only to the de-escalation and peace perspective, but also to the quality criteria of journalistic reporting. Only in this way constructive Peace Journalism can do sufficient justice to the function of journalism for a democratic society and to a peace reporting aiming for a promotion of tolerance.

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70 Cf. Vogt/Husmann 2019: 7.

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# Dialogue and Perspective

## Thoughts on Interaction between Interreligious Learning and Proactive Tolerance

*Lisa-Marie Mansfeld and Andreas Schoch*

### 1. Introduction

“Interreligious learning is only possible on the basis of a fundamental respect for the irreducible and unique alterity of the other. Interreligious learning implies the idea that, from the very start, human beings are dialogical and relational in nature (Buber) and that in the dialogical encounter the other is both vulnerable and my teacher (Levinas).”<sup>1</sup>

When Didier Pollefeyt brings up the fundamental respect for the otherness of the other as the basis of interreligious learning, he implicitly talks about tolerance. As an epistemic prerequisite that the religion, the faith of the other is to be respected and might even have some added value for me as a learner, it initially enables learning from that other person. While a passive tolerance which simply condoning others indifferently is not sufficient for this – “to condone means to insult”<sup>2</sup>, Goethe already knew, and should “really only be a temporary attitude”<sup>3</sup> – to learn from others requires the reciprocal recognition of the possibility to find truth in the other person. While the respect for the other can be found in an active tolerance being the necessary requirement, the appreciation and recognition that this other truth might have some added value for me as a learner is to be called proactive tolerance.<sup>4</sup>

Interreligious learning and the concept of proactive tolerance are therefore united in this article. The conditional possibility of all interreligious learning is a tolerance that not just condones but shows interest in the other whilst an existing rejection is diametrically opposed to the learning process. Proactive tolerance is therefore both a prerequisite and the result

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1 Pollefeyt 2007: VII.

2 Goethe 1998: 385 (translation L.M./A.S.).

3 Ibid.

4 See the concept of proactive tolerance of Markus Vogt and Rolf Husmann in: Vogt/Husmann 2019: 3–16.

of interreligious learning. In order to pursue this thesis, the model of interreligious learning and its foundations are outlined below from a Catholic Christian perspective, starting with a brief review of its development. In a second step an example of a concept of interreligious learning from religious education in Germany is given, in order to illustrate its link with proactive tolerance. In a final summarizing step, the opportunities as well as the limits of interreligious learning as part of the formation of pro-active tolerance are to be discussed.

## 2. Context of interreligious learning

A migration society, as it is existing in Germany since the 1970s at the latest, is characterized by its plurality formed by various cultures and religions. In order to achieve a conflict-free coexistence, it is important to organize this tangible plurality without falling into indifference towards the other. One building block to initiate this process towards peaceful coexistence can be interreligious learning.<sup>5</sup> Due to globalization, this learning process sees itself in an increasingly changing situation: other religions and cultures are no longer foreign rites and customs in other foreign countries or continents but are part of everyday life. One does no longer encounter the foreign just in books, but as a visible different religiosity in public and related to school “in more or less familiar – classmates”<sup>6</sup>. This once again confirms the necessity of interreligious learning.<sup>7</sup> In this context, Karl Ernst Nipkow even speaks of a paradigm shift that necessitates “interaction *between* members of different religions instead of just an instruction *about* them”<sup>8</sup>.

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5 For a discussion of the terms “interreligious learning”, “interreligious competence” and “interreligious education” see also: Sajak 2018: 24–34. In the following, the term “interreligious learning” is used, which aims to develop “interreligious competence” through knowledge building, encounters and dialogue and is thus committed to interreligious education as a whole. The aim is always the interreligious dialogue anchored in practice.

6 Dressler 2003: 113–124, here 114 (translation L.M./A.S.).

7 In addition to the ability to deal with pluralized societies, Unser 2021: 281f. following Schweitzer 2014: 14 sees the subjective need for orientation of all people as the second important reasoning context of interreligious learning. Thus (religious pluralization) leads not only to social, but also to individual movements for clarification and finding meaning, which make interreligious learning just as essential and thus assign it not only a social, but also an existential relevance.

8 Nipkow 2005: 362–380, here 362 (emphasis in the original, translation L.M./A.S.).

On the basis of respect and appreciation, interreligious learning can lead not only to tolerating people of other religions, but to value them as enriching. Since one's own identity is always shaped by externality, interreligious learning also helps to form and consolidate one's own religious or philosophical point of view.<sup>9</sup> In turn, a firm perspective and identity enable proactive tolerance, as it causes the perception of otherness not as a threat, but as an expansion and enrichment of one's (religious and philosophical) horizons. That being said, interreligious learning – in the spirit of the concept of proactive tolerance – is not about developing an equal validity of alien truth and values. Rather what is needed, as Christoph Gellner and Georg Langenhorst put it, is a “tolerance of strength, which enables from a consciously accepted openness to differences and the knowledge of non-negotiable dissent in ultimate beliefs a mutual recognition, respect and approval of the other.”

### *3. Developments in religious education – From the difference to the common*

As a religious educational concept, interreligious learning is relatively young: While the 1960s were characterized by an “apologetically contrasting perspective”<sup>10</sup> on other religions, religious education in Germany in the 1970s and 80s reacted to the theological paradigm changes through the second Vatican Council in focusing their similarities.<sup>11</sup> Above all, Johannes Lähnemann put forward that interreligious learning previously based purely on theoretical knowledge has developed into learning about witnesses and encounters, always aiming for dialogue. This type of interreligious learning addresses the existential discussion of truth, rites and customs of other religions. While the starting point is your own religion or denomination<sup>12</sup> the aim is to enable learners to deal constructively with an increasing (religious) plurality within society, to perceive it as appreciative and to relate to it.<sup>13</sup> This is to be achieved by developing a well-founded ability to make judgments and change perspectives.<sup>14</sup> This

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9 See: Vogt/Thurner 2018.

10 Schambeck 2013: 58 (translation L.M./A.S.).

11 See e.g.: Lähnemann 1986 und Lähnemann 1986a.

12 See: Unser 2021: 280–291.

13 See: Ibid. 280f.

14 See: Unser 2019: 107–109.

idea of interreligious learning prevails to this day – in various nuances.<sup>15</sup> In the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* this approach of interreligious dialogue is anchored as a fundamental method of Catholic social teaching.<sup>16</sup>

From a catholic perspective interreligious learning gains its theological legitimation through Vatican II (in particular: *Nostra Aetate* 2, 1965) with the introduction of an inclusive view on other religions.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, Catholicism as well as all monotheistic religions struggle with their absoluteness and claimed truth on one hand and the concept of tolerance on the other. There is doubt “whether the inclusivist position really contributes to the theological legitimation of interreligious learning [...]. Because in other religions no truth can be learned about God that is not already laid out in Christianity. So why interreligious learning?”<sup>18</sup> That being said, Alexander Unser follows von Stosch<sup>19</sup> and Meyer<sup>20</sup>, who advocate to not strictly distinct between exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism, but rather identify moments or aspects in all religions, which can be interpreted exclusively, inclusively and plurally. As a result, a comparison is shifted from the level of the belief systems, which tend to contrast various truths of faith, to the level of religious practice. Unser exemplifies this by relating to the interreligious and conflictive discussion on the sonship of Christ which is held on the level of the belief systems. In order to make interreligious learning profitable and to initiate a dialogue, one should not concentrate on that very question but on the religious practices appreciating Jesus in Islam as well as in Christianity.<sup>21</sup> The aim is to “enable an undisguised view of similarities and differences against the background

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15 The individual concepts of interreligious learning will not be discussed at this point. In addition to Johannes Lähnemann's dialogic world religion didactics, the UK-based approach of a distinction between “learning about religion” and “learning from religion” (learning from religion for one's own search and questions) is worth mentioning. See: Grimmitt 1977 and Grimmitt/Grove/Hull/Spencer 1991, who also shaped many concepts of interreligious learning in continental Europe. Schambeck 2013 offers a detailed overview of the diachrone and partly also synchronous development of interreligious learning.

16 See: FT.

17 For the religious theological solutions of the 20th century, see: Stosch 2012. For a further discussion on the special triple scheme of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism that has become popular in German-speaking countries, see also: Allemann 2011: 31–52.

18 Unser 2021: 280–291 (translation L.M./A.S.).

19 See: Stosch 2012.

20 See: Meyer 2019: 91.

21 See: Unser 2021: 284.

of the use of religious terms and sentences.”<sup>22</sup> Interreligious learning is therefore less of a theological discourse of dogmatic theory than of lived practice.

#### *4. Interreligious learning as a contribution to proactive tolerance*

##### *4.1 Of encounters and testimonies*

Religious learning can be realized as encounter learning which includes to learn from the “testimony” of the other. Building on the British approach “A gift to the child”, Clauß Peter Sajak spells out such a testimony in his work “Kippa, Kelch, Koran”<sup>23</sup> using elementary objects from various religions for religious education in schools. This kind of testimony has the advantage of being easily available, while the actual physical interreligious encounter requires the presence of people.<sup>24</sup> The objects must meet the requirement to be exemplary for religion, evoke a feeling for holiness, have a spiritual component and be relevant to the learners. Sajak declares life-relevant testimonies suitable, which in the sense of existential relevance can also be encountered in everyday life.<sup>25</sup> He defines four phases in which learning of testimony takes place: In phase one, the interest or so-called inner participation of the learner is awakened, while phase two moves on to discovering and exploring the subject. The third phase can be described with the concept of contextualization, in which further information on the object of cult is provided for the first time. In phase four as a phase of reflection there finally follows the link between testimony and living environment.<sup>26</sup>

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22 Unser 2021: 284 (translation L.M./A.S.).

23 Sajak 2010.

24 Stephan Leimgruber pursues the approach of encounter learning as he focuses on meeting people, which he calls the “royal road to interreligious learning”, Leimgruber 2012: 24. A detailed description of this approach and possible criticism cannot be presented at this point. For critical comments that relate, among other things, to the conditions of interreligious learning in religious instruction in schools and to possible pitfalls in encounters, see: Zimmermann 2015: 43–45 and Langenhorst 2012: 124f.

25 See.: Sajak 2010: 45–48.

26 See: Ibid.

The goal of such witnessing is another important component of interreligious learning as it aims for the ability to engage in dialogue.<sup>27</sup> Such an approach is deeply committed to the understanding of tolerance as a communicative phenomenon outlined by Vogt and Husmann.<sup>28</sup> Not only (first) encounters with other religions through certain cult objects are made possible, but communicative processes towards peaceful coexistence are promoted and demanded. Tolerance presents itself as a conditional willingness to learn, while at the same time – because of the phases passed through – it has to be understood in the sense of Vogt/Husmann as an “unfinished dynamic and process of constant intensification”<sup>29</sup>.

#### 4.2 *Tolerance as a condition and goal*

The relationship between tolerance and interreligious learning is seen as a kind of hermeneutic circle: The prerequisite for interreligious learning is a tolerant willingness to engage in dialogue, which, when encouraged by learning, in turn leads to new understanding and thus initiates dialogue opportunities.

The dialogue is not only an important part of interreligious learning, but also ideally, “open and honest”<sup>30</sup>, of proactive tolerance. All interreligious learning processes focus dialogue, whether they are primarily devoted to testimony and encounter learning or narrative approaches such as those presented by Gellner/Langenhorst<sup>31</sup> or Zimmermann<sup>32</sup>. They all initiate a dialogue which, in the spirit of developing proactive tolerance, intends to break down prejudices and promote openness towards the supposedly foreigner.<sup>33</sup>

The German Bishops' Conference (DBK) defined in 1991 dialogues in interreligious learning to be based on the principle of reciprocity.<sup>34</sup> The DBK stated that reciprocal communication must take place on an equal

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27 Learning from testimony can thus be understood as enabling of or disinhibiting for encounter learning, since the religion of the other is no longer confronted as unknown.

28 See: Vogt/Husmann 2019: 8.

29 Vogt/Husmann 2019: 9 (translation L.M./A.S.).

30 Vogt/Husmann 2019: 8 (translation L.M./A.S.).

31 See: Gellner/Langenhorst 2013.

32 See: Zimmermann 2015.

33 See: Unser 2021: 286.

34 See: Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz 1991: 9.

footing (criterion 1), must be based on an attitude of respect and the friendship (criterion 2) and is led with the aim of understanding each other and believing them to be true (criterion 3). What applies here to the interreligious dialogue equally applies, according to Vogt and Husmann, to the development of a proactive tolerance that involves all participants in a mutual communication process on an equal level. This communication process can in turn be opened and practiced through interreligious learning.<sup>35</sup>

#### *4.3 A Change of perspective as the goal of the learning process*

The ability to change perspective as a further relevant dimension of interreligious learning is already evident in the previous sections. It is to be understood as a figure of educational theory that aims to become aware of and reflect on internal and external perspectives. Such a perspective assumption is therefore an epistemic act that can be practiced and implemented at every stage of human development. The competence to change perspective is not about generating empathy, compassion or pity, but rather reaching a level of meta-reflection on which the feelings of the other person can be cognitively developed and understood.<sup>36</sup> In order to establish fair rules and thus to be able to organize peaceful coexistence, especially in a plural society, the competence to change perspective is inevitably required. In accordance with Vogt and Husmann, this does not mean “unlimited acceptance”<sup>37</sup>, but rather a cooperation on an equal footing. Therefore, the competence to take on perspectives is the basis for the development and successful establishment of a code for social coexistence. Interreligious learning can promote this competence to enable a togetherness and to promote the development of a proactive tolerance.<sup>38</sup>

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35 Worth mentioning in this context is the Hamburg model of religious education “Religionsunterricht für alle 2.0”, which tries to combine dialogical and interreligious learning by offering interreligious rather than denominational classes. See also as an example: Knauth 2020: 293–324 and Kuhlmann 2020: 315–330. The extent to which such religious education can be particularly conducive to peace cannot be assessed to this extent and is therefore a major research desideratum.

36 See: Bloch 2018: 106f.

37 Vogt/Husmann 2019: 9 (translation L.M./A.S.).

38 See as well: Kenngott 2012.

## 5. Limits of the concepts

### 5.1 Excessive expectations: Interreligious learning as the sole savior

Even if the relevance of interreligious learning cannot be denied, it still remains a singular concept on the way to a proactive tolerance.<sup>39</sup> On the one hand, not only religious, but also cultural plurality leads to different ideas and opinions, which is why not only religious rites, customs, etc., but also cultural identities have to be considered to approach peaceful and inclusive coexistence. The increasingly diffuse and multi-layered relationship between culture and religion makes interreligious learning more difficult, so that it sometimes can lead to nowhere. Interreligious learning alone cannot change behavior or attitudes, but is often overloaded with such demands and unrealistic objectives which can lead to disappointment. Additionally, due to concrete contextual conditions, interreligious learning can become considerably more difficult. In particular, as Grümme points out, in practical work with refugees interreligious learning often cannot be realized due to various trauma. In the specific context of the integration and inclusion of refugees, interreligious learning is therefore faced with special challenges and should not be overloaded with expectations. Here it seems more important to act step by step and first enable the refugees to arrive instead of confronting them with religious plurality right away. This also applies in particular to school children who have fled.<sup>40</sup>

### 5.2 The question of identity: interreligious learning and the concept of home

In many cases the accusation persists that interreligious learning prevents or makes it more difficult to find a home in one's own religion or denomination and leads to an indifferent attitude towards it. However, if one takes interreligious learning seriously in the sense presented here, this reproach does not apply. Just as tolerance can be recognized as a concept of conflict and, in the best case scenario, a constructive dynamic can grow from it,<sup>41</sup> interreligious learning is only possible if different, already developed opinions, attitudes and values enter the dialogue as firm identities. Interreligious learning that does not seek to deal with one's own religious

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39 See: Sajak 2018: 9–11 and Grümme 2017: 202f.

40 See: Grümme 2017: 202f.

41 See: Vogt/Husmann 2019: 7.



traditions beforehand can neither be constructive nor aim at developing proactive tolerance in the spirit of Vogt / Husmann.<sup>42</sup>

### *5.3 Actual results? The problem of the measurability of attitudes and values*

A far greater problem arises with regard to the measurability of results. Interreligious learning aims at acquiring knowledge about other religions, which can be measured relatively easy, but primarily is about the formation of attitudes and values, such as the willingness to dialogue, to take a perspective or to develop a proactive tolerance. In recent years now, religious education is asked how adequately it can be demonstrated whether these goals are actually being achieved. According to the problem of measurability, the number of studies is relatively small.<sup>43</sup> In their study from 2017, Schweitzer, Bräuer and Boschki looked at interreligious learning in job-oriented education and found out that a change in the categories of religion-related knowledge, religion-related perspective and religion-related settings can definitely be established.<sup>44</sup> Another example is Unser who in his dissertation published in 2019 investigates the question of whether interreligious learning does not suffer from an “educational and civic milieu constriction”<sup>45</sup> and whether the socio-economic status of the family of origin and gender have an effect. As a result, he showed that gender has little impact compared to the socio-economic origin which has an ambivalent influence.<sup>46</sup> These factors also play a role in the measurability of the results of interreligious learning. So whether the concept of interreligious learning can have a positive influence on the development of proactive tolerance cannot be conclusively verified. Nevertheless, main parts of interreligious learning match with the concept described by Vogt and Husmann and can therefore strengthen it.

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42 See: Sorg 2020: 51–56.

43 See: Unser 2021: 288f.

44 See: Schweitzer/Bräuer/Boschki 2017: 133–138.

45 Unser 2019: 288 (translation L.M./A.S.).

46 See: Unser 2019: 317–322.

## 6. Summary

When interreligious learning subscribes to the paradigm of interreligious dialogue, when its goal and starting point is the development of a well-founded and reflected point of view of the learner and when principles such as reciprocity are taken into account, it nevertheless seems to be a profitable concept towards peaceful coexistence in an increasingly plural society. It is therefore an important component in the development of proactive tolerance and paves the way to a pluralistic togetherness in appreciation and respect, in exchange and in dialogue.

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## Abbreviations

AL	Francis, <i>Amoris Laetitia</i> .
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church.
CCEO	Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium.
CIC	Codex Iuris Canonici.
CiV	Benedict XVI, <i>Caritas in Veritate</i> .
Decr. Grat.	Decretum Gratiani (Corpus Iuris Canonici I, ed. Aemelius Friedberg, Leipzig 1879).
DV	2nd Vatican Council, <i>Dei Verbum</i> .
EiE	John Paul II, <i>Ecclesia in Europa</i> .
EG	Francis, <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> .
FT	Francis, <i>Fratelli tutti</i> .
GS	2nd Vatican Council, <i>Gaudium et spes</i> .
LS	Francis, <i>Laudato sì</i> .
PL	J. P. Migne, <i>Patrologia Latina</i> .
PT	John Paul II, <i>Pacem in terris</i> .
PDMP	Benedict XV, <i>Pacem Dei munus pulcherrimum</i> .
STh	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologica</i> .
UR	2nd Vatican Council, <i>Unitatis redintegratio</i> .
UUS	John Paul II, <i>Ut unum sint</i> .
VG	Francis, <i>Veritatis Gaudium</i> .

Further abbreviations are following the common rules laid out by Schwertner, IATG<sup>3</sup>.