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**CULTURAL, PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES SERIES**

Volume I:

**Religion and Politics in Multicultural Europe:  
Perspectives and Challenges**

Edited by Alar Kilp and Andres Saumets

Volume II:

**Extremism Within and Around Us**

Edited by Alar Kilp and Andres Saumets

ESTONIAN NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE

**CULTURAL, PEACE AND  
CONFLICT STUDIES SERIES**

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ANDRES SAUMETS AND ALAR KILP

VOLUME II:  
**EXTREMISM WITHIN AND AROUND US**  
*Alar Kilp and Andres Saumets*

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## FOREWORD

The second volume of the Cultural, Peace and Conflict Studies Series offers thoughtful insights for scholars and readers interested in the wide range of phenomena that in public discourses are referred to as ‘radicalism’ and ‘extremism’.

Since the end of the Cold War, and particularly after the terror attacks of 9/11, it has become almost common knowledge that the haunting ‘spectre of extremism’ looms over our democratic and progressive, liberal and civilized, rational and tolerant societies. Within mainstream humanity, individuals pursue their own happiness or keep themselves to themselves, interest and pressure groups strive in a constructive and civilized manner for social good according to what they believe, and we consider public policies legitimate and ‘consented to’ when they result from rational debate and genuine compromise, even when they differ from our own personal desires.

In contrast to the ‘normal’ mainstream, typical extremists are believed to rely on passion instead of interest, on religious prejudices instead of secular reason, on uncompromising fundamentalist beliefs instead of consensus and public deliberation working towards compromise. The connections between extremist behaviour, ideas and forms of organization are thought to exist by assumption, not by evidence. As a rule of thumb, extremist ideas are believed to be religious, extremist organizations hierarchic, monolithic and authoritarian, extremists deemed lacking in individual autonomy and an individual sense of identity, and extremist behaviour is generally considered strongly unconventional if not manifestly terrorist in nature. Such greatly simplified representations of extremism can cause confusion and stir up many questions in anyone who seriously wants to make sense of the phenomenon itself.

When an overwhelming part of humanity observes some form of religion it cannot be religion itself that causes or sustains extremism. If extremism is related to a particular kind of religion, do its associated manifestations of religious extremism resemble manifestations of ideological extremism? If ideologies and religions can be both extremist and non-extremist should we discard all essentialist references to religion in our understanding of extremism? Does extremism resemble ‘public order’, which can be measured and assessed universally, or is it like ‘secularism’ and ‘tolerance’ which acquire substantive meanings only in their social and cultural environments? Can extremism be said to be a defining trait of personality and character that distinguishes some people or groups from the ‘normal’ others? Or is it like ‘anger’ and ‘aggression’ which are usually judged as good or bad depending on the specific context in which they manifest? Should extremism be categorized as a subtype of worldviews (similar to ‘convinced atheists’ or non-practicing ‘zen-buddhists’) or as a form of social deviation (similar to ‘criminals’ and ‘public enemies’)?

These are only some of the questions which might arise when one attempts to define extremism.

This volume contributes to studies on extremism by using interdisciplinary perspectives and a variety of academic approaches, and by keeping the general perspective on the topic sufficiently wide so that our subjective preferences and analytical assumptions do not rule out the possibility that extremism might exist ‘within’ ourselves too as individuals, scholars, groups, cultures, and religious and political communities. Throughout this volume extremism is conceptualized in a way that enables us to assess and evaluate extremism not only within the problematic ‘Other’ but also within the ‘Self’.

The contributors to this volume come from several academic disciplines (Theology, Political Science, Sociology, International Relations) and investigate extremism using analytical, theoretical, empirical, historical and social constructionist perspectives. The organization of these papers enables the reader to follow this analysis of extremism from abstract and general to specific and particular, from theoretical to practical, and from the historical to the contemporary.

Due to the limited scope of the volume, the specific case-studies on extremism ‘out there’ focus only on a limited number of historical examples and contemporary issues. Among the latter, the contributions specifically focus on issues related to religion, culture, terrorism and gender in the contemporary world, in accordance with the way extremism is perceived in present public discourse. The whole view on extremism, however, would of course be somewhat unbalanced if due attention were not also given to Atheist, Secularist and Fascist versions of extremism in recent Western history.

The topical idea for this volume originates from the conference “Extremism Within and Around Us” that was held in Tartu, Estonia on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2010, under the auspices of the Estonian National Defence College where earlier versions of several of these papers were first presented and discussed.

As editors, we are deeply grateful to all who have contributed to this volume. We also give our thanks to the Estonian National Defence College for organizing the conference and funding the project, and to *Roy Lowthian*, *David W. E. Thomas*, *Epp Leete*, *Karen Kuldnokk*, *Reet Hendrikson* and to the staff of the University of Tartu Press for their help in finalizing this collective effort.

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Tartu, October 2011

# THE ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY OF EXTREMISM

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**ABSTRACT.** Extremism does not have objective or universally accepted definitions. At the same time, 'extremism' can be functionally objective on all levels – individual, group, society, nation and global – to the extent that social actors in their cultural environment construct their enemies as such. The process of extremism functions as follows. It begins with the identification of the enemy. Thereafter, psychological attitudes which essentially function similarly in all of us are constructed negatively towards this enemy. Lastly, confrontations with extremists justify extremism within us since extreme situations call for extreme measures.

The effective use of this concept is Machiavellian in two significant respects. Firstly, in situations where effectiveness calls for extremism we should be capable of it. Secondly, although we may behave like our enemies there is nothing more useful than demonizing the enemy, and nothing is more necessary than maintaining a positive public image of a reasonable, good and moderate Self.

**Key words:** *ontology, epistemology, fanaticism, discourse analysis, representation of extremism, social construction.*

Societies have been fighting different kinds of religious, ideological, political, cultural, racial, ideational or behavioral extremism for centuries. To the 'free world', Soviet Communism represented extremism. For the Soviet Union, extremism could be seen in Mussolini's Fascism, Hitler's Nazism, an *ancient regime* of the Russian Orthodox Church and czarist absolutism, and Western democracy was perceived as a disguise for capitalist exploitation and the injustices of imperialism. In contemporary societies, religious fundamentalists can easily appear as extremists to liberals, defenders of multiculturalism can appear as extremists to nationalists, and 'all-permissive' sexual minorities can appear as extremists to Conservatives. In real life, what seems weird, deviant, negative and extreme for some can for others appear normal, authentic and self-evident.

This paper raises five ontological and four epistemological questions and dilemmas that should be considered and taken into account in an academic

analysis of extremism. The questions raised are accompanied by brief explanations and discussions.

## The Ontology of Extremism

Firstly, *is the definition of extremism subjective, objective or both at the same time?* Is the definition of extremism necessarily dependent on the choice of approach and subjective experience of the definer? Is it possible to identify the essence of extremism objectively, independently of the observer and its subjective social, cultural and political context? Is extremism an essentially disputed concept which lacks universal, timeless and objective meaning,<sup>1</sup> but still retaining a socially shared and culturally common meaning which works in the daily lives of common members of society ‘as if’ it is objective?<sup>2</sup> If extremism cannot be defined objectively and universally, functioning ‘as if’ it is objective on a social level, can social groups and individuals then also have their own subjective definitions of extremism?

Most likely we all have a working definition of extremism that we use when the need arises. Its substantive content is not fixed in itself<sup>3</sup>, it is dynamic and can change according to our social experiences. We know extremism when we see it, and we know extremists when we see them.

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<sup>1</sup> Following Andrew Heywood, the ‘essentially contested concepts’ – such as ‘human rights’, ‘human dignity’, ‘democracy’, ‘equality of rights’, ‘justice’, ‘freedom’ – do not have universal, timeless and objective meaning. Multiple versions of these concepts contest for their meaning, but this does not mean that these concepts are inefficient or futile. Instead, competing versions of the concepts may be equally valid. **Andrew Heywood**. *Key Concepts in Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000, p. 7. Their particular meaning is culture-specific, and is the object of social and political struggles at a global level as well as at lower levels – in a nation state, local communities, and civil associations. When we study the particular political phenomena and processes that these contested concepts refer to we need to take into account the *meanings* that the social actors attach to these concepts.

<sup>2</sup> In order to function effectively, the ‘shared meanings’ in social life do not need unambiguous, explicit and rational definitions. For example, society is considered to be ‘just’ and ‘free’ to the extent that the members of society believe their society to be such, not to the extent to which ‘justice’ and ‘freedom’ can be proven with clarity, evidence and the best rational argumentation available. Faith in ‘justice’ functions efficiently not based on rational persuasion, but on simplifying myths, beliefs and symbols. In a similar way, faith in liberal democracy is maintained by myths like ‘all humans are born equal’, ‘equal opportunities to all’, ‘all citizens can voice their opinions’, ‘people have sovereign power’.

<sup>3</sup> Extremism can be conceptualized as a ‘normatively dependent concept’ which, according to Rainer Forst, obtains a certain content and specifiable limits only by “other normative resources that are not dependent in that same sense.” **Rainer Forst**. *The Limits of Toleration*. – *Constellations*, 3/2004, p. 314. In this perspective, extremism does not gain any specific substantial meaning *before* we have identified to which sphere (political, economic, religious, art, etc.) and to what cause or issue (ideas or behaviors, liberties, rights, justice, violence, war) the concept is applied.

Our working definition of extremism can be as real for us as it is real at the societal and cultural level. We perceive who in our society “here and now” is considered to be an extremist. We may realistically consider the costs when our subjective definition of extremism does not conform to its respective ‘social definition’. In the latter case, our deviant conception may exclude us from fellowship with the ‘normal’. Thus, we may subjectively *share* the ‘social definition’ of extremism, *accommodate* it or consciously *deviate* from it.

To sum up, extremism does not have a universal, objective and undisputed definition. Competing definitions of extremism may, however, be equally valid and ‘functionally objective’ on all levels of culture (society, group and individual). The ‘social definitions’ of extremism do not rule out (deviating and conforming) subjective definitions of extremism by social actors and individuals. Correspondingly, definitions of extremism are social and individual, essentially subjective and contested. Their effectiveness depends on ‘functional objectivity’ (to the extent that they are considered as self-evident descriptions of reality).

Secondly, *what difference does it make when extremism is defined qualitatively (by degree) or quantitatively (by kind)?* From a quantitative perspective, extremism rears its head when something which is normal and healthy in moderate proportions becomes excessive. It is like self-centeredness and nutrition. Both are necessities of life which are natural and healthy to a moderate degree. Its non-existence or lack and its excess or surplus are *both* pathological and deadly. The only healthy way is moderation between both quantitative extremes (absence and excess). Both become consequentially problematic when, instead of being an invigorating way of life, they become mortifying obsessions. Over-eating can be as dangerous as strict fasting and excessive altruism as damaging as an absolute lack of empathy.<sup>4</sup>

From a qualitative perspective, extremism differs from non-extremism in a mutually exclusive way. Extremism is like ‘evil’ or ‘darkness’ which manifests itself only and always when ‘good’ and ‘light’ is absent. There is no ‘good’ in ‘evil’, and where there evil is there is no ‘good’. The only colors are black and white - intermediate and overlapping grey zones are missing, varying shades of grey are not taken into account. With extremists the community of the ‘good’ makes no compromises and signs no secret pacts.

Thirdly, *what difference does it make when the defining opposite of extremism is perceived to be the socio-cultural mainstream, the operative social belief system or moderation?* This is not an exhaustive list of the possible opposites of extremism. Three examples of opposites are sufficient in

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<sup>4</sup> For the ways in which excessive egoism and altruism can become pathological and deadly, see **Emile Durkheim**. *Suicide. – Readings from Emile Durkheim*. Kenneth Thompson (ed.) New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 81–105.

order to demonstrate that the nature of extremism also depends on the choice of its defined opposite.

When extremism is contrasted with the socio-cultural mainstream it is the opposite of what is considered to be *ordinary, common* and *prevalent*. In this way, extremism best characterizes those groups and individuals who are perceived to differ *qualitatively* from the social and cultural mainstream by virtue of their worldviews, beliefs, and lifestyles. The deviant minority culture, group or individual is perceived not to ‘live’, ‘think’, ‘behave’, ‘consume’, ‘entertain itself’ like ‘us all’ (‘us’ can refer symbolically to a culture or group). The related evaluative, emotional and psychological perceptions are strongly qualitative, although these emotions can also emerge *by degree* – groups, individuals and cultures are considered *qualitatively* different to the degree (quantitative aspect) that their ideas and practices *are perceived* (qualitatively) to *deviate* from what is generally accepted within a group or society.

The ideas and practices of the deviant groups do not conform to generally accepted norms. In order to function effectively, however, the deviant groups need an intra-group conformity to their norms. Let us suppose that, in a culture with liberalized sexual mores, a certain segregated religious group practices pre-marital sexual abstinence and considers all extra-marital sexual relations to be unambiguously illegitimate. From the perspective of the dominant social culture, that religious group can reasonably be assumed to consist of moral radicals who follow rigorous, extreme and out-dated – if not gender-discriminative – moral norms. From the perspective of this religious group, however, any culturally ‘normal’ person can be defined as ‘extreme’ and ‘abnormal’ based on intra-group norms and conformity.

One of the problems with any definition of extremism based on opposition to the socio-cultural mainstream is that some of ‘today’s extremists’ will be ‘mainstream heroes tomorrow’. As the beliefs and behavior of the social mainstream vary cross-culturally and are subject to change, these definitions of extremism depend strongly on culture, time and context. Many great leaders of religious, cultural and political change – such as Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King – were considered in their own time and socio-cultural environment as troublemakers who threatened the existing public order. The cultural progress of human society, to paraphrase the renowned observation of John Stuart Mill (*On Liberty*, 1859), has been dependent on extremists who, due to their strength of personality, have been capable of differing from the social mainstream and questioning established traditions and conventions.

Extremism can also be defined as the opposite of that which functions as the normative truth of society. From this perspective, extremism is defined *qualitatively* but the emphasis is more cross-cultural than intra-cultural. For example, in the Soviet Union capitalism was frowned upon significantly

more ‘as an idea’ than as a ‘practice’. The leaders of the Soviet Union, most importantly Lenin and Stalin, believed strongly in industrialization, in economic growth, ‘in capitalism without the capitalist class’, in capitalist modes of raising worker motivation (higher wages, not contribution to some form of socialist ‘common good’ served as an incentive for the workers).<sup>5</sup> Capitalism ‘as an idea’ was stigmatized because it contrasted with Communism ‘as an idea’ and was one of the defining opposites of the socially-shared description of reality.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the social belief systems of contemporary European societies are founded on liberalism, individualism and secularism. Minority cultures with strong kinship bonds, religious values, communitarian organization and patriarchal traditions can therefore function for European social mainstreams as symbolic representatives of a social ‘untruth’ because, within these communities, the kind of individual autonomy and freedom considered fundamental for human happiness and just social order is perceived to be lacking.

Extremism as the opposite of (emotional and behavioral) moderation manifests itself *quantitatively* – normal, healthy and common ideas and behaviors become extreme when they occur in excessive quantities or intensities. As a rule, behaviors are different from ideas and convictions as – in contrast to self-centeredness and nourishment – the *lack* of ideas or the absence of convictions of any intensity is not considered extreme. Ideas and convictions are considered extreme in one direction only, i.e., only when in excess. Yet, regarding behavior and attitudes, the (emotional and psychological) *capabilities* which are negative in excessive proportions are also problematic when lacking.

Imagine an individual who is incapable of being aggressive, arrogant, selfish and intolerant. When this person finds himself in an environment of rivalry or enmity, the absence of such psychological resources (of self-defense, self-expression and self-affirmation) will also undermine his self-confidence, self-esteem and self-identity. An excessive amount of aggression, ego-centrism, arrogance and intolerance or the presence of such attitudes in the emotional environment of friendship and collaboration are quite reasonably considered dysfunctional. Correspondingly, the quantitative moderation is qualified also by the nature of the environment in which one finds oneself.

In a similar way, patriotism (the ‘love of one’s fatherland’, a psychological attachment to a country or a nation) and ethnocentrism (including a distrust of foreigners) are normal to a moderate degree. When these preferential emotional and psychological attitudes towards one’s own political society

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<sup>5</sup> See **Alfred B. Jr. Evans**. *Soviet Marxism-Leninism: The Decline of an Ideology*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1993, pp. 1–5, 17–26, 193–205, 211–223.

<sup>6</sup> The other main defining opposites of Soviet Communism were Fascism, Christianity, Absolutist Monarchy, and Liberal Democracy.

become extreme and aggressive, this excessive feeling of superiority is considered chauvinist, and excessively negative feeling against foreigners is called xenophobia. The point at which ethnocentrism becomes xenophobia is vague and up for debate, but the general pattern still applies. The absence of positively-biased feelings regarding one's country, nation or ethnic community is just as dysfunctional as is an excess thereof.

Similarly, the intent of groups and individuals to voice their opinions, to be of different mind and opinion, to protest, even to harbor discontent and hatred and brood revenge, in themselves are not sufficient reasons why terrorists should be condemned. Individuals and groups may protest against policies, values and norms that they consider unjust. Terrorists simply go too far when using violence against civilians as a weapon of choice.

Fourthly, *what effect does the variation of context have on the essential content of extremism?* The specification of context is important because in different spheres of human action – religious, political, economic, military, artistic, cultural, educational – the definition of 'good' is dependent on the particularities of the professional sphere. Concomitantly, professions do not only have different conceptions of normality, undue excess and extremism, they also have varying professional reasons why behaviors and attitudes that are considered abnormal, extreme, abusive, discriminate or pathological in everyday life become normal for a professionally-defined period, reason and goal. Thus, a dentist may cause pain and drill your teeth in a way that no common man ever legitimately can.

The military is the ultimate sphere where attitudes and behaviors ordinarily considered most abnormal and extreme are 'normalized' for *professional* reasons. The soldier measures up to his profession, when he is physically, psychologically, emotionally and morally capable of doing things that no one can legitimately do in civilian life – to harm, capture and kill.

The definitions of normality and extremist deviances also vary in different forms of human interaction. A father may treat his children in a way in which a teacher cannot treat his students. Similarly, citizens are not expected to accept the laws of government with the same attitude as soldiers who are expected to follow the commands of their officers. A person may move towards extremism simply by behaving professionally outside that behavior's professional sphere – for example, when he behaves like a lieutenant general among friends and relatives. The same thing happens when his behavior deviates from his proper social 'role' (when students teach the teacher in the classroom and teenagers do "the parenting").

Fifthly, *what is the essential relationship between extremist ideas and extremist acts?* Are some beliefs and ideas also deplorable in cases where no extremist act has been committed? The ideas related to ideological racism and holocaust denial are deplorable today as ideas, but both of these ideas have a significant empirical history as their background.

There are two main aspects regarding extremist texts. Firstly, independently of interpreters, the texts themselves do not carry authoritative meaning. For instance, the Christian Bible is believed to carry a message that is either directly or indirectly in accordance with tolerance, democracy, human rights and gender equality. The actual text, however, does not include any references to these ideas. The literal message of the Bible is illiberal and strongly advocates slavery, capital punishment and patriarchy. The text of the Bible has been the same for more than seventeen centuries. It has not changed. The message and meaning of the text, however, have significantly altered because of the changes in values, perceptions and preferences of those reading it.

Secondly, when any text is defined and denounced as being extremist the definition of extremism is inevitably dependent on the cultural particulars and on the perspective of a specific social actor. For example, when Ayatollah Khomeini denounced Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* the text itself could hardly contain any extremist messages for non-Muslims or have any extremist consequences in non-Islamic cultures. Additionally, when Ayatollah Khomeini issued his fatwa he was a social actor whose cultural and political authority were dependent on an authoritative interpretation of a religious tradition that was directly disputed and questioned by Salman Rushdie's work.

The Old Testament of the Christian Bible includes hundreds of examples of divinely-legitimized violence which by contemporary standards would be considered crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and genocide, yet these passages can often be more effective and functional than the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament which denounces all physical violence. For example, in pre-combat religious services soldiers can be inspired by the image of Joshua and Caleb conquering the Promised Land. In pre-battle situations the message of the Sermon on the Mount would be out of place. Correspondingly, it is not their objective content that makes these texts functional but the extent to which they undermine or support the aspirations and causes of groups and societies.

### **The Epistemology of Extremism**

Firstly, *why is the same type of commitment selectively categorized as extremist and non-extremist?* For example, a commitment to non-violent conflict resolution in the Sudan, or to gender equality in the Congo, can be as uncompromising and principled an objective as that of any religious fundamentalist or ideological terrorist. The devotion and commitment of the young Martin Luther King to reforming the cultural norms of his society did not differ in intensity from that of later fundamentalists and were just as much at

odds with the operative cultural values of the day. Fundamentalists are easily labeled as extremists, yet Martin Luther King is hardly, if at all, described as one. Can it then be that we who evaluate Martin Luther King positively *today* – his aspirations and legacy – also describe his strong devotion and commitment in positive terms? Similarly, when we do not support fundamentalist aspirations and values we are inclined to use negative concepts in the ‘analyses’ of fundamentalism.

To illustrate this point, let us reflect for a moment on the use of the concept ‘fanaticism’ that is closely related to ‘extremism’. Both ‘fanaticism’ and ‘extremism’ refer *primarily to a nature of commitment* (intense commitment and strong convictions related to a certain cause) *not to the substantive content of the cause or goal of the commitment*. In a literal sense, ‘extremism’ itself carries the meaning of ‘pushing to the limit’ or ‘being at the edge’; ‘fanaticism’ refers to extraordinary devotion.

Most of the possible meanings of ‘fanaticism’ overlap with the above-mentioned definitions of ‘extremism’. Unlike ‘extremism’, however, ‘fanaticism’ is more often used in a positive sense, especially outside the political and religious sphere. We can all be ‘fanatics’ (‘fans’) of a certain style of music or literature, entertainment, hobby or sport. Ardent ‘fans’ of Britney Spears or Elvis Presley are not customarily called ‘extremists’. Fans of a football club can engage in significant street violence and the devoted members of a racist group may never enact their violent ideas, yet the latter will be called ‘extremists’, and the former not. Why?

The use of the label of ‘extremism’ is not the outcome of the amount of actual violence perpetrated or the *nature of commitment*, but arises simply because we evaluate football positively and racism negatively. We use *negative concepts* for actors who engage in causes that we evaluate negatively in the first place.

We may also have negative feelings towards fans of an opposing football team or towards those who prefer kinds of music and entertainment that we dislike. Our ‘opponents’ can actually be as devoted to their preferences as we are to ours. But we do not call them ‘extremists’.

One of the reasons why we mostly hear this discourse about extremism in the sphere of politics – and in situations where religion mixes with politics or politics mixes with religion – may be that our ‘opponents’ are more easily defined as enemies in politics – especially in global and national politics – than in sports or entertainment. In politics, hundreds of millions of Europeans can share the feeling of threat, a common understanding of the enemy, and thus can be united against a common enemy. In the sphere of entertainment, the preferences of these same Europeans are enormously diverse, divergent, contradictory and disintegrated. Anyone who tries to define all the myriad opponents of his preferred football and basketball clubs, actors, artists, singers and producers as enemies will soon find they

have not only multiple enemies but may also end up with no friends or allies at all since our multiple preferences do not mutually overlap.

Thus, we tend to use positive concepts (such as enthusiastic, committed, resolved, purposeful) for phenomena, persons and groups that we like and reserve negative concepts for those we dislike, yet the terms we use actually describe the same kinds of attitudes and the same intensity of conviction in both cases. If so, then the ‘goodness’ and ‘normality’ of groups and individuals depend on those who define them as such.

Women, Blacks, Aborigines, Indians, peasants and workers have all historically been considered to be inferior in nature, being described in such terms as violent, greedy, envious, dissatisfied, ignorant or irrational. Today such classifications sound discriminatory and lacking in sufficient evidence, but derogatory concepts for classifying particular types of people are still used. For example, the (religious and/or ideological) representatives of international terrorism are often depicted as ‘hating’ Western values and freedoms, as being ‘aggressive’ and ‘violent’. But can the representatives of international terrorism be considered the type of people who are *qualitatively different from all the rest of humanity*? If they are quantitatively different, does the evidence show that they use more violence than is being used against them? Or are they *qualitatively* different from those who *lead the fight against them*? Or is this confrontation *constructed* ‘as if’ it is between qualitatively different opponents? The latter case seems most likely because both parties perceive their cause to be legitimate and both justify the use of violence by invoking the right to self-defense. Extraordinary commitment and motivation do not only characterize those active in the global terrorism network. Self-confidence, resolve, courage, confidence in the justness of the cause, the readiness to use extraordinary measures and an uncompromising determination to enforce its will over the enemy until the enemy is eradicated from all corners of the world are all qualities that have also been expressed in the *fight against terrorism*.<sup>7</sup>

The qualitative difference – both use violence and are willing to enforce its will over the enemy – does not unambiguously distinguish between pro-terror forces and the coalition against terrorism. The context of war, however, differs explicitly from the atmosphere that friends enjoy during a Friday night feast. Enemies do not relate to each other in the same way friends or rivals do. They do not apply the same standards of evaluation for themselves and the enemy. Correspondingly, our attitudes differ according to the specific environment in which our social interactions take place.

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<sup>7</sup> According to Douglas Pratt, the commitment to the fight against terror during the presidency of George W. Bush corresponded to all the general characteristics of fanaticism. **Douglas Pratt**, Religion and Terrorism: Christian Fundamentalism and Extremism. – Terrorism and Political Violence, 3/2010, p. 439.

In a similar way, when we publicly discuss appropriate attitudes and behavior regarding the intolerant – how intolerant can we legitimately be against the intolerant? – we also assume that our behavior towards others depends on the way others behave towards us. To be tolerant with the tolerant seems appropriate. To be tolerant with the intolerant and to remain a non-violent pacifist when faced with a violent terrorist seems inappropriate. If intolerance is a functionally effective way of reacting to the intolerant, should we also be extremist against the extremists? Looking back to post-9/11 reactions to international terrorism, this question does not sound purely rhetorical.

By now we know that, when dealing with terrorists and with those who take hostages and present political demands to the United States, the American administration refuses to communicate with them. They were prepared to talk and negotiate with the leader of North Korea, but for the leader of al-Qaeda they conducted a hunt to the death. Not because of what al-Qaeda is or strives for, but primarily because al-Qaeda is the present enemy.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it is hotly disputed whether we can talk about extremists or extremism before first identifying who the enemy is. We know that one man's hero (freedom-fighter) is another man's extremist (terrorist). Today's ally may be tomorrow's enemy.

Therefore, people cannot be objectively classified as extremists in the same way that they can be classified by gender or skin color. Yet the capabilities, skills and character traits of an extremist may be stronger in some individuals than in others. If we imagine a continuum of character traits and skills that differentiate between the common man and extremists then it seems obvious that those who hold professional positions of leadership are closer to extremism since they need to be rigorous, authoritarian and enforce discipline if need be. The skills required of a leader differ significantly from those expected of followers. A leader's commitment and belief in the mission and vision of an organization is not only expected to be significantly stronger, but his confidence is also expected to spill over to his followers. Accordingly, in managing organizations and enterprises, the character traits and attitudes usually evaluated negatively in common human interaction may be considered positive attributes of leadership. The risk-taking entrepreneur

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<sup>8</sup> Shadia Drury argues that Al Qaeda is defined by the notion of 'terrorism' instead of 'freedom fighter' not because of the violence it has promoted or the goals it has, but primarily because it has been defined as the enemy. **Shadia Drury**. *Terrorism: From Samson to Atta*. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 1&2/2003, pp. 1-12. This observation gives vital analytical insight into the ways in which an enemy is constructed and depicted discursively. In empirical reality, Al Qaeda *has become* the enemy and *has acted* like the enemy, and the relationship between Western states and Al Qaeda takes place in an environment of enmity and war. Consequently, in this environment of war it is customary for both sides to paint confrontation as a cosmic war between good and evil.

is evaluated positively for being a go-getter, his self-centered ambition for personal material gain and courage are judged by different standards from those applied to general laborers or common people. Additionally, followers would stop being ‘good followers’, and subjects ‘good subjects’ if they acquired the kind of ambition and self-centeredness required of a successful businessman or the ability to enforce discipline on others required of an efficient manager.

As mentioned above, extremist attitudes take on the most positive meanings in places where the fight with extremists takes place most directly. More than in any other profession, soldiers active in military conflict have to master the skills and attitudes that characterize the extremist. Any soldier incapable of going beyond moderation cannot be effective in a combat situation.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, *can extremism be considered to be a general human psychological character trait and emotional skill that potentially exists in all of us?* What if extremism is like ambition, courage and fear? To a certain extent, some courage, ambition and fear should exist in every person. Individuals can also be bold and ambitious selectively – a self-confident lawyer may feel uncomfortable on the dance floor or a skillful organizational manager might fear commitment to a close relationship. Additionally, in our daily conversations we rhetorically refer to some individuals ‘as if’ they *are* ambitious, bold or cowardly people. Such conversations can be simultaneously metaphorical and real – we know that these labels do not comprehensively describe these people but, perhaps depending on the specific topic of conversation, these concepts do describe to a significant extent what *we* consider these respective people *to be*.

If this is indeed the case, then our discourse need not demonstrate the general qualitative or quantitative differences extremism/extremists exhibit. It suffices that we know in what respects the related groups or individuals are considered to be extremists, by whom and from which perspective.

In addition, there are situations that *require* extremist measures. All people possess the survival instinct. In the event of aggression, individuals and societies have not only the right but also the duty to defend themselves. The legitimacy of measures taken in self-defense are directly dependent upon the degree and intensity of the perceived danger. It is usually inappropriate to physically attack those who harm our self-esteem emotionally and

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<sup>9</sup> Barry Paskins contrasts extremism with moderation and argues that moderation is a very questionable guideline in any form of human relations. Moderation is particularly ineffective in military conflict where moral attitudes normally considered as extreme and fanatical, such as “courage, resolution, determination, decisiveness, ruthlessness” take on a positive meaning. **Barrie Paskins**. *Fanaticism in the Modern Era. – Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age*. Matthew Hughes, Gaynor Johnson (eds.) London: Frank Cass, 2004, p. 8.

verbally. In times of war, the use of physical violence against your enemy is legitimate. Thus, the legitimacy of extreme actions and measures depends on the extremeness of the situation. Irrespective of whether it be an individual, group, society or state which feels the urgent need for self-defense against external aggression, the situation itself justifies such forms of intolerance, hatred, aggression, fanaticism and violence that would not be considered legitimate or appropriate under ordinary circumstances.

From this perspective, we cannot appropriately deem groups or individuals to be 'good' or 'bad' when evaluating situations in which they have demonstrated anger, intolerance, aggression or fanaticism without any knowledge of the specific reasons why. Negative feelings (fear, hatred, anger) are as much a part of human existence as positive ones. By this token, the capacity for negative feelings in extreme situations, and for taking extreme measures when our existence is threatened, is perfectly healthy and normal.

Alas, all parties in human conflicts do not evaluate conflict situations objectively. As injustice and oppression in human interaction function emotionally (not rationally) and are perceived and interpreted subjectively (not objectively) – and given also the presence of injustice – the status of victimhood and the justification of the ways and means of resistance are contested.

Let us consider the hypothetical case of school violence. Let us suppose that there is one victim and several (direct or indirect) aggressors (as is most often the case). The victim has sustained substantial verbal and emotional abuse, and some physical violence. What can the victim do? Firstly, he can internally reinterpret the whole situation and give his suffering a positive spin. For example, he could meditate over selected verses from the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>10</sup> Most likely, however, this strategy will be of no help in ending the violence. The victim did not start the violence and can hardly end it by meditating. Secondly, if he does not believe in the message of Jesus Christ he may instead rely on rational argumentation and try to persuade the perpetrator(s) of this violence to accept their (objective) responsibility for the negative actions and resulting suffering. If the perpetrators perceive accurately what they are doing – and, as rational persons, they could – the realisation of their responsibility and guilt should lead them to repentance

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<sup>10</sup> The Sermon on the Mount helps to give meaning to suffering primarily in two ways. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King were encouraged to take the stand of *non-violent resistance*. In this perspective, the injustice experienced is wrong in principle and cannot be passively accepted. The other perspective glorifies suffering and encourages the passive acceptance of it especially in passages which speak about the blessedness of the meek and the persecuted and encourage us to love our enemies. In the latter perspective, the focus is exclusively on how well a blessed person *reacts*. The external suffering cannot be changed, eliminated or avoided. The external suffering is considered a constant.

and abandonment of violence because power in interpersonal relations has always functioned more emotionally than rationally<sup>11</sup>. It is not very likely, however, that those who dominate and discriminate would voluntarily give up their privileges simply because of rational argument. Thereafter the victim can use some other 'decent' and 'civilized' forms of self-expression. He can jump and dance, he may sing John Lennon's "Imagine", but to no avail. Instead, any emotional change from the previous submissive acceptance of violence can be interpreted by the public and perpetrators as a rebellion against the role and status of victim. Any emotional change within the victim can redefine the whole situation and thus threaten the *status quo* of this relationship. If the victim changes his emotional stance and the perpetrators do not increase the violence against him, they can try to discourage him simply by ridiculing the behavioral and attitudinal change within the victim.

This story is hypothetical and could continue or end in different ways. But it helps to understand that neither the perpetrators nor the victim perceive the situation objectively or rationally. If the victim has emotionally cast off the role of victim, if his self-expression no longer manifests a victim mentality, this behavioral change is often in itself *interpreted* as being emotionally or physically aggressive *by public and perpetrators alike*. Protests in the form of rebellion of the poor, a peasant's revolution, worker's strikes, protests of underpaid workers, demonstrations of cultural and sexual minorities, etc., have all often been interpreted as expressions of negative attitudes or character traits. The poor are represented as innately envious while the pursuit of profit is the virtue of the rich, the powerless are seen as violent by nature, the strong as defenseless and the weak as oppressive.

Objectively, there are situations where extreme reactions are appropriate. Human interaction, however, is interpreted subjectively from multiple perspectives. Consequently, resisting or rebelling against the *status quo*, even when subjectively perceived to be oppressive and unjust, may invite the labels and accusations of extremism.

Thirdly, *an epistemological difficulty also arises due to significant changes in the objects that the term extremism has been referring to*. Some centuries ago, Republicans and Democrats were extremists due to their belief in equality at birth. Today it would be abnormal to argue that humans are born unequal. This, however, was a self-evident truth not only for monarchists and absolutists but also for their loyal subjects. Today, the fundamental 'good' in our social status is based on the ideals of human rights and personal freedom. Centuries ago our forefathers did not believe in human rights

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<sup>11</sup> Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann pointedly expressed the common wisdom that "He who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definitions of reality." Berger, Luckmann 1991, p. 127.

and did not ‘know’ how to feel ‘relatively deprived’ by the lack of citizens’ rights.

How can we effectively make sense of the dynamic variation and mutation of those values and beliefs on which the working definitions of extremism have been normatively dependent? A particular difficulty arises in the Western world where it has become an unwritten rule to believe that bad and evil things – be they slavery, serfdom, theocracy, caesaropapism, clericalism, Communism, racialism, genocide, absolutism, fascism, patriarchy, to name but a few – all happened in the past. This kind of constructionist representation of the past can be functionally effective in the present.<sup>12</sup> The more we condemn the social and ideological order of the past – and when we condemn we are accustomed to condemning holistically and absolutely<sup>13</sup> – the more granted and self-evident becomes the inherent goodness of the present liberal, democratic society (the latter functions also holistically, society “as it is” is today better than ever before). While this kind of attitude is functional for us today, paradoxically *we thereby do condemn as evil or bad* also many beliefs and ideas which our forefathers believed to be ‘normal’ and ‘good’.

From a larger perspective, our present conceptions of ‘good’ are related to our own time and space. In our social environment these conceptions are not functionally relativist, they are *real*. It is therefore easy to fail to recognize how these conceptions have continuously been changed, revised and amended. For example, in Soviet society unemployment was considered to be ‘an unnecessary evil’. All adults had to be gainfully employed. *Any* level of unemployment was a problem that had to be eradicated. The presence of *any* unemployment was considered to be an evil curable by human efforts. In contemporary free market societies unemployment is like the slavery of past societies. There were better and worse slave masters, and there are better and worse places to be unemployed. Slavery in itself was a natural – although usually a minor – part of the system of economic production. Similarly, unemployment is in itself an inseparable part of the functioning of a free market. The total elimination of unemployment – which in Soviet societies was unambiguously a virtue – has become *a negative deed* for the economic system. Those inspired to eliminate unemployment once were heroes but today can be considered to be extremists.

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<sup>12</sup> I call it ‘construction of the past’ because the related holistic negative representations of past social orders are not only upheld as ideas, these images are also ‘kept alive’ and socially reproduced by public rituals where, for example, the atrocities and crimes against humanity of Nazism and Communism are continuously remembered.

<sup>13</sup> For example, Nazism and Communism are condemned as ‘failed ideas’ *in toto*. Retrospectively, Communists are not praised for spreading mass education and ensuring medical care for all, or Nazis for economic efficiency.

Fourthly, *can extremism also be analyzed 'within the observer', within the analyst? Should we analyze the extremism contained in the act of studying extremism?* To some degree, the academic arguments depend on the ideological preferences of the scholars concerned. For example, evaluations of the legitimacy of religious argumentation in the public sphere are often dependent on subjective religious or ideological preferences. Additionally, we are all influenced consciously or subconsciously by our cultural environment and geopolitical position on the world map. Correspondingly, we as scholars know without any solid evidence or rational argumentation that non-European immigration into Europe *is* a valid and important research topic; whereas the validity of European emigration to any other part of the world is, as a research topic, scarcely important. Thus, we are already subjectively biased and culturally influenced to some extent. Our perception of the world, especially when we understand it in terms of 'good' and 'bad' (the discourse about extremism is part of it), cannot be objective.

It could be speculated that extremism within the scholar becomes explicit to the extent that one can sense one's own normative and subjective, religious or ideological preferences that are not supported by evidence or facts. That could be said to be extremist because it is opposed to what is customarily considered as 'normal' academic research. The abovementioned subjective preferences, however, may not be considered extremist if they conform to widespread perceptions.

Additionally, in social and humanitarian sciences many social facts cannot be explained or interpreted consensually. Thus, scholars lack consensus on whether modernization – especially late modernization – is accompanied by secularization, or whether global conflicts are based on clashes of civilizations.

As extremism cannot be defined objectively and without the subjective perspective of any particular observer, extremism within the scholar cannot be unambiguously identified either. A similar "rule of thumb" helps to determine the chances of being labeled as an extremist in social and political as well as in academic interaction. As long as we do not question prevalent understandings and shared cultural beliefs, the chances of us being labeled as extremists are low. The more we question established understandings and the present state of affairs – it does not make much difference if we question the universality and objectivity of the present order by postmodern approaches, or if we identify something positive in the Christian-feudal, Fascist or Communist societies – the more our analyses and argumentation will be deemed to be extremist. The 'extremist' appearance of our argumentation will not be dependent on its rational and logical content or the adequacy of the evidence provided. In every effectively functioning society, the society itself – its present order, values, beliefs and state of affairs – is considered self-evidently 'good', without doubt and without question. Correspondingly, even rational,

accurate and logical common-sense appraisals of the state of affairs are more likely to be labeled as extremist than irrational, deficient and illogical praise thereof.

## Conclusions

There is nothing objective and timeless that can be defined as extremist as a behavior, goal, value or ideal. Extremism as a concept and phenomenon functions in human interaction as follows. Firstly, enemies are identified. Thereafter, psychological attitudes – which essentially function similarly in all of us – are formed negatively towards these enemies. In this way the willingness of self-sacrifice for the sake of our country or for the values of our civilization are described by terms like ‘patriotism’, ‘obligation’ and ‘commitment’, as metaphorical heroic deeds before our ancestors and future generations. We define any similar attitude we observe in our enemies as blind faith, manipulation and extremism. We are resolved and determined, whilst our enemies are brainwashed. We are afraid, threatened and bring justice to our enemies, whereas our enemies hate us and all our values. We use violence in self-defense, our enemies seek to kill the innocent. We have good intentions even when our policies have negative results. The feelings and attitudes within us and our enemies are the same, it is only the labels that are different.

This ambiguity characterizes not only extremism but also the use of violence, coercion, and war. Taken over a longer historical perspective, the use of violence and the occurrence of wars cannot be considered as objectively negative phenomena. The nature of the results of war and violence have been dependent on the parties involved. Humanity has so far been managing *better* with the temporary use of such instruments of power. Most certainly, the use of violent means will also fulfill significant positive roles in the future.

Since extreme circumstances and situations require extreme measures and attitudes, the concept of extremism itself is Machiavellian in its use in two significant respects.

Firstly, in cases where extremism produces effective results, not only does extremism lose its negative connotations but this situation also *requires* the *capability* (Machiavellian *virtu*) of being extreme. Secondly, one needs to be capable of extremism, if need be, yet there is nothing more useful than demonizing the enemy, and nothing is more necessary than maintaining a positive public image of a reasonable, good and moderate Self. Societies have been standing up to various enemies throughout history – Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, Muslims, Jews, Americans, Arabs, heretics, the working class, peasants, Capitalists, Communists, Fascists, Multiculturalists, Secularists, Racists, to name but a few. Political enemies

have changed – some have died, some have been born, others have been resurrected from the past. Our demons have always been around, however. Why? Because demons fulfill a positive social function. A common enemy and a shared fear unite us. Without such enemies society would quickly disintegrate because, as noted by Eric Hoffer, unless we are united by a common fear we tend to keep ourselves to ourselves and end up becoming rivals and competitors with each other.<sup>14</sup>

In our daily lives we should carefully consider whether the type of environment we are in is neutral or hostile, friendly or competitive, full of struggle or of war, and should modify our attitudes accordingly. All these types of environments exist in interpersonal, intergroup, social and political relations. If we do not recognize them for what they are we may suffer. If others misperceive their environment, they may suffer too.

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<sup>14</sup> **Eric Hoffer.** The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements. New York: Harper & Row, 2010, p. 93.



**PART I:  
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**



# THE MANY FACES OF FANATICISM

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**ABSTRACT.** The article presents fanaticism as a universal phenomenon that can manifest itself in almost every sphere of human activity. Although many expressions of fanaticism are negative and destructive, some can be almost neutral or even positive. The article describes the characteristics of the fanatic and explains some factors that predispose people towards fanatical behavior. It also highlights some differences between fundamentalism and fanaticism which can sometimes seem quite similar. Describing fanaticism in its multi-faceted nature, the article aims to show the reader that fanaticism is a much wider phenomenon than sometimes thought.

**Key words:** *fanaticism, fanatic, fanatical behaviour, fandom, fundamentalism, ideology, propaganda, mass movements.*

On April 14<sup>th</sup> 2010 the lead singer and bassist of gothic metal band Type O Negative, Peter Steele (birth name Petrus T. Ratajczyk), unexpectedly died. Being only 48 years old, his death came as a shock to many of his devoted fans. Three days later a video was published on Youtube.com which claimed to be the last interview with Steele but it turned out to be an imposter making fun of the deceased musician.<sup>1</sup> As Steele was known for his self-deprecating sense of humour, the video would probably not have caused any kind of outrage if it had come out during his lifetime. Now, though, it was a case of defaming an idol. The video was met with a barrage of negative comments which, along with some death threats to the author, included among other violent wishes the following comments (original quotes): “May you lose a dear friend to an agonizing death”, “PLEASE HANG YOURSELF and post – tonight”, “I look forward to hearing about your horrible accident when Karma comes knocking,” etc. At the same time, there were also several fans who thought that Peter Steele himself would have appreciated the joke.

For Mario Balotelli, a young football star, the spring of 2010 was similarly problematic. As a member of the Italian top football club Milano Inter he managed to anger fans by throwing his football top on the ground just after the UEFA Champions League game. Some fans loosened the screws of his car

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<sup>1</sup> **Jonathanfallen.** Peter Steele of Type O Negative last interview. YouTube. 17 April 2010. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNf6wiP01f4>>, (accessed March 26, 2011).

wheels in revenge. Fortunately Balotelli noticed this before getting into his car, possibly saving his own life in the process.<sup>2</sup>

In March of 2001 the armies of the Taliban set out to demolish sacred statues in Afghanistan because they considered them idols. Among other vandalized statues, some very famous ancient Buddha statues in Bamiyan Province were almost totally demolished.

What do all of these expressions of violence have in common? They were more or less the result of human fanaticism. According to legend, Czech reformer Jan Hus, while being burned at the stake, saw an elderly woman adding brushwood to his pile and exclaimed, “*O sancta simplicitas!*”<sup>3</sup> However simple fanatical people might seem to us, sometimes their actions can have very serious consequences. What exactly is this fanaticism that makes people react in ways they normally never would?

### About the meaning and usage of the term

The terms *fanaticism* and *fanatic* come from the Latin adverb *fānāticē* (frenziedly, ragingly) and the adjective *fānāticus* (enthusiastic, ecstatic; raging, fanatical, furious). The adjective is based on the noun *fānum* (place dedicated to a deity, holy place; sanctuary, temple). We also find some similarity to those terms in the verb *fānō* (devote).<sup>4</sup> Combining together the noun *fānum* and adjective *fānāticus*, the term *fanatic* is understood as, for example, “a temple devotee who is orgiastic, inspired, frantic or frenzied”.<sup>5</sup> Professor of Political Studies Dominique Colas who has studied tensions between civil society and fanaticism has described fanatics quite succinctly, deriving from the etymology of the term: “*fanatic* is always *profaning*: attacking the temples, polluting the relics, defying the taboos, and cursing the gods of the “other” – shitting [*sic*] in the pope’s tiara, a commonplace in anti-Catholic engravings of the Reformation period.”<sup>6</sup> From explanatory dictionaries we can take for example Webster’s which describes a fanatic as “a person with

<sup>2</sup> Haige värk: Interi poolehoidjad üritasid tappa klubi ründajat. Delfi. 02 May 2010. <<http://sport.delfi.ee/news/jalgpall/maailm/haige-vark-interi-poolehoidjad-uritasid-tappa-klubi-rundajat.d?id=30798683>>, (accessed March 26, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Latin quote meaning, ‘*Oh, holy simplicity!*’.

<sup>4</sup> Terms and their translations are taken from Kleis, R; Torpats, Ü; Gross, L; Freymann, H. *Ladina-eeesti sõnaraamat*. Tallinn: Valgus, 2002, lk 442.

<sup>5</sup> Hughes, M; Johnson, G. *Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age*. London & New York: Frank Cass, 2005, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Colas, D. *Civil Society and Fanaticism: Conjoined Histories*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 5. In this quote among other “fanatics” there is a reference to the iconoclasts during the Reformation period who destroyed paintings and sculptures in Catholic churches; for that reason Luther, Melancton and others called them fanatics in their writings.

an extreme and uncritical enthusiasm or zeal, as in religion or politics”.<sup>7</sup> Psychologist of religion Tõnu Lehtsaar has defined the term *fanaticism* as “[t]he pursuit or defence of something in an extreme and passionate way that goes beyond normality. Religious fanaticism is defined by blind faith, the persecution of dissents and the absence of reality.”<sup>8</sup> Lehtsaar has explained *extreme* and *extremity* in this context as the following: “Differing from balance. Extremity does not indicate something different in principle but different in degree, intensity, frequency or importance. Extremity does not indicate qualitative but quantitative differences.”<sup>9</sup> According to Christopher C. Harmon fanaticism “involves great energy, single-minded direction and a lack of any restraint or moderation. It is characterised by extremes of effort and fervour of intensity.”<sup>10</sup>

The book “Civil Society and Fanaticism: Conjoined Histories” by Dominique Colas gives an overview of the usage of the term *fanaticism* in a historical perspective. I will only use a few examples from it here. According to the book, Cicero (106–43 BCE) and Juvenal (c. 60 – c. 140) used *fānāticus* as a synonym for *superstitious* or *raving*.<sup>11</sup> In 17<sup>th</sup> century England religious visionaries were stigmatized with the terms *fanatic* and *enthusiast*.<sup>12</sup> English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) understood the term fanatic as someone who is *intolerant* and this is also one main meaning of the term today.<sup>13</sup> During the same period in continental Europe it designated an aggressive, religious zealot.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time it needs to be pointed out that the labelling of dissidents and those who differ with terms like “fanatic” or similar is often strongly related to the prejudices of those who apply such labels. A partisan can appear to be a terrorist in the eyes of his/her enemies but in the eyes of his/her supporters they are a freedom fighter, this also often being the case with “fanatics”. Furthermore, someone who labels particular groups as “fanatics”

<sup>7</sup> **Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language**. New York: Gramercy Books, 1996, p. 697.

<sup>8</sup> **Lehtsaar, T.** Äärmusliku usugrupi psühholoogia. Tartu: Tõnu Lehtsaar kirjastus, 1997, lk 9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> **Harmon, C. C.** Fanaticism and Guerrilla Warfare in the Late Twentieth Century. – Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age. M. Hughes, G. Johnson (eds.). London & New York: Frank Cass, 2005, p. 101.

<sup>11</sup> **Colas** 1997, p. 372.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> **Hughes, Johnson** 2005, p. 1. Zealots were members of a Jewish patriotic party during the first century CE who resisted the Roman occupation and used terror and violence to achieve their goals. They had a leading role in the first Jewish-Roman War (66–70) and their fanatical rebellion against the Romans led to the destruction of Jerusalem by Roman forces. From their name comes the noun *zealot* which has become a synonym for *fanatic*.

may happen to be a fanatic him/herself, as was the case with Luther. He considered iconoclasts and activists of the Peasant War (1524–25) as fanatics, yet in his writings he himself called for the destruction of the Catholic church (in 1520), for bloodily suppressing the peasant revolt (in 1525) and for setting fire to Jewish synagogues and schools (in 1543).<sup>15</sup>

The tendency to regard as fanatics those whose beliefs and practices differ should not discourage us from using this term. Suicide terrorists and their supporters can think their motives highly virtuous and moral when they blow themselves up alongside “enemy” civilians. But this does not mean that we should give up using the term *terrorist* and replace it, for example, with milder terms like *martyr*, or *freedom fighter*. So it is with the word *fanatic*. The term *terrorist* has certain specific meanings and in a similar way we can point out at least some hallmarks that differentiate fanaticism from, for example, the normal enthusiasm that can preoccupy anyone when they engage in a hobby or some other compelling activity.

The term *fanaticism* has sometimes been used in too broad a sense in common usage and even in scientific literature, so it has become a label even for activities that could be defined more adequately by other terms. For that reason, some claim that the term *fanatic* is useless.<sup>16</sup> Tõnu Lehtsaar has encountered similar problems when mapping religious fundamentalism. He admits, that “[f]or a better understanding of fundamentalism this term needs to be more precisely defined”.<sup>17</sup> So he asks: “How to discern between devotion, fanaticism and fundamentalism?”<sup>18</sup> In my opinion it is not wise to throw out the existing “baby” with the “bath water”, but to try to describe this “baby” even if this description is not always differential because its traits sometimes coincide with other “babies”. One of my aims when preparing for this article was to chart the nature of fanaticism and distinguish it from, for example, fundamentalism that has also evolved from the original narrow term into something much wider.

When speaking about *fanaticism* it is necessary to mention the “relative” of the term *fandom* that has been used primarily in the sphere of entertainment.

<sup>15</sup> Colas 1997, p. xix.

<sup>16</sup> Bryan, D. Fanatics, Mobs and Terrorists: The Dynamics of Orange Parades in Northern Ireland. – Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age. M. Hughes, G. Johnson (eds.). London & New York: Frank Cass, 2005, p. 154. Bryan questions the usage of the term *fanatic*, because he thinks that this is not a useful term for describing behavior. He claims that we like to use it as a label for violent human acts that we don’t like to consider a part of the “normal” social world. So he asks, are all soldiers willing to die for their country not fanatics because there is “excessive enthusiasm” and “uncritical devotion” in their behaviour, qualities that are often ascribed to fanatics? (*Ibid.*).

<sup>17</sup> Lehtsaar, T. Usulisest fundamentalismist religioonipsühholoogi pilguga. – Usuteaduslik Ajakiri, No. 59, 2009, lk 30.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Devoted supporters of a sport, athlete, sport club, game, musician, band, actor, or other similar attraction are usually called *fans*. A fan can be loyal and devoted without having a fanatical attitude but the inclination towards fanaticism is sometimes also found specifically among fans. For example, there is nothing exceptional about a fan trying to identify her/himself with the object of her/his fandom by wearing the same style of clothes or by associating her/himself with her/his idol with special tattoos. At the same time we can take as an extreme example a fan of the now deceased pop musician Michael Jackson who has undergone several surgical operations in order to look like his idol.<sup>19</sup> In this case we are probably dealing with fanatical identification with the object of devotion. There is also an intersection with religious fanaticism here when we think, for example, about ritual crucifixions in the Philippines.<sup>20</sup> In team sports fan culture is characterized, for example, by wearing clothes with club symbols and by attending if possible every match the club plays. But fandom takes on fanatical proportions when the fans can no longer tolerate the idea that the other teams can also have their fan base, when they start to use violence against players and fans of opposing teams or when all of their life and self-identity is focused around the avidly-supported club. So there is nothing odd when fans feel anger if someone from their favourite club goes over to another club, but the situation takes a more serious turn if s/he is beaten up or receives death threats from fans because of his/her decisions.

Before we look at the characteristics by which fanatics are usually described we need to consider the following:

**1) Fanaticism is a universal phenomenon.** Even if fanaticism has been most commonly associated with religion and politics it can be found in almost every sphere of human activity including social activism, the military and entertainment (for instance, some so-called *football hooligans*<sup>21</sup>). Certain social environments can induce fanatical behaviour (for example, some religious sects, totalitarian regimes, intense fighting situations during war, etc.) but it seems that fanaticism is mostly related to certain personalities, which means that some people are more predisposed to fanaticism than others. Of course this does not imply that a person with a so-called “calm nature” cannot be shaped

<sup>19</sup> Hills, M. Michael Jackson Fans on Trial? “Documenting” Emotivism and Fandom in *Wacko About Jacko*. – Social Semiotics, Vol. 17, No. 4, December 2007, p. 471.

<sup>20</sup> Although disapproved of by local churches, every spring at Easter some volunteers let themselves be whipped and then nailed to crosses for a few minutes, trying to imitate the suffering of Jesus.

<sup>21</sup> Not every “football hooligan” is a fanatic. Some may find a football stadium the “perfect place” for releasing their violent emotions but violent behaviour is not synonymous with fanaticism, although in some cases the latter can induce the former.

into a fanatic. What makes fanaticism universal is that it is related to human traits so it can be found in almost any activity where people are involved.

**2) Fanaticism is not always a negative phenomenon.** There is an expression that has been ascribed to Voltaire (although he never said this in his writings, but it fittingly summarizes his attitude toward freedom of speech): “I disapprove of what you say but I will defend to the death your right to say it.” Here we do not find the conviction of having absolute truth that characterizes the fanatic, yet there is a fanatical fighting attitude for freedom of speech in this saying. In a similar manner someone can fanatically defend someone else’s rights and could even be ready to die for them. Harmon gives an example of the religious fervor of an ascetic or spiritual teacher that can be considered peculiar to his contemporaries but can be seen as an example of a virtuous person for future generations.<sup>22</sup> Thus fanaticism can be either good or bad depending on how and for what reasons someone acts fanatically<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Harmon 2005, p. 101.

<sup>23</sup> As a positive example, we can take the French philosopher and social activist Simone Weil (1909–43), who displayed her fanaticism through the need to participate in the suffering of others. (When taking her as an example, I focus only on those circumstances where she manifested her extreme behaviour and I leave out other important facts in her biography.) While being naturally inclined to extremes, she already showed strong feelings of empathy towards the suffering of others during her childhood when she gave up her share of sugar during the First World War, at the age of six, to send it to the soldiers who suffered at the battle front. When she was acquiring her qualification as a teacher of philosophy in the École Normale Supérieure she voluntarily lived in extreme austerity and poverty, offering her bed to poorer students while she slept on the floor. When she worked as a teacher of philosophy, over and above her vocation she laboured with the unemployed in stone-breaking, sharing her income with them and fighting for their rights with the result that her career as a teacher was adversely affected. In 1934 she worked as a factory worker to experience the toil and suffering of those with whom she laboured. As she was physically weak, this year in the factory fatigued her both in body and soul and affected her whole life. It was in the factory where she learned to see herself as a slave similar to those with whom she voluntarily shared her fate. During the Second World War she was active in the French Resistance. In 1942 she went to the United States where she visited a Church in Harlem with a black congregation on a regular basis. She was the only white person there and this was her way of identifying herself with people who were outcast and oppressed. When returning to Europe she hoped and wished to join some hard and dangerous mission where she could sacrifice herself usefully to save lives or commit sabotage. She never got the opportunity. At that time she refused to eat any more than official food rations in occupied France. In 1943 when she was hospitalized due to tuberculosis and ill health she continued her voluntary starvation because she thought that eating would mean betraying her countrymen. This was noted as one cause of death when she died on August 24, 1943 in a sanatorium. So it was her *idée fixe* to support those who suffer and are oppressed and to avoid personal comfort, and by comfort she meant even elementary living conditions. Her constant desire was to prefer other people and their well-being to her own and to focus on the needs of others. (Perrin, J-M; Thibon, G. Simone Weil as We Knew Her. New York: Routledge, 2003; Tomlin, E. W. F. Simone Weil. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954).

**3) Fanaticism is primarily a behavioural trait.** For instance, religious fundamentalism can manifest itself in particular acts (for example, certain parents who are fundamentalists may raise their children strictly and use corporal punishment when their child has gone to the cinema), but not always (for example, parents who believe that going to the cinema is a sin, but they do not punish their child when s/he has attended the cinema because they hope that with God's help their child will turn from his/her "evil ways" and stop watching movies). The origins of fanaticism are based in the mind but it always manifests itself through actions. For instance, a fanatical conservationist is not only convinced that a certain corporation is responsible for polluting the natural environment but s/he actively calls upon others to boycott the corporation and is even prepared to commit acts of terrorism to sabotage the company.

### **Main characteristics of a fanatic**

We will now turn to descriptions of a typical fanatic that are given in literature on this subject. Before we look at those characteristics it is important to remember that noticing only one or a few of the following characteristics in a specific person is not enough to make hasty conclusions about his/her personality. But we can argue that a person who has many of the following traits is probably inclined more or less towards fanaticism. Let us also keep in mind that fanatics are not only those who carry all those traits mentioned below. Some fanatics, for instance, have no specific ideology (only the conviction that they "must" do what they do) that could fuel their fanaticism but their zealous behaviour goes beyond sanity. For example, I might decide to prepare and write the present article within a week. As this preparation includes working with enough relevant material, I decide not to waste my time on "useless" sleeping and food preparation and limit myself to 3 hours of sleep, abundant coffee and junk food. But in my fanatical passion I do not separate the world into "good ones" and "evil ones" and do not fight with some cosmic enemy (except if this enemy is actually the creeping feeling of fatigue). Nevertheless I act fanatically and switch myself off from everything else while devoting myself to one single goal – finishing the article within one week. That is why it is not always justified to include all the following traits when portraying a fanatic, but nevertheless those characteristics can help us to identify fanatical thinking and behaviour.

### ***Unwavering conviction about the absolute rightness of one's understanding***

According to Calhoun, “fanaticism [is not] merely a strong commitment to a worldview, ideology or belief system.”<sup>24</sup> Many people are devoted to a certain religion, ideology or political system without being fanatics. In Calhoun’s view, fanaticism is not the same as merely exhibiting extreme enthusiasm either. Men and women of principle are considered confident and not fanatic. Besides, those who fight selflessly and tirelessly for social change are considered heroes. If someone has strong convictions it does not mean that s/he would think about her/himself as infallible. What does differentiate fanatics from people who are confident in a positive way is that they are absolutely certain their understandings are absolutely correct.<sup>25</sup>

Perkinson sees fanatics as dogmatic people whose theories, ideology and proposed solutions are absolutely right in their own eyes. At the same time fanatics avoid critical thinking when they ignore or are not able to see those “arguments, facts, or consequences that refute his solutions”.<sup>26</sup> According to Klassen, the religious fanatic takes his/her scripture as a “paper pope”, that needs to be taken as is, without any need to think about how to interpret or apply it considering present-day and human experience. S/he believes that the text of the scripture is able to answer all questions.<sup>27</sup> There is a meeting point between religious fundamentalism and fanaticism: the scripture is taken as the infallible Word of God and in cases where it contradicts scientific discoveries or everyday experiences the written text is trusted and scientific facts and experience are considered erroneous or are totally ignored.<sup>28</sup> Doctor of

<sup>24</sup> **Calhoun, L.** An Anatomy of Fanaticism. – Peace Review, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2004, p. 349.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 350–351. As for criticism of Calhoun, it seems that she approaches fanaticism too narrowly in her article, seeing only negative traits in it. We can consider fanatics in a positive sense – even those who heroically and altruistically fight for social change and are even ready to die, if needed, for their mission.

<sup>26</sup> **Perkinson, H. J.** Fanaticism: Flight from Fallibility. – ETC: A Review of General Semantics, Vol. 59, No. 2, 2002, p. 172.

<sup>27</sup> **Klassen, M. L.** Bad Religion: The Psychology of Religious Misbehavior. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2007, p. 23–24.

<sup>28</sup> A clear example of such thinking is found in so-called “Prosperity Theology” which has its origins in the United States. It disapproves of knowledge received by the senses (“Sense Knowledge”) if this contradicts with “The Revelatory Knowledge” received from the Bible. So it states that Jesus’s death on the cross also brought deliverance from sickness; a believer who has fallen ill should receive this “knowledge” by faith and should not pay attention to the symptoms of sickness in his/her body. Therefore it is not proper for a believer to say that s/he is sick, but to confess with his/her mouth that s/he is already healed so that the healing might manifest itself physically. Even more extreme is Christian Science (founded by Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910)) which considers sickness illusory and in order to get healed we need to forsake this illusion. To give an example of religious fundamentalism’s opposition to science, we may consider different views on how the physical world and humans came into being.

Philosophy Leonidas Donskis, while relying on George Orwell's concept of nationalism, considers that fanatical faith goes hand-in-hand with fanatical distrust of reality where obvious facts are denied and illusions are preferred. Therefore, in the fanatic's opinion, reality that does not confirm or support his/her convictions must be rejected.<sup>29</sup> According to Professor of Sociology Charles Selengut, some psychological tension that comes from the incompatibility between an ideal and reality can be related to certain manifestations of fanaticism. While many believers adapt their religious ideas and theology to surrounding reality and scientific discoveries, some are not willing to make such compromises in their theology. That is why they try to subject reality to their religious views and can even use violence for this purpose, if need be.<sup>30</sup>

The same scheme has been eloquently described by Eric Hoffer who analysed the evolution of a fanatical *True Believer* among mass movements.<sup>31</sup> His thoughts were written 60 years ago but they are still relevant and suitable for describing, amongst other things, the fanatic's claims about his/her absolute rightness. According to Hoffer, a *True Believer* relies on knowledge taken from scripture<sup>32</sup> and draws conclusions based on it instead of drawing conclusions from his/her own experiences or observations. Relying on proofs derived from the senses and reason is considered heretical. Therefore the fanatical communist, for example, refuses to believe critical arguments or proof about the Soviet Union and s/he is not discouraged when facing the country's cruel reality. A *True Believer* closes his/her eyes and ears to the facts that, in his/her opinion, are not worthy of being seen or heard. S/he does not fear dangers or obstacles and s/he is not disturbed by contradictions because s/he denies their existence. His/her infallible doctrine helps him/her to deal with the displeasures and uncertainties of the surrounding world. Such doctrine isolates him/her from him/herself and from the realities of the surrounding world. The efficacy of the doctrine is not measured by its content

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For instance, a religious fundamentalist is certain that the world is only about six thousand years old and all discussion about human evolution is false because God first made humans (and other species) in a "completed way" according to the Bible. Such beliefs turn fanatical when their proponents start to fight actively and aggressively for the replacement of evolution theory with creationism in the school curriculum.

<sup>29</sup> **Donskis, L.** George Orwell: fašismi ja vihkamise anatoomia. – Akadeemia, Vol. 15, No. 8, 2003, lk 1604.

<sup>30</sup> **Selengut, C.** Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003, pp. 64–84.

<sup>31</sup> **Hoffer, E.** The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2010. The book was first published in 1951.

<sup>32</sup> Considering the context, the word "scripture" should be taken here in a broader sense than just a collection of holy texts that belong to one religion or another. Following Hoffer's thought, we can also include those "scriptures" used in certain political ideologies (for example, the writings of Marx and Engels and their interpretations in the Soviet Union).

or meaning, but by its certainty – by regarding it as an absolute truth. Likewise, the efficacy of the doctrine does not depend on its comprehensibility, but on its credibility. When someone believes that s/he holds the absolute truth, s/he also believes that s/he has all the answers. True doctrine is considered the answer to every problem in the world.<sup>33</sup>

Perkinson argues that human development stops when an individual ceases to be critical towards her/his creation (ideas, knowledge, social arrangements) and starts to take them as infallible and perfect. In that way s/he turns into a fanatic who does not pursue perfection any more but believes that s/he has already achieved it.<sup>34</sup> According to Calhoun, a fanatic abandons the scepticism that is intrinsic to democracy. Democracy assumes that everyone can make mistakes and no-one is free of error. Democracy also means a plurality of opinions that indicates the need for dialogue.<sup>35</sup> Just as fanaticism can endanger democracy, it can also endanger the smooth functioning of civil society. According to Colas, fanaticism opposes civil society because the latter supports tolerance, the free market and freedom of thought.<sup>36</sup> He argues that totalitarianism that hates civil society can be seen as a modern form of fanaticism.<sup>37</sup>

But the fanatic is more than just a narrow-minded and dogmatic person. S/he tries zealously and by all means to impose her/his convictions on others.

### ***Seeking to impose one's convictions on others***

According to Colas, a fanatic does not need to discover or find the truth. S/he is led by total self-assurance. A faith community of fanatics is certain about the absolute truth of the words of their leader and they are convinced they are the only ones authorized to interpret those words of truth. They are proud to be chosen and hate those who do not care about the truth. The latter are regarded as doomed. This fanatical community tries to subject everyone to their truth, be it through religious or political ideology. Deviation of the world from this truth is considered an accident that must be corrected. Fanatics are ready to sacrifice themselves for their ideas. They attack the disorder of the imperfect and unholy world.<sup>38</sup>

Perkinson writes that it is intrinsic to fanaticism to believe in the supremacy of its ideas and culture, for which reason it wants to impose them on others

<sup>33</sup> Hoffer 2010, pp. 79–82.

<sup>34</sup> Perkinson 2002, p. 172.

<sup>35</sup> Calhoun 2004, p. 350.

<sup>36</sup> Colas 1997, p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

and suppress or eliminate those who have a different opinion.<sup>39</sup> According to him, “a fanatic is authoritarian. When he has power he tries to impose his answers on others. /.../ And when people become fanatics, when they try to become God, they frequently make life a hell for other people.”<sup>40</sup>

Calhoun, who sees fanaticism as a threat to democracy, argues that while for democracy it is common to have a dialogue and possibility to express one’s opinions, the fanatic tries to smother the plurality of opinions by any means so that his/her “truth” might prevail. If they do not succeed with verbal methods then violence and killing is used. By killing those who have different opinions the possibility for dialogue and debate is eliminated. When killing individuals fear is also sown amongst others.<sup>41</sup> Here we see a meeting point with terrorism whose one function besides attracting public attention to one’s needs<sup>42</sup> is to sow (among enemies) as much fear and panic as possible<sup>43</sup>.

According to Psychologist Albert Ellis, radical fanatics who don’t hesitate to use acts of terror are, amongst other things, characterized by their belief in their opinion as the ultimate truth at the expense of other people’s lives. They may believe that if the views of their opponents are dominant in society then these people have a corrupting influence and must be stopped at any cost. They may also believe that they are the only ones who can save the human race by their religious or political ideology, so all those who hinder this mission should be eliminated. Additionally, they can have faith in the afterlife and believe that by their deeds they will obtain eternal bliss, while eternal damnation awaits their opponents.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Dualistic world-view***

Destructive fanaticism goes beyond the “moderate” distinction between “us” and “them”. Usually, in-groups (“us”) are viewed in a positive light and

<sup>39</sup> **Perkinson** 2002.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>41</sup> **Calhoun** 2004, p. 351.

<sup>42</sup> See for example, **Juergensmeyer, M.** *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., revised and updated. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2003. Juergensmeyer calls those acts of terror symbolic because often their aim is not to have as many victims as possible but to create as much publicity as possible (for instance, in the mass media) for their positions. So, for example, the suicide attacks of radical Muslims are often meant to draw attention to their resistance to the threat of secularization and, in the case of Palestine, to draw attention to the situation of Palestinians.

<sup>43</sup> Latin word *terror* means “fear” and “fright”.

<sup>44</sup> **Ellis, A.** *Fanaticism That May Lead to a Nuclear Holocaust: The Contributions of Scientific Counseling and Psychotherapy*. – *Journal of Counseling and Development*, Vol. 65, No. 3, November, 1986, p. 148. Still, there are fanatics who might try by extreme methods to save the souls of those who are in “error”. So it was believed, for instance, during historical witch hunts, that burning witches purifies their souls and saves them from damnation.

out-groups (“them”) are vilified or regarded with scepticism. But in fanaticism such distinction exceeds all moderation. “They” become enemies who are not simply bad but even embody “cosmic evil”. So the world does not simply consist of people with their virtues and vices, it becomes a battlefield between light and dark, good and evil. In literature on this subject it is sometimes referred to as a *Manichean dichotomy* or *Manichean construction*.<sup>45</sup>

For example, traditional Christianity makes a distinction between Christians and “the world” (the latter is seen as being under Satan’s rule). In Islam there has historically been division between the “House of Islam” (*Dar al-Islam*) where Muslims live and rule and the “House of war” (*Dar al-Harb*) that needs to be Islamized either peacefully or, when unsuccessful, with war. When both of those beliefs are taken to extremes a peaceful mission turns into violence and blood where either coldly-calculated violence or fanatical fervour are used to reach their goals.<sup>46</sup> We can also turn to the two most famous 20<sup>th</sup> century totalitarian regimes – National Socialism in Germany and Bolshevism in the Soviet Union – to see that both of them frequently used violence since both had a clear “enemy” who needed to be destroyed. Whilst the former targeted Bolsheviks and Jews, the latter, relying on the concept of class struggle, targeted “enemies of the people”. Conspiracy theories are also suitable for such mindsets. For a fanatic, Donskis notices, there is satisfaction in such conspiracy theories that ascribe all the bad to the “community, whom we hate”.<sup>47</sup>

Fanatical traits have also been noticed in the former President of the United States George W. Bush Jr. when he decided to attack Afghanistan (in 2001) and Iraq (in 2003). Calhoun has written an article in which she sternly criticises the decision to attack sovereign Iraq in 2003, a decision which contravened international law. When making this decision, international opinion was ignored, which means in principle that democratic values were forsaken and President Bush acted similarly to despots who rely only on their own convictions when making decisions. The Manichean dichotomy of such politics was laid out in the argument: “you’re either with us or with them (i.e.,

<sup>45</sup> For example, Calhoun 2004; Nystrom, C. L. Immediate Man: The Symbolic Environment of Fanaticism. ETC: A Review of General Semantics, Vol. 59, No. 2, 2002. The term comes from Manichaeism, which taught that the world is a battleground of opposites: light-darkness, good-evil, spirit-matter, etc.

<sup>46</sup> For an example of a victim of fanatical violence in Christian history we may look to the Greek female pagan scholar Hypatia (died in 415) who lived in Alexandria and was rumored to be responsible for the conflict between the local prefect and Christian bishop. Those rumors lead an angry Christian mob to seize her, after which she was taken into a local church where she was brutally tortured, killed, and burned. (Socrates Scholasticus. NPNF2-02. Socrates and Sozomenus Ecclesiastical Histories. Christian Classic Ethereal Library, p. 293 <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/hcc3.pdf>>, (accessed April 22, 2011).

<sup>47</sup> Donskis 2003, p. 1614.

the terrorists)<sup>47</sup>. So there was no opportunity left for scepticism that is the basis of democracy and does not accept categorical propositions but instead applies critical thinking. By his actions and arguments, President Bush claimed to be infallible.<sup>48</sup>

The same topic has been treated by Frances Hill who comprehensively studied the Salem witch trials.<sup>49</sup> The author draws several parallels between the authorities responsible for those trials and the neoconservative government of G. W. Bush Jr. She claims that, just like Puritan witch hunters back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, those in power in the United States at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century sought to strengthen their authority by exploiting existing fears. This fear originated in the former case from occult hysteria and in the latter case from the terrorist attack of 9–11–2001.<sup>50</sup> The ideologies of both governments had been in the background for about a decade or more but the events of 1692 and 2001 respectively helped them to gather new strength and provided an occasion to carry out their agendas.<sup>51</sup> According to Hill, in both cases those governments saw in their opponents a deadly enemy who wished to destroy the best and most moral society.<sup>52</sup> In both cases violence was seen as the only answer and total victory or defeat the only solution. Both governments believed that God was on their side in their fight against evil. In both cases the dominating factors were not sound mind and clear thinking but “panic, simple-mindedness, and religious and nationalistic fervor”<sup>53</sup>. In both cases some leading figures reaped political and personal rewards from the public panic. In both cases citizen’s rights and freedoms were sacrificed and suffering was inflicted upon countless innocent people.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the politics of both governments were led with intolerance and by faith in their own righteousness.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> **Calhoun** 2004. Calhoun concludes her article with sarcastic but fitting words: “When in the fall of 2002 President Bush ridiculed the United Nations as a “debate club”, he revealed for all the world to see his complete lack of comprehension of what democracy is. Bush may know how to pronounce the word “democracy”, but he has no idea what it means” (p. 356).

<sup>49</sup> The Salem witch trials (1692–1693) started from Salem Village and spread over Essex County in Massachusetts.

<sup>50</sup> **Hill, F.** *Such Men are Dangerous: The Fanatics of 1692 and 2004*. Hinesburg, VT: Upper Access, Inc., 2004.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18. So-called witchcraft happened in community that was named a “city on a hill” by one of its founders, indicating that the place was meant to serve as an example to the whole world of how to live. The terrorist attacks of 2001 were called an attack not only against America, but against the whole of civilization and democracy (*ibid.*, pp. 15, 17).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> **Hill** 2004. In this way, the Puritans who led the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1692 were certain of the absolute righteousness of their religious understandings and practices. Since the

### ***Self-sacrificial devotion to the goal***

There are no fanatics without this trait. For example, someone may have a fixed idea that the Sun moves around the Earth and they despise scientific discoveries that prove the contrary. So s/he believes that with similar kindred spirits they constitute an enlightened minority that fiercely opposes the rest of humanity that is seen as blinkered by their erroneous views. But s/he only becomes a fanatic when s/he starts to impose his/her fixed idea on others, demands that schools must teach not a heliocentric but a geocentric view and is willing to sacrifice not only his/her time and money but even his/her life to make his/her ideas dominant in society.

Self-sacrificial devotion to a goal is common to all fanatics, whether their fanaticism be connected with religion, politics, the world of entertainment, hobbies or something else. Therefore, the fanaticism of a sport fanatic, for instance, might not be rooted in any special ideology but it manifests itself in self-sacrificial devotion to a sport or club even if in the long term this could harm his/her health or cause trauma, for example, when getting into a fight with fans of an opposing team.<sup>56</sup> A fanatical computer gamer may not consider a highly addictive game the best ever made but his/her fanaticism focuses on self-sacrificial gaming that deepens the addiction and affects his/her health up to the point where it can even cause sudden death.

According to Ellis, fanatics have made a tyranny of compulsions out of their needs and wishes which forces them to get what they desire no matter the cost.<sup>57</sup> So the religious or political fanatic needs to win others over to his/her faith or ideology and to change the world according to his/her ideals. A fanatical computer gamer may give up food, sleep, work, social relationships, etc., to achieve the aim of the game. A fanatical athlete may seek to be as good as the top athletes through extreme training and chemical substances even if it leads to serious failures in his/her health. A fanatical admirer of a pop star may spend all her/his savings and even borrow money to visit a concert of her/his favourite artist in some other country if there is no chance of the concert taking place in her/his homeland. In all those cases rational thinking and common sense are pushed aside. It would be irrational to think that the whole

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very beginnings of the colony in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century residents had the obligation to confess only the official creed. Dissenters and those who shirked this obligation were punished, exiled or hanged. Dissenters were associated with the devil and there was the conviction that someone is either "with us or against us". Nevertheless, dissent (for instance, Quakers) could not be totally stopped and during the time of the witch trials the community was also forced to tolerate other creeds (*ibid.*, pp. 19–22, 43).

<sup>56</sup> Again we need to remember that not every type of fanaticism is thoroughly negative. Self-sacrificial devotion to a sport may not be harmful to others. However, although it can improve results in sports in the long term it can cause health problems.

<sup>57</sup> Ellis 1986, p. 148.

world might be subjected to one person's beliefs and ideologies; computer games can be paused for more important things and resumed afterwards; top results in sports are not achievable for everyone and sport should promote good health first and foremost; an alternative to attending a live concert could be watching it on DVD, thereby saving a lot of money. But the fanatic wants it all and wants it as quickly as possible.

Nystrom has described fanaticism as “the triumph of reflex over reflection”.<sup>58</sup> Reflexive reaction to stimuli is a natural human trait from birth but the ability to reason and reflect develops later. This development is important because we need to learn to modify our reactions towards our surrounding reality. This develops our self-control because we learn to critically analyse situations and defer our responses to stimuli.<sup>59</sup> In her article Nystrom describes the development of the so-called *Immediate Man* and relates its personality with fanaticism. The *Immediate Man* wants everything here and now. As s/he demands fast and immediate solutions to his/her problems, this leads to “his contempt for history, his Manichean construct of the origins of problems, his intolerance for complex and long-term solutions, his mystical faith in the solving and *saving* powers of technique and technology, and his deep mistrust of reason.”<sup>60</sup> So from this concept we can deduce that a fanatic does not reflect but reacts immediately and this reaction is often irrational. Somewhat similar is the definition of fanaticism by Doctor of Philosophy Barrie Paskins who calls it “misplaced simplicity”.<sup>61</sup> He takes as an example a family that prepares to visit relatives for a weekend but one family member announces resolutely that his favourite team has a game at the same time, meaning that he cannot go anywhere. In Paskins's opinion this announcement is simple and clear, but at the same time misplaced because it does not fit into the context of familial cooperation.<sup>62</sup> Basically, we can see in this situation the domination of resolute reflex over analytical reflection.

If a fanatic wants to reach his/her goals s/he does not hesitate in using extreme measures and is not ashamed to be considered bizarre by others. That is why religious fanaticism, for instance, can manifest itself in destroying fictional literature or albums with secular music if these are seen as stumbling

<sup>58</sup> Nystrom 2002, p. 175.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178. Nystrom sees in her contemporaries (the article was first published in 1977) a manifestation of *Immediate Man* and brings as an example of quick and instant solutions popular “instant” food chains and “instant” weight-loss programs, “instant” success and “instant” beauty books, “instant” therapies and /.../ “instant” religions” (*ibid.*).

<sup>61</sup> Paskins, B. Fanaticism in the Modern Era. – Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age. M. Hughes, G. Johnson (eds.). London & New York: Frank Cass, 2005, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

blocks that get in the way of the devotional life of a believer.<sup>63</sup> A religious fanatic may almost feel him/herself to be all powerful, believing him/herself able to control the weather<sup>64</sup>, heal the sick, ignore the laws of nature (for instance, imitating Jesus walking on water like in the story in the Bible) and even conquer death by trying to raise the dead. Faith gives immense confidence to a fanatic. If s/he fails to accomplish what s/he claims to be able to do then all sorts of explanations are used. For example, it is explained away by invoking a lack of faith or by claiming God had different plans in mind. If the former is considered responsible then this faith is seen as some substance that needs to be “developed” enough to succeed the next time.

Political fanaticism is similar in nature to its religious counterpart, even if here its basic ideologies are rather secular or quasi-religious. Hughes and Johnson have pointed out that National Socialists in Germany and Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union proved that fanaticism can characterize not only some “minorities” but also those majorities in power. Therefore the dominance of fanaticism over rational logic is also shown in the behaviour of Germany and Japan at the end of the Second World War when the result of the war was almost clear.<sup>65</sup> Colas considered that the motivation behind the Bolshevik revolution was hatred for their enemies, which ended up causing great terror. The Bolsheviks were fanatically devoted to their goal which also meant a willingness to sacrifice themselves and to die for the cause.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> See for example, **Saard, R.** Tallinna vaim: peatükk XX sajandi Eesti karismaatilise liikumise aja- ja mõtteleost. Tallinn: published by the author, 2010, lk 11. Here we can see some parallels with the iconoclasts to whom I referred in footnote 6, even if they did not destroy their own property. It is worth noticing that such behaviour is usually motivated by the wake-up calls of others and seldom if ever originates purely from the believer’s own conscience. For example, I recall a sermon by Albert Tünpu from the first half of the 90s who was at that time pastor of the Word of Life Church in Tartu. In his sermon he preached about how evil secular (rock) music is and called on people to “repent” from it. As a result of this sermon, I destroyed almost my entire collection of vinyl records and wiped all secular music from my cassette tapes.

<sup>64</sup> This example is taken from my own experience during an evangelical campaign in the first half of the 90s. It was raining but we refused to take cover. Instead we “rebuked” the rain “in Jesus’s name” and believed that this would make it stop. As a result we got our clothes wet and the rain remained, but this did not dampen our conviction about our “God given” ability to control the weather.

<sup>65</sup> **Hughes, Johnson** 2005, pp. 3–4. It is useful to keep in mind the importance of social environment for the spread of fanaticism. It is probably hard, if not impossible, to “school” someone into fanaticism if s/he has no predisposition towards it. But certain social environments can facilitate the manifestation of fanatical traits in those who would act “normally” under usual conditions. As for the tools of propaganda in molding a nation and especially the youth, see for example, **Paavolainen, O.** Külalisena Kolmandas Reich’is. – Loomingu Raamatukogu, No. 37–40, 2009, where the writer describes his experiences during a visit to Germany in 1936.

<sup>66</sup> **Colas** 1997, p. 323.

Fanatics are therefore willing to give their lives to reach their goals. We need to consider this willingness in the context of other characteristics that we have already described. That is why we cannot automatically consider all soldiers who are ready to die with an enemy in battle as fanatics. Instead they might rather be patriots or those who believe that retreating may cost their lives anyway.<sup>67</sup> Military fanaticism is hard to define. In the words of Christopher C. Harmon, war itself consists of the most extreme efforts and emotions. He thinks that it is hard to differentiate between fanaticism and war because the latter brings up primitive feelings of anger and can drive people to extremes.<sup>68</sup> Professor of Psychology Donald G. Dutton in his book that quintessentially describes and analyses extreme violence has referred to the theory developed by Richard Solomon according to which killing, which is at first psychologically very unpleasant, can later become rather pleasant. This does not happen to everyone who takes part in massacres targeted at civilians in a war situation, but for some it becomes so gripping that it leads to the enjoyment of violence and can even induce ecstasy.<sup>69</sup>

One specific phenomenon is religious or political martyrdom. Whether it can be described as fanatical behaviour or not depends on the situation. Both in Christianity and in Islam, martyrdom has been motivated by ideas

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<sup>67</sup> This last argument is valid both for the troops of Japan and the Soviet Union during the Second World War. The Japanese were seen as fanatics, but this claim has been strongly contested. The reason why many of them fought seemingly “fanatically” could be due to the fact that retreating, surrendering or allowing themselves to be imprisoned was considered illegal. Therefore their fiery zeal to fight could have been motivated by fear of the Allies, by fear of capital punishment after deserting and by fear of disgracing their families (see for example, **Trefalt, B.** *Fanaticism, Japanese Soldiers and the Pacific War, 1937–45. – Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age.* M. Hughes, G. Johnson (eds.). London & New York: Frank Cass, 2005, pp. 33–47). Soviet troops were motivated to fight in a similar way; besides hatred of the enemy, by fear of being shot which was the lot of those who retreated, escaped or deserted (see for example, **Merridale, C.** *Ivani sõda. Punaarmee aastatel 1939–1945.* Tallinn: Tänapäev, 2007). In the case of German troops, patriotism was probably mostly stirred by political propaganda. For instance, the training camps of 16–17 year-old *Hitlerjugend* fighters were decorated with the slogan “We are born to die for Germany”. They were told that they were the elite youth of Germany who must fight for the honor of the fatherland and if they manifest enough strong will they can change the course of the war. They were also told that they must take revenge for their dead relatives who died in the Allies’ bombing raids. The motive of fear was also present: they were told that the Allies shoot all SS-fighters who are imprisoned. In conclusion, the *Hitlerjugend*, compared to other German troops, preferred to die rather than be imprisoned (see, **Hart, S.** *Indoctrinated Nazi Teenaged Warriors: The Fanaticism of the 12<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Division *Hitlerjugend* in Normandy, 1944. – Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age.* M. Hughes, G. Johnson (eds.). London & New York: Frank Cass, 200, pp. 81–100).

<sup>68</sup> **Harmon** 2005, p. 101.

<sup>69</sup> **Dutton, D. G.** *The Psychology of Genocide, Massacres, and Extreme Violence: Why “Normal” People Come to Commit Atrocities.* Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2007, pp. 116–118, 121, 139.

of heavenly rewards. In times of early Christianity, a Christian could lose her/his life if s/he refused to make sacrifices to the emperor who was considered a god. Probably for many Christians who gave their lives in that way, the basic reason for that was not their personal fanaticism but deep devotion to their faith that forbade worshipping other gods. But since martyrdom quickly became something to be admired in early Christianity, it needs to be said that at least some Christians sought their martyrdom quite enthusiastically, if not fanatically. Somewhat different is the situation with today's suicide martyrs in Islam who give their lives voluntarily. But even there it depends on the individual, whether his/her incentive to commit an act of terror comes from deep devotion to the cause or from fanatical fervour (for example, if the act is committed for revenge). According to Juergensmeyer, factors that make such acts easier for suicide terrorists are dehumanization and demonization of the enemy with strong stereotyping, so it is simpler to kill dehumanized individuals because they belong to the hated community.<sup>70</sup> Juergensmeyer also points out that for bystanders such violence (terror) of the minority against a stronger opponent might seem a hopeless pursuit, but for the participants among terrorists it at least gives a feeling of power. Besides, dying for the cause can be seen to be a better solution than living in a situation that is considered frustrating and humiliating.<sup>71</sup>

Besides him/herself, a fanatic is willing to sacrifice even those who are close to him/her to show his/her devotion to the "holy cause", or if s/he happens to be the leader of a nation then even his/her people can be sacrificed rather than holding negotiations or surrendering.<sup>72</sup>

### ***Devotion itself is more important than the object of that devotion***

This last characteristic I describe here can also be seen as a relatively universal trait for all fanatics. Even if the fanatic may deny it, the devotion itself is more important to him/her than the object of that devotion.

Donskis, who in his article analyses Orwell's concept of nationalism, finds that while ideological fervour remains constant the object of it may change. So, for instance, somebody may admire the United States but later become disappointed and turn to its opposite. Donskis evokes the example of H. G. Wells "whose friendliness towards America was substituted with hostility and later became also love for Russia".<sup>73</sup> Or to take a few examples from religion, it

<sup>70</sup> Juergensmeyer 2003, pp. 176–178.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>72</sup> Hoffer 2010, pp. 89, 125. Similar fanatical traits can be seen for example in Adolf Hitler.

<sup>73</sup> Donskis 2003, pp. 1599–1600.

is not a great wonder if a convinced Satanist becomes a zealous Christian, a fundamental Christian turns into a fighting atheist, or vice versa.

Similar logic is valid for mass movements, too. Eric Hoffer claims that when people are ready to join mass movements they are ready to join any of them no matter the doctrine or program. For instance, before the National Socialists came to power young people in Germany were ready to join with either the Communists or the National Socialists; Jews in Czarist Russia were ready to join with either the revolutionaries or the Zionists. Readiness to join any mass movement does not end when someone has already devoutly joined one. Transforming from Saul to Paul is not a rare phenomenon. For example, Hitler saw the potential in German Communists to become National Socialists (but not in the petty bourgeoisie Social Democrats or in functionaries of trade unions).<sup>74</sup> According to Hoffer, it is important for a fanatic to cleave passionately to something no matter what it is. That way every cause can be turned into the holy cause. Fanatics cannot be dissuaded from their cause by referring to reason or morality. S/he is afraid to make compromises and cannot be made to look critically at the truthfulness or rightness of his/her cause. But s/he can very easily turn passionately from one cause to another. S/he cannot be convinced, but s/he can be “converted”. The most important factor is his/her passionate devotion, not the object of the devotion.<sup>75</sup>

Hoffer also mentions that different fanatics are only seemingly representative of different sides of a coin. Essentially they are all on the same side and their opposites are actually moderate. Fanatics regard other fanatics with suspicion and they are quite ready to assault each other, but in reality they are closely related. “They hate each other with the hatred of brothers. They are as far apart and close together as Saul and Paul.”<sup>76</sup> In Hoffer’s words, it is easier

<sup>74</sup> Hoffer 2010, pp. 16–17. Donskis gives a similar example according to which the German Communists would rather join with the National Socialists, because they were seen as lesser enemies compared to the Social Democrats (Donskis 2003, p. 1600).

<sup>75</sup> Hoffer 2010, pp. 85–86.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86. The apostle Paul actually bore both names: Jewish Saul and Roman Paul even if, by the saying, the first is used to describe him up until his conversion to Christianity and other thereafter. When systematizing the characteristics of a fanatic for the present article this person was outlined before me and it made me look more closely into his personality with the help of The Acts of the Apostles and his letters in The New Testament. In this way we can actually notice all five traits that may describe the fanatical personality: 1) unwavering conviction of the absolute rightness of his understandings – the phrase “my gospel” (my emphasis – K.M.) (The Letter of Paul to the Romans 2:16) which is “the gospel” (my emphasis – K.M.) (for example, The Letter of Paul to the Galatians); 2) seeking to impose his convictions on others, accompanied by an authoritative leading style and strict disapproval of teachings that contradicted his own (for example, *ibid.*), and 3) dualistic world-view, for example, against the Judizers who stressed the importance of keeping Jewish Law in order to be saved (*ibid.*); 4) self-sacrificial devotion to a goal which can be observed if reading his descriptions about how much he has suffered for preaching the gospel (for example, The

for a Communist to become a Fascist, Chauvinist, or Catholic, than a sober liberal. The opposite of religious fanaticism is not fanatical atheism, but mild cynicism that does not care about the existence or non-existence of God.<sup>77</sup>

The primacy of devotion over the object of devotion illustrates the universal nature of fanaticism. That is why fanaticism is not only limited to the religious or political sphere, but encompasses almost every field of human activity. For the fanatic it is important to be zealous about something or somebody. If s/he gets disillusioned, disappointed or bored with the object of devotion, s/he soon needs to find another object with which s/he wants to be associated.

After getting acquainted with some of the traits that characterize fanatics, we may now ask what predisposes certain people towards fanatical thinking and behaviour?

### Some factors that favour fanaticism

In the following I do not claim to provide an exhaustive answer to the question “What predisposes some people towards fanatical behaviour?” because there exist more factors than this article can present. I have already noted that fanaticism can be related to certain personality traits, so some people are more prone to fanaticism than others. I have also already touched upon the importance of a suitable ideology and tools of propaganda in inducing a fanatical mindset. Whilst reading literature on fanaticism we need to consider some other factors that may favour fanaticism.

According to Donskis, one source of fanaticism can be social changes where old values have lost their meaning but new ones have not yet been developed. So people search for theories and convictions that may help to restore their sense of security. At the same time, the modern world becomes an enemy to those who feel threatened by it because it instils incertitude and hesitation, and with its ethical universalism and secular humanism it cannot fully satisfy anyone who seeks confidence.<sup>78</sup> Hoffer’s *True Believer* also complains about the decadence of Western democracy because in his/her view the people who live in democracies are too soft, oriented toward pleasure and too selfish to die for anything or anybody, be it a nation, God or a

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Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 11:23ff) until his readiness to die for the gospel (Acts of the Apostles 21:13); 5) devotion itself is more important than the object of that devotion – the popular saying about turning from Saul into Paul derives from his conversion that turned a fierce persecutor of Christians into an equally zealous apologist and proselytizer of Christianity (references are taken from **Piibel**. Vana ja Uus Testament. Tallinn: Eesti Piibliselts, 1997).

<sup>77</sup> Hoffer 2010, p. 86. According to Hoffer, fanatical “True Believers” may honor those similarly rigid people who belong to their opposite camp, rather than moderates (*ibid.*, pp. 162–163).

<sup>78</sup> Donskis 2003, pp. 1609–1612.

“holy cause”. Unwillingness to die is for the *True Believer* a sign of moral decadence. In his/her view, those people who do not have any “holy cause” are without character or backbone.<sup>79</sup>

Eric Hoffer describes the fanatical *True Believer* as a frustrated individual whose frustration impels him/her to join emerging mass movements.<sup>80</sup> Such individuals wish to deny their “self” because they see themselves as worthless failures and their lives as empty and meaningless. This lost self-confidence is replaced with faith in a “holy cause”; because of their presumed unworthiness they start to exalt their nation, religion, race or “holy cause”. Such a “holy cause” gives their lives new meaning, worth, and essence. They try to prove to themselves and others the worth of the “holy cause” through their willingness to die for it if needed.<sup>81</sup> According to Hoffer, “[t]o the frustrated a mass movement offers substitutes either for the whole self or for the elements which make life bearable and which they cannot evoke out of their individual resources.”<sup>82</sup> A mass movement may offer to such unsatisfied individuals the sense of power to strive for great changes. This sense of power must combine with faith in the future. Hoffer offers as an example the generation of the French Revolution, the Bolsheviks and the National Socialists. The first believed in the omnipotence and unrestricted capabilities of human reason and therefore had exaggerated self-confidence. The second had blind faith in the omnipotence of Marxism to create the new world. The third had faith in their Führer and their new methods of warfare and propaganda.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, mass movements offer a sense of belonging and community to the frustrated which they need more than a doctrine.<sup>84</sup>

Therefore, according to Hoffer, a fanatic can be uncertain in him/herself but have confidence in what s/he believes or considers sacred. From his/her blind faith in what s/he passionately clings to s/he derives his/her whole virtue and strength. S/he sees him/herself as a defender and promoter of the “holy cause”, being willing to die for it as a proof of its worth.<sup>85</sup> When denying his/her “self” s/he gets rid of personal responsibility and this may lead to accepting all kinds of cruelty and evil that a mass movement may fuel.<sup>86</sup>

Offering quick and easy answers may also favour the fanatical mindset. Nystrom, whose *Immediate Man* we described previously, claims that one

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<sup>79</sup> Hoffer 2010, pp. 162–163.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7–16.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7–8.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41–42.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

culprit for such a mindset can be television. As a visual medium, it creates non-analytical, immediate, present-focused, unreflected and emotional reactions. The solutions on screen happen quickly and often disable intellectual engagement.<sup>87</sup> As an example of preferring simplified solutions, Craig M. Cameron writes about the United States battling against Japan in the Second World War where American troops justified their own fanatical means by considering the Japanese as fanatics and tried to offer easy solutions to complicated problems with technology (for instance, air bombing Japanese cities).<sup>88</sup>

Perkinson noticed that fanatical thinking can be cultivated even by the educational system if it offers largely pre-conceived answers and solutions to the questions and problems of humanity. Therefore such education may produce people “who “know,” who “believe,” who “accept” the present answers and solutions as true, good and proper. They are dogmatic, obscurantist, and authoritarian.”<sup>89</sup> Of course it can teach study methods and how to reason but it may then turn people into dogmatists in methodology. Even in education there is a need to develop critical thinking because all knowledge comes from humans, but humans are imperfect. Therefore this knowledge and these methods should not be seen as perfect and ready to be adopted without criticism, but as something in which we can discover shortcomings and for which we can suggest better (although imperfect) responses and solutions.<sup>90</sup>

According to Harmon, fanaticism can also be induced by interest toward exciting “action”. Such a pursuit, in Harmon’s view, brings together the professional criminal, the racer and the revolutionary partisan. He says that “[f]anatical attraction to activity at the expense of thought can have great appeal to persons of certain types, including the nihilistic, the immature and the young.”<sup>91</sup> So according to Harmon older people look more for stability than the drama and action that fascinates younger people. Armies and partisan troops know this and use it in their recruitment strategies.<sup>92</sup>

Harmon also brings in the motive of revenge which can bring about fanatical acts. This motive can have different causes: many female partisans or suicide fighters have experienced rape by government forces but revenge can

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<sup>87</sup> **Nystrom** 2002. A famous French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has also finely described the influence of television in mobilizing people, constructing a reality and disabling analytical thinking (see, **Bourdieu, P.** *Televisionist. – Loomingu Raamatukogu*, No. 30, 1999).

<sup>88</sup> **Cameron, C. M.** *Fanaticism and the Barbarisation of the Pacific War, 1941–45. – Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age.* M. Hughes, G. Johnson (eds.). London & New York: Frank Cass, 2005, pp. 48–62.

<sup>89</sup> **Perkinson** 2002, p. 173.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> **Harmon** 2005, p. 105.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

be a response to corruption, injustice or neglect. Hatred of foreign occupation forces can also stir up military fanaticism.<sup>93</sup>

But as said above, those predisposing factors of fanaticism described here are only some of many. A more systematic approach would require deeper study than the present article can offer.

## Fanaticism and fundamentalism

Finally we need to return to a question asked at the beginning of this article: how to discern between fanaticism and fundamentalism?

The term “fundamentalism” is much more recent than “fanaticism” but its usage has broadened as time has gone on and it seems that this broadening has sometimes occurred at the expense of its “older brother” (i.e., fanaticism). Fundamentalism was originally a reaction from some Protestants to the success of secular science and liberal theology at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century because they were considered a threat to biblical authority. Nowadays this term is also used for movements in other religions which oppose secularism and modernization but fundamentalist traits have also been noted in secularism.<sup>94</sup>

The sociologist of religion George Lundskow<sup>95</sup> has pointed out the following characteristics of fundamentalism that usually exist in conjunction with each other (some may manifest more strongly than others), so one should not consider as fundamentalist people or groups who only have a few of the following traits:

- literal (word-by-word) view of scripture. The scripture is considered infallible;
- absolute devotion to absolute truth which clearly draws a line between pure good and pure evil. This truth is considered universal and obligatory for everyone because it is ascribed to a higher force (usually to God);
- tireless efforts to impose the truth on others without negotiation or compromise;
- the pursuit to destroy evil;
- culture that is based on a cosmic battle where particular current issues become aspects of a larger battle between pure good and pure evil;

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* Harmon gives as an example of such occupation the situations in Northern Ireland, Palestine and Chechnya. At the same time the Jewish zealots from the first century described in footnote 14 can be a good example here too.

<sup>94</sup> **Kilp, A.** Sekulaarne fundamentalism. – Et sinu usk otsa ei lõpeks: pühendusteos Peeter Roosimaale. A. Saumets, A. Riistan (eds.). Tartu: Kõrgem Usuteaduslik Seminar ja Tartu Ülikooli usuteaduskond, 2009, lk 115–143.

<sup>95</sup> **Lundskow, G.** The Sociology of Religion: A Substantive and Transdisciplinary Approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2008, pp. 220–222.

- the temporal world is seen as a battleground that does not have meaning in itself but gets its meaning through certain interpretations. Success is not measured in practical terms, but in terms of emotional gratification which is derived from their own efforts. So, for example, a goal is not to create a functional society but to get the moral satisfaction derived from changing society according to their sense of justice;
- the pursuit to restore an idealized past.

Politologist Alar Kilp has narrowed the most common traits of fundamentalism into three main characteristics:<sup>96</sup>

- dualistic view of the world as a battleground between *good* and *evil* (or bad);
- conviction that objective truth exists and only fundamentalists have certain *access* to it;
- desire to validate this truth in society, and an *intolerant* and *uncompromising* attitude towards all those who do not fit in with their views.

In short, the fundamentalist mindset is characterized by enmity towards science, reason and especially secularism. The world view of a fundamentalist is black-and-white (without any shades of gray in between). Therefore something can either be according to God's plan (or whatever is taken as an authority) or against it. The world view and lifestyle of a fundamentalist is considered universal by him/her, therefore s/he wants everyone to follow it.

When reading these characteristics of fundamentalism we notice that they largely coincide with the traits of fanaticism described previously. So the question remains: how to tell the two apart? I will make some observations in the following text.

In the case of fanaticism, fanatical ideas are not always derived from scripture. They can even be not written down at all.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, not every kind of fanaticism is derived from some world view (for example fanaticism that is related to sport, the sphere of entertainment or hobbies), but fundamentalism is always based on a certain world view. The fundamentalist believes his/her world view to be imperative for everyone; while some fanatics do the same, some do not. The fundamentalist fanatic does all s/he can to impose it on others, whilst another fanatic devoted to another goal might not care much about what others believe. Not every fanatic idealizes the past and wants to restore it. S/he may pursue a future without having examples from the past. It also needs to be said that, while strongly devoted to his/her beliefs, a fundamentalist is not necessarily fanatical (in his/her behaviour) even if some fundamentalists can act very fanatically.

<sup>96</sup> Kilp 2009, p. 116. Italics are as in the original article.

<sup>97</sup> For example, consider a sports fanatic.

But the main difference is that, while fundamentalism seems to be more of an attitudinal phenomenon<sup>98</sup> related to a certain world view, fanaticism is rather a behavioural phenomenon (although predisposed attitudes may reinforce certain behaviour). This does not mean that fundamentalism cannot manifest itself in actions but if fundamentalism merely *may* manifest itself in actions then fanaticism does so every time.

Finally, we need to admit that while fanaticism and fundamentalism are not identical twins, in practice they are often strongly related to each other.

### Concluding remarks

Fanaticism as a particular mindset and behavioural trait is always present in human society. Therefore in my opinion it is justified to talk about it. Having many faces and being a universal phenomenon, fanaticism is not limited to the world of religion or politics but can be found in almost any sphere of human activity. This is because the vehicles of fanaticism are human beings, not ideologies, even if the latter can at times induce fanaticism. Even if not every kind of fanaticism is dangerous to society, we need to be familiar with its traits to recognize those tendencies which can lead to physical or mental violence and brutality.

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<sup>98</sup> For instance, Tõnu Lehtsaar (**Lehtsaar** 2009, pp. 21–22) characterizes religious fundamentalism as a “way to believe”. But if we look at the aforementioned traits ascribed to fundamentalism some of them show that it is both an attitudinal and behavioural phenomenon.

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# THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FUNCTIONS OF PERCEPTUAL BIAS IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

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**ABSTRACT.** Perceptual biases about the self and our human relations are not only a natural facet of the human condition but they also fulfil several important functions. Biases help to relieve feelings of uncertainty and support the sense of self-esteem and social status. They are also instrumental in formulating the myths that give meaning to our existence, in the subjective construction of our identity and how we present ourselves to the outside world. The article describes situations in which both positive and negative bias may function both positively or negatively. It advises the reader to recognize situations where being good is bad, compliments do harm and where distrust and disregard can be positive.

**Key words:** *perceptual bias, moral relativism, social constructivism, interpersonal communication, 'sick soul', William James.*

As human beings we tend to be subjectively biased in our evaluations about ourselves and about the relationships we take part in. This paper maps the ways in which positive and negative biases function in interpersonal relationships and describes the situations when both positive and negative biases can function in positive and negative ways. In general, perceptual biases about the self and human relations are a natural facet of the human condition. If we are able to accurately recognize our authentic biases we may gain better insight into ourselves. Correspondingly, this paper does not call upon anyone to *avoid* biases in their relations or to evaluate ourselves in our biases according to some version of objective moral norms. It attempts, instead, to identify situations in which the biases may become disproportionate and counterproductive.

The main practical purpose is to recognize how the biases function in us and in people we communicate with, to understand how we function in relationships, what happens in ourselves and what we can reasonably expect from others.

We are able to be empathetic, to be concerned about public good and global justice, but this does not adequately describe *who we are*. I can love animals,

but I am still not an animal. When I envy the happiness of a Bushman the envy is mine but happiness belongs to the Bushman.

Thus, we *are* emotional, self-interested and subjective beings. Those individuals we communicate with are like us. The recognition of inevitable biases in our perceptions enables us to understand how we as humans relate to each other. When we recognize the existence of emotional biases within us we should not be afraid this might become a moral disadvantage against our opponents. Unless we try to suppress and synchronize our biases with a particular version of objective and absolute moral standards, we will not be disadvantaged. We are all biased and subjective.

In human relations we need moral norms and related mutual expectations. Kant's *maxims*, the *Golden Rule* of Christ or Aristotelian virtue ethics, however, do not adequately describe me and you. We may succeed in promoting a certain version of justice in a particular community by using slogans like "all men are created equal" or promoting human rights with the axiom that "all men are born free" but these abstract ideals do not say a word about our nature, how we perceive the world and behave in concrete interpersonal situations.

We can become dysfunctional if we try to behave like saints in the company of common mortals, start to evaluate ourselves according to divine standards or assume that we are communicating with angels.

To be biased is to be human. It is normal to be biased. Anybody – both good and bad – is biased. Taking any objective and absolute moral norms too seriously can seriously distort our image of human nature.

I do assume that passions and emotions function similarly in all of us. In this approach I follow Thomas Hobbes who also assumes in the introductory passages of his book "Leviathan" (1651) that emotions and passions function in a similar way in all human beings. In this way, by getting to know ourselves we learn to know all others:

But there is another saying not of late understood, by which they might learn truly to read one another, if they would take the pains; and that is, *Nosce teipsum, Read thy self: /.../* for the similitude of the thoughts, and Passions of one man, to the thoughts, and Passions of another, whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does *think, opine, reason, hope, feare*, etc., and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know, what are the thoughts, and Passions of all other men, upon the like occasions. I say the similitude of Passions, which are the same in all men...<sup>1</sup>

Bias in our perceptions, behavior and understanding refers to the extent to which our evaluations lack an objective basis. As far as our subjective

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<sup>1</sup> **Thomas Hobbes.** *Leviathan: Or, the Matter, Forme & Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall and Civill.* R. Waller (ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904, p. xix.

perceptions and emotions are not biased they are accurate. Due to self-interest, partiality and subjectivity our emotional evaluations can usually only be more or less objective and accurate but not absolutely so. Thus we may recognize our biases more or less accurately as we may sense our subjectivity also more or less objectively.

In an ideal – reasonable, objective and impartial – world all individuals, groups and cultures may be empirically and should be normatively equal. In the real world we may believe that to be an Arab in Arab culture is as normal as it is to be a Pole in Poland. In an ideal world, to be a Muslim Arab in Poland is as normal as it is to be a Catholic Pole in Saudi Arabia. Ideally, the cultures may rationally be considered as being equal because, were we all without bias, prejudice and partiality, it would be an extremely demanding task for us to demonstrate objectively how and why certain types of individuals, cultures or societies could ever be inherently superior and better than others.

It sounds politically correct and right to claim “All individuals are as worthy and good as I am.” Even if I were to take such a belief seriously I would never be able – or completely willing – to live accordingly. In real life individuals are not born equal, do not live equal, do not die equal and are even posthumously unequal. We may believe in human equality that says we are equals in birth, life and death. Because of a shared belief in human equality we may consider present society to be an unprecedentedly good one. This belief, however, is also a metaphor, a functional myth, not a description of reality. Groups within a society are never equal – there are always those who are marginal and excluded, those whose needs are not recognized and whose voices are not heard. We may cherish religious freedom as a universal right but, again, religious choices are never culturally equal.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps we talk more about equality than live up to it. Perhaps we cheat because we do not even want the world to be equal. Maybe increasing equality makes us feel uncertain and vulnerable. Maybe we are subjective creatures. Maybe we – at least sometimes, in our own society, neighborhood, circles of fellowship, or in the supermarket – even enjoy being unequal. Maybe we celebrate when our compatriots win competitions and see no reason for celebration if the Nobel Prize goes to someone from distant culture. Maybe we want our little world, our groups and relationships to be superior. Maybe that way we feel ourselves truly human.

On the other hand, we know from history that interpersonal biases may also become extreme, harmful and dangerous. *A posteriori* we know that the crime has been done. But *a priori* in our present relationships it is often almost impossible to determine exactly when the excessive negative bias starts or to

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<sup>2</sup> For ethnic Estonians, the conversion to Islam involves considerably higher costs in a secular and traditionally Lutheran Estonian culture than conversion to Methodism, Baptism or Catholicism.

differentiate the victim from the perpetrator due to partiality in our perceptions and the subjectivity of the conflicting parties' experiences. Where we find unfounded bias materialized in a certain form of behavior we then use the term 'discrimination'. When bias manifests itself in unfounded attitudes we call it 'prejudice'. Where bias produces unfounded cognitive images we call these 'stereotypes'.<sup>3</sup> A good deal of cognitive practice with such labels may make us believe that the real world *could exist without harmful biases*. It is highly likely that the attitudes and perceptions about what is considered harmful will change. Biases themselves, however, will still be present.

The ideas and beliefs about social justice and equality have recently changed enormously. In the contemporary world we agree that slavery and racism cannot be legitimate. Several centuries ago, however, racism and slavery were normal and legitimate in all corners of the world to the extent that individuals in disagreement with the social inequalities due to skin color or birth were suffering from an "inaccurate" perception of their social position. Half a century ago a great many people believed in Communist ideals of equality. Today most of us consider Communist regimes as empirical failures. Some of us consider Communism as essentially a bad idea. Similarly, it is highly likely that future generations will reinterpret and reassess some of our present perceptions of inter-human justice and equality.

We are not absolutely certain that the norms and values we consider universal, timeless and objective actually are what we believe them to be. We lack consensus about whether such universal values exist at all. What we can be certain of, however, is that in our current daily interactions some degree of objectivity in our perceptions is always lacking. We usually evaluate ourselves with a positive bias and sometimes we construct negatively-biased images of those whose existence, ideas or attitudes undermine our sense of security, self-worth and self-esteem.

I assume that the present definitions of 'good' and 'bad' behavior, 'good' and 'bad' people, are social constructions. I subjectively believe this approach accurately explains why moral norms vary and how they have emerged and changed in human associations, cultures and societies. Ideas, behaviors, individuals, cultures and groups are not objectively good or bad but are so defined because social actors have constructed them as such. At the same time, I am not advocating nihilism (the absence of any moral norms). What functions as a self-evident moral norm in a particular moral community (for example, in the Catholic Church) or in a political society exists "as if" it is objective for the members of the respective communities. Anything beyond that inevitably opens the doors to abstract reasoning.

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<sup>3</sup> Miles Hewstone, Mark Rubin, Hazel Willis. Intergroup bias. – Annual Review of Psychology, 2002, p. 575.

I could try to identify a certain pattern of fundamental values and principles that most societies usually acknowledge, such as “do not kill” and “do not lie”. Irrespective of whether any particular society might be Christian, Fascist, Communist or Liberal Democrat, in one way or another they all socialize their common citizens to be loyal to that form of government, to accept the public order, to be law-abiding and willing to contribute to the public good. Good Christian, good Soviet and competent democratic citizens are all expected to be emotionally positively biased towards their present society. Their emotional socialization contributes to the bias towards some version of deontological morals instead of instrumental ethics. Irrespective of whether the moral norms of the common people are explained by a supernatural God’s will, scientific materialism or universal human rights – common members of society are always expected to be loyal and committed to contributing to the public good. They should live “as if” there are objective moral norms to which they have to conform. If they do not they are in danger of exclusion from the community of the ‘good’.

Thus the idea of who is considered good, included and part of the social mainstream and, conversely, who is considered evil, excluded, marginal or ‘other’ is socially constructed. Correspondingly, not only do we use moral concepts for evaluation from a subjective perspective, we may harbor negative prejudices against certain groups of people because they are negatively defined within our present culture.

As individuals we do not exist in isolation, as persons *per se* we do not exist before and outside of communication with other people. We do not even exist as persons *first* who only thereafter express and present themselves to the surrounding world. Instead, our self-identity and self-consciousness emerge on the basis of communication with others. As Peter L. Berger claimed, from the moment a human individual becomes conscious of self he or she is in a relationship with other people. Thereafter, the relationship between an individual and society is dialectic in nature.<sup>4</sup> Thus the beginning and the development of the perception of ourselves as people is preconditioned by our relationships to other individuals and society.

In order to communicate with other individuals we need words and language. On the one hand we need language in order to understand each other, but on the other hand we *learn to think* only as far as we have learned to *communicate with other people*. Our capacity of internal reasoning is the result of acquired capabilities of interpersonal communication. Correspondingly, even our capacity for individual thought results from our social interactions.

Moreover, our self-perception is based on comparison with others. Without comparisons (between individuals, groups, cultures, societies, etc.) the

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<sup>4</sup> **Peter L. Berger.** *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion.* Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967, p. 4.

notions of ‘good’, ‘foolish’, ‘civilized’, ‘primitive’, and so forth, would have no meaning. We acquire conceptions of ourselves and others during socialization. In comparison with small children, adults are more self-conscious because they have practiced comparative representations of self and others over a substantially longer period of time. In real-life situations they have learned to perceive themselves in relation to others according to a particular pattern (“I am active, attractive and ambitious”, “I have low self-esteem, I am an empathic team-worker, I am a self-critical introvert, humble and really decent person”).

The positive and negative nature of present self-perceptions depends largely on previous interpersonal experiences. Once the pattern of self-image starts to accumulate on the negative side it becomes increasingly difficult not to respond to emerging situations in ways outside of the acquired self-image. Changes in self-image are possible but are most likely to be evolutionary, not revolutionary. In order to improve one’s psychologically, emotionally and cognitively-internalized, habitual self-perception one can usually only make relatively small changes in thought and behaviour at a time. Thereafter, if one consistently follows these new patterns of interpersonal behaviour for a sufficient period of time a slightly changed self-image becomes habitually internalized. After success with the first step one can take another small step forward.

Thus, we attain our self-consciousness through human relations. Our self-esteem, consciousness of social status, dignity and security are dependent upon our relations with others.

We all have the instinct of self-preservation. We all want to feel psychologically secure and safe. We want to have relationships that nourish our self-esteem and fulfill our need of love. We choose relationships and associations for that purpose, we are conscious about group identities that help us build up a more secure sense of self. Some of us may have a weaker individual sense of self-certainty, be more responsive to social context and more dependent on groups and relationships in our secure sense of identity. Internally uncertain individuals can join with strict groups – i.e., groups, where the level of certainty is high – more easily because in that case identification with the group can reduce uncertainty by strengthening the sense of “who we are, how we should behave, and how others will treat us”<sup>5</sup>.

We respond differently to challenges depending on whether we perceive the situation to be under our own control or if we need the help of God or a particular group. For some of us challenges are exciting, the search for solutions and coping with challenges may yield satisfaction and an increase in

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<sup>5</sup> **Michael A. Hogg, Janice R. Adelman, Robert D. Blagg.** Religion in the Face of Uncertainty: An Uncertainty-Identity Theory Account of Religiousness. – *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 1/2010, p. 74.

self-confidence. Others experience stress, feel powerless as if they have lost control over the world and life. Whether the challenge is a danger and brings along passivity and withdrawal or whether it is an opportunity depends on whether we feel our resources to be sufficient for coping with it.<sup>6</sup> None of us can live a normal life with a continuous sense of insecurity and a strong feeling that we are in a vulnerable situation. We devote our cognitive energy to issues that matter to us, that touch us personally.<sup>7</sup> In order to reduce insecurity in human relations we may try to increase consistency and psychological stability.<sup>8</sup> We may choose which relationships to exclude and which to nourish.

Our emotional capacities differ in the ways in which we cope with internal insecurities and vulnerabilities. Yet we all are biased for three main reasons.

### General reasons for bias

**1. To reduce the feeling of uncertainty.** Every individual experiences feelings of uncertainty and chaos at certain stages of life. The uncertainty may be related to moral values, a sense of racial, national, ethnic, cultural, gender or sexual identity, or socioeconomic status.

According to Peter L. Berger, human beings are social creatures who are by nature inclined to construct a social world.<sup>9</sup> In order to cope with uncertainties people create a social world which, to a significant degree, replaces uncertainty with predictability and chaos with order. Real-life situations are significantly chaotic and unpredictable and can never be completely controlled by humans, but in order to feel safe and secure we as humans need a faith and perception that things are meaningfully under our control, that our status and position in society are sufficiently secure and that meaninglessness is sufficiently under our control too. Thus, we construct certainty, order and meaning where we find it lacking. Life and existence would be unbearable if we did not construct some kind of *meaning* to it. We strive to make the world more predictable and “our own behavior within it more efficacious”<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Hogg, Adelman, Blagg 2010, p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey R. Seul. Ours is the way of God: Religion, Identity, and Intergroup Conflict. – Journal of Peace Research, 5/1999, p. 555.

<sup>9</sup> Berger 1967, pp. 6, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Hogg, Adelman, Blagg 2010, p. 73.

**2. To enhance self-esteem.** We define ourselves in and by our positive and negative relationships with other individuals and groups.<sup>11</sup> For establishing positive self-esteem we do not only need positive social relations, but sometimes also intergroup prejudices.<sup>12</sup> Correspondingly, at times it may be useful for us to be pejorative towards people who objectively have not deserved it. And vice versa, when we ourselves experience injustice and discrimination we may be deeply touched and feel a compelling need to cope with it. In principle, we feel the need to eliminate the unjust situation. We may resist, rebel, transform the situation or transform ourselves. For example, we may re-interpret our suffering as good and try to restore our sense of dignity even when we remain humiliated.

**3. To construct meaning.** Human existence and existential experiences do not have objective and rational meanings. If we try to reason things out rationally, our existence does not have any given meaning. We are not irreplaceable – social life existed before we were born and will continue after our death. After our departure the places and roles which we filled will soon be filled by others. We may gather thousands of photos of ourselves “for our grandchildren”, yet our offspring will not remember us any more than we remember our grandparents. Maybe the most rational and objective perception of life is to acknowledge its meaninglessness, but we just cannot live like that.

If we pose a rational research question: “Does life have any meaning at all?” we could reasonably conclude that riches, fame, youth, and health vanish; even good things like love and pleasure are accompanied by pain and disappointments and nothing remains.<sup>13</sup> Instead, we formulate our research question as follows: “*What* meaning does my life have?” Life has to have meaning even when it has none. We just need to attach positive and negative meanings to ourselves, to our experiences, and to our relationships:

“We need to know who we are and how to behave and what to think, who others are and how they might behave and what they might think, and how we fit into a predictable social, physical, and ... existential universe.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> **Herbert C. Kelman.** *Interests, Relationships, Identities: Three Central Issues for Individuals and Groups in Negotiating Their Social Environment.* – Annual Review of Psychology, 2006, pp. 3–4.

<sup>12</sup> **Hewstone, Rubin, Willis** 2002. **Ole Waever, Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup, Lemaitre Pierre.** *Identity, Migration and The New Security Agenda in Europe.* London: Pinter Publishers, 1993.

<sup>13</sup> **William James.** *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature.* London: Routledge, 2002, p. 112.

<sup>14</sup> **Hogg, Adelman, Blagg** 2010, p. 73.

To sum up, as individuals, groups, cultures and communities we need myths that give meaning to our existence. These myths – such as “the world is a better place because I realize my professional mission”, “life in my society is better than in previous societies” – are not ‘false consciousness’ or distorted views of reality without which individual and communal existence would be better. Quite the opposite, without such biases our interpersonal relations cannot effectively function.

In the following section four functions of biases are delineated which may exist in individuals and groups in all possible combinations. As humans, we are capable of harboring positive and negative biases selectively and simultaneously. Our biases are also dynamic in nature – the same groups and individuals we perceive negatively today we may have liked yesterday. By the same token, our present opponents may become our allies tomorrow.

### **Positive function of positive bias**

Whether positive bias fulfils a positive function depends on whether the bias is suitable for the situation at hand. For example, we usually believe that it is good to trust “most other people” but such attitudinally positive bias towards strangers may at times yield unhealthy consequences. Principled realism and rational skepticism also may have negative outcomes. Therefore, the relevant question is: “*When* does positive bias function positively?”

Our self-esteem and our sense of social status – as individuals, groups and members of society – is based to a significant degree on positive bias.<sup>15</sup> To be positively biased towards oneself is neither immoral nor bad. In contrast, to be absolutely honest, objective and self-critical can become harmful and depressing. We do not need to live like angels because we are not angels and we do not live in the commonwealth of angels. Real individuals can never be perfectly objective, absolutely separated from subjective interests and personal perspectives.

Often we may hear public exhortations for members of the community to be more honest, more altruistic (to volunteer and participate in civil associations), more empathetic (to spend more time with their children, to visit parents more often, to care more about the marginal, powerless and needy). It sounds so good, but there are several serious faults with such moral exhortations.

Firstly, they measure human performance against standards which are sufficiently vague and ambiguous to be easily manipulated by the socially privileged who, themselves, would hardly succeed in their leadership duties and political and economic ventures if they were seriously following such moral norms.

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<sup>15</sup> Hewstone, Rubin, Willis 2002, p. 580.

Secondly, those among the common people who do take such norms seriously and attempt to live by these standards will most likely stagnate in their careers, suffer failures in interpersonal relations and consequently feel subjectively inadequate as people.

Thirdly, nobody's prime duty is to be concerned for somebody else first. It is life-affirming to treat yourself well first, to be good towards yourself first, to live first for yourself, to seek your own happiness first, to mind your own business, interests and needs first, to fulfil your own mission, goal and purpose in life and not anybody else's. To prefer myself is human. It is human also to prefer the groups to which I belong, the associations in which I am active and to prefer my friends to strangers.

Accordingly, it is natural to be positively biased towards the groups where I belong. If I do not like the group, if I have negative perceptions regarding the group, my sense of identity – and most likely also self-esteem – will be weakened by participation in that group. Thus it is natural to want to belong to groups which I consider to be better than other groups, which strengthen my self-identity and bolster my self-esteem.<sup>16</sup>

If somebody else defines my identity (“who I am”) and which relationships and behaviors are good for me, if the definition of my self-identity and self-certainty is dependent on the will and evaluation of somebody else, then I am at somebody else's mercy. Obviously, human relations and group identities mold my identity, and there are structural identities I almost cannot change (such as racial, gender, and ethnic identities), but at the same time I also partake in the construction of my own identity.<sup>17</sup> I am the one who chooses groups and relationships where I belong. I construct my world and the world constructs me. I construct my identity by choosing the groups and ideas which will mold my identity.

What we consider ourselves to be is our construction in relation to what we “want to be” (our future aspirations) and to what we “want to have been” (the images from the past that contribute to our present definition of self and future goals).

There are many ways in which we can deal with our own past and that of our ancestors. We choose elements that can realistically be found from our past. But as we cannot choose everything that can be found we inevitably *have to choose and select* the experiences which we emphasize as important. We also determine elements which are to be neglected. We may also reinterpret particular past negative experiences as positive or formulate myths

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<sup>16</sup> **Kristen Renwick Monroe, Maria Luisa Martinez-Martí.** Empathy, Prejudice, and Fostering Tolerance. – Political Science & Politics, 4/2008, p. 858.

<sup>17</sup> I can stop identifying myself culturally or politically as an Estonian. However, ‘Estonianness’ will remain part of my reality to the extent that other people around me still identify me as an Estonian.

and narratives about ourselves which may not be very close to the life we have actually been living up to now.

It seems to me that it is a general human condition to construct an image and identity of self in this way. People always tend to choose elements that contribute to their present self-definition and their future goals. Cultural conventions about the extent to which individuals are free to formulate positive presentations of self may be markedly different. In contemporary liberal societies which place a high value on self-expression, authenticity, autonomy and self-centeredness, a positively-biased presentation of self, are conventionally accepted. Thus, we are even expected to describe our character traits in CVs with concepts like “industrious”, “helpful”, “excellent team-worker”, “self-confident” and “ambitious”.

Recent changes in the means of interpersonal communication have also influenced patterns of presentation of self to the public. Social networks (such as Facebook) allow a constructionist presentation of “self” unprecedented in previous human history. It has introduced new digital methods for how the self can be presented, it has extended the conventions of the morally-appropriate ways in which the “self” can be marketed, advertised and branded and it has opened up access to the competitive market of groups and individuals for an unprecedented number of individuals. Increasing participation in social networks has also increased the potential “audience” to whom individuals knowingly or unknowingly present themselves.

Partners in well-functioning romantic relationships usually have a *strongly* positive bias in their evaluations about each other’s personalities, interests, goals and accomplishments. Precisely due to mutual positive bias, they feel good to be in such a relationship, they are more ready to commit, they feel greater satisfaction, mutual trust and love and their conflicts and differences are easier to solve.<sup>18</sup>

In a study conducted by Faby Gagné and John Lydon, 95% of respondents evaluated their partner as being more intelligent, charming, warm and humorous than the average dating man and woman.<sup>19</sup> As such a high proportion of individuals cannot objectively be better than average, it is obvious that individuals tend to be *positively* biased towards their partners and/or negatively biased towards all the remaining individuals who are dating.

As a rule, personal differences alienate and similarities attract. For example, positive romantic feelings usually start with the perception that the other person thinks and understands life the way we do. This feeling of similarity strengthens our self-identity and self-esteem as a person and raises our motivation of self-actualization. At some point in time, at least in cases where

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<sup>18</sup> **Faby M. Gagné, John E. Lydon.** Bias and Accuracy in Close Relationships: An Integrative Review. – *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 4/2004, p. 322.

<sup>19</sup> **Gagné, Lydon** 2004, p. 324.

both partners express their personalities and feelings, some differences of interest, understanding, worldview, hobbies or preferences inevitably emerge too. Almost automatically, the potential strength of a partnership is tested when the contradicting feelings of both personalities authentically meet.

In principle, the relationship can function if each partner does not have shared religious beliefs, professional interests, worldviews, hobbies, friends, social backgrounds and status, education or equal success in their professional careers. Such a relationship can function, but it demands much more effort. As a rule, the feeling that the partner is like me, forming a good team, is the basis for positive self-esteem (positive bias towards oneself) and positive bias toward the close relationship.<sup>20</sup>

### **Positive function of negative bias**

Negative emotions and bias are as normal a part of human life as positive ones. As mentioned above, we have positive emotions regarding relations with individuals and groups who enhance our self-esteem and contribute to our self-actualization, helping us to give meaning to the human world and to construct a reliable moral worldview.

Similarly, we also have negative emotions and biases regarding interpersonal relations. An autonomous individual can freely choose individuals and groups he or she wants to be in relationship and which to avoid – to ignore their concerns, to exclude them from networks in Facebook or to exclude them from any form of relationship. In order to have healthy relationships, people should also be capable of distrust and of avoiding unwanted communication, fellowship and partnership. If a person is interested in golf, the stock market and Machiavellian philosophy his or her integrity and authentic personality would be harmed if, in trying to conform to the role of a “decent person”, he or she becomes a member of a chess club for celibate, wine-drinking clergy, unless he or she wants it emotionally.

New digital forms of interpersonal communication make us accessible to an increasing number of individuals, networks and groups. We should not forget, however, that we will only be “good” people if we fulfil our own unique mission – I encourage you to take this positively-biased positive myth about yourself seriously enough – and the latter often requires the ability to answer in the negative, to reject and to abandon. That is to say, in order to be true to ourselves in expressing our negative attitudes towards individuals and groups around us we need not be informed partakers in thousands of ‘teams’ formed around us. We need to communicate with the members in a team we prefer and with those who want to be in the same team as us.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 323.

## Negative function of negative bias

Individuals who are psychologically capable of autonomous reasoning and behavior – often in contrast to the ideas, patterns and conventions followed by the majority – may be examples of positive deviances from the social mainstream despite having a critical attitude (negative bias) regarding social conventions. Accordingly, we can envision those individuals to be *both deviant and happy*. Unlike paranoiacs who also are negatively biased towards the external world, their mental sensors react mostly to negative external impulses and do not register any positive ones well.

Negative biases usually tend to function negatively. As negative bias tends by definition to exclude, the person who is purposefully self-centered, who is too engaged in excluding persons and relationships may end up in isolation and in loss of self-awareness (as the identity of self is based on human relationships).<sup>21</sup> And vice versa, to be “excluded” by all or most of those around us, can hardly be considered as good.

There is also a particular kind of psychological response to the external world which perceives the world accurately but may start to function negatively due to the lack of positive biases. The psychologist of religion, William James, talked about a ‘sick soul’ that perceives accurately the negative facets of human life such as the pain, the loss, the evil and the suffering.<sup>22</sup> James considered this realistic perception of parts of life as not contributing to vitality, self-actualization and personal success. Not surprisingly, James observed that most people would prefer *not to be ‘sick’, but ‘healthy’ souls*.<sup>23</sup>

A person with a ‘sick soul’ has an extraordinary ability to endure suffering for an extended period of time, to meditate continuously and systematically on evil and injustice in the human world, to be concerned about evil and to feel remorse over sin.<sup>24</sup> ‘Sick souls’ are able to stay stuck in remorse for sin, whereas a person with a ‘healthy soul’ just cannot bear the related emotions and thus has a strong motivation to act and move on. The ‘sick soul’ believes that the better it senses evil the better it understands the world.<sup>25</sup> The ‘sick soul’ neither escapes nor avoids the feelings of empathy, helplessness, pain

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<sup>21</sup> Emilé Durkheim has identified both excessive individualism (egoism) and insufficient individualism (altruism) as potential causes of suicide. Both egoism and altruism involves the loss of normal self-awareness. A self-centered egoist loses an ability to be aware of other persons and relationships, an other-centered altruist is not capable of being aware of his or her own self. **Emilé Durkheim**. *Suicide. – Readings from Emile Durkheim*. Kenneth Thompson (ed.) New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 90–102.

<sup>22</sup> **Charles Taylor**. *Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisited*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2002, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> **Taylor** 2002, p. 33.

<sup>24</sup> **James** 2002, pp. 103–131.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 106.

and fear, and by abiding in these feelings gains deeper insight into and understanding of what it *means* to be in such situations.<sup>26</sup>

‘Sick souls’ can be those who take the suffering of other humans to heart, those who are constantly concerned about the millions who suffer due to domestic violence, human trafficking, slavery, starvation, who are raped and killed in conflicts and wars. ‘Sick souls’ may *perceive* social, physical, psychological and existential sufferings *more accurately* but the majority of human beings see no purpose in this or just do not want to take such emotional burdens onto their shoulders.

### Negative function of positive bias

While a close relationship may be the source of supreme goodness in life due to the high level of interpersonal connectedness, it can also be a place where too much positivity may function negatively.

Firstly, culture always does influence the kinds of ideal conceptions and desired image we have regarding close relationships and how we measure their levels of satisfaction. In contemporary Western cultures close relationships are evaluated against very demanding ideals and expectations regarding physical beauty, sexual performance and social and economic status. As Roy Baumeister and Kathleen Vohs have noticed, in contemporary Western liberal societies partners base their evaluations of the relationship also on “... the sexual market, where the participants are partakers, and about their market value, as they themselves perceive it.”<sup>27</sup> Excessively positive expectations may also seriously hinder the forming of close and lasting relationships.

Secondly, while the option of quitting a relationship simply for reasons like “I can do better on the dating market” or “It is not you, it is me” are legitimate for us today, in real-life situations, however, individuals may remain in relationships whose costs for them have long ago outweighed the benefits. Among many reasons why partners do not dissolve their relationship – like shared real estate property, bank loans, children and the like – it may also be that a dysfunctional *positive bias* hinders them. If their mutual feelings and relationship lack positive romantic biases then they may be *thinking more positively about the relationship* than it *actually merits*. They may believe in the *potential* of what the relationship could be – or what it was years ago – and are thus not able to recognize *what it actually is*.

In practice, it is hard to tell when relationships at the workplace, among friends or between partners in life are not working any more (are not

<sup>26</sup> Taylor 2002, p. 34.

<sup>27</sup> Roy F. Baumeister, Kathleen D. Vohs. Sexual Economics: Sex as Female Resource for Social Exchange in Heterosexual Interactions. – Personality and Social Psychology Review, 4/2004, pp. 339–363.

accompanied by positive emotions) but in all cases where the relationships have become dysfunctional it is also dysfunctional to nourish positively-biased perceptions about them.

### ***“I know you can dance like Shakira”***

In a relationship that works well the idealization of a partner and a relationship contributes to the longevity of that relationship.<sup>28</sup> However, if the bias becomes excessive – if negative feedback is not considered at all or the positive attitudes towards the partner become unrealistically optimistic – the *positive* bias may become dysfunctional. Compliments like “I am convinced that you could sing and dance like Shakira (or Michael Jackson, if said to a man)” function most negatively in cases where the partner really believes in them, starts practicing dancing and singing and yet there is no realistic basis at all for such a positive comment.

Faby Gagne and John Lydon suggest that the best balance for couples would be a combination of positive bias together with realistic hopes and accurate feedback.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Most people can be trusted and “want me good”***

We are taught that good people are tolerant and trusting. Accordingly, we are also tempted to want to be good and virtuous individuals. We may “agree strongly” with the statement “most people can be trusted” that is presented in public surveys. In real-life situations the principled commitment to follow this kind of normative deontological attitude may become counterproductive and function negatively in many ways.

We may believe inaccurately that, regardless of the situation, we do make the right decisions by following some set of objective (absolute) moral standards. We may believe that we need to do what is right *rationally* and *universally* (in Kantian sense), *supernaturally* (what God said through Jesus Christ in the Sermon of the Mount, or what the laws of karma demand), or according to liberal humanism or virtue ethics. Whenever the main moral emphasis, if not the sole attention, is on the way *how we as individuals respond* and due attention is not given to what other individuals and groups do the resulting *positive bias* towards all other individuals functions negatively for several reasons.

Firstly, normative optimism or commitment to deontological ethics often only raises false hopes (i.e. hopes that, according to Winston Churchill’s famous quotes, will “melt like snow” and “are soon to be swept away”). We may be fervent believers in non-violent conflict solution but we should

<sup>28</sup> Gagné, Lydon 2004, p. 322.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 323.

remember that even Mahatma Gandhi believed that morally wrong choices are those which do not actively oppose injustices in interpersonal relations. The passive acceptance of injustice – such as being empathetic, humble, altruistic, self-denying, ascetic – contributes to its solidification and advancement and usually displays a lack of moral courage, not its presence.<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, Gandhi also believed that the correct choice of behavior depends on the peculiarities of the situation and on the nature of the opponent. For example, Gandhi considered the situation of the Jews in the Second World War ghettos of Warsaw sufficiently exceptional and extreme to justify armed resistance by the Jews.

It is good if we are able to form and develop interpersonal relations based on trust and mutuality but we certainly do not need to demonstrate unqualified trust towards all strangers. In a real-life situation we do not need to have any particular general attitude to most other individuals living in the same neighborhood or society. We need to make sufficiently accurate evaluations and decisions about a limited number of relationships that are significant to us.

The reliance on objective and absolute moral standards becomes unhelpful when it does not allow us to react to the situation *as it is* and motivates us to react in the way *we want* the situation *to be*. When we are tempted to react to our enemies, competitors and those who want to enter into relationships with us that are not mutual, open and consensual *as if* they are our trustworthy friends and partners we should remember that it is not morally superior to play chess when our opponents play football or to try to be deontologically “good” (honest, open, polite, compassionate, altruistic, humble, team-spirited, working for the common good and the like) in a competitive or confrontational situation. If we still do so we are hypocrites, we cheat ourselves and soon find ourselves many steps behind those who realistically perceive what is going on. The latter may be less optimistic than we are but will be less depressed and more likely to survive and succeed in interpersonal relations.

### Concluding remarks

We know the ideals. We talk about ideals. Sometimes we enthusiastically demand the observance of these ideals by others. But we follow these ideals only partially. We trust most “other people” yet want to have signed contracts and locks on the doors. The banks do not trust you and me with loans and we do not trust the good nature of those whom we elect to political office.

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<sup>30</sup> The brief outline of Gandhi’s ideas and practical suggestions are derived from the following book: **Mark Juergensmeyer**. Gandhi’s way: a handbook of conflict resolution. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

We want to be sure how they will behave when the state budget and political power are at their disposal. For some reason we want laws to guard them. We should love others like ourselves and attribute equal value and worth to other humans. We know we should. We know it is a nice idea.

We have a personality, emotions, experiences and yearnings all in ourselves and not in others. In our minds we are much closer to cherished (so-called “objective”) ideals than we are in our deeds and emotions. We follow ideals selectively at best. We recognize from experience that others do the same.

In interpersonal relationships there is no objective truth to which all parties conform and by which they evaluate themselves.

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# TERRORISM, STATE RESPONSIBILITY AND THE USE OF ARMED FORCE

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**ABSTRACT.** Terrorism has become an especially pressing security problem, both domestically and internationally, over recent decades. States have considered terrorism also as a national security threat that requires military action. Although the rules on the use of armed force were traditionally for inter-state relations, it does not mean that states may not use armed force in the conflict with terrorist non-state actors. Indeed, it would be absurd to claim that states may not exercise self-defence or employ collective security system merely because the adversary is a non-state actor. This demands a more innovative interpretation and use of existing international legal system, while not jeopardising its foundations in the process.

**Key words:** *terrorism, state responsibility, non-state actors, use of armed force, self-defence, collective security.*

## Introduction

Terrorism has plagued mankind for more than two thousand years but it has become an especially pressing security problem, both domestically and internationally, in recent decades. The most significant milestone was the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001. Since then we regularly hear about terrorist groups, terrorist acts and potential terrorist threats – terrorism has become an inseparable part of contemporary everyday life.

Terrorism can be viewed from either a law enforcement or a military perspective. The former considers terrorism as a criminal activity that falls under the responsibility of domestic law enforcement authorities while the latter perspective regards terrorism as a national security threat that demands military action. This article is about the military perspective. States and the international community, faced with the extreme threats of contemporary terrorism, have expressed a willingness to exercise self-defence in order to anticipate or retaliate against terrorist attacks as well as to employ the measures provided by a collective security system. The decision to resort to these means may appear attractive for political or similar reasons, but it

involves numerous (legal) complications. For instance, non-state actors do not have their own territory – they are located in state territory – and therefore every use of armed force against such actors is also a use of armed force against the host state. One should not take lightly the decision to engage militarily with another state; the latter has to bear (legal) responsibility for the conduct of the non-state actor or its substantial involvement therein.

Exercising self-defence and employing a collective security system is complicated because we lack a “universal language” on terrorism. Today, terrorism is so frequently spoken about that one cannot blame people for thinking there is a consensus on what terrorism means. However, if examined more closely, it becomes apparent that there is no common understanding of terrorism at all and, as a result, no common understanding of the enemy in the “war on terror”. No global treaty dealing with the prevention and punishment of acts usually perceived as terrorism expressly uses the words “terrorism” or “terrorist” when defining these particular acts; at the most, these words are mentioned in the title and/or preamble.

The term “terrorism” is imperfect, emotionally charged and politically influenced. Labelling someone as a terrorist often reveals more about the one using the label than the one being labelled. Terrorism is more likely to refer to a socio-political conviction than to describe a phenomenon. Nevertheless, persons or groups are too easily considered terrorists, states are too easily accused of using or supporting terrorism and human rights are too easily restricted by claiming that such measures are necessary in order to fight terrorism. The absence of a generally accepted definition of terrorism contributes to legal uncertainty as well as undermining the states’ credibility and the legitimacy of their conduct in the “war on terror”. Besides problems of definition, there is another factor which adds to the complexity of terrorism – the latter can be practiced in different forms. Generally, we can identify three forms. At the extreme ends of the scale there are purely state and purely private terrorism, while the most troubling form is the grey area in between. This type of terrorism is perpetrated privately, but unofficially supported or directed by states. This third form of terrorism is especially troubling in the light of the traditional norms and principles of international law.

It is clear that a state cannot be held equally responsible for whatever relations with terrorism. Not every situation provides the right to use armed force as a form of self-defence or as a coercive measure within the collective security system. Every counter-measure must be a necessary and proportional reaction to terrorist attack, its threat or its consequences. The absence of clear rules and restrictions leaves states less interested in dealing with the causes of terrorism; forceful counter-measures will simply become a convenient and robustly effective choice. At the same time, we cannot deny that terrorism shakes our previous beliefs and demands innovative interpretation in order to bridge these legislative gaps. Indeed, international law cannot remain static, it

has to find ways to adapt and modernise itself without jeopardising the foundations of international relations and the legal system in the process.

This article examines whether and under which circumstances states may use armed force in the fight against terrorist non-state actors. To find the answers, several interrelated topics are discussed. On the whole, the international fight against terrorism must be based on a common understanding of what terrorism is in order to ensure legal certainty and avoid abuse. The use of armed force must respect previously agreed fundamental principles, even in the context of terrorism; terrorism does not justify a “fresh start” in the form of hastily inventing completely new principles. Before making decisions in the framework of self-defence and the collective security system, one must first identify applicable obligations in preventing terrorism under international law and must then examine whether such obligations have been breached and what counter-measures are appropriate in the circumstances. In practice, states are instead resorting to political arguments that are neither transparent nor predictable and may destabilise the domestic and international situation.

This article looks at international terrorism from the perspective of international law, more specifically the perspective of regulations concerning state responsibility and the use of armed force. Domestic (criminal) law aspects are touched upon only to the extent necessary to explain states’ international obligations when fighting terrorism. International terrorism generally requires that its perpetrators come from one state and commit terrorist acts in another state, but this may also be supported by a third state. Because states usually do not practice terrorism directly but use non-state actors instead, this article focuses on aspects relating to terrorist non-state actors.

## **1. Concept of Terrorism in International Law**

### ***1.1. Different Approaches to Terrorism***

Terrorism can be approached from a law enforcement or military perspective. The first is older and was previously dominant,<sup>1</sup> but in the 1980s states began to argue that traditional law enforcement mechanisms are sometimes inadequate in the fight against terrorism and that the military has to take over responsibility for combating this threat.<sup>2</sup> Both perspectives have

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<sup>1</sup> See **Bassiouni, M. C.** 2002. Legal Control of International Terrorism: A Policy-Oriented Assessment. – Harvard International Law Journal, 43, pp. 88–96 for the measures applied and their critical assessment.

<sup>2</sup> **Livingstone, N. C.** 1990. Proactive Responses to Terrorism: Reprisals, Preemption, and Retribution. – International Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls. Ed. C. W. Kegley, Jr. London: Macmillan, pp. 219–220.

positive and negative aspects.<sup>3</sup> Law enforcement ensures a thorough investigation and court proceedings with appropriate legal guarantees, but this has turned out to be ineffective on numerous occasions as terrorists have taken advantage of legal loopholes and the lack of international co-operation.<sup>4</sup> One can reasonably argue that terrorism is more than just a crime; terrorists are enemies of the state who threaten the political regime and governments may resort to more serious measures when defending the state. The decision to use the military is a political one that is not necessarily based on “evidence” acceptable in a court of law. Therefore it is easier to use military force than law enforcement as the former can address the problem in a more robust manner “to get things done”. Although a potential advantage, the political decision-making process and this much lower standard of evidence are also open to abuse. However, the protection of national security means that risks are taken and mistakes are sometimes made, but this is the price one has to pay. Judges, prosecutors and attorneys may have the luxury to weigh up all evidence in detail and take their time, but this approach can have devastating effects in the event of actual threats to national security. In practice, states use different approaches in different situations and not all terrorist acts or groups warrant military action.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, one must realise that the use of force has become a real alternative which states are increasingly prepared to resort to.

## 1.2. Defining Terrorism

States are willing to use armed force to fight terrorism, but do they have a clear understanding of terrorism? Interestingly, states are prepared to retroactively label someone or something as a terrorist or terrorism but are not able to describe it beforehand. Is terrorism indefinable? Might states argue that they will know terrorism when they see it?<sup>6</sup> The absence of a generally accepted definition causes legal uncertainty as well as undermining a state’s credibility and the legitimacy of their conduct in the “war on terror”. Even so,

<sup>3</sup> **Erickson, R. J.** 1989. Legitimate Use of Military Force against State-Sponsored International Terrorism. Maxwell Air Force Base: Air University Press, pp. 47–57.

<sup>4</sup> For example, **Maogoto, J. N.** 2005. Battling Terrorism: Legal Perspectives on the Use of Force and the War on Terror. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, p. 53; **Bassiouni** 2002, pp. 92–93.

<sup>5</sup> See **Silke, A.** 2003. Retaliating against Terrorism. – Terrorists, Victims and Society: Psychological Perspectives on Terrorism and Its Consequences. Ed. A. Silke. Chichester: Wiley, pp. 215–231 for the inappropriateness of military measures.

<sup>6</sup> Paraphrasing Associate Justice Potter Stewart of the United States Supreme Court who asserted in relation to pornography that he could not define it, but he knew it when he saw it. **Jacobellis v. Ohio**, United States Supreme Court, Judgment, 22 June 1964, 378 US 184 (1964), p. 197.

states have attempted to define terrorism albeit with limited success. They have taken two paths: a more idealistic path that would lead to a generic definition and a more pragmatic path where states deal with specific types of terrorist acts one by one. Global efforts are complemented by regional initiatives that have produced results more easily, but are somewhat biased and reflect political preferences.

The first attempts to define terrorism were made in the 1930s<sup>7</sup> and since then there have been numerous proposals for a generic definition,<sup>8</sup> but none has gained the necessary approvals and has accordingly become generally legally binding. The main obstacle has always been the divisive idea that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter”. A significant number of states believed that those fighting for freedom from colonial or other foreign power may use means and methods which are otherwise prohibited by the law of armed conflict (as a general term, covering all rules related to armed conflicts) because they are in an inherently weaker position. This approach was implicitly endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly – it was aware of such questionable means and methods, but still reaffirmed “the inalienable right to self-determination and independence of all peoples under colonial and racist regimes and other forms of alien domination” and upheld “the legitimacy of their struggle, in particular the struggle of national liberation movement, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the organs of the United Nations”.<sup>9</sup> This approach was reaffirmed annually from 1972 for two decades<sup>10</sup> and reflected the split between the western world on one hand and socialist, Islamic and non-aligned blocs on the other hand. In addition, the western world was not ready to accept the possibility that the armed forces can commit terrorist acts.

When references to self-determination and the legitimacy of struggle were finally dropped in 1993<sup>11</sup> and the General Assembly unequivocally condemned all acts, methods and practices of terrorism because they constitute a grave violation of the United Nations Charter and may pose a threat to international peace and security,<sup>12</sup> hopes ran high that finally states would be able to agree upon a generic definition of terrorism. But these hopes were not met with results and even the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 that provoked

<sup>7</sup> Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism, Geneva, 16 November 1937, never entered into force, 19 LNOJ 23.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Draft Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Certain Act of International Terrorism, UN Doc A/C.6/L.850 (1972).

<sup>9</sup> GA Res 3034 (XXVII), 18 December 1972.

<sup>10</sup> GA Res 32/147, 16 December 1977; GA Res 34/145, 17 December 1979; GA Res 36/109, 10 December 1981; GA Res 38/130, 19 December 1983.

<sup>11</sup> GA Res 48/122, 20 December 1993.

<sup>12</sup> GA Res 49/60, 9 December 1994, Annex.

unprecedented solidarity within the international community did not result in more than the Draft Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism.<sup>13</sup> It declares that it is essentially terrorism if a person, by any means, unlawfully and intentionally, causes:

- (a) Death or serious bodily injury to any person; or
  - (b) Serious damage to public or private property, including a place of public use, a State or government facility, a public transportation system, an infrastructure facility or to the environment; or
  - (c) Damage to property, places, facilities or systems referred to in [the previous paragraph] resulting or likely to result in major economic loss;
- when the purpose of the conduct, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.<sup>14</sup>

There is no doubt that this is a notable achievement and provides a good definition, but states continue to disagree hopelessly over whose actions should be covered by this convention. Perhaps the most controversial position is that the activities of armed forces during an armed conflict, as those terms are understood under the law of armed conflict, are excluded,<sup>15</sup> but similar activities perpetrated by other parties to the conflict are not. The author believes that a balanced approach is needed and all legitimate parties of an armed conflict, e.g., recognised national liberation movements, should have equal standing, whatever that may be. Furthermore, the exclusion of certain types or forms of terrorism is not in conformity with the General Assembly and Security Councils unequivocal condemnations of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, by *whomever* and *wherever* they be committed.<sup>16</sup> However, because committing such acts usually perceived as terrorism is already prohibited under the law of armed conflict<sup>17</sup> the inclusion or exclusion of the activities of armed forces is mostly emotional and symbolic.

Since 1963 states have adopted 13 treaties dealing with specific terrorist acts like hijacking, kidnapping and nuclear terrorism.<sup>18</sup> Because these are not politically sensitive acts, states have managed to reach pragmatic solutions. They have defined these acts as criminal (the words “terrorism” and “terrorist” are avoided) and have applied the *aut dedere, aut iuricare* principle requiring

<sup>13</sup> See UN Doc A/59/894 (2005), Annex II for the latest draft.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, Article 2(1).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, Article 20(2).

<sup>16</sup> For example, GA Res 49/60, 9 December 1994; SC Res 1269, 19 October 1999.

<sup>17</sup> Protocol Additional (I) to the Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, 8 June 1977, entry into force 7 December 1978, 1125 UNTS 3, Article 51(2).

<sup>18</sup> For example, International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, New York, 17 December 1979, entry into force 3 June 1983, 1316 UNTS 205.

states either to extradite or prosecute the perpetrators of these acts. On comparing specific definitions with the draft generic definition, one cannot help but notice that the former is covered by the latter. Hence a generic definition is in fact possible; the problem is definitely about the range of potential perpetrators as mentioned above.

The Security Council's contribution to defining terrorism has been limited. However, in 2004 it unanimously adopted a resolution that recalled that "criminal acts, including those against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, which constitute offences within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism", are under no circumstances justifiable by considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar nature.<sup>19</sup> This provision does not, strictly speaking, give a definition but simply *recalls* something that is quite obvious. Before this resolution was adopted some states remarked that the intention was not to officially define terrorism.<sup>20</sup> However, we cannot simply set aside this resolution because it was adopted *expressis verbis* under Chapter VII powers, which definitely allow the Security Council to impose legally binding obligations.<sup>21</sup>

Although states have not been able to adopt a treaty law definition, there remains the question of whether efforts over decades have generated a customary law definition instead. Customary law as a primary source of international law requires two elements: constant, uniform and general state practice (objective element) and the conviction by states that such practice reflects a legal obligation (subjective element).<sup>22</sup> Proponents use mainly three arguments to support the existence of a customary law definition: (1) globally and regionally adopted treaties contain definitions that have similar elements; (2) year on year General Assembly resolutions repeat a definition of terrorism that is very similar to the one in the Draft Comprehensive Convention; (3) many domestic legal acts have similar definitions to those in the previously

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<sup>19</sup> SC Res 1566, 8 October 2004, para. 4.

<sup>20</sup> See UN Doc S/PV.5059 (2004); UN Doc S/PV.5059 (Resumption 1) (2004) for the discussion.

<sup>21</sup> Charter of the United Nations, Articles 25, 48, 49.

<sup>22</sup> *North Sea Continental Shelf* (Federal Republic of Germany/Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany/Netherlands), Judgment, ICJ Reports (1969) 3, para. 77; *Continental Shelf* (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya/Malta), Judgment, ICJ Reports (1985) 13, para. 27.

mentioned legal instruments.<sup>23</sup> The author is sceptical that there is such a definition yet – the objective element may be satisfied, but the subjective element is still missing. Global and regional treaties can indeed contribute to the generation of customary law by constituting state practice, but one should be careful when making far-reaching claims. Treaties, as a basis for the generation of customary law, are problematic because (1) when accepting treaty obligations states admit the absence of previous customary law obligations since the treaty creates new obligations (unless the treaty is codifying customary law) and (2) if not mentioned explicitly, one cannot assume that the treaty reflects customary law.<sup>24</sup> States have tried for years to adopt a generic definition of terrorism and have failed. How can one claim that there exists necessary *opinio iuris*? In other words, states have failed to adopt a treaty law definition, but at the same time have unconsciously generated a customary law definition. This is unlikely. Moreover, state practice varies because global, regional and domestic definitions differ in terms of perpetrators, motivation and covered acts. Despite the lack of progress, states remain committed to the process of preparing the Draft Comprehensive Convention to “fill existing gaps”, “complete and strengthen the current legal regime” and “supplement the existing conventions dealing with terrorism”.<sup>25</sup> The General Assembly also encourages states to adopt the convention.<sup>26</sup> If there were indeed a customary law definition, why would the international community concern itself with the onerous task of adopting a new treaty that is so difficult to agree upon? In conclusion, it is too early to claim that international law has a customary law definition of terrorism, but developments are moving in the right direction.

Terrorism in the present context has several inherent and generally acknowledged characteristics: (1) causing serious harm or death to persons or serious damage to property; (2) provocation of a state of terror in a wider audience than direct victims; (3) coercion of a government, an international organisation or a person; (4) intentional activity to further certain objectives; (5) transnational nature. Accordingly, the author proposes a possible definition as a basis for the rest of his analysis: terrorism is the unlawful transnational use or threat of violence or armed force against persons or property with the intent to provoke a state of terror in the general public or to coerce a government, an international organisation or a person to act or to abstain from acting in a specific manner, in pursuit of political objectives.

<sup>23</sup> For example, Cassese, A. 2006. The Multifaceted Criminal Notion of Terrorism in International Law. – Journal of International Criminal Justice, 4, pp. 936–941.

<sup>24</sup> Mendelson, M. H. 1998. The Formation of Customary International Law. – Recueil des Cours de l'Académie de Droit International, 272, p. 301.

<sup>25</sup> UN Doc A/63/37 (2008), p. 6; UN Doc A/64/37 (2009), p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> For example, GA Res 63/129, 11 December 2008, para. 22.

### 1.3. Terrorism with State Involvement

Terrorism is a method mostly used by non-state actors to influence states. In inter-state relations, violence is used in the form of armed conflicts which are regulated by specific rules on the use of armed force and the law of armed conflict. However, terrorism is sometimes also exploited by states and therefore we can talk about state terrorism or terrorism directed, supported or tolerated by states. In practice, terrorist non-state actors with state involvement are usually more powerful, protected by states and can use intelligence gathered by governmental authorities. Because of the safe havens provided by certain states, foreign intelligence and law enforcement agencies face difficulties in infiltrating and obstructing their activities.<sup>27</sup>

States typically resort to terrorist methods for practical and ideological reasons.<sup>28</sup> Terrorism can substitute traditional warfare if the latter is too expensive or risky. It has become a rewarding alternative approach of foreign policy to use this extraordinary but potentially effective means as it avoids or minimises the risk of taking responsibility. Since it is rather easy to hide relations with terrorist non-state actors, the use of terrorism constitutes low risks but can also be an influential and cheap “foreign policy”. Every instance of terrorism is *prima facie* morally wrong, but terrorism with state involvement even more so.<sup>29</sup>

State involvement can have a very different level. It would certainly be dangerous and wrong to classify every involvement in the same manner, because the responsibility of and consequences to a state should obviously depend upon the extent, not on the fact of involvement. At opposing ends of the scale we have (1) terrorism committed directly by state officials and (2) the objective inability to control terrorist activities; between these two extremes we can identify several forms of state involvement. The author believes that, setting aside state terrorism and concentrating on terrorist non-state actors, four levels of state involvement can be identified:

- State direction – a state actively controls or directs terrorists and uses terrorism as an alternative to conventional military methods in order to avoid responsibility and disregard the law of armed conflict, e.g., Libya directing the terrorists who bombed the Berlin discotheque (1986);
- State support – a state does not control the terrorists, but it encourages their activities and provides active support such as money, equipment,

<sup>27</sup> **President of the United States of America.** 1986. Public Report of the Vice President’s Task Force on Combating Terrorism. <[www.population-security.org/bush\\_and\\_terror.pdf](http://www.population-security.org/bush_and_terror.pdf)>, (1.10.2011), p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> See **Byman, D.** 2005. *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 21–52 for the analysis why states support or resort to terrorism.

<sup>29</sup> **Coady, C. A. J.** 1985. The Morality of Terrorism. – *Philosophy*, 60, pp. 47–70.

training and transport, e.g., Iran giving substantial support to Hezbollah that has become its main tool for carrying out terrorist strategies;

- State toleration – a state does not actively support or direct terrorists, but it makes no effort either to arrest or suppress them, e.g., the Taliban regime allowing terrorists in 1994–2001 to use Afghanistan as a training ground and base of operations, and refusing to co-operate in the capture of Osama bin Laden and his associates;
- State inaction – a state is simply unable to deal effectively with terrorist due to political factors or inherent weakness, e.g., the Lebanon lacking control over a large portion of its southern territory where terrorists operated against Israel.

A state cannot be held equally responsible for all these situations. Most importantly, not every situation automatically calls for military intervention: remedial action has to be proportionate to the threat or consequences of the terrorist attack. While the state direction of terrorist activities may indeed justify or even demand a military response, mere inaction by this state due to its genuine inability to deal with terrorist non-state actors does not necessarily make the host state a legitimate target of lawful military operations.

## ***2. Legal Framework of the Use of Armed Force***

It is the United Nations Charter that provides the legal framework for the use of armed force that must also be respected in the fight against terrorism. The United Nations was created in a climate of popular outrage after the unprecedented horrors of the Second World War.<sup>30</sup> Its creation resulted in the most important and certainly the most ambitious modification of international law in the twentieth century, namely the prohibition of the (aggressive) use of armed force in international relations. This fundamental rule is prescribed in Article 2(4), which demands that “all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations”.

This provision is a considerable improvement compared to previous attempts to outlaw the use of armed force, but at the same time the wording is still not without ambiguities. It is certainly progressive because it talks about the threat or use of “force”, not about “war”. The latter refers to a narrow and technical legal situation which begins with a declaration of war or rejection of an ultimatum, and ends with a negotiated peace treaty.<sup>31</sup> The term

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<sup>30</sup> Charter of the United Nations, preamble.

<sup>31</sup> See **Wilson, G. G.** 1938. War Declared and the Use of Force. – American Society of International Law Proceedings, 32, pp. 106–127 for the practice of declaring wars.

“force” has a factual connotation and covers all forms of hostilities regardless of how states decide to classify them. What matters most is the actual use of armed force. This is especially useful in the case of terrorist attacks because host states rarely officially endorse such attacks; on the contrary, they deny involvement and even claim that the attacks are not even a type of force.

Yet there are several negative or problematic aspects to this. *Firstly*, the provision talks about “force”, not “armed force” and has provoked a dispute over the exact scope of “force”. The prevailing and undoubtedly correct view is that in this context the term “force” is limited to armed force and it does not include political or economic coercion.<sup>32</sup> *Secondly*, the provision forbids the threat or use of force “against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations”. Does this mean that this prohibition is conditional and that armed force can be used for a variety of purposes because it is not aimed “against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State”, e.g., surgical anti-terrorism military operations? These clauses were never intended to restrict the prohibition to the use of armed force, but were seen by the drafters as the most obvious examples of what is prohibited.<sup>33</sup> Therefore an incursion into another state’s territory constitutes an infringement of Article 2(4), even if it is not intended to deprive that state of its territory, and the word “integrity” actually ought to be read as “inviolability”. Furthermore, the clauses “territorial integrity” and “political independence” should not distract attention from the phrase “any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations”. The paramount and overriding purpose of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security and, to that end, to prevent and remove threats to peace and suppress aggression in its different forms.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, every single use of armed force, even a precision attack against a terrorist non-state actor, can potentially endanger that precious and often unstable international peace and security.

Although the United Nations Charter is the primary point of reference, the use of armed force is also regulated by customary law. Article 2(4), as a treaty provision, is legally binding only for United Nations member states. Just a decade after the United Nations Charter was adopted this provision was no longer considered as simply another contractual norm but also a customary

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<sup>32</sup> For example, **Brownlie, I.** 1963. *International Law and the Use of Force by States*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 362; **Randelzhofer, A.** 2002. Article 2(4). – *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary*. Ed. B. Simma. 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, vol. I, p. 117; **Dinstein, Y.** 2005. *War, Aggression and Self-Defence*. 4th edn, Cambridge University Press, p. 86.

<sup>33</sup> United Nations Conference on International Organisation Documents, vol. 6, pp. 556–558.

<sup>34</sup> Charter of the United Nations, Article 1(1).

law norm.<sup>35</sup> As such it is legally binding to all states. Moreover, the prohibition to use armed force has reached the status of an *ius cogens* norm.<sup>36</sup> Generally speaking, the latter are overriding norms of international law which are so fundamental that they must be followed at all times without any excuse. The obligations deriving from *ius cogens* norms are not like usual contractual obligations, but are obligations owed to the international community as a whole. In other words, a violation of an *ius cogens* norm breaches the essential interests of every state; therefore not only the directly injured state but also any other state is entitled to invoke the responsibility of the violating state.

As with every rule, this prohibition to use armed force is not without exceptions. Although certain states and authors have advocated several potentially questionable justifications for the lawful use of armed force, only two explicit exceptions exist:

- Self-defence (Article 51);
- Military enforcement measures authorised by the Security Council (Article 42).

Whenever a state or the international community wants to use armed force against a terrorist non-state actor all deployed methods must fall under these two exceptions. Chapters 4 and 5 are respectively devoted to self-defence and military enforcement measures under the collective security system in the context of terrorism.

### **3. State Responsibility for Terrorist Non-State Actors**

#### ***3.1. Principles of State Responsibility***

States are responsible for their conduct. International law presumes that states do not engage in terrorism. The reality is quite often different. On the other hand, official state representatives rarely commit terrorist acts; states mostly use non-state actors for that purpose regardless of the fact that international law prohibits supporting terrorism and demands that states take active measures against it. If these obligations are not met, responsibility follows and the state has to bear the appropriate (forcible) counter-measures. At the same time, one must understand that not every connection with terrorism involves responsibility for a particular terrorist act or its perpetrator or, moreover, warrants the use of armed force. Whatever counter-measures are employed, these obligations require that a state be legally, not politically, responsible for

<sup>35</sup> *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua* (Nicaragua v. United States), Merits, ICJ Reports (1986) 14, paras 188–190.

<sup>36</sup> *Barcelona Traction, Light and Power Company Limited* (Belgium v Spain), Second Phase, Judgment, ICJ Reports (1970) 3, paras 34–35.

terrorist activity and that the choice of counter-measures be justified by the gravity of the terrorist act.

In order to invoke state responsibility it is necessary to show two things: 1) that the conduct in question is attributable to the state under international law and 2) that it constitutes a breach of an international obligation of the State.<sup>37</sup> Usually the first condition is the more difficult to prove. States are political abstracts and as such are not able to act.<sup>38</sup> Only humans can truly act and it is therefore necessary to demonstrate that the particular conduct is attributable to the state. The obligation in question has to derive from international law including treaty, customary law and general principles of law.<sup>39</sup> For the existence of an internationally wrongful act, fault is not a necessary precondition unless explicitly included in the obligation. Therefore it is only the breach of an international obligation that matters, independently of any intention.<sup>40</sup> For example, states have the obligation not to knowingly allow anyone to use their territory in such a way that might endanger the rights and security of other states.<sup>41</sup> This obligation is breached if the state knows that terrorists are present in its territory and they commit terrorist attacks against other states, even if the host state has no intention to harm other states.

According to the law of state responsibility, all international norms are either primary or secondary.<sup>42</sup> Primary norms contain international obligations, a breach of which leads to state responsibility. Secondary norms establish conditions for state responsibility and the consequences of such responsibility. One should not confuse the formulation of specific international obligations with more technical rules that determine whether these obligations have been breached. Therefore the rules of state responsibility do not establish obligation in the fight against terrorism, but help to assess whether different anti-terrorism norms or principles have been neglected. If there is no primary norm, there can be no responsibility.

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<sup>37</sup> Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, UN Doc A/56/10 (2001), Article 2 [hereinafter the Draft Articles].

<sup>38</sup> *German Settlers in Poland*, Advisory Opinion, PCIJ Series B, No 6 (1923) 6, p. 22.

<sup>39</sup> **International Law Commission**. 2001 Commentaries on the Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts. – Yearbook of the International Law Commission. New York: United Nations, vol. II, p. 91 [hereinafter the Commentaries on the Draft Articles].

<sup>40</sup> **Brownlie, I.** 1983. *System of the Law of Nations: State Responsibility*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 39.

<sup>41</sup> *Corfu Channel* (United Kingdom v. Albania), Merits, ICJ Reports (1949) 4, p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> See **Combacau, J. & Alland, D.** 1985. ‘Primary’ and ‘Secondary’ Rules in the Law of State Responsibility: Categorizing International Obligations. – *Netherlands Yearbook of International Law*, 16, pp. 81–109 for more detailed analysis about the nature of primary and secondary norms.

### 3.2. *Grounds for Responsibility*

The law of state responsibility is based on the concept of agency. As already mentioned, states are political abstractions which act through persons. So, the key question is whether a person has acted as an agent of a particular state and person's acts qualify as acts of that state. The traditional rule is that the conduct of private actors is not normally attributable to the state under international law. However, it is equally well settled that the acts of *de facto* state agents are attributable to a state, i.e., the conduct of apparently private actors may, in fact, be sufficiently connected with the exercise of governmental functions in such a way that otherwise private acts may be deemed state acts instead. It is, however, more difficult to demonstrate that a state is responsible for the private acts themselves (direct responsibility) than to prove that the state is responsible for its own related wrong, i.e., inadequate action in preventing the private acts in question (indirect responsibility). Whether the state bears direct or indirect responsibility usually determines what kinds of counter-measures are appropriate in a particular case.

There are several grounds for state responsibility,<sup>43</sup> but three are most relevant in the context of terrorism (their validity is tested mainly against the situation in Afghanistan concerning the Taliban and Al-Qaeda). *Firstly*, if a state directs or exercises control over terrorist non-state actors and they become its *de facto* agents, the state is responsible for their acts.<sup>44</sup> Certainly there is a question of degree: how much the state has to direct or control the non-state actor before we can say that the state is now responsible. Court practice has provided two tests. The effective control test requires that the state participated in the planning, direction, support and execution of specific terrorist acts.<sup>45</sup> This test has several limitations. To begin with, it imposes on the victim state the quite unrealistic obligation to provide evidence of specific instructions or directions from the host state relating to the terrorist acts. The author believes that the traditional effective control test is insufficient to address contemporary threats posed by terrorist non-state actors and states that harbour them. Furthermore, there is very little evidence that effective control has wide support in the international community or reflects a definite norm of customary law. This test was conceived by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and subsequently incorporated into the Draft Articles on State Responsibility by the International Law Commission.<sup>46</sup> In a later judgment,

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<sup>43</sup> Draft Articles, Articles 4–11.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, Article 8.

<sup>45</sup> *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua*, para. 115.

<sup>46</sup> Commentaries on the Draft Articles, p. 47.

the C referred to these articles as a codification of customary law.<sup>47</sup> It is a vicious circle, a tautology.

There are reasons to believe that the position of such a strict approach has weakened after the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 and that the international community has approved a more liberal approach. The International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia provided an alternative: the overall control test.<sup>48</sup> The author shares the tribunal's view that international law does not require that control should extend to issuing specific orders or instructions relating to every attack; it is enough if the state has overall control over a non-state actor in question. The law of state responsibility should, after all, be based on a realistic concept of responsibility. If the state exercises overall control over a non-state actor, i.e., finances, arms and trains as well as generally participating in the planning and supervision of activities, it would be too much and unnecessary to ask the victim state to prove that the host state actually demanded or directed that specific attack. Nevertheless, the overall control test is neither a magical solution for, nor a revolutionary change in, the question of attribution. The essential difference between the two tests lies merely in the degree of control, not in its nature. In both cases the state should have control that goes beyond the mere financing and equipping of terrorist non-state actors, involving participation in the planning and supervision of military operations.

The Taliban and Al-Qaeda had close and mutually beneficial relations, but their exact nature is not clear.<sup>49</sup> Al-Qaeda was not a typical non-state actor dependent on a state; to some extent, the roles were reversed.<sup>50</sup> The Taliban did not exercise effective control over Al-Qaeda; in fact, it is even questionable whether it even exercised overall control.

*Secondly*, if a state acknowledges and adopts the conduct of a terrorist non-state actor clearly and unequivocally as its own, the state is responsible for its acts.<sup>51</sup> This ground is not concerned with implied state complicity arising out of a failure to prevent terrorism or prosecute its perpetrators, but with the explicit acknowledgement and adoption of their conduct by the state. This

<sup>47</sup> *Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project* (Hungary/Slovakia), Judgment, ICJ Reports (1997) 7, paras 47, 50–53, 58, 79, 83, 123.

<sup>48</sup> *Prosecutor v. Duško Tadić*, Case No IT-94-I-A, ICTY, Judgment of the Appeals Chamber, 15 July 1999, para. 117.

<sup>49</sup> **National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States**. 2004. The 9/11 Commission Report. <[www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf](http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf)>, (1.10.2011), pp. 63–67.

<sup>50</sup> For example, **British Government**. 2001. Responsibility for the Terrorist Atrocities in the United States, 11 September 2001 – An Updated Account. <[www.number10.gov.uk/Page3682](http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page3682)>, (1.10.2011), paras 11–13 describe that Al-Qaeda had representatives at the Taliban military command.

<sup>51</sup> Draft Articles, Article 11.

conduct is not attributable to a state if it merely acknowledges the factual existence of such conduct or expresses verbal satisfaction with it. In their international controversies states often take positions which amount to “approval” or “endorsement” of conduct in some general sense but do not involve any assumption of responsibility. This ground of responsibility, however, carries with it the idea that this conduct would be acknowledged and adopted by the state as its own conduct, in effect. This act of acknowledgment and adoption, whether it takes the form of words or conduct, must be clear and unequivocal.<sup>52</sup> Whether such an act has retroactive effect is still disputed.<sup>53</sup> The author sees no good reason why responsibility should not be retroactive; otherwise there will be gaps in such responsibility.<sup>54</sup> There is an important implication for the use of armed force, here. If we consider a state responsible from the moment a terrorist attack is carried out we can claim that the attack was committed by the state and it was allowed to exercise self-defence. Should the state’s acknowledgment and adoption of this attack come weeks or months later, we have to assess whether the criterion of immediacy for exercising self-defence is satisfied. If there is no retroactive effect, then the state is responsible only for what is happening after acknowledgment and adoption. But such partial responsibility is not advisable.

The Taliban did not acknowledge and adopt the attacks of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001.<sup>55</sup> True, it failed to condemn the terrorist attacks, declined to extradite Osama bin Laden and refused to stop the operation of Al-Qaeda,<sup>56</sup> but this is not clear and unequivocal acknowledgment and adoption of the attacks. Anti-American or Islamic rhetoric by the Taliban cannot be construed as due acknowledgement and adoption.

*Thirdly*, if, under exceptional circumstances, a terrorist non-state actor exercises elements of governmental authority in the absence or default of the official authorities the state is responsible for its acts.<sup>57</sup> This ground of responsibility is usable in very exceptional cases where the regular authorities are disintegrated, have been suppressed or are simply inoperative at the time. Failed states would be the most likely examples in the context of terrorism.

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<sup>52</sup> Commentaries on the Draft Articles, p. 47.

<sup>53</sup> The ICJ inclines toward the position that acknowledgement and adoption do not have retroactive effect. *United States Diplomatic and Consular Staff in Tehran* (United States of America v. Iran), Judgment, ICJ Reports (1980) 3, para. 74.

<sup>54</sup> See also Commentaries on the Draft Articles, p. 53; *Prosecutor v. Duško Tadić*, para. 118.

<sup>55</sup> **Brown, D.** 2004. Use of Force against Terrorism after September 11th: State Responsibility, Self-Defense and Other Responses. – *Cardozo Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 11, p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> **Schmitt, M. N.** 2002. Counter-Terrorism and the Use of Force in International Law. *Marshall Center Papers*, No 5, p. 47.

<sup>57</sup> Draft Articles, Article 9.

In such cases, the state system would have collapsed because of a revolution, natural disaster or other similar events and the government would not be able to exercise its functions in a certain part of the territory.<sup>58</sup> A non-state actor would then take over the “management” of that area and start to organise cross-border violent attacks (possibly even in the belief that it is organising defensive operations or providing security). Although the central government would be temporarily incapacitated, it would still be responsible for the action of that non-state actor. In order to apply this ground of responsibility such actions must effectively be related to exercising elements of governmental authority. So, not every type of conduct is covered.

Although the Taliban allowed Al-Qaeda to operate independently and the latter sometimes performed functions typically reserved for governmental authorities (distributing humanitarian aid and building infrastructure),<sup>59</sup> we cannot claim that Al-Qaeda exercised elements of governmental authority in the absence or default of the official authorities.

### ***3.3. Providing a Safe haven as Additional Grounds?***

Does state responsibility end if the conduct of non-state actors is not attributable on previously discussed grounds or continues if different forms of state support are decisive in carrying out terrorist attacks? It becomes especially relevant if a state is able to exercise control over its territory, but nevertheless tolerates or even encourages terrorist non-state actors. This is a grey area for international law. The debate was initiated once again by President Bush who declared that the United States would make no distinction between the terrorists and those who harbour them.<sup>60</sup>

This line of argument has some validity and definitely should not be cast aside without giving it at least some consideration. Depending on the circumstances, supporting or providing a safe haven for terrorists may breach a number of international obligations under treaties, customary law and Security Council resolutions. To begin with, states should not knowingly allow anyone to use their territory in a way that endangers other states, including the use of its territory as a base for terrorist attacks.<sup>61</sup> As a matter of basic principle in international law, every state has a duty to refrain from organising, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in another state or acquiescing to organised activities within its territory that are directed towards committing

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<sup>58</sup> Commentaries on the Draft Articles, p. 49.

<sup>59</sup> **British Government** 2001, para. 12.

<sup>60</sup> **White House**. 2011. Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation. <[georgew-bush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html](http://georgew-bush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html)>, (1.10.2011).

<sup>61</sup> *Corfu Channel*, p. 22.

such acts when the acts referred to involve a threat or the use of armed force.<sup>62</sup> The Security Council has also demanded that all states must “deny safe haven to those who finance, plan, support, or commit terrorist acts”.<sup>63</sup> The emphases of these arguments can be taken as an attempt to revive the theory of vicarious responsibility which concerns a state that knowingly acquiesces to the injurious acts of non-state actors within its territory. Therefore, a state that (1) is or should be aware of a potential terrorist attack against another state, (2) is able to prevent the attack but neglects to do so and (3) fails to warn the other state of the attack is responsible for it. This vicarious responsibility was endorsed in the *Corfu Channel* case.<sup>64</sup> Here we can draw a peculiar parallel with the law of neutrality which demands that a neutral state may not allow belligerents to use its territory for recruiting combatants or forming units to assist them.<sup>65</sup> If the neutral state fails to respect that obligation it loses its neutrality and one belligerent may attack the enemy combatants in that state.

Vicarious responsibility would render the Taliban responsible for Al-Qaeda because the former allowed the latter knowingly to operate in its territory while being aware of the nature and extent of Al-Qaeda’s activities.

Some have argued that state responsibility should also be expressed in terms of complicity.<sup>66</sup> Israel has repeatedly claimed that the terrorist attacks against it from the territory of the Lebanon and Syria were only possible due to the complicity of their respective governments. Although this idea is not inconceivable, it is incompatible with the present rules of state responsibility on complicity.<sup>67</sup> The latter become relevant only when *one state* is aiding or assisting *another state* in the commission of an internationally wrongful act. Moreover, complicity renders a state responsible for its own illegal conduct (indirect responsibility), not for the conduct of another state (direct responsibility).

One should not neglect the fact that the obligations to prevent terrorism are due diligence obligations, i.e., compliance with these obligations does not require complete prevention of terrorism.<sup>68</sup> If a state in good faith has taken all feasible measures to eliminate danger from terrorist non-state actors, but

<sup>62</sup> GA Res 2625 (XXV), 24 October 1970, Annex, section 1.

<sup>63</sup> SC Res 1373, 28 September 2001, para. 2.

<sup>64</sup> *Corfu Channel*, p. 17.

<sup>65</sup> Convention (V) respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War on Land, The Hague, 18 October 1907, entry into force 26 January 1910, 100 BFSP 359, Articles 4–5.

<sup>66</sup> **Jinks, D.** 2003. State Responsibility for the Acts of Private Armed Groups. – Chicago Journal of International Law, 4, p. 90.

<sup>67</sup> Draft Articles, Article 16.

<sup>68</sup> See **Barnidge, R. P. Jr.** 2005. States’ Due Diligence Obligations with regard to International Non-State Terrorist Organisations Post-11 September 2001: the Heavy Burden That

they still manage to attack another state, then the attack is not attributable to the host state and it cannot be held responsible even for the failure to prevent the attack because the due diligence requirement has been satisfied. However, such a situation needs a solution since a danger to the security of other states remains. Therefore the author proposes that if the state fails to perform these obligations, it is not directly responsible for the conduct of terrorist non-state actors not directed or controlled by that state, but has an obligation to bear appropriate (forceful) counter-measures. In other words, if the state does not manage to handle the situation it must allow others to do it. Otherwise non-state actors would enjoy impunity and the security of other states would still be endangered. When states become members of the United Nations they do not only enjoy many privileges, but also take on further duties so that other states might equally benefit from those privileges.<sup>69</sup> Whatever the principle of sovereignty after the Peace of Westphalia (1648) may have been, contemporary sovereignty includes a duty to protect the rights and security of other states as well as fulfilling the obligations undertaken before the international community.<sup>70</sup> The same logic similarly applies in cases where the state is, for objective reasons, incapable of protecting the rights of other states and removing the dangers threatening them.

In the event of objective incapacity, all counter-measures should only be directed against the objectives of such non-state actors. The victim state must obviously act in good faith and the decision to use this option should be taken as a last resort. The international community supervises such decisions through the Security Council. While the latter is not likely to deal with these terrorist non-state actors or explicitly authorise military sanctions, it is more likely to react if the victim state made an ill-advised and hasty decision or has gone too far in its operations. The Security Council already exercises similar supervision with regard to self-defence.

It is state practice to show support for such an approach. In the 1990s, Iran and Turkey organised frequent military operations into Northern Iraq from where the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) had launched armed attacks against neighbouring states.<sup>71</sup> Turkey claimed that its military measures did not violate Iraqi sovereignty as Iraq was not in effective control of the northern territory and it would have been useless to demand that Iraq

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States Must Bear. – *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 16, pp. 103–125 for the analysis about the nature of due diligence obligations in the context of terrorism.

<sup>69</sup> Charter of the United Nations, Article 2(2).

<sup>70</sup> See UN Doc A/59/565 (2004), paras 29–30 for the relationship between sovereignty and responsibility.

<sup>71</sup> **Gray, C. & Olleson, S.** 2001. *The Limits of the Law on the Use of Force: Turkey, Iraq and the Kurds.* – *Finnish Yearbook of International Law*, 12, pp. 355–410.

prevent trans-boundary attacks by the PKK.<sup>72</sup> Iraq protested but the Security Council refused to discuss the matter, hinting unofficially that Iraq had failed to live up to its international obligations.<sup>73</sup> A similar situation happened again in February 2008: Turkey used similar arguments and the international community was either silent or urged that the operations should be limited in time and scope, i.e., quick precision attacks against the PKK positions. Iraq had to bear the counter-measures.

## 4. Self-Defence by a State against a Terrorist Attack

### 4.1. Nature of Self-Defence

States have an inherent right to self-defence. This mantra has been repeated countless times but it is still important to emphasise that self-defence has a clear meaning in international law. It can sometimes have very little connection with the not-so-rare emotional and political declarations by states that they have the right to defend themselves against various “inconveniences”. Self-defence in international law refers to the right to use armed force against an attack involving a significant amount of armed force. There is no doubt that self-defence is permissible if the armed attack was carried out by a state. Do states have similar rights if an attack is organised by a non-state actor? Opinions differ on this matter but it would be unreasonable to argue that self-defence should be ruled out under any circumstances.

All legal instruments which have restricted or prohibited the use of armed force have explicitly or implicitly recognised the right to self-defence.<sup>74</sup> Article 51 of the United Nations Charter similarly provides that “nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations”. Self-defence has generally been associated with inter-state relations but after the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 it is necessary to ask whether the concept of self-defence can also include terrorism. Article 51 does not itself specify that the right to self-defence only applies between states. This condition has been taken as implicit because self-defence is an exception to the general prohibition to use force, and Article 2(4) which contains that prohibition expressly mentions states. Nonetheless, there is no reason why the right to self-defence should only be confined to inter-state relations because violent acts from non-state actors can at times be comparable to those of states.

<sup>72</sup> **Franck, T. M.** 2002. *Recourse to Force: State Action against Threats and Armed Attacks*. Cambridge University Press, p. 63.

<sup>73</sup> UN Doc S/1997/461 (1997).

<sup>74</sup> Although Treaty providing for the Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy (1928) (usually known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact) does not explicitly mention self-defence, its legality was reaffirmed during the negotiations.

## 4.2. Armed Attack

Article 51 asserts explicitly that states can lawfully exercise self-defence “if an armed attack occurs”.<sup>75</sup> The term “armed attack” was left undefined at the San Francisco Conference where the United Nations Charter was adopted because it was considered self-evident and sufficiently clear.<sup>76</sup> However, this was too optimistic a judgment to make because it soon proved to be rather difficult to agree on a standard definition of “armed attack” as some preferred restrictive and others liberal interpretations of Article 51. The ICJ has asserted that it is necessary to distinguish the gravest forms of armed force (those constituting armed attack) from other less grave forms. However, it does not explain which criteria should be used for making that distinction. It seems that the ICJ assesses the quantitative amount of armed force because it refers to “scale and effect”, distinguishing armed attacks from mere frontier incidents. The author believes that it is dangerous to exclude “small” armed attacks from “genuine” armed attacks. Such a distinction seems artificial and is difficult to apply during or immediately after the attack. It is more reasonable to say that the quantitative extent of armed force simply limits the choice of counter-measures on the basis of proportionality.

Can a terrorist attack be an armed attack *ratione materiae*? If an attack by a non-state actor is comparable by scale and effect to an attack by regular armed forces it would be unreasonable to claim that no armed attack was carried out in the sense of Article 51. This is supported by the Definition of Aggression adopted by the General Assembly that qualifies any act of aggression as “the sending by or on behalf of a State of armed bands, groups, irregulars or mercenaries, which carry out acts of armed force against another State of such gravity as to amount to the acts listed above, or its substantial involvement therein”.<sup>77</sup> A single terrorist attack is not very likely to satisfy the requirement of gravity but the ICJ has suggested that separate but connected attacks can cumulatively constitute an armed attack.<sup>78</sup>

Can a terrorist attack be an armed attack *ratione personae*? Traditional interpretation would say no, but the situation has changed since 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 and subsequent state practice would suggest that it could be. Article 51 does not provide that the right to self-defence is only applicable if an armed attack originates from a state. Why should this right depend on the type of attacker? The ICJ has acknowledged this possibility, but makes it conditional

<sup>75</sup> *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua*, para. 195.

<sup>76</sup> Brownlie 1963, p. 278.

<sup>77</sup> GA Res 3314 (XXIX), 14 December 1974, Article 3(g).

<sup>78</sup> *Oil Platforms* (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America), Judgment, ICJ Reports (2003) 161, para. 64.

on whether the attack is eventually attributable to a state.<sup>79</sup> The infamous *Caroline* case that has long been taken as an authoritative source for the criteria of self-defence was about self-defence against a non-state actor.<sup>80</sup> Immediately after the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 attacks, the Security Council,<sup>81</sup> NATO<sup>82</sup> and the Organization of American States<sup>83</sup> explicitly confirmed the right to self-defence in the wake of these attacks, a position that was at least implicitly supported by the rest of the international community. True, reaffirmations of self-defence were found in the preamble of the Security Council's resolutions, but this fact does not render these reaffirmations meaningless.

The legitimacy of self-defence against attacks carried out by non-state actors is usually assessed in the context of the rules of state responsibility. It is presumed that the state must be in some way responsible for the attack before the victim state may exercise self-defence. This was certainly a logical approach a decade ago, and more, but it may prove to be insufficient in the new security environment. It is possible to circumvent the need for attribution if we can demonstrate that a state's support to non-state actors gives in itself sufficient justification for self-defence. The conduct of a state would be equated with an armed attack. For that purpose we can use the above-mentioned Definition of Aggression and place emphasis on its second half: "the sending by or on behalf of a State of armed bands, groups, irregulars or mercenaries, which carry out acts of armed force against another State of such gravity as to amount to the acts listed above, or *its substantial involvement therein*".<sup>84</sup> The author proposes that substantial involvement in the described terrorist attack itself amounts to an act of aggression which is essentially a situation equivalent to an armed attack justifying self-defence. However, such involvement must be decisive, i.e., without it there could not have been a particular terrorist attack. Substantial involvement can be active or passive. In the first case, a state provides non-state actors with financial, logistical and material support; in the second case, a state allows non-state actors to operate freely within its territory and offers protection from external hazards under the shield of sovereignty. Passive involvement obviously warrants more detailed evidence. If passive substantial involvement is caused by the objective incapacity to control non-state actors present in the territory, all counter-measures

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<sup>79</sup> *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua*, para. 195.

<sup>80</sup> Meng, W. 1992. The *Caroline*. – Encyclopedia of Public International Law. Ed. R. Bernhardt. Amsterdam: North-Holland, vol I, pp. 537–538.

<sup>81</sup> SC Res 1368, 12 September 2001; SC Res 1373.

<sup>82</sup> NATO. Statement by the North Atlantic Council. NATO Press Release (2001) 124, 12 September 2001. <[www.nato.int/docu/pr/2001/p01-124e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2001/p01-124e.htm)>, (1.1.2010).

<sup>83</sup> OAS. Terrorist Threat to the Americas, OEA/Ser.F/II.24, RC.24/RES.1/01 (2001).

<sup>84</sup> GA Res 3314 (XXIX), Article 3(g).

may only be directed against the objectives of such non-state actors. Authors<sup>85</sup> and states<sup>86</sup> have previously rejected this idea, mainly using the argument that non-state actors are not capable of carrying out attacks of significant enough gravity as to warrant being described as acts of aggression. But, as reality demonstrates, this has changed in recent years.

### 4.3. *Anticipatory Self-Defence*

Although Article 51 provides that states may exercise self-defence “if an armed attack occurs”, there is still the debate about whether states may resort to self-defence before an actual armed attack has occurred (anticipatory self-defence). According to the overwhelming majority of legal doctrine, the term “armed attack” refers to an actual armed attack. This is certainly the position under the United Nations Charter<sup>87</sup> and no state has, as far as we know, claimed anticipatory self-defence under Article 51.<sup>88</sup> Hence, any counter argument must be based on customary law. Anticipatory self-defence takes two forms:<sup>89</sup>

- Pre-emptive self-defence – military action taken against an imminent attack;
- Preventive self-defence – military action taken against a threat that has not yet materialised and that is uncertain or remote in time.

Anticipatory self-defence has positive and negative aspects, but the latter prevail. In the context of terrorism one has to be even more cautious, especially when dealing with a situation equivalent to an armed attack. Under normal circumstances, it is the Security Council that may act in an anticipatory manner.

The alleged imminence of an armed attack cannot usually be assessed by objective criteria, therefore any decision to take anticipatory action would necessarily be left to the discretion of the state in question. Such discretion involves a noteworthy potential of error which may have devastating results and a manifest risk of abuse, which can in turn seriously undermine the prohibition to use armed force. Moreover, the argument that an armed attack begins with planning, organisation and logistical preparation is not plausible, otherwise the armed attack would begin with pencil and paper rather than

<sup>85</sup> **Rifaat, A. M.** 1979. *International Aggression*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, p. 274.

<sup>86</sup> UN Doc A/9619 (1974).

<sup>87</sup> **Brownlie** 1963, p. 278; **Henkin, L.** 1979. *How Nations Behave: Law and Foreign Policy*. 2nd ed, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 295.

<sup>88</sup> **Randelzhofer** 2002, p. 804.

<sup>89</sup> Different authors and institutions use different notions for more or less the same content.

with bullets and bombs. However, the armed attack may be so imminent and certain (it is not a question of *if*, but *when*) that it would be unreasonable to demand that the soon-to-be victim state should wait until the moment when the first missiles hit their targets.<sup>90</sup> The author does not support the general right to pre-emptive self-defence, but if a state or non-state actor has taken decisive and irreversible steps to begin an actual attack the targeted state may use interceptive self-defence. These are exceptional cases. A sound mind would not require that the state wait for an inevitable attack to happen before acting. The United Nations Charter should not become a suicide pact.

Preventive self-defence is clearly unlawful under international law. There is nothing in contemporary legal norms and state or court practice that would suggest that such a broad, even overly broad, construction of a situation equivalent to an armed attack is a part of current customary law.<sup>91</sup> Such a precautionary approach would be alarming, undesirable and wide-open to mistakes or abuse and it is difficult to understand how this would contribute to global stability and ensuring international peace and security. States simply may not use armed force when an armed attack is merely a hypothetical possibility.<sup>92</sup>

#### **4.4. Criteria for Exercising Self-Defence**

Self-defence has to be immediate, necessary and proportional. These well-known criteria are also applicable if self-defence is exercised against non-state actors. However, there are a few nuances that should be taken into consideration. Overall, some flexibility is necessary in order not to render self-defence a mere theoretical option.<sup>93</sup>

The geographical origin of the attacks carried out by terrorist non-state actors is not immediately known as is usually the case in inter-state conflicts. For that reason, gathering information and identifying the perpetrators (somewhere abroad) prolongs the reasonable time period between the armed attack and the implementation of self-defence. The requirement of necessity demands that there be no feasible alternative to the use of armed force. It is reasonable to ask the state to consider peaceful means of settling disputes if the armed attack was an isolated or insignificant episode. But in the event of an extensive

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<sup>90</sup> Dinstein 2005, pp. 190–191.

<sup>91</sup> Additionally, supportive literature is almost non-existent. Bothe, M. 2003. Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force. – European Journal of International Law, 14, p. 232.

<sup>92</sup> SC Res 487, 19 June 1981.

<sup>93</sup> The criteria are not included in Article 51, but are derived from customary international law and must be assessed based on generally accepted state practice. *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua*, paras 194, 237; *Oil Platforms*, paras 43, 76.

attack the state may use armed force more freely as a first resort.<sup>94</sup> Judgment on necessity is certainly subjective, but this subjectivity does not equate to wanton discretion. Assessing proportionality is not an exact science either; the best results are achieved after conflicts have ceased when it is possible to calmly and comprehensively evaluate the circumstances. The purpose of self-defence is to repel and end the attack. So, for example, a terrorist attack does not justify the full occupation of the host state. As mentioned before, victim states have to restrain themselves especially in situations where military operations are prompted by the objective incapacity of target states.

#### 4.5. Collective Self-Defence

States may collectively exercise a right that they may also individually exercise. Collective self-defence receives surprisingly little attention. Most principles and criteria are equally applicable in both cases, but collective self-defence is more complex and deserves closer examination.

*Firstly*, exercising collective self-defence requires that (1) a state identify itself as the victim of an armed attack<sup>95</sup> and (2) a state issue a request for assistance<sup>96</sup>. The first requirement is implicitly applicable also in the event of individual self-defence and indicates that there was an armed attack that triggered the right to self-defence. The second requirement is supposed to prevent situations where other states intervene against the will of the victim state. Without this requirement an armed attack can become an excuse to intervene in another state for less honourable reasons. After 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, the United States informed the Security Council that it was the victim of armed attacks and from 7<sup>th</sup> October 2001 they would be exercising individual and collective self-defence in Afghanistan.<sup>97</sup> This opened the way for collective self-defence and for the participation of other states.

*Secondly*, collective self-defence is exercised for the benefit of the victim state (no need for some degree of “self”).<sup>98</sup> Therefore the range of appropriate participants is not limited to those who were victims along with the state issuing a request for assistance. This is most reasonable and better maintains international peace and security: a potential aggressor has to consider the possibility that all states may, from the moment of the first armed attack, participate in a multinational military operation against it (spontaneously or

<sup>94</sup> **Schachter, O.** 1984. The Right of States to Use Armed Force. – Michigan Law Review, 82, p. 1635.

<sup>95</sup> *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua*, para. 195.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, para. 199; *Oil Platforms*, para. 51.

<sup>97</sup> UN Doc S/2001/946 (2001).

<sup>98</sup> *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua*, paras 195–196.

under a prior agreement<sup>99</sup>). The United Kingdom was not a direct victim of the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 attacks (Article 5 of the Washington Treaty creates a legal fiction that all members of NATO were victims of these attacks), but was entitled to participate in collective self-defence with the United States.

## 5. Collective Security System against Terrorism

### 5.1. Nature of the Collective Security System

Contemporary terrorism can threaten international peace and security. The leading terrorist non-state actors operate internationally in order to gain wider exposure – and as a result more success – but also to find supporters, namely states that sympathise with their political objectives. International counter-measures are naturally associated with the Security Council to whom the states have conferred primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the collective security system.<sup>100</sup> Despite being a political organ whose decisions are, and also have every right to be, linked to political motivations not necessarily congruent with legal considerations, the Security Council's activity has legal consequences. It is the one organ of the United Nations that can impose legally binding obligations and sanctions on the member states.<sup>101</sup>

The Security Council, a constantly attentive executive organ, has a broad range of considerable means at its disposal for that purpose under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, starting with diplomatic or economic sanctions<sup>102</sup> and ending with military measures<sup>103</sup>. But before the Security Council can utilise these means it must first determine whether terrorism falls within its competence. For example, does terrorism constitute a threat to the peace that justifies its response? When this is done the Security Council may even take forceful anticipatory steps against future breaches of the peace or acts of aggression, regardless of whether it is imminent or, by contrast, remote and uncertain in time. As discussed above, this is a privilege that the United Nations Charter withholds from states acting individually or collectively.

Before venturing any further it is worth mentioning three aspects connected with military measures applied within the collective security system. They are also rationalised by the fact that the collective security system is not a situation of state versus state but state versus international community. The state against which military measures are imposed may not (legally speaking):

<sup>99</sup> Dinstein 2005, pp. 255–256.

<sup>100</sup> Charter of the United Nations, Article 24.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, Article 25.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, Article 41.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, Article 42.

1. Exercise self-defence;
2. Use reprisals against states participating in the application of coercive measures;
3. Demand reparations for the damages caused by coercive measures.

## 5.2. Exploring the Meaning of Terrorism

For a long time the Security Council was reluctant to get involved in the debate about terrorism. During the Cold War it was the General Assembly where states discussed the matter. This passive period ended in December 1985 when the Security Council used the term “terrorism” for the first time in response to a spate of terrorist acts in the preceding year.<sup>104</sup> At the beginning, the Security Council was concerned mostly with hostage-taking and abduction, but soon also came assassinations, attempted or otherwise, bombing airplanes, terrorising the general public in conflict situations, etc. After the Iraq-Kuwait War in 1991 the Security Council began to demand abstractly that states should take all appropriate measures to prevent terrorist acts and to bring their perpetrators to justice.<sup>105</sup> At the same time, the Security Council failed to explain what it considered terrorism actually was. Its condemnations were retroactive. On one hand, such condemnations were not necessarily a very practical problem because the acts concerned were declared illegal in specific treaties on terrorism. On the other hand, the obligations imposed were not sufficiently clear but still carried legal weight and violating them could lead to sanctions under the collective security system. Although the Security Council’s action was certainly necessary in regards to terrorism, it also generated its fair share of confusion.

The events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 caused the Security Council to become even more active and determined. Subsequent resolutions brought in several new developments, but in some respects the practice remained the same. The Security Council began to regard *all* acts of international terrorism as a threat to international peace and security<sup>106</sup> but despite this unprecedented unity within the international community no explanation of terrorism was given. The *travaux préparatoires* indicate that this lack of definition was the price states had to pay in order to secure the adoption of Resolution 1373, cornerstone of the present fight against terrorism.<sup>107</sup> The Counter-Terrorism Committee established under that resolution also decided not to define terrorism

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<sup>104</sup> SC Res 579, 18 December 1985.

<sup>105</sup> SC Res 687, 3 April 1991 (Iraq); SC Res 748, 31 March 1992 (Libya); SC Res 1267, 15 October 1999 (Afghanistan).

<sup>106</sup> For example, SC Res 1368.

<sup>107</sup> See also **Rosand, E.** 2003. Security Council Resolution 1373, the Counter-Terrorism Committee, and the Fight against Terrorism. – *American Journal of International Law*, 97, pp. 339–340.

in a legal sense, “although its members had a fair idea of what was blatant terrorism” as was commented by one delegation.<sup>108</sup> However, many states have expressed the wish to have a sort of reference explanation that could be used, for example, domestically when implementing Security Council resolutions. The closest thing we have to a definition is the description in Resolution 1566 discussed above.

### **5.3. Determination of a Situation**

The Security Council cannot avail itself of enforcement measures at any given moment – it is supposed to follow certain procedures in order to establish that conditions for the use of such measures are satisfied. According to Article 39, the primary condition is the existence of a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace or an act of aggression. Once a positive determination has been made, the door is automatically opened to enforcement measures of a non-military or military nature. Nevertheless, this is a procedural rather than substantive limitation, basically demanding that the Security Council as a collective organ reach consensus before imposing enforcement measures. Yet such a limitation may equally help to ensure consistency in the Security Council’s practices if this determination is not made on the basis of political expediency but after a genuine assessment of the situation and comparison of the latter with other similar situations. This practice demonstrates that the Security Council has not always determined that a threat to the peace, a breach of the peace or an act of aggression existed before imposing sanctions.<sup>109</sup> In such cases we have to assume an implied determination. A few observations are called for. *Firstly*, there is no need to expressly refer to Article 39 when making such a determination.<sup>110</sup> *Secondly*, this determination is not necessary in cases of resolutions that follow from previous resolutions that did contain a determination.<sup>111</sup> The latter are cited in the preambles to the former; therefore, the necessary link and legal basis are already established. *Thirdly*, in terms of time, the validity of such a determination does not expire automatically. It remains valid until the Security Council decides otherwise, even if there is a change in the situation on the ground.

The discretionary power of the Security Council is very broad in terms of deciding both *when* and *how* to act. At the San Francisco Conference various proposals were made that the regulation should be more detailed with regard to the collective security system but, in the end, the present wording was preferred. It was expressly stated that the lack of more specific criteria was

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<sup>108</sup> UN Doc SC/7276 (2002).

<sup>109</sup> For example, SC Res 1160, 31 March 1998.

<sup>110</sup> For example, SC Res 713, 25 September 1991.

<sup>111</sup> For example, SC Res 687.

necessary if the Security Council were to be allowed to decide how to act on a case-by-case basis.<sup>112</sup> A determination is essentially a judgment based on factual findings and the weighing up of political considerations that cannot be measured by legal criteria. The former usually prevail. The political nature of determinations is further underlined by the fact that permanent members of the Security Council have the power of veto.<sup>113</sup> Nonetheless, once it has made a determination this determination is conclusive and all member states must accept the Security Council's verdict even if they do not share its opinion. The Security Council is theoretically obliged to make a determination and subsequently take any enforcement measures. But in reality it operates selectively and with much discretion.<sup>114</sup>

The "threat to peace" is the most flexible and dynamic of the three terms in Article 39 and it is here that the Security Council enjoys the broadest discretion. It is equally true that within this discretion lies the possibility of subjective political judgment. In fact, we can conclude rather bluntly that a threat to the peace is whatever the Security Council says is a threat to the peace. Obviously, here one should distinguish such discretion from the necessity to sufficiently explain to states the characteristics of a specific threat to the peace. While this may not be necessary in the event of more traditional threats (e.g., preparing an armed attack against a state), it may well be vital if the Security Council is referencing a continuous state of affairs (e.g., the inability to demonstrate the denunciation of terrorism) or an abstract phenomenon (e.g., terrorism). A threat to the peace does not have to be linked to any breach of international law. In other words, a threat to the peace is not necessarily a state of facts: it can merely be a state of mind; and the mind that counts is that of the Security Council.

In order to understand the threat to the peace it is also important to reflect on the meaning of the word "peace". The latter can be defined either negatively (narrowly) or positively (widely). In the negative sense, the word refers to the absence of the organised use of armed force; therefore, in order to constitute a threat to the peace the situation in question must have the potential of provoking armed conflict between states in the short or medium term. Still, an actual outbreak of armed conflict is not necessary. The more positive concept of peace is wider and also includes friendly relations between states as well as other political, economic, social and environmental conditions that are necessary for a conflict-free international community. The absence of war and military conflicts amongst States does not in itself ensure international peace and security and that non-military sources of instability in the

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<sup>112</sup> United Nations Conference on International Organisation Documents, vol. 12, p. 505.

<sup>113</sup> Charter of the United Nations, Article 27(3).

<sup>114</sup> **Österdahl, I.** 1998. Threat to the Peace: The Interpretation by the Security Council of Article 39 of the UN Charter. Uppsala: Iustus, pp. 103–105.

economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to such peace and security.<sup>115</sup> When examining Security Council practice, one notices that very different situations may qualify as a threat to the peace: for example, non-international armed conflicts,<sup>116</sup> serious violations of human rights,<sup>117</sup> violations of the democratic principle,<sup>118</sup> violations of the law of armed conflict<sup>119</sup> as well as the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons<sup>120</sup>.

#### ***5.4. Terrorism as a Threat to the Peace***

By now, the Security Council has on several occasions designated terrorism as a threat to the peace. In a number of cases, insufficient action by states against terrorism has been categorised in this way: for example, Libya's failure to surrender those responsible for the Lockerbie bombing in December 1988,<sup>121</sup> Sudan's refusal to extradite three suspects in connection with an attempt to assassinate the president of Egypt in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in June 1995<sup>122</sup> or Afghanistan's failure to cease providing sanctuary and training for international terrorists and co-operate with efforts to bring indicted terrorists to justice<sup>123</sup>. The events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 brought about a new approach. The Security Council condemned unequivocally in the strongest terms these horrifying terrorist attacks and regarded "such acts, like *any* act of international terrorism, as a threat to international peace and security".<sup>124</sup> This determination goes further than previous ones as it was not confined merely to the terrorist attacks in question but extended to all present and future terrorist acts without ascribing them to any particular state. Moreover, this was not an isolated incident immediately after these unprecedented attacks invoking global solidarity but the beginning of a series of similar resolutions.<sup>125</sup>

The Security Council's decision to condemn terrorist acts so strongly and decisively was certainly welcomed, but the adopted approach also brought with it certain problems. *Firstly*, as already discussed, terrorism was still not defined after 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001. To some extent the Security Council

<sup>115</sup> UN Doc S/23500 (1992).

<sup>116</sup> For example, SC Res 713.

<sup>117</sup> For example, SC Res 688, 5 April 1991.

<sup>118</sup> For example, SC Res 1132, 8 October 1997.

<sup>119</sup> For example, SC Res 808, 22 February 1993.

<sup>120</sup> For example, SC Res 1540, 28 April 2004.

<sup>121</sup> SC Res 748.

<sup>122</sup> SC Res 1044, 31 January 1996.

<sup>123</sup> SC Res 1267.

<sup>124</sup> SC Res 1368 (emphasis added).

<sup>125</sup> For example, SC Res 1438, 14 October 2002; SC Res 1618, 4 August 2005.

adopted the approach of “we will know it when we see it”. Now, how can one determine the existence of a threat to the peace when using undefined terms? This ambiguity and the Security Council’s demands to take effective measures against terrorism have presented several states with a welcome opportunity to enact broad-reaching anti-terrorism laws directed against the political opposition or other inconvenient persons instead. The Human Rights Committee has criticised numerous states for defining the crime of terrorism and especially an association with terrorism too vaguely, or for imposing the death penalty for such crimes.

*Secondly*, does the Security Council have the authority to designate a generalised indeterminate phenomenon, as opposed to a specific incident, as a threat to the peace? Moreover, there are neither temporal nor geographical limits here. Even though a determination regarding a specific incident (such as a violation of the law of armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia) is formally binding for all member states, it is not, however, likely to affect many of them in practical terms on account of geographical distance, for example. By contrast, in the event of an indeterminate phenomenon having no temporal or geographical limits; all member states are affected by it and are potentially subject to different sanctions. Once again such a situation is open to abuse by individual states both domestically and internationally. The Security Council’s determination may serve as a blanket excuse for the illegitimate and forceful settlement of other disputes. One should keep in mind that the Security Council is a reaction-oriented organ, not equipped to prevent all possible long-term tensions. Therefore, it is somewhat irresponsible for it to try to provide blanket excuses and impose unspecific obligations that may endanger international peace and security if implemented overzealously. Since a threat to the peace continues until the Security Council decides otherwise, the latter has placed itself in a very tricky position – a declaration that there is no longer a threat to the peace would indicate that the terrorist problem had been eliminated. But how likely is this to happen?

Although misgivings have been expressed, this new approach is supported by several arguments. *Firstly*, alongside traditional threats, terrorism is constantly becoming a more current concern and an ever more serious international security threat. Terrorist acts can certainly threaten international peace and security, but not every terrorist act does so. *Secondly*, the threat to the peace is a dynamic, constantly evolving political concept that has been expanding since the establishment of the United Nations. Despite the broad and abstract nature of this determination in the new resolutions, it remains within the realm of a negative (traditional) definition of peace. Whilst these resolutions contain some novelties, these novelties do not dissociate the threat to the peace from the potential outbreak of international armed conflict. *Thirdly*, because the Security Council is entrusted with the primary

responsibility of maintaining international peace and security with the exclusive right to take anticipatory steps, it should take the problem of terrorism most seriously and adopt appropriate measures in order to fight it.

## Conclusion

International law relating to terrorism has been shaken up of late. Previously settled rules or traditional understandings face trouble when having to deal with ever more globalised and dangerous threats. This is not to say that we need completely new rules – a more innovative use of the international legal system could deliver adequate results. Then again, this should not lead to a clearly unreasonable application or interpretation of the existing rules. Hence, interceptive self-defence may well be sensible but to use preventive self-defence is going too far and endangers the stability of the international community. Terrorism should not become a magic word that justifies exceptions or arguably unavoidable deviations from fundamental norms or principles.

What are the main conclusions and suggestions? *Firstly*, international law lacks a generic definition of terrorism both in treaty and customary law. There are two main obstacles to reaching a treaty definition, namely how to distinguish freedom fighters from terrorists and whether the members of the armed forces can commit terrorist acts. As far as the definition in customary law is concerned, its weakest point is the lack of *opinio iuris*, although state practice and understanding of the nature of terrorism are not consistent either. The signs show that there has been potential progress towards a customary law definition but at the moment it is still too early to speak about such a thing. In the search for a definition states have been more successful at a regional level where understandings and values are more similar. The author believes that a treaty or customary law definition would become a reality if states could leave aside the question of potential perpetrators. The nature of terrorism does not depend on its perpetrators. Therefore western states should agree that the armed forces can also commit terrorism and former colonies and Islamic states should embrace the fact that the law of armed conflict is equally applicable to freedom fighters.

*Secondly*, the state has an obligation to bear counter-measures by other states if the former provides a safe haven for terrorist non-state actors. According to the fundamental principle of international law, a state must not knowingly allow anyone to use its territory in a way that might endanger the rights and security of other states. This obligation has been frequently reiterated in international court practice and numerous important international legal instruments. The author believes that this obligation should be taken more seriously because the era of absolute sovereignty is over. A state that knowingly allows non-state actors to use its territory as a base of operations

ought to be held responsible for their attacks. By being able but intentionally neglecting to prevent such attacks, the state acquiesces to the injurious acts of non-state actors. If the state fulfils its due diligence obligation to prevent terrorism but still fails to eliminate the threat from non-state actors or the state is, for objective reasons, simply incapable of dealing with non-state actors, it is not directly responsible for the conduct of such non-state actors. However, the author proposes that in such cases the state has the obligation to bear appropriate (forceful) counter-measures from other states. Otherwise the non-state actors would enjoy the impunity of protection provided by sovereignty and territorial inviolability. Besides, the security of other states remains endangered. Nevertheless, all counter-measures may only be directed against the objectives of such non-state actors. The victim state must obviously act in good faith and the decision to use the option in question should be taken as a last resort. To ensure that this option is not abused or misused, the international community operates through the Security Council. In addition, the conduct of a non-state actor is attributable to a particular state if (1) the state exercises control over them and they become its *de facto* agents, (2) the state acknowledges and adopts their conduct clearly and unequivocally as its own or (3) they exercise, under exceptional circumstances, elements of governmental authority in the absence or default of the official authorities.

*Thirdly*, a state may exercise self-defence against a terrorist attack committed by a non-state actor if the attack (1) is comparable in scale and effect to a conventional armed attack and (2) is attributable to a state or the latter is substantially involved in the attack. Contemporary terrorist attacks can be comparable to conventional armed attacks by regular armed forces. The author believes that in such cases there is no good reason to argue that self-defence is not allowed. Nothing in the United Nations Charter suggests that self-defence may be exercised only if an armed attack originates from a state. Earlier customary law accepted the possibility that an armed attack could originate from a non-state actor. Exercising self-defence is certainly permissible if the terrorist attack is attributable to a state. Additionally, the author proposes that substantial involvement in the described terrorist attack amounts in itself to an act of aggression which is essentially a situation equivalent to an armed attack, justifying self-defence. However, such involvement must be decisive, i.e., without it there could not have been a particular terrorist attack. Normally it is the Security Council that may use anticipatory armed force but the author is prepared to accept the possibility that a state may use armed force to stop an armed attack if the other party (state or non-state actor) has taken decisive and irreversible steps to begin the actual attack. When assessing the criteria of self-defence, one should be more flexible in order to avoid making hasty decisions, mistakes or unduly limiting the right to self-defence.

*Fourthly*, a collective security system may be employed against terrorism because, in addition to traditional threats, terrorism has become a real, pressing and serious international problem. Since the Security Council is entrusted with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security as well as the right to take anticipatory measures, it has a greater obligation to react decisively to terrorism and to take appropriate steps to fight it. For some time now the Security Council has considered international terrorism as a threat to the peace. The latter is also one precondition for invoking the collective security system. After the attacks of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, the Security Council embarked on a somewhat troublesome path – it has classified all terrorist acts as a threat to international peace and security without any further qualification or ascribing these acts of terrorism to a particular state. The author calls for a more cautious approach simply because not every terrorist act is a threat to international peace and security. Overly frequent referrals to minor terrorist acts could also devalue major terrorist acts. While it is politically convenient not to individually assess every terrorist act brought to the Security Council's attention but instead to label them all as a threat to the peace, such an approach endangers numerous fundamental rules and inter-state relations as well as international peace and security, eventually. The author also considers problematic the fact that the Security Council does not explain its understanding of terrorism clearly enough, but imposes on states legally binding obligations concerning the fight against terrorism. As a result, states do not know exactly what they are supposed to fight and cannot be certain that all necessary steps have been taken in order to avoid possible international sanctions for disobedience. Furthermore, such ambiguity coupled with the Security Council's demands to take effective measures against terrorism have presented several states with the welcome opportunity to draw up broad-reaching anti-terrorism laws directed against political opposition or other inconvenient persons instead. The author believes that one should not refrain from trying to define terrorism in the Security Council merely because such a task seems unrealistic or because someone might find a way around the definition and claim that the conduct in question is therefore legal. Respect for the principle of legality should override practical conveniences or fears of potential, but fixable, loopholes.

The fight against terrorism has mostly been a reactive phenomenon. Instead, more attention should be paid to the identification and elimination of the root causes of terrorism as terrorism is not born out of nothing or randomly directed against any state. Historical injustice, freedom fighting, occupying forces, poverty, ignorance and bad foreign policy decisions are some of the causes or favourable conditions of terrorism. But the original reason may become blurred over time and organising attacks becomes an aim in itself.

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**PART II:  
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**



# THE EMERGENCE OF THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE WARFARE AND THEOLOGY OF WAR IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

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**ABSTRACT.** In the first available Sumerian royal inscriptions describing warfare (king of Lagaš Ur-Nanše, ca. 2520 BC), no divine principle is mentioned. The next preserved Sumerian texts (Eanatum ca. 2470 BC) clearly express the idea that military campaigns are undertaken following divine orders from the gods who demand that the divine justice that was overruled by the enemy state Umma be restored. It seems that a certain concept of warfare as a theologico-political matter has evolved in the royal ideology. Those texts can be considered the first recorded evidence about the “holy war” or “theology of war” in human history. A similar concept of the “theology of war” remains throughout the history of the Ancient Near East and is also present in Old Testament Israeli sources. Similar attitudes are also common in Christian thought. Islamist perspectives about the “holy war” seem to differ in the sense that religious text is imperative and it is not the actual political situation which demands the war.

**Key words:** *Sumer, Ancient Near East, holy war, theology of war, Ur-Nanše, Eanatum.*

It is hard to determine a definite period in Near Eastern history when we can already speak about the terms “holy war” or “theology of war”. Major military conflicts were certainly already taking place in the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC and before the invention of cuneiform ca. 3300–3200 BC in Mesopotamia. It is reasonable to believe that the archaic Sumero-Akkadian city-gods were considered “fertility gods” or “gods of vegetation” providing and guaranteeing their subjects with their daily livelihood. They were probably not seen as mighty warlords like Ningirsu or Enlil in later Sumerian royal inscriptions and myths.<sup>1</sup> The only available information about the social structures,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. **Peeter Espak**. *The god Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology*. Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2010, pp. 215ff. for a description of early pantheon and its nature.

religion, customs and political ideologies of archaic Mesopotamia comes from analyses of archaeological materials which, unfortunately, never allow a full understanding or comprehension of how the ancient mind actually interpreted or defined ideological or religious questions. It can only be concluded that there was a large variety of politically and socially complex and developed early states<sup>2</sup> along with political and military alliances between different states. Around every major city there were several subordinate smaller cities and habitations, including surrounding agricultural areas with their complex irrigation systems. In order to maintain those systems coordinated and more centralised governance and supervision was probably a must. Relations between individuals as well as those between different states were certainly regulated by orally fixed contracts and law (which was based on the principle of mutual beneficence or so-called “natural law”). For the citizens, certain public work duties and taxes were imposed which also fixed their relation to the state. Between different states, in similar terms, there were fixed rules and verbal international law which was especially important for determining the borders of the states and their fields. It is reasonable to believe that initiating warfare against another state in the Sumerian cultural area was also somehow regulated by mutual agreements supervised and guaranteed by the most important priests in their ancient cultic centres devoted to the major gods of Mesopotamia (Nippur, Eridu, Uruk). The state originally started developing around a temple or ancient cultic holy place and therefore the later religious-economic temple and its priesthood also held a preeminent position in early Mesopotamian statehood.<sup>3</sup> Probably already in the fourth millennium, the priest-ruler of the state was called with the title *en*, meaning “lord” or “priest” in Sumerian. This priest-ruler lived in the shrine of the protective deity of the city in special living quarters.<sup>4</sup> By the time the first longer written chronicles appeared in ca. 2500 BC, the management of state affairs had been taken over by male political rulers, although female priestesses often held important positions in religious and therefore also political life.

The real ruler of the state or the city was considered to be its patron deity, of whom the priest-ruler *en*, city-ruler *ensi* and later *lugal* (“king”) were subjects

<sup>2</sup> See: **Petr Charvát**. *Ancient Mesopotamia – Humankind’s Long Journey into Civilization*. Prague: Oriental Institute, 1993 / **Petr Charvát**. *Mesopotamia before History*. London – New-York: Routledge, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> As a case example, see the development of the ancient temple in Eridu starting already 5000 BC: **Fuad Safar, Mohammad Ali Mustafa, Seton Lloyd**. *Eridu*. Baghdad: Ministry of Culture and Information, 1981.

<sup>4</sup> **Piotr Steinkeller**. *On Rulers, Priests and Sacred Marriage: Tracing the Evolution of Early Sumerian Kingship*. – *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East*, Papers of the Second Colloquium on the Ancient Near East – The City and its Life, held at the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan (Mitaka, Tokyo), March 22–24, 1996. Ed. Kazuko Watanabe. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1999, pp. 104–113.

or servants.<sup>5</sup> These rulers had an extensive subordinate bureaucratic circle of different officials, priests and scribes in service to them. They held the state together and governed it as a well-oiled machine. One of the most important tasks of the state system was to serve, give offerings and provide food and drink to the patron deity and his or her extended family. Serving the gods was in turn connected to serving the whole state and its subjects – because keeping the temple operational and its inhabitants, the gods, happy also meant providing the citizens of the whole state with food, drink and safety. The essence of this social rule whose primary goal was to serve the gods and community or society in general is well reflected in the ancient title or epithet of the ancient Sumerian ruler *sipad zid* – meaning “the just/true shepherd.”<sup>6</sup> Also the relation between different states was seen on similar terms as relations of different deities of their cities. When two cities joined together to form a single state then the different gods of the states were incorporated into a combined pantheon. This could take place, for example, in a marriage ceremony between male patron deities and important female goddesses from another city. By this process, one god could become the son, brother or sister of another god in the combined pantheon. In this way complex relations between differing religious systems and their priesthoods were formed, relations which were also reflected in the official theology and ideology of the new state.

At the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium there were dozens of independent states formed in Mesopotamia which all had complex mutual political and theological relations. This period also saw the formation of the overall Sumerian pantheon which grew more complex as new deities were incorporated into different state pantheons.<sup>7</sup> This process finally led to the formation of the so-called canonical pantheon of Sumer.

<sup>5</sup> See the pyramidal structure of early Mesopotamian society as depicted, for example, on the Warka Vase: **Eva A. Braun-Holzinger**. *Das Herrscherbild in Mesopotamien und Elam. Spätes 4. bis frühes 2. Jt. v. Chr. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 342*. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2007, S. 8–10.

<sup>6</sup> This same title is also in use in the Old Testament where the god or the ruler is often called the shepherd of his people (2. Samuel 5, 2; Isaiah 40, 11; Ezekiel 34,12; 37, 24; etc). The topic of the “good shepherd” is important in the Gospel of John where Jesus claims (10, 11): “I am the true/good shepherd (ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός). The good shepherd will give his life for his herd.”

<sup>7</sup> Cf. **Gebhard J. Selz**. *Studies in Early Syncretism: The Development of Pantheon in Lagaš. Examples for Inner-Sumerian Syncretism. – Acta Sumerologica Japonensia (=ASJ), 12, 1990, pp. 111–142* for the characterisation of the process by using the example of the state of Lagaš. The capital of the state of Lagaš was Girsu, and the chief god of the entire state was Ningirsu. The earlier power centre had been the city of Lagaš, situated about 20 kilometres from Girsu where the ancient patron goddess was Gatumdu. The third most important city of the state of Lagaš was Nigin (NINA), where the main goddess was Nanše, the deity of fertility, fish and birds. When the three cities merged into a single state the different pantheons became a single extended family of gods.

Due to the lack of written evidence, it is hard to determine when the first military conflicts took place in Mesopotamia. Various wars must have taken place between rivalling regions and against all kinds of nomadic tribes even at the time of the earliest cities in ca. 5000 BC. As the states grew we can assume that military conflicts also flared up first between different Sumerian city states and then between larger unions of those city states. The danger of being attacked or surrounded by another organised military power can clearly be seen, for example, when the city of Uruk built its city walls about 10 meters high in ca. 3000 BC.<sup>8</sup> The need to build such massive fortifications shows that the city must have been in constant danger and had to be able to survive a long siege by hostile organised forces. First written records of warfare, though, come from 26–25<sup>th</sup> centuries BC when the first documented military conflict<sup>9</sup> between the states of Lagaš and its neighbouring Umma took place.<sup>10</sup>

### Ur-Nanše

Over 50 royal inscriptions have been preserved from the time of the Lagašite king Ur-Nanše (ca. 2520 BC). They mostly describe constructions of temples for the various gods of Lagaš such as Nanše, Ningirsu or Nin-MAR.KI by Ur-Nanše. He is also mentioned as the builder of the city-walls of Lagaš.<sup>11</sup> Ur-Nanše titles himself as *ur-<sup>d</sup>nanše / lugal / lagaš*: “Ur-Nanše, the king of Lagaš.”<sup>12</sup> One stele inscription, however, also calls him the *ensi* (“city ruler”) of Lagaš.<sup>13</sup> The name of Ur-Nanše’s wife is *Men-bára-abzu* and his father is recorded as a person called *Gu-NU.DU* of whom nothing is known from other records. His father was probably a previous city ruler from whom Ur-Nanše

<sup>8</sup> Cf. **Gwendolyn Leick**. *Mesopotamia. The Invention of the City*. Penguin Books, 2001, pp. 55ff. for an overview.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. **Sa-Moon Kang**. *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East*. Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 177. Berlin – New-York: W. de Gruyter, 1989; **William J. Hamblin**. *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC. Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History*. New-York: Routledge, 2006. Early Dynastic period, pp. 35–72 for general treatments.

<sup>10</sup> For an overview of the history of the conflict, see: **Jerrold S. Cooper**. *Reconstructing History from Ancient Inscriptions: The Lagash-Umma Border Conflict*. Sources from the Ancient Near East 2/1. Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983.

<sup>11</sup> Ur-Nanše 17: IV 5–6; Ur-Nanše 20: IV 4–5; Ur-Nanše 6b: V 8–9. Royal inscriptions according to: **Douglas R. Frayne**. *Presargonic Period (2700–2350 BC)*. Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia: Early Periods 1 (=RIME 1). Toronto-Buffalo-London: University of Toronto Press, 2008; cf. **Horst Steible**. *Die Altsumerischen Bau- und Weihinschriften*. Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 5/1 (=FAOS). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1982.

<sup>12</sup> Ur-Nanše 1: 1–3.

<sup>13</sup> Ur-Nanše 6a. This might indicate that he started using the title *lugal* (king – especially in the sense of military ruler) after he had already won or taken part in several wars and battles.

inherited the royal throne of Lagaš but it is also possible that he was elected to this position by priests and officials or simply took the throne by force. Since there are no available records concerning previous rulers of the state of Lagaš, we can call Ur-Nanše the founder of the First Dynasty of Lagaš.

There is only one fragmentary inscription<sup>14</sup> available describing Ur-Nanše's military campaigns. The text indicates that the man (or leader) of Lagaš had been thrown to war against the man (or leader) of Ur and Umma. No indication is given of the causes or detailed progress of the war but it is clearly stated that Lagaš was victorious and won both the states of Ur and Umma:

Rs I	1	[ur- <sup>d</sup> nanše (?)] [lugal / lú (?)] lagaš (NU <sub>11</sub> .BUR.LA) lúuri <sub>5</sub> (ŠEŠ.AB) lú umma <sup>ki</sup> ( <sup>geš</sup> KÚŠU <sup>ki</sup> ) mè (ME + LAK 526) e-šè-DU lú-lagaš	Ur-Nanše (?) king / man (?) of Lagaš (against) the man (or leader?) of Ur (against) the man of Umma (Giša) (to) war/battle went. The man of Lagaš
II	1	lú-úri GÍN.ŠÈ m[u]- <sup>-</sup> sè <sup>2</sup> mu-[dab <sub>5</sub> ] éns[i]-má-gur <sub>8</sub>	the man of Ur defeated (and) captured. Ensimagur ( <i>ensi</i> of ships / admiral)
	5	mu-dab <sub>5</sub> ama-bára-si kišib-gál nu-bànda <sup>da</sup>	captured. Amabarasi, Kišibgal (seal-bearer), captains / lieutenants (junior officers)
III	1	mu-dab <sub>5</sub> pap-ur-sag dumu-Ú.Ú.Ú [mu-dab <sub>5</sub> ]	captured. Papursag, U-u-u's son [captured].
	5	[PN] [nu-bàn]da mu-dab <sub>5</sub> SAHAR.DU <sub>6</sub> .TAG <sub>4</sub> m[u]-dub	[?] [captains / lieuten]ants captured. Burial mounds heaped up.
	10	lú-umma <sup>ki</sup> GÍN.ŠÈ mu-sè	The man of Umma defeated.
IV	1	lú-pà bil-la-la	Lupa, Bilala,

<sup>14</sup> The text comes from a destroyed stele fragment of Ur-Nanše which was reused in a door socket in a house in Lagaš: **Vaughn E. Crawford**. Inscriptions from Lagash: Season Four, 1975–1976. – *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* (=JCS), 29, 1977, pp. 192–197.

	nu-bànda <sup>da</sup>	captains / lieutenants
	mu-dab <sub>5</sub>	captured.
5	pa-bil-gal-tuku	Pabilgaltuku,
	[é]nsi	the city-ruler ( <i>ensi</i> )
	[u]mma <sup>ki</sup>	of Umma
	mu-dab <sub>5</sub>	captured.
	ur-pú-sag	Urpusag
10	nu-bànda	captain / lieutenant
	mu-dab <sub>5</sub>	captured.
V	1 hur-šag-šè-máh	Hursagšemah
	dam-gàr-gal	big-merchant (chief of merchants)
	mu-dab <sub>5</sub>	captured.
	SAHAR.DU <sub>6</sub> .TAG <sub>4</sub>	Burial mounds
	m[u]-dub	heaped up
VI	lú-umma <sup>ki</sup>	(for?) the man of Umma

This text is also the earliest known larger description of a historical event since all the previous texts were only very short statements about temple construction or simply named the ruler at the time. According to the Ur-Nanše inscription, also the city ruler of Umma, Pabilgaltuku, was either killed or captured. In addition, there is an extended list of enemy officers and officials who were taken as prisoners of war. Ur-Nanše also describes the construction of burial mounds. It seems that these burials were meant for fallen soldiers (possibly also enemy soldiers) but the scene does not describe the possible execution of the aforementioned captured enemies. The text states that warfare took place between human parties (Sumerian *lú*) and there is no mention of any divine force ordering the war or taking part in the process. This is unusual since in almost every known later inscription there is always at least some sort of brief reference to gods. Maybe this indicates that the concept of “holy war” or “theology of war” was not fully developed in the minds of the ancient Mesopotamians and warfare was seen as a fight between human forces. Since the early city deities were mostly gods of fertility and “benevolence”, and not mighty war lords, this idea seems plausible. Although divine advice and approval was most certainly requested of the gods by priests in various ceremonies and rituals before and during the war, the direct involvement of gods in violence between human armies might have been unusual thinking. On the other hand, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions based on one text fragment only. Even partial understanding of this period’s early thinking models would need a larger collection of texts. In addition, this text comes from the Lagašite side and no information has been found so far that might explain the understandings and beliefs of the losing states of Ur and Umma.

## Akurgal

According to authentic texts from this period, the ruler who followed Ur-Nanše was his son Akurgal. It is clear that Akurgal was not an old man when he took over the state of Lagaš. This assumption is based on the fact that after the long rule of Akurgal's son Eanatum, another of his sons Enanatum I became king. Inscriptions of Eanatum and Enanatum I tell of several long wars happening. Taking into account that only a small number of inscriptions have been preserved from the rule of Akurgal himself, he would have died rather young, only couple of years after his accession to the throne. Furthermore, most of the sources mentioning his name date from his father Ur-Nanše's period or from those of his two sons Eanatum and Enanatum I. Only one preserved text (Akurgal 1) depicts his activities, mentioning that the city ruler (ensi) Akurgal, son of the king (lugal) Ur-Nanše, built a temple for the god Ningirsu.

The famous Stele of the Vultures (Eanatum 1, preserved in several fragments) erected by Akurgal's son Eanatum could provide some insight into what happened to him and why his rule remained so short. The beginning of the text is mostly destroyed or remains in a fragmentary state, but we know that Akurgal is mentioned as the lugal of Lagaš and in connection with an attack from the neighbouring state of Umma. This conflict was over ownership of the agricultural areas of Guedina situated in the two states' border areas. It seems likely that the first section of the text describes different diplomatic solutions offered by Akurgal to avoid war.<sup>15</sup> Although only fragmentary, the text seems to say that Umma has gained victory and Akurgal has lost the battle:

II	<i>(lacuna)</i>	
	lú umma <sup>ki</sup> -ke <sub>4</sub>	man (leader?) of Umma
25	šu-ur <sub>6</sub> -rá e-ma-da-du <sub>11</sub> lagaš <sup>ki</sup> gaba-bé šu e-ma-ús	arrogantly / badly (=šúr) acted with him. Lagaš – its frontier (chest) pushed open.
30	a-kur-gal lugal lagaš <sup>ki</sup> dumu ur- <sup>d</sup> nanše <i>(lacuna)</i>	Akurgal, the king of Lagaš, son of Ur-Nanše

<sup>15</sup> Cf. **Thorkild Jacobsen**. The Stele of the Vultures Col. I-X. *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 25. Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon und Bercker / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1976, p. 248.

The next 15 lines or so of the text have been destroyed. It seems likely that the text described Akurgal's fate or how the battle between Umma and Lagaš ended. So Akurgal's early death can be associated with this battle, though the possibility that he died somewhere later of other causes cannot be ruled out. One of the main motives in his son Eanatum's royal inscriptions is the war against Umma and revenge for injustice perpetrated by that state. No records have been found from Umma describing this conflict so it is also impossible to determine which country broke the ancient "international law"<sup>16</sup> and attacked unjustly. Since the purpose of this war was to gain control over the fields and agricultural areas of Guedina, it is also reasonable to suggest that its fundamental cause was overpopulation (hundreds of thousands of inhabitants on both sides) and the need for food supplies for both countries. The initial debate over the placement of border stones escalated into a battle in Ur-Nanše's time and later into a major war lasting several decades.

### Eanatum

The king Eanatum is the first ruler in Sumerian history whose actions are already well documented, therefore the history of his period can no longer be considered a creative work of speculation but real history in a modern sense based on written evidence. Eanatum began his career as a warrior king and his main goal seemed to be regaining the territories lost during the rule of his father Akurgal. When the Ur-Nanše inscription states that the battle took place between the men of Lagaš and Umma, Eanatum always justifies his military actions as being the will of the gods. He paints himself as a restorer of divine justice for the whole of Sumer. The text in the Stele of the Vultures has

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<sup>16</sup> See **Amnon Altman**. Tracing the Earliest Recorded Concepts of International Law. The Early Dynastic Period in Southern Mesopotamia. – *Journal of the History of International Law*, 6, 2004, p. 162 who argues that the concept of "waging a war against another city was forbidden, unless it was an act of defense. In the same light, we have to see Eanatum's concern to clarify that the war was fought in his own territory, the territory of Lagash." As Altman describes, there is no way to conclude that the state of Lagaš was unlawfully attacked. It is even possible, as the participation of several different city states on the side of Umma against Lagaš testifies, that the state of Lagaš itself was pursuing hegemony over the larger territories of Mesopotamia. As attacking another state needed a clear reason according to the norms of the current "international law," then also the use of the notion of "divine will" might have been one of the suitable measures of how to legitimise and argue for the military actions of Lagaš in the eyes of other important state rulers and priesthoods. Altman also concludes that the law forbidding unjustified wars against other states might have been a late development: "Yet, admittedly, there are statements, like the one made by Urnanshe, Eanatum's grandfather, that he 'went to war against the leader of Ur and the leader of Umma' and defeated them, without preceding it with a declaration that these two kings initiated the war. If my above interpretation is correct, then I would take this statement of Urnanshe, made three generations earlier, as indicating that the reservation from declaring openly an aggressive act was a recent development that only gradually became accepted norm."

a long passage describing how the goddess of Uruk Inanna, goddess of Keš Ninhursag and the chief god of Lagaš Ningirsu rejoice over Eanatum becoming king. The deities offer him support and strength for the coming battle against Umma.<sup>17</sup> The fact that Eanatum mentions several other patron gods of Sumerian power centres clearly shows that he was thinking globally taking the overall political situation in ancient Sumer into consideration. Bringing other state gods into his political affairs also means seeking alliance with these gods' priesthoods. He calls the patron deity of Lagaš Ningirsu "the hero of Enlil,"<sup>18</sup> which demonstrates that he wishes to ally himself with the most important political and religious centre of the period, the city of Nippur of the god Enlil. The introductory passage of the Stele of the Vultures ends with a curse and threatening of the gods supporting Eanatum against Umma and its city ruler. It promises to destroy the enemy and recapture the territory lost.

The sun-god Utu, mainly responsible for justice and lawfulness, is also involved in the divine battle and it is said that:

VII	6	á zi-da-za <sup>d</sup> utu iri-è.	At your (Eanatum's) right (=just) side (the sun-god) Utu shall rise!
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It is written that the god Ningirsu was against Umma's actions and Eanatum is described as the king who was impregnated by Ningirsu himself so he could avenge the injustice perpetrated by Umma:

III	25	<sup>d</sup> nin-gír-sú-ke <sub>4</sub> KA-na KA.KID-a mu-ni-tak <sub>4</sub>	Ningirsu his mouth (opened) to complain / roar
V	1	é-an-na-túm a šà-ga-šu-du <sub>11</sub> -ga <sup>d</sup> nin-gír-su-ka-da <sup>d</sup> nin-gír-su	Eanatum, semen implanted in the womb by Ningirsu! Ningirsu
	5	mu-da-húl	rejoiced over it

The campaign is described as fully successful. 3600 bodies lie dead in the battlefield.<sup>19</sup> It is also suggested that the citizens of Umma killed their own ruler, probably implying that even the enemy themselves understood that their own ruler had acted against divine justice and this was the main reason

<sup>17</sup> Eanatum 1:IV 17–V 32.

<sup>18</sup> Eanatum 1:IV 4–5.

<sup>19</sup> Eanatum 1: VII 21–22.

for losing the battle.<sup>20</sup> The final victory in the war is then metaphorically described using the image of the victorious human ruler Eanatum returning the recaptured fields to its real owner, the god Ningirsu:

XII	[ <sup>d</sup> nin]-g[ír-sú-ra]	To Ningirsu
	a-[šàGANA-ki]-ág-[ni]	his beloved field
	gú-eden-[na]	Gu-Eden
	šu-na mu-ni-gi <sub>4</sub>	(Eanatum) gave back to his hand.

The mixing of political actions and earthly power with the concept of divine power and justice is also illustrated in the artistic development of the actual Stele of the Vultures.<sup>21</sup> One side of the stele depicts a victorious king Eanatum with his armed men marching and destroying the enemy:



Stele of the Vultures, Louvre: The side depicting the soldiers of Eanatum (= earthly battle)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Eanatum 1:VIII: 1–3.

<sup>21</sup> See: **Zainab Bahrani**. *Rituals of War. The Body and Violence in Mesopotamia*. New-York: Zone Books, 2008, pp. 147–154 for a general description of artistic and ideological features of the stele. Cf. **Braun-Holzinger** 2007, p. 46ff; **Irene J. Winter**. *After the Battle is Over: The “Stele of the Vultures” and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Ancient Near East*. – H. Kessler – M. S. Simpson (ed.-s). *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity to the Middle Ages*. Washington DC: National Gallery of Art 1985, pp. 11–32; Eannatum and the “King of Kiš”? Another Look at the Stele of the Vultures and “Cartouches” in *Early Sumerian Art*. – *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und vorderasiatische Archäologie*, 76, 1986, pp. 205–212 (Both articles of Winter reprinted in: *On Art in the Ancient Near East, Vol. 2. From the Third Millennium BCE. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East*. Leiden: Brill, 2010, pp. 3–64.)

<sup>22</sup> See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stele\\_of\\_Vultures\\_detail\\_01.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Stele_of_Vultures_detail_01.jpg)

The other side of the stele depicts the god Ningirsu<sup>23</sup> who holds a battle net in his hand where the enemy soldiers are imprisoned. Therefore Eanatum tries to show that he and his army achieved victory in the battlefield but that the real victory comes from the divine force and power of the chief god Ningirsu. Eanatum's earthly victory is also a victory in the divine and cosmic spheres:



Stele of the Vultures, Louvre: The side depicting Ningirsu capturing the enemy soldiers into his great battle-net (= divine battle)

In all future royal inscriptions and descriptions of battles, it is self-evident that warfare is always conducted by divine interference or with divine approval and help. The ruler is usually depicted as a subordinate messenger of the gods and warrior of divine justice. Also, the defeats in war are justified by the simple fact that a ruler had broken the will of the gods and overruled divine justice. The insulted god or gods then send enemy peoples or nomadic tribes to avenge the corrupt acts of that ruler or nation.

### Conclusion and Comparative Perspectives

When analysing the first available extended Sumerian royal inscriptions from the era of the Lagašite king Ur-Nanše (ca. 2520 BC) it is noticeable that warfare is said to have taken place between the “man of Lagaš” and enemies who are described as the “man of Ur and Umma.” No divine force or god is ever referred to as ordering the war or helping the king and his army to achieve its objectives. The next preserved Sumerian royal inscriptions describing warfare

<sup>23</sup> Ningirsu was later associated with Ninurta, the son of the chief god of Sumerian pantheon Enlil, cf. **Amar Annus**. *The God Ninurta in the Mythology and Royal Ideology of Ancient Mesopotamia*. State Archives of Assyria Studies vol. XIV. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002.

between the states of Lagaš and Umma come from the rule of king Eanatum (ca. 2470 BC) who was the grandson of Ur-Nanše. Eanatum's inscriptions clearly express the idea that all military campaigns undertaken by the king are conceived following divine orders from the gods. Eanatum acts as messenger of the gods or simply follows orders from higher powers to restore the divine justice which the enemy had broken. It seems likely that a certain concept of warfare as a theological matter evolved in the royal ideology of the state of Lagaš. The inscriptions of the king Eanatum can be considered to be the first recorded evidence of "holy war" or "theology of war" in human history.

A similar concept of the "theology of war" runs through the history of the Ancient Near East and is in its different aspects also present in Israeli<sup>24</sup> Old Testament sources where the god YHWH helps his own people in warfare against other "morally corrupt" peoples.<sup>25</sup> He can also punish his own people ("moral corruptness among his people") by sending hostile peoples, chaos and destruction against them because his own people had broken divine law or justice.<sup>26</sup> One aspect that differentiates the Israeli YHWH religion from earlier Ancient Near Eastern traditions is, of course, the tendency to consider its own local supreme god as the only "right" and "legal" object of worship, ruling out the gods of other nations as illegitimate or "unreal" divine entities.<sup>27</sup> However, the Israeli religion is full of various semi-divine and mythological figures and the inner tension between different concepts and the distribution of divine power amongst them is always detectable.

In varying forms, similar attitudes have also been common in Christian understanding. However, the Islamist concept of "holy warfare" seems to exclude the possibility of considering the meaning of "divine justice." There is no other divine being besides Allah, and no divine norms other than those bestowed by his messenger.

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<sup>24</sup> For the latest on this topic, see: **Rüdiger Schmitt**. *Der „Heilige Krieg“ im Pentateuch und im deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk. Studien zur Forschungs-, Rezeptions- und Religionsgeschichte von Krieg und Bann im Alten Testament. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 381.* Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2011. Cf. **Anu Põldsam**. *Sõjast ja rahust Heebrea Piiblis (Of War and Peace in the Hebrew Bible).* – Eesti Akadeemilise Oriantaalselti aastaraamat 2009/2010, Tartu, lk 85–90.

<sup>25</sup> In Joshua 8, 1, God asks Joshua to conquer the city of Ai and also promises the victory. 8, 27–29 the victory is achieved and according to the instructions of God, the city is plundered, burnt and the local king is hanged.

<sup>26</sup> Dt 28, 25 mentions that God himself is the force who can send the foreign people to attack Israel and causes the defeat of his own people.

<sup>27</sup> A tendency first detectable during the reign of Amenhotep IV of the 18th Dynasty Egypt trying to establish the supreme cult of the Sun god. The Persian cult of Ahuramazda emerging from unknown origins and not easily determinable period in history also shares similarities in terms of the image of the supreme divine figure.

It can be stated that in Ancient Near Eastern, Old Testament and later Christian understanding, religious warfare or the theology of war was mostly in service to a desired political goal. When there was a political need to attack someone, theological reasoning was used to justify, explain or motivate the war. The Islamist perspective seems fundamentally different in the sense that the war can actually be theology or a means of theology. Acts of violence can be justified based on certain passages from the Quran without having any actual pre-planned political goal to be achieved.<sup>28</sup> Or, from a different angle, a political need or cause can be invented based on phrases from Quran calling for the surrender or destruction of the unbelievers (cf. 8, 60 or 8, 12–13). Whilst in earlier systems ideological and theological means were used to serve the actual political situation, in a “radical” Islamist sense theology might rather motivate the policies or real actions meant to be undertaken. This same kind of ideology can, at least to some extent, also be found during the time of the Crusades in Christian thinking. Several Christian movements throughout history can also be compared to the so-called radicalism of war-oriented Islam; these are mainly the movements that try to interpret the Christian holy scriptures not by logical argument, reasoning and church tradition, but by literal interpretation following the passages taken out of their original context word by word. At present, the best example of such an approach would be several so-called Evangelical Christian groups in the USA. Their goal is not the interpretation of scriptures through seeking the holy meaning behind the metaphors of the text or narrative, but principally to cherry-pick passages from the Bible in order to reorganise the present world, attack nonbelievers, liberate Jerusalem, amongst other aims. Just like in modern radicalised Islam, it is hard to determine if an act of violence is motivated by political necessity or certain religious norms or phrases are considered suitable for expressing and justifying violent urges.<sup>29</sup> Similar attitudes are, of course, common not only in radical Islamist and radical Christian movements but also in modern Israeli radical Judaism.

The outspread of radicalism in different religious groups in the modern world raises the question of whether religion has tended to and still tends to encourage violence; and whether religion might be the source of, rather than the solution to, the problem of violence. As material from the earliest known periods shows, religious beliefs were originally most probably centred on aspects of fertility. There is no evidence that warfare or violence in general

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<sup>28</sup> Which could, for example, be illustrated by the joining of the citizens (having no actual or “genetic” relation to the Islamic world) of USA or Western Europe in radical Islamist groups in the modern day world. This also actually means that those “radical” groups can potentially be formed anywhere in the world and motivated by the political military agenda expressed in the scriptures.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. the ideology of Anders Behring Breivik.

need to be one aspect of religious thinking. Divine justice and theology were later used as a basis and justification for the rulers' political actions. Furthermore, the violent Old Testament stories about conquering the Holy Land, etc., were composed and mostly invented later to be justification myths for the historical and present situation of the Israeli people. The basis of the Quran seems to be different in the sense that the Islamist religion actually expanded in parallel with military conquests and can therefore be called a "military religion." Earlier narratives composed to describe or explain the wars were turned into a theology which based future wars on the scriptures. However, as examples of peaceful coexistence between Islam and Christianity in medieval Spain, Sicily or elsewhere demonstrates basic religious beliefs concerning the merciful nature of the divine can be interpreted at the same level and there is therefore no substance to the claim that any given religion must necessarily cause violent actions. The current question of the relation between violence and religion is actually to do with the ways and means of interpreting scripture and is nothing to do with the "basic nature" of any particular religion.

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# ZUR ENTSTEHUNG UND PROBLEMATIK DES NEUZEITLICHEN TOLERANZGEDANKENS UND DER GEWISSENS- UND RELIGIONSFREIHEIT AM BEISPIEL DER STAATSKIRCHLICHEN STELLUNGEN ZU DEN TÄUFERN UND DEN NONKONFORMISTEN IN DER FRÜHEN NEUZEIT

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**ABSTRACT.** This article gives an overview of how the idea of religious tolerance evolved in Early Modernity by passing through such historical phases of the Christian Church as intolerance and the pursuit of truth. It then reveals the main reasons and legal background for the political and religious persecution of heretics. Above all, it was due to Martin Luther's Reformation theology that freedom of conscience became an important issue in Early Modernity. That being said, at that time freedom of religion was not understood as an individual and inherent human right, and this "free" conscience was seen through the prism of an objective gospel truth, just as Luther conceived it via his own exegetic work. The ideology celebrating the individual and universal freedom of conscience and religion – being founded on a different interpretation of the Scriptures, and existing in the context of a radical reformation that led to the voluntary establishment of new communities based on personal religion (anabaptist in the 16th century, and non-conformist in the 17th century) which were formed outside the territorial state or state churches – was treated by both the Protestant and Catholic religious establishment as a heretical movement and political uprising that required harsh repression. The Christians – who were seeking other alternatives to the prevailing corpus-Christianum model that was applied to the relationship between Church and state, and who had therefore challenged the current socio-political order – were systematically persecuted far and wide. This theological condemnation of the heretics (Anabaptists) was also expressed in 16th century Lutheran doctrine. This church- and state-level oppression of believers belonging to the ranks of the Radical Reformation clearly reveals the serious shortcomings rooted in that interpretation of moral and religious freedom when examining this question in the context of Early Modernity. On the other hand, this article suggests that, from the point of view of the development of religious tolerance, the impetus that prompted demands for individual and universal freedom of conscience and religion in Early Modernity came above all from the fringes of the state churches, whether Catholic or Protestant, and even from within the communities operating outside of those Churches.

**Key words:** tolerance, freedom of conscience, religious freedom, heresy, *corpus Christianum*, Martin Luther, radical reformation, Anabaptists (*Täufer*), non-conformists, free churches.

Wir leben heute sowohl in Estland als auch in Deutschland in einer nach dem Demokratischen Prinzip geordneten Gesellschaftsordnung, zu deren Grundlagen auch verschiedene von Staat grundgesetzlich garantierte *Grundrechte*<sup>1</sup> wie z.B. *Gewissens- und Religionsfreiheit*<sup>2</sup> gehören. Der demokratische und freie Staat will also diese Freiheiten schützen; sie sollen einen offenen, politischen Prozess in der Gesellschaft ermöglichen. Eigentlich geht dies aber nur auf der Grundlage der Gleichwertigkeit aller Kräfte im Staat, die das Grundgesetz als Rahmenordnung für das menschlich-gesellschaftliche Zusammenleben vorbehaltlos akzeptieren. Insofern spricht das Grundgesetz nicht nur vom religiösen, sondern auch vom weltanschaulichen Bekenntnis. Die diversen religiösen und weltanschaulichen Bekenntnisse sind jedoch nicht staatstragend; das verbietet die normierende Redeweise von der religiösen und weltanschaulichen Neutralität des Staates. Demnach kann es in Deutschland oder in Estland weder einen „evangelischen“, noch einen „katholischen“ oder „orthodoxen“, auch keinen „christlichen“ oder „muslimischen“ Staat geben. Die unterschiedlichen Bekenntnisse sind aber auch nicht uninteressant

<sup>1</sup> „Grundrechte sind verfassungsrechtlich gewährleistete subjektive Rechte, die als Freiheitsrechte die individuelle Freiheitssphäre vor dem Zugriff der Staatsmacht schützen oder als Gleichheitsrechte rechtliche Gleichheit schützen.“, so **H. Avenarius**, Kleines Rechtswörterbuch, 7. Aufl., Bonn 1992, S. 214.

Das Grundrecht der *Religionsfreiheit* ist z.B. in Deutschland durch Art. 4 GG gewährleistet. Danach sind die Freiheit des Glaubens, des Gewissens und die Freiheit des religiösen und weltanschaulichen Bekenntnisses unverletzlich (Abs. 1); die ungestörte Religionsausübung wird garantiert (Abs. 2). Art. 4 GG schützt sowohl das religiös fundierte als auch das von einer Weltanschauung unabhängige Gewissen. Siehe **Avenarius** 1992, S. 207.416. – In *estnischem* Grundgesetz sind die Freiheit des Gewissens, des Glaubens und des Denkens, auch die freie Zugehörigkeit zu Kirchen und Glaubensgemeinschaften durch den Art. 40. garantiert. „Menschenrechte sind Grundrechte, die das GG *jedermann* [...] gewährleistet.“ *Ebenda*, S. 309. Ein Menschenrecht ist also ein Recht, das jedem Menschen von Natur her zusteht, und schon die Philosophen der Antike beschreiben die *religiöse* Veranlagung eines jeden Menschen als von der Natur gegeben. Als Menschenrecht zu verstehende Religionsfreiheit umfasst also auch die sog. *negative* Religionsfreiheit, das Recht, sich keiner Religionsgemeinschaft anzuschließen oder zu keiner Weltanschauung zu bekennen. In Zusammenhang mit der *positiven* Religionsfreiheit, also dem Recht, sich zum Glauben einer Religionsgemeinschaft zu bekennen, bedarf das Praktizieren einer Religion einer gewissen Freiheit. Siehe **I. Friedrich**, Religionsfreiheit – Menschenrecht, in: „Sie werden Euch hassen... Christenverfolgung weltweit“, hg. von Ph. W. Hildmann. Argumente und Materialien zum Zeitgeschichte, Bd. 59, München 2007, S. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Die Gewissensfreiheit, die in engem Zusammenhang mit der Religionsfreiheit steht, umfasst nicht nur die Freiheit der inneren Gewissensentscheidung, sondern auch die Freiheit, diese Entscheidung nach außen zu bekunden und ihr gemäß zu handeln.

für Staat und Gesellschaft, sondern sind im Gegenteil Ausdruck der inneren Lebendigkeit der Gesellschaft.

Was nutzt die Religionsfreiheit, wenn es keine wachen Gemeinden oder Bekenntnisgruppen gibt, die in freier Weise ihre Religion ausüben: *free exercise and voluntary commitment*? Eine Gesellschaft, der religiöse Initiative fehlt, ist auf dem besten Weg in die Unfreiheit quasireligiöser und/oder ideologischer Establishments.<sup>3</sup> Die Neutralität entspringt somit weder einem Desinteresse oder einer Indifferenz des Staates gegenüber religiösen und weltanschaulichen Gruppen, sondern sie bildet den Ermöglichungsgrund sowohl für die Freiheit des Staates als auch für die Freiheit der Religionen und Weltanschauungen. Denn nur die *Neutralität* des Staates garantiert<sup>4</sup>, dass dieser keinem Klerikalismus und keiner Ideologie unterliegt und ermöglicht gerade deshalb die freie und ungehinderte sowie ungezwungene religiöse und/oder weltanschauliche Entfaltung der Persönlichkeit<sup>5</sup>. Ein freier Staat, d.h. ein nicht-totalitärer, neutraler, für den politischen Prozess offener, auf die religiöse und politische Mündigkeit der Bürger und deren politischer Partizipation setzender Staat wäre ein Stück unfreier ohne Religionsfreiheit bzw. ohne freie Kirchen oder Weltanschauungsgruppen.

Um der Gewissens- und Religionsfreiheit als dem allgemeinen *Menschenrecht* seine volle Wirksamkeit zu verlieren, ist es in mehreren Rechtstexten auf nationaler (die Grundgesetze), europäischer (die Europäische Menschenrechtskonvention) und internationaler Ebene (die Allgemeine Erklärung der Menschenrechte der UNO) verankert. Auch in der Charta der Grundrechte der Europäischen Union vom Dezember 2000 ist die Religionsfreiheit als elementarer gemeinschaftsrechtlicher Grundsatz anerkannt.<sup>6</sup>

Dieser grundrechtlich verankerte Schutzbereich ist das Ergebnis eines historischen, aber keineswegs linearen und kontinuierlichen Prozesses, der im Abendland in der frühen Neuzeit deutlich bemerkbar einsetzt und sich seit dem ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert beschleunigt. Mit der Einleitungsphase der Neuzeit steht aber in strukturellen Zusammenhang die Reformation. Bedingend für die Neuzeit wurde die Reformation u.a. auch durch Ein- und

<sup>3</sup> E. Geldbach, Religion und Politik: Religious Liberty, in: Gott und Politik in USA, hg. von K.-M. Kodalle, Frankfurt a.M. 1988, S. 238.

<sup>4</sup> „Die Gewährleistung volle Religionsfreiheit ist eine Grundvoraussetzung freien Geisteslebens, in das einzugreifen dem Staat verboten ist. Somit begründet Art. 4 GG zugleich /.../ die religiöse und weltanschauliche Neutralität des Staates“, so Avenarius 1992, S. 416.

<sup>5</sup> Die menschliche Freiheit ist durch Art. 2 GG als Grundrecht gewährleistet: Jeder hat das Recht auf die freie Entfaltung seiner Persönlichkeit (Abs. 1). *Ebenda*, S. 170.

<sup>6</sup> Artikel 10 Abs. 1 der Charta lautet: „Jede Person hat das Recht auf Gedanken-, Gewissens- und Religionsfreiheit. Dieses Recht umfasst die Freiheit, seine Religion oder Weltanschauung zu wechseln, und die Freiheit, seine Religion oder Weltanschauung einzeln oder gemeinsam mit anderen öffentlich oder privat durch Gottesdienst, Unterricht, Bräuche und Riten zu bekennen.“ Zitiert nach Friedrich 2007, S. 11f.

Auswirkungen des kirchlich-religiösen Phänomens Reformation auf alle gesellschaftlichen Bereiche.<sup>7</sup> So interessiert uns bezüglich dieser Ausführungen vor allem die Frage: gibt es unter den demokratischen Grundkategorien unserer Gegenwart Phänomene, die historisch begründet mit der Reformation und deren Auswirkungen in Verbindung gebracht und als unverändert gültig bewertet werden können? In diesem Sinne bietet sich unter unmittelbarer Bezugnahme auf den Speyerer Reichstag von 1529 das Problem der *Gewissensfreiheit* an, das Fragen nach Religionsfreiheit sowie generell nach *Toleranz* einbezieht<sup>8</sup>.

Nach Martin Honecker<sup>9</sup> ist die Gewissensfreiheit politisch belangvoll. Mit ihr berühren sich sehr eng die Achtung der Religionsfreiheit und das Gebot der Toleranz gegenüber dem Staat. Religionsfreiheit kann freilich zweifach verstanden gesehen und begründet werden: Sie kann von außen her verstanden werden als die Notwendigkeit für einen Staat in einer weltanschaulich und religiös pluralistischen Gesellschaft, sich nicht einzumischen in die Religion der Bürger. Toleranz bedeutet dann die Verwirklichung eines allgemeinen Freiheitsstandards innerhalb einer Gesellschaft, da der Staat nicht eigentlich festlegen kann, was Religion ist, was unabdingbar zu ihr gehört und der Freiheit der Religionsausübung einen möglichst weiten Raum einräumen muss. Religionsfreiheit kann aber auch noch tiefer, von innen heraus verstanden werden, als Verwirklichung der christlichen Freiheit des Glaubens, als Konkretisierung des alten Axioms *credere voluntatis est*. Dieses Freiheitsverständnis stößt aber auf die *Wahrheitsfrage* und es kann nicht den (Wahrheits-)Anspruch christlichen Glaubens zur Disposition stellen. Der Anspruch des Glaubens und der weltanschauliche Pluralismus stehen immer noch zueinander in Spannung.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Vgl. R. Wohlfeil, Bedingungen der Neuzeit, in: Gewissensfreiheit als Bedingung der Neuzeit. Bensheimer Hefte 54, Göttingen 1980, S. 7–24.

<sup>8</sup> In diesen Ausführungen beschränkt sich der Begriff „Toleranz“ auf die *christliche* Tradition und auf die *abendländische* Entwicklung, und zwar deswegen, weil im Abendland in der frühen Neuzeit sich eine Situation ergeben hat, die für die Entwicklung der Toleranzgedanken eine besondere Herausforderung bedeutete.

<sup>9</sup> M. Honecker, Das reformatorische Freiheitsverständnis und das neuzeitliche Verständnis der „Würde des Menschen“, in: Modernes Freiheitsethos und christlicher Glaube, hg. von J. Schwartländer. [Entwicklung und Frieden, Bd. 24], München/Mainz 1981, S. 279ff.

<sup>10</sup> Dazu zitiert Honecker aus Überlegungen der Kammer für öffentliche Verantwortung der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland: „Weltanschaulicher Pluralismus setzt zwar ein gewisses Maß an gegenseitiger Toleranz der verschiedenen Religionen und Weltanschauungen voraus, er verlangt von ihnen aber nicht die Relativierung ihrer eigenen... Standpunkte. Das Grundrecht auf Religionsfreiheit gilt als solches nicht in der Kirche, wie weit oder eng man auch die Grenzen für einen Pluralismus theologischer Meinungen in der Kirche ziehen mag. Überspitzt könnte man sogar sagen, dass Pluralismus erst dort recht funktioniert, wo sich Toleranz zwischen den Gruppen mit klaren Standpunkten innerhalb der Gruppen verbindet. Dennoch darf nicht übersehen werden, dass die Freiheitlichkeit und der Pluralismus einer

Nach Helmut Burkhardt ist Toleranz als Aushalten der Spannung, die durch das Anderssein anderer Menschen in Denken, Wollen und Empfinden entsteht, eine soziale Tugend, die überall unumgänglich nötig ist, wo Menschen zusammenleben<sup>11</sup>. In der Religionsgeschichte begegnen wir zwei verschiedenen Arten der Toleranz und ihres Gegenteils: die *formale* und die *inhaltliche* Toleranz und Intoleranz. Erstere meint das bloße Unangetastetlassen fremder Religion und (Glaubens-)Praxis. Vom tolerierten Objekt aus spricht man dann von Glaubens- oder Religionsfreiheit. Die formale Intoleranz zwingt die Bekenner fremden Glaubens zur Unterwerfung unter eine sakrale Institution des Staates oder einer Kirche bzw. einer Konfession, deren formale Einheit durch abweichenden Glauben und Kultus gestört werden würde. Die inhaltliche Toleranz beschränkt sich nicht auf bloße Duldung, sondern ist darüber hinaus die positive Anerkennung fremder Religion als echter Möglichkeit der Begegnung mit dem Heiligen.<sup>12</sup>

Der exklusive *Wahrheitsanspruch* der sog. Universalreligionen, zu denen auch das Christentum gehört, führt zumeist zur Intoleranz im formalen und auch inhaltlichen Sinne und in extremen Formen sogar zum Fanatismus. In der Geschichte des Christentums hat sich der Toleranzgedanke erst im Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit herausgebildet. Obgleich das Christentum dem Römischen Reich gegenüber für sich selbst Toleranz forderte und schließlich durchsetzte (Mailänder Abkommen von 313), stellte sich mit dem Sieg des Christentums unter Kaiser Konstantin die folgenschwere Frage, ob die werdende Staatskirche jetzt ihrerseits Heiden und Häretikern Toleranz gewähren solle<sup>13</sup>. Ungeachtet dessen, dass die Christen selbst in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten verfolgt wurden und die Tolerierung gefordert hatte, blieb das Christentum nach der Konstantinischen Wende im Verhältnis zu Andersgläubigen und Häretikern trotz pragmatischer Regelungen weitgehend intolerant und gewalttätig<sup>14</sup>.

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Gesellschaft auch in die Kirche hineinwirken... Trotzdem gilt es, an der Differenz zwischen Kirche und Gesellschaft festzuhalten: Christliche Freiheit und Religionsfreiheit sind nicht identisch." Siehe **Honecker** 1981, S. 281,

<sup>11</sup> **H. Burkhardt**, Art. Toleranz, in: Evangelisches Lexikon für Theologie und Gemeinde, Bd. III, hg. von H. Burkhardt und U. Swarat, Wuppertal und Zürich 1994, S. 2018. Toleranz ist nicht zu verwechseln mit Gleichgültigkeit in der Wahrheitsfrage.

<sup>12</sup> **G. Mensching**, Art. Toleranz, I. Religionsgeschichtlich, in: Die Religion in der Geschichte und Gegenwart, Bd. VI, 3. Aufl., hg. von K. Galling, Tübingen 1986, S. 932f. – Es gibt aber auch andere Vorschläge zur Typisierung: 1) die pragmatische Toleranz; 2) die Konsensus-Toleranz; 3) die dialogische Toleranz. Vgl. **E. Stöve**, Art. Toleranz. I. Kirchengeschichtlich, in: Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Bd. XXXIII, hg. von G. Müller, Berlin 2002, S. 647.

<sup>13</sup> Siehe **M. Honecker**, Grundriß der Sozialethik. Berlin/ New York 1995, S. 698.

<sup>14</sup> Vgl. **M. Hengel**, Christus und die Macht. Zur Problematik einer „Politischen Theologie“ in der Geschichte der Kirche. Stuttgart 1974, besonders S. 46–60. Hengel stellt fest: „Daß der eine Gott das eine Reich und der eine Herrscher dann auch zu einem Glauben und einer

Die Häresie galt als krimineller Tat und sogar noch mehr. Das Staatsglaubensbekenntnis von Nicäa (325) schied den Ketzer vom Rechtsgläubigen und damit den Staatsfeind vom Bürger. Der rechtliche Umgang mit den in seiner Mitte lebenden Dissidenten, die ihn verneinen und bekämpfen, ist jedem Staat ein existenzielles Problem. Hans Hattenhauer stellt fest, dass im Staatskirchentum wurde diese Frage durch das Glaubensbekenntnis gelöst. Es war eine Rechtsnorm und nicht privates Glaubenszeugnis. Es verpflichtete Kirche, Staat und Volk auf die so definierten Wahrheiten und bestätigte das Selbstverständnis der Rechtskirche: der Glaube wurde in die Form des Gesetzes gefasst und mit staatlicher Verbindlichkeit ausgestattet. Nicäas Formeln haben sich auch in den Kirchen der Reformation erhalten können. Mit dem Staatsglaubensbekenntnis hat die Kirche ein Maßstab zur Ausgrenzung von Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzertum geliefert und nötigenfalls auch über Staats-treue und Staatsfeindlichkeit entschieden. Dem Staat kam die Anwendung der rechtlichen Sanktionen gegen den Staatsfeind zu und deshalb betonten die römischen Kaiser auch ihren eigenen Auftrag zur Ketzerbekämpfung. Der Ketzer galt gefährlicher als der Ungläubige. Während man letzteren noch bekehren zu können hoffte, schien der Ketzer hoffnungslos.<sup>15</sup> M. Honecker resümiert diese Entwicklung so: Die Zwangsmaßnahmen gegen den Häretikern, z.B. gegen den Donatisten und Manichäer, das Verbot heidnischer Kulte, die Erhebung des Christentums zur Staatsreligion durch Theodosius I., die Proklamation der nizänischen Orthodoxie zum Reichsglauben bezeichneten Etappen auf dem Weg zu christlicher Intoleranz!<sup>16</sup>

Kirchenvater Aurelius Augustin (+ 430) verurteilte das Einlenken des Kaisers gegenüber den häretischen Donatisten als „schändlichsten Ablass“ (*ignominiosissima indulgentia*). Nach Augustin gibt es eine *iusta persecutio*, d.h. Recht für die Verfolgung durch die Kirche und eine ungerechte Verfolgung durch die Gottlosen: „*Die Kirche verfolgt aus Liebe, die Gottlosen aus*

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Kirche hindrängten, war auf Grund dieser neuen „christianisierten“ Herrschaftsideologie nur zu verständlich. Daß die Christen einst selbst gegenüber der Staatsräson um Toleranz gebeten hatte, vergaß man leider gar zu schnell.“ (*Ebenda*, S. 55f). Das Profil von Toleranz im Christentum ist durch zwei Tendenzen gekennzeichnet: Einerseits wird Glaubenszwang gegenüber Nichtchristen abgelehnt (nicht immer konsequent), andererseits werden Häretiker in der eigenen Reihen unerbittlich verfolgt. Ein klassisches Beispiel dafür ist Konstantins Häretikergesetz aus der Zeit um 326: „Was sollen wir also länger solche Frevel [ihr Novatianer, Valentianer, Markionisten, Paulianer, Kataphryger] dulden? Unsere lange Nachsicht bewirkt ja nur, daß auch die Gesunden wie von einer pestartigen Krankheit befallen werden. Warum also nicht durch öffentlich bewiesene Strenge so rasch wie möglich dieses große Übel sozusagen mit den Wurzeln ausrotten?“ Zitiert nach **A. M. Ritter**, *Alte Kirche. Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte in Quellen.*, Bd. I, 5. Aufl., hg. von H. A. Oberman u.a., Neukirchen-Vluyn 1991, S. 139.

<sup>15</sup> **H. Hattenhauer**, *Europäische Rechtsgeschichte*. Heidelberg 1992, S. 113f.

<sup>16</sup> Siehe **Honecker** 1995, S. 698f.

*Grausamkeit*“.<sup>17</sup> Die christlichen Kaiser sollten „*ihre Gewalt zur Dienerin der göttlichen Majestät machen*“<sup>18</sup>. Wenn man aus diesem Gedanke Konsequenzen zieht, braucht man sich nicht zu wundern, dass auch schon Augustin den Einsatz staatlicher Machtmittel gegen die Häretiker vertreten hat. Augustin verzichtete jedoch noch auf die Forderung nach der Todesstrafe oder nach schweren Torturen. Er begründet die *iusta persecutio* mit dem Hinweis auf Lk 14,23: *coge* (bzw. *compelle*) *intrare*, d.h. „Nötige bzw. zwingt sie hereinzukommen!“ Martin Hengel stellt fest, dass hier die gemeinantike Vorstellung vom religiösen Charakter des antiken Staates sich stärker als die am Evangelium geschärfte theologische Reflexion erwiesen hat: Der Kaiser musste sich um die rechte Religion seiner Untertanen kümmern, so wie der römische Familienvater für die rechte Frömmigkeit seiner Familie sorgte. Diese verhängnisvolle Vorstellung wirkte weiter bis zum Ende der Reformationsära und hat den Grundsatz des Augsburger Religionsfriedens von 1555 „*Cuius regio, eius religio*“ (wer die Herrschaft besitzt, bestimmt über die Religion der Untertanen) und auch das „landesherrliche Kirchenregiment“ des Luthertums beeinflusst.<sup>19</sup>

Bezüglich der im Allgemeinen fehlenden Toleranz bestimmt eine starke Interdependenz von kirchlicher und weltlicher Herrschaft das Mittelalter. Kaiser Friedrich II. z.B. erklärt Häretiker zu Staatsfeinden (*Liber Augustalis*, 1231; Erlass zur Verfolgung deutscher Ketzer, März 1232)<sup>20</sup>, Päpste Innozenz III. (1199), Gregor IX. (1231) und Innozenz IV. (1252) sanktionieren und

<sup>17</sup> Zitiert *ebenda*, S. 699.

<sup>18</sup> Zitiert nach Hengel 1974, S. 58.

<sup>19</sup> *Ebenda*.

<sup>20</sup> 1232 erließ Friedrich II. seine berühmte Ketzerordnung, in der als Strafe Folter, Verstümmelung und Feuertod angedroht werden. H. Nette weist darauf hin, dass es sich dabei weder um den Ausdruck persönlicher Grausamkeit des Herrschers handle, noch um einen Gefälligkeitserweis dem Papst gegenüber, sondern dass Friedrich „Kezerei als Majestätsverbrechen wertete... Ketzer und Rebellen waren für ihn das gleiche.“ Zitiert nach R. Mokrosch/H. Walz, *Mittelalter. Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte in Quellen*, Bd. II, 3. Aufl., hg. von H. A. Oberman u.a., Neukirchen-Vluyn 1989, S. 130. Aus dem Friedrichs II. Erlass zur Verfolgung deutscher Ketzer: „Die Ausübung der uns vom Himmel anvertrauten Herrschaft und die von Gott verliehene erhabene kaiserliche Würde erfordern es, dass wir das leibliche Schwert, das wir im Unterschied zu den Geistlichen führen, gegen die Feinde des Glaubens und zur Ausrottung der verderblichen Kezerei anwenden... Wir bestimmen deshalb, dass die Ketzer, wie immer sie heißen mögen, überall im Reich, wo sie von der Kirche verurteilt und dem weltlichen Gericht überantwortet werden, gebührend bestraft werden. /.../denn wir wollen, dass die Ketzerbrut aus Deutschland, wo immer der wahre Glaube geherrscht hat, gänzlich vertilgt werde. Den Erben und Nachkommen dieser Ketzer und deren, die sie aufnehmen und begünstigen und für sie eintreten, entziehen wir kraft unserer kaiserlichen Gewalt bis zur zweiten Generation alle weltlichen Lehen und alle öffentlichen Ämter und Ehren, damit sie sich in der Erinnerung an das Verbrechen ihres Vaters ohne Unterlass in Trauer verzehren und erkennen, dass der Herr ein eifriger Gott ist und die Sünden der Väter mit Macht an den Söhnen rächt.“ Zitiert *ebenda*, S. 132f.

verbreiten seine Ketzergesetze<sup>21</sup>; es entsteht ein wirkungsvolles und monolithisch christliches Rechtsganzes. Ein allgemeines, katholisches Glaubensbekenntnis wurde vom 4. Laterankonzil (1215) den Laien zur Abschirmung gegen die Häresie der Albigenser und Katharer an die Hand gegeben<sup>22</sup>.

Thomas von Aquin unterscheidet Unglauben, Häresie und Abfall. Die Ungläubigen dürfen nicht zum Glauben gezwungen werden, denn *credere voluntatis est*. Der Kult der Ungläubigen, z.B. der Juden, kann toleriert werden, wenn ihre Zahl groß ist; Häretiker dagegen sind mit dem Tode zu bestrafen. Die Häresie ist gesteigerte Falschmünzerei, also ein Majestätsdelikt; die Häretiker verbreiten einen Infekt, der die Seele verdirbt.<sup>23</sup> Zu den von der weltlichen Gewalt zu schützenden Gütern gehört nach Thomas auch der gemeinsame, von der Kirche autoritativ verkündete Glaube der Christenheit. Deshalb müssen Sünde und Abfall von Glauben, wenn sie in äußeren Handlungen in Erscheinung treten und so Frieden gefährden, von der weltlichen Gewalt geahndet werden. Also darf gegen Ketzer die weltliche Obrigkeit Gewalt anwenden, wenn zwei Versuche ihrer Bekehrung fehlgeschlagen sind.<sup>24</sup>

Die Rezeption griechischer und arabischer Philosophie brachte in die scholastische Theologie einige Elemente der Konsensus-Toleranz<sup>25</sup>, die in der Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts einen Höhepunkt in Nikolaus von Kues' religionsphilosophischen Schrift *De pace fidei* (1543) findet. Er hat der Idee der Konsensus-Toleranz eine konkrete Formulierung gegeben: Einheit der Religionen bei Verschiedenheit der Riten (*religion una in rituum varietate*)<sup>26</sup>; aber das Häretikerproblem blieb von diesen Gedanken unberührt.

<sup>21</sup> Die Voraussetzung für das Eingreifen des weltlichen Arms schuf die Dekretale Innozenz' III. *Vergentis in senium* (1199), in der Häresie als Majestätsverbrechen bezeichnet wird. Der Kreuzzug gegen die Ketzer, als letztes Mittel, war damit vorbereitet. Im Aufruf Innozenz' III, zum innerabendländischen Kreuzzug gegen die ketzerischen Albigenser (1208) heißt es u.a.: „Damit die Heilige Kirche Gottes gegen ihre grausamsten Feinde furchterregend als wohlgeordnete Schlachtreihe zur Vernichtung der Anhänger der ketzerischen Bosheit /.../ ausziehen könne, hielten wir es für geboten, die Truppen der christlichen Heerschar aus den umliegenden Gebieten zusammenzurufen, /.../ damit die Verteidiger der Ehre der Heiligen Trinität unter einer dreifachen Leitung von Meistern den Sieg gewinnen möchten.“ Zitiert nach **Mokrosch/Walz** 1989, S. 115, 117; vgl. auch **M. Lambert**, *Ketzerei im Mittelalter. Häresie von Bogumil bis Hus*, Augsburg 2001, S. 145–164.

<sup>22</sup> **Mokrosch/Walz** 1989, S. 121.

<sup>23</sup> Vgl. **H. Bornkamm**, Art. Toleranz II. In der Geschichte des Christentums, in: *Die Religion in der Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Bd. VI, 3. Aufl., hg. von K. Galling, Tübingen 1986, S. 935.

<sup>24</sup> Siehe **B. Sutor**, *Vom gerechten Krieg zum gerechten Frieden?* Schwalbach/T. 2004, S. 30f.

<sup>25</sup> Sie sucht nach Übereinstimmungen im Kernbereich, um die nicht vergleichbaren Punkte (in der äußeren Ausprägung) als sekundär oder äußerlich zu entschärfen.

<sup>26</sup> Nach seiner Anschauung haben Christentum, Judentum und Islam einen Kernbestand gemeinsamer Überzeugungen, auch wenn die jeweilige Frömmigkeitspraxis ganz unterschiedlich ausfällt. Aber der gemeinsame Kernbestand ist (natürlich!) ganz aus der Sicht

Eine deutliche Wende im Verständnis der Toleranz bahnt sich erst im 16. Jahrhundert mit der Reformation und mit dem Humanismus an<sup>27</sup>. Die Reformation als in erster Linie kirchengeschichtliche Bewegung<sup>28</sup> resultierte in gemeineuropäisch geschichtlicher Komplexität: 1) aus vorangegangenen geistig-geistlichen, kirchlich-religiösen und politisch-sozialen Auseinandersetzungen und daraus erwachsenen Erneuerungshoffnungen; 2) aus der Polarität zwischen tiefer christlicher Verwurzelung in den bewusstseinsbestimmenden Glauben und dem Unbefriedigtsein mit den überlieferten Formen der Heilungsvermittlung; 3) aus der Spannung zwischen dem Ideal eines gut christlichen Lebens aller Mitglieder des *corpus Christianum* und deren Verhaltensweise im konkreten Geschehen mit der daraus sich ergebenden Forderung nach Reform von Sitten und Moral. Aus der unterschiedlichen Rezeption des individuellen Denkens, ureigenen Wollens und konkreten Wirkens Luthers und anderen Reformatoren – zu denen auch die führenden Denker der verschiedenen Täuferbewegungen gehören – ergab sich die Mannigfaltigkeit ihrer direkten und mittelbaren, beabsichtigten und unerwünschten Anstöße und Wirkungen mit ihren Folgerungen auf allen gesellschaftlichen Ebenen.<sup>29</sup>

Das Christentum ist in seiner Geschichte immer wieder vor die doppelte Aufgabe gestellt worden, Toleranz zu erringen und Toleranz zu gewähren. So befand sich auch die Reformation in der gleichen Situation: Sie musste Toleranz fordern und wurde bald gefragt, ob sie selbst sie gewähren wollte. In

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des christlichen Dogmas formuliert. Für Nikolaus sind Trinität, Inkarnation, Rechtfertigung unaufgebbare Glaubenswahrheiten, und die eine, wahre Religion ist im Christentum allerdings in vollkommener Weise enthalten. Nikolaus scheint ein System einzuleiten, das die Humanisten später verkünden werden: Die Union der Kirchen und der Sekten ungeachtet ihrer Verschiedenheiten auf der Grundlage einiger großer gemeinsamen Wahrheiten, einiger „fundamentaler Artikel“. Er strebt es jedoch weniger als ein zu schließendes „Konkordat“ an, sondern als ein Ideal, dem es ohne Unterlass zu folgen gilt, sei es auch hienieden nicht zu erreichen. – **H. G. Senger**, Nikolaus von Kues, in: *Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte*, Bd. IV, Stuttgart 1993, S. 291.; vgl. auch **J. Lecler**, *Geschichte der Religionsfreiheit im Zeitalter der Reformation*, Bd. 1, Stuttgart 1965, S. 181–185.

<sup>27</sup> Freilich bringt die frühe Neuzeit noch keine Duldung in modernem Sinne, aber es zeigen sich die ersten Ansätze zu ihr. Einerseits versagen die traditionellen Mechanismen der Einheitsstiftung, andererseits ist Religion immer noch ein öffentliches Gut und noch nicht als Religionsfreiheit, wie in den modernen Verfassungen, privatisiert. Weil der Staat den christlichen Glauben als die eine und wahre Religion betrachtet, gewährt er keine Religionsfreiheit; es besteht „Staatszwangskirchentum“. Die Kirche ihrerseits bedient sich des weltlichen Armes, um abweichende religiöse Auffassungen zu bekämpfen. – **R. P. de Mortanges**, Art. Religionsfreiheit, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Bd. XXVIII, hg. von G. Müller, Berlin 1997, S. 565f.

<sup>28</sup> „Reformation (lat) ‚Wiederherstellung‘; die kirchengeschichtliche Bewegung, die gegen die Missstände in der kirchlicher Lehre und Praxis des Spätmittelalters die Erneuerung der Kirche von ihrer Grundlage, der Heiligen Schrift... her betrieb.“ – **J. Hanselmann u.a.** (Hg.), *Fachwörterbuch Theologie*, Wuppertal 1987, S. 145f.

<sup>29</sup> Siehe **Wohlfeil** 1980, S. 16f.

seiner berühmten Adelschrift (1520) hat Luther verlangt: „*So sollte man die Ketzer mit Schriften, nicht mit Feuer überwinden, wie die alten Väter getan haben. Wenn es eine Wissenschaft wäre, mit Feuer Ketzer zu überwinden, dann wären die Henker die gelehrtesten Doktoren auf Erden, dann brauchten auch wir nicht mehr zu studieren, sondern wen den andern mit Gewalt überwände, könnte ihn verbrennen*<sup>30</sup>.“ Luther löste sich von der für das mittelalterliche Ketzerstrafrecht grundlegenden Auffassung der Häresie als Mord an den Seelen. Er konnte anerkennen, dass auch die Irrgläubigen und Schwärmer nach ihrem Gewissen handeln und deshalb nicht durch Gewalt, sondern durch die Heilige Schrift zu überwinden seien. „*Denn Ketzerei kann man nimmermehr mit Gewalt abwehren. Es gehört ein anderer griff dazu, und es ist hier ein anderer Streit und Handel als mit dem Schwert. Gottes Wort soll hier streiten... Ketzerei ist ein geistliches Ding, das kann man mit keinem Eisen zerhauen, mit keinem Feuer verbrennen, mit keinem Wasser ertränken. Es ist aber allein das Gotteswort da, das tut's.... Dazu gibt es keine größere Stärkung /.../ der Ketzerei, als wenn man ohne Gottes Wort mit bloßer Gewalt dagegen handelt*“, sagt Luther in seiner Schrift *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit* (1523)<sup>31</sup>. Die unbezwingbare Freiheit des Glaubens, die Natur des Gotteswortes und die Trennung des Geistlichen vom Weltlichen (Zweireichelehre) machen bei Luther dem kirchlichen Inquisitionsverfahren und der staatlichen Verfolgung *ketzerischer Lehre* ein Ende<sup>32</sup>. Wie weit Luther aber damit noch von einem politisch-rechtlichen Verständnis der Toleranz entfernt war, zeigt der Umstand, dass er unter dem Eindruck der – mit dem Auftreten der Täufer verbundenen – Unruhen die politische Gewalt zu unnachsichtigem Eingreifen aufforderte. Eckehart Stöve stellt fest, dass die reformatorische Theologie, ob in Wittenberg oder in Zürich, ihren Glaubenssubjektivismus mit politischem Konservatismus verbunden hat. Diese Verbindung brachte es mit sich, dass der sog. „linke Flügel“ der Reformation aus dem neu sich bildenden protestantischen Kirchenwesen ausgeschieden und die anfangs Verfolgten dann selber zu Verfolgern wurden<sup>33</sup>.

Luther ging von einer empirisch begründeten Sorge vor der Zerstörung der staatlichen Ordnung durch Zwiespalt in Lehre und Gottesdienst aus. *Die politische Gefahr der Ketzerei* reichte für Luther über die entstehende Unruhe bis in den Bereich des Zornes Gottes über ein Land, in dem die Blasphemie der Messe, Synagoge oder schwärmerischen bzw. täuferischen Predigt zugelassen wird. Die Obrigkeit muss hier um des Landes willen Ordnung schaffen, nicht um des Evangeliums willen, das keinen Schutz braucht. Nach

<sup>30</sup> WA 6, 455, 21f; zitiert nach: **Martin Luther**. Ausgewählte Schriften, Bd. I, hg. von K. Bornkamm und G. Ebeling, 2. Aufl., Frankfurt a.M. 1982, S. 221.

<sup>31</sup> WA 11, 268, 22ff, zitiert nach: **Martin Luther**. Ausgewählte Schriften, Bd. IV, S. 69.

<sup>32</sup> **Bornkamm** 1986, S. 937.

<sup>33</sup> **Stöve** 2002, S. 652.

Luthers Auffassung sollte der evangelische Fürst einer dreifachen Rolle für die Ausbreitung und Organisation des Evangeliums gegenüberstehen: 1) nach besten Kräften die Predigt der Schrift zu begünstigen; 2) die Predigt falscher und häretischer Lehrer zu verhindern und gleichzeitig alles zu unterdrücken, was von außen der Ehre Gottes abträglich sein konnte; 3) Sorge zu tragen, dass alle das wahre Wort Gottes hören und sie notfalls dazu zu zwingen. Diese Vorschriften griffen nach Luthers Meinung die Glaubensfreiheit in keiner Weise an!<sup>34</sup>

Unter allen Reformatoren hat sich Luther am ausführlichsten mit der Frage des Gewissens und Gewissensfreiheit beschäftigt<sup>35</sup>. Gewissensfreiheit ist nach Luthers bzw. nach reformatorischer Auffassung nichts anderes als die Umschreibung des erkennenden und vertrauenden Glaubensverhältnisses zu Gott, das durch sein befreiendes Wort im Evangelium konstituiert wird<sup>36</sup>. Wir müssen also merken, dass Luther die Freiheit des Gewissens keinesfalls als *allgemeines Recht des Einzelnen* im Sinne von Religionsfreiheit, also zu glauben und eine Religion zu leben ohne jedweden äußeren Zwang, sondern ausschließlich als Befreiung des Gewissens durch das Evangelium als einziger objektiver Wahrheit verstanden hat<sup>37</sup>. Durch das Wort Gottes blieb das Gewissen jedoch „gefangen“, also fest gebunden an die Bibel als seine einzige Autorität. In diesem Sinne beriefen sich die protestierenden Reichsstände 1529 in Speyer auf das Gewissen; keineswegs verstanden sie in Über-

<sup>34</sup> Siehe **Lecler** 1965, S. 241.

<sup>35</sup> So hat man das reformatorische Glaubensverständnis im Anschluss an Karl Holl sogar „Gewissensreligion“ genannt. Dies ist freilich eine theologische Überschätzung des Gewissens. Im Gegensatz kam es zum Teil zu einer Unterschätzung des Gewissens in der evangelischen Theologie, was auch zum Gehorsam gegen die Autorität des Wortes Gottes führte. Siehe **Honecker** 1981, S. 279f.

<sup>36</sup> **Fr. Krüger**, Art. Gewissen III, in: Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Bd. XIII, hg. von G. Müllers, Berlin 1984, S. 222ff.

<sup>37</sup> M. Honecker weist auf die Tatsache hin, dass: „Reformatorische Sicht kennt kein unabhängiges Gewissen, kein Gewissen, das nicht stets von Mächten und Machthabern beherrscht ist. /.../ Reformatorische Theologie kennt kein „autonomes“ Gewissen, es lässt sich entweder von Gott oder vom Teufel beherrschen, es lässt sich entweder vom Evangelium bestimmen oder vom Gesetz gefangen nehmen, es lebt entweder im Vertrauen des Glaubens oder unter der Angst vor dem Tode und in Bedrängnis durch Schuld und Anfechtung. So sagt es Luther: „Das gute oder böse Gewissen hat entweder Vertrauen zu Gott oder nicht, aber das Gewissen ist kein neutrales Mittleres, das weder einen Bezug zu Gott noch zum Teufel hat“. Es gibt kein „freies“ Gewissen, sondern nur das „befreite“, das getröstete oder das verzagte Gewissen.“ Nach Honecker kann man theologisch nicht vom Gewissen reden, ohne zugleich vom Evangelium zu sprechen. Er zitiert dazu Luther: „Es gibt eine Freiheit vom Gesetz, den Sünden, dem Tod, von der Gewalt des Teufels, vom Zorn Gottes, vom jüngsten Gericht. Wo? im Gewissen, dass ich nämlich darum gerecht bin, weil Christus der Befreier ist und in den Stand der Freiheit versetzt, nicht auf politische, sondern auf theologische Weise, und das heißt: lediglich im Gewissen.“ Diese Auffassung vom Gewissen setzt freilich voraus die Unterscheidung von Gesetz und Evangelium. Zitiert nach **Honecker** 1981, S. 282.

einstimmung mit Luther unter dessen Forderung nach Gewissensfreiheit das Recht ihrer Untertanen als Individuen auf ein persönliches Gewissen oder ein zumindest eigenverantwortliches religiöses Leben jedweden Glaubens. Grundlage der Gewissensfreiheit bildet für Luther und für die evangelisch-lutherischen Reichsstände nur das Evangelium im Verständnis des Reformators, jede Berufung auf ein anderes wies Luther als „*erdichtetes Gewissen*“ ab und tritt damit grundsätzlich gegen die Auffassung von Katholiken und Anhängern reformatorischen Bewegungen, die sich von ihm emanzipiert hatten, sich auf ihr Gewissen zu berufen.<sup>38</sup> Luther verlangte also nicht die Anerkennung seiner subjektiven Gewissensentscheidung als solcher, sondern die Anerkennung seiner exegetisch und vernünftig begründeten Entscheidung, an die er sich im Gewissen gebunden fühlt, solange er nicht eines Besseren belehrt wird.

Die Reformation ist im Ansatz eine sowohl kirchenzerstörende als auch kirchenbegründende und in der Folge eine neue Linie der Weltgeschichte mitbegründende Theologiereform<sup>39</sup>. Die neue Bibeltheologie Luthers führte sogleich zur Entscheidung einer Mehrzahl gleichgerichteter, doch nicht identischer reformatorischer Theologien, so dass man von einem neuen reformatorischen Typus der Theologie reden kann, der in sich wiederum Variationen und Gegensätze auch kirchenbildender Art enthält. Die Theologien des Schweizer Zwingli und des Franzosen Calvin begründen eine eigene Form protestantischer Kirchenbildung. Sie haben mit Theologie Luthers und vieler anderen Reformatoren unter anderem gemeinsam, dass sie die mittelalterliche Wirklichkeit einer Gesamtchristenheit der getauften und der sich zum Christentum bekennenden Herrschaftsgewalt akzeptieren und nur von innen neu gestalten wollen. Daneben stehen, ebenfalls biblisch begründete *freiwillige* Gemeinschaftsbildungen, die sich nur an den einzelnen wenden und die christliche Gesamtgesellschaft, ja die christliche Obrigkeit als eine echte Möglichkeit zum Teil ablehnen<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Siehe **Wohlfeil** 1980, S. 19. Der Religionssoziologe Ernst Troeltsch stellt fest, dass in der durch das Bibelwort und auf dem Bibelwort beruhenden Glaubensgesinnung liegt für den Protestantismus „der Kern der Religion, wie er für den Katholizismus in Priestertum und Sakrament, Gehorsam und Mystik, liegt. Es ist die Glaubens- und Überzeugungsreligion an Stelle der hierarchisch-sakramentalen Religion.“ Zitiert nach **K. von Greyerz**, Religion und Kultur. Europa 1500–1800, Göttingen 2000. S. 46.

<sup>39</sup> Vgl. **K.-V. Selge**, Einführung in das Studium der Kirchengeschichte, Darmstadt 1982, S. 118f.

<sup>40</sup> Als eigenen reformatorischen Typus, der an der Wurzel des Umbruchs zur Neuzeit 150 Jahre später stehe, hat einst Ernst Troeltsch in seinem bedeutenden Buch *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* (Tübingen 1912) diese von ihm vor allem als „Täufer“ angesehenen Gruppen ins Licht gestellt. Nach Troeltsch ist eine etablierte Kirche eine „Anstalt“, in dem Sinne, dass man in sie hineingeboren wird. Sie ist ein objektiver Organismus, der letztlich unabhängig von der Qualität und Leistung ihrer anstaltlichen Träger existiert. Demgegenüber ist nun aber die Sekte „die Gemeinschaft der Freiwilligkeit und

Nach Hans-Jürgen Goertz waren die polygenetisch entstandenen täuferischen Bewegungen, die ihr gemeinsames Merkmal in der Praxis der Glaubens- und Bekenntnistaufe und in der Bemühung um Wiederherstellung des „wahren Christentums“ hatten, „weder katholisch noch protestantisch“, sondern eine deutliche Alternative zu beiden großen Kirchen<sup>41</sup>. Eine erneuerte Christenheit konnten sie sich nur als eine *radikale Alternative* zur bestehenden Kirche und Gesellschaft vorstellen. Die Verweigerung der Kindertaufe und die Durchführung der Glaubenstaufe, der Ruf in die Nachfolge Jesu Christi, das Modell der separatistischen Gemeinschaft: all das sind kirchen- und gesellschaftskritische Ausdrucksformen eines *alternativen Christentums*<sup>42</sup>. Mit ihren Alternativen brachten die Täufer eine Unruhe in die geistlich-weltlichen Mischformen des *corpus Christianum*<sup>43</sup>. Der Bruch mit der verfassten Kirche, die massive Kritik an der gesellschaftlichen Situation der Zeit und ihr Eintreten für eine „gesamtgesellschaftliche Erneuerung der Christenheit“ weist den Täufern ihren eigenen Ort in der Reformationsgeschichte zu<sup>44</sup>. Die Täufer reihten sich in die „*Radikale Reformation*“ ein, die eine Überwindung der gesellschaftlichen Grundordnung des 16. Jahrhunderts

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deshalb des bewussten Anschlusses. Alles hängt daher auch an persönlicher Leistung und Beteiligung [...] In die Sekte wird man nicht hineingeboren, sondern ihr tritt man auf Grund bewusster Bekehrung bei; die in der Tat ja auch später aufgekommene Kindertaufe bildet für sie fast stets einen Anstoß.“ Zitiert nach **Greyerz** 2000, S. 244.

<sup>41</sup> **H.-J. Goertz**, Die Täufer. Geschichte und Deutung, Berlin 1988, S. 14. Vgl. auch **J. Stayer, W. Packull, K. Deppermann**, From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: The Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins, in: Mennonite Quarterly Review 49, Goshen 1975.

<sup>42</sup> „In den sogenannten Sekten komme oft genug gerade erst wesentliche Triebe des Evangeliums zu ihrer Auswirkung, wie sie sich denn stets auch auf das Evangelium und das Urchristentum berufen und die Kirche als abgefallen bezeichnet; es sind stets Triebe, die in den offiziellen Kirchen unterdrückt oder unterentwickelt geblieben sind“, so Ernst Troeltsch im Blick auf die Situation der Frühen Neuzeit. Zitiert nach **Greyerz** 2000, S. 243.

<sup>43</sup> Die Gläubigentaufe wurde zum Signal für die Auflösung und Beendigung des allgemein anerkannten, durch ihre Praxis als Säuglingstaufe herbeigeführten Verstehens- und Lebenszusammenhanges von Kirche als alle Menschen umfassendem Leib Christi, als *corpus Christianum*.

<sup>44</sup> „... die bedeutendste Seitenbewegung der Reformation, die abseits der großen Konfessionen bis in die Gegenwart fortlebt...“, so **J. Wallmann**, Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands seit der Reformation, 5. Aufl., Tübingen 2000, S. 51. Nach Kaspar von Greyerz werden mit diesem Begriff bezeichnet „diejenigen religiösen Bewegungen im Protestantismus des 16. Jahrhunderts, die sich von den etablierten lutheranischen und reformierten Kirchen separierten. /.../ Mit dem Begriff „Radikale Reformation“ wird nach heutigem Verständnis zum Ausdruck gebracht, das die Täufer, Spiritualisten und Antitrinitarier des 16. Jahrhunderts den ursprünglichen, radikalen Impuls der etablierten Reformation aufrechtzuerhalten und weiterzutragen versuchten, während die etablierte Reformation Luthers und Zwinglis im Zuge ihrer Institutionalisierung ihre anfängliche Radikalität weit gehend einbüßte und verlor.“ **Greyerz** 2000, S. 245.247.

anstrebte und in den Unruhen „des gemeinen Mannes“ von 1525 ihren prägnantesten Ausdruck fand<sup>45</sup>.

Demzufolge waren die Täufer Reformer, die ihre Radikalität aus dem antiklerikalen Milieu der frühen Reformationsjahre bezogen und von ihrer Vision einer besseren Kirche und Gesellschaft nicht lassen wollten. Sie wollten die Welt und die Obrigkeit nicht dämonisieren. Aber wer nach dem Gesetz der Welt lebte, konnte ihrer Meinung nach das Gesetz Christi nicht erfüllen. Dieser die reformatorische Zweireichelehre ablehnende Dualismus von Welt und Gemeinde findet sich sowohl bei den von Zürich ausgehenden oberdeutschen Täufnern wie bei den anderen großen, in der Folgezeit sich bildenden Täufergruppen, den Hutterischen Brüdern und den Mennoniten<sup>46</sup>. Man vertraut darauf, dass Gott Leute bestellt, die der Welt leiten und für Ruhe und Sicherheit der großen Menge sorgen. Sich selbst weiß man berufen, Gottes Wort ohne Abstriche zu befolgen, die unverfälschte Taufe zu vollziehen und das Abendmahl als Gemeinschaftsmahl in brüderlicher Liebe zu feiern, sich von den Bösen durch den Bann zu trennen und ein durch selbstgewählte Laienprediger geordnetes Gemeindeleben zu führen. Die auf der Kindertaufe gegründete Volkskirche ist für die Täufer ein fauler, dem Evangelium widersprechender und mit dem Verlust der Wahrheit erkaufter Kompromiss mit der Welt. „*Es ist viel besser*“, so Konrad Grebel, einer der Begründern des Täuferturns in Zürich, „*wenn wenige durch das Wort Gottes recht unterrichtet werden, recht glauben und in rechten Tugenden und Bräuchen wandeln, als wenn viele durch verfälschte Lehren einen falschen und trügerischen Glauben haben.*“<sup>47</sup>

Der schon oben genannte Zweite Speyerer Reichstag von 1529 ist in die Geschichte gegangen als „Geburtsstunde des Protestantismus“ und ein Meilenstein auf dem Wege zu neuzeitlicher Gewissensfreiheit. Er ist aber auch eine Wegmarke in der Geschichte der Intoleranz gegenüber Andersgläubigen und Nonkonformisten, sofern diese ohne politischen Einfluss waren. Mit dem Speyerer Reichstag wurde also die Sterbestunde des Täuferturns eingeläutet.<sup>48</sup> Das Wiedertäufermandat wurde einmütig sowohl von Katholischen und als auch von Evangelischen zum Reichsgesetz erhoben und dem Reichsabschied

<sup>45</sup> Luther erschienen die Täufer in steigender Masse nicht nur als *Ketzer*, sondern wie Müntzers Wirkung im Bauernkrieg erwiesen hatte, als *Auführer*, obwohl sich die täuferische Bewegung als Ganzes von der Müntzerischen Utopie wegbewegt hatte. Luther warnte immer davor, die Welt mit dem Evangelium regieren zu wollen. Ein gewaltsamer Aufstand musste Luther schädlich erscheinen auch wegen der Diskreditierung der Reformation, die Luther für die weitaus wichtigste Sache auf dieser Welt hielt.

<sup>46</sup> Siehe **Wallmann** 2000, S. 52; vgl. **Greyerz** 2000, S. 257–259.

<sup>47</sup> Zitiert nach **Wallmann** 2000, S. 52.

<sup>48</sup> Siehe **Goertz** 1988, S. 121.

einverleibt<sup>49</sup>. Begründet werden Straftat und Strafmaß mit dem Hinweis auf den *Codex Justinianus* aus dem 6. Jahrhundert, in dem die Ketzerei der Manichäer und Donatisten, auch die dort geübte Praxis der Wiedertaufe, unter die Todesstrafe gestellt worden war. Denn im *imperium sacrum* waren die Rechte der Staatsbürger abhängig von der Zulassung zu den Sakramenten.<sup>50</sup> Bei der Modernisierung des Rechts auf der Grundlage des römischen Rechts im 16. Jahrhundert hat dieser Tatbestand ein trauriges und blutiges Nachspiel erfahren. Das Delikt ist eine kultische Handlung, und Delikt ist zugleich die Wirkung, die davon ausgeht: Unfriede und Uneinigkeit im Reich. Der Kaiser erlässt das Mandat, um „*fried und einigkeit im heiligen reich zu erhalten*.“<sup>51</sup> Diese Bestimmungen sollen die Rechtspraxis auf Reichsebene vereinheitlichen und vereinfachen. Erneuert und erweitert wurde dieses Mandat noch auf den Reichstagen von 1544 und 1551.

Das Speyerer Mandat hat eine Vorgeschichte. Das erste Mandat gegen die Täufer wurde am 7. März 1526 in Zürich erlassen<sup>52</sup>. Die eidgenössische Schweiz war übrigens ein Ursprungsland des Täufertums, und Zürcher Täuferbewegung entstand in einem Bibelkreis um den dortigen Reformator

<sup>49</sup> „(1) Wer wiedertauf oder sich der Wiedertaufe unterzogen hat, ob Mann oder Frau, ist mit dem Tode zu bestrafen, ohne dass vorher noch ein geistliches Inquisitionsgericht tätig zu werden braucht. (2) Wer sein Bekenntnis zu den Wiedertäufern widerruft und bereit ist, für seinen Irrtum zu sühnen, soll begnadigt werden. Er darf jedoch nicht Gelegenheit erhalten, sich durch Ausweisung in ein anderes Territorium einer ständigen Aufsicht zu entziehen und eventuell rückfällig zu werden. Die hartnäckig auf der Lehre der Täufer Beharrenden werden mit dem Tode bestraft. (3) Wer die Wiedertäufer anführt oder für deren Verbreitung sorgt (Fürprediger, Hauptsacher, Landlaufer und die aufrührerischen Aufwiegler) soll „keineswegs“, also auch bei Widerruf nicht, begnadigt werden. (4) Wer nach einem ersten Widerruf rückfällig geworden ist und abermals widerruft, soll nicht mehr begnadigt werden. Ihn trifft die volle Strafe. (5) Wer die Taufe für seine neugeborenen Kinder verweigert, fällt ebenfalls unter die Strafe, die auf Wiedertaufe steht. (6) Wer von den Täufers in ein anderes Territorium entwichen ist, soll dort verfolgt und der Bestrafung zugeführt werden. (7) Wer von den Amtspersonen nicht bereit ist, nach diesen Anordnungen streng zu verfahren, muss mit kaiserlichen Ungnade und schwerer Strafe rechnen.“ Zitiert nach **Goertz** 1988, S. 121f.

<sup>50</sup> Siehe **Honecker** 1995, S. 699. Vgl. auch **R. Bainton**, David Joris, in: Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, Ergänzungsband VI, Leipzig 1937, S. 11: „Zwingli bestand auf der beschimpfenden Benennung („Anabaptistici“, d.h. Wiedertäufer), um die Radikalen unter die Reichsgesetze zu bringen, welche den alten Donatisten Todesstrafe auferlegte (sic!), weil sie Konvertiten von der katholischen Kirche wiedertaufen.“

<sup>51</sup> Zitiert nach **Goertz** 1988, S. 122.

<sup>52</sup> Siehe **Goertz** 1988, S. 123. „... Daraufhin ergeht jetzt unserer genannten Herren [d.h. Bürgermeister, Rat und Großer Rat] ernstliches Gebot, Geheiß und Warnung, daß, ob in ihrer Stadt, auf dem Land oder in den [ihnen unterstellten] Gebieten, fernerhin niemand, es seien Männer, Frauen oder Mädchen den andern wiedertaufen darf. Denn wer so weiterhin den andern taufen würde, den würden unsere Herren ergreifen und nach ihrem jetzt beschlossenen Urteil ohne alle Gnade ertränken lassen. Demgemäß möge sich jeder vorsehen und darauf achten, daß sich niemand zu seinem eigenen Tode die Ursache liefere.“ Zitiert nach **Goertz** 1988, S. 194.

Huldrych Zwingli. Da sie die Kindertaufe ablehnten und seit Januar 1525 die (Wieder)taufe an Erwachsenen vollzogen, blieben die Verfolgungen nicht aus. Zwingli selbst musste seine früheren Freunde bekämpfen. Aus dem (negativen) Widerstand gegen die Kindertaufe wurde die (positive) Verkündigung der Gläubigentaufe. Der biblische Radikalismus entwickelte sich aus einer Opposition gegen das, was nicht in der Bibel belegt ist, zu der positiven Forderung, zu tun, was die Bibel vorschreibt; so musste er bedeutende Folgen für das Leben der Kirche haben. Die Obrigkeiten duldeten die Trennung von der kirchlich-bürgerlichen Gemeinde, welche immer noch eine Einheit bildete, nicht. Am 16. März 1525 beschloss der Rat, dass alle der Stadt verwiesen werden sollten, die sich von nun an wiedertaufen lassen würden. Die Täufer wiederum verbitterten mehr und mehr gegenüber den Reformatoren, die nicht den ganzen Weg des Neuen Testaments hatten gehen wollen und nun auch noch diejenigen verfolgten, die den Versuch wagten.<sup>53</sup>

Das Mandat bildete auch die rechtliche Grundlage für das Todesurteil: im Januar 1527 wurde Felix Manz als erster Täufer vom Zürcher Rat zum Tode verurteilt und in der Limmat ertränkt. Der Zürcher Rat zog es vor, das rigorose Urteil mit dem Verstoß gegen bürgerliche Gesetze begründen zu lassen<sup>54</sup>. Zwinglis Kommentar zu diesem Mandat lautete so: „... *wer sich von jetzt an noch taufen lasse, der werde ganz untergetaucht; das Urteil ist schon gefällt*“<sup>55</sup>. Der Bruch zwischen der Partei der Reformatoren und der radikalen „neutestamentlichen“ Partei war damit endgültig vollgezogen. Man darf nicht übersehen, dass es sich bei diesem Bruch nicht um den Akt der Taufe, sondern um die bittere Rivalität zwischen zwei sich gegenseitig ausschließenden Auffassungen von der Kirche handelte. Zwingli hatte sich für die *Staatskirche* entschieden, die Täufer dagegen aber für das *freikirchliche*<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Siehe **F. H. Littell**, Das Selbstverständnis der Täufer, Kassel 1966, S. 32; vgl. auch **Greyerz** 2000, S. 247–250.

<sup>54</sup> Aus dem Mandat des Zürcher Rates gegen die Täufer: „... einige von ihnen aber ganz uneinsichtig und entgegen ihren Eiden, Gelübden und Versprechungen bei ihrer Meinung geblieben sind und sich gegenüber dem obrigkeitlichen Regiment mit nachteiligen und zerstörerischen Folgen für den gemeinen Nutzen und das christliche Wesen als ungehorsam erweisen haben...“, zitiert nach **Goertz** 1988, S. 194.

<sup>55</sup> Zitiert *ebenda*, S. 123.

<sup>56</sup> Das klassische, protestantische Freikirchentum hat also seine Wurzeln in der deutschsprachigen Schweiz. Fritz Blanke stellt fest: „*Das Dorf Zollikon am Zürichensee war die Stätte, wo innerhalb der protestantischen Geschichte zuerst versucht wurde, eine staatsfreie und auf freiwilliger Mitgliedschaft beruhende christliche Gemeinschaft zu verwirklichen.*“ **F. Blanke**, Brüder in Christo, Zürich 1975, S. 82. Freikirchen sind demzufolge „frei“ in zweierlei Hinsicht: 1) staatsfrei, d.h. die sichtbare Gemeinde sollte gänzlich von Gott abhängig und deshalb unabhängig von staatlicher Macht bzw. Establishment sein; 2) freiwillig, d.h. die Gemeinde setzt sich zusammen aus freiwilligen Mitgliedern (*voluntary membership*). Eigentlich kann man noch ein dritter Aspekt der Freiheit dazugefügt werden: Freikirchen finanzieren sich aus den freiwilligen Beiträgen ihrer Mitglieder.

Gemeindewesen. Das war verbunden mit ihrer *grundsätzlichen* Haltung zur weltlichen Obrigkeit und deren Macht über die Glaubensentscheidungen des Einzelnen. F. H. Littell stellt fest, dass die Taufe in diesem Kampf deswegen wichtig wurde, weil sie den Obrigkeiten einen Vorwand bot, die Radikalen mit Gewalt zu unterdrücken<sup>57</sup>.

Mit Mantz Martyrium begann die erschütternde Leidensgeschichte der Täufer<sup>58</sup>, an denen sich das Wort von der fortzeugenden Kraft des Märtyrerblut bewahrheiten soll<sup>59</sup>: nach wenigen Jahren gab es in und außerhalb der Schweiz vielerorts Täufergemeinden, die Bewegung war nicht aufzuhalten und breitete sich überall aus. Im habsburgischen Österreich wurde gegen alle Reformbewegungen, vor allem aber gegen die „*new erschrockelich unerhört leren*“ der Täufer, auf der Rechtsgrundlage des Wormser Edikts vorgegangen. Das erste österreichische Mandat, das sich speziell gegen die Täufer wendet, wurde im Oktober 1527 erlassen. In diesem wurde gesagt, dass von diesen Ketzern nicht nur die christliche Einheit in Mitleidenschaft gezogen werde, sondern dass von ihnen auch „*widerwillen, auffruer, abfallung der obrigkeit und besunderung des gemain mans*“ ausgehen könne<sup>60</sup>. So tritt allmählich neben den Ketzervorwurf auch der Vorwurf des *Aufbruchs*. Am 4. Januar 1528 wird schließlich ein kaiserliches Mandat in Speyer erlassen. Es wird gesagt, dass nach geistlichem und weltlichem Recht die Todesstrafe auf Wiedertaufe stehe und dass die Wiedertäufer den Umsturz und die Abschaffung der Obrigkeiten im Schilde führten. Dieses Mandat ist das erste auf Reichsebene und der unmittelbare Vorläufer des Wiedertäufermandats von 1529.<sup>61</sup>

Die Beratungen der beiden gegenüber feindlich gesinnten Religionsparteien, die auf dem Reichstag zu dem Wiedertäufermandat geführt haben, scheinen unproblematisch zu sein. Hans-Jürgen Goertz hat versucht, das zu

<sup>57</sup> Littell 1966, S. 33.

<sup>58</sup> Über die Tödersarten der Täufer in Geschichtsbuch der Hutterer: „Einige hat man gereckt und gestreckt, so dass die Sonne durch sie hindurchscheinen konnte, einige sind an der Folter zerrissen und gestorben, einige sind zu Asche und Pulver als Ketzer verbrannt worden, einige an Säulen gebracht worden, einige mit glühenden Zangen gerissen, einige in Häusern eingesperrt und alles miteinander verbrannt worden, einige an Bäumen aufgehängt, einige mit dem Schwert hingerichtet, erwürgt und zerhauen worden. Vielen sind Knebel in den Mund gesteckt und die Zunge gebunden worden, damit sie nicht reden und sich verantworten konnten. So sind sie zu Tode geführt worden... Wie die Lämmer führte man sie oft haufenweise zur Schlachtbank und ermordete sie nach des Teufels Art und Natur...“ Zitiert nach Goertz 1988, S. 197.

<sup>59</sup> Der Graf von Alzey in der Pfalz soll, nachdem er ca. 350 Täufer hinrichten ließ, ausgerufen haben: „Was soll ich bloß tun? Je mehr ich töte, desto grösser wird ihre Zahl.“ Zitiert nach G. Wehr, Reformation der Täufer, in: Die Kommenden, 25.11.1983.

<sup>60</sup> Zitiert nach Goertz 1988, 124.

<sup>61</sup> *Ebenda*, S. 125f.

erklären<sup>62</sup>. Mit ihrer Zustimmung zu einem strengen Wiedertäufermandat konnten die evangelischen Stände erstens den *Ketzervorwurf* von sich auf die Täufer ablenken und zeigen, wie widersinnig es sei, die Erneuerung des Wormser Edikt zu betreiben, um Ruhe und Frieden im Reich zu gewährleisten. Dieses Ziel ist nicht mit dem Wormser Edikt, sondern mit einem Wiedertäufermandat zu erreichen. *Zweitens* konnten sie unterscheiden, wie abwegig es sei, den Konsens des Ersten Speyerer Reichstags von 1526 aufs Spiel zu setzen, der gefunden worden war, um Aufruhr und Empörung des gemeinen Mannes zu beseitigen. Nicht die Anhänger des neuen Glaubens, d.h. die Evangelischen, sondern die „auführerischen“ Wiedertäufer seien die wahren Feinde des Reichs und der Christenheit, gegen die mit aller Entschiedenheit *gemeinsam* vorgegangen werden müsse. Und *drittens* ließen sich auch die evangelischen Stände gern von einem Reichstag indirekt bestätigen, dass die geistlich-kirchliche Jurisdiktion eine Angelegenheit der weltlichen Gewalt ist. Wenn es die Aufgabe der (evangelischen) Obrigkeit sei, auf Ketzerei zu befinden, dann, so müsste man schließen, konnte *diese* Obrigkeit doch selber nur *orthodox* sein.

Auf das Reichsgesetz gegen die Täufer wurde in den einzelnen Territorien und Städten unterschiedlich reagiert, obwohl es von allen Ständen einmütig beschlossen worden war<sup>63</sup>. Es ist bemerkenswert, dass dieses Mandat in aller Härte eben in Kursachsen, dem Ursprungsland der Reformation, durchgeführt wurde. Noch 1528 ließ Luther nur das Exil, die Ausweisung aus dem Territorium zu; dennoch machte bei den deutschen Führern der Reformation bald der Gedanke der Todesstrafe seinen Weg. 1530 schreibt Philipp Melancthon, dessen Versöhnungsbereitschaft sonst allgemein bekannt war, in einem Brief an Schweizer Reformator Oswald Myconius: „*Ich finde, dass jeder, der ausgesprochen lästerliche, wenn auch nicht auführerische, Artikel verteidigt, durch die zivile Autorität zum Tode geführt werden sollte.*“<sup>64</sup> Er war einer der entschiedensten Kämpfer für die Todesstrafe gegen die Täufer. Der sächsische Kurfürst konnte sich auf ein von ihm angefordertes Gutachten (1531) berufen, das Melancthon angefertigt und dem Luther zugestimmt hatte. Melancthon bemerkte, dass gewisse Häretiker auführerische Lehren gegen die Fürsten verbreiten; deshalb kann man sie wie Rebellen behandeln und mit

<sup>62</sup> *Ebenda*, S. 127f.

<sup>63</sup> Zum Beispiel hat der einflussreiche Landgraf Philipp von Hessen in seinem Territorium eine relativ tolerante Haltung gegenüber Andersgläubigen gezeigt; es ist nicht bekannt, dass dort jemals ein Täufer zum Tode verurteilt worden wäre. Nach Claus-Peter Clasen Errechnung wurden außerhalb der Schweiz im Reich mit Bestimmtheit 715 und mit Wahrscheinlichkeit 130 weitere Täufer hingerichtet, mehr als 400 in den Habsburgischen Erbländen. Nicht berücksichtigt wurde dabei allerdings der niederdeutsche Raum. – C.-P. Clasen, *Anabaptism. A Social History, 1525–1618*. Switzerland, Austria, Moravia, South and Central Germany, London 1972, p. 370.

<sup>64</sup> Zitiert nach Lecler 1965, S. 247f.

dem Tode bestrafen. Selbst die Täufer, denen keine aufrührerische Lehren nachgewiesen werden konnten, seien eindeutig mit dem Tode zu bestrafen, weil „*sie das öffentlich ministerium verbi (d.h. Predigtamt) verwerfen, und lehren, man soll sonst heilig werden ohne Predigt und Kirchenamt. Das zerstört die Kirche und bedeutet Aufruhr gegen die kirchliche Ordnung. Dieser Versuch muss ebenso wie andere Aufstände verhindert und unterdrückt werden...*“<sup>65</sup> Die Verachtung des „*öffentlich ministerium verbi*“ sei Gotteslästerung und müsse mit dem Tode bestraft werden. Melancthon verschiebt also die Begründung von „Ketzerie“ auf „Gotteslästerung“; und Gotteslästerung und Aufruhr rücken wiederum eng zusammen. Luther hat dieser Schrift seine Billigung gegeben: *Placet mihi Martino Luthero*, und hat das Gutachten seines Kollegen so kommentiert: „*Wiewohl es crudele anzusehen, dass man sie mit dem Schwert straft, so ist doch crudelius, dass sie ministerium verbi damniren und keine gewisse Lehre treiben, rechte Lehr unterdrucken, und dazu regna mundi zerstören wollen*“<sup>66</sup>. Vor Jahren noch hatte Luther es Thomas Müntzer nicht durchgehen lassen, die Ausrottung der Gottlosen mit dem mosaischen Gesetz zu rechtfertigen; jetzt stört es ihn nicht, wenn Melancthon die Hinrichtung der öffentlichen Gotteslästerer mit eben demselben Gesetz begründete. Schon im Jahre 1530 hat Luther in seiner Auslegung des Psalms 82 im Zusammenhang mit schweren Formen der Häresie an die furchtbaren Strafmaßnahmen des mosaischen Gesetzes gegen die öffentlicher Lästerer erinnert. Diese Strafen können im Normalfall gegen die aufrührerischen Häretiker bzw. gegen Täufer (Luther: „*Sie gelten als „Aufrührer“ und „Mörder*“), angewandt werden. „*... will er predigen, so beweise er den Beruf oder Befehl... Will er nicht, so befehle die Obrigkeit solchen Buben dem rechten Meister, der Meister Hans heißt (= dem Henker). Das ist als denn sein Recht als der gewißlich einen Aufruhr oder noch Ärgeres im Sinn hat, unter dem Volk anzurichten.*“<sup>67</sup> Derselbe Luther, der zehn Jahre zuvor erklärt hatte: *Haereticos comburi est contra voluntatem Spiritus*, fordert nun gegen die Täufer die Todesstrafe. Im Jahre 1536 verfassten die Wittenberger Theologen<sup>68</sup> eine Denkschrift, die folgenden Titel trägt: *Ob Christliche Fürsten schuldig sind, der Widerteuffer unchristlichen Sect mit leiblicher straffe, und mit dem schwert zu wehren*. Die Antwort ist zustimmend: „*Jedermann ist schuldig nach seinem stand und ampt, Gottes lesterung zu verhüten und zu*

<sup>65</sup> *Ebenda*, S. 248f.

<sup>66</sup> WA Briefe, VI, S. 223; zitiert nach Goertz 1988, S. 129.

<sup>67</sup> **D. Martin Luthers Werke**. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (= WA), 31 (I), Weimar 1913, S. 208f.

<sup>68</sup> Diese Denkschrift ist von Luther, Bugenhagen, Melancthon und Creutziger unterzeichnet und gibt Antwort auf die Frage, die Philipp von Hessen an diese Theologen richtete: Was soll man mit den Wiedertäufern tun, die verhaftet worden sind?

wehren... Da zu dienet auch der text Levit 24: Wer Gott lestert, der sol getödet werden<sup>69</sup>.”

Mit der (gewissen) Duldung anderer Lehre und der Freigabe des Gewissens überwand Luther das Mittelalter; in der politischen Sorge vor öffentlicher Toleranz blieb er mittelalterlich. Die politische Gefahr der Täufer erhellt für Luther aus der Ablehnung der obrigkeitlichen Ämter, des Eides, des Kriegsdienstes, z.T. des Eigentums, aber auch des geordneten Predigtamtes (*ministerium verbi*), in dem er eine Hilfe für den inneren Frieden sah. In seinem polemischen Schreiben *Von den Schleichern und Winkelpredigern* (1532) sagt Luther über den Missachtern des öffentlichen Predigtamtes mit voller Entschiedenheit: „Darum heißt also: Entweder beweiset die Berufung und den Befehl zu predigen, oder kurzum still geschwiegen und das Predigen verboten. Denn es heißt ein Amt, ja ein Predigtamt. Ein Amt aber kann niemand haben, außer und ohne Befehl und Berufung. /.../ Und in Summa: die Schleicher und Winkelprediger sind des Teufels Apostel, über die Paulus allenthalben klagt, wie sie durch die Häuser laufen und dieselben verkehren, lehren immer, und wissen doch nicht, was sie sagen oder was sie setzen... Darum sei das geistliche Amt gewarnt und vermahnt, sei gewarnt und vermahnt das weltliche Amt, sei gewarnt alles, was Christ und untertan sein soll, daß man sich vor ihnen hüte und sie nicht höre<sup>70</sup>.”

Wenn die Täufer den offiziellen Amtsträgern misstrauten und ihre Predigten und Gottesdienste mieden, musste das ja noch nicht heißen, dass sie grundsätzlich das *ministerium verbi* verwarfen. Sie hatten nur eine andere Vorstellung von Funktion und Wesen dieses Dienstes. Eine obrigkeitlich angeordnete und überwachte Visitation der Amtsträger war in den Augen der Täufer alles andere als biblisch zu rechtfertigen. So nützlich es den Reformatoren erscheinen mochte, die Begründung der täuferischen Straftat von Ketzerei auf Gotteslästerung umzustellen, so problematisch war dieser Schritt. Eindeutiger konnte die reformatorische Entdeckung der Zweireichenlehre, die ein hohes biblisches Recht für sich hatte, nicht desavouiert werden. Die Entscheidung für das Speyerer Mandat, die von den evangelischen Ständen gefällt und den kursächsischen Reformatoren nachvollzogen wurde, stand unter einem paradoxen Zeichen. Die evangelischen Stände haben sich auf den Reichstag gegen die altgläubige Zumutung, das Wormser Edikt zu erneuern, gerade im Namen der Trennung von Geistlichem und Weltlichem gewandt, die sie den Täufnern selber zum Verhängnis werden ließen, da sie in ihren eigenen Territorien den bereits eingeschlagenen Weg zu einem landesherrlichen Kirchenregiment ungestört fortsetzen wollten.<sup>71</sup> Die Wittenberger Theologie

<sup>69</sup> Zitiert nach **Lecler** 1965, S. 250.

<sup>70</sup> WA 30, 3, 518ff; zitiert nach: **Martin Luther**: Gesammelte Werke, Bd. 6, hg. von K. Aland (= Digitale Bibliothek, Bd. 63), Berlin 2002, S.3799f. 3811f.

<sup>71</sup> Siehe **Goertz** 1988, S. 134f.

büßte nach und nach ihre innere Unabhängigkeit ein und wurde zur Rechtfertigungsideologie ihres weltlichen Schutzherrn.

Mit der Reformation stehen erstmals mehrere Konfessionen mit dem Anspruch auf Alleinvertretung der Wahrheit nebeneinander. Die Reformatoren halten am Absolutheitsanspruch evangeliumsgemäßer christlicher Verkündigung ebenso wie an der Einheit von der Kirche und Welt bzw. Staat fest. Die *Unum-Corpus-Christianum*-Idee wurde durch die Reformation grundsätzlich nicht in Frage gestellt, weil die Reformation diese Idee auf territorialer Basis fortführte. Hinfort ist nicht mehr das ganze Reich, sondern die einzelnen, evangelisch gewordenen Territorien sind kleine einheitliche christliche Körper. Ein Staatswesen ist unregierbar, so lautete die Rechtfertigung dieser Lösung bei Luther und anderen Reformatoren, wenn es in sich durch verschiedene Religionsparteien zerstritten sei. *Ein Landesherr, ein Territorium, eine Religion für die Landeskinder*: das ist das typisch europäische Modell des Verhältnisses von Staat und Religion, das die Täufer mit aller Entschiedenheit abgelehnt haben.

Über Luther und die protestierenden Reichsstände von 1529 führt kein unmittelbarer Weg zur neuzeitlichen Freiheit des Gewissens als unantastbarem individuellen Recht des Gewissens. Johannes Kühn hat eine interessante Analyse der Reichstagsakten von 1529 vorgenommen: *„Wer die Protestierenden zu Verfechtern der Gewissensfreiheit macht, der trifft ihren Sinn nicht... Wenn sie selbst sich auf ihr Gewissen berufen, so tun sie das nicht nur als Einzelpersonen, sie tun es als Obrigkeiten. Sie schließen dabei ohne weiteres ihre Untertanen mit ein. Sie setzen voraus, dass Menschen, die den evangelischen Glauben haben, in ihrem Gewissen nicht anders empfinden können als sie selbst. Die ihn aber nicht haben – und sie hatten doch alle noch solche Untertanen in ihrem Land – denen würden sie auch nur ein irrendes Gewissen zusprechen können, das keine Beachtung verdient. Gewissensfreiheit und Berufung auf das Gewissen sind nicht ein und dasselbe.“*<sup>72</sup>

Ein dunkles Kapitel für sich in den Beziehungen der Lutheraner und Täufer zur Zeit der Reformation sind die Verwerfungen der Täufer in den lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften des 16. Jahrhunderts<sup>73</sup>. In fünf Artikeln der *Confessio Augustana* (= CA) von 1530 werden die Täufer und ihre Lehren besonders erwähnt und verworfen<sup>74</sup>. In der Konkordienformel von 1580

<sup>72</sup> J. Kühn, Die Geschichte des Speyerer Reichstags 1529, Leipzig 1929, S. 257ff.

<sup>73</sup> Vgl. **Baptisten und Lutheraner im Gespräch**. Eine Botschaft an unsere Kirchen/Gemeinden. Bericht der Gemeinsamen Kommission des Baptistischen Weltbundes und des Lutherischen Weltbundes, Genf 1990, S. 39–43.

<sup>74</sup> Artikel 5: „Und es werden verdammt die Wiedertäufer und andere, die lehren, dass wir ohne das leibliche Wort des Evangeliums den Heiligen Geist durch eigene Bereitung, Gedanken und Werke erlangen“; Artikel 9: „Deshalb werden die Wiedertäufer verworfen, welche lehren, dass die Kindertaufe nicht recht ist.“; Artikel 12 (in lateinischer Verfassung): *„Damnant Anabaptistas, qui negat semel iustificatos posse amittere spiritum sanctum“* (Hier werden

(Epitome, Kapitel 12 „Von andern Rotten oder Sekten“, Abschnitt 3 „Irrige Artikel der Wiedertäufer“) werden u.a. die Weigerung der Täufer, Kinder zu taufen, kritisiert. In diesem Abschnitt werden auch die Verwerfungen von CA Art. 16 wiederholt<sup>75</sup>. Die Verwerfungen der CA und der Konkordienformel richteten sich gegen Lehren und Lehrer, die dem lutherischen Verständnis des Evangeliums entgegenstanden. In der Praxis hatten diese Verwerfungen jedoch schwere Auswirkungen, die weit über den Bereich der theologischen Auseinandersetzung hinausgingen und mit dazu beitrugen, eine Mentalität zu fördern, die ernsthafte gesellschaftliche und rechtliche Folgen für Täufer hatte, u.a. Beschlagnahme von Eigentum, Folterung, Vertreibung und Hinrichtung.<sup>76</sup>

Kontakte der verschiedenen Täuferbewegungen und –gruppen untereinander ergaben sich in erster Linie aus der systematisch durchgeführten und brutalen Verfolgung, die ihnen sowohl von evangelischen Ständen, die um ihre orthodoxe Reputation besorgt waren, als auch von den katholischen Ständen zuteil ward. Die Verfolgung wurde dann nach dem Augsburger Religionsfrieden von beiden gemeinsam – reichsrechtlich abgesichert! – betrieben. Man kann feststellen, dass auch in den Augsburger Verhandlungen von 1555 hatten beide Religionsparteien die Gewissensfreiheit nicht problematisiert, der Religionsfrieden gewährte nur das Recht der Gläubigen, unter Berufung auf das Gewissen aus dem Herrschaftsbereich einer andersgläubigen Obrigkeit abzuziehen (*ius emigrandi*). Das alles bedeutete einen gewaltigen Fortschritt gegenüber der totalen Intoleranz des Mittelalters, aber doch nur einen ersten Schritt in der Richtung auf wirkliche Toleranz, da neben dem Existenzrecht der beiden Konfessionen – Reformierte, Täufer u.a. Bekenntnisgruppen waren übrigens vom Religionsfrieden ausgeschlossen – das Prinzip des *cuius regio, eius religio* rechtlich begründet wurde<sup>77</sup>. Die Reformation brachte daher „nicht Glaubensfreiheit, sondern Glaubenszweiheit“<sup>78</sup>. Da *evangelische bzw. lutherische Religionspartei* zu ihrer Sicherheit existenziell auf den *Konfessionsstaat* angewiesen war, führte diese Lage zur Bildung

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verworfen die, welche lehren, dass diejenigen, die einstmal fromm geworden sind, nicht wieder fallen können.“; Artikel 16: „Hier werden verdammt die Wiedertäufer, die lehren, dass der oben angezeigten Dinge keines christlich sei („Christen mögen in Obrigkeit, Fürsten- und Richteramt ohne Sünde sein, nach kaiserlichen und anderen üblichen Rechten Urteil und Recht sprechen, Übeltäter mit dem Schwert strafen, rechte Kriege führen...“); Artikel 17: „Deshalb werden die Wiedertäufer verworfen, die lehren, dass die Teufel und verdamnten Menschen nicht ewige Pein und Qual haben werden.“ Zitiert nach: **Bekenntnisse der Kirche**. Bekenntnistexte aus zwanzig Jahrhunderten, hg. von h. Steubing, Wuppertal 1985, S. 41–45.

<sup>75</sup> Vgl. **Baptisten und Lutheraner im Gespräch** 1990, S. 40.

<sup>76</sup> *Ebenda*, S. 40f.

<sup>77</sup> Diese reichsrechtliche Entscheidung machte die Täufer zu „gehetzten Häretikern“, die von Ort zu Ort fliehen mussten, um der Verfolgung und Hinrichtung zu entgehen.

<sup>78</sup> **Mortanges** 1997, S. 566.

geschlossenen Konfessionsstaaten: protestantischen (lutherischen) und römisch-katholischen Staaten (Territorien). Die Täuferbewegungen waren durch ihr ekklesiologisches Verständnis des individuellen Bekenntnisses der Gemeindemitglieder nicht in der Lage zu geschlossenen Konfessionsstaaten und wurden deswegen von beiden großen Religionsparteien verfolgt. Charakteristisch für die damalige Zeit war nicht die Vertiefung des theologischen Bekenntnisses, sondern das Anwachsen zur *Religionspartei* als einer geistlich-weltlichen Macht. Das führte bald auch zu gravierenden zwischenstaatlichen und innerstaatlichen Problemen und gewaltigen Konfrontationen, u.a. auch zu den blutigen konfessionellen Kriegen.

Von bleibendem Wert ist aber die Tatsache, dass Luther eine Diskussion anregte, geführt von Kräften, die evangelische Freiheit anders begriffen und damit auch späterem individualistischen Verständnis von Gewissensfreiheit die Bahn eröffneten. Durch die Reformation aufgeworfen wurde zunächst das Problem der religiösen Toleranz, die Gewissens-, Glaubens- und Religionsfreiheit erst ermöglicht. Und erst das unaufhebbare, den bisherigen Zustand von Grund auf verändernde Nebeneinander von Kirchen schuf die Möglichkeit für eine künftige Entfaltung der Toleranz.

Welche Rolle haben die Täufer in dieser Entwicklung gespielt? Man kann sagen, dass die Täufer gewissermaßen zu den ersten Wortführer der neuzeitlichen Toleranz gehörten, und zwar nicht nur als die Verfolgten, sondern auch auf Grund ihrer Auffassung der Lehre Jesu und der Absonderung der Christenheit von der Welt<sup>79</sup>, die die Täufer dennoch bis weit ins 17. Jahrhundert hinein immer wieder sporadischen, von den Obrigkeiten initiierten Verfolgungen aussetzten. In ihrer internen Auseinandersetzung mit Thomas Müntzer schieden sie sich darum von dessen eschatologischer Intoleranz, die das Reich Gottes durch die Herrschaft der „Auserwählten“ über die „Gottlosen“ herbeizwingen wollte<sup>80</sup>. Der Schatten Müntzers überdeckte leider die echte Gestalt des Täufertums (mit Ausnahme von sog. „apokalyptisch-

<sup>79</sup> Die Führer der Taufgesinnten der deutschsprachigen Schweiz haben in einem Treffen in Schleithem bei Schaffhausen (1527) unter Führung des Michael Sattlers sog. Schleitheimer Täuferbekenntnis (*Brüderliche Vereinigung etlicher Kinder Gottes, sieben Artikel betreffend*) verfasst. Die Artikel „erörtern ihr jeweiliges Thema nicht eigentlich im Hinblick auf innertäuferische Schwierigkeiten, sondern in Auseinandersetzung mit altgläubigen bzw. reformatorischen Vorstellungen. Grundlegend ist die klar durchgeführte Scheidung zwischen Gemeinde und Welt.“ Siehe **Bekenntnisse der Kirche** 1985, S. 261. Das Schleitheimer Bekenntnis von 1527 ist klassisches Dokument täuferischer Gewaltlosigkeit, dessen humanistischer Grundzug deutliche Gemeinsamkeiten mit Huldrych Zwingli erkennen lässt.

<sup>80</sup> So Zürcher Täufer Konrad Grebel an Thomas Müntzer: „Rechte Christen sind Schafe mitten unter den Wölfen, Schafe zum Schlachten, müssen in Angst und Not, Trübsal, Verfolgung, Leiden und Sterben getauft werden, sich im Feuer bewähren und das Vaterland der ewigen Ruhe nicht durch Erwürgen leiblicher Feinde erlangen, sondern durch Tötung der geistlichen. Auch gebrauchen sie weder weltliches Schwert noch Krieg.“ Zitiert nach **Goertz** 1988, S. 190.

gewaltsamem“ Täufertum<sup>81</sup>), da er für den Blick der Reformatoren mit ihm verschmolz<sup>82</sup>.

Der wichtigste Beitrag der Täufer zur Toleranz lag darin, dass sie unermüdlich Duldung forderten und durch ihr Leiden dafür eintraten. „*Um ihrer Leiden willen kann daher gesagt werden, dass sie unmittelbar zur Durchsetzung der Religionsfreiheit beigetragen haben*“, so der bekannte Kirchenhistoriker Roland Bainton<sup>83</sup>. Die Täufer haben das Martyrium wohl ausgesehen und als ein notwendiges Kennzeichen der *wahren* Kirche und als einen Weg angenommen, auf dem sich die Vision einer erneuerten Christenheit am Maßstab des Urchristentums verwirklicht<sup>84</sup>. Sie sind mit dem Bekenntnis zu Jesus Christus, ja wegen dieses Bekenntnisses gestorben, so unbeholfen und theologisch fragwürdig sie es oft auch formuliert haben. Entscheidend für die Frage nach Martyrium ist nicht die *doctrina*, entscheidend ist das *Bekenntnis*, das in den Loyalitätskonflikten des Christen in dieser Welt eindeutig durchgehalten wird und Zeugnis dafür ablegt, dass das Leben, das Gott will, noch anders ist, als das Leben, das Menschen einander bereiten.<sup>85</sup>

Der große Täufer-Theologe, Theologieprofessor Balthasar Hubmaier<sup>86</sup>, verfasste z.B. 1524 die Schrift *Von Ketzern und ihren Verbrennern*, mit der

<sup>81</sup> So eine eigenständige Bewegung löste sich im Mitteldeutschland spiritualistisch gesinnte Thomas Müntzer (in Zusammenhang mit Zwickauer Propheten) mit seiner eschatologischen Busstaupe aus, die sich darin an dem Bußprediger und Täufer Johannes orientierte, dann aber durch das Tausendjährige Reich von Münsterer Täufer (1534–1535) desavouiert wurde.

<sup>82</sup> So wurde auch im Bericht der Gemeinsamen Baptistischen-Lutherischen Kommission von 1990 Folgendes festgestellt: „Die lutherischen Reformatoren machten selten einen Unterscheid zwischen den verschiedenen Strömungen des „linken Flügels“ der Reformation, sondern neigten dazu, selbst miteinander in Konflikt stehende Gruppen (z.B. gewalttätige Schwärmer und pazifistische biblische Täufer) pauschal mit der Bezeichnung Wiedertäufer zu versehen.“ **Baptisten und Lutheraner im Gespräch** 1990, S. 40.

<sup>83</sup> **R. H. Bainton**, Der täuferische Beitrag zur Geschichte, in: G. F. Hershberger (Hg.), *Das Täuferum. Erbe und Verpflichtung*, Stuttgart 1963, S. 304.

<sup>84</sup> Täufer Leonhard Schiemer schrieb über die wahre Kirche so (ca. 1527): „Kirche oder ecclesia ist ein Haufe versammelten Volkes, die auf Christus und nicht auf den Papst, Kaiser etc. gebaut ist. /.../ Aber all diesen rechten Zeichen der heiligen christlichen Kirche widerspricht man. Paulus spricht: Wer ein Andres Evangelium verkündigt als die Apostel, ist verdammt und verflucht. So findet man um uns herum ein solches Leben wie zur Zeit der Apostel. Wo man es aber nicht findet, da nennt man diese Gemeinschaften eine Sekte und tötet sie, wie man auch mit den Aposteln eins verfahren ist. Man findet auch allerlei Lügen über sie – im Grunde aber zum Zeugnis für ihre Seligkeit, sonst wären sie nicht Christen. Diese Gemeinschaft findest du klar und deutlich in der Apostelgeschichte 2.4.5. beschrieben.“ Zitiert nach **Goertz** 1988, S. 188.

<sup>85</sup> Siehe *ebenda*, S. 136.

<sup>86</sup> Doktor Balthasar Hubmaier hatte bereits eine beachtliche Karriere hinter sich, als er Täufer wurde. Er war etwa so alt wie Luther und Zwingli, hatte in Freiburg die Universität besucht und ist Schüler Johann Eck's gewesen, wurde in Ingolstadt promoviert und 1512 selber Professor geworden und sogar Prorektor der Universität gewesen. Seit 1516 hatte er

Hubmaier der Gefahr seiner Auslieferung an König Ferdinand begegnete. Diese Schrift war ein flammendes Plädoyer gegen jede Art inquisitorischer und gewaltsamer „Bekehrung“ zum „richtigen Glauben der Kirche“ und ein früher und wichtiger Ansatz zum Toleranzgedanken. Die Vermischung von weltlichen und geistlichen Argumenten und Kompetenzen sollte um des Evangeliums willen ein Ende haben und mehr Geduld in der Bemühung um die Wahrheit des Glaubens walten. Der angefochtene Glaube ist für Hubmaier nicht schon Häresie, sondern Station auf dem Wege zur Wahrheit, die sich am Ende durchsetzen wird. Sein Lebensmotto lautete: „*Die Wahrheit ist untödlich! (untötbar)*.“ Im Juli 1527 wurde Hubmaier wegen Anstiftung zu Aufruhr verhaftet, als Volksprediger, durch den „viel Unrat, Widerwillen, Aufruhr und Empörung erwachsen“ war. Er wurde am 10. März 1528 in Wien als Ketzer und Aufrührer verbrannt; seine Frau ertränkte man drei Tage später in der Donau.<sup>87</sup> Die von ihm erkannte Wahrheit ließ sich nicht zugleich mit seiner Hinrichtung exekutieren, sondern lebte im späteren Freikirchentum weiter<sup>88</sup>.

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als Domprediger in Regensburg gewirkt. 1521 kam er als Pfarrer nach Waldshut. Von hier aus gewann er Beziehungen erst zur lutherischen Reformation, dann zu der in Zürich und galt seit 1523 als einer ihrer wichtigsten Verfechter. Unter seinem Einfluss wurde ganz Waldshut 1524 zwinglisch. Im deutschen Bauernkrieg trat Hubmaier für die aufständischen Bauern ein und musste 1525 nach Zürich fliehen. Als er Pfingsten 1525 von Wilhelm Reublin für das Täuferum gewonnen worden war, wurde er sein bedeutendster literarischer Vertreter. Zwar nahm er theologisch insofern eine Sonderstellung unter den Täufem ein, als er sowohl der Obrigkeit als auch dem einzelnen Christen das Führen des Schwertes zugestand. Und diese Sonderstellung machte sich gewiss auch in der Praxis seiner Reformationsarbeit bemerkbar. Aber seine Wirkung auf die Täuferbewegung reicht gerade durch seine vielen Schriften weit über seinen Märtyrertod in Wien 1528 hinaus. – Siehe **H. Fast** (Hg.), *Der linke Flügel der Reformation* (= *Klassiker der Protestantismus*, Bd. 4), Bremen 1964, S. 35f.

<sup>87</sup> Vgl. **Ch. Windhorst**, Balthasar Hubmaier – Professor, Prediger, Politiker, in: *Radikale Reformatoren*, hg. von H.-J. Goertz, München 1978, S. 129ff.

<sup>88</sup> Chr. Windhorst weist auf die Tatsache hin, dass „in neuerer Zeit besinnt sich z.B. der Baptismus auf diesen hervorragenden Theologen und Praktiker unter seinen reformatorischen Vätern, der als Gelehrter und Prediger seine Erfolg hatte und Reformation durchzuführen vermochte, die das altgewordene Gefüge von Kirche und Gesellschaft im 16. Jahrhundert an den Orten seines Wirkens radikal veränderte. /.../ Die Summe seiner Theologie, seines Glaubens und Lebens ist die unbedingte Einsicht, dass dies alles sichtbar werden und sich bewahrheiten müsse in einem aktiven, die Welt verändernden Christentum.“ Siehe **Windhorst** 1978, S. 135f. „Wenn auch die Beziehung zwischen der modernen baptistischen Bewegung, die im 17. Jahrhundert begann, und den Täufem des 16. Jahrhunderts umstritten ist, so sehen viele Baptisten heute die Wurzel ihrer Identität und ihres Selbstverständnisses in den Täufem des 16. Jahrhunderts. Und es ist nachweislich wahr, dass die Baptisten ihrerseits auch unter Diskriminierung und rechtlichen Schwierigkeiten als Folge der lutherischen Verwerfungen gelitten haben.“ Zitiert nach: **Baptisten und Lutherarer im Gespräch** 1990, S. 40f.

Die Mennoniten, eine auf Menno Simons (+ 1561)<sup>89</sup> zurückgehende Täuferbewegung im holländischen Friesland, die heute noch in vielen Gebieten der Erde verbreitet ist, haben auf dem europäischen Boden aus eigenem Interesse als erste den Gedanken *konfessioneller Toleranz* vertreten. Der niederländische Täuferführer David Joris (+1556) erklärte Glaubenszwang und gewaltsame Unterdrückung für unvereinbar mit dem christlichen Liebesgebot. Diese Gedanken haben reiche Früchte getragen besonders im angloamerikanischen Raum, wo man im Umgang mit religiösen Minderheiten viel früher zu einem betont *individualrechtlichen* Verständnis der Religionsfreiheit gelangt als z.B. in Deutschland oder anderswo in neuzeitlicher Europa<sup>90</sup>. John Smyth und Thomas Helwys, englische Theologen und „Nonkonformisten“<sup>91</sup>, die von anglikanischer Staatskirche verfolgt wurden und 1608 nach Amsterdam flüchteten, kamen dort mit den hiesigen Mennoniten in Berührung. Mit ihren Gesinnungsgenossen übernahmen sie die Glaubenstaufe von Erwachsenen, aber die Integration dieser Gruppierung in das niederländische Mennonitentum scheiterte jedoch daran, dass eine Mehrheit der Mitglieder nicht auf ihre puritanischen Vorstellungen von Kirchenzucht verzichten wollte<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>89</sup> Holländer Menno Simons, ehemaliger katholischer Priester, wandte sich in den Krisen-jahren des nachmünsterischen Täuferturns dem Täuferturn zu (nach 1535) und ließ sich 1536 taufen. Als gesuchter Ketzer verbrachte er viele Jahre weitgehend auf der Flucht: als Missionar, als Seelsorger und als Sammler der zerstreuten, friedlich gesinnten Täufer (v.a. in den Niederlanden) und als Schriftsteller. Menno Simons wurde ein bedeutender Täuferführer; er verurteilte nicht nur die Münsteraner Exzesse, wie Blutjustiz gegen Andersgläubige, sondern generell jegliche Form von Krieg und Gewalt, ohne soweit zu gehen, auch jegliche Form weltlicher Obrigkeit abzulehnen, wie dies in den Schleithemer Artikeln geschehen war. Seit Mitte der 17. Jahrhunderts bezeichnen sich viele Täufergruppen nach ihm als „Mennoniten“. Vgl. **I. B. Horst**, Menno Simons. Der neue Mensch in der Gemeinschaft, in: Radikale Reformatoren, hg. von H.-J. Goertz, München 1978; siehe auch **Greyerz** 2000, S. 256f.

<sup>90</sup> Das Aufkommen der sich kongregationalistisch organisierten Independenten in Großbritannien im 17. Jahrhundert, die jegliche Form des Staatskirchentums ablehnten, gab dem Verlauf der Dinge eine neue Wende. 1647 wurde ein Verfassungsentwurf von historischer Bedeutung zusammengefasst, weil er die Religionsfreiheit als Menschenrecht bezeichnete. Der Entwurf war geprägt vom individualistischen Gedankengut der Independenten; Religionsangelegenheiten gehören zu den „*native rights*“, welche der Einwirkung der Obrigkeit entzogen sind. Hinter diesem Entwurf standen u.a. die sog. *levellers* (Gleichmacher), eine radikale Richtung in der Großen englischen Revolution, die Gleichheit aller vor dem Gesetz und Gewissensfreiheit für die Glaubensfragen und den Gottesdienst forderten. Die Festsetzung der sittlichen Normen sollte dem Staate, der dem demokratischen Urgesetz unterworfen ist, überlassen bleiben.

<sup>91</sup> Als „Nonkonformisten“ (Nichtgleichförmige) werden die Uniformitätsakte oder die 39 Artikel der anglikanischen Kirche (1563) ablehnende englische Protestanten, besonders Puritanen und Dissenters (Andersdenkende, d.h. Presbyterianer, Baptisten, Quäker u.a.) bezeichnet.

<sup>92</sup> Spezifisch puritanisch war daran die Forderung, dass die weltliche Obrigkeit die Kirchenzucht zu garantieren hatte. Die Mehrheit der ursprünglich durch John Smyth beeinflussten Gruppierung war aufgrund dieser positiven Einschätzung der sittlichen Rolle der weltlichen

Smyth und Helwys gründeten 1609 in Amsterdam die älteste Baptistengemeinde<sup>93</sup>. Als Helwys nach England zurückkehrte, nahm er mit sich ein von ihm verfasstes Buch für den Verkauf in England, das den Titel trug: *Eine kurze Erklärung des Geheimnisses der Ungerechtigkeit (A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity)*. Es ist der erste in englischer Sprache gedruckte Aufruf zu völliger Glaubensfreiheit für alle: „*Unser Herr, der König, ist nur ein irdischer König und er hat als König Autorität nur in irdischen Dingen, und wenn die Leute des Königs gehorsame und wahre Untertanen sind, die allen von Königs erlassenen menschlichen Gesetzen gehorchen, so kann unser Herr, der König, nicht mehr verlangen; denn die Religion der Menschen zu Gott besteht zwischen Gott und ihnen selbst, der König soll dafür nicht Rede stehen, noch soll der König Richter sein zwischen Gott und Mensch. Sollen sie Ketzer, Türken, Juden oder sonst etwas sein, es steht der irdischen Macht nicht zu, im geringsten Masse zu bestrafen.*“ Noch kühner war Helwys in der Widmung an König James I, die er mit eigener Hand schrieb: „...*Der König ist ein sterblicher Mensch und nicht Gott, und deshalb hat er keine Gewalt über die unsterblichen Seelen seiner Untertanen, für sie Gesetze und Ordnungen zu schaffen und geistliche Herren über sie zu setzen...*“<sup>94</sup> Dies war zu viel für die Regierung James I, Helwys wurde verhaftet und er starb in Gefängnis. Sein Aufruf zur Glaubensfreiheit bedeutet den Beginn eines Kampfes<sup>95</sup>, der am Ende mit Erfolg gekrönt sein sollte. So sind auch Baptisten

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Obrigkeit nicht bereit, die grundsätzliche täuferische Distanz gegenüber allem weltlichen Regiment zu akzeptieren. Der Gegenspieler von John Smyth in dieser Frage, Thomas Helwys, kehrte 1611 nach London zurück und gründete in London die *General Baptists Congregation*. Siehe Geyerz 2000, S. 259f.

<sup>93</sup> Vgl. **W. R. Estep**, *Why Baptists? A Study of Baptist Faith and Heritage*, Fort Worth 1997, pp. 47ff.

<sup>94</sup> Zitiert nach **J. D. Hughey**, *Die Baptisten. Einführung in Lehre, Praxis und Geschichte*, Kassel 1959, S. 116.

<sup>95</sup> Gekennzeichnet ist dieser Kampf u.a. mit einer Reihe von Gesetzen, die später als *Clarendon Code* bezeichnet worden sind, und nach einer Züchtigung der verschiedenen „Sekten“ trachteten. Mit *Corporation Act* vom Dezember 1661 war der erste Schritt zur politischen und zum Teil auch sozialen Ausgrenzung der Presbyterianer, Quäker, Baptisten und anderer Gruppierungen getan, die von da an als Dissenters bzw. Nonkonformisten bezeichnet wurden. Das bekannteste Gesetz des *Clarendon Code* war die *Uniformitätsakte* von 1662. Sie zielte vor allem auf eine Reinigung der Staatskirche von nicht konformen und unorthodoxen Geistlichen. Der Gesetz schrieb vor, dass jeder im Rahmen der *Church of England* tätige Geistlicher sein Amt verlieren solle, der nicht offiziell das gesamte *Common Prayer Book* angenommen, dem Presbyterianismus und dem Gedanken des Widerstandrechtes der Untertanen gegenüber dem König abgeschworen habe. Etwa ein Zehntel der gesamten Pfarrgeistlichkeit Englands und Wales wurde damals aus der Staatskirche ausgestoßen. Mit der Revolution von 1688/89 und der *Toleration Act* von 1689, die noch längst keine volle religiöse Toleranz brachte, aber doch die Verfolgungen der Dissenters durch den Staat und seine Vertreter weitgehend beendete, setzte eine Phase der Annäherung und der allmählichen Versöhnung mancher Dissenters mit der bestehenden gesellschaftlichen und politischen Ordnung ein. Siehe Geyerz 2000,

von Anfang an die Verfechter der Religionsfreiheit<sup>96</sup> sowie der Trennung von Kirche und Staat gewesen (das Prinzip „einer freien Kirche im freien Staat“)<sup>97</sup>, und infolge der Emigration der Glaubensflüchtlinge verbreitete sich dieses Gedankengut bald auch in der „Neuen Welt“. Da setzte sich das sog. *freikirchliche* Modell des Verhältnisses von Staat und Kirche, das dem Staat überhaupt keine Machtbefugnisse in religiösen Angelegenheiten zubilligt, weil die Religion nicht zu den staatlichen Hoheitsaufgaben gehört, in der Tat durch<sup>98</sup>. Zuerst wurde dieses Modell greifbar im 17. Jahrhundert in der Kolonie Rhode Island, wo ein englischer Puritaner und Gründer der ersten baptistischen Kirche der Kolonien (1639), Roger Williams, einen Freistaat auf Grundlage der Gewissensfreiheit und religiöser Toleranz gründete. Williams Begründung war sehr tiefstinnig: Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes in Erwählung und Wiedergeburt erfordert völlige Glaubensfreiheit, die weltliche Natur des Staates absolute Trennung von der Kirche. Wenig später machte es ihm der Quäker William Penn mit einem „Heiligen Experiment“ in seiner Kolonie Pennsylvania nach, womit er seinen Siedlern bürgerliche und religiöse Freiheiten ermöglichen wollte.<sup>99</sup>

Dieses Modell wird dann bei Gründung der neuen Republik trotz allen Widerstands in den Verfassungsrang erhoben. Es waren vor allem Thomas Jefferson und James Madison, die für die Bundesverfassung richtungsweisend

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S. 264–266.274; vgl. auch **R. Ward**, Kirchengeschichte Großbritanniens vom 17. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert. [Kirchengeschichte in Einzeldarstellungen, Bd. III/7], Leipzig 2000, S. 19–22.

<sup>96</sup> Im Gegensatz zu jenen, welche die Freiheit nur für „die wahre Religion“ verteidigen, haben die Baptisten immer an der Freiheit für *alle* Religionen festgehalten. Sie haben die Freiheit wohl für sich verlangt, aber nicht *nur* für sich selbst – schon Helwys hat die Freiheit für „Ketzer, Türken, Juden oder sonst etwas“ verlangt. Die Religions-, bzw. Glaubensfreiheit lässt sich nach dem Prinzip „Gleiche Rechte für alle und besondere Vorrechte für keinen“ kurz so definieren als „das Recht von Einzelpersonen und von Gruppen, religiöse Glaubensanschauungen und Praktiken zu besitzen, zu veröffentlichen und zu verbreiten, und ihre religiösen Angelegenheiten ohne Behinderung und Einschränkung von außen zu betreiben, und zwar unter Gleichheit der bürgerlichen Rechte, solange sie nicht im Widerstreit mit den rechten oder Freiheiten anderer Leute stehen.“ Zitiert nach **Hughey** 1959, S. 120.

<sup>97</sup> „Baptisten legen großen Wert auf die Trennung von Kirche und Staat und auf die Religionsfreiheit, weil sie überzeugt sind, dass das Evangelium in Freiheit von politischen, gesellschaftlichen, nationalem, gesetzlichem und religiösem Zwang oder Gebundenheit empfangen und gelebt werden muss.“ – **Baptisten und Lutheraner im Gespräch**, S. 33.

<sup>98</sup> Vgl. **A. Saumets**, Riigi ja kiriku suhete ideaal ning praktikad ameerikaliku vabakirikliku paradigma taustal (The Ideas and Practices of the Relationship Between Church and the State, Based on the American Free Church Model), in: KVÜÖA toimetised, nr 13, Tartu 2010, lk 235–284.

<sup>99</sup> Vgl. **D. Davis**, The Enduring Legacy of Roger Williams. Applying his Principles to Today's Pressing Church-State Controversies, in: L Lybæk *et al.* (Hrsg.), Gemeinschaft der Kirchen und gesellschaftliche Verantwortung (Ökumenische Studien/ Ecumenical Studies, Bd. 30), Münster 2004, S. 479ff; vgl. auch E. Geldbach, Religion und Politik: Religious Liberty, in: Gott und Politik in USA, hg. von K.-M. Kodalle, Frankfurt a.M 1988, S. 230ff.

waren<sup>100</sup>. Im *First Amendment* der amerikanischen Verfassung (*Bill of Rights*) von 1791 wird der Kongress darauf verpflichtet, „to make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for the redress of grievances“<sup>101</sup>, was u.a. auch als strikte Trennung von Staat und Kirchen interpretiert wird<sup>102</sup>. Und im Artikel 6 der Verfassung hatte es schon geheißen, dass „no religious test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or Public trust under the United States.“<sup>103</sup> Im Gegensatz zu den europäischen Modellen einer Trennung von Staat und Kirche bzw. Religion<sup>104</sup> – Französische Revolution, Russische Revolution, Laizismus usw. – geschieht es in Amerika nicht, um Religion das Absterben zu erleichtern, sondern

<sup>100</sup> Einen entschlossenen Schritt in die Richtung der verfassungsmäßigen Religionsfreiheit hat Thomas Jefferson gemacht mit verschiedenen Rechtsakten: *Act for Establishing Religious Freedom* von 1777 und *Bill for Establishing (!) Religious Freedom* von 1786. Eine besondere Aufmerksamkeit verdient aber in diesem Zusammenhang James Madison, der u.a. proklamiert: „Religion or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reasons and conviction, not by force or violence. The Religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as they may dictate. This right is in its nature an unalienable right.“ Madison hat auch erkannt, dass Religionsfreiheit sowohl zeitlich wie auch sachlich allen anderen Ansprüchen auf das Individuum vorgeordnet ist: „This duty (to render to the Creator such homage... as [every man] believes to be acceptable to him) is precedent both in order of time and degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society“, und dass Toleranz und Religionsfreiheit nicht zu verwechseln sind: „Toleration belonged to a system where there was an established church and where it was a thing granted, not of right, but of grace.“ Zitiert nach **Geldbach** 1988, WS. 236.

<sup>101</sup> Zitiert nach **Estep** 1997, p. 55. Vgl. **Geldbach** 1988, S. 235–240; vgl. auch **Estep** 1997, pp. 53–55; **Saumets** 2010, S. 261–267.

<sup>102</sup> **Mortanges** 1997, S. 569.

<sup>103</sup> Zitiert nach **Geldbach** 1988, S. 235.

<sup>104</sup> Die Ausbreitung der freikirchlichen Gedanken und Praktiken waren bis ins 19. Jahrhundert hinein durch den Sachverhalt bedingt, dass in vielen Gebieten Europas für Freikirchen kein reales Existenzraum war. In volks- und staatskirchlichen Systemen, welche keine individualrechtliche Religionsfreiheit zuließen, waren freie christliche Gemeinden einfach nicht vorgesehen. So gehörten freikirchlich gesinnte Menschen paradoxerweise zu den Pioniersiedlern in Ost und West, in Osteuropa und Russland sowie in Nordamerika. In Nordamerika trug das Freikirchentum wesentlich zur Herausbildung der modernen pluralistischen und demokratischen Gesellschaft bei. Im Osten hatte das Freikirchentum in zaristischem Russland einen eingeschränkten Spielraum und musste später im atheistisch-totalitären Sowjet-System ums Überleben kämpfen. Interessanterweise sind im 20. Jahrhundert aus beiden Regionen – Nordamerika und Osteuropa/Russland – wieder wesentliche freikirchliche Impulse zurück nach Europa gekommen: Aus Nordamerika durch intensive missionarische Tätigkeit nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg und aus Osteuropa/Russland durch mehrere Rückwanderungswellen Russlanddeutscher Freikirchlicher nach Deutschland. Siehe **B. Ott**, Der Beitrag der Freikirchen in globaler Perspektive (2011), in: FVG Freikirchen Schweiz, <[http://www.freikirchen.ch/fileadmin/user\\_upload/pdf/Freikirchen\\_in\\_globaler\\_Perspektive.pdf](http://www.freikirchen.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Freikirchen_in_globaler_Perspektive.pdf)>, (20.02.2012)

im wohlverstandenen Interesse der Religion. Die Religion gedeiht besser, wenn sie keiner ihr wesensfremden Macht unterworfen oder von dieser abhängig ist.

Dieses oben genannte *freikirchliche* Modell hat in den vergangenen fünf Jahrhunderten sein geistiges und fortschrittliches Potenzial gezeigt, u.a. auch wesentlich zur Gestaltung unserer freiheitlich-demokratischen Gesellschaft beizutragen. Der Konfessionskundler Erich Geldbach hat diesen Beitrag so formuliert: „*Es kann keinem Zweifel unterliegen, dass die Freikirche insgesamt einen besonderen Typus der Verwirklichung des Christlichen darstellen. Wenn man es kurz kennzeichnen müsste, liegt es nahe, von einer persönlichen Verantwortung der Gemeindeglieder zu sprechen... Es kann ebenso wenig einem Zweifel unterliegen, dass das Freikirchentum einen erheblichen Beitrag dazu geleistet hat, die gegenwärtige Gesellschaft hervorzubringen. Die Kennzeichen unserer Gesellschaft, d.h. demokratisch legitimierte Regierungen auf Zeit, Verfassungs- und Rechtsstaat, Gewaltenteilung und gegenseitige Kontrollmechanismen einschließlich einer freien Presse und freier Medien, säkulare Aufgabenstellungen für die Regierungen, religiöse und weltanschauliche Neutralität des Staates, Garantien für die Einhaltung von Menschenrechte, all dies und vielleicht noch einiges mehr haben die Freikirchen mit hervorgebracht. Ohne den Einfluss der Freikirchen sähe unsere heutige Welt anders, d.h. weniger zivilisiert und weniger demokratisch aus*<sup>105</sup>.”

Zum Schluss nochmals zurück in die frühe Neuzeit. Wie man sehen konnte, ist der Prozess der Entstehung des religiösen Toleranzgedankens bzw. der Forderung nach Religionsfreiheit in der frühen Neuzeit höchstens am Rande der etablierten Kirchen, meistens jedoch außerhalb derselben erfolgt. Das Bekenntnis der Täufer hat die Gesellschaft des 16. Jahrhunderts herausgefordert, ihre Grundlagen neu zu überdenken und zu verändern. Die Täufer mit ihrem *freikirchlichen* Kirchenverständnis, das die „staatsfreie“ bzw. sich vom Staat und von staatlichen Privilegien unabhängig konstituierte Existenz der freiwilligen Glaubensgemeinschaften bedeutet, haben schon vor fünf Jahrhunderten gezeigt, dass das Modell der Verbindung von Staat und Kirche (sog. *corpus Christianum*, weitgehende Identität von *Christengemeinde* und *Bürgergemeinde*), wie man das in den europäischen Ländern seit ca. 1500 Jahren kennt, nicht der globale Normalfall ist<sup>106</sup>. Und die Verfolgung von Täufern im 16. Jahrhundert und von verschiedenen nonkonformistischen Gemeinschaften und Gruppierungen im 17. Jahrhundert beweist einen großen Mangel an Engagement für Gewissens- und Religionsfreiheit, einen Grundsatz, der heute von allen nach einem Freiheitlich-Demokratischen Prinzip geordneten Gesellschaften und Gemeinschaften bekräftigt wird, obwohl es sowohl

<sup>105</sup> E. Geldbach, Freikirchen und Demokratie, in: J. Swoboda, E. Geldbach und W. Klaiber (Hrsg.), Die Freikirchen und ihr gesellschaftlicher Beitrag, Stuttgart 1995, S. 30.

<sup>106</sup> Siehe Ott 2011.

in alten Demokratien wie in Deutschland als auch in jungen Demokratien wie in Estland immer noch an der Gleichbehandlung bzw. an der Gleichsetzung der diversen religiösen und weltanschaulichen Bekenntnisse<sup>107</sup> mangelt und in verschiedenen Bereichen des religiösen und öffentlichen Lebens kann man noch die (getarnte) Diskriminierung aufgrund des Bekenntnisses feststellen. Was damals vor Jahrhunderten geschah, müssen wir heute als eine sehr ernste Warnung vor jeglicher Diskriminierung von Menschen anderen Glaubens und Denkens betrachten. Der Kampf um die Freiheit des Gewissens und Glaubens und der Religion ist nie ein für allemal gewonnen. Das Beispiel der Täufer im Rahmen der Radikalen Reformation und ihrer geistigen Nachkommen im Nonkonformismus und im neuzeitlichen Freikirchentum sorgt aber hoffentlich für die Einsicht, dass Toleranz und vor allem Gewissens- und Glaubensfreiheit nicht Forderungen sind, die eine Gesellschaft zerstören, sondern vermenschlichen.

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<sup>107</sup> Demzufolge muss man auch zwischen Religionsfreiheit und Toleranz unterscheiden, wie es z.B. auf der baptistischen Weltkonferenz des Jahres 1923 festgestellt wurde: „... Glaubensfreiheit schließt das Prinzip der religiösen Toleranz aus. Die Gewalt und das Ansehen des Staates eine Form der Religion zukommen zu lassen und die anderen bloß zu dulden, bedeutet nicht Glaubensfreiheit. Das ist religiöse Nötigung... Gleiche Rechte für alle und besondere Vorrechte für keinen, das ist das wahre Ideal.“ Zitiert nach **Hughey** 1959, S. 119.

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# CHRISTIAN APOCALYPTIC EXTREMISM: A STUDY OF TWO CASES

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**ABSTRACT.** The article treats two cases of large scale Christian extremism: the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in China in the middle of the 19th century and the Russian Old Believers movement that started in the second half of the 17th century. In both cases there were intense expectations of the end of the world. In both cases their extreme actions were provoked by the violent activity of the state authorities. The extremism of the Chinese Christians was directed outside whereas the extreme behaviour of the Russian Old Believers was directed first of all inside, towards themselves. One of the reasons of the difference in their actions was the difference in their respective theological thinking.

**Key words:** *Christian extremism, Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Russian Old Believers, eschatological figures, utopias and dystopias.*

There are various ways to classify the phenomena of extremism. One possibility is to divide these phenomena into external and internal ones. In the first case the extremism is directed towards others. Its aim is to change the other, usually to rebuild the whole world. It can easily become aggression. In the case of the internal extremism it is directed towards the extremists themselves. Its aim can be a withdrawal or a change of themselves. Sometimes it becomes self-denial.

The last one hundred years have mainly been an era of the atheistic extremism. Tens of millions of people have perished in the concentration camps created by national socialist or communist extremists. Nevertheless religious extremism has not disappeared. Atheism has not replaced religion. It has existed alongside religion and its extremism is merely added to the already existing extremism.

The aim of this article is to treat some aspects of classical religious extremism, more exactly – some aspects of extremism in Christianity. Usually extremism appears in the situation of intense apocalyptic expectations. People believe that the end of the world is near. In this situation the attitudes and behaviour of people change extremely. There are not only psychological factors behind these changes. The ideas and concepts dominant during these

intense eschatological expectations can also influence the patterns of human behaviour.

In this article I study two historical cases when Christian expectations of the end of the world were extremely high. Both cases involved huge numbers of human beings and in connection with both cases we have to speak about clear extremism. But in these two cases the occurrences of extremism were actually opposite. In one case the extremism was directed in the form of aggression against the outside world, against other human beings. In the other case the extremism remained inside of the community that believed itself to be in the apocalyptic situation and if we speak about aggression, then it was directed towards the believers themselves. Sometimes it became self-denial.

### The Chinese Taiping Case

In the middle of the 19th century a large-scale rebellion occurred in China in which at least 20 million people lost their lives. This was a Christian rebellion or at least it was strongly influenced by Christianity.<sup>1</sup> The main character of this story was Hong Xiuquan (born Hong Huoxiu, 1814–1864), a Hakka schoolteacher. His ambitions were to pass the Confucian examination and thus to make a career in the service of the government. But he failed time and again. After one failure Hong fell ill and during this illness he saw a vision, at least so he claimed. According to his story the scene of this vision was in the Heaven. Here he saw an old man with a long golden beard, who, as it appeared, was Hong's heavenly father. The old man gave Hong a sword and commanded him to destroy the demons, who had led many people astray on the earth. In this vision Hong also met a man who claimed to be his elder brother and who supported him in his fight against the demons. Hong spent quite a long time in Heaven and actually founded a new family there. Later, when Hong regained his consciousness, the dream seemed to have no meaning. This was all beyond any interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

In the first half of the nineteenth century the Christian mission was forbidden in China. This did not mean that there was no missionary interest towards China. Usually missionaries from Europe and from North America resided outside China not far from the borders and tried, in a clandestine way, to direct some mission. For this they had Chinese helpers. One of the first Chinese who worked for the Protestant mission was a man called Liang Afa (1787–1855). He worked for the London Missionary Society and became

<sup>1</sup> **Lee Chee Kong.** Taiping Rebellion. – A Dictionary of Asian Christianity. Scott W. Sunquist (ed.). Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001, pp. 814f.

<sup>2</sup> **Jonathan D. Spence.** God's Chinese Son. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan. New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996, pp. 47–50.

the first Protestant Chinese preacher. Being intensely interested in Christianity, he wrote quite a comprehensive book about Christianity entitled “Good Words for Exhorting the Age”.<sup>3</sup> It was printed outside China but the author himself made trips into China and distributed the book among the Chinese. Hong Xiuquan happened to receive one of the copies. At first Hong did not pay attention to this work and laid it aside. But later he started to read it. To his amazement it now made sense of his one-time strange vision. According to his interpretation the older man, his father, was Jehovah, the Christian God the Father. According to Hong’s interpretation the younger man, his “elder brother”, was Jesus Christ. This was the beginning of a completely new view of the world. Even more, this was the beginning of completely new life of Hong. Now he considered himself as the younger son, the Chinese son of God the Father. According to his new understanding he had a new, powerful mission to fulfil – to convert others to Christianity as understood by him and to fight the demons and devils as “his father had commanded.”

Hong’s mission was actually quite successful. His proclamation was understandable and acceptable for many people, especially for his fellow Hakkas. Some scholars have supposed that the grounds for the Christian faith, in some areas, had been prepared earlier by Karl Gutzlaff,<sup>4</sup> the German Protestant missionary.<sup>5</sup> An important part in Hong’s proclamation was the call to fight with devils. At first it was not “quite clear who these devils were, whether they were the physical forms of the followers of the devil king Yan Luo himself, or benighted Confucian scholars who closed their eyes to truth, or Taoist and Buddhist priests, or the shamans of local folk cults, or the sinners and idolaters who broke the various versions of Hong’s or God’s commandments.”<sup>6</sup> But later, when the state authorities tried to intervene and suppress the movement, it became clear for Hong and his followers that actually the state, i. e., the ruling Qing dynasty and generally the authorities were the devil demons against whom they had the commission to fight. And more, now the leaders of the movement realised that the fight against demons was not only on the spiritual level but also on the political and military levels. The movement became more and more an organised army and their religious leader Hong became more like an army commander. We can say that the movement became the Taiping<sup>7</sup> Heavenly Kingdom and Hong became the king of this expanding state.

<sup>3</sup> In this capacious work Liang Afa developed his own ideas about Christianity.

<sup>4</sup> Actually Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff (Chinese name Guo Shi Li) (1803–1851) was a German Lutheran missionary in East-Asia and a translator of Bible into numerous languages.

<sup>5</sup> Spence 1996, p. 88.

<sup>6</sup> Spence 1996, p. 115. Yan Luo is in Chinese mythology the god of death and the king of underworld.

<sup>7</sup> Taiping means „Great peace”. Cf. John King Fairbank, Merle Goldman. *China: a New History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts/London, England: Harvard University Press, 2006, p. 207.

During next years the Taiping army was successful and the whole movement became more and more like a state. In addition to the destruction of demons its aim was the building of heaven on earth. In practice that means building a “brave new world.” In 1853 the Taiping army captured the old Chinese southern capital Nanjing. According to the movement it became the “Heavenly Capital”, the “New Jerusalem.” Hong as the head of this state was called heaven-born the “True Lord.” The leaders of Taiping understood it as paradise existing on the earth. The existence of paradise means that the whole society is divided into small units which compose bigger units and these in turn compose again bigger units. Upon this structured and organised society were laid harsh laws and severe discipline. The death penalty for small trespasses was rather common, at least according to our understanding. Theoretically we can speak about it as a communist society as private ownership of property was abolished, at least. “For all, whether active combatants, cloistered women, or sequestered elderly, daily rations are allocated, three-tenth of a pint of rice, and a small container each of salt and oil. The Taiping allow no trade of any kind within the city walls.”<sup>8</sup>

Men and women were separated, even if they were married. Sexual love was prohibited until the time when final victory over the demons had been won.<sup>9</sup> There was an exception – the leaders of Taiping were free from this prohibition. All people of the society were registered and records of their behaviour and their loyalty were kept. The whole organisation demanded a huge bureaucracy. And to uphold this system and the necessary regulations the discipline had to be strict.

The Taiping society was also a very religious one, at least its aim was to be religious. Regular public worship was compulsory for all and participation in it was checked up. Non-attendance in worship was punishable. All other religions were forbidden. Only the special form of Taiping Christianity was legal.

Thus the moral system, ethical relationships, cultural inheritance, social institutions and statutes of the past several thousand years in China, in short, the whole Chinese tradition was destroyed.<sup>10</sup> The only thing that survived was the cult of the emperor – Hong could never be wrong, he was the son of God, of the Christian God. And he was the younger brother of Jesus Christ.

In the long term the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was not able to survive. Under the attacks of the Peking government army the Christian empire fell in 1864. The Manchu Confucian state in its war against the Christian Taiping state was supported by the Christian Western states, especially by Great Britain and France.

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<sup>8</sup> Spence 1996, p. 169.

<sup>9</sup> Spence 1996, p. 225.

<sup>10</sup> Spence 1996, p. 227.

Was the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom actually a Christian state or was the Taiping Christianity a real Christianity? There are scholars who question its Christianity and call it merely a pseudo-Christianity.<sup>11</sup> It is true that this Christianity was a peculiar one and quite different from the mainstream Western Christianity. Its Christology was Arian as Hong did not consider himself and his “older brother” fully divine. Besides the Scriptures or actually instead of them Hong and his followers estimated their own visions and dreams as the divine word.

There are other differences as well. But if we deny the Christianity of the Taiping religion can we call Christian many currents and groups in the 19th century Europe that have been traditionally called Christian? The differences between, e.g., some Hegelian theologians and some pietistic movements are no smaller than the differences between Taiping Christianity and the mainstream Western Christianity, as presented at the same time in China by some Western missionaries.

Hong and his followers believed that he was sent by God “down to earth to direct the salvation of mankind<sup>12</sup>.” His work consisted of the fight with the demons who had led people astray. They had been obstacles to the right faith. This fight was the fight against the Chinese government. Thus salvation happened on the scene of history. According to Hong it was a this-worldly event. And although Hong as the son of God had the support of his father and of his elder brother and he had been endowed with all sorts of god-given qualities, nevertheless he was not a divine being. He was not a transcendent being. But actually according to Hong’s theology God the Father neither was a fully transcendent being. He was rather humanly God.<sup>13</sup> And this-worldly Taiping army must help this-worldly God in his this-worldly apocalyptic fight. The result was an outward directed extremism, an aggression and emergence of a nightmarish society that we can call anti-utopian or dystopian.

### The Russian Old Believers’ Case

We come across another example of Christian extremism in the so called Russian Old Believers movement. The Old Believers do not constitute a homogenous church or denomination. The movement contains a number of churches and smaller or bigger branches with a varying degree of extremism. This movement took its origin in the liturgical reforms initiated by the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch of Moscow Nikon and the Russian Tsar Aleksey

<sup>11</sup> **Samuel Hugh Moffett**. *A History of Christianity in Asia, Volume II: 1500–1900*. New York. Orbis Books, 2005, p. 299.

<sup>12</sup> **Spence** 1996, p. 294.

<sup>13</sup> **Spence** 1996, p. 221f.

Mikhailovich Romanov in the second half of the 17th century.<sup>14</sup> Actually the Russians had already attempted to reform and unify their liturgies earlier. These earlier attempts to reform were based on the Old Russian liturgical texts. This time the reforms were rather penetrating and they were based on the Byzantine Greek usage.<sup>15</sup> According to the Russian religious understanding of the 17th century, the liturgy and the piety that was closely connected with the liturgy were essential parts of Christianity and they were the pillars on which the salvation of souls relied. The correct practice of liturgy and piety makes a human being acceptable for God. Therefore, careless changes in liturgy can create obstacles for salvation. This in turn caused many believers to fear before liturgical reforms. The old liturgy of the forefathers was safe, as its usage had in the past led many pious Russians to sainthood according to their belief. But in relation to the innovations many believers were rather sceptical.

There were other reasons for the opposition to the reforms, as well. One substantial reason was the fact that the Byzantine Greek liturgical patterns were taken as examples for Russian reforms. At that time there were differences between Russian and Greek practices and the leaders of the Russian church and state considered the Greek practice as the right one. But as the Greeks had lost to the Moslems and as Constantinople, the Byzantine capital had fallen, thus many Russians interpreted all this as the consequence of their deficient liturgy and faith. Therefore, for many Russians actually the Byzantine liturgy was erroneous and precisely the Russian old liturgy was the correct and saving one.<sup>16</sup>

One reason that strengthened the resistance to the reforms was the brutality with which the state and the church tried to execute these reforms. The opponents of the reforms were condemned by the state and the church as heretics. Frequently the church and the state did not recoil from the use of military force to enforce the new liturgy and piety. In reaction to this the opponents of the reforms hardened their resistance. As they conceived these reforms as hindrances to salvation, the Old Believers started to consider the reforms as the work of the antichrist.<sup>17</sup> Antichrist is an eschatological character in the Scriptures and in the Christian tradition, who will appear at the

<sup>14</sup> The number of views on the Russian Old Believers movement in English is still rather limited. Even nowadays is one of the best short introductions **Adalbert von Stromberg**. *Sects (Russian)*. – Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics James Hastings (ed.). Volume XI. Pp. 332–339: Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1920.

<sup>15</sup> **Wilhelm Hollberg**. 1994. *Das russische Altgläubigentum. Seine Entstehung und Entwicklung*. Tartu/Dorpat: Tartu University Press, 1994, S. 126ff.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. **Peter Hauptmann**. *Russlands Altgläubige*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht. 2005, S. 23.

<sup>17</sup> According to Hauptmann the idea of the antichrist emerged as the reaction to the brutality of the state. **Hauptmann** 2005, S. 69.

end of time to fight against God and salvation. The insight that the end time was arriving was supported by the concept of Moscow as the third Rome that was popular at that time. According to this idea Moscow was the third and the last Rome and there would never be a fourth Rome.<sup>18</sup> Thus as the state and the Patriarch of Moscow had introduced the changes wished by antichrist, the city had fallen from the right Christianity. The reign of the antichrist and the fall of Moscow, the last Rome meant that the eschatological end time had arrived. The end of this world was near and one must expect the so called apocalyptic events to arrive. Or actually the reforms and the persecution of the opponents of the reforms were already part of this apocalyptic period. Therefore, these events were understood as such by the Russian Old Believers.

The result was that the Old Believers distanced themselves from the state and from the official church as the institutions of antichrist. But different groups of the Old Believers regarded the withdrawal from – or even the negation of – the state and the official church differently. Some groups were more radical, some were less radical in it. The varying degree of radicalism of their attitude was one of the factors that helped to divide the Old Believers into a number of different denominations. These denominations constituted quite a wide spectrum. At the one end of this spectrum were the so called Popovtsy (in Russian: поповцы, “with priests”), whose attitude towards the state and the established church was rather moderate. According to their understanding the official church was erroneous but it was still a Christian church and its sacraments were still valid. Therefore, its priests were real priests and after renunciation by these priests of the so called innovations of the established church the Popovtsy were willing to use these priests in their own church.

The attitude of the so called Bespopovtsy (in Russian безпоповцы “priestless”) to the state and the state church was more radical. According to their idea the established church was hopelessly corrupted. The antichrist ruled in it. Therefore the existing Russian church was no more the real, divine church. And therefore the priests ordained in this established church were not real priest and were not usable. Actually, according to their understanding there was no longer a real church in the whole world. God had withdrawn his grace from the world and thus till the end of the world there would be no church. The absence of priesthood was one of the signs of the eschatological end time, in addition to the above-mentioned persecutions of the opponents of these supposedly antichristian reforms. The Old Believers had to survive without a hierarchy. They considered themselves to be the only remnant of the true Christianity.

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<sup>18</sup> About the doctrine of the third Rome cf. **Alar Laats**. *The Concept of the Third Rome and its Political Implications. – Religion and Politics in Multicultural Europe: Perspectives and Challenges*. Alar Kilp, Andres Saumets (eds). Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2009, pp. 98–113.

What was the reaction of the Russian Old Believers to the “reign of the antichrist”? The main thing all the Old Believers tried to do was to distance themselves – both geographically and spiritually – from the state and from the established church. This was not by any means a withdrawal from civilisation generally. On the contrary, some denominations of the Old Believers were usually rather skilful in using the achievement of civilisation, e. g., they were more efficient in using commercial credit institution or printing than the members of the established church. But they kept as far as possible from the Russian state and from the official Russian Orthodox Church. Geographically this meant that the Old Believers tried to move away from the central districts of Russia to remote borderlands – to Pomor Land or Pomorye at the White Sea, to the Transvolga Region, to the Ural Mountains, to Siberia, to the steppes of the south and to other far and little-inhabited districts. Some groups of the Old Believers moved abroad, e. g., to territories of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth or of the Ottoman Empire.

Some especially radical Old Believers even desisted from touching money because there were and are on it the signs of the antichrist – all kinds of symbols of the state. In the same way they avoided touching any document or paper issued by the state. They were called “Wanderers” (*beguny* or *stranniki*, in Russian *бегуны́, странники*). These wanderers avoided any other contact and accommodation with the official society. As their name points they did not have a permanent abode.<sup>19</sup> Their way of life was a continuous wandering. This denomination exists in Russia up to the present.<sup>20</sup>

Although the priestless Old Believers said that it was the eschatological end time and that God had withdrawn the church from the earth, nevertheless most of them believed that the church in some limited, reduced way existed in their own communities. Their congregations were the only true Christian congregations. They believe this up to the modern days. Usually they baptize their members, they practice worship in their chapels, although their liturgy is in a reduced form and in their congregations they have especially appointed people who fulfil some limited priestly functions. Therefore, we can still speak about the existence of the church amidst of them. But there are some denominations of the Old Believers who are more consistent in their negation of the existence of the church on the earth. They are so called Spassovtsy<sup>21</sup> or Netovtsy (in Russian *нетовцы, спасовцы*). According to their understanding

<sup>19</sup> Cf. **Johannes Chrysostomus**. Die radikalen Sekten der russischen Altgläubigen. – Ostkirchliche Studien, 21/1972, S. 8f. **А.И. Мальцев**. *Староверы-странники в XVIII-первой половине XIX в.* Новосибирск: Сибирский хронограф, 1996, стр 3.

<sup>20</sup> **М. Бурдо, С. Б. Филатов**. Современная религиозная жизнь России. Опыт систематического описания. Vol. 1. Москва: Логос, 2004, стр. 173.

<sup>21</sup> Saviour’s denomination. The name is from Russian Spas (Спас) – Saviour. **Chrysostomus** 1972, pp. 107f.

there is no longer any church on the earth; therefore, there are no sacraments<sup>22</sup> and no worship, no chapels and no congregations. The only hope they have is in Spas – the Saviour.

In the past some Old Believers have gone even further in their extremism. They have committed self-immolation. Some authors have asserted that it was an ascetical act of self-purification. In the majority of cases it was not so. It was not a heroic act of self-punishment or an act of repentance. Instead, it was a withdrawal. It was an escape like moving into an empty borderland, only more radical. It was an escape into a place where the pursuers could not follow the escapees. The self-immolation of the Old Believers was a reaction to the persecution by the state and the official church.<sup>23</sup> The aim of this persecution was to return the Old Believers to the established church. To achieve this, the state and the church used brutal methods. Sometimes the Old Believers were not strong enough and yielded to the brutality. They were forced to recant and return formally to the official church. But for the Old Believers this meant entering into the church of the antichrist. This in turn meant that they were left without salvation. The church of the antichrist was not the real church. Thus the self-immolation was just the escape from the influence of the antichrist. Usually a community of radical Old Believers was already prepared for this event. When the military expedition, sent to bring them back to the official church, was approaching, the Old Believers community closed themselves into a special building without exits and they set the building to fire. Thus the self-immolations were usually collective withdrawals from this world where the antichrist reigned.

Sometimes there occurred an armed resistance of the Old Believers against the government army. Perhaps the most famous was the eight years (1668–1676) siege of the Solovetsky Monastery and the resistance of the monks.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the extremism of most of the Old Believers was not aggressive. It was not directed outside and its aim was not to transform the world. It was rather directed to the Old believers themselves. Usually its essence was the withdrawal from the realm of the antichrist as far as possible.

### Similarities and differences

We have briefly examined two cases of Christian eschatological expectations when people were sure that the end of the world had nearly come. In both cases we can speak about religious extremism. Yet in these cases the extremism was realised rather differently.

<sup>22</sup> Thus the Netovtsy are Christians who have not been baptized as there is no baptism in the world according to their belief.

<sup>23</sup> Hauptmann 2005, S. 67f.

<sup>24</sup> Hauptmann 2005, S. 49ff.

The extremism of the Taiping rebellion was directed towards the outside. Its aim was to change the world according to the understanding and expectations of Taiping Christianity. The other case – the Russian Old Believers movement – was directed rather towards the inside. Its aim was to withdraw from the world and to sever all possible contacts with the Russian official church and with the Russian state. The Taiping movement tried to change the world, the Old Believers tried to leave the world. In connection with these two cases we can speak about two types of extremism, one extroverted and the other introverted.

These two cases are not singular cases. In some way they are exemplary cases as there have been a number of other cases of Christian eschatological extremism in the history of Christianity that are more or less similar to one of these two exemplary cases. Thus, for example, to the extrovert type we can attribute the rebellion of the Münster radical Anabaptists in the 16th century. The aim for them, at least that of their leader Jan Beukels, was “to usher in the Last Days”. He proclaimed “himself messianic king of the world, with all the royal trappings of a new David in Israel.”<sup>25</sup> Another well-known case of this type is the tragedy that occurred in connection with the Branch Davidians near Waco in Texas, USA, in 1993. The group lived in a supercharged apocalyptic atmosphere and its leader David Koresh claimed to be the Lamb of God, i. e., also a sort of eschatological character who would save the world.<sup>26</sup>

With regard to the second type of the Christian extremism we can recall the whole monastic movement, at least in its initial period. This movement was a withdrawal from the society, from the world into the desert. And although these two, the world and the desert were not yet so sharply contrasted as the world of antichrist and the Russian Old Believers community, nevertheless, according to the monastic understanding only in the desert the godly life was possible.<sup>27</sup> Another well-known example of the second, introvert type is historically and geographically quite close to the above-mentioned Münster Anabaptists. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century there was and still is another example, an alternative branch of Anabaptism. Members of this branch are pacifists and reject all forms of physical violence. The principal inspirer of these quietist and pacifist separatist communities was a former priest from West Friesland called Menno Simons.<sup>28</sup> He and his followers, the Mennonites, too, awaited the imminent second coming of Christ and the end of the world. Eventually,

<sup>25</sup> *Diarmaid McCulloch. The Reformation. A History. London: Penguin Books, 2003, p. 206.*

<sup>26</sup> **David V. Barrett.** *The New Believers. A Survey of Sects, Cults and Alternative Religions.* London: Cassell Illustrated, 2001, pp. 85–88.

<sup>27</sup> **Peter Brown.** *The Rise of Western Christendom. Triumph and Diversity, A. D. 200–1000.* Second Edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, pp. 172–176.

<sup>28</sup> **MacCulloch** 2003, p. 210.

they also withdrew socially as well as spiritually from the common life of the world that was not Christian enough according to their understanding. Besides the Mennonites there are other pacifist Anabaptist branches as well, for example, the Hutterites and the Amish. They all refuse to perform any type of military service and they all try to distance themselves from the modern world.

Both of these types of extremism are Christian and thus they share the common Christian linear conception of time. There is the beginning of time and the end of time. Time started with the creation of the world and it moves in the direction of its end. Therefore, the belief in eschaton, in the end of time and of the whole world is common to practically all branches of Christianity. The expectation of the eschaton in the near future is a common characteristic of both of these types of Christian extremism. In a way it is their precondition.

The other common element in these two cases is that there was a massive aggressive interference from outside. In the case of the Russian Old Believers the brutal realisation of the liturgical reforms and the attempts to convert the resistant Christians by force to the reformed worship and piety was an important factor that led to the most extreme behaviour of the Old Believers – to their self-immolation. In the case of the Taiping movement it was the attempt of the local authorities to suppress the movement that actually turned movement's activities into military counteractions and thus helped to transform the movement into a new militarized society. Thus it is likely that neither of the movements practised *an sich* extremist actions. Their extremism in actions was merely their reactions to the no less extremist attempts to destroy these movements taken by the state authorities.

Why was the extremism in the case of the Taiping movement directed towards the outside, towards the others, and why in the case of the Russian Old Believers the extremism was directed towards the inside, towards themselves? Presumably there were many historical, social, ideological, etc., reasons. Here I would like to point at one difference in the theological thinking of these two extremist Christian movements. It seems that it can give at least a partial explanation of this difference of their extremist behaviour.

The Taiping movement was centred on particular persons. Especially the person of Hong played a central role here. Besides, he was not regarded as an ordinary, earthly human being. Although he was not considered God, nevertheless he was a sort of heavenly being. He was God's Chinese son and the younger brother of Jesus according to his followers. Hong was one of the main characters in the great apocalyptic play. His task was to destroy demons, to lead his army to victory and to save humanity. He was the general in the apocalyptic battle and an eschatological figure. Its victorious end would also be the end of history. To fulfil this task, he was made able to do it, at least according to his followers.

There is no positive eschatological figure in the apocalyptic view of the Russian Old Believers. However, there are a number of outstanding characters in the story of this movement, the most famous of them, the protopope Avvakum, was one of the initiators of the movement. But he is a fully human being even for the Old Believers. His celebrated autobiography is popular among his followers. This is a story of a real historical human being, not a story of a divine or even of a semi-mythological hero. Had Avvakum been deified by his supporters, his autobiography as a very human story could not be valued by them. Gods and semi-gods do not write about their fully human aspirations and doubts.

Yet there was at least one eschatological character in the apocalyptic world of the Russian Old Believers. This fully negative figure plays an important role according to the traditional Christian eschatological drama. This was the antichrist, the opponent of God. Although some Russian Old Believers did identify the antichrist either with patriarch Nikon or with one or another of the Russian tsars, nevertheless according to most of the Old Believers these historical figures were not actually the incarnations of the antichrist. According to the mainstream Old Believers' understanding the eschatological time had arrived. In this end time the world was ruled by the antichrist. But according to their understanding this did not mean that the antichrist was really present in the world. Rather the antichrist ruled spiritually.<sup>29</sup> It is in some way like the Christian understanding of the spiritual rule of Christ in the world. This means that nobody in history – neither a particular person nor a social group – can be identified with the antichrist. In other words, the enemy is not inside the physical or historical world and Christians cannot fight with ordinary weapons against him. Therefore there is no theological sense in destroying anybody in the world.

The Russian Old Believers emphasised the distinction between the transcendence and the immanence, between this-worldliness and other-worldliness. The antichrist is a transcendent being. This means that he is not in this world. But it also means that as a transcendent being he is much stronger than the human beings. He is not a match to human beings, even to heroes. Avvakum was not fighting with the antichrist. Fighting the antichrist is actually not a human job. It is God's job. Only God is able to fight against the antichrist and defeat him. The only way that Christians can resist the rule of the antichrist is to withdraw into the wilderness. But as we saw, there was a more extreme way – escaping this world altogether, committing self-immolation.

According to Taiping Christianity the eschatological enemy was the Manchu dynasty, i. e., the state. The enemy was historical, a physically existing group of people. And it was the job of Taiping Christians to fight against them. Thus the enemy was not transcendent, it was rather this-worldly, and it

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<sup>29</sup> Hollberg 1994, pp. 169f.

was immanent. Destroying the enemy, the demons, was the precondition for building the heaven on earth. Thus the final aim of the Taiping Christians was the building of the heavenly kingdom on the earth. Although for this task they needed divine help, nevertheless it was a human job.

The enemy, the demons were earthly beings. But according to Hong's theology not only the demons were immanent, earthly beings but the heavenly kingdom was also achievable on the earth. It was to be an earthly, historical reality. But even more – actually God also was in some way immanent, an almost physical being. God could enter into this world and he could abide in this world. He is a tangible person. At least so Hong believed. For him and his followers the transcendence and the immanence, the heaven and the earth, the divine and the mundane are not as opposite as they are in the Russian Old Believers theology. The Taiping God is a humanized God.<sup>30</sup>

For the Russian Old Believers' theology the cleavage between the human and the divine is enormous. The principal apocalyptic events happen in the transcendent world, outside the created world. A human being cannot take part in it, they cannot contribute to it. It is beyond human reach. For Taiping theology the cleavage is not unbridgeable, the divine and the human realms exist beside each other. In a way they inhabit the same world.

On the basis of this limited study of the two Christian extremist cases one can conjecture that some elements of the theological thinking influence the ways of the eschatological extremism, whether it is directed towards the outside or towards the inside.

### **Conclusion: Utopias and Dystopias**

In this article I have addressed two types of Christian extremism. In both cases quite a large groups of believers were expecting the imminent arrival of the end of time, the eschaton. Actually millions, or even tens of millions of people were involved in these events. In one case people participated in the creation of the expected heavenly kingdom. Actually they were the main creators or attempted to be the main creators. At the head of this movement was a God-sent king, a heavenly figure. Building a heavenly kingdom was a human business, human beings were capable of this achievement. They thought in this way. Using modern secular terms we can say that they were building a utopian society. The result of this attempt was a disaster, a totalitarian antihuman society. The result of the building of a utopia was quite the opposite. The result was a dystopia.

In the second case the Russian Old Believers did not consider it humanly possible to create a heavenly kingdom upon the earth. For them the building

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<sup>30</sup> Spence 1996, p. 222.

of it was God's job. Believing that the antichrist was ruling upon the earth, they prepared themselves for the kingdom of the antichrist. *Cum grano salis* we may say that according to their understanding they were entering the dystopia, a totalitarian hell, against their own will, of course – at least so they understood the world. The real history of the Old Believers up to the present has not been easy. But there have been periods when the state has tolerated their existence, when their communities have prospered, when they have had the freedom to worship and to live as they have considered right. Thus they have had times in history that they could call God's blessing. Using modern terms we can say that they have experienced a utopia, or at least something that was not very far from utopia.

The aim of this article is not to study the other cases that are more or less relevant to these two types and that I have cursory indicated earlier. But it seems that the monks and the radical Anabaptists that have tried to evade the dystopias, the non-Christian world as understood by them, have also at least sometimes created for themselves some sorts of Christian utopias in their own terms. On the other side these radical and militant Anabaptist, sects and extremist movements that have tried to build the heavenly kingdom or in modern terms, utopia in the world, have usually arrived to real dystopia.

Both a withdrawal from, and an attack upon the others can be extremist actions. In the first case the result is usually a sort of heaven, the result of the second case is usually a hell.

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**PART III:  
SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST  
PERSPECTIVES**



# STEREOTYPES THAT DEFINE “US”: THE CASE OF MUSLIM WOMEN

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**ABSTRACT.** In Western political rhetoric the veil has become the epitome of oppression of Muslim women. Several countries have gone so far as to prohibit different articles of clothing associated with Islam. This article argues that these regulations are based on two flawed assumptions about Islam and Muslim women in particular. They assume, firstly, that these women are forced to wear Muslim religious clothing and thus need to be saved and, secondly, that these practices conflict with some predefined understanding of “Western values”. In light of these images, this article calls for a more nuanced understanding of these practices and emphasizes the need to let the subaltern speak for themselves.

**Key words:** *stereotypes, Muslim women, hijab, burqa, regulation of religious practices, politics of identity.*

In the last decade, discussions about the necessity of regulating, as well as actually regulating, traditions associated with Islam have become widespread in Western European countries. Examples can be drawn from several places:

- in Belgium, wearing clothing covering one’s face in public was unanimously banned in 2010, citing security reasons;<sup>1</sup>
- in Germany, 8 out of 16 states introduced restrictions from 2004 on wearing religiously meaningful symbols and clothing, while several of them (e.g. Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg) make exceptions for “Christian-Western” clothing and symbols (including nuns’ habits);<sup>2</sup>
- in France, wearing visible religious symbols (including Islamic headscarves and “large Christian crosses”) was banned in state schools in 2004, officially for reasons of safeguarding and implementing French secularism (*laïcité*);<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Belgian lawmakers pass burka ban. BBC. 30.04.2010. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8652861.stm>>, (15.05.2011).

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Watch. 2009. Discrimination in the Name of Neutrality. <<http://www.hrw.org/en/node/80829>>, (17.05.2011). Here section IV.

<sup>3</sup> French headscarf ban opens rifts. BBC. 11.02.2004. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3478895.stm>>, (15.05.2011).

- again in France, a law banning clothing items covering the face and body (i.e., niqabs and burqas<sup>4</sup>) from schools, hospitals and public transport took effect in 2011, with punishments directed towards both women who do wear the banned clothing and men who (presumably) have forced them into doing so.<sup>5</sup>

The list goes on, indicating pan-European concern about Islamic dress. But state regulation of Islamic symbols has not been limited to clothing: in 2009 building new minarets was prohibited in Switzerland (until then a total of four minarets existed in Switzerland), accompanied by a large-scale campaign centred around an image of the country bristling with symbolically rocket-shaped minarets.<sup>6</sup>

With these regulations in mind, it is necessary to ask: what kind of picture is painted of Islam in the “West”?<sup>7</sup> How accurate are these images? More specifically: how are Muslim women depicted in the West? Do these images correspond to reality? What do these images tell us about the West itself? This paper tries to provide some preliminary answers to these multifaceted questions by problematizing two of the basic assumptions that underpin this rhetoric of prohibition: one being patriarchal and the other being cultural.

In general, Islam seems to be associated with several fears, ideas and stereotypes in the eyes of Westerners. Hirschkind and Mahmood have cited as examples:

women wearing headscarves (now, *burqas*), the cutting off of hands and heads, massive crowds praying in unison, the imposition of a normative public morality grounded in a puritanical and legalistic interpretation of religious texts, a rejection and hatred of the West and its globalized culture, the desire

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<sup>4</sup> The niqab is an article of clothing that covers the mouth and nose (most often worn together with a jilbab); it is most popular in the countries of the Persian Gulf. The burqa refers commonly to an article of clothing that covers the whole body, leaving only an embroidered grill in front of the wearer’s eyes to see through (it is mostly associated with the Afghan chadri). The hijab refers in the European context to a scarf covering the head (thus leaving the face untouched) and comes in all kinds of colors; depending on the region it may be black (e.g., in Iran), bright (e.g., in Malaysia) or patterned (e.g., in Turkey). The articles of clothing worn by a particular person depend mostly on the tradition of Islam that is followed. See Sara Silvestri. 2010. Europe’s Muslims: burqa laws, women’s lives. – OpenDemocracy. <<http://www.opendemocracy.net/sara-silvestri/french-burqa-and-%E2%80%9Cmuslim-integration%E2%80%9D-in-europe>>, (05.05.2011).

<sup>5</sup> French Senate votes to ban Islamic full veil in public. BBC. 14.09.2010. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11305033>>, (15.05.2011).

<sup>6</sup> Swiss voters back ban on minarets. BBC. 29.11.2009. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8385069.stm>>, (15.05.2011).

<sup>7</sup> In the context of this paper, words like the “West” and “Western” belong in quotation marks, emphasizing the problematic nature of these kinds of labels. Some of these problems are discussed at length below.

to put aside history and return to a pristine past, and the quick recourse to violence against those who are different.<sup>8</sup>

The prevalence of such mental images is also demonstrated by media analyses<sup>9</sup> and surveys conducted in various Western European countries.<sup>10</sup> These reports indicate a widespread negative attitude towards people of Muslim faith, especially when it comes to locals (i.e., Muslims living in Western Europe). Such images have a very long history,<sup>11</sup> but these attitudes resurfaced after the events of 9/11 that have become the central symbol of Islamic fundamentalism.

A veiled Muslim woman has long been used as the epitome of the oppression and patriarchy of the Islamic world. This image has run through the media and politics as well as arts and literature. Although the burqa covering the whole body is rare even in most Muslim countries (an estimated 90% of Islamic women *do not* wear a burqa<sup>12</sup>), and especially so in Western European countries (about less than 2000 women wear a niqab in France<sup>13</sup> and an estimated 30 wear a burqa in Belgium<sup>14</sup>), one can rest assured that an article or news coverage touching upon Muslim topics in the European media is accompanied by a picture of a veiled woman. At the same time it is

<sup>8</sup> **Charles Hirschkind; Saba Mahmood.** *Feminism, the Taliban, and Politics of Counter-Insurgency.* – *Anthropological Quarterly*, 2/2002, pp. 339–354. Here p. 348. Italics in original.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. **Laura Navarro.** *Islamophobia and Sexism: Muslim Women in the Western Mass Media.* – *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 2/2010, pp. 95–114.

<sup>10</sup> For example, a survey conducted by Münster University, covering Germany, France, Denmark, the Netherlands and Portugal, found that about 80% of respondents thought that Islam in general discriminates against women, about 70% drew a direct link between Islam and fanaticism and about 60% between Islam and violence. See Detlef Pollack. 2010. *Studie "Wahrnehmung und Akzeptanz religiöser Vielfalt"*. <[http://www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/religion\\_und\\_politik/aktuelles/2010/12\\_2010/studie\\_wahrnehmung\\_und\\_akzeptanz\\_religioeser\\_vielfalt.pdf](http://www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/religion_und_politik/aktuelles/2010/12_2010/studie_wahrnehmung_und_akzeptanz_religioeser_vielfalt.pdf)>, (05.05.2011).

<sup>11</sup> See **Edward W. Said.** *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2003[1978]. **Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.** *Can the Subaltern Speak? – Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader.* Eds. Patrick Williams, Laura Chrisman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, pp. 66–111. For Western images of Muslim women throughout history see **Leila Ahmed.** *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, pp. 144–168. For a background on the French law of 2004 see Navarro 2010, pp. 107–109.

<sup>12</sup> **Leila Ahmed.** 2006. *Muslim Women and Other Misunderstandings.* An interview with Leila Ahmed. <[http://download.publicradio.org/podcast/speakingoffaith/20061207\\_muslim-women.mp3](http://download.publicradio.org/podcast/speakingoffaith/20061207_muslim-women.mp3)>, (26.11.2010).

<sup>13</sup> French Senate votes... 2010. According to different sources there are about 3.7 – 5 million Muslims living in France, being therefore the largest Muslim community in Europe. The niqab or burqa is worn by about 0.04–0.05 percent of them. The proportion of these Muslims that are even religious is not known.

<sup>14</sup> Belgian lawmakers... 2010.

generally assumed that she is forced into wearing it, that she is humiliated by wearing it and has no choice to do otherwise.

In this context, this article argues that Western discourse about the Islamic veil (or other Muslim symbols) is actually hardly about clothing at all. It is rather a political and identitarian question, not a discourse directed against certain types of religious dogma or a “clash of civilizations”. The question of the veil thus attests to the changing role of religion in contemporary societies:

religious debates and conflicts are no longer primarily waged over matters of belief, the true god, salvation, or other substantive issues of faith, as they once were; it is instead religion as the basis of identity and identitarian cultural practices – with co-religionists constituting a community, nation, or “civilization” – that comes to be the ground of difference and thus conflict.<sup>15</sup>

The question of burqas and headscarves is thus distinctly political, exemplifying the attempts to (re)construct identity and safeguard its boundaries by constituting a feared or even demonized “Other”.

The aforementioned bans and regulations contain two central assumptions, one emphasizing the patriarchal and the other the cultural dimension that will come under discussion below. Firstly, if women wearing Islamic garments had a choice they would not wear a headscarf, niqab, burqa or any such clothing. That is to say, it is assumed that these women are oppressed or even enslaved and need to be saved or forcibly emancipated. Secondly, the continued toleration of Islamic symbols has a negative effect on “European” (or, more generally, “Western”) culture and values (e.g., secularism, nation-state, etc.). In other words, it is assumed that Islam in itself is incompatible with some kind of coherent understanding of “being Western”.

### **The emancipation of Muslim women**

The goal of the emancipation of women has been used in political rhetoric for both justifying the prohibition of Islamic dress<sup>16</sup> and starting the war in Afghanistan in 2001<sup>17</sup>. This kind of discourse, however, ignores at least three interconnected aspects of Islamic dress and the women wearing it. Firstly, these women are discursively deprived of their free will. Secondly, the context and history that give meaning to the practices under discussion are ignored. Thirdly, a black-and-white contrast between the situations of women from

<sup>15</sup> **Rajeswari Sunder Rajan; Anuradha Dingwaney Needham** (eds.). *The Crisis of Secularism in India*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007, pp. 2–3.

<sup>16</sup> E.g., Sarkozy speaks out against burka. BBC. 22.06.2009. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8112821.stm>>, (15.05.2011).

<sup>17</sup> E.g., Laura Bush. 2001. Radio Address by Mrs. Bush. 17.11.2001. <<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011117.html>>, (29.11.2010).

Western countries and women from Islamic traditions emerges, making one look free and the other in bondage. In the following text these images will be examined further.

The question of whether Muslim women need to be "saved" from the burqa and other Islamic clothing items is closely related to the everlasting structure-versus-agency debate. Is it social structure (i.e., societal norms, values, expectations) that coerces Muslim women to wear such clothing against their will? Or is it their free choice? As always, the social world does not follow any binary rules. Instead, the real situation is always dialectical and interdependent: nothing is the mere result of the structure and nothing is absolutely open to free will.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the subject is inevitably constrained by the social milieu and yet always has some freedom of action to change his or her environment. In this context, there can be no distinction between one's "true" desires as opposed to societal pressures – the two are inseparable.

Several social scientists who have studied and/or themselves grown up in Islamic communities have argued that wearing a headscarf should not be directly taken as a lack of free will,<sup>19</sup> as is usually done by Western discourses that portray Muslim women as passive and oppressed. According to Saba Mahmood in her ethnography on the grassroots women's piety movement in the mosques of Cairo in Egypt, most women make the decision to wear a headscarf (or other such items of clothing) independently and "freely" (i.e., as freely as one can make decisions in the context of a societal structure) as a sign of their piety, modesty and morality.<sup>20</sup> For the women who participated in Mahmood's study, the practice of veiling oneself was inseparable from their desire to live piously and virtuously, and the different versions of the Islamic dress were seen as instruments that help to achieve that. The veil can therefore be a symbol of opportunity and freedom, rather than one of oppression and powerlessness.

The same is confirmed by Lila Abu-Lughod's ethnography of a Bedouin community in Egypt where the practice of veiling is seen as "a voluntary act by women who are deeply committed to being moral and have a sense of

<sup>18</sup> For some theoretical background see **Peter L. Berger; Thomas Luckmann**. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books, 1967. Pierre Bourdieu. *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

<sup>19</sup> **Lila Abu-Lughod**. 2006. *The Muslim woman: The power of images and the danger of piety*. – Eurozine. <<http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2006-09-01-abulughod-en.html>>, (01.05.2011). Ahmed 2006. Saba Mahmood. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Mahmood 2005, ch. 5. This kind of piety and modesty in everyday practices is called hijab (meaning literally a curtain or a cover) in Arabic. This applies to both men and women. In the West, however, this word is commonly defined very narrowly, referring distinctly to the women's head garment.

honour tied to family”<sup>21</sup>. Also, women themselves choose when and for whom they veil and for whom they do not<sup>22</sup> – it is, thus, not a strictly regulated practice but rather a way of showing respect and modesty depending on the social context. To complicate the common view even more, the practice of wearing Islamic modest dress can even be seen as “a sign of educated urban sophistication, a sort of modernity”<sup>23</sup>, as opposed to being one of traditionalism and lack of good education. Although these examples are drawn from Egypt, they do demonstrate the manifold meanings that different religious items of clothing can convey. Tying these practices unequivocally with passivity and coercion is therefore rather arbitrary.

Examples of studies giving a voice to Muslim women themselves are rather scarce in Western Europe. One very telling exception, however, is a study conducted by the Open Society Foundations in France where 32 women wearing full-face veils (i.e., niqabs) were given the opportunity to speak openly about their reasons for wearing it. In the case of these women, similarly to the ones in Egypt, they “adopted the full-face veil as part of a spiritual journey”<sup>24</sup>. Some also explained their choice by describing the aesthetic nature of the veil, while others cited unwanted male attention as a factor.<sup>25</sup> One young woman somewhat curiously chose to wear a niqab instead of a headscarf simply to avoid being recognized by her parents and their friends from whom she wanted to conceal her conversion to Islam.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to achieving piety and virtue, the practice of wearing headscarves and niqabs in Western Europe has also been associated with a reaction against the more assimilated life-styles of one’s parents and against “the rigid policies of a state that insists on dictating the ways in which personal practices of religious piety should appear in public”<sup>27</sup>. The prohibition of these practices can thus even be counter-productive, forcing more women to wear them simply out of protest.

<sup>21</sup> **Lila Abu-Lughod**. Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others. – *American Anthropologist*, 3/2002, pp. 783–790. Here p. 786.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Open Society Foundations. 2011. Unveiling the Truth: Why 32 Muslim Women Wear the Full-face Veil in France. <[http://www.soros.org/initiatives/home/articles\\_publications/publications/unveiling-the-truth-20110411/a-unveiling-the-truth-20100510.pdf](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/home/articles_publications/publications/unveiling-the-truth-20110411/a-unveiling-the-truth-20100510.pdf)>, (17.05.2011). Here p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>27</sup> Hirschkind & Mahmood 2002, p. 352. See also Navarro 2010, p. 101. How else could one explain, for example, the sincere wish of two French atheists’ daughters to wear an Islamic headscarf? Jewish dad backs headscarf daughters. BBC. 01.10.2003. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3149588.stm>>, (15.05.2011).

The reasons for veiling oneself are therefore very wide-ranging and rather personal. In addition to piety and virtue, wearing different Islamic garments can convey very different meanings: from avoiding being objectified by men to provoking the rest of society, thus making it a highly contextual practice. As the above examples demonstrate, women from both Muslim and Western countries wear Islamic garments for reasons that cannot be labelled as simply "coercive" or "oppressive". While real coercion has happened as well – most notably in Afghanistan under Taliban rule<sup>28</sup> – the reasons for wearing headscarves are more varied than normally believed. These examples thus cast serious doubt on the usual liberal conception of freedom that is so often used in Western rhetoric as it blurs the distinction between societal norms and one's "real" desires.<sup>29</sup> Can one then *assume* that these women are coerced into or oppressed by wearing these garments?

This question can also be approached from a different angle by asking: are *Western* women free in their choice of clothing or are their choices also governed to some degree by cultural-societal norms and expectations? It is here that Lila Abu-Lughod's ironic question, mimicking the Western way of thinking about these issues, is very telling: "Did we expect that once 'free' from the Taliban [Afghani women] would go 'back' to belly shirts and blue jeans, or dust off their Chanel suits?"<sup>30</sup> That is, is it belly shirts and blue jeans that make us free? Are not both Islamic and Western women (and men) suffering from the "tyranny of fashion"? Why should it be that Muslim women are more coerced into it as opposed to "Western women"?

It is in this context that it becomes truly justifiable to ask how representative and accurate images of Muslim women are in Western countries. As has been asked again by Abu-Lughod, would it be representative of Westerners "if magazines and newspapers in Syria or Malaysia were to put bikini-clad women or Madonna on every magazine cover that featured an article about the United States or a European country"?<sup>31</sup> As pointed out earlier, only a small fraction of Muslim women wear dresses that cover them from head to toe and these pieces of clothing are especially rare in Western countries. The same could be assumed about wearing bikinis and overly sexualized Madonna-style clothing in the West. Instead, people from both Western

<sup>28</sup> Yet even in this context burqa has been seen by some as a liberating piece of clothing since it enabled women to walk in public spaces (thus liberating only in the context of a strictly segregated society). See Abu-Lughod 2006.

<sup>29</sup> For a longer discussion on these questions see Mahmood 2005, ch. 1 and pp. 148–152.

<sup>30</sup> Abu-Lughod 2002, p. 785. One example of the discourse that Abu-Lughod caricatures is given by French feminist Elizabeth Badinter: "The veil... is the symbol of the oppression of a sex. Putting on torn jeans, wearing yellow, green, or blue hair, this is an act of freedom with regard to social conventions. Putting a veil on the head, this is an act of submission." Cited from Hirschkind & Mahmood 2002, p. 352.

<sup>31</sup> Abu-Lughod 2006.

countries and Muslim communities wear very different articles of clothing and follow diverse norms of dress; it would be thus impossible to single out one representative piece of clothing from either.

Yet this is exactly what is done regarding Muslim women. As has been demonstrated by many social scientists studying the images of Islam in the West, Muslim women are mostly portrayed in the Western mainstream media in three particular ways: as passive, as victims and/or as veiled.<sup>32</sup> These stereotypes are reinforced by the fact that in news about the Muslim community or especially about Muslim women they themselves are hardly ever given the chance to express their opinions<sup>33</sup> – the discourse is *about* them, but not *with* them. Instead of seeing them as active, i.e., able to speak for themselves and for their community, they are usually portrayed as passive, “lacking individual or personal attributes”<sup>34</sup>.

This attitude from the news media thus reflects underlying societal stereotypes about Muslim women but, at the same time, helps to perpetuate itself by potentially marginalizing these women even further. Moreover, the current marginalized situation of Muslim women “tends to be explained almost exclusively according to theories on Islamic culture”<sup>35</sup>. It is therefore not different socio-economic inequalities or identity politics that are portrayed as the reason for the position of Muslim women; the reason is rather shown to be Islam itself.

Another aspect of this story, besides the real diversity of significance of the veil and the way it is used to portray Muslim women, is the hypocrisy of these images. In short, this attitude could be entitled “emancipation abroad, justification at home”. From colonial history, the most infamous example of such hypocrisy is the case of Evelyn Baring who was the British consul general in Egypt from 1883. In his day he was one of the most vocal proponents of the need to unveil Muslim women, regarding the veil as the “first and foremost” symbol of the inferior status of Islam (as opposed to Christianity).<sup>36</sup> This kind of view about Islam was not, of course, anything unheard of or surprising at the time; it rather belonged to the political mainstream. What is interesting however is that Baring who was the fiercest champion of the

<sup>32</sup> Navarro 2010, p. 100. See also Gema Martín-Muñoz. 2002. Islam’s women under Western eyes. – OpenDemocracy. <[http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe\\_islam/article\\_498.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/article_498.jsp)>, (05.01.2011).

<sup>33</sup> Navarro 2010, pp. 100–101.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>36</sup> Ahmed 1992, pp. 152–154. Ahmed 2006. Markha G. Valenta. How to Recognize a Moslem When You See One: Western Secularism and the Politics of Conversion. – Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World. Eds. Hent de Vries, Lawrence E. Sullivan. New York: Fordham University Press, 2006, pp. 444–474. Here p. 456.

unveiling of Egyptian women was also, back in England, a founding member and sometime president of the Men's League for Opposing Women's Suffrage (founded in 1909).

This is only one example of how Victorian colonial power modified feminist ideas for their own imperialist ones. As Leila Ahmed put nicely: "Feminism on the home front and feminism directed against white men was to be resisted and suppressed; but, taken abroad and directed against the cultures of colonized peoples, it could be promoted in ways that admirably served and furthered the project of the dominance of the white man"<sup>37</sup>. The question, then, was and still is about power, not about the freedom of women. (It should also be noted that Victorian dress was anything but "emancipating" at the time.)

This predominantly patriarchal character of both Western and Muslim cultures has not changed over the last century. As many contemporary studies on the position of women in Western societies conclude, sexual harassment and violence directed against women has no religion or skin colour; i.e., it can be found in every society or, more specifically, in every sector of every society.<sup>38</sup> This problem of the position of women is thus a global issue not confined to any one culture or era. But why is so much attention directed against one (perceived) expression of power over women's bodies, while so little attention is paid to the global problem of violence against women?<sup>39</sup> The question of veiling is once again about Islam, the cultural "Other", not about "saving" Muslim women.

To conclude, it should not be in any way ignored how women are suppressed, citing some cultural or religious norms or customs. But what should be borne in mind is that this kind of discursive or physical repression occurs and is a problem in *both* Western and Muslim communities. What is crucial in this respect is the question of what to count and what not to count as an expression of oppression. This question, however, should be answered by the

<sup>37</sup> Ahmed 1992, p. 153.

<sup>38</sup> See Group of Specialists for combating violence against women. 2000. Plan of Action for combating violence against women. The Council of Europe. <[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/violence-against-women/EG-S-VL\(97\)1\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/violence-against-women/EG-S-VL(97)1_en.pdf)>, (17.05.2011). Here pp. 16–25. For the prevalence of the various types of violence against women in France see **Maryse Jaspard**; the ENVEFF group. *Nommer et compter les violences envers les femmes: une première enquête nationale en France*. – *Population & Sociétés*, 364/2001, pp. 1–4.

<sup>39</sup> As Markha Valenta has forcefully put it: "While a veil on the heads of a handful of girls is perceived throughout much of continental Western Europe as having the potential to undermine the West's hard-fought democratic values, the continued battering of women – much like the lucrative traffic in Eastern European women, girls, and boys forced into prostitution – apparently poses little danger to European societies. /.../ At least it's not un-Western". Valenta 2006, p. 456.

respective women themselves and no-one else. The problem, then, lies in the way the West continually regards the post-colonial world and the people from it with an air of superiority. This kind of attitude results in a polarized image of the situation of women in these traditions and, therefore, a lack of attention to the real problems women face in either. What is needed is a contextual understanding of the practices under discussion, as opposed to top-down arbitrary interpretation.

This central point is very well spelled out by Saba Mahmood:

the liberatory goals of feminism should be rethought in light of the fact that the desire for freedom and liberation is a historically situated desire whose motivational force cannot be assumed a priori, but needs to be reconsidered in light of other desires, aspirations, and capacities that inhere in a culturally and historically located subject.<sup>40</sup>

In other words, women are different everywhere and the ones best aware of their particular problems are these women themselves. As seen from Mahmood's and Ahmed's ethnographies as well as from other studies of Islamic communities, the traditions and norms of Islam are criticized and adapted according to changing conditions also from within the Islamic tradition, just like different social movements (incl. feminists) have criticized and adapted different Western traditions. The rhetoric of "saving" someone should thus be abandoned if it fails to take into account the social context and cultural differences stemming from it.

### **The protection of Western values**

The second rhetorical device in the discourse of prohibition lies in "Western values" that need to be protected from the Islamic infiltration symbolized by women's dress.<sup>41</sup> But speaking of "Western" (or "European") values, culture, or even civilization leaves open the meaning of these concepts. It is assumed to be common sense, known to everyone without further explanation. But what *are* these "Western values" that need to be protected from Islam? At the risk of sounding banal, are there any common denominators that are shared by all Europeans which distinguish them from all non-Europeans? And furthermore, is there such a category as "real European" as opposed to all others? Or in the cultural sphere, is there such a thing as "authentic culture" that needs to be protected from all that is foreign or potentially "contaminating"?

To start with, one needs to problematize the big concepts used above: namely "values", "culture" and "civilization". None of these notions has a

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<sup>40</sup> Saba Mahmood. *Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival*. – *Cultural Anthropology*, 2/2001, pp. 202–236. Here p. 223.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. Swiss voters back... 2009; and French Senate votes... 2010.

clear and non-controversial definition. Rather, these are all ambiguous and all-encompassing words, mostly used as cognitive shortcuts to very abstract concepts and ideas.

Let us take the example of "culture". In common understanding it refers to a distinct and coherent set of traditions, social norms, practices, shared beliefs and attitudes. In the real world, however, it would be extremely difficult to pinpoint what "belongs" or does not belong to a particular culture, or where one culture ends and another begins. What is more, culture is not something static, homogenous, delineated, or primordial – even though this is the way the concept of culture is usually perceived. Cultures have rather formed (and will continue to form) through different contacts with and influences from other cultures, all of which are dynamic from the inside out.<sup>42</sup> There is thus no single origin of any culture and its transformation is constant and perpetual. As a consequence, as argued by Jean and John L. Comaroff,

[c]ulture always contains within it polyvalent, potentially contestable messages, images, and actions. It is, in short, a historically situated, historically unfolding ensemble of signifiers-in-action, signifiers at once material and symbolic, social and aesthetic.<sup>43</sup>

The rhetoric of cultural authenticity, which is implied by the necessity to protect it from outside influence, is thus more of a political doctrine, creating the illusion of a coherent and static tradition. This perceived unity, however, does not exist outside these power relations that have created it.<sup>44</sup> In other words, it is only by the use of power that the regular flow of time is fixed within definite boundaries, creating the image of a static cultural tradition. Thus, the Thomas theorem applies here: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences"<sup>45</sup>. Therefore, one culture is conceptually distinct and different from another culture plainly because it is conceived that way

<sup>42</sup> In the context of Islamic headscarves it is interesting to note that the practice of wearing them has come to Islam from Christianity. See Ahmed 2006. For more on the common roots of Islam and Christianity that lead to Ancient Greece, see Talal Asad. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003, pp. 168–169.

<sup>43</sup> **John L. Comaroff; Jean Comaroff**. *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992, p. 27. See also Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 1–18.

<sup>44</sup> For a longer discussion on the intersection of culture and power, see Comaroff & Comaroff 1992, ch. 1; and Ruth Marshall. *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009, ch. 1. For an ontological background, see **Ernesto Laclau; Chantal Mouffe**. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso, 2001[1985], ch. 3.

<sup>45</sup> **Jan Kubik**. *Ethnography of Politics: Foundations, Applications, Prospects*. – *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*. Ed. Edward Schatz. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009, pp. 25–52. Here p. 38.

discursively. This discourse, however, is always closely entangled in power relations.

What does this conceptual question have to do with “Western values” and their relationship with Islam? As Edward W. Said has very thoroughly demonstrated, “the Orient” and “the Occident” (which are themselves very problematic notions) are indeed products of a type of discourse – they are political ideas rather than essentialist starting points.<sup>46</sup> It is the orientalist discourse from such figures as Gustave Flaubert to Bernard Lewis, perceiving the Orient as unchanging and completely different from the West, that has created the “Other” for the Western world; the “Other” to define oneself by.<sup>47</sup> Because of this, “[t]he relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of complex hegemony”.<sup>48</sup>

In other words, there is nothing natural about how the Orient and Islam in particular are perceived in the contemporary Western world – it is a question of power, rather than that of objective description. This binary opposition therefore does not hold water. It is, rather, a result of certain discourses that function *as if* such clear-cut opposition exists, ignoring at the same time the real diversity on both “sides”, or the very absence of this kind of cultural boundary. What is important in this context, however, is that these kinds of perceptions, in addition to mirroring underlying power relationships, also shape and structure the lives of many people affected by these images, including Muslim women living in Western Europe. The case of Evelyn Baring, outlined above, is another case in point.

It is out of these power relations that the images discussed earlier have originated, structuring the lifeworlds in both the East and the West in turn. Consequently, the main question should not be about the *content* of the Western values, as such essence is only an illusion embedded in power relations, but, paraphrasing Talal Asad’s argument about the concept of modernity, “why it has become hegemonic *as a political goal*, what consequences follow from that hegemony, and what social conditions maintain it”<sup>49</sup>. In other words, we should look for the ways in which this power over the “Other” is exercised through discourse: what kinds of images it is based on and what assumptions lie underneath it. This is exactly what this paper has attempted to do.

<sup>46</sup> Said 2003. See also Asad 2003, pp. 161–170.

<sup>47</sup> This is especially true after the collapse of the Soviet Union which had represented the primary image of the “Other” for Europe for nearly half a century.

<sup>48</sup> Said 2003, p. 5. The notion of hegemony, to use Comaroff’s lucid definition, refers to “that order of signs and material practices, drawn from a specific cultural field, that come to be taken for granted as the natural, universal, and true shape of social being – although its infusion into local worlds, always liable to challenge by the logic of prevailing cultural forms, is never automatic”. Comaroff & Comaroff 1992, p. 28.

<sup>49</sup> Asad 2003, p. 13. Emphasis in original.

Due to the nature of concepts like "culture", "values" and "civilization" it can be seen that the "problem" of Islamic headscarves in Europe today is purely political; it is not about some cultural or civilizational difference. It is based on an arbitrary boundary drawn between "us" and "them", "authentic Europeans" and "immigrants",<sup>50</sup> "Western secularists" and "Muslim fundamentalists" with the purpose of "returning" to some conception of a "pure" past that has never existed.<sup>51</sup> Images of Islamic headscarves or full-face veils, so popular in contemporary Europe, thus function as constant mental reminders of the perceived threat "our" way of life is under, at the same time reinforcing these images in return. The very *existence* of this threat, however, is never questioned.

The most obvious example of these "Western values" under threat is the concern over secularism. This notion itself is, of course, very broad and multifaceted, but also too abstract to be attributed only to one "civilization". Therefore, is secularism really a "Western value" common to all countries and societies deemed "Western"? Examples from the real world, once again, refute such simplistic interpretations: there are many countries with Muslim majorities that are formally secular (e.g., Syria and Turkey<sup>52</sup>) while many European countries still officially have state religions (e.g., United Kingdom, Norway and Greece). It is, then, hardly anything distinctive or even common to the West, while the same could also be said about ideas like freedom, equality and democracy.

When delving deeper into this rationale for restricting women's dress, more questions emerge. Obviously the question of whether Islamic headscarves or veils are at odds with the principles of secularism depends largely on the definition of secularism one uses. Is it simply the absence of state religion or is it something deeper, implying enforced dereligionization as in contemporary France? As seen from some of the examples discussed at the beginning of this article, it is, again, a matter of interpretation. The French legislation from 2004, for example, banned all visible religious symbols including skullcaps, large Christian crosses and all Islamic headwear, thus leaving room for symbols like small crosses and small Stars of David. The exact size of a large or small cross remains open to interpretation. In addition to being targeted rather clearly against particular pieces of clothing, such bans also raise the question:

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<sup>50</sup> For more on the dichotomy of "autochthonous" people and immigrants in the Netherlands see Peter Geschiere. *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009, ch. 5.

<sup>51</sup> This conception of cultural purity thus functions as an empty signifier, to use Ernesto Laclau's term. According to him, societies are always organized and centered on the basis of some unachievable ideals. "Although the fullness and universality of society is unachievable, its need does not disappear: it will always show itself through the presence of its absence". Ernesto Laclau. *Emancipation(s)*. London: Verso, 1996, p. 53.

<sup>52</sup> Both of these countries have also imposed restrictions on the women's dress.

what exactly is “secular clothing”? Taking into account the fundamentally dynamic and hybrid nature of cultures and such values, it is impossible to tell. Or, to be more exact, it would be possible only in an arbitrary way from the position of power.

## Conclusion

As seen from the above discussion, the European fear of Islam is largely based on symbols and images that have little to do with the situation on the ground. These images, however, have very deep roots, reaching down into colonial policies, cultural history and patterns of immigration. Contemporary bans on and regulation of all things perceived to be Islamic mirror these deeply embedded false images of that religion and the people identifying with it.

The veil is one of these symbols used to incite fear of Islam in Europe. As argued earlier, however, it is used in such a way mainly for purposes of power, not for that of “freeing women”. And yet the burqa has become the “face of Islam” in the West as if it represented the whole way of life associated with Islam. Therefore, for the reasons explained above, Westerners should seriously call into question everything they think they know about Islam and instead let the subaltern speak.<sup>53</sup> This current obsession with Muslim clothing and headwear leads, at best, only to a very limited understanding of hundreds of millions of people worldwide, especially if this obsession is coupled with stereotypical images entangled with power relations. All too often one forgets that these images and the political discourses that rely on them also have very real consequences for Muslim women whose freedom of choice is restricted by the patriarchal systems they live in, be it either Western or Muslim. Rather than focusing attention on the fight over symbols like veils or headscarves, more serious attention should be paid to the broader problems of patriarchy and racism that shape life on both sides of the imagined boundary between the East and the West.

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<sup>53</sup> This phrase has become famous from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s work. See Spivak 1994.

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# RELIGION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CULTURAL 'SELF' AND 'OTHER'

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**ABSTRACT.** From the social constructionist perspective, cultural differences are neither good nor bad, unless effectively constructed as such. The article sketches a pattern of the process of the construction of clashing cultural identities, which helps the understanding of the empirical paradox, why the apparently 'most religious' conflicts are usually the ones which are accompanied by the greatest economic, political and social fears, grievances and vulnerabilities.

The process of construction of a cultural 'Other' is initiated by subjective feelings of insecurity, chaos and vulnerability. As a rule, the negative subjective feelings are caused by social, economical and political concerns, the ensuing conflict, however, is constructed based on cultural identities. It is made meaningful by a reliance on religious or ideological values, beliefs, myths and narratives, and is framed with general moral binaries (such as 'good' and 'evil').

From the functional perspective, the representation of the negative cultural 'Other' fosters social integration, helps to avoid a sense of chaos and maintains the positive feeling of national identity. In general, religion and ideology fulfill the same cultural and political function and offer a similar variety of types (moderate and radical) of functions. Religion is more efficient than ideology in extraordinary and long-lasting crises.

In Western societies, the role of religion as belief has lost its cultural relevancy, but religion as a cultural symbol of identity has remained functional both in construction of 'Self' and 'Other'.

**Key words:** *social construction of reality, cultural representation of 'Self' and 'Other', social commonsense, social belief system, 'scapegoating', religious symbols in cultural identity.*

At some point of time, we probably have asked ourselves, or have heard our co-patriots ask: "Who are we?" This question is not about an identity of a particular group or about a geometric mean from the total sum of individuals. 'We' refers symbolically – certainly imaginarily and artificially, if not mythically and fictitiously – to 'Us' as a culture. At times, we also hear debates over ideas and values, acts and behaviors, which undermine our cultural values and threaten our cultural self-identity either internally or externally.

In order to analyze religion in the construction of the cultural ‘Us’ (“who we are”) and ‘Other’ (those who define ‘Us’ by being “who we are not”), it is proper to start with a theoretical outline of the processes of the social construction of reality.

### **Social Construction of ‘Us’ and ‘Other’**

We are social beings irrespective of the intensity of our belief in individualism. We live in an era of an expressive individualism. In affluent societies, more individuals follow individualist, secular and post-materialist ‘self-expression’ values. Since the Enlightenment, we have believed in the moral autonomy of a rational Enlightened individual. Today we believe in an authenticity of the individual personality and in moral trueness of the subjective experience both as individuals and as groups. Yet, as humans, we are all social beings.

It is highly likely that for most of us individual freedom – at least when it means an individual responsibility for choices that influence and mold our individual existence – is rather an emotional burden than an occasion for psychological liberation.<sup>1</sup>

Presumably, a majority of us are by nature inclined to imitate and follow the norms and values of a group and a community rather than to be the ones who exert an autonomous influence on the latter. Even those of us who are by nature autonomous individuals can be reasonably considered as social beings. What do I mean?

Like animals, humans have an inbuilt desire for sex and food. Unlike animals, however, humans always construct the norms and values that culturally define and regulate the morally accepted sexual behavior and that of the consumption of food. The resulting cultural knowledge is a ‘common-sense knowledge’ and a ‘reality’ for members of society<sup>2</sup> irrespective of whether they are cognizant of the respective ideas and values, whether they agree or disagree, whether their behavior is in accordance or in discord with it.

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<sup>1</sup> Individuals may perceive freedom as both a blessing and a curse. Eric Hoffer argues that as the circumstances of the freedom of an individual make an individual himself responsible for his choices, and puts the whole blame of failure on his shoulders, freedom unavoidably multiplies frustration unless “a man has the talents to make something of himself”. Apparently, the majority of individuals do not crave for freedom as self-expression and self-realization, but for freedom “from the intolerable burden of an autonomous existence”. **Eric Hoffer**. *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*. New York: Harper & Row, 2010 (first print 1951), pp. 31, 142.

<sup>2</sup> In this article, the general conceptualization of the nature and processes of social construction of reality follows closely the theoretical observations of **Peter L. Berger, Thomas Luckmann**. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin Books, 1991 (first print 1966), here pp. 26–27.

The norms regulating both sexual relationships and diet vary through space and time. These norms are dynamical and changing, but for every efficiently functioning (i.e. cohesive, integrated, stable and ordered) society, these norms delineate the boundaries within which the specified behaviors and practices are legitimate. We know that the pattern of traditional marriage as the sole legitimate framework for sexual relations has recently extended to include pre- and extramarital affairs as legitimate forms of sexual relationship. In some cultures, the partnership of homosexual couples has been elevated to the status equal to traditional marriage. In the latter, the marriage of homosexuals is an accepted and established description of 'social reality' as in other societies the non-existence of homosexual marriages.

As individuals, we may have different attitudes regarding the beliefs and values established in our social culture, but we all participate in the 'social stock of knowledge', which makes us aware of our social status, about our situation in society, its possibilities and limits. We also know that other members of society, who participate in the same 'social stock of knowledge', are able to locate us as individuals socially and are inclined to 'handle' us accordingly.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, when I perceive myself to belong to the middle class, I identify my social opportunities with others who belong to the same level of affluence. At the same time, I am aware of the social classes above and below the social stratum in which I belong. This 'stock of knowledge' is relevant only within the local society. If I were hypothetically to emigrate to foreign societies unfamiliar to me, let us say to Tanzania or Vietnam, at first, I would be ignorant of the local 'social stock of knowledge', and of my own social situation and its limits.<sup>4</sup>

The 'social stock of knowledge' regulates the socially accepted moral good. This, again, is a major difference from the animal world, where 'good', 'bad' and 'evil' are not consciously defined and constructed. Western societies do not tolerate cannibalism, do not usually accept the eating of the flesh of cats and dogs, and may consider the eating of horses a legitimate alternative for cultural minorities. Slavery, intra-communal violence and torture are illegitimate everywhere. Society-specific norms regulate prostitution, gender equality, the wearing of religious clothes in public institutions, homosexual marriages, and socioeconomic justice. Correspondingly, in every society certain phenomena are not tolerated. For the latter 'let us agree to disagree' does

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> In a real encounter with Tanzanian or Vietnamese culture, I do have some limited knowledge during and before my first experiences within the local cultural environment. For example, I have previously acquired some information regarding these cultures and I know from the start that I am a foreigner. By experience my 'social knowledge' will increase as soon as I get to know, how foreigners in these cultures are 'handled', how foreigners can communicate with the local people and the like.

not apply.<sup>5</sup> Contrariwise, *within* the limits of what is generally accepted, the members of society are expected to ‘agree to disagree’.

Thus, a kind of ‘working consensus’ over the values and norms regulates the inter-personal conduct and social relations within a given society. In order for a society to function effectively, these norms and values need to be *objectivated*, i.e. members of society need to perceive these norms as objective, self-evident and a generally valid truth about ‘reality’.<sup>6</sup> Deviating intellectuals and groups would sometimes wish to extend or restrict the boundaries of the legitimately tolerated and accepted values. Because these boundaries are *functionally* real, any questioning of the established social values involves strong emotions and convictions, and tends to result in passionate confrontations.<sup>7</sup> The social belief system is ‘objective’ for members of society, is ‘relativist’ historically and cross-culturally, and ‘relational’ to a specific agency, time and place (‘here and now’).<sup>8</sup>

This ‘social commonsense’ is an important base for political government. In order to rule effectively, every government, in addition to the instruments of coercion also needs “a social basis for control, with clear ideological supports”<sup>9</sup>. The essentially hegemonic social consensus, which in the Gramscian perspective is exerted by the hegemonic classes and organized by intellectuals, helps to produce and maintain ‘social conformism’.<sup>10</sup> Here, ‘intellectuals’ refers to religious, political, economic, and educational elites that dominate ideationally over the rest of the society through ‘moral and intellectual leadership’. These hegemonic social groups have what Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann have called a ‘power in society’, which “includes the power to determine the decisive socialization processes and, therefore, the power to *produce* reality”<sup>11</sup>. Accordingly, these groups, who are able to influence and control the socialization processes are the ones who control and define the hegemonic consensus.

<sup>5</sup> **Peter L. Berger.** Introduction: Between Relativism and Fundamentalism. – Between Relativism and Fundamentalism: religious resources for a middle position. Peter L. Berger (ed.) Cambridge: William Eerdmans, 2010, pp. 11, 12.

<sup>6</sup> **Berger, Luckmann** 1991, p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> **Jeffrey Stout.** The Contested Sacred: The Place of Passion in Politics. – Commonweal, November 5/2010, pp. 15–18.

<sup>8</sup> Relationism and perspectivism conceptualize knowledge neither as objective nor as relativist. Knowledge is always a knowledge from a specific perspective or from a certain position. **Berger, Luckmann** 1991, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> **Carlos Alberto Torres.** The Church, Society, and Hegemony: A Critical Sociology of Religion in Latin America. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1992, p. 42.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>11</sup> **Berger, Luckmann** 1991, p. 137.

The hegemonic consensus does not manifest itself necessarily in the dominance of an explicitly outlined idea or theory, the truthfulness whereof is constantly rationally tested. Contrariwise, usually the abstract, symbolical and implicit myths, beliefs and narratives guide the everyday behavior and reasoning of the members of the society. Social rather than empirical or scientific-rational support validates the commonsense knowledge of social reality.<sup>12</sup> Ideas become socially persuasive less by persuasion and rational proofs than by social confirmation, imitation and conformity. Social ideas are convincing not because of their rationally logical and valid content, but to the extent that other individuals and groups follow these ideas and take them for granted (i.e. when the social structure supports the plausibility of ideas). Accordingly, the ideas are most persuasive when followed by all and questioned by none. To put it differently, *conformity* produces *consensus*, not the other way round.

At times, some individuals, classes and groups do not agree with the socially dominant ideas. Any dissenting individual, however, needs to find a group of other individuals to assist him in maintaining his deviant definition of reality. A single individual may interrupt the world for the moment, yet in order to have an impact he needs to have the capability to win and hold the utmost loyalty of small group of devoted and able men.<sup>13</sup> Any deviating or revolutionary ideology needs a backing by a certain sub-society, sub-culture, which maintains the plausibility of the alternative definition of reality. As Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann observed:

“... no conspiracy can succeed without organization ... sub-universes require sub-societies as their objectivating base, and counter-definitions of reality require counter-societies.”<sup>14</sup>

Within the general social ‘plausibility structure’, the dissenting, deviating or revolutionary intellectual feels himself, when being alone, “to be ridiculous whenever doubts about the reality concerned arise subjectively”<sup>15</sup>. The followers of the established social belief system may also deliberately *ridicule* the dissenting and deviating group or intellectual. Similarly, in the recent Danish cartoon controversy, where the authoritative religious symbols of Islam were ridiculed, those, who defended the Danish (secular-liberal) social belief system, felt a *need* for *ridiculing* Mohammad by cartoons. This is one way how societies ‘handle’ deviations from the established social beliefs.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>13</sup> Eric Hoffer uses Hitler as an example. **Hoffer** 2010, p. 114. In order to have a lasting influence on social culture, the deviant or revolutionary intellectuals, philosophers and prophets have nearly always relied on an inner-circle of devoted disciples, apostles, followers, and students.

<sup>14</sup> **Berger, Luckmann** 1991, p. 144.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

When new groups and ideas emerge, they are either included into the social mainstream and belief system by extended and more inclusive redefinition of ‘Us’ or are excluded as negative ‘Others’ – as heretics, infidels, rebels, enemies of nation or enemies of class.

In between the full members of society and the excluded are usually those who are second-rate members of society *culturally*, even when politically they are equal citizens. Beyond formal political equality – equality before laws and equal citizen rights to vote in elections, run for parliament and the like – other, more extended visions of equality are (utopian) ideals to which real societies and cultures can only approximate. Thus, the ideal of religious freedom envisions equality of religious alternatives (perhaps also equality of religious and non-religious alternatives), versions of multiculturalism represent equal worth of all cultures, liberal democratic ideal cherishes the equality of the ideological choices of citizens, and civic nationalism equalizes the rights of various ethnic communities. In reality, however, cultures, religions, ethnic identities and linguistic groups are never culturally equal. Therefore, it is not a disaster, when certain groups and individuals are culturally second-rate in any given society.

A cultural Muslim may assimilate to Danish culture and become a Danish citizen, but to the extent that he retains his Muslim religious identity, he will culturally not be equal to those Danish citizens who belong to the cultural mainstream.

The Estonian constitution does not name any specific religious tradition. It stipulates religious freedom and non-existence of a state church. As Estonians have traditionally been Lutherans, Estonian culture has a lot more to do with Christianity and Lutheranism than with Islam or Buddhism. Irrespective of the constitutional protection of religious freedom, an Estonian, who converts to Islam or Buddhism, self-ostracizes himself to a significant extent from the mainstream culture. The cultural cost of these conversions is significantly higher than the price for conversion from Lutheranism to Methodism.

Recently scholars and public opinion leaders have raised concerns about Islam’s increasing demographical presence and cultural relevance in Europe that tends to reduce in the coming future the non-Muslims to a status of second-class citizens.<sup>16</sup> Two comments are due in this regard. First, the increase of demographic presence does not automatically change the secular-liberal hegemony in European cultures. Muslim minorities in Europe, whose social presence has increased during last half a century, have their ‘ethno-religious capital’ confined to their respective minorities, and are therefore at a disadvantage in comparison both with the traditional cultural religions connected to ‘ethnic *and* political’ identities of core populations and with the secular-

<sup>16</sup> Philip Jenkins. Demographics, Religion, and the Future of Europe. – Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs, 3/2006, p. 522.

liberal social belief systems in European societies.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, if the present hegemonic status of the secular-liberal culture should some day end – which I do not believe will happen any time soon –, the resulting situation will not be that of cultural equality, but an establishment of a new cultural hegemony with an extended cultural mainstream (which most likely will include *also* some form of secularism and liberalism).

In the social construction of cultural identity, moral categories are instrumental in defining 'Us' and 'Other'. The actual cultural differences are essentially neither good nor bad, neither static nor unchangeable, the related moral evaluations result from the processes of construction.<sup>18</sup>

In real life, individuals and groups differ from each other in multiple ways – by gender, income, wealth, ethnic, religious, sexual and regional identities – but none of these differences is morally perceived unless socially constructed as such. Correspondingly, the existing cultural differences will not cause oppositions, unless the related differences are morally constructed as essentialist and objective.

As we construct our social reality, we attach moral meaning to some of the existing or perceived differences, which we feel to be important for our self-esteem, social identity, economic status or political security. Therefore, we attach moral meanings to the differences in wealth and race more often than to differences in hair-color or in the levels of education.

We tend to feel vulnerable for social, economic and political reasons, but we rationalize our concerns by relying on religion, ideology and identity. Concomitantly, the control of economic resources and of power (means of force and coercion) is usually legitimized – i.e. transformed from *might* to *right* – by (religious, ethical or ideological) moral representations of social order and the behavior of the subjugated and marginalized as well as the dominant and hegemonic social groups.

In themselves, groups, cultures and individuals are neither good nor bad. Any good vs bad/evil relationship results from the social construction of reality. The negative construction of the 'Other' does not begin from the 'Other', but from the negative feeling of 'Self'. The 'Others' are effectively perceived as 'bad'/'evil' and morally deficient to the extent that they are perceived to be dangerous to 'Us', to our values and lifestyle.<sup>19</sup> As the moral

<sup>17</sup> 'Ethno-religious capital' describes the symbolic and authoritative religious resource in the public sphere which results from the convergence of ethnic and religious boundaries. **Jo Campling**. Religion, Ethnicity & Society. New York, NY USA: Palgrave Publishers, 1999, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> **Kristen Renwick Monroe, Maria Luisa Martinez-Martí**. Empathy, Prejudice, and Fostering Tolerance. – Political Science & Politics, 4/2008, p. 857.

<sup>19</sup> **Gerald Schames, Joshua Miller**. The Discourse of Denigration and the Creation of "Other". – Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, 3/2000, p. 49.

construction proceeds, the discourse of anger, aggression and fear increases, the vulnerable group of the ‘good’ feels increasingly justified to protect itself by using state power against the inferior, morally deviant and dangerous ‘Other’.<sup>20</sup>

A narrative about a religious, cultural or ideological, internal or external, ‘Other’ as an ‘Enemy’ characterizes every functioning society (together with a narrative about a ‘Friend’).<sup>21</sup> The narrative about an ‘Enemy’ is as necessary for any social organization as is the perception of the boundaries of exclusion. The ‘Enemy’ for the social culture is what the Devil is for traditional Christianity. The existence of the Devil is not the source of chaos and disorder. Quite the contrary, the absence of the ‘Evil’ incarnate – such representation of ‘evil’ where all that is ‘evil’ stems from only one, embodied and incarnate, source, and ‘good’ is unambiguously defined by the struggle against the ‘evil’ – may result in a serious crises for organized religion and social culture. Thus, unless a society disintegrates and ceases to exist, it has to have its demons or enemies. Obviously, the narrative about a social and cultural ‘Enemy’ should better be moderate, not radical, but its total absence is dysfunctional.

In Western social history, the cultural Enemies have at various times and places been Jews, Muslims, Catholics, Protestants, slave-owners, abolitionists, Orthodox, the Turks, Communists, Fascists, Nazis, Capitalists, Imperialists, and Blacks to name a few. Revolutionary upheavals have often transformed a former ‘Enemy’ into a ‘Friend’, or introduced a new Enemy, but the narratives about ‘Friends’ and ‘Enemies’ have remained.

As seen from above, the negative representation of the cultural ‘Other’ fulfills several positive functions for the core culture. The effective functioning of the society requires a sufficient degree of normative consensus, social cohesion, national pride, loyalty and social order, lest it fall apart.<sup>22</sup> Consensual demonization of an agreed-upon Enemy helps to avoid the sense chaos and to maintain the positive feeling of national identity.<sup>23</sup> The more the ‘Other’ is demonized, the less critically the past and present actions and behaviors of Self are evaluated.

The process of the construction of the ‘Other’ starts with the sense of vulnerability, uncertainty, chaos and insecurity. Correspondingly, the cultural ‘Other’ is most likely found from amongst those who undermine the political or socio-economical sense of security, *and* whose culture is different enough in order to attach moral meaning to the perceived cultural differences. To the

<sup>20</sup> **Schmameß, Miller** 2000, p. 51.

<sup>21</sup> **Jeffrey C. Alexander.** Citizen and Enemy as Symbolic Classification: On the Polarizing Discourse of Civil Society. – Real Civil Societies: Dilemmas of Institutionalization. Jeffrey C. Alexander (ed.) London: Sage, 1998, pp. 96–114.

<sup>22</sup> **Berger** 2010, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> **Schmameß, Miller** 2000, p. 46.

extent that the cultural confrontation is constructed, *the fears decrease*, and the sense of *security, control* and *order* is restored.

How can it be that the perception of the one, who threatens us, can calm our feelings and make our minds confident? One of the reasons, why it happens so, is that the 'Other' is actually a (defining) part of the Self. The construction of the 'Other' functions effectively only, if it is in a relationship with the 'Self' in a quite similar way that 'evil' exists in a binary relationship with the 'good', and the feeling of superior 'Self' with the feelings of the 'inferior' 'Other'.

An effective negative cultural 'Other' needs not to be actually culturally, morally or religiously deficient or corrupt. Innocent and blameless 'Other' qualifies also. The whole process starts with the negative sense of Self (with a 'bad feeling' regarding Self, low self-esteem, vulnerability and the like). René Girard's description of the psychosocial process of 'scapegoating' illustrates this process well.

The term 'scapegoating' was initially used in theology for the ancient religious rituals where the 'guilt' (sins, crimes) and 'sufferings' of the community were *symbolically* attributed to animals (in Old Testament to goats, but Hindus have also used horses, i.e. 'scapehorses'). Girard used the concept psychosocially for cases, where innocent victims of violence were punished for the 'sins' of somebody else or for the sake of various disasters, social crises, conflicts and hardships. When the guilt and suffering was transferred from one person to another like stones or potatoes changed their owner,<sup>24</sup> the perpetrator felt relieved. 'Scapegoating' resembles the social construction of the negative 'Other', because in both the aggression (either physical, emotional or ideational) towards the scapegoat/the 'Other' is justified by self-defense and is grounded on the subjective sense of insecurity and fear.

We hate, discriminate and 'scapegoat' more efficiently as a culture, group or social movement, than individually.<sup>25</sup> In the discourse of 'scapegoating', the 'Other' can be represented as 'violent', 'pessimist' (in contrast to normal persons who are satisfied with the social and political *status quo*), 'envious', 'aggressive' and the like. 'Scapegoating' results in the imagination of two kinds of individuals, social groups and cultural communities: good, decent, altruistic, tolerant, rational and moderate are contrasted with cruel, evil, emotional and violent.

<sup>24</sup> René Girard. Generative Scapegoating. – Violent Origins: Walter Burkert, René Girard, and Jonathan Z. Smith on Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation. Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly (ed.) Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987, pp. 73–74.

<sup>25</sup> Eric Hoffer argues that "fears, hesitations, doubts and the vague stirrings of decency" accompany an individual judgment, but these are abandoned in the corporateness of a mass movement, where we can easily find "a new freedom – freedom to hate, bully, lie, torture, murder and betray without shame and remorse". Hoffer 2010, p 100; Girard 1987, p. 77.

‘Scapegoating’ is often a subconscious activity. The perpetrators may not acknowledge that ‘scapegoating’ – the transmission of responsibility, guilt and suffering, and the misrepresentation of the social or political situation – is actually happening. The agreement, who actually is the victim, may also be lacking. In the end of 1930s, Germans were depicted to be the ‘victims’ of the Jewish race and correspondingly in need of aggressive self-defense. In the contest for the status of the victim, Nazi Germans had major advantages over the powerless Jews (it was significantly more difficult for the powerless to persuade the powerful that the weak are the victims). Besides, the powerful Nazis would never admit their guilt. As Girard stressed, we all – not only Nazis – tend to be partial in scapegoating – we easily identify those who have done it or do it, but resist in acknowledging our own participation.<sup>26</sup>

As all social groups – both the dominant and hegemonic, and the subjugated, discriminated and marginalized ones – tend to attach meaning to their social situation according to the socially constructed reality, the Jews could have had a hard time considering themselves as victims. In the concentration camps, they were suffering and dying in a culture, where the social belief system defined them as the ones guilty of the oppression of others. The dominant social culture believed that the divine providence and the fate of human race were on the side of Hitler.

The unjust conditions and outright oppression caused by themselves does not automatically cause the blaming of others, and those who blame others are not automatically the objective victims.

Today, it would be unrealistic to imagine that a small minority of internally split Muslim communities could dominate social majorities in Western countries. This does not mean, however, that the fears among the Europeans do not make sense. The socially perceived threat is real when subjectively perceived to be real. The efficiency of social belief systems has never been dependent on objectivity, rational persuasion and evidence. How otherwise could European societies collectively believe for more than a millennium in the virgin birth of Christ, and that the Jews threatened the Nazi state.

Is the construction of the cultural ‘Other’ then, the result of manipulation by politicians and profit-seeking media? Media and politicians would hardly succeed, if the emotions of the common people did not yearn for a cultural Enemy, especially in times of social, economic and political crises.

I used to consider the ‘discourses of fear’ based on the simple account of demographic presence of problematic minorities to be an outright populist, irrational and emotional manipulation with popular sentiments.<sup>27</sup> Now, however, I have revised my evaluation. In issues related to cultural identity,

<sup>26</sup> Girard 1987, p. 74.

<sup>27</sup> Philip Jenkins has predicted that the number of Muslims in France, Germany and the Netherlands could reach one fifth or fourth of the total population by 2030. Jenkins 2006, p. 521.

demographic numbers matter for both majorities and minorities. Why is this so? Because both cultures – their values, norms, beliefs and ways of life – are conventionally evaluated holistically ‘as if’ representing and referring to everybody and anybody belonging to the respective culture. Correspondingly, it is natural that the members of the majority culture feel threatened when they perceive that their culture – which symbolically represents them as a whole and which they represent *en bloc* – as being under attack by a minority culture, which similarly represents all of its members and is being represented by its every member as a whole. As both ‘Us’ and ‘Other’ are perceived culturally, holistically and inclusively, both cultures are defined also in abstract, vaguely and symbolically, with simple moral adjectives referring to basic human moral feelings.

Correspondingly, our positive emotional identification with our co-patriots does not require from us the personal knowledge of each of them or even a rational abstracting of our cultural characteristics. We ‘attain’ our ‘knowledge’ about cultural minorities in the same way.

Last, but not least, cultures, civilizations, events and dates (such as 9/11) are not ‘agents’ by themselves and are not the cause of the consequences often ascribed to them. The attacks of 9/11 provided a changed structure of opportunities for the political entrepreneurs, but political actors, not 9/11, constructed later the perceptions of threats and enemies, alliances and battle-lines.<sup>28</sup> Political actors attached meaning to the events of 9/11, created narratives and myths that distinguished the good from the evil, specified the contours, the character, the evil goals and inhuman nature of the ‘Enemy’. They also defined the values, which were ‘really’ being attacked when the population had actually observed the destruction of large buildings and witnessed the deaths of thousands of human beings. Cultures and civilizations may form structures of ideas, norms, beliefs and values, dates and events can become structural precedents, in addition political and ideological legacies set limits for the opportunity structures for the construction of political oppositions, yet by and of themselves, they do not act, they are not agents.

To sum it up, identities clash only when morally constructed. The process of the construction of clashing cultural identities is preceded and initiated by subjective feelings of insecurity, chaos and vulnerability. The negative subjective feelings are usually caused by social, economical and political concerns, the ensuing conflict; however, being constructed based on cultural identities and is made meaningful morally – by reliance on religious or ideological values, beliefs, myths and narratives, and is framed by simple moral binaries.

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<sup>28</sup> **David S. Meyer.** Constructing Threats and Opportunities After 9/11. – American Behavioral Scientist, 1/2009, p. 24.

## Religion in the construction of 'Us' and 'Other'

Is it an *essential* nature of religion to be involved in the construction of the cultural identity? What *kind* of religion is involved in the construction of cultural identity? What *functions* does religion fulfill in this process? Is religion by nature a cultural phenomenon? Can secular ideologies fulfill the cultural functions of religion with the same efficiency, or are there some cultural functions, which are fulfilled more efficiently by religion?

In order to answer to these questions, I need to start with the claim that religion does not have to be involved in the construction of cultural identity at all. In contemporary pluralized societies, there are forms of religion – such as New Religious Movements, cults, New Age, religious minorities, novel religious denominations, syncretistic and privatized forms of religion – which do not have a significant positive or negative *defining* function regarding the political or minority culture.

Historically, Christianity started to fulfill *positive* all-inclusive cultural functions only from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Thereafter, in several non-European parts of the world, Christian communities lacked any defining (positive or negative) relationship regarding the general culture. Correspondingly, the dominant culture could exist without Christianity and *vice versa*. Thus, for the construction of holistic and inclusive cultural identity religion is neither *necessary* – the cultural identity does not need to include religion as one of the defining markers – nor *sufficient* – religion needs not be the sole cultural marker next to secular, ideological, philosophical, racial, linguistic and other markers that the identity can be based on.

In one way, it seems legitimate to speak about the 'cultural functions of religion', because *historically*, pre-industrial and early modern societies were *defined* by cultural religions. Correspondingly, in the *historical* perspective, we could speak about the particular cultural functions of a specific religion in its social environment. Thus it is valid to classify the cultural functions traditionally fulfilled by religion as the 'cultural functions of religion', which thereafter can be fulfilled (as the cultures secularize or de-Christianize) by ideologies, philosophy and science.

In the general theoretical perspective, and especially regarding the recent developments in modernized societies, it would be *analytically inefficient*<sup>29</sup> to attach the functions fulfilled by either religion or ideology to their definitions. If we assume that religion *has* cultural functions and (any) culture is of necessity based on religion, then the assumption about the inter-dependent relationship of religion and culture enforces us to consider not only National-

<sup>29</sup> By 'analytical inefficiency' I refer here to such conceptualization and definition of key terms, which do not contribute to better understanding and improved knowledge of the research objects.

ism, Democracy and Liberalism as religions, but to describe any ideologically plural or monist political order with a term 'religious'.<sup>30</sup>

For conceptual clarity, I argue that there are no *universal* cultural functions of religion. Unless a form of religion is a 'cult of political community' by its very origin (such as the 'civil religion' of the United States), religions are meaningful without cultural functions and cultures without religions. To illustrate the point, Catholicism in Poland and Orthodoxy in Romania are major cultural markers of identity. In the United States, Catholicism and Orthodoxy lack specific relation to cultural identification with 'Americanness'. In comparison to Catholic 'Polishness' and Orthodox 'Romanianness', cultural 'Estonianness' is weakly related to religion (Lutheranism). Yet this Lutheranism will be increasingly disentangled from its 'Estonianness', and vice versa, when an Estonian travels to a country, where Lutheranism has no relationship to dominant or minority cultures. Without the cultural support to the plausibility of the connection between 'Estonianness' and 'Lutheranism', his 'Lutheranism' and 'Estonianness' will both become private matters soon to be disentangled from each other subjectively and externally.

In cases, where the cultural identity of the political community is built on secular ideologies (for instance, Communism) and scientific theories (such as racial theory), the commitment to the values of the respective community can become holy causes and as sacred as were the commitments to Christian values and causes in a Christian society for members of that society. According to Eric Hoffer, both ideologies and religions are capable of 'religification' – i.e. to turn practical purposes into holy causes.<sup>31</sup> Presumably, crowd psychology does function in important respects similarly, irrespective of the religious, secular, ideological or scientific nature of the collective commitment.

These functional similarities need to be taken into account, but this does not mean that ideology and religion automatically *are the same* to the extent that they fulfill the same function. In Western history there have been two

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<sup>30</sup> For example, Timothy Crippen defines religions as "unified systems of beliefs and rituals relative to conceptions of the sacred...", where the related beliefs and rituals "encourage individuals to subordinate their *apparent* self-interest in relation to the *collectively expressed* interest of sovereign organization". For Crippen, religion is a "universal component of human societies". Therefore, the religious nature of societies is constant. The traditional sacred symbols (for instance, a Christian cross) can be replaced by the "new gods of national identity and integrity", or new sacred symbols such as Democracy, Equality, Justice, and Liberty, which are equally sacred and inspire similar 'religious' commitments to traditional sacred symbols. **Timothy Crippen**. Further Notes on Religious Transformation. – *Social Forces*, 1/1992, pp. 221, 222. For an outline, how 'new gods' replaced the traditional ones, see **Timothy Crippen**. Old and New Gods in the Modern World: Toward a Theory of Religious Transformation. – *Social Forces*, 2/1988, pp. 316–335.

<sup>31</sup> Religious, national and revolutionary political movements react to the same psychological orientations in their followers, they use the same psychological strategies and organizational tactics. **Hoffer** 2010, p. 6.

contrasting historical transitions – the *cultural sacralization of Christianity* starting from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, where the specific Christian *beliefs* (such as two kingdoms, hell and heaven, Trinity, salvation and final judgment) attained political and cultural functions, and the *de-Christianization of the culture* which has taken place during last decades and centuries. The latter disentangled of the cultures of modernized societies from Christian beliefs even when the cultural connection to Christian rites of passage and communal identities (implicitly or manifestly) did remain. If we try to define Christianity by the social and political functions it used to fulfill, and we define Communism and Nazism by their social and political functions, we may end up with circular reasoning where religion *is* ideology, and ideology *is* religion. When Stalin's Communism or Hitler's Nazism are conceptualized as functional equivalents of Christianity in confessional states, and therefore labeled as 'political religions'<sup>32</sup>, it should be remembered that Nazism and Communism *did not resemble* Christianity 'as such', but the kind of Christianity which started to fulfill the political and cultural functions of public religion since the 4<sup>th</sup> century. It would be sufficiently precise, then, to argue that an *all-inclusive, normative and monist ideological* social belief system resembled a situation, where *Christianity* was part of an *all-inclusive, normative and monist* social belief system. In this comparison, I do not argue for the sameness between an ideology and Christianity, but for the similarities of the social belief systems. Religion and ideology have both multiple manifestations and both can be related to any form of social belief systems. In general, both religion and ideology can fulfill the same social, cultural and political functions.

Moreover, in social and political functions, absolutist, all-inclusive, intolerant, normative, radical, fanatical and extremist religion *is similar* to absolutist, all-inclusive, intolerant, normative, radical, fanatical and extremist ideology, and moderate, tolerant, and pluralist (congregational, denominational) religion to moderate, tolerant and pluralist (democratic) ideology.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The main theoreticians conceptualizing Communism, Nazism and Fascism as 'political religions' have been Eric Voegelin, Reinhold Niebuhr and Emilio Gentile. **Eric Voegelin**. *The Political Religions*. – Eric Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint: The Political Religions, the New Science of Politics, and Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*. Manfred Henningsen (ed.), Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 2000, p. 68; **Reinhold Niebuhr**. *Reinhold Niebuhr on Politics: His Political Philosophy and Its Application to Our Age as Expressed in His Writings*. Harry R. Davis, Robert C. Good (eds.). New York: Scribner, 1960, pp. 10–11. **Emilio Gentile**. *Politics As Religion*. Princeton University Press, 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Eric Hoffer argues that fanatical (proselytizing or revolutionary) ideology resembles fanatical (proselytizing and revolutionary) religion, and fanatics of any religious, national or revolutionary motivation contrast to religious, national and revolutionary moderates. **Hoffer** 2010, p. 86. Tariq Modood has observed that secular moderates resemble religious moderates, and correspondingly, both contrast to religious and secular radicals. **Tariq Modood**. *Moderate Secularism, Religion as Identity and Respect for Religion*. – *The Political Quarterly*, 1/2010, pp. 4–14.

Historically, all patterns of social belief systems have been possible – democratic and undemocratic, open and closed, monist and pluralist, religious and ideological.

Ideologies and religions are similar also regarding their efficiency. As argued above, *conformity* precedes *consensus*. Correspondingly, the effective function of both religion and ideology relies more on the commitment and loyalty to the group than on the nature of their ideals, norms and goals. To put it differently, their norms and ideals – the kingdom of God, Communism, a millennial racial state or consumer's paradise – are functionally the means, which connect individuals to each other.<sup>34</sup> In this perspective, the social belief is effective when supported by collective rituals, socialization and everyday intra- and intergroup communication (i.e. when individuals and groups re-produce and re-confirm to each other the plausibility of these norms and beliefs).

In Western societies, the intensity of the religious legitimation of culture and the scope of religion as a marker of cultural identity has significantly changed during last centuries. The *scope of religious legitimation* has diminished due to political modernization and economic development. Starting from the 18<sup>th</sup> century Enlightenment, the sense of the general superiority of the Western culture<sup>35</sup> – largely irrespective of internal divisions to Catholics and Protestants, monarchists and republicans – has been defined less by religion than by civilization and modernization. The civilization in the singular (the 'West') became the criterion of the 'good' in contrast to all uncivilized others.<sup>36</sup> In cases, where the social and cultural 'good' has been still conceived religiously, religion is either a symbolical attribute of the civilization or the culture, or is understood deistically and this-worldly in contrast to theistic and supernatural religion of the traditional Christian societies.

The cultural common 'stocks of knowledge', once unified around religious doctrines, split in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century between Fascist, Communist and Democratic 'roads to modernity'. Thereafter, the social belief system focused on liberal values such as human rights, gender equality, equality of sexual orientations, individual pursuit of happiness, and the free market. Traditional Christianity *as a belief system* lost its cultural relevancy. In a constantly

<sup>34</sup> Functionally, the religious devotion connects individuals to each other, not to Gods or deities, and *vice versa* – the commitment of group's members to one another is an expression of their commitment to God. **Jeffrey R. Seul.** Ours is the way of God: Religion, Identity, and Intergroup Conflict. – Journal of Peace Research, 5/1999, p. 559.

<sup>35</sup> Starting from the Enlightenment era, anyone who doubted and questioned the inherent superiority of Western civilization, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau did in his "Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men" (1755), risked to ostracize himself from the social culture by asking questions commonly not asked or considered adequate.

<sup>36</sup> **Ibrahim Kaya.** Modernity, openness, interpretation: a perspective on multiple modernities. – Social Science Information, 1/2004, p. 49.

extending religious market, where individuals found new forms and ways of how one can be legitimately religious and/or “Christian by belief”, any particular interpretation of Christianity became a matter of subjective preference.

In some societies, religion has remained as a major cultural marker of identity, but socially ‘sacred’ has become primarily related to secular communities, and this-worldly goals and values.

Analytically, religion as ‘belief’ can be distinguished from religion as ‘identity’.<sup>37</sup> As mentioned above, if religion is related to a culture of political community or culture of the minority, it refers symbolically and inclusively to every member of the respective cultural community, and to *religious choice* – or to a religious choice of a religion ‘as belief’ – of no one. In the like manner, it does not refer to the *choice* of the religion ‘as identity’ either. I may chose which cultural community to belong to, but this choice is reflected in “letting the cultural community choose me”, not in me choosing the cultural community. How is this so?

If I as an Estonian choose Islam as my religious identity, I will remain culturally Estonian unless I become a member of minority or majority Muslim culture. Similarly, while living in Estonia, I cannot choose the “civil religion” of US. I can let the cultural religion of US choose me only in the United States, only by integrating into its culture. On the other hand, I can choose to reject the Estonian cultural norms and habits, and act ‘as if’ American or Muslim. My co-patriots will then recognize my efforts to distance myself from the surrounding culture, whether Americans or Muslims will accept me as ‘one of their own’, is the crucial matter.

On the level of culture, religion as identity functions unrelated to the choices of an individual, although the choices of the individuals enable them to change their cultural identities, and to distance themselves from or assimilate into different cultures. Nevertheless, the effectively constructed religious symbols in the cultural identity function independently from the cultural choices of the individuals (the religious symbols have become ‘as if’ objective and essential features of the cultural community).

Religion as ‘belief’ has significantly declined in substance and scope from the European cultural consciousness and social belief systems, religion as ‘identity’ has significantly persisted in Europe’s East and West, North and South. Increasing proportions of the populations are alienated from the traditional religious services, beliefs and practices. Yet, the majority of individuals turn to cultural religious identities (not necessarily religious beliefs) and

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<sup>37</sup> Linda Woodhead differentiates religion as belief from religion as identity as follows: if references to belief define religion, then to be religious means to believe in certain religious dogmas, doctrines and propositions; when religion is treated as a source of identity, it can be “both a matter of social ascription and of personal choice” (of identity). **Linda Woodhead.** Five concepts of religion. – International Review of Sociology, 1/2011, pp. 112, 119.

rituals in order to restore and maintain the psychological sense of certainty, order and meaning. This occurs at crucial moments of individual life – at birth, marriage and death –, at crucial moments of national history – such as during transitions from Communist collectivist systems to free market democracies – or during personal, social, economic, environmental or political crises.<sup>38</sup>

The relationship of religion and state has changed similarly to the relationship between agriculture and the economy. Agricultural production is important for a national economy and for all the members of society, yet the life style of the members of advanced societies does not resemble the life style of their ancestors in agrarian societies (it has changed from parochial and rural to urban and mobile), and their religion too, has changed. They do not live or believe like their ancestors, yet their functional need (for agricultural food and for meaning, order, and certainty provided by religion, ideology, science or philosophy) is the same.

Correspondingly, individuals, groups and societies have *always* had some form of ideas that have given meaning to their existence, have legitimized their status and pursuits, *and* their *economic* and *political interests*. When Samuel P. Huntington argued that in post-Cold War era, “Individuals identify themselves with religion, family, blood and belief, not with political ideology or economic interests”<sup>39</sup>, he referred to the change ideas of legitimation (presumably from secular-ideological to cultural-civilizational). However, humans have never been willing to justify their economic and political interests by straightforwardly rational and transparent economic and political reasoning. Correspondingly, irrespective of the religious or secular nature of legitimation (religious or secular), mere economic legitimation of economic purposes, political rationalization of political interests has always been difficult or inefficient at least for those who want to exercise a coercive power over others. The settlers of Australia rationalized their wish to acquire the land from the Aboriginals with economic argumentation (Aboriginals were poor utilizers of land), yet their right to the land became ‘as if’ self-evident only by the help of polygenetic theories of racial supremacy. Similarly, in the post-Yugoslavian conflicts of early 1990s, the ‘real’ concern of the parties involved seemed to be related to territorial sovereignty. At the same time, the conflict was not

<sup>38</sup> Noam Chomsky argues that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 constituted a shock both for the populations of the United States, and of Europe, because for more than a century they had not suffered an attack from the colonized territories (or subordinated regions) from abroad (“England was not attacked by India nor Belgium by the Congo”). **Noam Chomsky**. September 11. Allen & Unwin: Crows Nest, 2001, pp. 11–12. Collective public religious rituals were instrumental in relieving the fears, vulnerabilities and existential insecurities sensed due to the attacks of 9/11.

<sup>39</sup> **Samuel P. Huntington**. If Not Civilizations, What? Paradigms of the Post-Cold War World – Foreign Affairs, 5/1993, p. 194.

only accompanied, but also originated from the increasing representation of the opponents as evil ‘Others’, followers of heresies and subjects to tyranny.<sup>40</sup> The conflict culminated with the Bosnian genocide.

The general observation of Samuel P. Huntington should be analyzed in more detail. What kind of religion (or culture) is becoming increasingly a resource of political identity (and of political legitimacy)? What kind of religious, political or ‘third agents’ (such as mass media) are the authoritative interpreters of “religion in culture”? When we *observe* “religion in culture”, should we *interpret* it as religion subjected to a ‘cult of community’ or a community subjected to a worship of divinity?

Virtually all political states have positive connections to some form of religion (either in the form of chaplains in public institutions, publicly acknowledged religious communities and religious holidays, religious services at national anniversaries, religious education as part of state education etc). The connections between religion and politics tend to persist, but the nature of the relationship between state and religion has changed irrevocably.

Irrespective of the particular formal organization of religion and state and the informal connection of church to national identity, national communities worship *national heroes*, are worried about *national dangers*, believe in the everlasting fate of the national culture and community. This description is especially relevant for historical cultures with Protestant established churches, because in the latter the church has been far less autonomous from state, less differentiated from the national community than in traditionally Catholic cultures, where Catholic *beliefs* have some authority in society and culture and are defined primarily by the church. In Protestant cultures with national churches, individuals have a great freedom to give meaning to their religion autonomously from the authority and influence of the church hierarchy and institution. Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart argue that in these cases, the religious identity (and beliefs) which are relevant for the cultural community are transmitted and interpreted primarily by the national educational system and the mass media, not by the church.<sup>41</sup>

The culture of the United States is also traditionally Protestant, but in many ways contrasts to Protestant societies with historical national churches. Unlike most European societies, and virtually in contrast to *all of the European Protestant* societies, for about half of a century there have been ‘culture wars’ with a strong religious involvement in the United States over the boundaries of what is considered morally sacred. The boundaries of the morally accepted behaviors are contested passionately in any society (i.e. those who

<sup>40</sup> **Vilho Harle.** *The Enemy with a Thousand Faces: The Tradition of the Other in Western Political Thought and History.* Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000, p. 5.

<sup>41</sup> **Pippa Norris, Ronald Inglehart.** *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 17.

defend or undermine the existing boundaries have strong convictions hardly amenable to compromises).<sup>42</sup> The United States, however, differs markedly from European cultures by having a large and strong social religious movement that challenges the moral *status quo* and is committed to traditional Christian values.<sup>43</sup>

Post-communist cultures in East-Central Europe differ from West-European cultures by having their national identity more interrelated with religion. As Ina Merdjanova has observed, this fusion between religion and nationalism helps to create and preserve identity and “stimulates intra-societal integration”, but it also tends to delimitate, alienate and increase animosity “towards the ‘Other’”.<sup>44</sup>

In Western Europe, the concerns focus on the increasing cultural presence of the Muslim minorities. When the culture of the minority is not assimilated to the core culture, and the definition of the reality specific to the minority community is not effectively segregated so that it remains irrelevant to the mainstream culture, then the presence of this cultural minority undermines the plausibility of the dominant social creed (ways of life, norms, beliefs and values). The ensuing ‘cultural conflict’ is not about differences in religious dogmas or moral values, but due to an increasing sense of insecurity provided by competing versions of cultural social order. As noted above regarding East-Central Europe, the increasing fears and worries about the cultural ‘Other’ also perform positive functions in Western Europe. Nothing unifies and integrates members of society better than a common hatred (and a corresponding common fear).<sup>45</sup>

Both in Western Europe and in America, Islam has increasingly become a cultural ‘Other’. In part, this has been the resurrection of the old discourses of Orientalism, which were instrumental in subjugation of societies during the era of colonization and depicted the “West” as a dynamic, complex, and ever-changing society, and the “Orient,” particularly the world of Islam, as static,

<sup>42</sup> Stout 2010, pp. 15–18.

<sup>43</sup> Grace Davie. Global Civil Religion: A European Perspective. – *Sociology of Religion*, 4/2001, p. 457. One of the reasons, why the US public sphere enables the political participation with strong religious motivations may be due to the type of secularism. Unlike to European secularisms, the US secularism relates positively to Christian religious traditions, it is secularism with identifiably ‘religious values’. Jeff Haynes. Religion and international relations after ‘9/11’. – *Democratization*, 3/2005, p. 409.

<sup>44</sup> Ina Merdjanova. In Search of Identity: Nationalism and Religion in Eastern Europe. – *Religion, State & Society*, 3/2000, p. 234.

<sup>45</sup> The shared hatred (and fear) is the most efficient means of social unification in a liberal democratic society. In illiberal societies, a strong promotion of collective national or social values can function as efficiently as fear. In liberal democratic societies, however, unless unified by common fear and hatred, the society is inclined towards social disintegration as the individuals and groups are prone to pursue their self-interest and self-advancement.

violent, patriarchal, barbaric, and despotic, and in need of Western intervention.<sup>46</sup> Within this discourse, especially the Arab Muslims are perceived to have a long-time hatred towards the West.<sup>47</sup>

A negative depiction of Islam re-appeared strongly in West during 1980s and culminated with the ‘clash of civilization’ thesis in the mid-1990s.<sup>48</sup> Later revisions in this discourse, particularly after 9/11, have concentrated on *Islamism* and *Islamofascism*.<sup>49</sup>

The attacks of 9/11 did not target religious objects and did not distinguish between the religious identities of the casualties, yet the following ‘aggressive hyperpatriotism’ in the United States “pointed to Islam as the antithesis of all that was good and worthy in America and led many to ask whether Muslims could be good Americans”<sup>50</sup>. Islamic communities started to be depicted as monolithic – following the same beliefs and practices irrespective, whether they origin from Somalia, Iran or Pakistan –, sexist religion, inherently violent, and prone to terrorism, not to democracy.<sup>51</sup> The main problematic bias with such a description of tensions between West and Islam is the lack of attention on the actual foreign policies of the Western countries in the Middle East (their economic, geopolitical and military support to authoritarian regimes), and in particular in relation to Palestine and Arab nationalism.<sup>52</sup>

Islam and the Ottoman Empire had been the defining cultural ‘Others’ for Western Europe until the First World War. During the Cold War, Communism

<sup>46</sup> **Deepa Kumar**. Framing Islam: The Resurgence of Orientalism During the Bush II Era. – *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10/2010, p. 5. **Marranci** 2004, pp. 106, 107.

<sup>47</sup> **Andrew A. G. Ross**. Emotion, Agency and the Politics of ‘Anti-Americanism’. – *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 1/2010, p. 109.

<sup>48</sup> It is worth noticing that Samuel P. Huntington’s ‘clash of civilizations’ thesis referred to ‘Islamic civilization’ as a unit of analysis and argumentation, not to Islamism. Similarly, in a conversation published in 2005, Huntington’s list of reasons why the majority of armed conflicts in 2000 involved Muslims, did not include explicit references to Islamism: the lack of a core state that could provide leadership to Islam; response to unsuccessful modernization; absence of pluralism and liberty and open politics; and historic resentment, particularly among Arabs, due to “great injustices imposed on them by the West”. **Michael Cromartie** (ed.) *Religion, Culture, and International Conflict: A Conversation*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005, p. 5.

<sup>49</sup> Francis Fukuyama has argued that the core enemy in the international fight against terrorism is neither Islam as a religion nor Islam as a civilization, but rather “Islamofascism that is, the radically intolerant and anti-modern doctrine that has recently arisen in many parts of the Muslim world”. Fukuyama pointed to Saudi Arabia as the main source of Islamofascism. **Francis Fukuyama**. Has history started again? – *Policy*, 2/2002, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> **Akbar Ahmed**. *Journey into America: The Challenge of Islam*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010, p. 7.

<sup>51</sup> **Kumar** 2010, p. 5.

<sup>52</sup> **Ervand Abrahamian**. The US media, Huntington and September 11. – *Third World Quarterly*, 3/2003, pp. 529–544.

had replaced Islam, and the Ottoman Empire had ceased to exist. After the Cold War, Turkey and Islam have re-appeared as cultural 'Others'<sup>53</sup>, both often perceived to be in contrast with everything considered to be European.<sup>54</sup>

Particularly paradoxical is the perceived cultural image of Turkey. On the one hand, it is difficult to find a country among Muslim-majority countries, which has undergone more political or cultural westernization and has more diligently secular polity than Turkey. Turkey is exceptional in lacking the historical experience of colonization by Western capitalist states and the experience of Communist rule. Yet, a great bulk of Europeans believe that there are essentialist differences between European cultures and the Turkish culture, wherefore the possibility of increasing influx of Turkish Muslims to the labor market of the European Union is believed to undermine such core values of European culture as democracy, equality and human rights.<sup>55</sup>

Three aspects seem to make religion exceptionally instrumental in the construction of cultural confrontations.

First, many long-lasting political conflicts, where the involved parties sense the situation gone outside of ordinary human means of control (such is a situation of Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza), have obtained religious overtones. To put it differently, the greater the economic, political and social fears, grievances and vulnerabilities, the more religious the conflicts tend to become. It is not that religion causes these conflicts, but religion may be more efficient than ideology in extraordinary and long-lasting crises.

Secondly, the conflicts are not constructed between the 'most different' or the 'most alien' religions or cultures, but the 'Other' is most likely found amongst those, who are perceived to undermine either the political or the economic sense of security. An ideal 'Other' follows a different religious tradition, but the cultural differences are concentrated upon, and religious legitimation is sought, only when the cultural fears and feelings of vulnerabilities based on economic, political and social factors have gained their way. Correspondingly, in such conflicts religion is fused with national identity according to a pattern, where the representative community is a *national* culture, identity and interests, grievances and fears are overwhelmingly non-religious (related to social, economic and political factors) during the initial phases of the conflict.

Thirdly, one has to bear in mind that the core cultures in the United States and in European countries are secularized (i.e. lacking any binding religious

<sup>53</sup> **Benoît Challand.** From Hammer and Sickle to Star and Crescent: the Question of Religion for European Identity and a Political Europe. – Religion, State and Society, 1/2009, p. 66; **James Kurth.** Europe's Identity Problem and the New Islamist War. – Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs, 3/2006, p. 541.

<sup>54</sup> **Marranci** 2004, p. 115.

<sup>55</sup> **Sabine Strasser.** Europe's Other. – European Societies, 2/2008, p. 178.

authority in media, public morality, education, culture, politics, economy, entertainment etc). The pattern and degree of cultural secularization varies, but the Western cultures do not adhere to explicitly religious beliefs and norms any more.<sup>56</sup> The social belief systems in contemporary European cultures focus on consumerism and individualism. They value the autonomous choice of an individual in cultural tastes, sexual relationships, modes of cohabitation, places of residence and choices of religious belief. Individuals mostly feel that psychological deprivation, fulfillment of individual expectations, social status, subjectively inferior or superior, personally successful and failing (which can all be considered indicators of the social belief system or the ‘social stock of knowledge’) are not dependent on their membership and status within a certain religious or ideological community. It is externally manifested, interpersonally and inter-subjectively perceived, in their ability to procure material goods and immaterial services in and outside supermarkets. Poor individuals may feel satisfied and rich people dissatisfied, but their social situation, its ‘goodness’, its limits and opportunities, are evaluated by their social co-members according to the level of consumption they can afford. The level of consumption is believed to demonstrate manifestly and externally the merits, goodness and moral content of the character of an individual, which is also perceived to be the source of greatest happiness.

The meta-ideology of post-Cold War European societies is Liberalism,<sup>57</sup> which corresponds best to the culture of expressive individualism, hedonism and consumerism. Problematically, however, the Liberal meta-ideology facilitates social disintegration, and is therefore incapable of coping effectively with the threat of Islamism.<sup>58</sup>

It seems likely that the increasing cultural presence of the Muslim minorities helps Europeans to rediscover and revitalize the religious roots and symbols of their cultural identities. In general, there seems to be four roads, by which this may happen.

The least likely is the return to the Medieval or early modern versions of social belief systems, where explicitly Christian *beliefs* functioned as the singular cultural *lingua franca*. This pattern of the relationship of Christianity and culture has been exceptionally intolerant, excelling in legitimating hatred

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<sup>56</sup> Vatican is the exception. In several cultures – such as Poland and Romania – traditional churches still wield a significant cultural authority, but they are better understood as ‘religious players in a secular game’, who are not able to define and control the parameters of the cultural life any more.

<sup>57</sup> Kurth 2006, pp. 542–543.

<sup>58</sup> James Kurth has argued that dominance of Liberalism will be short-lived and advises the restoration of once-dominant Christian identity that would strengthen Europe in the war with Islamism. *Ibid.*, pp. 541, 544, 557. Paradoxically, if the liberal societies are prone to promote disintegration and individualization, the ‘fear of Islamism’ fulfills a very useful political function of a social unifier.

and subjugation.<sup>59</sup> The European dominant (democratic, anticlerical and secularist) pattern of modernization contrasted strongly with the illiberal, authoritarian, anti-individualistic and undemocratic Christian *ancien regime*. Therefore, its restoration in the future is undesirable and highly unlikely.

Less likely, but hardly imaginable at present, would be the restoration of the pattern of 20<sup>th</sup> century Clerical Fascisms, which in contrast to Soviet Atheism attempted to modernize illiberally and undemocratically, but together with the church and traditional religion. As democracies do not consider clerical systems of political order legitimate, the restoration of the 'clerical road to modernity' requires the restoration of authoritarian forms of government. If the latter happens, the first is possible.

Most probably the European countries will not emulate the religio-cultural pattern of the United States (combination of Judeo-Christian 'civil religion', 'passively secularist' polity, denominational culture, legitimate political participation of the large-scale religious political opposition). As most of European political cultures have ceased to rationalize politics and social issues in religious terms, it is also unlikely that religion in Europe could regain the "lost" territories soon or without battles. The failed attempts to include references to Christianity in the draft of the European Constitution testify to the latter. European predominantly homogeneous 'religious markets' – where a majority of the population are formal members in a single religious tradition – will even less likely resemble the denominational culture of the US any time soon.

Yet, the cultural connections to the religious symbols of *identity* are strengthening at present and will continue to be so in the coming future. Why should this be? Various new (Facebook, iPad etc) and old "agents of social disintegration" (cable networks, internet) put an increasing pressure on all kinds of human association (families, local communities, national cultures, close relations, the relationship between parents and children or between relatives). The new means of interpersonal communication enable an increase in the quantity of relationships and networks in which an individual is involved. They foster 'loose' relationships with low levels of commitment and bonding. Any strongly bonding relationship, whether between man and woman, father and son, citizen and nation, is relativized by the constant increase of causes, initiatives, networks, information, offers, goods, opportunities and services offered via new means of communication. This situation enhances the pluralization of religious and ideological beliefs and information about

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<sup>59</sup> In his monumental work on religious toleration in Western history, Perez Zagorin summarized the historical practice of cultures defined by Christian religious beliefs as follows: "Of all the great world religions past and present, Christianity has been by far the most intolerant". **Perez Zagorin**. *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 1.

reality, products and producers of reality. It also pluralizes the communities, each constructing their own version of reality. The only remaining politically inclusive and integrative ideology is nationalism, and the only culturally inclusive and integrative type of religion will be religion as a symbol of a cultural identity.

## Conclusion

“Should” this article end with a moral exhortation to stop the negative constructions of ‘Others’ in our society and culture? “Should” I encourage us all to be more emphatic?

I do not think so.

If we could meditate and think for a while on how ‘Others’ perceive themselves and how they may see ‘Us’, we *will* evidently be better able to understand and tolerate the respective ‘Other’.<sup>60</sup> If we continue doing so, however, the likelihood of a better world will be lower than the likelihood of ‘Us’ becoming the next victims.

I am calling upon the reader instead to recognize how we function as a culture. To recognize the instances, where we actually are not rationally analyzing the patriarchal defects of, let us say, Islamic culture or the psychological disposition of the Islamist, but we are actually involved in a psychotherapy of ‘Self’ through the discourse about the ‘Other’. The ‘Other’ helps us. The ‘Other’ draws attention away from everything unpleasant in ‘Self’. To recognize in these matters that the ‘Other’ is as human as the ‘Self’. For humans, the ‘good’ world is often dependent on the knowledge of who the ‘(d)evil’ is.

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<sup>60</sup> **Monroe, Martinez-Martí** 2008, p. 858.

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# DE-CONTEXTUALIZATION IN THE TERRORISM DISCOURSE: A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST VIEW

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**ABSTRACT.** This essay will analyze how in post 9/11 public discourse “terrorism” is constructed. We use language to structure our world. Language not only determines how we see the world, but also what kinds of actions are possible. It functions as an instrument of power and groups struggling for domination use language to create and maintain a hegemonic regime of truth. Terrorism could be viewed as a “construct” produced by particular social actors to serve their political needs. In dominant terrorism discourse theological language is employed to de-contextualize terrorist’s motives from historical-material settings and construct terrorism as a metaphysical phenomenon.

**Key words:** *terrorism discourse, de-contextualization, social constructionism, language and politics.*

## Introduction

After the terrorist acts of 9/11 the word “terrorism” has been much exploited by politicians. It has become a primary term in central narratives of Western culture like the terms “freedom” and “democracy”.<sup>1</sup> At the same time it is still impossible to define what exactly is meant by this word. There is no official and agreed definition that would accurately describe the phenomena that it designates. Over the years “terrorism” has changed the meaning many times and all attempts to come to a fixed definition have come to no avail. Moreover, it seems that post 9/11 the meaning of the term has become even more abstract and elusive.

In the political discourse it has been used interchangeably with more general “terror”.<sup>2</sup> Various words have been used to describe those who commit

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<sup>1</sup> **Richard Jackson.** Constructing Enemies: “Islamic Terrorism” in Political and Academic Discourse. – Government and Opposition, Vol. 42, No. 3, 2007, p. 394.

<sup>2</sup> For example George W. Bush in his speeches regularly speaks about war on terror and uses the word ‘terror’ instead of terrorism. See Bush, George W. Address to the Nation. Washington, DC. September 20, 2001 (<http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/09.20.01.html>); **George W. Bush.** Homeland Security Act. Washington, DC. November 25, 2002,

acts of terrorism. They are radicals, fundamentalists, evil madmen, the enemies of democracy, enemies of civilization, enemies of freedom, insurgents, tyrants, murderers, criminals and killers who operate in shadowy networks. The definition of who is a terrorist has become as elusive as the term terrorism. As these vague categories are used in public discourse it induces a climate of fear and anxiety among Western populations. This climate of fear has had a profound effect on the public discourse, policy and civil liberties. Then the aims of terrorists have become a strategy of scapegoating and attaching negative labels to political dissidents, activists and random people in the name of security and avoidance of radicalization.

As the recent leak of secret US Military documents dubbed the Guantánamo Bay files<sup>3</sup> shows, the criteria used to measure who were considered to be terrorists were quite unclear. Guantánamo Bay documents show that in many cases criteria had been arbitrarily defined by military and intelligence institutions. Among those who were captured and imprisoned were children, mentally ill persons, and elderly pensioners, against whom there was no evidence that they were extremists or had committed any terrorist acts.<sup>4</sup> The reasons for capture varied, and were often based on what a law specialist and prisoners rights campaigner Clive Stafford Smith has described as extraordinarily thin evidence.<sup>5</sup> People were detained and sent to prison based on vague false accusations, for their expected intelligence value, or barely on prejudice of officials. Even wearing a cheap Casio watch could mark one as terrorist.<sup>6</sup>

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<<http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/11.25.02.html>>; **George W. Bush**. Update in the War on Terror. Washington, DC, September 7, 2003 <<http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/09.07.03.html>>.

<sup>3</sup> Guardian editor David Leigh writes: “A number of other documents in the cache spell out guidelines for interrogating and deciding the fate of detainees. One, the ‘JTF-GTMO matrix of threat indicators’ details the ‘indicators’ which should be used to ‘determine a detainee’s capabilities and intentions to pose a terrorist threat if the detainee were given the opportunity.’ Another provides a matrix for deciding whether a prisoner should be held or released.” **David Leigh**. What are the Guantánamo Bay files? Understanding the prisoner dossiers. – The Guardian, Monday, April 25, 2011, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/25/what-are-guantanamo-files-explained>>.

<sup>4</sup> **James Ball**. Guantánamo Bay files: Children and senile old men among detainees. – The Guardian, Monday, April 25, 2011, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/25/guantanamo-files-children-old-men?intcmp=239>>.

<sup>5</sup> **Clive Stafford Smith**. Guantánamo Bay files: ‘The vast majority were not extremists’. – The Guardian, Monday, April 25, 2011, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2011/apr/25/guantanamo-bay-files-reprieve-video?intcmp=239>>.

<sup>6</sup> JTF-GTMO Matrix of Threat Indicators, published in Guantánamo files: How interrogators were told to spot al-Qaida and Taliban members. – The Guardian, Monday, April 25, 2011, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/interactive/2011/apr/25/guantanamo-files-interrogators-al-qaida-taliban#the-sign-of-al-qaida>>. The original document states: “The possession of a Casio F-91W model watch and the silver-color version of this model, the A159W, is an indicator of

There is further evidence that same kind of unclear criteria is used by US and UK police and juridical institutions to target people at their homeland.<sup>7</sup>

In this essay I will analyze from the social constructionist perspective the language used to describe terrorists and terrorism in terrorism discourse. The first part of the essay provides a short description of what I consider to be the mainstream view of terrorism. In the post 9/11 terrorism discourse, terrorism is often described as something new and unfamiliar. The word terrorism signifies phenomena perceived as something demonic and ultimately barbaric. It is constantly used to refer to something as inherently evil, irrational and completely unjustified. Terrorism is described as an uncivilized way for some social actors to advance their irrational goals. Terrorism as a tactic is usually described as unsuccessful. As such terrorism is depicted as senseless and irrational use of violence against innocent victims.

I will contest the mainstream view of terrorism from the social constructionist viewpoint. Social constructionism presumes that our reality is constituted by the constant and dynamic interaction between individuals and institutions. Our worldview is “constructed”, that is, determined by the language that we use in the interaction process. Our and our adversaries’ identities are created through the use of language. As language is infused and intermingled with power, and thus, political, social actors who strive for power always try to normalize their worldview at the expense of excluding others’ worldviews. In public discourse the language of terrorism is often utilized to construct the evil “other”. From a social constructionist viewpoint the word “terrorism” is a construction; there are no universal and objective standards of what terrorism is and who terrorists are. Rather the word is often used to delegitimize the position of those who are not part of dominant social groups.

In the final part I will use the concept of de-contextualization from literary theory to describe the discursive strategy used to label enemies. In terrorism discourse terrorists are demonized through the process of de-contextualization. With the help of de-contextualization terrorism is projected in public discourse as a metaphysical phenomenon. The consequences of this process are that when terrorism is perceived as being metaphysical it can generate an atmosphere of anxiety which serves as fertile ground for attempts to de-legitimize political dissent and activism.

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al-Qaida training in the manufacture of improvised explosive devices. [The informant] identified the watch as a ‘sign of al-Qaida’.”

<sup>7</sup> **Michael Welch**. *Scapegoats of September 11th: Hate Crimes and State Crimes in the War on Terror*. New Brunswick, NJ, USA: Rutgers University Press, 2006, p. 155; **TRAC**. *Who Is A Terrorist? Government Failure to Define Terrorism Undermines Enforcement, Puts Civil Liberties at Risk*, September 29, 2009, <<http://trac.syr.edu/tracreports/terrorism/215/>>; *Without Suspicion. Stop and Search Under Terrorism Act 2000*. **Human Rights Watch**, 2010, p. 1.

## The Orthodox View of Terrorism

“Why do they hate us?” was the questions many were asking in the West, and particularly in US, after the attacks of 9/11. Soon afterward, the consensus was, at first, that it must be because of the failure of the Arab world to come to terms with modernity. As put by one professor of US National War College, the root cause for the anger towards the West was the historic failure of the Arab world to embrace the achievements of modernity: democracy, capitalism and science.<sup>8</sup> Huntingtoinian prophecy had fulfilled itself.<sup>9</sup> A similar but more generalized idea was aptly put forward by US president George W. Bush.<sup>10</sup> The moral condemnation of the 9/11 terrorist acts was unequivocal in the US. In the post 9/11 public discourse now emerged a dominant understanding that word terrorism designated something inherently evil and morally wrong. It is often argued that terrorism is immoral at all times in all places, and that terrorism is essentially always the same irrespective of the context it emerges from. The consequence of the 9/11 is that the question of “terrorism” is seen in rigid, morally absolute categories. One must condemn terrorism, or it is clear that one embraces it.

In the years following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, in public discourse, the conceptualization of terrorism has taken a specific “common sense” form. There is a general assumption that only one and universal way of conceptualizing terrorism exists. This view has become dominant in western thought. I will call it the orthodox view of terrorism. Over the years the orthodox view of terrorism has shaped both – public discourse and policy – making it perceived as objective and universal. Yet contrary to this mainstream view there are other ways to conceptualize terrorism. What we classify as terrorism, and who we label as terrorists depends largely on the point of view from which we approach the question.

After the attacks on the World Trade Center – but also in response to some earlier attacks – a vivid but very oversimplified conventional wisdom has developed about contemporary terrorism that portrays this threat as both new

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<sup>8</sup> **Marvin Ott**. *Why Do They Hate? Because Modernity Passed Them By*. – New York Times, January 9, 2002, <[http://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/09/opinion/09iht-edott\\_ed3\\_.html?scp=8&sq=Why%20do%20they%20hate%20America?&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2002/01/09/opinion/09iht-edott_ed3_.html?scp=8&sq=Why%20do%20they%20hate%20America?&st=cse)>.

<sup>9</sup> I’m referring here to the hypothesis first put forward by **Samuel Huntington** in the *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 72, No. 3, 1993, pp. 22–49.

<sup>10</sup> “Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber – a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms – our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other. /.../ These terrorists kill not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life.” **George W. Bush**. *Address to the Nation*. Washington, DC. September 20, 2001.

and unfamiliar.<sup>11</sup> In orthodox view, terrorism is broadly defined as the use of violence by non-state actors against innocent non-combatants. Even though there are probably as many definitions of terrorism as there are authors writing about the subject, generally the orthodox view tends to mirror definitions proposed by the US Department of State and US Department of Defense. The US Department of State definition states: “the term terrorism means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience”. The Department of State definition has been in use since 1983 and the US Department of Defense has expanded on this with a more recent definition, according to which terrorism is “The unlawful use of – or threatened use of – force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives”.<sup>12</sup> There is a latent presumption in both definitions that it is only non-state actors who can commit acts of terrorism. The latter one also introduces religion and the vague “ideological objectives” as motivators for terrorism. The notion “ideological objectives” is specifically vague and could facilitate a wide range of possible interpretations of motives that cause social actors to commit acts of violence.

The orthodox view describes modern terrorist’s mentality as growing from absolutist and religiously motivated worldview which sees everything in binary categories: either-or, good or evil, us or them. That is why there is no possible way to come to a rational compromise or no possibility of dialogue or mutual bargaining between the sides. Peaceful and civilized dialogue and persuasion of terrorists is not possible because of their absolutist and rigid principles. Thus the proposed solution to deal with the problems that terrorism presents is to implement rigid and absolutist countermeasures against those who are classified as terrorists. Those who commit terrorist acts are, according to orthodox view, enemies of the democratic process and civilized discourse itself. Terrorists are described as inherently evil and uncivilized.<sup>13</sup> In the orthodox view terrorist mentality is usually portrayed as unwarrantably radical and irrational in its core; terrorists are simply nihilists who are driven by abstract “cruelty and hate, the shedding of all moral restraints, the great

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<sup>11</sup> **National Research Council.** Terrorism. Perspectives from the Behavioral and Social Sciences. Panel on Behavioral, Social, and Institutional Issues, Committee on Science and Technology for Countering Terrorism. Neil J. Semsler and Faith Mitchell (Eds). The National Academic Press, 2002, p. 10; **Joseba Zulaika.** Terrorism: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy. Chicago, IL, USA: University of Chicago Press, 2010, p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, cited in **Bruce Hoffman.** Inside Terrorism. Columbia University Press, 2006, p. 31.

<sup>13</sup> **Tohmas J. Butko.** Four Perspectives on Terrorism: Where They Stand Depends on Where You Sit. – Political Studies Review, Volume 7, 2009, p. 185.

rage about everything and nothing in particular, the joy generated by killing and destruction”<sup>14</sup>.

Terrorist acts are described as irrational not only because of their non-sensible motives, but also because their acts are directed against a tendency of rational human beings to strive for order and stability. As terrorists intimidate and destabilize societies by disseminating fear, uncertainty, insecurity and chaos they are described as enemies of the principle of order itself. Their tactics rely on generating shock, fear and surprise in societies, which strive for order and predictability, by indiscriminately attacking innocents. Moreover, according to the orthodox view, modern terrorists show a special kind mercilessness by using any means possible – including the possible use of weapons of mass destruction – to advance their agenda against victimized societies. In the orthodox view the terrorist threat is often portrayed as an amorphous and fluid menace, and terrorists as an invisible a-spatial enemy. Terrorist are stateless and without territory, operating in the form of terrorist networks that transcend the borders of states.<sup>15</sup>

### **A Social Constructionist Critique of Orthodox View**

Social constructionism is a theory which studies the genesis of social phenomena in specific social contexts. Its focus is the study of relationship of meaning and power.<sup>16</sup> According to social constructionism our perception of reality – the way we see and make sense of our world is always “constructed” by the social institutions we are participating in. All our knowledge, even our everyday reality is created and maintained through social interaction.<sup>17</sup> Through their social interaction people discover that their overlapping worlds are related and have common aspects. By this process of discovery common knowledge is created and sustained through inter-personal relations. Thus common knowledge takes a crystallized form and is expressed in social institutions, human stereotypes, myths and beliefs which become perceived by social group as an objective reality. The process of maintaining this reality is a

<sup>14</sup> **Walter Laqueur**. *The New Terrorism and the Weapons of Mass Destruction*. Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 231.

<sup>15</sup> **Hoffman** 2006, p. 38, **Helen Dexter**. *New War, Good War and the War on Terror: Explaining, Excusing and Creating Western Neo-interventionism*. – *Development and Change*, 38(6), 2007, p. 1059; **William C. Banks**. *Alternative Views of the Terrorist Threat*. – *International Studies Review*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 2005, pp. 670–671.

<sup>16</sup> **Michael Larkin**. *What is Social Constructionism?* <[http://www.psy.dmu.ac.uk/michael/soc\\_con\\_disc.htm](http://www.psy.dmu.ac.uk/michael/soc_con_disc.htm)>, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> With this I do not want to imply that there is no external material reality. On the contrary, I presume that underlying every discourse are complex historical-material settings. There exist multifaceted relations between discourse and material reality and both are mutually influencing each other.

dynamic one; reality needs to be constantly shaped and re-affirmed to persist. Social phenomena are constantly made and institutionalized by social agents that take part in the open-ended process of social interaction.

Norms and institutions are not things existing objectively out there, but are created in and by particular communities that exist in particular contexts. And these institutions again shape those communities. There are no objective measures of good or bad, right or wrong. Rather what is considered to be good or bad, right or wrong depends on what viewpoint one takes. Our perception of reality depends on the community one identifies oneself with. Norms and institutions change with time, taking multiple forms in different contexts. What might seem right in one community might be wrong in another; what is considered normal for one community might be abnormal to another. In sum, different communities have different sets of norms, goals and aspirations.

Language has an important role in creating worlds that communities identify themselves with. Language functions as an instrument for creating, normalizing and reinforcing particular worldviews, affixing certain knowledge and institutions in society; at the same time alternative worldviews and knowledge are excluded and de-legitimized. Through language identities are created and maintained, and as such, language is never neutral. Groups struggling for power and trying to reaffirm their identities use language to create and maintain a hegemonic regime of truth.<sup>18</sup>

From the social constructionist viewpoint terrorism could be viewed as a “construct” created by particular social actors to serve their political needs. “Terrorism” in terrorism discourse is created by the process of inter-group communication and interplay of political interests and aspirations for power. Terrorism is politically and socially produced, that is, “a process of communication rooted in language itself and, thus, involves creating or imposing a bridge of shared meanings”<sup>19</sup>. What is signified with the word terrorism is not an objective fact, nor is it a universal phenomenon, but rather a product of specific systems of classification. What terrorism means is defined by the framework of signification that particular social actors use to give meaning to the term. Who are terrorists and what acts constitute terrorism is constructed by social actors through the language they use to order the world. “Terrorism” is a result of a terrorism discourse. This discourse is not merely a description or reflection about facts existing in objective reality, it is also a construction and interpretation of those facts.

The concept of terrorism implies a system of categorization that simultaneously describes the world and creates it. Although the history of the word “terrorism” dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and has gone through several transformations of meaning, it was not until the 1970s it became a discourse in

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<sup>18</sup> Jackson 2007, p. 397.

<sup>19</sup> Butko 2009, p. 191.

itself. It was when such acts of political violence as bombing, kidnappings and assassinations became classified as terrorism, terrorism as independent discourse came into being.<sup>20</sup> Terrorism discourse is not just merely a play of language; it creates its own reality with consequences manifest in historical-material settings. Its effects are expressed in politics and legislation that societies implement in response to the discourse. Terrorism discourse is a functional reality of politics that is deployed in the time of seeming crisis.<sup>21</sup>

As pointed out by Jackson, a political project like war on terrorism, that so deeply encompasses the fabric of society, needs a wide-scale social and political consensus, and, that consensus is not available without language.<sup>22</sup> Language creates meaning, and this process of meaning-making is political in nature. In the process of meaning-making certain questions are posed and certain answers suggested at the expense of excluding alternative questions and answers, thus leading to the preference of certain meanings over others. Language used to formulate the discourse does not exist as value-neutral; power and language are inseparably interwoven entities in a society as power relations determine what kinds of forms of knowledge are privileged, who are allowed to speak and act and how they are positioned in the discursive field. Due to the inherent political nature of discourses there is a tendency in social actors to reaffirm their own views while at the same time trying to delegitimize alternative views. Discourses are:

“constructed and employed for specific purposes, most importantly, the creation, maintenance, and extension of power. Discourses are an exercise of power; that is they try to become dominant or hegemonic by discrediting alternative or rival discourses, by promoting themselves as the full and final truth and by drowning out the sound of any other discourse”<sup>23</sup>

Terrorism discourse is a system of legitimization/de-legitimization. In the discursive process terrorists identities are constructed, named and opposed to “legitimate” identities. Also ways to confront terrorists are mapped out and legitimized. Terrorism discourse does not only construct the “terrorists”, it also makes certain responses and strategies to deal with the terrorists seem justified. Terrorism discourse creates a new framework through which political power can justify its actions without generating a widespread dissent. It

<sup>20</sup> Zulaika 2010, p. 17.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Jackson. Language Power and Politics: Critical Discourse Analysis and the War on Terrorism. – 49th Parallel, Issue 15: Spring 2005, <<http://www.49thparallel.bham.ac.uk/back/issue15/jackson1.htm>>.

<sup>23</sup> Richard Jackson. Writing the War on Terrorism: Language, Politics, and Counter-Terrorism. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005, cited in Butko 2009, p. 191.

needs to create a legitimizing narrative that manufactures approval while simultaneously suppressing individual doubts.<sup>24</sup>

### **The de-contextualization in the terrorism discourse**

Language as an instrument of power provides innumerable resources by which honest investigation of phenomena may be evaded by mystifying or “essentializing” actions.<sup>25</sup> In orthodox view of terrorism the meaning of terrorist acts are separated from their social and political context and interpreted instead with a reference to religious and political myths. This process of transformation of meaning I will call de-contextualization.

Before I proceed to discuss what I mean by de-contextualization it is in order to clarify what is meant by the term context. We can speak of several types of contexts. First, there is the social context – the socio-political and economic circumstances that surround social agents. We may call it the social agents’ “social reality”, that is, the concrete material-historical settings in which social agents act in. Second, there is the situational context that influences discursive practices of the social agents; it determines the semantic aspects of particular communication acts and texts.<sup>26</sup> In other words, it gives meaning to concrete acts of social agents in specific time and place. And third, there is the textual context which consists of narratives, myths, stereotypes and beliefs that a particular group holds. The textual context functions as a wider signification framework in which meanings are created, attributed and preserved. It provides a broad set of cultural narratives like the narrative of war of good and evil, the narrative of civilization-versus-barbarism, and narrative of innocence versus sinfulness, but also more specific narratives such as those surrounding the struggle against fascism or mythologies of the cold war.<sup>27</sup> All contexts are interrelated and there are complex and dynamic relationships between them that contribute and influence the discursive process.

The term de-contextualization originates from the literary theory and is used to refer to process of abstraction through which texts are separated from their real world context of their origins. As shown by Hamilton-Wieler the

<sup>24</sup> Jackson 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Carl Kandutsch. Mechanisms of Power in the Age of Terrorism. Resetting Theory. Kroker, Arthur and Marilouise (Ed), 5/18/2010, <<http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=646>>.

<sup>26</sup> I use the word text here in very broad sense. Text is not limited to written texts, but it also designates a wide variety of other phenomena such as historical events, social agency in concrete historical social reality, institutional practices, myths and beliefs (that often are materialized as written texts) of particular societies.

<sup>27</sup> Jackson 2007, p. 401; Joanne Esch. Legitimizing the “War on Terror”: Political Myth in Official-Level Rhetoric. – Political Psychology, Vol. 31, No. 3, 2010, p. 365.

term is somewhat imprecise.<sup>28</sup> Is it really possible to take something out of context without putting it into another one? She argues that it is not. Analyzing written texts and language she comes to a conclusion that the term certainly does not function on the morphological level as it is impossible to take a text or sentence out of its context without putting it into another one.<sup>29</sup> All discourse is contextual and meanings are always created in reference to some context. But this also implies that every text can be read in several contexts. No text is related only to one context; rather it could belong to many contexts and have several meanings.

As a text's meaning is not fixed, it can be read in such a way that reference to its social reality is cut off and the meaning is created in reference to some other more abstract context. With de-contextualization I designate then a discursive practice that obfuscates the motives of particular acts, and changes the meaning of those acts by shifting the center of interpretation in the discourse from the social reality into a more abstract textual context. In the case of terrorism discourse, the meanings of terrorist acts are constructed by interpreters of those acts, not in reference to the social conditions where the perpetrators of terrorist acts originate, but in reference to abstract moral categories that interpreters use to structure their world. Through de-contextualization concrete socio-political causes of problems are transformed "into abstract universalized [moral] notions that we are familiar and comfortable with"<sup>30</sup>. By this process of reinterpreting the meaning of acts, those acts are legitimized or delegitimized by associating them with generalized moral concepts like "good/evil", "faithful/nihilist", or "civilized/barbarian". By de-contextualization the search for causes of particular acts is shifted away from the concrete political and socioeconomic level into the metaphysical. Zulaika and Douglass describe the re-framing of terrorist acts in the terrorism discourse: "Terrorism discourse singles out and removes from the larger historical and political context a psychological trait (terror), an organizational structure (the terrorist network), and category (terrorism) in order to invent an autonomous and aberrant realm of gratuitous evil".<sup>31</sup> In the orthodox view acts of political violence are separated from their socio-political context and described in theological terms. The meaning of political violence is reinterpreted in reference to religion and political mythology. De-contextualized acts of terrorism are not seen as instrumental acts of political persuasion but as fundamental confrontation on an absolute scale of good and evil.

<sup>28</sup> For a longer discussion about the definition of the term see **Sarah Hamilton-Wieler**. *The Fallacy of Decontextualization*. Indiana University at Indianapolis, 1988.

<sup>29</sup> **Hamilton-Wieler** 1988, pp. 4–5.

<sup>30</sup> **Dexter** 2007, p. 1062.

<sup>31</sup> **Joseba Zulaika and William Douglass**. *Terror and Taboo: The Follies, Fables, and Faces of Terrorism*. Routledge, 1996, p. 22.

In the orthodox view terrorist acts are described as unmotivated and irrational acts of pure evil that are directed against everything “we” stand for – the democracy, freedom and our way of life as a whole. The instrumental character of terrorist’s acts is denied. Proponents of the orthodox view separate motives of those who commit acts of violence from their socio-political context and argue that all terrorism is alike. This position is well expressed in the remark of former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon: “Terrorism is terrorism anywhere in the world”<sup>32</sup>. Acts of political violence committed by the Palestinians are delegitimized by claiming that there are no difference between the attacks of al-Qaida and those carried out by Palestinians.<sup>33</sup> UK Prime Minister David Cameron presents another example. In his recent speech on the Munich Security Conference he subtly associated Islamic extremism, fascist ideology, recent popular protests against austerity measures in Greece and Italy, and political violence carried out by Red Army Faction in Germany, by combining them under a term “extremist ideology”.<sup>34</sup> According to Cameron this ideology needs to be combated by exposing its ideas “for what they are” by arguing that terrorism is wrong in all circumstances.<sup>35</sup>

In 2004 US Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told graduates of West Point Military Academy that the civilized world faces adversaries unlike any in the past, “radicals and extremists who have attempted to hijack a religion” and who “have no territory to defend, no public to answer to”, and who are threatening us “with shadowy networks”.<sup>36</sup> And despite that “in less than three years, an 80-nation coalition has overthrown two vicious regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, liberated 50 million people... the truth is we are closer to the beginning of this struggle this global insurgency than to its end”<sup>37</sup>. In the orthodox view both temporal and spatial dimensions are abstracted, and terrorism becomes amorphous threat that could strike at any place anytime. Rumsfeld de-contextualizes terrorist threat by portraying it as a-spatial and a-temporal. Even though we have defeated two terrorist states, the war against terrorism has just begun. As there is no perceivable end to war on terrorism

<sup>32</sup> Cited in **Virginia Held**. *How Terrorism is Wrong: Moral and Political Violence*. Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> **Virginia Held**. *How Terrorism is Wrong: Moral and Political Violence*. Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 13

<sup>34</sup> **David Cameron**. Speech at Munich Security Conference. February 5, 2011, <<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2011/02/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference-60293>>.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>36</sup> Cited in **Jim Garmone**. Life not Predictable, Rumsfeld Tells New Army Officers. – American Forces Press Service, May 29, 2004, <<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=26381>>

<sup>37</sup> Cited in **Garmone** 2004.

it becomes an ontological state.<sup>38</sup> It is also implied that terrorism could not be located in any specific place, but it exists everywhere. It is a global phenomenon, an extremist insurgency against the civilized world. But this threat is imagined not only as emerging from the outside of the civilized world, but also from inside.<sup>39</sup>

The proponents of the orthodox view assume that terrorists are operating according to some alternative rationality, and this rationality is interpreted and described in theological language. By this in the discourse the possibility that there exists a connection between terrorist's behavior and social relations of interpreters is cut off. By de-contextualization terrorists motives are explained in the language of religious and moral notions rather than as being part of complex, historically based calculus of power and privilege, systems of value exchange and social organization.<sup>40</sup> By shifting the basis of interpretation of the terrorist's acts from the social reality into the textual context, materiality of the acts is denied. There is a perceived difference in materiality of acts of evil and acts of political adversary or dissident. In the former case the links between the material world that conditions the acts and the perpetrator of those acts are cut off in the mind of the addressee of discourse.<sup>41</sup>

Ultimately de-contextualization in public discourse enables casting those who are named as terrorists out of one's moral sphere. By removing social and political factors as possible motivators for an act of terrorism, terrorists are seen as evil by nature. Acts of terrorism are not seen as being caused by oppression and marginalization, but rather as caused by the terrorist's evil

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<sup>38</sup> Osama Bin Laden, one of the main targets of the war on terrorism, was killed by US special forces during the time I was finishing this article. Only a couple days later when celebrating ended, politicians, intelligence and police executives made clear that it is business as usual, and war on terrorism will continue undisturbed as the terrorist threat remains severe. As aptly expressed by UK Metropolitan Chief Sir Paul Stephenson: "To be blunt it means that an attack is highly likely and could occur without warning at any time". Cited in **Vikram Dodd**. Osama bin Laden death doesn't end terror threat – Met chief. – The Guardian, 4 May, 2011, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/may/04/osama-bin-laden-met-chief>>; **Hélène Mulholland**. Cameron says Britain must stay vigilant after Bin Laden death. – The Guardian, 3 May, 2011, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/may/03/cameron-britain-vigilant-bin-laden-death>>; **Michael D. Shear**. After Killing of Bin Laden, Official Reaction Pours In. – The New York Times, 2 May, 2011, <<http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/05/02/after-killing-of-bin-laden-reaction-pours-in/?scp=13&sq=terrorist%20threat&st=cse>>.

<sup>39</sup> **Cameron** 2011; **George W. Bush**. Renewing the Patriot Act. Columbus, Ohio, June 9, 2005, <<http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/06.09.05.html>>.

<sup>40</sup> **Russell McCutcheon**. Religion and the Domestication of Dissent. Equinox, 2008, p. 38.

<sup>41</sup> Evidence suggest that in cases where the same acts of terrorism are described as religiously motivated, people consider the perpetrators of those acts to be more blameworthy than in cases where same acts are described as politically motivated. Also people tend to consider acts to be terrorism when motives of those acts are presented as religious instead of political. See **R. K. Pradhan**. Terrorism, Rule of Law and Human Rights. Delhi, IND: Global Media, 2010, pp. 92–99.

and irrational motives, by a logic completely belonging into another moral sphere. In this rhetoric no rational justification for acts of terrorism can exist, as such acts are against humanity and rationality itself. Those who commit acts of terrorism become non-persons, existing outside the civilized world. As pointed out by Kandutsch that in Judeo-Christian morality a principle of reciprocity exists, according to which the sides of moral dispute must accept a resolution of that dispute to the extent they share the underlying norms that constitute possible ways of resolving disputes.<sup>42</sup> The principle of reciprocity implies that a right for self-defense or counter-challenge exists on the part of the victim. When a victim engages in self-defense or makes a counter-challenge, the other side has no moral ground for objecting these actions. By de-contextualization this principle of moral reciprocity is broken. As terrorists are cast into another moral sphere, there is no common framework which would regulate questions of challenge and response. There exists no possibility that acts of terrorism are a response of the victimized. Bad things that “we” do cannot be compared to the bad things that terrorists do, because terrorists’ acts are profoundly more evil.<sup>43</sup>

By de-contextualization the presentation of reality in public discourse is reduced to the binary oppositions of “us versus them” where “we” serve as a force of good. This dichotomy appeals to the identity of the group and thus prefers civilizational explanations for conflict over political or economic ones.<sup>44</sup> De-contextualization functions in a public discourse as an instrument of justification of a particular set of narratives and actions that affirm one groups’ identity at the expense of others. Those who commit acts of terrorism are described as being uncivilized barbarians who are against ‘our’ way of life. By reducing the world to moral absolutes, into categories of us versus them, and by appealing to identity, a possibility for critical analysis of the concept of terrorism is cut off. The word “terrorism” becomes a taboo with super-linguistic power.<sup>45</sup> Discussion about the alternative causes of terrorism is expelled from public discourse by strategies of labelling and scapegoating. If one does not subscribe to the orthodox view, and tries to find other explanations for terrorist’s acts, one puts himself in danger of being labelled as a supporter of those acts. De-contextualization works as a rhetorical strategy that adverts further analysis of the terrorist’s motives beyond the “because they are evil” explanation. Further, it denies self-critical reflection in public discourse about the possibility that the causes of terrorist’s acts could be related to the structural injustice created by the attacked group itself.

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<sup>42</sup> **Kandutsch** 2010.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> **Esch** 2010, p. 370; **Butko** 2009, p. 186.

<sup>45</sup> **Kandutsch** 2010.

The consequence of de-contextualisation in the terrorism discourse is that when the enemy is constructed as an abstract evil it creates an atmosphere of public anxiety and fear. For example during the eight years of the US Homeland Security Advisory System – a five-color scheme that indicated the terrorist threat in the US – it was mostly on levels yellow or orange, fluctuating between high and elevated levels of threat. It was never lowered to blue or green.<sup>46</sup> By de-contextualization an atemporal and omnipresent state of emergency is created that manufactures need to be ever vigilant, and implement ever widening scope of terrorism countermeasures like electronic surveillance, wiretapping, personal information harvesting, border searches and racial profiling.<sup>47</sup>

The image of an invisible and aspatial enemy that poses an omnipresent threat opens up the possibility of resolving arbitrarily the problem of naming the enemy. In the state of public fear scapegoating as enemies those who look different, who have alternative political views, or who constitute marginalized groups in society, could become a normal and tolerated practice. In the state of anxiety the practice of labelling and scapegoating different social actors becomes the means for satisfying certain social and psychological needs, like the need to assign blame or the need to reduce the psychic discomfort of society.<sup>48</sup>

There is a danger that terrorism discourse leads to persecution of political dissent and to the destruction of open civil society. The war on terrorism is not limited to violent extremism, but is fought against “extremist ideology” in general. This “extremist ideology” is shared alike by those who commit acts of violence and those who are called “non-violent extremists”.<sup>49</sup> When terrorist motives are de-contextualized, those who are blamed for supporting terrorists or sharing a terrorist philosophy are also classified under a category of “terrorist”.<sup>50</sup> It is not only certain actions but also certain ways of thinking that are delegitimized in the terrorism discourse. There is a growing body of evidence that political activists, animal rights protesters, anti-globalism protesters, liberals, academics, and curiously even photographers are silenced and persecuted under the legislation that has proliferated as a consequence

<sup>46</sup> Homeland Security Advisory System Task Force Report and Recommendations. September 2009, <[http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/hsac\\_final\\_report\\_09\\_15\\_09.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/hsac_final_report_09_15_09.pdf)>, p. 12.

<sup>47</sup> For an overview of measures implemented in response to 9/11 attacks in US and in various European states see **Wolfgang Benedek and Alice Yotopoulos-Marangopoulos** (Eds). *Anti-Terrorist Measures and Human Rights*. Leiden, NLD: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004; **Mark Sidel**. *More Secure, Less Free?: Antiterrorism Policy and Civil Liberties After September 11*. USA: University of Michigan Press, 2007. pp. 31–64; **Michael Welch**. *Scapegoats of September 11th: Hate Crimes and State Crimes in the War on Terror*. pp. 77–78

<sup>48</sup> **Welch** 2006, p 36.

<sup>49</sup> **Cameron** 2011.

<sup>50</sup> **Welch** 2006, pp. 155–156.

of terrorism discourse.<sup>51</sup> The de-contextualization of the enemy leads to the legislation that in broad sweeps makes a large variety of political expression a terrorism related offense. In the US Patriot Act, for example, a new concept of domestic terrorism is coined, that is defined as “acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws” if they “appear to be intended ... to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion”<sup>52</sup>. Such vaguely defined criteria make it possible to classify almost any kind of political expression as terrorism. A similar problem is present in the inclusion of ideological and religious motives in official definitions of terrorism. Communicating one’s political or religious views is part of normal democratic public life. But by making it possible to classify advancing ones religious or political views, and influencing government politics as terrorism-related crime, governments could limit legitimate political action as they see fit. It is not only radical forms of political actions like property damage or civil disobedience that are vilified, but in a state of public fear, any critique of dominant power is dampened.

## Conclusions

The language of terrorism discourse obfuscates the structural causes of terrorist motives by de-contextualizing them from their historical-material settings. Instead, abstract and absolute moral notions are employed to describe terrorists and their deeds. Terrorist are seen as inherently evil, and as such they

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<sup>51</sup> **Jackson** 2005; **Welch** 2006, p. 147; TRAC. Who Is A Terrorist? Government Failure to Define Terrorism Undermines Enforcement, Puts Civil Liberties at Risk. An analysis of thousands of juridical records of the US federal courts and from two agencies in the US Justice Department by Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) shows that the government institutions have no clear definition what constitutes as terrorism. This has lead to the arrest and prosecution of thousands of people under terrorism legislation who had nothing to do with terrorism. A December 2008 manual directive to the U.S. Attorneys stating that federal terrorism cases “may have, but are not required to have, identifiable links to terrorist activity”. This broad classification lets prosecutors bring up almost any federal crime as a terrorism related offense; it has become common in the UK to use anti-terrorist laws to search and arrest people taking pictures in public places, as they are more frequently assumed to be terrorists on reconnaissance missions. **Mark Hughes and Jerome Taylor**. Do not take this picture. The Independent, 3 December, 2009, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/warning-do-not-take-this-picture-1833127.html>>; According to Human Watch report on the use of “stop and search” powers in UK and Ireland between April 2007 and April 2009 police used its right to detain people without suspicion on almost 450 000 occasions. This power is justified by the need to prevent terrorist acts despite the evidence showing that none of those cases led to any successful prevention of terrorist acts not to the prosecution of anyone on the ground of terrorism accusations. Without Suspicion. Stop and Search Under Terrorism Act 2000. **Human Rights Watch**, 2010, p. 1, <<http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/uk0710webwcover.pdf>>; **Sidel** 2007, pp. 127–132.

<sup>52</sup> US Patriot Act, Section 802. Cited in **Welch** 2006, p. 147; see also **Sidel** 2007, p. 11.

would operate according to some rationality other than that of the describer's. This leads to a depiction of terrorism as a metaphysical phenomenon that is aspatial and omnipresent. There is no clear definition of what terrorism is or who terrorists are, and thus, the war on terrorism becomes a fight against an uncertain imaginable threat.

The use of language also affects the way policies and institutions are developed. In the time of emergency blaming and scapegoating become more prevalent and acceptable practices. As terrorism is pictured as an abstract threat, a need for appropriate countermeasures is manufactured. In the name of security terrorism discourse legitimatizes certain forms of political institutions and actions that serve to fortify the dominant political order. An atmosphere of public fear and anxiety make it easier for dominant powers to find support for implementing sweeping countermeasures that are needed against a vaguely defined enemy.

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# THE CULTURE OF FEAR IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS – A WESTERN-DOMINATED INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AND ITS EXTREMIST CHALLENGES

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**ABSTRACT.** A culture of fear is precipitated by an emotional response to uncertainty, instability and anxiety in social discourses and relationships. It is a powerful tool in the hands of ideologies stressing on conflict between Us and Others, notable of mention are nationalism, Marxism and religious fundamentalism. Fear can be an attractive political instrument for hiding motives, evoking irrational emotions and mobilizing people under the flag of populist gains. In international politics, the culture of fear is closely related to the Hobbesian political culture, which emphasizes a permanent state of war between international actors. Deviant actors may use the culture of fear in their resistance to the international system.

**Key words:** *culture of fear, cultural theory of international relations, political cultures, deviant states, international terrorism, international system, neo-conservatism.*

## Introduction

A culture of fear is a term used in social sciences in order to describe the emotional response produced by actors using fear as a political incentive, which is often related to extremism. Extremism can be referred to as radical actions against prevailing social norms and rules recognized by the vast majority of actors in a certain environment. To realize their goals, the followers of extremist ideologies can turn to illegitimate tools. The culture of fear increases the role of instability and anxiety in social discourses and relationships and makes distinctions between friendly Us and hostile Others. These emotions may be deliberately used for political gains (e.g. in starting wars, in tensioning relations with other countries, but also in building a kind of national solidarity). Although in recent discourses the culture of fear is frequently connected to the rise of radical Islamic fundamentalism and the Global War on Terrorism (GWoT), which was evoked after the terrorist attacks in New York and

Washington on September 11, 2001, its roots descend from ancient times. The Ancient Greek historian Thucydides already regarded Sparta's fear of maintaining its way of life threatened by the growth of Athens as a main catalyst for the Peloponnesian War in the 5th century B.C.<sup>1</sup>

A high-level Nazi leader Hermann Göring has said in his interview to G. M. Gilbert during the Nuremberg Trial:

**Göring:** ... Naturally, the common people don't want war; neither in Russia, nor in England, nor in America, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the *leaders* of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship.

**Gilbert:** There is one difference. In a democracy the people have some say in the matter through their elected representatives, and in the United States only Congress can declare wars.

**Göring:** Oh, that is all well and good, but, voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country.<sup>2</sup>

Hermann Göring was quite outspoken in his descriptions of why emotional motives might be beneficial for political elites. Fear is a powerful incentive in the hands of populist politicians for shaping public opinion. Zbigniew Brzezinski has noted that a culture of fear "obscures reason, intensifies emotions and makes it easier for demagogic politicians to mobilize the public on behalf of the policies they want to pursue"<sup>3</sup>. Sometimes democratic politicians may also use popular emotional motives for achieving their political goals. In 2003, the US senator Robert C. Byrd introduced the excerpt from the Nuremberg Diaries in his speech of October 17, 2003, addressed to the President George W. Bush after the Iraqi invasion of 2003.<sup>4</sup> Senator Byrd accused the President of the continuation of war based on falsehood.

<sup>1</sup> **Richard Ned Lebow.** Thucydides the Constructivist. – The American Political Science Review, 2001, p. 556.

<sup>2</sup> **Gustave Gilbert.** Nuremberg Diary. New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1947, pp. 278–79.

<sup>3</sup> **Zbigniew Brzezinski.** Terrorized by "War on Terror". – Washington Post, 25.03.2007. Available online at: <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/23/AR2007032301613.html>>, (accessed 07.05.2011).

<sup>4</sup> **Robert C. Byrd.** The Emperor Has No Clothes by U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, October 17, 2003. Available online at: <[http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2003/10/17\\_byrd\\_emperor.htm](http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2003/10/17_byrd_emperor.htm)>, (accessed 30.04.2011).

Alexander Wendt<sup>5</sup> has identified three phenomena (ideal types) that have influenced the development of European political culture and created premises for constructing engagement of international actors into the prevailing international system: the Hobbesian war, the Lockean rivalry, and the Kantian collective security/security community.<sup>6</sup> There is a fundamental difference in the nature of Hobbesian/Lockean political culture on the one hand and the Kantian culture on the other hand. Fear is an important incentive, which is capable of precipitating the Hobbesian war of all against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). The Kantian culture envisages the idealist tradition of cooperative international relations, introduces comprehensive cooperative tools for consolidating universal peace (e.g. security communities, collective and cooperative security arrangements) and intends to unite the world under common virtues.

There are different drivers, which would shape political cultures accordingly to their specific cultural environments: conflict for the Hobbesian culture, competition for the Lockean culture, and cooperation for the Kantian culture. The culture of fear is closely related to the Hobbesian political culture, emphasizing interstate conflict as a natural paradigm in international politics. The Lockean culture recognizes the state of war between international actors but desires to mitigate its effects. The Kantian culture intends to overcome fear in international relations by increasing mutual interdependence among actors.<sup>7</sup> Ideologies, which emphasize conflict (state of war) between social entities, may promote fear-related motives in their political activities and tilt into political extremism.<sup>8</sup> Eventually, the *ideological states*<sup>9</sup> may practice state extremism against the valid international system.

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<sup>5</sup> **Alexander Wendt**. *Social Theory in International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> After the English philosophers Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and John Locke (1632–1704) and their German colleague Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).

<sup>7</sup> Like the Hobbesian enmity, the Lockean rivalry manifests the Self-Other dichotomy with respect to violence, but they recognize the sovereignty of Others and do not try to conquer or dominate them. **Wendt** 1999, p. 279.

<sup>8</sup> Ideologies like Nationalism (stresses conflict between national identities), Marxism (between social classes), Religious Fundamentalism (between religious identities) can be prone to follow extremist lines. Religious Fundamentalism may be also regarded as Religious Nationalism as the organization of the ideology is similar and the only difference is the object of identity.

<sup>9</sup> Countries, which declare that there is an official ideology of the state. Extremist ideologies – Extreme Nationalism, Communism, Religious Fundamentalism, etc. – can often monopolize the state establishment and produce ideological societies.

A Hungarian-born British sociologist Frank Furedi has significantly contributed to the research into the origins of the culture of fear.<sup>10</sup> The current work uses the framework of cultural theory of international relations envisaged by Richard Ned Lebow<sup>11</sup> in examining how the culture of fear can impact on international politics, justify the activities of deviant actors and produce enmities and polarizations within the international system.

### The culture of international systems

Hedley Bull stated that an international system comes into force “when two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another’s decisions to cause them to behave as parts of a whole”<sup>12</sup>. Although since the 1990s the role and importance of other actors (e.g. international institutions, transnational networks, etc.) has notably grown, states have still maintained a status of principal international actors within the international system.

An international system is a governing body that has an ability to arrange relations between different political, social, and cultural entities and operates by using various international regimes for this purpose. It is a self-regulative structure, not a cultural entity, but various political cultures can influence the development of a system. In its turn, the system has an ability to shape its cultural environment. Modern and post-modern international systems have been predominantly influenced by the Western political cultures, and therefore can be identified as Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian systems depending on which political culture prevails within the system.<sup>13</sup> The international actors will normally accept mutually recognized norms, which support interactions within the system.

Various social forces may intervene for the transformation of anxious emotions into fear.<sup>14</sup> The extremist actors and ideologies may force the culture of fear facilitating their political gains. The culture of fear is also influenced by

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<sup>10</sup> In his books *Culture of Fear: Risk Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation* (1997/2002), *The Politics of Fear. Beyond Left and Right* (2005), *Invitation to Terror: The Expanding Empire of the Unknown* (2007), all of them published by the Continuum International Publishing Group.

<sup>11</sup> **Richard Ned Lebow**. *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> **Hedley Bull**. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, pp. 9–13.

<sup>13</sup> See also **Holger Mölder**. *Cooperative Security Dilemma – practicing the Hobbesian security culture in the Kantian security environment*. Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2010, pp. 94–100.

<sup>14</sup> See also **Frank Furedi**. *The Politics of Fear. Beyond Left and Right*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005.

the concept of security dilemma, which refers to a situation in which actors provoke an increase of mutual tensions in order to improve their own security.<sup>15</sup> There will emerge a ‘*moral panic*’ – that occurs when a “condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests”<sup>16</sup>. If the culture of fear is empowered by populist politicians from both sides, it may lead to the non-solvable security dilemma transferred into the sphere of emotions and irrational narratives powered by fear. Such dilemmas are most complicated to manage.

The culture of fear, practiced by powerful international actors, can destabilize international systems. Which is important, certain ideologies, particularly Nationalism and Marxism in their extreme representations, tend to play an important role in producing system-related security dilemmas. Eric Hobsbawm called the 20<sup>th</sup> century the age of extremes with two global wars and the rise and fall of the messianic faith of Communism.<sup>17</sup> The ideological societies, which emerged rapidly after the World War I, promoted the culture of fear not regionally as it happened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but already in global terms. The Marxist revolution in Russia set up an ideological alternative to the world society and positioned Russia as a deviant actor, similarly to North Korea or Iran within the current international system, having only a limited access to mainstream international politics. Systemic confrontations between the international system and deviant actors continued through the activities of Fascist Italy from 1922, Nazi Germany from 1933 or Shōwa Nationalist Japan from 1920s-1930s. These three ideologies founded common paradigms in uniting nationalism, socialism and militarism together for creating an alternative subsystem to the post-World War I Versailles system.<sup>18</sup>

The Westphalian concept of national sovereignty is based on two general principles: recognition of territorial integrity of states and recognition of the rule that external actors have no right to interfere into the domestic matters of states.<sup>19</sup> These principles have prevailed throughout modern society, until the last modern international system, the Cold War’s bipolarity, ended. The end of the Cold War marks another breakthrough from the overwhelmingly Hobbesian/Lockean modern international systems to the Kantian post-modern one. The transition was accompanied by a cultural clash, which stems from

<sup>15</sup> **Ken Booth and Nicholas J. Wheeler.** *The Security Dilemma. Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> **Stanley Cohen.** *Folk Devils and Moral Panics.* St Albans: Paladin, 1973, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> **Eric Hobsbawm.** *The Age of Extremes. A History of World, 1914–1991.* London: Michael Joseph and Pelham Books, 1994.

<sup>18</sup> The Versailles system may be identified as the first Kantian international system, see **Mölder** 2010, pp. 94–100.

<sup>19</sup> See also **Stephen D. Krasner.** *Sovereignty: organized hypocrisy.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

different cultural practices and narratives used by modern and post-modern actors within the system.

Since the 1990s, a liberal democracy has been the main incentive for stimulating cooperative international regimes in the Euro-Atlantic security environment, which is shifting towards a global community of democratic states. The majority of European states started to follow the principles of the Kantian political culture, which helped to end the emergence of violent international conflicts in the most parts of Europe. However, the introduction of the Kantian international system did not exclude the co-existence of the Hobbesian actors and environments with the Kantian trend of the system. The cultural differences between the Hobbesian/Lockean actors and the Kantian actors reflect the ideological clash between the Western liberal democracy and the rest of the world, where the modern ideologies like Nationalism or Marxism retained their influential positions in many countries and regions

The logic of postmodern society recognizes supranational principles (e.g. human rights, liberal democracy), which do not entirely fit with the concept of national sovereignty prevailing in the modern society. The conflict between the logic of modern society and the logic of post-modern society may produce cultural security dilemmas between actors and environments representing different cultures and values. Several powerful countries, first of all China and Russia, prefer to keep alive modern principles of the international system, which complicates the involvement of international society in stabilizing the whole system by emphasizing peace, stability, and human rights.

International systems existentially depend on two dependant paradigms: polarity and stability. Polarity implies that there are competing antagonistic subsystems within a system. The Hobbesian and Lockean systems are polarized international systems, while the Kantian system intends to avoid the polarization and if any actor will find itself in opposition with the Kantian system, it may be identified as a deviant actor, outside of the system. The stability within the system may be changed by actions usually taken by major powers. In the long-run, the Soviet invasion to Afghanistan in 1979 caused the crash of the Cold War system. The invasion of the US-led coalition to Iraq in 2003 destabilized the post-modern Kantian system.

Societies stemming from the Hobbesian and Lockean political cultures tend to treat polarity as a natural behavior of the international system. This would indeed describe the 19<sup>th</sup> century society wherein the ideological differences had a minor influence on the international society and the motives of actors manifested quite similar characteristics. A century later, major powers under the auspices of the Western democracy were forced to find consolidating factors and curb their national interests in standing against the competing extremist ideologies from German National Socialism to Soviet Communism. Lebow explains that, contrary to the realist assumptions, within a non-polar system powerful actors attempt to conform to the rules of the system as the

system would help them to use their power capabilities in the most efficient and effective manner.<sup>20</sup> In return, they should limit their national goals to those which others consider as legitimate and the interests of the community as a whole.

### Extremism in international politics

The culture of fear polarizes and destabilizes international systems as it is able to force emotional motives, which are able to avoid rational calculations and lead to a political extremism. In their extreme manifestations,<sup>21</sup> Nationalism, Marxism and certain religion-affiliated ideologies may produce ideological states and ideological societies. Lebow explains fear as one of the general motives shaping international relations, which settles security as a primary goal for fear-based societies and uses power as an instrument to achieve more security in eternal competition for increasing security-related capabilities.<sup>22</sup>

Organic ideologies may attribute a certain status of ideal to the community – *we are going the right way, and all those who behave differently, are trying to hinder the achievement of the desired ideal*. Consequently, it would be necessary to provide for all those who as renegade deviate from these ideals. In extreme cases, it may lead to the use of violence in order to bring the renegades back to the ‘right track’. The ideological societies, which are based on a strong sense of identity with Us and Others contrasted and polarized, would impact their positioning towards the system related to some other cultural environment. “As a general rule, individuals, groups, organizations and political units attempt to create, sustain and affirm identities in their interactions with other actors.”<sup>23</sup>

In interstate relations, a fear is an emotion, which demands that security is guaranteed through the direct acquisition of military power and economic well-being is a tool for establishing such a power requirement. Brian Frederking includes interactions that produce mistrust and hostilities between actors (traditional nation-state warfare, Israeli-Palestinian relations, imperialism, and Global War on Terrorism) as manifestations of the Hobbesian security culture,<sup>24</sup> which is traditionally characterized by producing uncertainty and misperceptions between actors. The Lockean culture in its turn intends

<sup>20</sup> Lebow 2008, p. 497.

<sup>21</sup> If ideologies are capable of forcing conflict within societies, their behavior can be identified as extremist. For example, Chauvinism is an extreme manifestation of Nationalism and Communism respectively refers to Marxist extremism.

<sup>22</sup> Lebow 2008, p. 90.

<sup>23</sup> Lebow 2008, p. 497.

<sup>24</sup> Brian Frederking. Constructing Post-cold War Collective Security. – American Political Science Review, 3/2003, p. 368.

to create some collective actions in balancing security-related fears (i.e. doctrines increasing state security under the circumstances of international anarchy like power balancing, bandwagoning or neutrality).

The Kantian culture of the post-Cold War international society looked for opportunities to produce a more stable non-polarized environment. In Europe, Kantian principles progressed significantly through the European Union and the transforming of NATO. The post-Communist societies of Eastern Europe could fall under the influence of extremist ideologies, if they did not succeed in the transition to consolidated liberal democracies. State extremism can more easily emerge in illiberal democracies and non-democracies than in consolidated democracies.<sup>25</sup> The experience of the former Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, which in many cases were not able to avoid violent post-dissolution conflicts, confirms this assessment. Therefore, the immediate objective of the European institutions after the Cold War required the engagement of the Central European countries with the rest of Europe.

The Gulf War, the Yugoslavian conflicts, the Afghanistan operation and many others manifest violent interactions between the Kantian and the Hobbesian environments in the post-modern international system. Some environments in the European neighborhood and beyond are mistrustful of the Kantian security culture and hold cultural security dilemmas to be actual. The Greater Middle East, which includes vast areas from Morocco and Mauritania in West Africa to Afghanistan and Pakistan in Central Asia, represents a foremost security concern for the Kantian international system in the near future, as the region is marked by recurrent violence and instability. Despite some progress in the peace processes, the Middle-East remains to be an unstable and polarized region. Besides the Middle-East, Africa poses another serious concern for Europe, as it is still an unstable continent with huge amounts of potential global and regional security risks, including civil wars, ethnic clashes, political, economic and social instability, poverty and famine among others.

The Self-Other binary draws support from Foucault's assertion<sup>26</sup> that order and identity are created and maintained through discourses of deviance (Lebow 2008, 476).<sup>27</sup> If the self-identification of a particular actor contrasts with the culture used by the international system, it may cause the appearance of extremist behavior in the actor-system relationship. There are countries on the world map, which submit challenges to the valid Kantian international system, while practicing the Hobbesian culture towards the system – i.e.

<sup>25</sup> This does not refer to other formations of extremism.

<sup>26</sup> Reference is made to **Michel Foucault's** book: *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

<sup>27</sup> **Richard Ned Lebow**. *Identity and International Relations*. – *International Relations*, 4/2008 (a), p. 476.

North Korea, Iran, Sudan, and Venezuela among others. The extremist stance in international politics may directly or indirectly force deviant countries to support illegitimate actions, international terrorism among others. The Global War on Terrorism has been regarded as a manifestation of the culture of fear in the post-Cold War society,<sup>28</sup> which was able to evoke challenges to the prevailing Kantian political culture and thus destabilize the whole international system.

Lebow notes that deviant actors “attempt to gain attention and recognition by violating norms of the system”<sup>29</sup>. Countries like North Korea, Cuba, Libya, Sudan, Iran, Syria, Iraq of Saddam Hussein, Yugoslavia of Milosevic, or Afghanistan of the Taliban have taken actions that did not fit with the general principles of the international society. The elaboration of weapons of mass destruction (North Korea, Iraq, Iran), give support to international terrorism (Libya, Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan), violent behavior against minorities or political opponents (Sudan, Yugoslavia, Libya, Iraq) have been condemned by the overwhelming majority of the international society and may cause the international reaction of the Kantian system with their involvement into the “internal matters” of violating countries.

### **State extremism at the threshold of post-modern society and the Axis of Evil**

Since many international actors – states, organizations of citizens, armed groups, and individuals – may depart from the universally accepted norms and practices of the international society, extremist status may also be accredited to states, which violate against the norms of the system. The ‘*pariah*’ or ‘*rogue*’ state refers to a country, which has an ‘outsider’ status within the international system, occupying the lowest ranks in the international hierarchy. According to Lebow, “these are relatively new concepts that made their appearance during the Reagan administration, and were applied to states like Libya or Cuba that the administration chose to ostracize because of their leadership and policies. The Clinton administration introduced the less offensive term ‘states of concern’”<sup>30</sup>. The main pretenders to the role of ‘pariah’ or ‘rogue’ state were different actors usually representing other civilization than Western.

Already in 1979, during the Cold War, the US Department of State had listed Libya, Iraq, South Yemen and Syria as state sponsors of terrorism. Later Cuba (1982), Iran (1984), Sudan (1993), and North Korea (1988) had

<sup>28</sup> Brzezinski 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Lebow 2008, p. 544.

<sup>30</sup> Lebow 2008, p. 488.

been added to the list. Iraq was initially removed from the list in 1982, enabling the US to provide military assistance during the Iran-Iraq War. After the invasion of Kuwait, Iraq returned to the list and was removed again in 2004. Yemen was removed in 1990 with the unification of North Yemen and South Yemen. North Korea, however, was removed from the list in 2008, because of nuclear inspection requirements. Libya was removed in 2006 following Gaddafi's decision to renounce the support of international terrorism and Libya started to change its policy towards the Western world and attempted to normalize relations with the United States and the European Union. The Libyans abandoned their programs concerning weapons of mass destruction and paid compensations to the families of victims of the Pan Am flight 103 as well as the UTA flight 772.

On January 29, 2002, the US President George W. Bush first introduced the term the *Axis of Evil* in describing countries which tend to support international terrorism and seek weapons of mass destruction, namely Iran, Iraq and North Korea.<sup>31</sup> The list of Axis of Evil predominantly coincides with the list of state sponsors of terrorism. The former speechwriter of G. W. Bush, David Frum invented the term *axis of hatred* for Iran and Iraq in making parallels between modern terror states and the Axis Powers from the World War II.<sup>32</sup> However, differently from the Axis Powers of the World War II, the so-called modern terror states do not cooperate in their international goals and do not form coalitions. They may be ideologically and/or culturally diverse entities which would confront each other to the same extent as the international system. Initially, the Axis of Evil included six countries – Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Cuba, Libya, and Syria. Later, after the ousting of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq and the democratization process initiated, Iraq was excluded from the list.

A support to international terrorism and/or intentions to develop weapons of mass destruction are main causes that countries would be listed as states of concern, but also violations against human rights have caused international sanctions or other similar reactions against extremist states. Countries like Belarus, Myanmar and Zimbabwe have most often been mentioned among the extremist countries.<sup>33</sup> All these countries can be identified as ideological societies, and as a rule, ideological societies tend to be more favorable to authoritarian or even totalitarian regimes. Ideologically, regimes of the Axis

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<sup>31</sup> **George W. Bush.** State of the Union Address, 29.01.2002. Available online at: <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>>, (accessed 29.08.2010).

<sup>32</sup> **David Frum.** The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush. New York, Toronto: Random House, 2003.

<sup>33</sup> Former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called these three countries "outposts of tyranny". For further information see: **At-a-glance: Outposts of tyranny.** Available online at: <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4187361.stm>>, (accessed 30.04.2011).

of Evil differ from each other. Iran practices a strongly ideological Shia fundamentalist theocratic regime. North Korea and Cuba represent vanishing communist ideologies. The regimes of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Syria refer to secular pan-Arab nationalist and socialist ideologies directed by their ruling Baath parties.<sup>34</sup> Also Gaddafi's Libya practices its particular ideology (the Third International Theory), which is a mixture of pan-Arab nationalism, secular socialism and Islamic culture. The table below describes deviant (extremist) countries in the post-modern system since 1990.

**Table:** the Axis of Evil – extremist countries<sup>35</sup>

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Wars vs international community</i>	<i>UN sanctions implemented</i>	<i>State sponsors of terrorism</i>	<i>Weapons of Mass Destruction</i>
<b>Cuba</b>	Communism			1982–	
<b>Iran</b>	Shia Fundamentalism		2006–	1984–	suspected
<b>Libya</b>	Arab Nationalism/ Socialism		1992–2003 2011–	1979–2006	
<b>North Korea</b>	Communism		2006–	1988–2008	declared 2006
<b>Sudan</b>	Arab Nationalism/ Islamism		1994–	1983–	
<b>Syria</b>	Arab Nationalism/ Socialism			1979–	suspected
<b>Belarus</b>	Post-Communism, <sup>36</sup> Nationalism				
<b>Myanmar</b>	Nationalism		<i>EU 1990–</i>		suspected
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	African Nationalism/ Socialism		<i>EU 2002–</i>		

<sup>34</sup> The **Arab Socialist Baath Party**, which means “resurrection” or “renaissance” and bases on Arab Socialism, Arab Nationalism and pan-Arabism. It was founded in 1940, was ruling party in Syria since 1963 and in Iraq 1963–2003.

<sup>35</sup> These countries have or had problems with entering into the international society in the last decades. This list is incomplete. Since 1990, the UN has exposed economic sanctions or arms embargo also against DR Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda, Haiti, Angola for different reasons. Online: available at <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/>.

<sup>36</sup> Post-Communism refers to some post-ideological societies that emerged in the 1990s after the collapse of Marxist ideology on the basis of former Communist movements, which often practiced an authoritarian regime with mixed elements of Marxism and Nationalism used in building a new ideological formation (source: author's compilation).

**Table:** continuation

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Ideology</i>	<i>Wars vs international community</i>	<i>UN sanctions implemented</i>	<i>State sponsors of terrorism</i>	<i>Weapons of Mass Destruction</i>
<b>Afghanistan – until 2001 (Taliban)</b>	Sunni Fundamentalism	2001	1999– (Taliban)		
<b>Iraq – until 2003 (Saddam Hussein)</b>	Arab Nationalism	1991 2003	1990–	1979–1982 1990–2004	suspected
<b>South Yemen – until 1990</b>	Arab Socialism			1979–1990	
<b>Yugoslavia – until 2000 (Milošević)</b>	Post-Communism, Nationalism	1994–1995 1998–1999		1991–1996 1998–2001	

The Iraqi invasion of 2003 made some changes in the classification of evil forces, while Iran, North Korea and to lesser extent Syria have remained core members of the Axis of Evil. After the resignation of their charismatic leader Fidel Castro, Cuba has often been believed to be moving towards liberalization of the Communist regime, although these signs are very modest as yet. Venezuela under the leftist anti-Americanism of President Hugo Chavez, the Mugabe's regime of Zimbabwe, Myanmar having long-time troubles with human rights, and Sudan with her continuing Darfur problem have often been named as countries alternating themselves against the Western-dominated international system.

The division between liberal states and authoritarian others may introduce the ideological confrontation between the so-called the Axis of Evil and the Axis of Good.<sup>37</sup> Especially as the President of Venezuela Hugo Chavez and the President of Iran Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have played an active role in continuous attempts to build up a systemic confrontation that may lead to a Cold War's dichotomy between democratic and authoritarian regimes. Hugo Chavez has used the term Axis of Good in merging partnership between leftist-governed Latin-American countries – Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Since the end of World War II, anti-Americanism has historically proved itself to be a strong and capable ideological movement in uniting some nations against Western liberal democracy.

Relations with international terrorism have been considered in the emergence of an 'outlaw' status in the discursive recognition of *evil* by the US Government. The reasons empowering the use of a terrorist method include a wide area of reasons. "Terrorism is the deliberate and systemic murder,

<sup>37</sup> Lebow 2008 (a), p. 476.

maiming, and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear for political ends.”<sup>38</sup> Terrorist methods are traditionally typical of smaller groups, which may be in difficulties when using traditional political methods through popular support in achieving their goals. This may be one reason why terrorism is frequently practiced by extremist groups, which can hardly pretend to take a leading role within a democratic society.

Similarly, deviant states would turn to international terrorism for achieving political goals that they are not able to achieve without extremist measures. Besides that, they may spread the culture of fear for deterrence. Ideologies that would provoke certain actors to use terrorism for recognition of their political goals include nationalism, anarchism, communism, neo-fascism, and religious fundamentalism among others. Frank Furedi explains that terrorism, which is traditionally applied as an attempt to influence the population for a specific political end, can be now feared more because of ideological appeals of terrorist actors.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to supporting international terrorism, deviant states may be interested in developing weapons of mass destruction, not necessarily for offensive purposes but for deterring punitive actions from the international society. In 2006 and 2009, North Korea conducted nuclear tests. Some other countries (e.g. Iran, Myanmar, and Syria) are suspected of developing weapons of mass destruction. If some nations fear international involvement or intervention into their domestic affairs, a culture of fear may appear and deviant actors may start to reproduce practical and discursive actions supporting their evolving military capabilities. In the cases of Iraq, Iran, and Korea, the development of their nuclear capabilities or intentions to move in that direction may be used on behalf of a deterrence against possible international intervention. The international society, however, can take their intentions to maintain their ideological regimes as a threat to its peace and stability and a system-related security dilemma is established.

### **Asymmetric axis**

The post-Cold War arrangement in international relations favors globalization and an enhanced interdependence between nations. Collective punitive actions against Iraq in 1991 and against Serbia in Bosnia and Kosovo some years later symbolize the cooperative goals of the international society, which corresponded to the principles fixed within the UN Charter, chapters VI and VII. Even while the states have remained as main actors in the international arena, the role and importance of non-governmental entities has rapidly

<sup>38</sup> **Christopher C. Harmon.** *Terrorism today.* London: Routledge, 2008, p.7.

<sup>39</sup> **Frank Furedi.** *Invitation to Terror: The Expanding Empire of the Unknown.* London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007.

grown. These trends have been accompanied by the increasing importance of asymmetric risks and threats. These are risks and threats with possible international influence, which can emerge at some other level than states, from global risks to domestic risks as well. Asymmetric actors may include international interest groups, non-governmental organizations, transnational companies, individuals – which all may go beyond a particular citizenship.

After 2001, the international societal environment fostered the emergence of a culture of fear, while terrorism, which has never been a ‘mainstream political tool’, has been promoted to the next level by a small and relatively little-known Islamic fundamentalist group Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda succeeded in increasing the amount of uncertainty, which produced instability within the whole international system and caused political risks to be taken by actors.<sup>40</sup> As follows, the international society was confronted “with an increased awareness of risks because more decisions are taken in an atmosphere of uncertainty”<sup>41</sup>. International terrorism has often been mentioned among the most important manifestations of a new asymmetric axis, which involves transnational networks and therefore comes into conflict with the traditional approaches to international systems based on national interests performed by states. Jessica Stern, while analyzing the effectiveness of Al-Qaeda, notes its capability for change, which makes Al-Qaeda more attractive for new recruits and allies.<sup>42</sup> Colin Wight notes that Al-Qaeda followed a structural form without clear lines of hierarchy and channels of control over the cells, which makes it harder to detect and destroy it.<sup>43</sup>

A global transnational network corresponds to the timely principles of the post-modern society. It is somehow symbolic as NATO for the first time throughout its history used its article V against the asymmetric threat, terrorism, and on behalf of its major military power, the United States. The attacks organized against international terrorism are justified in that they are not against states but terrorist organizations, the United States fought in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, and in 2006 Israel fought against a Lebanese Shia extremist militant group Hezbollah, not Lebanon, which moves asymmetric groups to the level comparable with states.<sup>44</sup> Notably, the United

<sup>40</sup> See **Mary Douglas; Aaron Wildavsky**. *Risk and Culture: An essay on the selection of technical and environmental dangers*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

<sup>41</sup> **Frank Furedi**. *Culture of Fear: Risk Taking and the Morality of Low Expectation*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> **Jessica Stern**. *Al Qaeda: the Protean Enemy*. – *Foreign Affairs*, 4/2003.

<sup>43</sup> **Colin Wight**. *Theorising terrorism: The State, Structure, and History*. – *International Relations* 1/2009, p. 105.

<sup>44</sup> **Daren Bowyer**. *The moral dimension of asymmetrical warfare: accountability, culpability and military effectiveness*. – Baarda, Th. A. van; Verweij, D. E. M. (eds.). *The moral dimension of asymmetrical warfare: counter-terrorism, democratic values and military ethics*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2009, p. 139.

Nations performed sanctions against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in 1998 and against Hezbollah in 2006.<sup>45</sup>

In 1990s Samuel Huntington invented a descriptive theory that prescribes general trends in international politics while emphasizing a possible cultural conflict between opposing civilizations.<sup>46</sup> The attack of September 11, 2001 led to the Global War on Terrorism with the world divided between 'good' and 'evil' once again and polarity-based policies started gradually to return. The offensive strategy characterizing the counterterrorist policies carried through the western world during the GWOt, which frequently demonized the Muslim faith and the Islamic civilization, fitted more with the Hobbesian security culture practicing enmities between different entities and has evidently promoted the direction towards the clash of civilizations, once predicted by Huntington and damaged hopes for the end of history as described ten years ago by Francis Fukuyama.<sup>47</sup>

Although the defensive actions against international terrorism, including military operations in Afghanistan, have been widely approved by the international society, the Kantian world favoring democratic peace, multiculturalism and international cooperation did not satisfy apologists of power policies. Extremist movements were successful in splitting a still fragile Western unity. The emerging culture of fear could be observed as a counter-ideology to the rising Islamic fundamentalism especially in the United States, where the neo-conservative ideological movement strengthened with Bush's presidency of the United States.

During the Cold War, the Islamists were often treated as natural allies of the Western bloc because of their fighting against the spread of Communist ideologies. Their opposition to Atheism practiced by the Communist regimes made Islamism a powerful competing ideology especially in the Third World countries. Huntington mentioned that "at one time or another during the Cold War many governments, including those of Algeria, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, and Israel, encouraged and supported Islamists as a counter to communist and hostile nationalist movements"<sup>48</sup>. Pro-Western countries provided massive funding to the Islamists groups in various parts of the world. The United States often saw Islamists as an opposition to the Soviet influence under the circumstances of the bipolar competition of the Cold War.

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<sup>45</sup> **UN Security Council Sanctions Committees.** Available online at: <<http://www.un.org/sc/committees/>>, (accessed 06.05.2011).

<sup>46</sup> **Samuel P. Huntington.** *The Clash of Civilizations. Remaking World Order.* New York: Touchstone Book, 1997.

<sup>47</sup> In his book: **Francis Fukuyama.** *The End of History and the Last Man.* New York: Free Press, 1992.

<sup>48</sup> **Huntington** 1997, p. 115.

At the same time, secular movements in Islamic countries, contrariwise, often flirted with Marxism and thus gained support from the Soviet Union. The Pan-Arabist leaders of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Algeria shared the anti-American and anti-Imperialist views of the Soviet ideological establishment. From 1979, the situation gradually started to change with the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, which strengthened Islamic solidarity instead of socialist and nationalist sentiments. Whilst pan-Arabism followed the structure of Western ideologies and settled it into the specific Nationalist environment with Socialist influences, the contemporary Islamic Fundamentalism is a direct challenge to the Western model of the state and politics, and constitutes a form of political resistance.<sup>49</sup>

In 1980s, the Western governments supported the Sunni resistance in the Afghanistan conflict and only a smaller Shia community of Islam was mostly involved in the anti-Western confrontation. The revolution in Iran established a new regime that was simultaneously anti-Western and anti-Soviet and did not suit with the Cold War's bipolarity. Sunnis remained silent and used Western support in Afghanistan and other conflict areas, whereby they fought for their values and identities. Paradoxically, in the course of the Iraqi-Iran war 1980–1988, the East and the West both supported the leftist Arab nationalist regime of Saddam Hussein against Iran.

The post-Cold War era produced some regrouping between international powers and groups of interests. The Islamic militants started to stand against the spread of western liberal democracy, which did not fit with their ideological goals. In the 1990s, the clash between western liberal democracy and Islamic fundamentalism developed rapidly. The Sunni fundamentalist Taliban movement established their control over Afghanistan in 1996. More serious signs of ideological clash emerged in 1998, when Al-Qaeda terrorists attacked the US embassies in East-Africa. With the GWoT, cultural conflicts became indeed more visible. The confrontation between Western liberal democracy and Islamic fundamentalism verified that Huntington was right in predicting a clash of civilizations.

The transnational character of asymmetric actors allows them to introduce non-traditional methods effectively (e.g. international terrorism) as they have no territoriality or sovereignty to defend, which makes it more efficient in balancing the possible sanctions from the valid international system. Legally, there is a difference between asymmetric transnational terrorism and symmetric state terrorism – terrorist organizations have no legitimate right to kill, contrariwise to political communities, though they may apply to some form of revolutionary vanguard the term, “good people” who destroy

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<sup>49</sup> Wight 2009, p. 104.

“bad people”.<sup>50</sup> The promotion of a culture of fear would be one of the most important challenges caused by international terrorism. Strategies of terrorist groups aim to produce chaos and political, economic, social and military damage, hoping that the destabilization of existing societies following the terrorist attack may help them to validate their ideological goals.

### **The rise of neo-conservatism and the culture of fear in Western democracies**

The activation of Islamic terrorism was followed by the appropriate reaction from the United States, where a neo-Trotskyite neo-conservative ideology increased its influence on the US foreign policy. The so-called “Bush Doctrine” referred to the following principles: the idea of pre-emptive or preventive military action; the promotion of democracy and regime change, and a diplomacy tending towards unilateralism, a willingness to act without the sanction of international bodies such as the United Nations Security Council or the unanimous approval of its allies, which according to Robert Kagan, however, is a traditional US policy rather than a new concept in American foreign policy.<sup>51</sup>

The emergence of the neo-conservative movement, which fed on destabilizing emotions like fear and uncertainty and intended to implement the Hobbesian political culture on behalf of the ideals of liberal democracy, greatly influenced the ideological stanchions of George W. Bush’s administration. Neo-conservatism is a syncretic movement, which uses US patriotism (nationalism), a Marxist methodology and conservative philosophical discourses for the forceful introduction of US hegemony in international affairs. It emerged in 1970s on the basis of former leftists, who turned to the right after the Vietnam War. For its opponents, it is a distinct political movement that emphasizes the blending of military power with Wilsonian idealism.<sup>52</sup>

According to their ‘founding father’ Irving Kristol, neo-conservative postulates in foreign policy issues are based on five pillars: patriotism as a necessity; world government as a terrible idea; statesmen should have the ability to accurately distinguish friend from foe; protection of national

<sup>50</sup> **Carl Ceulemans.** Asymmetric warfare and morality: from moral asymmetry to amoral symmetry? – Baarda, Th. A. van; Verweij, D. E. M. (eds.). *The moral dimension of asymmetrical warfare: counter-terrorism, democratic values and military ethics.* Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> **Robert Kagan.** End of Dreams, Return of History. – Policy Review, No. 144, July 17, 2007. Available online at: <<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/6136>>, (accessed 20.08.2010), p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> **John J. Mearsheimer.** *Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War: realism versus neo-conservatism.* London: Open Democracy, 2005. Available online at: <[http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-americanpower/morgenthau\\_2522.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-americanpower/morgenthau_2522.jsp)>, (accessed 30.04.2011).

interests both at home and abroad; and the necessity of a strong military.<sup>53</sup> Their ideology borrowed a lot from the ideas of American philosopher Leo Strauss. Strauss described liberalism as a generally Utopian ideology actively defended the prevalence of values in social sciences and he was against the world-state because he feared that this would lead to tyranny.<sup>54</sup> During the Cold War, the neo-conservatives had paid only a little attention to international relations and their main interest has been directed towards the rebirth of the American society based on its traditional values. In the 1990s they started to loudly criticize US foreign policy because of the lack of *moral clarity* and lesser willingness to pursue the US strategic interests.<sup>55</sup> Step by step, the neo-conservative ideology gradually reorganized itself as a particular school of International Relations, which is distinctive from Realism as well as from Liberalism.

During the Bush presidency, US unilateralism in world politics started to emphasize modern values of sovereignty and national interests again instead of multinational cooperative regimes. As a result of cultural change in their foreign policy, the United States practically unilaterally opposed the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, complicating global cooperation in environmental issues. Besides that, the Americans fiercely fought against the involvement of the International Criminal Court in US military matters. The liberal democracy remained in the slogan but there were no other gods besides Zeus himself. The rise of patriotism, strong criticism towards the United Nations (standing against world government), identifying enemies and promoting polarity (distinguishing friend from foe), settling the US interests over global interests (protecting national interest), preferring the use of military power in conflict regulation (strong military) – this all characterizes a trend of change in international politics initiated by neo-conservative strategists.

The ideological schism between the United States and some of her European allies was a result of neo-conservative militant unilateralism. Heated discussions about the role of the United States in post-Cold War Europe, especially considering the dependence of European on the American military power shot up more vigorously after 2001. Some experts expressed their fears about the ability of Europe to defend itself after the American forces leave the Europe. The reference of an orthodox neo-conservative theorist, Robert

<sup>53</sup> **Irving Kristol**. The Neoconservative Persuasion. Available online at: <[http://www.weeklystandard.com/Utilities/printer\\_preview.asp?idArticle=3000&R=785F2781](http://www.weeklystandard.com/Utilities/printer_preview.asp?idArticle=3000&R=785F2781)>, (accessed 04.09.2007).

<sup>54</sup> **Jim George**. The Contradictions of Empire. Leo Strauss, Neoconservatism and the US Foreign Policy: Esoteric Nihilism and the Bush Doctrine. – *International Politics*, 2/2005.

<sup>55</sup> **William J. Bennet**. *Why We Fight: Moral Clarity and the War on Terrorism*. New York: Doubleday, 2005.

Kagan that Europeans are from Venus and Americans from Mars has gained a noticeable popularity.<sup>56</sup>

For some, mostly North American writers, disagreements between Western European states over the appropriate institutional configuration for Europe reflects the states' concerns about their relative power. Others saw in the European project a desire to continue the age-old practice of balancing power whilst others caricatured post-Cold War Europe as being led by a 'benign unipolar' hegemon – the United States.<sup>57</sup>

The Iraqi operation of 2003, initiated by neo-conservative strategists and widely criticized by some allies and partners in NATO and the EU, caused a significant divergence in opinions concerning the future global security order. Some analysts predicted the return to the Hobbesian world, characterized by permanent clashes and polarities. The others insistently aimed the gradual change towards the Kantian world, placing a high value on cooperation and tolerance between different civilizations.

Neo-conservatism idealizes the perpetual fight for World revolution even if it could be called a liberal democratic revolution and objects to hegemony in the world order. These appeals are close to Leon Trotsky's conception of permanent revolution. Despite the fact that the neo-conservatives may use different narratives, their methodology remains close to the Marxist one, in which their founding fathers grew up. Discursively, the neo-conservatives may follow the Kantian concepts as their ultimate goals, but rather, these goals are hegemonic international systems, which do not accept competition of values within a system. They do not believe that different civilizations can make peace between each other and prefer to use power in order to establish peaceful settlements under a hegemony.

Theoretically, the neo-conservative approach to international relations is close to a post-Marxist World system approach. Immanuel Wallerstein, a leading post-Marxist theorist, elaborated the World system theory that describes a world system as a social system that is made up of the conflicting forces looking for their advantages.<sup>58</sup> Wallerstein characterizes this system as an organism, which is able to change in some respects but retains its stability in others.<sup>59</sup> While the world-system theory lies in the core and periph-

<sup>56</sup> **Robert Kagan.** *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order.* New York: Knopf, 2003.

<sup>57</sup> **Alex J. Bellamy.** *Security Communities and their Neighbours. Regional Fortresses or Global Integrators?* Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004, p. 65.

<sup>58</sup> **Immanuel Wallerstein.** *The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist system: Concepts for Comparative Analysis.* – *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4/1974, pp. 387–415.

<sup>59</sup> **Immanuel Wallerstein, Terence K. Hopkins et al.** *World-Systems Analysis: Theory and Methodology.* Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982.

ery conflict, the neo-conservative hegemony emphasize a perpetual conflict between liberal states and authoritarian others. In this respect, Lebow<sup>60</sup> compared the influence of George Bush's neo-conservatism to the post-World War I international system with the influence of Adolf Hitler's National Socialism.<sup>61</sup> They both succeeded in destabilizing the valid world system – Hitler's ideological movement destabilized the Versailles system and the neo-conservatism destabilized the post-modern system, both of which are the Kantian systems.

Ideological movements emphasizing powerful ideas of nationalism, religious fundamentalism or Marxism and using a culture of fear as a political instrument for achieving their political goals can destabilize international systems if they are able to enter into the power projection. The manifestation of neo-conservatism with its nationalist and Marxist origins and politicized Islamic fundamentalism added an ideological dimension to the Global War on Terrorism. The neo-conservative policy offered an ideological confrontation between contrasting values accordingly to the Hobbesian cultural approach, while the Kantian approach made it possible to hold the potential conflict of values within a framework of the international system and deviant actors. The neo-conservative influence on world politics was at its height from 2001 to 2008. After the presidential elections of 2008 in the United States, the new Obama administration came to power and ended the neo-conservative influence to the US foreign policy, after that they quickly started to be marginalized.

## Conclusions

A culture of fear most effectively supports the logic of the Hobbesian culture, which emphasizes a state of war between international actors. It may provoke extremist challenges against peace and stability and conflicting ideologies compose a powerful agenda for initiating fear-based polarizations. Fear in the hands of ideologies has an enormous capability to provoke irrational decisions and security dilemmas. At first glance, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the culture of fear seem to depending on each other. The Hollywood-like scenario of September 11, 2001, by which the charismatic leader of Al-Qaeda Osama Bin Laden recorded himself in the history of the world, caused the worldwide diffusion of fear, which in its turn opened the door for the extremist neo-conservative reaction in the United States. Recent news about the liquidation of the protean enemy hardly makes the world safer.

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<sup>60</sup> Lebow 2008, p. 439–443.

<sup>61</sup> There are of course differences in the two ideologies themselves, and practices those ideologies used and the similarity of two ideological movements first of all concerns their methodological treatment of the world politics, which is culturally deeply Hobbesian in both cases.

The post-modern Kantian international system continually includes multiple Hobbesian security environments. The variety of cultural environments makes the whole international system conflict-prone and it is able to produce a culture of fear involving different civilizations, identities or ideologies. Deviant actors often find themselves manipulating the culture of fear in justifying their legitimacy within the international system. The axis-building policies between good and evil can destabilize the international system by introducing new polarizations. Various factors reproducing a culture of fear (e.g. social problems, ethnic tensions with strengthening national sentiments, nuclear dilemmas) may inflict the emergence of most problematic security dilemmas into the Kantian international system. The successful alternative to fear-based political incentives largely depends on maintaining a non-polarized cooperative framework within the valid international system. A less ideologized world tends to be a safer world.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Judith Butler, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, Cornel West.**

The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere. Eduardo Mendieta, Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.) Afterword by Craig Calhoun. SSRC Book. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

ISBN: 978-0-231-15646-2, 137 pp.

This book was written following a public event held in New York in 2009 at which four preeminent philosophers presented their perspectives on the legitimate role of religion in the democratic public sphere. In the printed volume their contributions are followed by mutual discussions.

In contrast to the title of the book which refers to the *power* of religion in the public sphere, its content mostly discusses the *legitimate inclusion* of religion in public affairs, not particularly forms of religious authority or historical changes in the scope of religious *power* in the public sphere.

Its authors argue for increasing inclusion of particular forms of religion into the public sphere. Scholars and readers having a practical or theoretical interest in reasons for the legitimate *exclusion* of forms of religion from the public sphere will find detailed discussion of this subject mostly in the contribution by Jürgen Habermas.

Habermas devotes a substantial part of his argument to outlining historical patterns of the religious and democratic legitimization of political affairs. In pre-democratic politics, religion was indispensable for securing compliance to the law by providing sacred origins for the laws (17) and for legitimizing political power by reference to transcendent religious authority. In democracies, the previous pattern of the metasocial religious legitimization of political power has been replaced by the democratic deliberation of self-empowered citizens (21). ‘The political’ has been emancipated from its reliance on religious legitimization and collectively binding decisions should be “freed from all religious influences” (24). In order for religious citizens to be included in the processes of deliberative politics on an *equal* basis with non-religious citizens (24), they have to meet two conditions: they should not come from fundamentalist religious communities and they should translate “the potential truth contents of religious utterances ... into a generally accessible language before they can find their way onto the agendas of parliaments, courts, or administrative bodies...” (25).

According to Habermas, the resulting state of affairs does not discriminate against religious citizens (26–27). Irrespective of the (religious or non-religious) substance, the citizens’ ‘mindsets’ are not relevant for legitimizing

the power of democratic discourses. The latter is based on *public* contributions to the formation of opinions and consensus building (33), while the ‘mindsets’ are private.

Charles Taylor’s arguments are not much in disagreement, but they do present several significant elaborations of arguments already proposed by Habermas. Taylor does not question the secular nature of the democratic state, yet he argues strongly for the reconceptualization of the term ‘secularism’. For Taylor, a secularist state strives for three goals – liberty, equality and fraternity – which are often in contradiction with each other. During the pursuit of these goals, all religious and non-religious perspectives and systems of belief should be equally included as there is no need to distinguish the religious from non-religious, secular or atheist within these processes (34–37). Therefore, secularism manifests itself as a correct response to increasing religious and ideological diversity.

Taylor extends the Habermasian requirement translating religious reasons into secular language to secular outlooks and convictions as well: “The state can be neither Christian nor Muslim nor Jewish, but, by the same token, it should also be neither Marxist, nor Kantian, nor utilitarian” (50). Correspondingly, collectively binding decisions cannot be said to be legitimate by referring to Jesus Christ, but may not use references to Karl Marx or Immanuel Kant either.

Taylor observes that democratic states are based on the principles of “human rights, equality, the rule of law, democracy which function as a political ethics shared by all citizens” (37, 45). Secular states are not concerned with the variety of reasons why such political ethics are supported by followers of different ideologies (37). Consequently, Taylor’s requirement of shared political ethics resembles the Habermasian condition of translating religious reasons into commonly shared language because both aim to include religious and non-religious ‘mindsets’, treat those outlooks equally and provide norms and principles that are required from all.

Judith Butler’s essay contributes to the general discussion in significant ways. Charles Taylor had already made the point that secularism inevitably has manifestations that vary across cultures. Butler elaborates on this topic by arguing that practical battle lines do not need to be drawn between the religious and the secular or between public and private. Depending on what kind of religion we are talking about, its relationship with the public sphere and the political arena can be understood differently (70–71). Therefore, one has to observe how the boundaries between public and private affairs are defined (constructed), what type of religion is helping to define these boundaries, what types of religion are limited to the private sphere and what kinds of religious discourses exist comfortably and legitimately in the public sphere.

Butler particularly focuses on the instances when public criticism of Israeli state violence that has emerged from within Jewish frameworks of

social justice is taken to be anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish. For Butler, to criticize “openly and publicly” such violence is “an obligatory ethical demand from within Jewish frameworks, both religious and nonreligious” (73, 83). Conformably, Butler advocates for the inclusion of religiously-motivated criticism of another public discourse which itself is connected with religious, national, cultural and political identity. It is highly likely that, in most national cultures, critical views on commonly shared national aspirations, identity, and a sense of security are always in danger of being marginalized and excluded irrespective of their religious or non-religious motivations and reasons.

For example, it would seem not to make much difference if, in the example provided by Butler, opposition to state violence were to originate from Kantian or utilitarian frameworks instead of Jewish ones. Particularly in such issues where the cultural, national and political “we” is perceived in the singular, the following observation from Butler seems to be valid: “The public sphere is constituted time and again through certain kinds of exclusions: images that cannot be seen, words that cannot be heard” (75).

Consequently, the inclusion of religious and ideological perspectives and views is inevitably limited and the boundaries of inclusion not easily contested. While Judith Butler discussed the contestability of these boundaries by focusing on the relationship between religion and nationalism, Cornel West concentrates on the right- and left-wing political connections of religion.

In a retrospective look at recent political history of the United States, West observes that the views combining religion with the ideological left – he himself argues for a prophetic, emancipative, radical, Christian *and* Marxist view that is capable of confronting “hegemonic powers always operating” (99) – tend to attain the position of legitimate participant only for a short period of time.

Whilst Butler contrasts her – what can be termed as – ‘secular humanism with Jewish roots’ with the established national-religious discourse, West contrasts the prophetic religion with the ‘dominant forms of religion’. His prophetic religion tries to put brakes “on the capitalist civilization gone mad” (103), is “an individual and collective performative praxis of maladjustment to greed, fear, and bigotry”, and aims to generate righteous indignation against injustice (99).

Both Butler and West observed a particular type of publicly legitimate religion which was already effectively functioning. Both argued for the inclusion of another type of religion that is more universal, emphatic, compassionate and humanist. And both seem to advocate for a type of worldview that tends to be in a weaker position irrespective of the religious or ideological composition of reasons, motivations and arguments.

For those unfamiliar with approaches to religion in the public sphere that the authors of this book have been elaborating for decades, the book offers an excellent introduction to their conceptualizations, approaches and core

arguments. For those who are acquainted with their works, the book traces the ways how preeminent philosophers discuss each other's arguments critically and thereby set new frames for general scholarly discussion of this topic.

The academic debate over religion in the public sphere is most widespread within the United States where religious dissent and self-expression have been legitimate for centuries, Protestant denominationalism has influenced the cultural pattern of religious organization and religious pluralism has attained forms to an extent not reached anywhere in Europe.

Judith Butler and Cornel West have paid *critical* attention to particular situations where religio-political discourse has been monopolized by religious and political elites. In traditionally Orthodox, monoconfessional Lutheran or Catholic nations of Europe, the manifestations of religion in the public sphere, especially of identifiable religious reasons, are related to the forms of organized religion that still hold a monopoly over the use of religion as a public and political resource to a significant extent. Therefore Judith Butler's essay offers particularly useful insights for those who analyze European cultural contexts which are religiously monoconfessional, have low religious diversity and a strong symbolic connection between traditional religion and a shared national identity.

The legitimacy of the religiously-motivated radical politics of the left, as advocated by Cornel West, resonates more in Africa and Latin America than in Europe. Due to socio-political reasons and historical legacies, religiously motivated left-wing politics is discursively least relevant in European post-communist countries.

Last but not least, the kind of organized religion that is perceived to have a legitimate public function and the kind of fusion of the religious and secular discourses that are considered legitimate in the public sphere depend significantly upon the degree of differentiation of the organized religion from the state, the political and the cultural; the historical legacy of church-state relations; and the diversity inside the sphere of the 'religious'.

Because of the increasing diversity of religious, ideological and political views and the multiplication of the practical connections between them, instead of asking about the power of religion in the public sphere in the singular, we should be asking: "*What kind of religion functions how effectively in attaining what kind of goals and for whom?*"

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**Richard Ned Lebow.** *A Cultural Theory of International Relations.* Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, reprinted with corrections 2010. ISBN 978-0-521-69188-8, 762 pp.

Contrasting views between rationalists and reflectivists, which concern the epistemology of international relations, have given rise to another great debate in International Relations (IR) theory. Richard Ned Lebow, a James O. Freedman Presidential Professor of Government at Dartmouth College and Centennial Professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science, one of most prominent constructivist thinkers in the United States, contributes to IR theory with his cultural approach by which he examines the influence of culture and identity on the development of international political order. His theory generally follows the path of a constructivist theoretical school of thought, though in some cases Lebow can be critical of mainstream constructivism. He admits that constructivism has not met with success in producing a comprehensive theory of international relations (3). Only time will tell if Lebow is presenting another aspect of constructivism and if this book will initiate a new *grand theory* in international relations.

In his book Lebow takes a closer look at changes in norms, beliefs and values and how these changes are often motivated by irrational factors he called the motives *appetite*, *spirit*, *fear* and *reason* which may dominate political decision-making in societies (worlds). Appetite values *satiation* and uses *wealth* as an instrument in order to achieve this goal. Spirit aspires to *esteem* through *honor* and *standing*. Fear urges us to seek *security* using *power* as a tool (90). At the same time, Lebow notes that culture and ideology can do more than rationalist behavior is able to offer, providing people with meaning, order and predictability in their lives (16). Many social scientists do not want to provide the public with perfectly calculated explicit theories. They “are more interested in understanding the background conditions and cultures that constitute the social reality and make actors and action meaningful” (34).

A *culture* is a unique phenomenon in the history of mankind which manifests relationships among individuals and groups, ideas and identities. Cultural relativists, including constructivists, recognize the constant need in international relations to draw distinctions between *Us* and *Others* in forming cultural identities. Constructivists move away from rationalist theoretical arguments by arguing that identity is rather a social construction which emphasizes the self-esteem of actors. The construction of identity is essential in determining interactions between an international system and actors operating within it. While realists mainly focus on the anarchical order of an international system, which requires that actors within it help themselves, constructivists emphasize that “identity is closely connected to autonomy regardless of the motive that is dominant” (555).

The roots of debate between rationalists and reflectivists/cultural relativists reach back to the time of the ancient Greeks, the foundation of modern Western thought. Even then the ancient philosophers were already discussing whether nature should be understood in terms of its units or in terms of a process (56). Ontologically, cultural theory has its origins in the works of Plato and Aristotle which described the psyche as consisting of three drives: appetite, spirit, and reason (14). Similarly, Lebow recognizes the influence of “universal drivers (*appetite and spirit*), a powerful emotion (*fear*) and routine practices (*habit*)” which interfere with international decision-making at every level of social aggregation (5). Each of these four motives creates its own logic of cooperation, conflict, and risk-taking. They express different forms of hierarchies and practice different forms of justice. Spirit-based worlds and appetite-based worlds are inherently unstable and intensely competitive “which encourages actors to violate the rules by which honor or wealth is attained” (82). These motives would become dominant in international relations and generate appetite-based societies aspiring to wealth, spirit-based societies valuing honor, reason-based worlds being prepared to cooperate with others, and fear-based worlds seeking security.

Lebow highlights human *self-esteem* as an important factor in the formation of identity. Nationalities, nations and other cultural entities seek, at least to some degree, enhanced self-esteem through their victories and suffer a loss of esteem, even humiliation, when experiencing setbacks (17). This makes the *spirit* an important, perhaps a dominant, motive in international relations. *Spirit* as a motive is closely related to its instruments *honor* and *standing* by which higher self-esteem can be attained. For the ancient Greeks, honor was a status which described the outward recognition given to us from others in response to our excellence (64).

Appetite is probably one of the most visible motives, manifested by *wealth*. Plato estimated that wealth had become the dominant goal in the democracy of Athens (72). Appetite-based societies, in which cooperation is built around common interests and those interests dictate preferences of policy, differ from spirit-based societies where cooperative relationships with others are much more difficult to achieve (75–76). Reason-based worlds are even more cooperative than appetite-based worlds, being willing to cooperate even if it may run contrary to their immediate self-interest (77).

*Fear* is one of the general motives that shapes international relations, setting *security* as a goal and using *power* as an instrument. Lebow defines fear as “an emotion, not a fundamental human drive”, which differs from appetite, spirit, and reason (89). He doubts the utility of power as a concept (557). Power is the main argument of the realist school, though realists are not able to give a usable definition for it. All the components used in describing “power” – territory, population, wealth, military capability – can be counterproductive if they are used in inappropriate ways.

Lebow assumes that spirit would be probably the most dominant motive in shaping international relations. In his book he takes us on a journey through human history, visiting ancient Greek and Roman society, medieval Europe, the courts of Sun King Louis XIV and his contemporaries, Europe's multi-polar society from 1815 to 1914 dominated by competitive great powers, Nazi-Germany and imperialist Japan, the Cold War environment and finally he reaches the era of the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq. All these societies had powerful spiritual motives which, from time to time, produced changes in international order.

In the ancient world, classical Greek society identified honor as a primary motive for the aristocratic elite and other citizens (518–519). Later, “limits established by governing norms facilitated a shift in goals from *honor* to *standing*,” (521). According to Lebow, fifth-century Greece and the late Roman Republic were *fear*-based societies, while the Roman Empire was dominated by *appetite*. In medieval Europe, the Merovingian and Carolingian dynasties of the Frankish Empire ruled over warrior societies where honor was absent and in which appetite was the dominant drive (521). Describing Europe between 1648 and 1789, Lebow notes that the distinction between private and state interests had mostly not yet developed and Europe was a set of honor societies where appetite was looked on positively (525).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the decline of the aristocracy and “feudalization” of the European middle-classes led societies from a spirit-based world to an appetite-based world (527). Standing and honor diverged at the state level but honor survived at the personal level (528–529). The spread of nationalism in 19th century Europe helped to keep spirit alive, and *appetite* and *spirit* both became dominant motives of that era. The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which produced two world wars, was probably the apogee of Western influence on the international system, and western powers attempted to divide the world. Non-Western powers like Iran, Turkey, China, Japan, India, and others were weak, isolated, or destroyed by their colonial expansion.

At the beginning of World War II, spirit became an important motive for the Axis powers – Germany, Italy, and Japan. As Lebow explains: “When society is robust, honor and standing are closely linked, and actors are correspondingly more restrained in their goals and the means they use to achieve them. When society is thinner, honor and standing more readily diverge, actors are less restrained and escalations in goals and means are likely to occur” (532).

The book's most intriguing case-study is called “Hitler to Bush and beyond”, in which the author explores some tremendous parallels between the actions of Adolf Hitler, giving rise to World War II, and George W. Bush invading Iraq in 2003. Lebow admits that Hitler and Bush were different personalities. Hitler was a pathological murderer using power on behalf of “his most perverse fantasies and compulsions” (442). Both leaders, however, got involved in military operations that were condemned by majority of the

rest of the world. By invading Iraq, Bush and his neo-conservative advisers attempted to bring back the age of heroes and heroism, but ultimately failed. “The Anglo-American invasion of Iraq offers dramatic evidence that power does not necessarily produce influence” (557).

The study tells us that spirit-based societies are generally more risk-accepting than appetite-based and fear-based worlds (537). Consequently, appetite-based and reason-informed worlds are more cooperation-oriented, while spirit-based and fear-based societies are more receptive to conflict-building. Lebow argues that power of spirit as a dominant motive in international relations still resists. In the recent world, he makes a distinction between revolutionary powers (i.e., the United States, France, the Soviet Union, China and Iran), which claimed standing on ideological grounds, while others (i.e., Canada, Japan, the European Union) claimed standing on the multilateral nature of their foreign policies (570).

The international order is a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon in which the cultural identity of its actors certainly plays an important role. Ever since ancient times, international actors have relied on fundamental drives for justifying their behavior in facing multiple intercultural challenges. With his cultural theory, Richard Ned Lebow provides a promising approach to the discipline of international relations, which might encourage timely debate between cultural relativists and rationalists. Besides a “*Social Theory in International Politics*” of Alexander Wendt, this book has the great potential to become another fundamental study for reflectivist theoretical standing.

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**Jean-Daniel Strub**<sup>1</sup>, *Der gerechte Friede. Spannungsfelder eines friedensethischen Leitbegriffs.* (Forum Systematik. Beiträge zur Dogmatik, Ethik und ökumenischen Theologie, hg. von Johannes Brossecker, Johannes Fischer und Joachim Track, Band 36), Verlag W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 2010, ISBN 9783170209732, 280 S.

Mit dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts haben sich auch im ethischen Diskurs um Krieg und Frieden die Gewichte verschoben. In der jahrhundertealten Frage nach einem „gerechten Krieg“ war hier die Dimension der Gerechtigkeit in Erinnerung behalten worden. Aber angesichts des nuklearen Dilemmas schien alles verändert und der Begriff „gerecht“ im Hinblick auf Krieg und Frieden keinen Ort mehr zu haben. So akzeptierten auch viele Pazifisten in und außerhalb der Kirche unabhängig von allem „Gerechten“ als einzige Option einen bedingungslosen einseitigen Verzicht auf nukleare Waffen, um aus dieser tödlichen Bedrohungslage herauszukommen. Allerdings sind gegenwärtig die auch nach dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts trotzdem noch vorhandenen Nuklearwaffen weniger Debattengegenstand.

Aus der hier vorzustellenden, von Johannes Fischer betreuten und 2008 an der Theologischen Fakultät Zürich angenommenen Doktorarbeit wird deutlich, dass sich mittlerweile der Focus der Arbeit der Friedensforscher und Friedensengagierten viel grundsätzlicheren Fragen zugewandt hat – nicht etwa, weil es seit dem Ende des Ostblocks keine kriegerischen Verwicklungen mehr gegeben hätte, sondern weil man gerade eher mehr und andersartige zu beklagen hatte. Möglicherweise mag es auch ein Ausbleiben der erwarteten „Friedensdividende“ gewesen sein, dass man sich intensiver für eine Friedensvorstellung zu interessieren begann, wie sie bereits in den sechziger Jahren von Galtung u.a. entwickelt wurde. Dort meinte man im Gegensatz zu einem sogenannten „negativen Frieden“, der lediglich ein Schweigen der Waffen bedeutete, für die Menschheit einen „positiven Frieden“ fordern zu können und zu müssen, was sich dann gegenwärtig weitgehend wiederfindet in der Forderung nach einem „gerechten Frieden“, oder wie der Autor z.T. auch sagen kann, einem „wahren Frieden“ (11). Insofern würde der Begriff „gerecht“ schien im Hinblick auf Krieg und Frieden wieder einen Ort gewinnen – eben als „gerechter Frieden“.

Dabei nimmt der Autor zu Recht wahr, dass „sich mit Blick auf die friedensethische Debatte um den >gerechten Frieden< bis heute grundlegende offene Fragen sowohl mit Blick auf die inhaltliche, wie auch mit Blick auf die funktionale Ebene“ stellen (12), und dass sich hier eine Untersuchung „in Auseinandersetzung mit den etablierten Paradigmen des Pazifismus auf der

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<sup>1</sup> Diese Rezension ist zuerst in der *Theologischen Literaturzeitung* (ThLZ), Nr 136 (Februar 2011), Sp. 208–210, erschienen; hier nachgedruckt mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Autors.

einen Seite und die Theorie des gerechten Krieges auf der anderen Seite zu bewähren hat." (26)

Und hier untersucht er im 2. Kapitel seiner Arbeit im Blick auf die evangelische Friedensethik und ihre Relevanz für den „gerechten Frieden“ das Grundpostulat „von der >konstitutiven Interdependenz< von Frieden und Gerechtigkeit“ (33) sowie das Grundpostulat, „dass der Rede vom gerechten Frieden ein weiter, im biblischen shalom-Begriff verwurzelter Friedensbegriff zugrunde zu legen sei“ (33).

Ihn lässt dabei aber zurecht unbefriedigt, dass „Gerechtigkeit in theologischer Perspektive also nicht als Grund allen Friedens verstanden werden (könne), sondern ... vielmehr als eine Bedingung der nachhaltigen Sicherung und Festigung des Friedens aufzufassen“ sei. (54)

Genauso unbefriedend ist für ihn, dass das im 3. Kapitel untersuchte Friedensethische Leitbild der deutschen katholischen Bischöfe zu „utopisch“ (71) und der gerechte Friede als friedensethisches Leitbild bei Hans-Richard Reuter, Wolfgang Huber und in der Friedensdenkschrift der EKD zu „unbestimmt“ (94) sei. Dagegen wertet er Haspels Ansatz vom „>gerechte(n) Friede< als >normative(r) Theorie internationaler Beziehungen<“ höher, weil er letztlich auf das Konzept der „Human Security“ weise (109).

In seinem 4. Kapitel „Friedentheoretische Anfragen an die Rede vom gerechten Frieden“ stellt der Verfasser zunächst einmal den Kontext der jüngeren friedentheoretischen Diskussion vor (115ff.). Allerdings tut der Autor sicherlich den diversen prominenten deutschen Friedensforschungsinstituten Unrecht, die auf den Impuls von Gustav Heinemann hin gegründet wurden, wenn er von einer Institutionalisierung der Friedensforschung seit den 90iger Jahren (119) spricht. Weiter bekräftigt er in diesem Überblick aber zutreffend, dass ein weiter Begriff (vom „positiven“ oder „gerechten“) Frieden zu einer Leerformel verkommen muss, weshalb er es für erforderlich hält, den Friedensbegriff enger zu fassen und zu präzisieren (128ff.). Dabei findet er in Senghaas' Zivilisatorischem Hexagon durchaus Anregungen (154ff.) und plädiert u.a. für eine Trennung von Friedensbegriff und Friedensbedingungen (159).

In seinem 5. Kapitel untersucht er sodann als ein konkretes historisches Beispiel für die Suche nach einem „gerechten Frieden“ das sogenannte „Genfer Modell“ für den Frieden in Israel und Palästina, in dem sich „gerechter Frieden“ nur an korrekt einzuhaltenden Verfahrensregeln orientiere und sich auf das peacemaking beschränke (174f.). Er muss dabei jedoch das Argument von Beteiligten gelten lassen, dass das Konzept des „gerechter Friedens“ als „gefährlich“ zurückzuweisen sei, da in einem Verhandlungsfrieden immer einer etwas als „ungerecht“ empfinden könne(177). Er kommt letztlich so zur Unmöglichkeit eines formalen Begriffs des gerechten Friedens (202ff.), obwohl der in diesem Abschnitt entwickelte Gedanken eines „jus post bellum“ nicht uninteressant erscheint.

Wie Strub in seinem 6. Kapitel darstellt, findet sich nun für ihn eine ausreichende Einengung und Konkretion des Verständnisses von einem „gerechten Frieden“ in dem 1994 erschienenen Bericht des United Nations Development Programm, wo zuerst ein Konzept der Human Security (207ff.) entworfen und in der internationalen Öffentlichkeit proklamiert, aber dann von Netzwerken und interessierten Gruppen immer weiter entwickelt worden ist. Immerhin darf sich Strub dabei auch weitgehend im Konsens mit der jüngsten Friedensdenkschrift der EKD (Aus Gottes Frieden leben) von 2007 wissen.

Nun ist hinsichtlich des „Human Security“-Konzeptes sicherlich der Aspekt unbestritten ein Gewinn, dass höhere Friedensqualität nur durch Zusammenschau und Zusammenwirken von Friedens- Militär- und Entwicklungspolitik (223) erreicht werden kann. Und ebenso ist es neu, fruchtbar und nicht ohne Verbindung zum elementaren christlichen Gebot der Nächstenliebe, dass damit nicht Staaten, sondern die Individuen als Adressaten von Frieden und Sicherheit (235) beachtet werden mit fundamentalem Bezug auf die Menschenrechte. (245)

Allerdings muss dabei in schwieriger Weise offen bleiben, was es für demokratisch konstituierte und legitimierte Staaten und die in ihnen kultivierten politischen Prozesse bedeutet, wenn ihre Rechte und Pflichten durch „Human Security“-Aktivisten übergangen werden. Und wenn das Ziel von „Human Security“ nach UNDP 1994 tatsächlich „freedom from fear“ und „freedom from want“ ist, so bleibt doch die vom Verfasser referierte Kritik Krauses unüberhörbar, nach der „Human Security bzw. der Gegenbegriff menschlicher Unsicherheit eine Art Synonym (sei) für alles Schlechte, das einem im Leben widerfahren könne“ (218). Und wäre dann die Idee eines „gerechten Friedens“ wirklich befriedigender bestimmt und näher an ihrer Verwirklichung?

Ferner wird in christlichen Stellungnahmen nicht ohne Grund auf die Überweltlichkeit des Friedens verwiesen. Der Verfasser erwähnt zwar auch die Eschatologie, rät aber, um „Entwertungen“ oder Entmutigungen zu vermeiden, doch das >utopische< Element nicht überzubetonen (244). Zweifellos würde sich jedoch der christliche Frieden, der „höher ist als alle Vernunft“ niemals im „Utopischen“ erschöpfen.

Da es dennoch christlicher Auftrag bleibt, den Frieden zu suchen und ihm „nachzujagen“ (Ps 34,15), ist diese Studie ein verdienstvolles Werk zur Klärung eines Leitbegriffes gegenwärtiger Sozialethik.

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# SUMMARIES IN ESTONIAN

## Äärmusluse ontoloogia ja epistemoloogia

Alar Kilp, *mag. art.* (politoloogia)

Tartu Ülikooli riigiteaduste instituudi võrdleva poliitika lektor

Äärmuslusele universaalset, objektiivset ja ajatut määratlust anda ei ole võimalik. Samas võib mõiste „äärmuslus” toimida igas ajas ja kohas – nii indiviidi, grupi, ühiskonna, riigi kui ka globaalses kontekstis – *reaalsena* (funktsionaalselt objektiivsena). Mis tahes idee või käitumise mõtestamine äärmuslikuna sõltub mõtestaja subjektiivsetest väärtustest ja kultuurikontekstist.

Kui äärmuslust defineerida *kvalitatiivselt*, väljendub see peamiselt kas vastandumises ühiskonnas kehtivale kultuurilisele põhivoolule või ühiskonna alususkumustele. *Kvantitatiivselt* mõtestatud äärmuslus aga vastandub alati mõõdukusele. *Pühendumine* ideedele ja veendumustele saab olla äärmuslik vaid *ühemõõtmeliselt* ehk liialt suures n-õ koguses, pühendumise puudumine iseenesest ei ole äärmuslus. Mitmete *psühholoogiliste*, *käitumuslike* ja *hoiakuliste* nähtuste puhul (nagu toitumine, enesemõtestamine, patriotism) väljendub äärmuslus aga kahemõõtmeliselt – eluterve mõõdukusega vastandub nii liialt suur kui ka liig väike n-õ kogus.

Äärmusluse olemus sõltub ka taustsüsteemist, milles seda vaadeldakse. Näiteks militaarvallas, kus äärmuslusega võideldakse kõige otsesemalt, peetakse „elukutsest tulenevatel” põhjustel, viisidel, eesmärkidel ja aegadel õigustatuks ning heaks teiste inimeste kohtlemist viisil, mis tavaelus oleks äärmuslik ja lubamatu.

Sõna „äärmuslus” kasutatakse üldjuhul viitena ideedele ja isikutele, kes juba ette on defineeritud negatiivselt või vaenlastena. Objektiivselt ei pruugi äärmuslane käituda ei kvalitatiivselt ega kvantitatiivselt teistmoodi. Vaenlased lihtsalt ei hinda üksteist samasuguse mõõdupuuga ega suhtle kui sõbrad. Nii nagu sallivatega on normaalne käituda sallival, sallimatutega sallimatult, õigustab äärmuslusega silmitsi seismine äärmuslust meis enestes samamoodi, nagu äärmuslikud olukorrad õigustavad äärmuslikke abinõusid.

Akadeemilistes aruteludes peetakse äärmuslikeks väiteid mitte niivõrd tõendite vähesuse või loogika puudumise tõttu, vaid pigem selle põhjal, kuivõrd minnakse vastuollu ühiskonnas üldkehtivate uskumuste ja tõekspidamistega. Nii teenib äärmusluse sildi pigem tervemõistuslik ühiskonnakriitika kui ühiskonna irratsionaalne, põhjendamatu ja ebaloogiline kiitus.

## Fanatismi mitu palet

Kalmer Marimaa, *mag. art.* (sotsioloogia)

Kõrgema Usuteadusliku Seminari religiooniuringute lektor

Siinne artikkel käsitleb fanatismi selle mitmekesisuses. Sageli on fanatismi mõistetud negatiivses tähenduses, kuid see ei pruugi olla alati ühiskonnaohtlik, vaid võib olla suunatud ka positiivsete muutuste saavutamisele. Mitmepalgelise ja universaalse

nähtusena ei piirdu fanatism üksnes usu- või poliitikavaldkonnaga, vaid seda leidub pea igas inimtegevuse sfääris. Fanaatikut iseloomustab äärmuslik innukus ning kriitilise mõtlemise vähesus või koguni selle puudumine. Peamiselt käitumusliku nähtusena võib fanatism avalduda teatud ideedes või ideoloogias, kuigi see ei juurdu alati kindlates ideedes, mida peetakse eksimatuks. Nii pole võimalik luua fanaatikute kohta universaalset tüpoloogiat, kuna neid iseloomustavad omadused võivad varieeruda ja teatud fanatismi ilmingute puhul sootuks puududa. Järgnevalt on esitatud viis tunnust, mis iseloomustavad fanaatikut:

- 1) kõikumatu veendumus oma arusaamade ainuõigsuses;
- 2) püüd suruda teistele peale oma veendumusi;
- 3) dualistlik maailmakäsitlus koos äärmusteni mineva meie-nemad-mõtteviisiga;
- 4) ennastohverdav pühendumine eesmärgile;
- 5) pühendumine on olulisem kui pühendumisobjekt.

Samas ei saa nende viie tunnuse põhjal luua kõikehõlmavat pilti fanaatikust, sest mõne puhul esinevad kõik viis, mõne teise puhul aga mitte. Mõned inimesed on altimad kalduma fanaatilistele tegudele kui teised. Seejuures võivad fanatismi soodustada ka mitmed tegurid, näiteks fanatismi toetav ideoloogia ja propaganda-vahendid, ühiskondlikud muutused, individuaalsele frustratsioonile n-ö vastust pakkuvad massiliikumised, lihtsustatud ja kiirete vastuste eelistamine reflekteeriva mõtlemise asemel, põnevuse otsimine ja kättemaksumotiivid. Need on siiski vaid mõned tegurid, mis võivad teatud indiviide kallutada fanaatilisele käitumisele.

Fanatismi spetsiifika väljatoomist raskendab selle sarnasus fundamentalismiga, kuna viimane on ajapikku omandanud üha laialdasema kasutusampluaa. Siiski saab märkida mõnesid erisusi, millest kõige olulisem on fanatismi rõhuasetus käitumisele, samas kui fundamentalism on rohkem hoiakuline nähtus. Samuti ei juurdu fanatism alati mingis kindlas maailmavaates, kuid fundamentalism eeldab kindla maailmapildi olemasolu. Mõni inimene võib olla nii fanaatik kui ka fundamentalist, kuid mitte iga fundamentalist pole fanaatik ja vastupidi.

Fanatism kui teatud mõtlemis- ja käitumislaad ei ole meie ümbert kuhugi kadunud. Seetõttu on õigustatud ka sellest rääkimine. Kuigi mitte igasugune fanatism pole ühiskonnaohtlik, on fanatismi tunnusjooni vaja teada, et tunda neid tendentse, mis võivad viia vägivalla (sh vaimse vägivalla) ja jõhkrukseni.

## **Tunnetusliku kallutatuse positiivne ja negatiivne funktsioon inimsuhetes**

*Alar Kilp, mag. art. (politoloogia)*

Tartu Ülikooli riigiteaduste instituudi võrdleva poliitika lektor

Akadeemilistes uurimustes väärtustame üldjuhul objektiivsust ega pea subjektiivset kallutatust positiivseks. Kallutus täidab aga mitmeid asendamatu ja hädavajalikke funktsioone nii inimese eneseidentiteedi kujunemisel, grupikuuluvuse ja suhete loomisel kui ka nende toimimisel. Õppides tundma kallutatuse toimimist meis enestes, õpime tundma mitte ainult ka kõiki teisi inimesi, vaid sedagi, kuidas inimsuhted reaalsuses toimivad.

Üksikindiviidil aitab positiivne kallutatus leevendada ebakindlustunnet, tugevdada enesehinnangut, tunnetada eneseväarikust ja sotsiaalsel staatust.

Nii üksikindiviididele, gruppidele kui ka ühiskondadele laiemalt aitavad nende jaoks positiivselt kallutatud – paljuski ebarealistlikud – müüdid omistada mõtet ja tähendust inimesele, muuta kaootilist ja juhuslikku maailma ennustatavaks ja korras- tatuks. Üksikindiviidid, grupid ja kultuurid kujundavad nende kaudu ka oma hetke- identiteeti. Minevikust valitakse osad, mis hetkeidentiteeti tugevdavad ning aitavad pürgida tulevikueesmärkide suunas. Negatiivsed tahud minevikust kas unustatakse või mõtestatakse positiivseks.

Inimsuhetes ei ole võimalik tuvastada ühte ja üldkehtivat reeglit, millal on milline kallutatus hea või halb. Inimsuhetes toimetuleku eetiliseks lähteks ei soovita artikkel ühtegi versiooni deontoloogilisest eetikast, mis mõtestab hea käitumise ühe- poolset vaid meie enda hoiakutena. Käitumisviis – ja nendega kaasnev positiivne või negatiivne kallutatus – tuleb valida pigem olukorrast ja vastastest lähtudes. Ei ole moraalselt üllas mängida jalgpalli ajal kabet ega mängida altruistlikku heategijat konkurentsi või vastandumise olukorras.

Tuues erinevaid näiteid inimsuhetest töökohal, tänaval ja lähisuhtes, soovib artikkel olla iseäranis tähelepanelik olukordade suhtes, kus usaldamatus ja tõrju- mine toimivad positiivselt, komplimentid ja empaatia aga negatiivselt.

## **Terrorism, riigi vastutus ja relvastatud jõu kasutamine**

**René Värk**, *dr. iur.*

Kaitseväge Ühendatud Õppeasutuste riigi- ja rahvusvahelise õiguse dotsent, Tartu Ülikooli rahvusvahelise õiguse lektor, I. Jalaväebrigadi õigusnõunik (reservis)

Terrorism on viimastel aastakümnetel muutunud eriti aktuaalseks julgeoleku- probleemiks nii riigisisesele kui ka rahvusvahelisel tasandil. Seda probleemi on või- malik vaadelda, lähtudes kas korra-kaitselisest või militaarsest paradigmat. Esimene käsitab terrorismi kriminaalse tegevusena, mis kuulub riigi õiguskaitseorganite pädevusse, ja teine suhtub terrorismi kui julgeolekuohtu, mis kuulub sõjaväelisse vastutusalasse. Artikkel keskendub viimasele ning uurib, kuidas ja millistel tingi- mustel on riikidel võimalik kasutada relvastatud jõudu (enesekaitset või kollektiivset julgeolekusüsteemi) võitluses terroristlike mitteriiklike rühmituste vastu. Hinnangu andmise teevad keeruliseks ainuüksi asjaolud, et rahvusvahelises õiguses puudub jätkuvalt üldaksepteeritud terrorismi definitsioon, relvastatud jõu kasutamist puu- dutavad reeglid pärinevad Teise maailmasõja lõpust ja mitteriiklikel rühmitustel ei ole oma territooriumi, vaid need paiknevad mõne riigi territooriumil. Viimane tähendab, et rünnates mitteriiklikku rühmitust, rünnatakse õigupoolest ka asukoha- riiki. Seetõttu eeldab terroristlike mitteriiklike rühmituste vastane võitlus rahvus- vahelise õigussüsteemi uudset tõlgendamist ja kasutamist, ohustamata seejuures selle alustalasid. Riigid võivad kasutada relvastatud jõudu enesekaitseks mitteriik- like rühmituste korraldatud terroristlike rünnakute vastu, kui need on oma ulatuse ja mõju poolest võrreldavad tavapärase relvastatud rünnakutega ning on omistatavad riigile või viimane osaleb nendes oluliselt. Samuti tekib riigil kohustus taluda teiste riikide vastumeetmeid, kui ta võimaldab terroristlikele mitteriiklikele rühmitustele

varjupaika või ei ole suuteline kõrvaldama neist tulenevaid ohtusid. Rahvusvahelise õiguse ühe olulise põhimõtte järgi ei tohi riik teadlikult lubada oma territooriumi kasutada tegudeks, mis rikuvad teiste riikide õigusi või ohustavad julgeolekut. Julgeolekunõukogul on võimalik määratleda terroriakti ohuna rahule ja kasutada kollektiivset julgeolekusüsteemi, mis lubab rakendada asjasse puutuvate terroristlike mitteriiklike rühmituste või riikide suhtes sõjalisi sunnimeetmeid.

## **Püha sõjapidamise ja sõjateoloogia esilekerkimine muistses Lähis-Idas**

**Peeter Espak**, *dr. phil.* (teoloogia)

Tartu Ülikooli filosoofiateaduskonna kultuuriteaduste ja kunstide instituudi teadur

Esimeste sõdade kohta, mis muistses Lähis-Idas peeti, saab järeldusi teha ainult arheoloogilise materjali ja hilisemast perioodist pärit võrdlevate näidete põhjal. Valdav osa jumalusi olid algselt eelkõige oma riigi viljakust ja heaolu tagavateks pühadeks jõududeks. Jumalate portreerimine oma riigi poliitiliste ja ka sõjaliste juhtidena sai alguse tõenäoliselt üsna varakult, kui olid tekkinud esimesed organiseeritud riiklikud moodustised ja nende liidud. Esimeseks teadaolevaks kirjalikuks tekstiks, kus on antud pikem ülevaade muistses sõjast, on Lagaši riigi kuninga Ur-Nanše (*ca* 2520 eKr) fragmentaarselt säilinud steelitekst, kus kirjeldatakse sõda Lagaši, Umma ja Uri riikide vahel. Selles tekstis jumalusi sõjategevuse initsiaatoritena või sinna sekkujatena ei mainita. Otseselt sõjas osalejatena kujutatakse jumalaid esmakordselt kuningas Eanatumi (*ca* 2470 eKr) raisakotkaste steeli tekstis, mil võib esmakordselt ajaloos rääkida sõjapidamise ja religiooni sulandumisest või sellisest nähtusest nagu sõjateoloogia. Kuningat kujutatakse selles tekstis jumaliku õiguse taastajana ning jumalate tahte ja korralduse tõttu sõtta mineva õiglusevürstina. Samasugune arusaam jumalikust õigusest, õiglusest ja pühast sõjast jääb püsima kogu edasise Lähis-Ida ajaloo jooksul. Ka Vana Testamendi allikates kujutatakse jumal Jahvet oma rahvast sõjas aitamas, et saavutada nn jumaliku õigluse. Samal ajal oli võimalik ka lähenemine, mille kohaselt võis jumal saata vaenulikud rahvad omaenda inimesi ründama karistuseks jumaliku õigluse normidest üleastumise eest. Sarnane lähenemine on osalt omane ka hilisemale kristlikule mõttemaailmale. Eri-nevaks võiks pidada islamistlike sõjakuvandeid, mille eripära seisneb asjaolus, et koraan on sündinud sõjaoludes ja peegeldab oma kirjapanemise ajal toimunut. Koraani sõjakas iseloom võimaldab ka kontekstiväliselt erinevate vägivaldsust õhutatavate üksiklausete ja mõttekonstruktsioonide kasutamist kõikvõimalikes situatsioonides. Teisalt on aga samasugune kontekstiväline ja sõnasõnaline pühakirjalause kasutamine vägivalda õigustamiseks levinud ka mitmetesse kristlik-evaangelsestesse liikumistesse (eelkõige USA-s) ning ka nüüdisaegsesse judaismi Iisraelis. Üldistades võib järeldada, et kõigi nende religioonide vägivaldsus ei tulene aga pühakirjade tekstist, vaid pigem teksti kontekstivälisest ja sõnasõnalisest tõlgendamisest. Samas on heatahtliku või armulise ülimalduse olemine kõigile kolmele usundile.

## Uusaegse sallivusmõtte, südametunnistus- ja religioonivabaduse tekkest ning probleemistikust riigikirikliku suhtumise näitel ristijatesse ja nonkonformistidesse

Andres Saumets, mag. theol.

Kaitseväge Ühendatud Õppeasutuste ühiskonnateaduste ja  
Kõrgema Usuteadusliku Seminari kirikuloo dotsent

Demokraatlikus ühiskonnas on põhiseadusega tagatud erinevad põhiõigused, sealhulgas ka *südametunnistus-* ja *usuvabadus* (avaramas tähenduses ka *religioonivabadus*). Vaba ja demokraatliku riigi usuline ning maailmavaateline *neutraalsus* peab tagama oma kodanikele religiooni vaba praktiseerimise ja vabatahtliku kuulumise või mittekuulumise mõnda usulisse või maailmavaatelisse ühendusse, et seeläbi oleks võimalik tagada ka isiksuse vaba usuline ja/või maailmavaateline areng. *Vabade* kirikute ja maailmavaateliste ühenduste olemasolu on *vaba* riigi ja *vaba* ühiskonna oluline tunnus ning demokraatliku põhiseaduslikkuse tagaja. Religioonivabadus kui põhiõigus selle kõige avaramas tähenduses peab kindlustama võrdse kohtlemise, üldise võrdõiguslikkuse, usulise ja maailmavaatelise pluralismi.

Tegelikkuses avaldub põhiõiguslikult tagatud religioonivabadus sageli riigi *sallivuses*, mis ei takista riigil praktiliselt eelistamast üht või teist konkreetset, näiteks ajaloolis-kultuuriliselt kinnistunud ja harjumuspärast kirikut või usutunnistust, ega pakkumast teistele, näiteks vabakirikutele või muudele osaduskondadele, pelgalt nn repressiivset ususalivust. Põhimõtteliselt on *ühe* territooriumi ja *ühe* kiriku mudel ikka veel sügavalt juurdunud paljude riikide, aga ka neile partneriks olevate kirikute tõeteadvuses ja välistes vormides ning religioossete organisatsioonivormide ja usu-praktikate pluralismiga harjumine võtab veel aega.

Artikkel annab lühiülevaate uusaegse tolerantsusmõtte kujunemisest läbi kristliku kiriku intolerantsuse ja tõenõudluse ajaloo, avades teisisiiskujate (hereetikute) poliitilise ja kirikliku tagakiusamise peamised, sh õiguslikud, tagamaad ning põhjendused. Ennekõike just Martin Lutheri reformatsioonilise teoloogiaga tõusis varausajal olulise teemana esile südametunnistusvabaduse küsimus, kuid seda ei mõistatud tollal üksikisiku individuaalse ja võõrandamatu õigusena religioonivabaduse mõttes. See oli allutatud objektiivselt mõistatud *evangeeliumi* tõele, nii nagu seda mõistis just Luther oma eksegeetilise töö põhjal.

Individaalset ja ka kollektiivset südametunnistus- ning usuvabadust käsitasid nii protestantlikud kui katoliiklikud religiooniparteid hilisantiigist pärit ketseriseaduse põhjal hereesiaana ning ühtlasi poliitilise mässuna, mis vajas karmikäelist mahasurumist. Sellised südametunnistus- ja usuvabadus rajanesid teistsugusel Pühakirjajärgendusel ning viisid *radikaalse* reformatsiooni kontekstis *isikliku usuotsuse* alusel ja *vabatahtlikult* moodustatud osaduskondade tekkimisele (nt 16. sajandil erinevad ristijateliikumise grupid, 17. sajandil nonkonformistlikud osaduskonnad) *väljaspool* riigi- või rahvakirikuid. Alates 4. sajandil toimunud nn Constantinuse pöördest valitsetes kiriku ja riigi suhetes nn *unum-corporus-Christianum* ehk riigikirikliku ühtsuse mudel. Viimase kehtivust ei vaidlustatud põhimõtteliselt ka 16. sajandi reformatsioonikirikutes. Sellele erinevaid alternatiive otsinud ja seeläbi ka valitsevale ühiskondlik-poliitilisele korrale põhimõttelise väljakutse esitanud usklikud kogesid pea

kõikjal Euroopas süstemaatilist tagakiusamist. Õiguslikult tugines see erinevatele taasristijate vastu suunatud mandaatidele (nn *Wiedertäufermandaten*), mida anti välja nii kohalikul kui riiklikul tasandil, näiteks Teisel Speyeri riigipäeval 1529. aastal. Teoloogilisi ja organisatsioonilisi alternatiive otsinud teisitiuskujate (ristijate ja nn spiritualistide) *teoloogiline* hukkamõistmine leidis lisaks luterlike ja reformeeritud teoloogide erinevatele kirjutistele selgesõnalist väljendust näiteks ka 16. sajandi olulisemates luterlikes usutunnistustes.

*Radikaalse* reformatsiooni ridadesse kuulunud usklike vastu suunatud riiklikud ja kiriklikud repressioonid viitavad selgelt tõsistele puudujääkidele südame-tunnistus- ja religioonivabaduse käsitamisel varasel uusajal. Ennast südame-tunnistusvabaduse kilbiga kaitsnud *evangeelsed* riigiseisused olid valmis igati toetama „mässuliste taasristijate” vastu suunatud keiserliku mandaadi elluviimist. Sel moel õnnestus neil ketserluse süüdistust oskuslikult endalt teistele suunata ning andis neile ühtlasi võimaluse ketserite leidmise ja karistamise ülikondlikku ülesannet täites näidata ennast ortodokssena. Ususallivuse *avalik-poliitilise* aspekti rõhutamise ja *evangeeliumi*-põhise kristliku kuulutuse *tõenäudlus* ei lasknud reformaatoritel toona *radikaalselt* nähtud *alternatiivsele* kristlusele vaba arenguruumi jätta. Teisalt võib tõdeda, et just diskrimineerimine ja läbielatud kannatused on aidanud reformatsiooniaja ristijatel ja nende pärandi edasikandjatel valitud teed mööda edasi liikuda ning oma eksistentsi ja usutunnistuse nimel võidelda. Artiklis esitatud näidete ja mõttekäikude põhjal võib väita, et tolerantsusmõtte arengu seisukohalt edasiviivad impulsid – igapäevase individuaalselt ja samas kõigile võrdselt kehtiva südame-tunnistus- ja religioonivabaduse kui üldise *inimõiguse* nõudmise suunas – on varasel uusajal lähtunud ennekõike just etableeritud kirikute varjus või hoopis neist väljaspool asetsenud ja *radikaalselt* mõistetud osaduskondadest.

Religiooni vaba praktiseerimise ja vabatahtlikkuse põhimõtetele rajatud *vabakiriklik* riigi ja kiriku suhete mudel leidis esmalt avalikku ja põhiseaduslikku rakendamist 17.–18. sajandil Põhja-Ameerikas. Just seal hakati südame-tunnistus- ja religioonivabadust mõistma ning praktiseerima niisuguse *võõrandamatu* õiguse (inimõiguse), mida riik ei saa võimaldada ega jälle ära võtta (nagu ususallivust), vaid üksnes põhiseaduslikult kaitsta. Nüüdisaja demokraatlike põhiväärtusi ja vabadusi esindava ning kaitsva ühiskonna jaoks tõenäoliselt sobivaima *vabakirikliku* suhtemudeli kujunemislugu algab nonkonformistlikest usuühendustest. Selle mudeli juured ulatuvad juba radikaalse reformatsiooni käigus praktiseerimist ja sõnastamist leidnud südame-tunnistus- ja religioonivabaduse põhimõtetele. Nii saavad vabakirikud oma teoloogilise ja organisatsioonilise enesemõtestamisega – tänu oma viie sajandi pikkusele ajaloole ning meenutades selle jooksul kogetud diskrimineerimist ja sellele osutatud vastupanu – teadvustada riigile religioosse ja maailmavaatelse neutraalsuse hädavajalikkust. Sel moel on vabakirikutel võimalus anda oma teadlik panus vaba ja pluralistliku ühiskonna arengusse.

## Kristlik apokalüptiline ekstremism: kaks juhtumit

Alar Laats, *dr. phil.* (teoloogia)

Tallinna Ülikooli Eesti Humanitaarinstituudi usundiloo professor

Ekstremism pole pea ühelegi usundile võõras. Kristluse puhul esineb ekstremismi tavaliselt pingelise maailmalõpuootuse olukorras. Siinses artiklis käsitletakse kahte ajaloolist apokalüptilise ekstremismi juhtumit, millega oli seotud miljoneid inimesi. Esimene näide pärineb 19. sajandi keskpaiga Hiinast, kus laiad rahvamassid hakkasid Jumala pojaks peetud Hong Xiuquani (surnud 1864) juhtimisel Taipingi taevast kuningriiki rajama. See oli eshatoloogiline ettevõtmine. Usuti, et Hongi sõjaväeliselt organiseeritud ja range distsipliiniga pooldajaskond suudab seda teostada. Taevase kuningriigi rajamiseks tuli sõjaliselt murda ülejäänud Hiina ühiskonna vastupanu. Teiseks näidisjuhtumiks on Vene vanausuliste liikumine, mis sai alguse 17. sajandi teisel poolel. Ka siin usuti, et maailm on oma lõpule lähedal. Vanausulised aga uskusid, et valitsema on asunud antikristus, nagu see traditsiooniliste uskumuste kohaselt peakski enne maailmalõppu juhtuma. Vanausuliste arusaamade kohaselt ei jäänud sellises olukorras midagi muud üle kui taanduda võimalikult kaugele tsaaririigist ja ametlikust ortodoksses kirikust, kus usuti valitsevat antikristus. Vene vanausuliste seas esines massiliselt ka kõige äärmuslikumat ühiskonnast lahkumise viisi – enesepõletamist. Mõlema kristliku liikumise ekstremistlikku käitumist võib vaadelda kui vastureaktsioone võimude katsetele neid jõuga ehk ekstremistlike vahenditega lämmatada.

Hiina Taipingi ja Vene vanausuliste juhtumeid võib pidada kristluses esinevate eshatoloogiliste ekstremistlike juhtumite kahe tüübi esindajaks. Taipingi ekstremism oli suunatud väljapoole, maailma muutmisele. Vanausuliste ekstremism seevastu oli aga suunatud just maailmast eemaldumisele, kohati lausa maailmast lahkumisele. Sellise ekstremistliku käitumise erinevuse üheks põhjuseks on erinevused religioossetes arusaamades. Hong Xiuquani ja ta pooldajate usu kohaselt ei ole jumaliku ja inimliku distants ületamatu. Inimesed on põhimõtteliselt suutelised maailmalõpu sündmustes otsustavalt osalema. Nad on suutelised ehitama Jumala riiki. Selleks tuleb vaid olemasolevat maailma muuta, vajaduse korral ka ekstremistlikke jõuvahendeid kasutades. Seevastu Vene vanausuliste jaoks valitseb lõpuaja maailma antikristus, kes on transtsendentne, sealpoolne tegelane. Sellisena ei suuda inimesed tema vastu midagi ette võtta. Inimene ei suuda teda hävitada ja siin maa peal jumalariiki ehitada. See on Jumala, mitte inimese töö.

Kasutades tänapäeva keelepruuki, võib öelda, et Taipingi liikumine tahtis rajada utoopiat, välja tuli aga antiutoopia. Vene vanausuliste eesmärgiks oli eemalduda antiutoopiast. Tulemuseks oli see, et neil õnnestus nii mõnelgi korral rajada oma väikseid, muust ühiskonnast isoleeritud utoopiasaarekesi.

## **Stereotüübid, mis „meid“ määratlevad: mosleminaiste näide**

**Eero Janson**

Tartu Ülikooli riigiteaduste instituudi võrdleva poliitika magistrant

Viimastel aastatel on Lääne-Euroopa riikides üha enam hoogu kogunud islamiga seostatud traditsioonide riiklik reguleerimine ja debatid sellise reguleerimise vajalikkuse üle. Mitmed riigid on läinud lausa nii kaugele, et on keelustanud erinevate islami riideesemete kandmise avalikus ruumis. Sellise poliitika taustal on aga oluline küsida, missugusena näeb lääs islamit ja mosleminaisi ning mil määral on need kuvandid representatiivsed.

Siinne artikkel vaidlustab seejuures kaks aluseeldust, millele riikliku reguleerimise retoorika on toetunud. Esiteks eeldatakse, et kui islami kombe kohaselt riietuvatel naistel oleks valida, siis nad ei kannaks peärätti, *niqab*'i ega burkat. Teisisõnu arvatakse, et need naised on rõhutatud ja orjastatud ning vajavad seega päästmist ja vabastamist. Teiseks ollakse seisukohal, et nende riideesemete kandmise jätkuv lubamine mõjuks halvasti euroopaliku (või veel laiemalt lääneliku) kultuuri normidele ja väärtustele, sekulaarsele põhikultuurile, rahvusriigile jne.

Nagu aga näha erinevatest uuringutest, ei tunne islamiusulised naised ennast peärätti kandes allasurutuna, vaid teevad sellised otsused üldiselt iseseisvalt, kuigi samal ajal piiravad neid sotsiaalsed normid. Seda ignoreerides maalitakse läänes aga mustvalge pilt naiste olukorrast, jättes seejuures tähelepanuta need probleemid, mille ees naised tegelikult mõlemas kultuuriruumis seisavad.

Teine probleem seisneb lääne väärtuste kontseptsioonis, mille tähendus on äärmiselt hägune ja mida on seetõttu lihtne poliitilistel eesmärkidel ära kasutada. Selle kõige taustaks on aga teatud kuvand islamist, millel on väga pikk ja keeruline ajalugu ning mis toetub suurel määral ajaloolistele võimusuhetele lääne ja ida vahel.

Siinne artikkel väidab, et on vaja eemalduda nendest stereotüüpidest, mis tänapäeval islamiusuliste naiste kohta käibel on ning seeläbi nende elu mõjutavad. Identiteedipoliitika asemel tuleks tegeleda hoopis reaalsete probleemidega, mille ees islamiusulised (ja ka lääne) naised seisavad. Üks võimalus probleemiga tegeleda oleks lasta neil naistel endil rääkida, sest vaid nemad ise saavad öelda, kui vabad või allasurutud nad on.

## **Religioon kultuurilise identiteedi ja kultuurilise vastase konstrueerimisel**

**Alar Kilp**, *mag. art.* (politoloogia)

Tartu Ülikooli riigiteaduste instituudi võrdleva poliitika lektor

Sotsiaalkonstruktiiivse lähenemise järgi ei eksisteeri häid ega halbu kultuurilisi erinevusi nii kaua, kuni selliseid erinevusi ei konstrueerita. Artikkel visandab kultuurilise vastandumise tavapärase tekkemudeli, et aidata tõlgendada tihti esinevat empiirilist paradoksi, mille puhul näiliselt kõige religioossemate konfliktide taustaks on samal ajal ka kõige sügavamad majanduslikud, poliitilised ja sotsiaalsed hirmud, haavatavuse, ülekohtu ja jõuetuse tunne.

Kultuurilise „teise” konstrueerimine algab subjektiivsest ebakindluse, kaose ja haavatavuse tundest. Mainitud tunded põhinevad sageli majanduslikel, sotsiaalsetel ja poliitilistel asjaoludel. Tärnanud konfliktile antakse tähendus konstrueeritud kultuuriliste erinevuste põhjal, mida mõtestatakse ka usuliste või ideoloogiliste väärtuste, uskumuste, müütide ja narratiividega ning lihtsa moraalse vastandumise (hea vs. halb) vormis.

Kultuurilise „teise” negatiivne esitamine täidab mitmeid positiivseid funktsioone. Jagatud vaen liidab ühiskonnaliikmeid, aitab vältida kaose tunnet ning hoida alal positiivset rahvusidentiteeti.

Religioon ja ideoloogiad võivad täita samasuguseid kultuurilisi ja poliitilisi funktsioone ning võivad toimida nii mõõdukalt kui radikaalselt, pluralistlikult kui monistlikult. Pikaajaliste ja erakorraliste kriiside puhul on religioon tihti ideoloogiast olulisem mõjutegur.

Lääne ühiskonnas on religioon kui uskumus oma ajaloolise kultuurilise rolli minetanud, religioon kui üks kultuurilise identiteedi sümboleid on aga tänini oluline nii kultuurilise identiteedi kui kultuurilise vastase konstrueerimisel.

## **Sotsiaalkonstruksionistlik vaade dekontekstualiseerimisele terrorismidiskursuses**

**Livio Nimmer**

Tartu Ülikooli usuteaduskonna magistrant

Keel on poliitiline. Keel konstitueerib meie maailma ja määrab ära, kuidas me maailma näeme ning millised teod on selles maailmas võimalikud. Keelel on ühiskonnas ka hegemooniline funktsioon, kuna erinevad ühiskonnas võimule pürgivad grupid ja institutsioonid kasutavad keelt oma seisukohtade juurutamiseks ning oma positsiooni kindlustamiseks.

Pärast 2001. aasta 11. septembri terrorirünnakuid USA-s on terrorismi hakatud kujutama deemonliku ohuna, mis varitseb kõikjal ning võib rünnata igal ajal. Kuna selline arusaam domineerib avalikus terrorismi käsitlevas diskussioonis ja kirjanuduses, võib seda nimetada ortodoksseks vaateks. Ortodoksse vaate esindajad kasutavad terrorismist kõneldes sageli teoloogilist keelt, mille tulemuseks on terrorismi põhjuste eraldamine ajaloolis-materiaalsest kontekstist ning terrorismi kujutamine metafüüsilise kurjusena. Terrorismi on hakatud nägema ajatu ja kõikjal oleva ohuna, mis nõuab pidevat valvelolekut ning järjest uusi vastumeetmeid. Terrorismi käsitlemine metafüüsilisena on süvendanud mõistete *terrorism* ja *terrorist* meelevaldset tõlgendamist ning defineerimist. See on omakorda loonud soodsa pinnase erinevate ühiskonnagruppide sildistamiseks ja häbimärgistamiseks ning on soodustanud uute terrorismivastaste institutsioonide ja poliitika tekkimist.

Artikkel analüüsib terrorismi konstrueerimist sotsiaalkonstruksionistlikust perspektiivist pärast 11. septembri terrorirünnakuid. Analüüsis kasutatakse dekontekstualiseerimise mõistet, et kirjeldada retoorilisi võtteid, mis on viinud terrorismi metafüüsilise kujutamiseni. Samuti käsitletakse selliste muutustega kaasnevaid probleeme ja ohtusid demokraatlike ühiskondade jaoks.

## **Hirmukultuur rahvusvahelises poliitikas – Lääne domineeritud rahvusvaheline süsteem ja tema ekstremistlikud näited**

**Holger Mölder**, *dr. phil.* (politoloogia)

Kaitseväe Ühendatud Õppeasutuste julgeolekupoliitika ja strateegia dotsent

Hirm on aegade jooksul olnud üks olulisemaid rahvusvahelistes suhetes toimunud emotsionaalseid motiive. Hirmukultuur võib põhjustada äärmuslike vaadete ja ideoloogia esilekerkimist. See omakorda võib viia äärmuslike poliitiliste vahendite kasutamiseni, mille abil on populistlikel ja demagoogilistel poliitikutel võimalik tähelepanu ratsionaalsetelt lahendustelt kõrvale juhtida ning tekitada pingeid ja konflikte.

Siinses artiklis uuritakse hirmukultuuri mõju äärmuslusele rahvusvahelistes suhetes, tuginedes eelkõige Richard Ned Lebowi kultuuripõhisele rahvusvaheliste suhete teooriale. Analüüsis kasutatakse Alexander Wendti välja pakutud kolme poliitilise ideaalkultuuri (hobbes'liku, locke'liku ning kantiliku kultuuri) põhimõtteid. Hobbes'lik kultuur on hirmukultuuri lätetega lähedalt seotud, sest selles kultuuris on iseloomulikult välja toodud tugev meie-nemad-vastandus ning pidev sõjaseisukord rahvusvaheliste toimijate vahel – „kõikide sõda kõigi vastu”, mille lahutamatu osa on hirm. Locke'lik kultuur soovib hirmu mõjusid vähendada, kuigi temagi tunnistab konflikti vältimatust toimijate vahel. Neile vastandub kantilik kultuur, mis üritab koostöö kaudu luua püsivaid usalduslikke suhteid.

Teatud ideoloogia, eeskätt natsionalismi ja marksismi äärmuslikud vormid maru-rahvuslus ja kommunism, aga samuti usufundamentalism, võib hirmukultuuri levitada ning rahvusvahelisi toimijaid äärmuslikule käitumisele kallutada. Kui äärmuslik ideoloogia pääseb mõnes riigis võimule, võib tekkida riiklik äärmuslus, kus süsteemi suhtes deviantid riigid eiravad rahvusvahelises süsteemis käibivaid üldtunnustatud norme, samuti võivad nad toetada rahvusvahelist terrorismi või välja töötada massihävitusrelvi ning kokkuvõttes vastandada end rahvusvahelisele süsteemile. Postmodernsele rahvusvahelisele süsteemile omane üleilmastumine ning suurenev vastastikune sõltuvus on põhjustanud rahvuseüleste äärmuslike koosluste esiletõusu, mis on olnud märgatav islamiäärmusluse puhul. Teatud tingimustel võib äärmuslik käitumine levida aga ka demokraatlikus ühiskonnas, mille üheks väljundiks oli neokonservatiivse liikumise mõju suurenemine Ameerika Ühendriikides pärast islami-terroristide 11. septembri 2001. aasta rünnakuid New Yorgis ja Washingtonis.