



ESCOLA DE
HUMANIDADES

TEOCOMUNICAÇÃO

Revista da Teologia da PUCRS

Teocomunicação, Porto Alegre, v. 51, n. 1, p. 1-10, jan.-dez. 2021
e-ISSN: 1980-6736 | ISSN-L: 0103-314X

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15448/0103-314X.2021.1.41617>

SEÇÃO: TEMÁTICA LIVRE

Religion in the public sphere: a contested field in late modern societies

La religión en la esfera pública: un campo controvertido en las sociedades modernas tardías

Religião na esfera pública: um campo contestado nas sociedades modernas

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Received on: 25/08/2021.

Approved on: 30/08/2021.

Published on: 27/09/2021.

Abstract: Religion has become a highly ambivalent phenomenon in late modernity. For some, it is a lasting resource for meaning, even in a highly ideologically plural society. For others, it belongs in the private sphere, not in the public sphere. What both would probably share, however, is the assumption that a state religion would be in contradiction to the promises of freedom and autonomy of modernity. But where is the place of religion in a democratic society? The text discusses this highly complex question in an examination of two theories that have shaped debates in the field like few others. From this discussion, further perspectives for a theologically founded position that is responsible in terms of democratic theory are given in conclusion.

Keywords: Secularization. Public Sphere. Civil Society. Public Religion. Public Theology.

Resumen: La religión se ha convertido en un fenómeno muy ambivalente en la modernidad tardía. Para algunos, es un recurso duradero de significado, incluso en una sociedad de gran pluralidad ideológica. Para otros, pertenece al ámbito privado, no al ámbito público. Lo que probablemente compartirían ambos, sin embargo, es la suposición de que una religión estatal estaría en contradicción con las promesas de libertad y autonomía de la modernidad. Pero, ¿dónde está el lugar de la religión en una sociedad democrática? El texto analiza esta cuestión tan compleja en un examen de dos teorías que han dado forma a los debates en el campo como pocas. A partir de esta discusión, se dan en conclusión perspectivas adicionales para una posición teológicamente fundada que es responsable en términos de teoría democrática.

Palabras clave: Secularización. Esfera Pública. Sociedad Civil. Religión Pública. Teología Pública.

Resumo: A religião tornou-se um fenômeno altamente ambivalente na modernidade tardia. Para alguns, é um recurso duradouro de significado, mesmo em uma sociedade altamente pluralista ideologicamente. Para outros, pertence à esfera privada, não à esfera pública. O que ambos provavelmente compartilhariam, entretanto, é a suposição de que uma religião de Estado estaria em contradição com as promessas de liberdade e de autonomia da modernidade. Mas onde está o lugar da religião em uma sociedade democrática? O texto discute essa questão altamente complexa em um exame de duas teorias que moldaram debates no campo como poucos. A partir dessa discussão, outras perspectivas para uma posição fundamentada teologicamente que é responsável em termos de teoria democrática são dadas como conclusão.

Palavras-chave: Secularização. Esfera Pública. Sociedade Civil. Religião Pública. Teologia Pública.



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Introduction

A dispute has broken out in Germany: It is about whether religious symbols belong in the public sphere. This is particularly ignited by the veil, burka or Nikab. Muslim civil servants and teachers have repeatedly been forbidden to wear a headscarf as a religious symbol during lessons. Cultural and religious motifs are unmistakably mixed with Islamophobic motifs, but in some cases also racist impulses. But what is currently in focus in a certain interaction with it is the question of crosses in public spaces. In 2018 this discussion flared up again, when the Prime Minister Söder of the Christian Social Union had crosses hung up again in courts and schools. This was certainly an attempt to win back voters who would otherwise have migrated to the right-wing party Alternative für Deutschland. But there were fierce protests against this throughout the country, because religious symbols were politically instrumentalised here.

In Germany there is a special relationship between state and religion. The state is ideologically neutral, but it encourages the religious communities to become publicly involved. That means a religion-friendly separation, no laicism as in France, where laicism itself is elevated to its own world view. In Germany, however, this ideological neutrality means that religions and religious symbols such as the cross may only be hanging up in state institutions such as courts or schools if no one complains. This story is an impressive example of a very fundamental problem: the relationship between state and religion is still highly controversial (GRÜMME, 2018, p. 171-201). This dramatic situation is exacerbated by the progressive processes of secularisation: in Germany as a whole, believers, be they Christians, Jews or Muslims, are now in a minority compared to non-religious people or atheists. What rank does religion have in public then? Where can it have significance? Does a democratic society, a democratic state, need traditions of a religious nature? The scholar for law and politics Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde made a quite important and famous thesis: The liberal, democratic,

ideologically neutral state lives from traditions that it cannot create itself. On the one hand, this contains a fundamental critique of totalitarianism. The crown jurist of the Third Reich, Carl Schmitt, and others had just believed that the National Socialist state was capable of setting its own world view and thus providing the state with its own foundations. In contrast, Böckenförde refers to traditions that enable legitimation, motivation, but also critical distance (BÖCKENFÖRDE, 1991, p. 112). But: where should such traditions, where should religion have their place? In civil society, in the public sphere, in parliament, in legislation? Laws passed in the name of Jesus Christ and not in the name of the people would be illegitimate in a plural society. But what does this mean for the relevance of religion? Obviously, this is a very complex issue, which I will deal with in three steps. I will deal with this topic using the example of the conflict between two world-class masterminds: the conflict between Charles Taylor, the Canadian philosopher who has never made a secret of his Catholic faith, even though he decidedly philosophises and does not pursue theology, and Jürgen Habermas, who describes himself as religiously unmusical in the recording of a famous dictum by Max Weber. He has become old, but not pious, Habermas replies to those above all Catholic theologians who meanwhile want to make Habermas a church father of late modernism. Taylor and Habermas: here they stand for two different localizations of religion in Late Modernism. They are discussed and related to each other by me. In a third part we will briefly expose our own perspective.

1 A consciousness of what is missing: Habermas and religion

For Habermas, religion has long since ceased to be an outdated traditional good to be tolerated as contingency management practice (Hermann Lübbe) only relative to the progressing secularization process, as he had unfolded it in his recourse to Max Weber in his theory of communicative action (HABERMAS, 2019ab; JOAS, 2017). Religion itself is seen as a resource for subjective and

social identity and meaning-founding processes in the confusing processes of modernity and is seen as relevant in itself, an assumption that ultimately makes him speak of a "post-secular society" in a way that is not entirely unmistakable (BECK, 2008, p. 70; MANEMANN; WACKER, 2008; JOAS, 2004, p. 124-127; BREUL, 2015, p. 114-117). For him religion is first and foremost "originally 'world view' or 'comprehensive doctrine' also in the sense that it claims the authority to structure a way of life as a whole" (HABERMAS, 2005b, p. 117). As such, it holds "a sense of what is missing and 'could be different'" (HABERMAS, 2008a, p. 84; REDER; SCHMIDT, 2008). This is precisely where it plays an important role at the level of the civil society (HABERMAS, 2001, p. 13).

Such a religion is certainly not a civil religion. Ultimately, this is rather a "commodification of religion in conformity with the market" (HOCHGESCHWENDER, 2007, p. 171), which dims the critical prophetic impulses from the hope for the Kingdom of God. Significant for his theory of religion, however, is now the way in which he does this. In a critical reformulation of Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde's famous thesis, Habermas, in the wake of a kantian republicanism, assumes that under the inescapable conditions of the secular state, no worldview can be effective as a norm for all any longer. The democratic state is able to generate its legitimacy procedurally from the presupposed unconditional claims to validity of rational argumentation, only detached from religious and metaphysical traditions within the framework of communicative reason. This leads to an "autonomous justification of the constitutional principles that is rationally acceptable for all citizens according to their claim" (HABERMAS, 2008a, p. 138-140). In view of the functional differentiation of modernity and the pluralization processes, the constitutional state must act ideologically neutrally and may therefore only be based on principles that can be justified ideologically neutrally and can be accepted by believers, non-believers, and those of other faiths. However, in Habermas eyes the increasingly "derailing modernization", which can "wear down" the democratic bond and

"emaciate" solidarity, refers to traditions outside procedural reason (HABERMAS, 2005b, p. 109). Already practical reason misses its "own destiny when it no longer has the strength to awaken and keep awake in profane minds an awareness of the worldwide wounded solidarity, an awareness of what is missing, of what cries out to heaven" (HABERMAS, 2008c, p. 30; HABERMAS, 2008d, p. 95). And in view of increasing crises, the democratic state in particular needs an internally guided, persuasion-based legitimation of its citizens that goes beyond mere pragmatic acceptance. Such traditions can make possible the political commitment to the community that is expected of citizens "in the role of democratic co-legislators" (HABERMAS, 2005b, p. 109).

In this respect, the state relies on pre-political sources in order not to cut itself off from "increasingly scarce resources of meaning, solidarity and justice" (HABERMAS, 2008d, p. 99), which are also capable of motivating supererogatory actions. With all reserves concerning theological statements, Habermas increasingly thereby acknowledges the undetachable dignity of religious tradition (REDER; SCHMIDT, 2008; HABERMAS, 2008b, p. 33-46). Their semantic potentials have not yet been exhausted (HABERMAS, 2001, p. 24).

For Habermas the presence of religion in public is socially and politically relevant precisely in its authenticity. "I too would like to preserve the authentic character of religious language in public, because I am convinced that there could very well be buried moral intuitions of a secular public that could be exposed by a moving religious speech. Listening to Martin Luther King Jr., it doesn't matter whether you are secular or not. You understand what he means" (HABERMAS; TAYLOR, 2012, p. 95; RENNER, 2017, p. 103-215). A secular state like a heterogeneous society urgently needs such sources of moral and meaningful inspiration. However, according to Habermas, the religions in a secular state must also accept "that the politically relevant content of their contributions must be translated into a generally accessible discourse independent of religious authorities before it can find its way into the agendas of

state decision-making bodies [...]. For decisions sanctioned by the state must be formulated and justified in a language equally accessible to all citizens" (HABERMAS, 2012, p. 63; BREUL, 2015, p. 138). Only through translation can religious language find its expression in political and state decisions, above all laws (HABERMAS, 2001, p. 29). For Habermas a "secularization that does not destroy" takes place, therefore in the mode of translation. Without translation religion in its always particular meaning is not understandable for everyone and therefore not universalizable.

Translation thus, as Bernhard Peters once formulated it, has a lock function (PETERS, 2007, p. 44-50). Nevertheless, it is significant which design Habermas gives to this obligation of translation in contrast to John Rawls' famous theory of liberalism. For Rawls it is important in this context that all citizens can contribute their respective worldviews as comprehensive doctrines. On the basis of reasons, citizens should respect each other in these different worldviews and thus find an overlapping consensus in controversial questions (RAWLS, 1993). Traditions are only legitimate at the level of the public insofar as they correspond to the "values of public reason", all of which assume that they can be accepted by everyone, both religious and non-religious citizens (RAWLS, 1993, p. 786). But this justifies a reservation, a condition, a proviso, which demands the translation of particular traditions into the secular reason accessible to all. While the public use of non-public reasons is subject to translation, the same does not apply to secular reason itself.

At this point, however, Habermas critically argues that there is an asymmetry here that is one-sidedly to the detriment of religious traditions and thus also counteracts the targeted integration of citizens in an equal and just society. In addition, even secular citizens could not know whether they were not cutting themselves off from religious traditions by privatizing their sense resources and buried intuitions in the process of marginalizing them. Therefore, a translation is also required of secular people, which is socially highly significant as much as it goes hand in hand with the critical

self-reflection of secular reason and its dialectic. Secular reason can only be appropriated in critical recourse (HABERMAS, 2005b, p. 133-138). Although Habermas, like Rawls, adheres to a neutrality of the state, he refuses to make it absolute in the sense of a secular worldview and imposes an obligation of translation on both religious and non-religious contemporaries. Thus, both religious and non-religious citizens, as democratic citizens in equal measure, are placed in a relationship ready to learn to take the other "also for cognitive reasons" seriously in a "complementary learning process" (HABERMAS, 2005b, p. 116).

However, Habermas' precondition is questionable. Can religious contents be adequately translated at all? (REDER, 2013, p. 110-116; RENN, 2017, p. 120-130). In what kind of reason, in what kind of language, in what kind of practice can the radicality of the message of the Kingdom of God be translated without weakening the semantic contents or authoritatively transforming the logic of other languages and rationalities? Taught by postcolonialism, contemporary cultural studies are sensitive to the power structures of every translation: translating always means representing something foreign, speaking for it. It can be an enrichment, an extension of one's own, can contribute to understanding, but can also become a moment of one-sided assimilation and power (RENN, 2002, p. 9; GRÜMME, 2021, p. 167-213; PIRNER, 2012; JOHN, 2017, p. 169-172). The "social turn of translation studies" draws attention to the contextual location of translation (NASSEHI, 2017, p. 198). But can meaning be grasped at all solely in linguistically articulated semantics, or does translation not require a participatory, experiential observation, because meaning is always rooted in a particular cultural practice? In contemporary cultural theory, translation is accordingly placed in a broader framework and understood as a "medium of cultural understanding" (RENN, 2002). One must immerse oneself in another culture, one must attain a "dense description" (Clifford Geertz) in an experiential inner perspective.

But the far more radical question is that of an appropriate interpretation of religion. Habermas'

theory relies one-sidedly on a functional concept of religion, of which he makes predominantly a functionalist use. The critical intrinsic value of religious traditions is dimmed. This goes hand in hand with the almost diastatic separation of faith and knowledge (GERHARDT, 2016, p. 17-75). For Habermas religion remains opaque, cognitively inaccessible. Philosophy can only revolve around the "opaque core of religious experience" as the basis of religion (HABERMAS, 2005b, p. 150). This remains as "mysteriously alien" to "discursive thinking" as the impenetrable core of aesthetic experiences (HABERMAS, 2005b, p. 149). But does Habermas thereby do justice to the rationality content of religion and faith itself? By excluding religion from the political procedures in principle, which from outside is considered impenetrable to reason, he relativizes the excessive force of religious traditions (REDER, 2013, p. 100-126; SCHMIDT; PITSCHMANN 2014).

This is where Charles Taylor comes in, arguing from a communitarian standpoint.

2 Reasonable Religion: Charles Taylor

Taylor's access to religion results from an Aristotelian oriented conception of reason, which is oriented towards meaningful visions of good life and wants to bring them into dialogue with each other in a heterogeneous society of late modernity. He profiles his position in strict contrast to those universalist conceptions of Habermas and Rawls, which he qualifies as liberal theories because of the dominance of a negative concept of freedom. He opposes the strong asymmetry between secular and religious citizens favored by Rawls, according to which "in a democracy characterized by religious and ideological diversity, one can for good reasons demand of all citizens to consult exclusively in terms of reason and to present religious convictions at the cloakroom of the public sphere" (TAYLOR, 2012, p. 75). In this one-sided favouring of secular language he recognizes the "tyrannical character" of secular reason (TAYLOR, 2011a, p. 320; 2012, p. 75).

Be it with Habermas, be it with Rawls: the argument is similar for Taylor in all liberal classifi-

cations of religion in public. Secular reason offers "a language that everyone speaks and in which everyone can be made understandable or persuaded. Religious languages, on the other hand, move outside this discourse because they bring into play heteronomous preconditions to which only believers can confess. So, we should agree on a language that everyone shares" (TAYLOR, 2012, p. 75). It is always assumed that religion is less rational than secular reason and therefore heteronomous. But this is problematic for two reasons. First, the argument is contradictory since it is based on a *petitio principii*. It presupposes what is to be said. Thus, it can only convince those who already share it. Either religious reason comes to similar insights as secular reason, but then it is superfluous. Or it is dangerous, so that it must be rejected all the more (TAYLOR, 2012, p. 76). On the other hand, however, the argument is based on a narrowed, one-dimensional understanding of reason. In the background stands exactly that "myth of the Enlightenment" (TAYLOR, 2012, p. 79), that Cartesianism, which is highly problematic due to the predominance of negative freedom and the abstractness of human existence of linguistically inter-subjective practices. Taylor considers that religion cannot participate on an equal footing with secular reason at the basis of social understanding, that it - in contrast to secular reason - is a priori met with suspicion that it is segregated from the other versions of good life. The achievements of orientation and justification of secular moral concepts like that of Kantianism, utilitarianism, Hegelianism or discourse ethics had so far not proved more plausibility and strength than a creation-theological argument. Would people have understood Martin L. King "better if he had quoted Kant", he asks? (TAYLOR, 2012, p. 87). Indeed, in Habermas's case, religious and secular reason remain separated for their own sake: for Habermas, secular reason "forms the only rationally acceptable basis for a normative regulation of conflicts of action in ideologically pluralistic societies" (HABERMAS, 2005a, p. 151).

Taylor, on the other hand, "sees in the claim of religious languages a human right against the

exclusivism of secularized uniformity" (RUDOLPH, 2011, p. 115). Philosophically, his conception of language and reason serves him as a starting point for this. Reason embedded in the executions of life and linguistic networks can justify the reasonableness of religion and at the same time the openness of secular reason for creativity, transcendence and faith. This "comprehensive understanding of reason" can show: Reason possesses "a creative component; it can and must generate new ways of grasping the reality that it seeks to understand [...]. One could also call this phenomenon a kind of faith" (TAYLOR, REPLIK 2011b, p. 856). Religious reason is thus capable of discourse, is meaningful on the level of rational debates and certainly also substantial in a normative sense, giving meaning as well as strong in orientation.

Thus, Taylor has prepared the epistemological and rational theoretical basis for the legitimacy of religion in public. But how does he contour it in view of the quite legitimate arguments he himself has put forward for state neutrality? In a secular state there must be areas in which language remains neutral. However, it does not already include the area of public deliberation (like Rawls) or parliamentary debates (like Habermas). Only the "official language of the state" can be defined as that neutral area, because it is impossible to see to what extent laws in the name of Buddha, Kant, Jesus or Karl Marx could claim plausibility under conditions of plurality (TAYLOR, 2012, p. 77). The prerequisite for this, however, was the further development of the traditional concept of laicity in the sense of a "pluralistic laicity" (MACLURE; TAYLOR, 2011, p. 146). This would include the development of an "ethics of dialogue" as "political minimal morality" or an "overarching consensus" that the citizens would have to learn. They must accept the authority of the shared principles that underlie their political institutions, even though they are committed to different views of the good. In a way, this is a deepening of the ideal of tolerance that has enabled the end of religious conflicts. This type of society demands of its citizens that they "abstract" from their moral and

philosophical differences, some of which are quite profound, in the name of their more fundamental interest in living together in a sufficiently stable and harmonious society, and that they openly discuss the foundations and direction of their political life (MACLURE, TAYLOR, 2011, p. 141). Beyond the marginalization of religion in relation to secular reason in public and in contrast to a cognitive-reductionist understanding of reason, only such a dialogicity willing to learn is capable of realizing equality, freedom and fraternity (TAYLOR, 2012, p. 85).

What can we conclude from Taylor? To bring particular traditions to bear in secular modernity in order to generate strength, orientation, motivation and meaning in the service of the whole and for the individual foundation of identity is certainly a central merit of Taylor's theory of religion. In contrast to Habermas, for Taylor all traditions are first of all capable of discourse in the dialogical struggle for the common good. With the equal participation of all traditions alongside secular reason, the problem of determining the relationship between universality and particularity becomes explosive. Does Taylor manage with his reason to generate those distinguishing criteria which are nevertheless necessary in religiously charged heterogeneous life worlds for the truth ability and discursivity of the respective traditions in public? How can the difference between religion and astrology be established and justified for outsiders in order to get to the heart of the matter? What is the difference between esotericism and faith? Although Habermas may have overly dimmed the concrete contexts in spite of his efforts to establish a basis for discursive reason in everyday life, Taylor's problem is the opposite. Although universalizable norms are dependent on life-worldly bonds, traditions and visions of the good in order to support them and motivate a commitment for them, they are not the only ones that are not yet in the focus of the discussion. But these particular visions of the good need a larger framework that can "at the same time transcend them and enable a differentiated practice of critique within and beyond them" (FORST, 2011, p.

18). In heterogeneous democracies, the idea of making certain concepts of good living binding for all amounts to a regress behind the processes of differentiation of modernity. Values and norms must be legitimized in their validity for all. In the field of ethics, Rainer Forst, a representative of Critical Theory, maintains that in plural contexts "in which no shared ethical convictions provide convincing answers", it requires norms "that can be (also) justified intersubjectively in other ways. This is where the question of justice begins" (FORST, 1994, p. 349). Taylor, however, lacks this status of normative distinctions. With it he ignores that even with philosophical adaptation particular traditions like "also theological statements remain obligatory to justify", as the Catholic fundamental theologian Markus Knapp notes (KNAPP, 2011, p. 678).

3 Religion in the public sphere: perspective considerations

This debate between Habermas and Taylor is highly relevant to the precarious definition of religion in public due to its multi-dimensionality. The tension between religion and the secular public is exactly the same here as we debated at the beginning using the example of the headscarf and the cross. Perhaps this can be summed up with the political theorists Michael Reder: Religions as a whole have public significance, not only their discursive part. But it is decided in deliberative procedures to what extent they should and can be effective for the public and of political influence (REDER, 2016, p. 254).

In this space of a discursive public sphere a public religion crystallises out (GABRIEL, 2008, p. 266-268; GRÜMME, 2009, p. 32-34). In it different worldviews, religions and politics enter into a discursive debate about fundamental orientations, values and practices. This public religion takes seriously the political-theoretical, cultural-scientific and historical analysis just alluded to, that in the strict sense the ideologically neutral constitutional state is in its decisions, its actions and its regulations "in fact never ideologically neutral", but is based on the "rivalry of the world views" (HOCHGESCHWENDER, 2007, p. 200; CASANOVA,

1994; TAYLOR, 2009). An agonistic orientation of the common good, as advocated by Hanna Arendt and, more recently, Chantal Mouffe, which produces laws and institutions that promote freedom, also permits religious expressions, but also leaves them to criticism if they threaten to become authoritarian. Christian faith therefore belongs in the public sphere. It itself urges to become public in a critical-transformational as well as liberating way. It can contribute to the fact that questions about sense, about justice, about the past suffering, about the truth and legitimacy of world views are not pushed out of the public eye (KÜHNLEIN, 2017, p. 200).

Without undermining the processes of modernization, it then certainly provides impulses for politics. For example, he could always sue for the "non-political of politics" against a universal mania for feasibility as well as against a pragmatic defeatism (HÖHN, 2007, p. 19), a thought that is not to be underestimated in the current debate about the political in politics (LACLAU; MOUFFE, 2012; MARCHART, 2010; MOUFFE, 2007, 2013). Faith could act in civil society, the motor of democracy, as a driving force for a politicization of the private sphere and for a renormalization of the public sphere, forcing society to deal critically and reflexively with its own normative foundations (KLINGEN, 2008, p. 178). For Jon Sobrino, "criticism of today's democracies and ways of humanizing them are related to the biblical-Jesuanian tradition" (SOBRINO, 2007, p. 448). Therefore, according to the political theologian Jürgen Manemann, "democratic society is well advised to pay attention to the potential for change contained in the biblical traditions. Morality does not arise [...] in equality, but by serving the poor, the orphans, and the widow. Central to the biblical traditions is the imperative of recognizing foreign suffering. Thus, the theory and practice of justice and equality in liberal society is repeatedly questioned anew in view of the concrete people in their infinite dignity [...]. The egalitarian attitude of the members of democratically constituted societies is completed by this 'individual becoming just'" (MANEMANN, 2008b, p. 86). This "a priori of suffering" can orient the political discourse in a

critical departure from a purely formal "a priori of understanding" (METZ, 1996, p. 46).

At the same time, however, it becomes apparent with the same sharpness that the messianic surplus is lost precisely when politics takes possession of messianism. Only when messianic expectation and *memoria passionis* come together is a "messianic politics" immune from self-absolutisation and at the same time religion from a new integralism (MANEMANN, 2008b, p. 85; 2008a, p. 116-118). Nevertheless, this can only happen according to the normative rules of discursive reason. The neutrality of the constitutional state lies only here, thus only on the procedural level (HOCHGESCHWENDER, 2007, p. 201). In this discourse then also the truth of faith is to be brought in and there discursively to examine. "Here it can, if necessary, show its argumentative persuasiveness and its performative power of change" (ARENS, 2007, p. 54). However, as Michael Walzer also emphasizes, going public in turn has civilizing effects on religion and believers, at least because they have to face critical discussions and their own religion-critical traditions (WALZER, 2017, p. 339).

In view of this, of course, at the end the concept of a reason standing in the background itself must be inquired. Here I would like to plead for a reason based on the theory of alterity. Does not every deliberative reason have to be irritated by strangeness and the courteous challenge of alterity? However, this also does not seem to be sufficiently given in Rainer Forst's Kantian social constructivism, shaped by Habermas' deliberative conception of reason, which I included in my considerations above. Aren't the concrete others overplayed in their specific context of life? Seyla Benhabib reminds us of a secret Platonism: "A fully transparent and justified basic structure reminds one of a Platonic utopia rather than critical theory's emphasis on the longing for the wholly other" (BENHABIB, 2015, p. 789). In relation to religion this is still dramatized: Can phenomena of the wisdom of indigenous peoples in their autochthonous foreignness, their rites and cults ultimately be dismissed as irrational and marginalized as resources of individual life relevant at best in the private sphere?

According to Pope Francis, don't the secular public like the Church need religious traditions also of indigenous peoples as inspiration, as irritation, as source for the "care of nature and for the weakest brothers and sisters?" (METTE, 2017, p. 49). And yet there is a need for reasoned, rationally identifiable distinctions to protect subjects and make justice possible.

In view of the validity of deliberative procedures, but no less in view of the recognizable limits of the Kantian-deliberative reason, the significance of a form of thinking based on the theory of alterity becomes blatantly visible. Firstly, it is particularly suited to bring up the inherent logic of religious convictions in the sphere of the public sphere and, secondly, to provide rational, universally criteria for differentiation and, at the same time, to secure what Benhabib called the "endangered public sphere" (BENHABIB, 1997). This does not solve the problem of the Muslim teacher who is not allowed to wear her headscarf as a religious symbol in class if her superior forbids it. But here there is at least a form of thinking that works towards further perspectives.

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Os textos deste artigo foram conferidos pela Poá Comunicação antes da publicação.