


## CHAPTER 98

### Study on the practical notions of tolerance

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#### ABSTRACT

The practice of tolerance is essential in any society, given that diversity is a strong characteristic of the human beings that compose it. Respect for people with their different beliefs, positions, and ways of being in the world is, without a doubt, a value to be cultivated both for the dignity that is proper to each human being and for the maintenance of harmonious coexistence among them, since, man is a social being.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The practice of tolerance is essential in any society, given that diversity is a strong characteristic of the human beings that compose it. Respect for people with their different beliefs, positions, and ways of being in the world is, without a doubt, a value to be cultivated both for the dignity that is proper to each human being and for the maintenance of harmonious coexistence among them, since, man is a social being.

The discussion about tolerance is not new. In sixteenth-century France, it was already present among those who argued that the provisional presence of Protestants should be allowed in the country so that it would be able to overcome the crisis it had been facing. (AMARAL, 2008 ). Authors such as John Locke, Voltaire, and John Stuart Mill, among others, also made their considerations on the subject based on the influence of the modern context in which they lived.

According to SANTOS (2013), in Modernity, there was a strong belief that reason would lead humanity to progress and the construction of a more fair and tolerant society, a belief that was frustrated by the numerous atrocities that occurred in the 20th century, such as the advent of the two World Wars, as well as the emergence of totalitarian regimes.

All this frustration, combined with other events that occurred in the period after the Second World War, such as the phenomenon of globalization, produced radical changes that led to the formation of the contemporary context in which we live, a context marked by phenomena such as pluralism and relativism (PARMEGGIANI, 2004; SCOPINHO, 2007) and by strong opposition to the modern ideal of reaching a universal knowledge capable of leading humanity to progress.

In contemporary society, the call for tolerance has become increasingly strong and frequent. It is not uncommon, nowadays, to see public demonstrations, debates in academic environments, and discussions on social media where the topic of tolerance is the main focus. However, claims or appeals for tolerance are often not accompanied by a clear notion of tolerance.

What, does it mean to tolerate? In addition to this not being a simple question to answer, the answer given to it has many implications for society as a whole, since the notion of tolerance that people or different societies adopt directly or indirectly influences how to occur relationships among those who have different beliefs, ways of life and ways of thinking.

Because of this, it is verified how much the notion of tolerance is dear to contemporary society, which makes the discussion of the theme opportune, in our days, as it has been in the past. Discussing tolerance contributes to the enrichment of its notion within society and makes it possible to reflect on how it may be possible to build a society in which there is respect for human beings in their most diverse ways of being in the world. With that in mind, this work proposes to discuss the notions and practices of tolerance in contemporary times using bibliographic research as a methodological procedure.

## **2 BRIEF HISTORY ABOUT TOLERANCE**

Etymologically, the term tolerance comes from the Latin *tolerantia*, a term derived from the word *tolero* which means to bear. (BENEDETTI, 2011)

According to Gondim (2011), tolerance can take on multiple meanings, such as a moral virtue or a political practice. The first meaning concerns an attitude of putting up with what is judged as liable to be reprimanded, while the second means a political commitment made so that different peoples, religions and cultures can coexist peacefully.

Both the concept and the notion of tolerance have a strong relationship with the characteristics of the time in which they were conceived, which is not difficult to understand, given that each period, in particular, reveals a predominant way or ways of understanding the reality and the relationships that are established in it.

### **2.1 16TH CENTURY FRANCE AND THE BIRTH OF TOLERANCE**

Conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in 16th century France grew to a state of civil war. In this context, several parties were formed in the country, some composed by conservative Catholics, others by moderate Catholics and still others, composed by both Catholics and Protestants, as was the case of the politiques party. These parties published in the form of treaties, pamphlets, and other resources, discussions on various themes that involved religious issues, among them, the temporary coexistence of two religions in the country so that it could overcome the crisis it had been facing. This is how the emergence of tolerance occurred, as stated by Amaral (2008).

The principle of civil tolerance, particularly defended by the politiques group, was of fundamental importance for the modern State, which applied it as a political instrument to restore peace and order in the kingdom. It is on this basis that Amaral (2008) argues that the modern State was responsible for producing tolerance by using it as an instrument to move away from religion and promote the common good. In the same line of thought, John Locke (1632-1704), one of the forerunners of the Enlightenment, also argued that the separation of Church and State was indispensable for tolerance to be possible.

## 2.2 JOHN LOCKE – LETTER ON TOLERANCE

The Protestant Reformation, which began in the 16th century, questioned some dogmas of the Catholic Church, moving it away from its position of dominant religion before the State. In England, this reform had particular characteristics: it was promoted through the Act of Supremacy in 1534 by King Henry VIII. According to this document, the Head of Anglican Religion became the Head of State and all subjects were to follow the king's religion under penalty of treason. Thus began the religious conflicts in England. (GONDIM, 2011).

In his Letter, Locke stated that the reason for the wars of religion that had been going on in the Christian world was not diversity, but the lack of tolerance towards people who professed different beliefs. For the author, mutual tolerance among Christians was the sign of the true church.

Defending freedom of choice, Locke was opposed to opinions that held that the propagation of religion should be done by force of arms. According to the author, it was the role of the Church to be concerned with the salvation of souls, but coercion was the task of the civil magistrate for the preservation of civil goods such as liberty, life and possessions. In this way, Locke defends the distinction of roles and non-interference between Church and State:

I affirm, however, that no matter the source from which its authority springs, being, however, ecclesiastical, it must be confined to the limits of the Church, being in no way able to encompass civil affairs, because the Church itself is totally separated and diversified from the community. and civil affairs. Boundaries from part to part are fixed and immutable. (LOCKE, 1973, p. 16).

According to Locke, the magistrate could even use arguments to convince people of the truth and lead them to salvation, however, this could also be done by anyone else. He defended the human right to exhort, correct and argue through reason about the truth or falsity of a certain opinion, but he insisted on making it clear that arguing and coercing are two different things. According to him, the civil magistrate should not prescribe articles of faith because, if he did not punish violations of a religious nature, his laws would lose their force and, even if they were applied, they would be of no use, since “enlightenment in no way can come from bodily suffering”. (LOCKE, 1973, p. 12).

Having distinguished between the roles of the Church and the civil magistrate, Locke (1973) proposed the duty of each in relation to tolerance. For him, the Church was not obliged to continue welcoming those people who did not obey its laws, however, no excommunicated person should have their

goods confiscated or suffer any kind of physical damage. According to the author, when the magistrate granted the Church the power of the sword, charity and peace were abandoned, however, when he took that power away, he encouraged mutual tolerance.

With regard to the role of the magistrate, he should not tolerate “[...] any doctrines incompatible with human society and contrary to good customs that are necessary for the preservation of society”. (LOCKE, 1973, p. 23). Nor should it forbid from being carried out, in the church, what was legally permitted in the community. Locke also defended the argument that, if the magistrate had the permission granted by law to intervene in religious matters by means of force, this would have no limits, for he would presume that he had the “[...] power to compel everything to conform to the rule of truth invented by him.” (LOCKE, 1973, p. 23).

As you can see, Locke was a strong advocate of the separation of church and state and individual liberty. For him, everyone had the right to have his own belief, and tolerance towards those who had different beliefs was truly rational behavior and that was in accordance with what was preached in the Gospel. It must be remembered, however, that, despite having been an advocate of individual liberty, Locke (1973, p. 29) shows no tolerance for atheists. In the author's words: "Those who deny the existence of God should by no means be tolerated." At this point, the author demonstrates a certain inconsistency in his propositions.

## 2.5 THE (IN)TOLERANCE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The 20th century can be pointed out as the one in which intolerance caused the most destruction, thus characterizing it as a deeply painful mark in the history of humanity.

The First World War (1914-1918) led to countless deaths, in addition to leaving millions of them refugees, as stated by Burigana (2014).

The inter-war period (1918-1939) brought the rise of totalitarian regimes which, in turn, were responsible for real massacres in different countries. According to Carson (2013) it is likely that fifty million people died in China during the government of Mao Tse-Tung and approximately twenty million Ukrainians during the Stalin regime.

During the Second World War, Nazism in Germany led by Adolf Hitler produced the massacre of millions of Jews, not to mention gypsies and homosexuals who were also targets of Nazi hatred. (ARENDR, 1989).

After all these atrocities committed in the period between the first war and the end of the second, the United Nations (UN), created in 1945, proclaimed on December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a document whose based on human dignity and stressed equal rights and freedom of belief and expression, committing to the practice of tolerance. (BRAZIL, 2008).

This document served as the basis for the elaboration of another reference on the subject, the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, published by UNESCO in 1995. In this document, tolerance was

presented as a virtue that promotes peace and combats war, and which rejects dogmatism and absolutism. According to this Declaration, tolerance is not only the recognition of the freedom rights of individuals, but also “the acceptance and appreciation of the richness and diversity of the cultures of our world”. (UNESCO, 1995, p. 11). Your practice means that:

[...] every person has the free choice of their convictions and accepts that the other enjoys the same freedom. It means accepting the fact that human beings, who are naturally characterized by the diversity of their physical appearance, their situation, their their way of expressing themselves, their behavior and their values, they have the right to live in peace and to be who they are. It also means that no one should impose their convictions on others. (UNESCO, 1995, p. 12).

From these two documents it is possible to say that, in the 20th century, the notion of tolerance, in the first place, intended to oppose all types of atrocities committed from the First World War to the end of the Second, and in addition to highlighting the human dignity and the freedom of individuals to express their most diverse beliefs and ways of being, also emphasized the acceptance and appreciation of differences.

### **3 TOLERANCE: CONTEMPORARY NOTIONS**

To understand how tolerance is defined, thought and discussed today, it is necessary to understand the characteristics of the context and contemporary society which, in turn, have a strong relationship with the profound changes that have taken place since the last century. According to Gatti (2005), there is no consensus on how to name the current phase of history in which a new society is produced. Among those who are concerned with understanding the period in which we are living, there are those who agree in calling it Postmodernity, although, for others, the term is not very representative, since it suggests a rupture with Modernity, which has not yet definitely happened, as is the case with Zigmunt Bauman.

Despite these controversies about how to name the current period of history, it is possible to understand it from the study of its characteristics, as well as the context in which it was produced.

With the countless atrocities committed during the totalitarian regimes and the two great wars of the 20th century, the modern dream that human reason would lead humanity to progress and the construction of a more tolerant society was frustrated. After the end of World War II, the world, divided between two rival systems represented by two great powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, still lived under constant tension and fear that a third war would happen.

Azevedo (1993) apud Gatti (2005, p. 599), in his synthesis about the characteristics of Postmodernity, points out that, in its emergence, it was related to a “historical and cultural invalidation of the great analyzes and their resulting reports of emancipation”. The events that took place in the 20th century disqualified the promise of salvation for humanity, according to the author. In this way, “[...] there is great suspicion regarding the ideals of Modernity, due to the failure of the created utopias – whether as

scientific explanations of the real, or as saving propositions – and not carried out in the daily life of modern culture and societies” . (GATTI, 2005, p. 600).

Another characteristic of the postmodern period, according to Azevedo (1993, p. 31) apud Gatti (2005, p. 600), is that, in it, the great epistemological models, which intended to achieve truth, objectivity and universality, they were deconstructed through “indeterminacy, discontinuity, theoretical and ethical pluralism, the proliferation of models and projects”.

Bauman (2001) uses the term Liquid Modernity to refer to the current period of history, because, in his point of view, the term postmodernity only talks about what current society is not, that is, that it is not it's modern, yet it doesn't say anything about what it actually is. For Bauman, what actually exists are two Modernities, which he calls Solid Modernity and Liquid Modernity.

According to the author, Modernity is characterized by the dissolution of solids or structures present in society. It is this argument that he uses to defend the idea that we are still living in Modernity. The difference between the two Modernities, solid and liquid, would then be the fact that, in Solid Modernity, there was indeed an intention to dissolve old structures, but with the intention of “clearing the area for new and improved solids, to replace the inherited set of deficient and defective solids by another set, improved and preferably perfect, and therefore no longer alterable”. (BAUMAN, 2001, p. 9).

With regard to Liquid Modernity, the author uses the metaphor of liquidity to explain why he calls the current phase that way and, thus, characterize and differentiate it from Solid Modernity. Just as fluidity is characteristic of liquids, the fact that they move and change very easily and quickly, in the same way, institutions and the relationships between them and individuals or between them, in today's society, no longer have a solid and durable structure. “The time has come for the liquefaction of patterns of dependence and interaction. They are now malleable to a point that past generations have not experienced [...] but, like all fluids, they do not hold the same shape for long.” (BAUMAN, 2001, p. 14).

Another change also pointed out by Bauman (2001, p. 38) that characterizes the liquid society is the “deregulation and privatization of modernizing tasks and duties”. This means that the responsibility for social improvement previously attributed to reason, understood as the collective property of humanity, has changed its place, becoming related to the individual's self-affirmation. This is reflected in the change in the ethical/political discourse that turns “the focus of that discourse on the right of individuals to remain different and to freely choose their own models of happiness and an adequate way of life”. (BAUMAN, 2001, p. 38).

## **5 DISCUSSION**

In general, the different conceptions of tolerance agree that it would be the acceptance and recognition that others have the right to adopt beliefs, opinions, worldviews and ways of life different from those we ourselves adopt or believe to be the most correct. However, despite such an understanding, it is

still possible to raise some questions, which require a more in-depth discussion on the subject. Among them, the question about the limits of tolerance and where they should be established stands out.

Forst (2009) suggests that these limits should be placed at the point where intolerance begins, but, given this statement, it is possible to question what, in fact, intolerance would be. This is a very relevant issue for the discussion proposed in this work, since it is possible that major problems are generated by the lack of a clear understanding of intolerant actions and behaviors, and even when, due to this lack of clarity, people start to consider all those who disagree with their opinions as intolerant.

Faced with the argument that we cannot tolerate the intolerable or the intolerant, it is necessary to be very careful not to end up labeling individuals as intolerant based on mistaken assumptions. That is why the notion of tolerance, as well as a more in-depth reflection on the subject, is so fundamental for today's society, which has diversity as one of its main characteristics.

When we define tolerance from a relativistic perspective, such as that presented by Maliska and Wolochn (2013), which presupposes the abandonment of absolute truths, it is believed that the most likely thing is that, instead of contributing to the construction of a more tolerant society, we end up having the undesired opposite result, since there are great chances of people being labeled as intolerant for not being able to make this relativization of life and values.

Although the authors present the argument that in the religious context faith does not need to be relativized, but that it is necessary to understand that the faith of a certain person is as absolute as that of another, this is still a relativistic conception. What happens, in practice, is that most people do not consider the beliefs of others as true as their own, although some manage to make this relativization.

It is believed that people are not necessarily intolerant when they do not consider the beliefs and opinions they differ from as true as their own. Intolerance is more likely to be in the attitude of trying to impose your beliefs and opinions on others. Trying to reach the truth or believe in its existence does not necessarily result in intolerance.

The search for tolerance as a supreme value from the relativization of life and values, in turn, can end up producing intolerance. On this, theologian DA Carson had already pointed out in his book "The Intolerance of Tolerance", published in 2013, where he discusses how the contemporary notion of tolerance, based on a relativist perspective, ends up, paradoxically, producing more intolerance, since it labels all those who cannot give up certain values as intolerant.

This is a characteristic of the contemporary context in which we live, where there is a way of thinking, predominantly linked to a pluralistic and relativistic rationality and a tendency to discredit absolute values, which contributes to the contradictions present in the claims for tolerance. are increasingly stronger.

In this way, Paul Ricoeur's view presented by Xavier (2017) seems to be more coherent in admitting the difficulty in relationships between people with different opinions and characterizing as intolerance the attempt to impose a certain worldview or point of view on others and, as tolerant, that

behavior of respect for the person with whom we disagree, renouncing the desire to impose our beliefs and opinions on him.

From this notion, it is possible to verify that disagreement is present when talking about tolerance, which in a relativistic view seems to be absent, because, when considering the belief and way of life of the other as true as mine, the degree of disagreement is almost nil. For there to be disagreement, it is necessary to perceive a significantly negative aspect in the belief and view of the other. Thus, we agree with Williams (2009), for whom the practice of tolerance is possible in contexts where people consider opinions contrary to their own to be wrong, but admit that those with whom they disagree have the right to think and live as they wish.

It is not necessary to say that all worldviews are equally true to be tolerant, but it is necessary, as Paul Ricoeur says, to renounce the desire to impose on others the worldview taken as true. And that's not the same thing as trying to convince people that your point of view might be wrong and ours might be right. It is possible, yes, to argue with the intention of convincing without going beyond the limits of tolerance. Just as Locke was keen to make clear in his "Letter on Tolerance", it is also emphasized here that arguing is different from coercing and that people have the right to dialogue and try to convince one another about certain ideas, beliefs and ways. to see the world, but that it is everyone's duty to accept that the right to disagree is legitimate and that no one should be forced to adopt an opinion or belief with which they disagree.

Following a similar line of reasoning, Quintás (2018) makes a very interesting comment. According to him:

Anyone who gets excited about defending a conviction is criticized for trying to impose it on others in an intolerant way. Is this enthusiastic and reasoned defense of an idea really an attempt at imposition? Of course not. To be excited by a conviction means that one is enriched by it and wants to keep it as a source of fulfillment and happiness. Defending it does not mean imposing it, but wanting to live it and share it with other people. This desire is not coercive at all. It actually has a participatory character. (QUINTÁS, 2018, p. 24).

For the author, a person is tolerant not when he gives up enthusiastically defending his convictions and disagreeing with the opinion of others, but when he is able to hear divergent opinions even though he continues to think that his convictions are closer to the truth than the one he believes. was presented to him. "Anyone who gets excited and tenaciously defends something valuable is undoubtedly willing to change his mind if someone convinces him, based on reasons, that he is wrong." (QUINTÁS, 2018, p. 24).

Francisco Razzo, in his book "The Totalitarian Imagination", published in 2016, in which he discusses the dangers of politics as hope, brings a very interesting reflection on how human beings deal with their claims to truth. According to the author, the experience of a feeling of unshakable conviction often leads us to go beyond the scope of personal experience to "throw ourselves firmly into an expectation of a totalizing character and of excluding everything that hinders the achievement of our mental project in the world". (RAZZO, 2016, p. 90). Also according to the author, this form of dogmatism is not characteristic



of a specific ideology, but of the human being itself. Our ability to construct images of a perfect world can lead us to force others to adapt to such worldviews. This is what he calls the totalitarian imagination.

The tendency of a totalitarian mind is to try to eliminate everything that stands in the way of its project of a perfect world. In this way, it excludes and demotes even to a non-human category those who are seen as barriers or hindrances to reaching the truth. (RAZZO, 2016). It is from this notion that we understand that it is not the belief in the truth that produces intolerance, but what is done with this claim to truth and how this claim affects relationships between people.

The thesis defended by Razzo (2016, p. 116) is that “[...] the totalitarian imagination [...] takes place through the consecration of the formula: “it is not enough to be true for me, it must be true for everyone”. ”“. This is something that can happen even when someone adopts a relativistic worldview and tries to impose that perspective on others. It is common to defend the argument that a relativistic worldview is the one that most contributes to the construction of a tolerant society, however, when this perspective is imposed on others under threat of being labeled as intolerant to those who disagree with it, the product of this seems to be, in fact, intolerance.

Within this discussion, it is also opportune to emphasize that accepting the existence of differences without seeking to end them does not imply saying that all differences should be tolerated. Like Machado (s/d), it is stated that it is necessary to recognize that, within this great diversity that characterizes human existence, there is a set of values and rights that must be preserved, as well as actions that, in no way, can be accepted, such as rape, pedophilia and murder, for example. However, it is also necessary to recognize together with the author that it is not an easy task to establish this limit between what can or cannot be tolerated.

The political positions in Brazil today are a clear illustration of how the search for tolerance can end up resulting in the intolerance that is so much desired to be eliminated. It doesn't take a very deep investigation on the internet to come to the conclusion that the struggle for tolerance has revealed that people, however well-intentioned they are, have become what they most criticize. It is the paradox of intolerant tolerance pointed out by Carson (2013). In the name of tolerance, people have reduced each other to mere obstacles to the conquest of the long-awaited tolerant society.

In this attempt to make a perfect world project work where intolerance is non-existent, the subject who defends a discordant position is seen as a threat, sometimes seen as the very incarnation of evil that needs to be fought at all costs. In this way, the space for dialogue is almost non-existent and interactions between the parties, most of the time, result in exchanges of offenses. Thus, these interactions by no means represent an authentic discussion, in which, according to Quintás (2018), there is space for the interlocutor to present the arguments that support his opinion. What exists, in fact, are interactions in which no one shows any willingness to listen to what the other side can present as valid, which, according to the author, can quickly turn into fanaticism.

This is a context where the use of the argument that we cannot tolerate the intolerable is quite common. And using the reflection brought by Razzo (2016) that the totalitarian mind seeks to exclude those who hinder the realization of a perfect world, in a context in which tolerance is seen as a supreme value, one of the means of excluding those with whom one disagrees. and which, therefore, are seen as barriers to the project of a tolerant society, is precisely the use of the argument that the intolerable cannot be tolerated. By labeling those who disagree with my opinion as intolerant, I tarnish their image in society so that they don't have the space to express themselves.

Thus, opposing sides seek to exclude each other by accusing each other of being intolerant and rejecting dialogue with each other on the grounds that they cannot tolerate the intolerable. In this attempt to put an end to all threats to the construction of a plural society, which values the rights of citizens while preserving the characteristic diversity of the human being, it is possible to perceive the opposite result, that is, a society in which individuals seek to exclude those of who disagree and where there is only dialogue between those who share the same opinions.

Another example in which this contradiction is present is what happens in the case of the defense of minority rights. It is worth mentioning that the objective here is not to make generalizations and to frame all those who fight for the rights of minorities in this example, nor to try to delegitimize the rights of these people, but only to highlight that this is something that already exists in reality and use the case as an illustration for the proposed discussion. According to Razzo (2016, p. 108), currently, “[...] the radical discourse in defense of “minorities” has become one of the emblematic paradigms of a mentality with a strong totalitarian tendency”. The author states that these groups organize themselves from an agenda of struggles for rights seeking social acceptance, but, in this struggle, they claim the radical transformation of society. In this context, those who are not in favor of this transformation without necessarily being against the guarantee of the rights of those who belong to these groups are, once again, labeled intolerant without having the proper opportunity to present their point of view.

In March 2018, a dissertation entitled “The Basic Human Good of Marriage in the Neoclassical Theory of Natural Law: Practical Reason, Common Good and Law” developed by Dienny Riker, under the guidance of Prof. . Dr. Victor Sales Pinheiro, caused revolts on social media by groups who understood that the work fostered prejudice and violence against the LGBT community.

The dissertation addressed the marriage perspective defended by John Finnis, an Australian philosopher and jurist considered one of the main representatives of natural law in contemporary times. Initially, the work was presented as a research proposal entitled “Marriage: Its Marital Nature and Relevance to the Common Good” for admission to the PPGD. After the student had fulfilled all the criteria established by the PPGD-UFPA regiment, the dissertation was delivered and its defense scheduled for April 4, 2018, which was later postponed due to the repercussion it caused. ( ANAJURE, 2018 ).

Upon becoming aware of the existence of the work and its content, some groups declared to be committed to the struggle for the rights of the LGBT community began a series of demonstrations on social

networks and at UFPA itself, characterizing the research as non-scientific and of a religious nature, as well as contrary to human rights. ( ANAJURE, 2018 )

According to an article published on the “G1 Pará” news portal, the groups that were protesting against the dissertation did not intend to prevent the work from being defended, but only to exercise their right to take a stand against it.

It is not the purpose of this work to investigate in depth the theory on which the research developed by the student is based, as well as those who spoke out against the work did not do so either. However, according to the Doctor in Philosophy and General Theory of Law from USP, Pablo Antonio Lago (2018), who defends the union between people of the same sex, the work developed by the student cannot be considered non-scientific and based on religious doctrines. In an article published by the newspaper “Gazeta do Povo”, he states that the theory developed by Finnis, an author with whom he himself disagrees, is not based on religious or metaphysical explanations. Therefore, it would be a mistake to disqualify the research developed using these arguments.

Although the protesters against the dissertation stated that they had no intention of preventing the defense, the fact is that they questioned the approval of the research by the PPGD-UFPA and, as Pablo Antonio Lago pointed out, without having read the work and presented criticisms of the arguments. that the author presented in the same, from which it appears that, for them, a public educational institution that values human rights should not offer space for the production of research that defends a position against marriage between people of the same sex.

Thus, it is understood that the case is a clear example of intolerance within the academic environment. From the arguments raised by the protesters, it is possible to conclude that, in their view, only those who agree with same-sex marriage can be considered a defender of human rights and that, therefore, there should be no space for dialogue. in the academy for those who defend a contrary position. Ultimately, this is an attempt to impose a point of view on others, which, as discussed earlier, is what characterizes intolerant behavior.

And, once again, the argument behind all these protests is that the intolerable should not be tolerated, which, in the case presented, would be the defense of a position contrary to the same-sex marriage. So, again, in the name of tolerance, we try to exclude those with whom we disagree, depriving them of expressing their views in an environment where dialogue should be valued.

A similar case to this occurred in November 2017, when the American philosopher Judith Butler was in Brazil. Butler is one of the main references within the discussions on gender identity, but on the occasion, he was here to participate in the event “Os fins da Democracia” held by Sesc Pompeia. On November 7, 2017, the date on which the event took place, protesters for and against the philosopher gathered to protest in front of the building where it would be held. Before that, an online petition had already been signed by about 320,000 people who took a stand against the coming of the philosopher. ( BETIM, 2017 ).

As much as they did not agree with the theory defended by Butler and had the right to manifest themselves publicly against it, the fact is that when they tried to cancel the event in which the philosopher would participate, in addition to claiming that Butler left Brazil and of the clear demonstrations of hatred during the protests, these groups were representatives of intolerance by seeking to exclude and silence instead of dialoguing and even seriously and coherently refuting the points of view with which they disagree.

## 6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present study made it possible to discuss the notion and practice of tolerance in contemporary times. At first, a brief historical presentation was made of how tolerance was discussed over time and later, a presentation of the characteristics of the current period of history was made in order to better understand how tolerance is currently understood.

In the modern period, this notion was closely linked to religious issues, which is not difficult to understand considering that this was a period marked by conflicts of this nature. In addition, discussions on the subject were based on the modern ideal that reason and science would lead humanity to progress and the construction of a more tolerant society, in which individual freedom was respected, an ideal that ended up being frustrated after the events of the 20th century, specifically, the atrocities committed between the beginning of the First World War and the end of the Second. This, together with other factors, ended up resulting in the production of a new context in which a pluralist and relativist way of thinking prevails and which is opposed to the modern ideal of reaching universal knowledge.

The study showed that there is a certain understanding that tolerance is the recognition that others, like me, have the right to have their own beliefs, opinions and ways of life, as well as to express them. Despite this understanding, it is verified, from an analysis of reality, that it is necessary to be very careful when establishing limits for tolerance, especially in view of the suggestion that these limits should be placed where intolerance begins and the argument that the intolerable should not be tolerated, since great problems can be generated when people adopt a shallow notion of tolerance and, based on mistaken assumptions, begin to consider intolerant all those who disagree with their opinions, beliefs and ways of life.

From the analysis of the contemporary context, specifically the Brazilian one, it is possible to find, as seen in the examples presented, different cases in which the search for tolerance, supported by a little-depth notion of it, has contributed to the perpetuation of intolerant practices.

In view of this, a notion of tolerance is defended here, in which the difference is recognized without necessarily trying to eliminate it, although it is necessary that between these differences there is a relevant level of disagreement. Thus, tolerating would be the action of those who recognize the other's right to have beliefs, opinions and ways of life different from their own, even though they see them as a relevantly negative aspect.

In view of everything that has been presented in this work, it is possible to perceive that the problem of lack of tolerance is far from being overcome and, from this, the extreme importance of discussions on this topic today is reaffirmed. It deserves special attention due to the numerous contradictions it presents and the problems that can result from them, among them, the very perpetuation of intolerance in society. Thus, when discussing tolerance, it is possible to identify such contradictions and, in this way, contribute to the construction of a society in which there is space for dialogue and for the expression of differences.

Finally, it reinforces the importance of academic research that proposes to study the topic discussed here, expose its problems and contradictions and the social impacts that they can generate, in addition to seeking proposals to overcome them. The study developed here was limited to discussing the subject through bibliographic research, however it is believed that field research can bring even more enriching contributions to discussions on tolerance. In view of this, an incentive for the development of such studies is left here.

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