

# TRUST AND TOLERANCE IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*WE LIVE IN A GLOBAL ERA (ALBROW, 1996), WHICH PERMANENTLY EXPOSES US TO THE CHALLENGES OF DIVERSITY (ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL). WE CAN SEE ITS CONSEQUENCES ON A POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LEVEL. AMONG THE DESIRABLE IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALISATION, IMPACTING BOTH SOCIALLY AND INDIVIDUALLY, AS EMPHASIZED BY THEORETICIANS INTERESTED IN THIS SUBJECT COULD BE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE TOLERANT SOCIETY (JONES, 2011: 297). THROUGH THIS PAPER, WE AIM TO PRESENT THE RESULTS OF OUR ANALYSIS CONCERNING THE LEVEL OF SOCIAL TOLERANCE CORRELATED WITH THE LEVEL OF INTERPERSONAL TRUST, PLACING OUR RESEARCH IN AN INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT. IN OUR APPROACH, WE FOCUSED ON TWO COMMUNITIES IN THE NORTHEAST OF ROMANIA, WHICH ARE RELEVANT TO THEIR INTER-ETHNIC AND INTER-RELIGIOUS PROFILE: CACICA (A COMMUNITY WITH CURRENT RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY) AND IACOBENI (A COMMUNITY WITH A HISTORY IN RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY) TRYING TO SHOW BY COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE VALUES ARE PRESENT IN INTERCULTURAL SPACE AND THE LEVEL AT WHICH THEY ARE EXPRESSED BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF THEIR OWN GROUP.*

**KEYWORDS:** *TRUST; TOLERANCE; RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY; INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE; GLOBALIZATION.*

## **1. Introduction**

There are many researches and debates on the impact of globalization (Rother & Medrano, 2006; Berggren & Nilsson, 2015), modernization (Inglehart, 1997) and institutions (Gundelach, 1994) on social values, but placed at macro-social level. But there are voices that supports the idea that what is happening at the micro-level, connected to institutionalized social networks such as organizations, communities and the interactions between them, provide valuable information for the analysis of social values (Arts, 2011:29). The research we propose is part of this micro-social framework, trying to highlight the aspects identified at this level in order to explain the macro-social elements.

## **2. Theoretical background**

### *2.1. Social tolerance*

A first clarification of the concept of tolerance involves distancing it from other notions with which it is associated. Social tolerance appears to be different from indifference or

unconditional positive attitude (Dijker & Koomen, 2007:11). Thus, tolerance is not like indifference towards the behaviour and beliefs of others, although in practice it seems to be so, a certain degree of interest from the tolerant person is necessary. At the same time tolerance is different from positive attitude toward individuals with some deviant predispositions, a general reticence of cataloguing people and regard them as different (Dijker & Koomen, 2007: 11). Instead, it is associated with power, it is absurd to consider that a person tolerates a leader or that a prisoner tolerates a prison guard (Del Águila, 2005: 265), but also the disagreement towards the views or behaviours of categories of individuals, in the absence of a critical behaviour, tolerance would no longer be necessary (Seligman, 2011: 350). The mere presence of disagreement towards someone without the possibility of expressing power does not mean tolerance, which is why the aversion of a minority to the behaviour of the majority is not a matter of tolerance (Galeotti, 2002: 89).

In this context, we can consider same as Horton, tolerance as representing in fact "the refusal, when one has the power to do so, to prohibit or seriously interfere with conduct that one finds objectionable" (1996: 34). But tolerance implies more than restraint in the face of other people's unwanted behaviours, and this is a value or associated with valuable attributes of human society, such as peace, social harmony and economic development (Walzer in Dijker, 2013:1). Although there are authors who claim that being in front of something you disapprove of, being the adept of the moto "live and let live" even when the other one shocks, annoys, scares or disgusts, from this perspective tolerance is a controversial value (McKinnon, 2006:3).

Tolerance, as a model of social interaction based on the equivalence of human rights assertions and the contextual relativity of values (Sandu, 2003: 24), also implies a negative side, "implies a power ratio of subordination between the one who tolerates and the tolerated, which can generate conflicts, that were delayed for a while" (Frunză, 2015: 361).

#### *Forms of tolerance*

We will stop on three forms of tolerance that Geir Afdal (2010: 611-613) describes as summing up the essential aspects of tolerance:

- Tolerance as submission is the minimal type of tolerance and implies enduring, bearing something you think is wrong;
- Tolerance as a lack of prejudice implies the acceptance of differences, of situations and of new people;
- Tolerance as an opening implies involvement, an attempt to understand and learn something about the other.

Tolerance involves the awareness of difference, but "to tolerate means to accept the man, but not his religion, beliefs and behaviour" (Gavriliuță, 2013: 213). However, according to Seligman living together with a person that is different constitutes a test of confidence and a degree of cognitive dissonance, which often leads us to rethink the comforting aspects of trust, for example, affirming either the fundamentally identical character of the other, or suspecting his actions (2011: 350), especially if we see the individual as a result of his socializing experiences (Savu în Morariu, 2007:123). Consequently, tolerance involves a minimum level of confidence (Dees, 2004: 33) without which its existence would be difficult in any form.

#### *2.2. Social trust*

Georg Simmel wrote about trust as "one of the most important synthetic forces within society" (1950: 318). He suggests that this value implies "an expectation based on information intermediate between knowledge and ignorance, and that this information helps to stimulate a faith of man in man that overcomes ignorance" (Frederiksen, 2012: 736). He also supports the role that trust has in maintaining social relations, without this society would disintegrate (Simmel 2011: 191).

As noted colloquially, trust can be defined in various terms that refer to:

- Benefits involved: social order, cooperation, political cohesion, reliability;
- The provisions of those invested with confidence: affective, moral, pragmatic;
- The nature of the relationship between the confidant and the trustworthy: dependent, contractual, mutual, etc. (Barbalet, 2009: 368).

As for the variety of trust as a typology, *moral trust* is emerging as a value that implies a positive vision on the world and the ability to have a control on it, and the *strategic trust* that indicates our expectations for the behaviour of others (Uslaner, 2008). Beyond the vision of a "multidimensional phenomenon" (Rădoi & Lupu, 2014: 61) the differences are obvious: "the grammar of strategic confidence is 'A trusts B to do X'", "the etymology of moralistic trust is simple 'A trusts'" (Uslaner, 2008).

*Generalized trust* stands distinctive towards the trust in personal relationships. The latter, named *private or personalized trust*, is a result of numerous interactions with people in proximity, which may be a family, a community or an association (Stolle, 2001). While generalized trust is oriented towards "general social identities associated with the symbolic boundaries of in- and out-groups" or does not refer to any aspect, private trust always involves a distinct person or group (Frederiksen, 2012). Generalized trust, which is founded on moral but distinctive trust, implies a certain degree of conviction that people take part to a moral collectivity (Uslaner, 2008).

In the perspective of Cook and Gerbasi (2009), cognitive trust is considered to be a specific form of trust which implies having a perspective on the ability of others to fulfil their commitments based on previous experiences. The same authors state the following dimensions of trust:

- Competence and credibility: to be trusted to carry out a specific task;
- Integrity, commitment not to harm, at least as a form of respect.

These dimensions, we believe, aim both the professional confidence, the trust in abstract systems in the sense of Giddens (1990: 83) and the institutional trust (close to generalized trust). The latter implies the appreciation that the intentions of an authority are benevolent, that it is motivated to act in a way that considers the welfare of the population in general. Trust in institutions, in group authority, requires those invested with authority to be mindful of the needs, interests and opinions of those who invest them with confidence (Tyler, 2001: 286).

There are two theoretical perspectives that explain the sources of trust in institutions:

- According to cultural theories institutional confidence as an extension of interpersonal trust is more linked to socialization than to performance;
- Institutional theories say that trust in institutions is the result of their current performance (Telegdy, 2013).

The level of trust both institutional and interpersonal is related to risk, uncertainty, vulnerability, as Cook and Heimer argue. It is "less likely to trust someone when the uncertainty

is high, especially when I am vulnerable" (Cook & Gerbasi, 2009: 219). But Giddens reminds of active trust as specific to non-traditional culture, risk society (1994). By contrast, some authors associates to modern society fundamental changes in how to handle trust issues: cutting down uncertainty, cutting down vulnerability (Heimer, 2001:64), but also the intensification of social interactions (Medeleanu, 2013:45).

Of late years, many empirical analyses focus on social trust as part of social capital, which implies, according to Putnam "features of social organization such as trust, norms and social networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" (1993:167).

### **3. Methodology**

Our research is a quantitative and a comparative type, using the questionnaire survey with the run-up for April - May 2016. The sample comprised 434 people among the population of Cacica and Iacobeni, between the ages of 18 and 80. The analysis of the data gathered in the field was based on the respondents' community, their age category, and later correlations were made with the gender and the studies of the respondents.

The selection criterion of the communities for our study was religious diversity. So, we chose two communes from the same historical region, Cacica with today's religious diversity (where we find faiths such as Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Greek Catholic, Gospel, Orthodox) and Iacobeni - with a history of religious diversity.

In this research, we will analyse the level of tolerance among members of the Cacica and Iacobeni communities towards: persons belonging to different ethnic and religious groups, to immigrants, persons infected with HIV/AIDS, delinquents, alcohol addicts and drug users and the level of institutional and interpersonal trust.

### **4. The main results**

The analysis of the data collected through the quantitative research conducted in Iacobeni and Cacica indicates a high level of tolerance of ethnic and religious alterity, but lower on delinquent persons or drug users (see Figure 1).

Tolerance towards immigrants is much lower compared to ethnic or religious groups, the percentage of those who claim to accept immigrants is lower than 50% (Cacica - 36.6% and 42% - Iacobeni).

People with certain conditions, such as those infected with HIV/AIDS, are accepted to a greater extent than deviant groups: delinquents, alcohol or drug users (although the percentages are low, 26.4% - Cacica, 41% - Iacobeni).

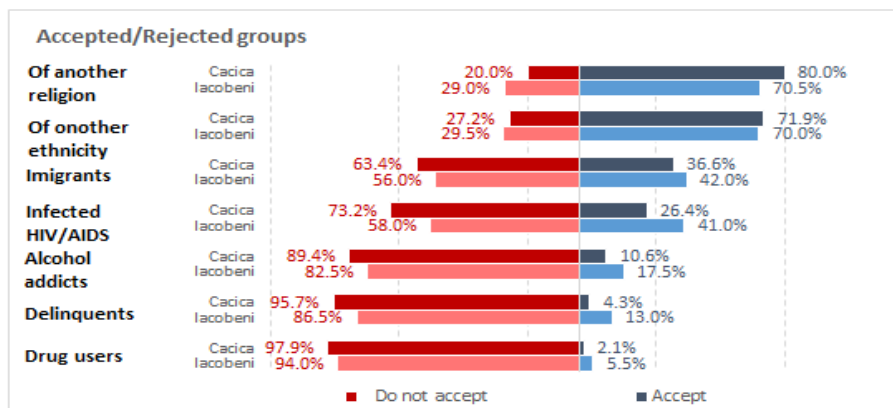


Figure 1. The level of tolerance in Cacica and Iacobeni

Analysing the responses of the inhabitants of the two communities from the perspective of different age categories, we notice the tendency of young people to be more tolerant towards religious or ethnic groups compared to other age categories. Similarly, attitudes towards immigrants or delinquents are more favourable compared to older age groups (see Figure 2).

Adults (35-49 years old) turn out to be more tolerant towards people infected with HIV / AIDS and alcohol addicted people than other age groups, but less tolerant of delinquent persons or drug users than young people. Those in the 50-64 age categories tend to have a more favourable attitude towards people of different ethnicity and confession compared to the previous age group.

The elderly stand out as having the lowest level of tolerance towards all the mentioned groups, up to the total rejection of delinquent persons or drug users (here the percentage of those who answered that they cannot accept around them such persons is 100%).

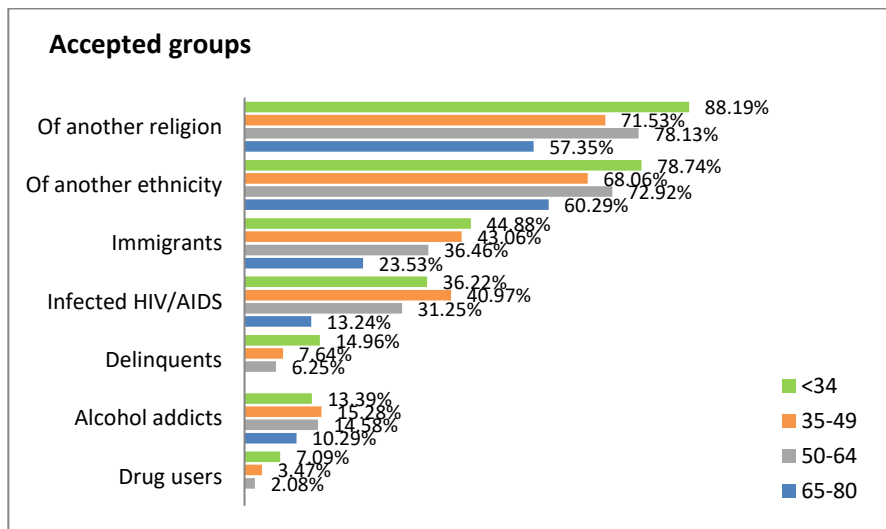


Figure 2: The level of tolerance by age category

Regarding the gender of the respondents, we notice a higher level of tolerance among men towards different groups to ethnic or religious compared to the level of tolerance among women. The latter prove to be slightly more tolerant when it comes to people infected with HIV / AIDS.

We can notice significant differences in respondents with a different level of education. Thus, those with higher education tend to be more tolerant with both groups of other religion and other ethnicities as well as deviant ones, as compared to those with middle or secondary education. The differences are more pronounced in terms of migrants and those infected with HIV / AIDS. The favourable attitude towards the latter is, of course, due to a higher level of information on the ways of transmitting the virus or the risks to which they may be exposed as they encounter such a person. The lowest level of tolerance is among those with secondary education, reaching as much as 100% in the refusal to accept people who are delinquent or drug-using.

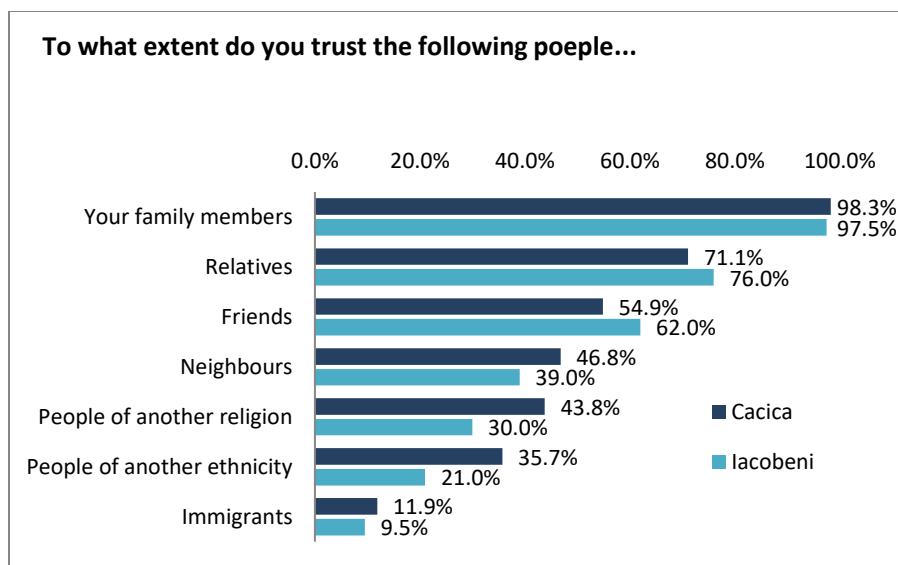
#### *The interpersonal trust*

The results of previous analyses showed that family is at the top of the hierarchy of values of the inhabitants in both communities (Ungureanu, 2018, p.119) as a natural consequence it is invested with the highest level of trust (98.3% of the respondents in Cacica commune and 97.5% of the people in Iacobeni said they trust their family members.

A lower level of confidence is noted in the case of neighbours, people of different ethnicity or religion, where the percentages are below 50%. Immigrant people prove to be invested with the lowest degree of trust (11.9% - in Cacica and 9.5% - in Iacobeni).

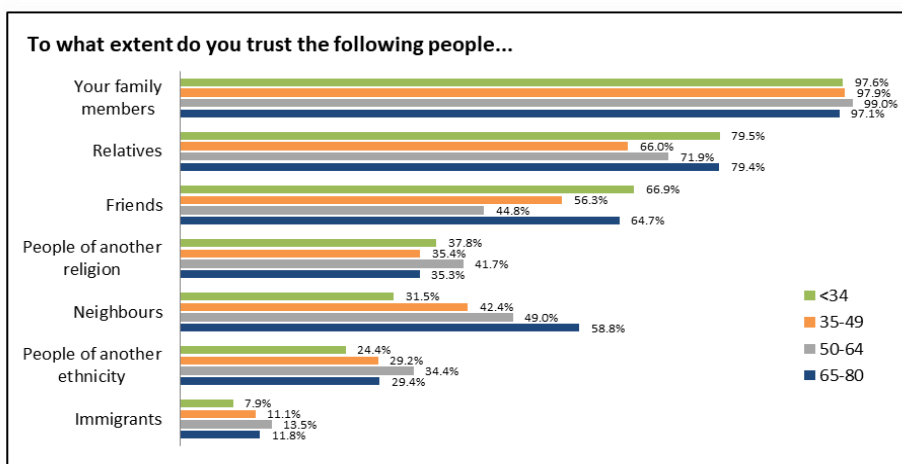
The groups invested with confidence are the same in the situation of both communities, and the percentages are similar; we notice differences only when it comes to groups of other ethnicities (35.7% - Cacica, 21% - Iacobeni) and religion (43.8% - Cacica; 30% - Iacobeni).

A remarkable aspect is the difference between the high level of tolerance shown by both communities for persons of different ethnicity or religion and the confidence with which they invest them. If previously, those who claimed to accept people in these categories were quite high, the percentages concerning trust are small, under 50% (see Figure 1).



**Figure 3.** The level of interpersonal trust in Cacica and Iacobeni

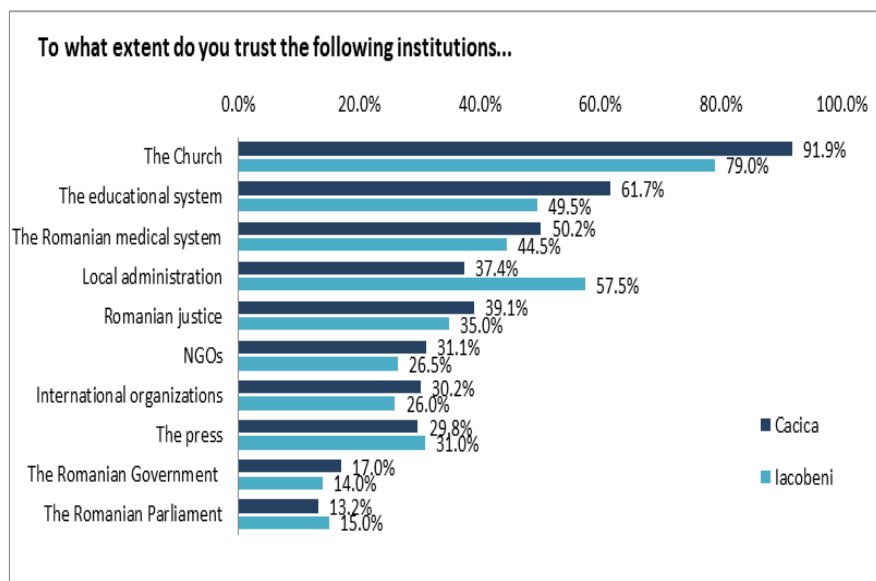
Looking at the results obtained by age groups, we distinguish family invested with the highest level of trust regardless of age. However, young people tend to give more trust to their relatives and friends than to other groups and less to neighbours, to other ethnicities and to immigrants (here the percentage is 7.9%).



**Figure 4.** The level of interpersonal trust by age category

*Institutional trust*

The church is the institution invested with the highest confidence level in both communities, although the percentages are different, 91.9% of respondents in Cacica claim to have more and a lot of trust in the church and only 79% in Iacobeni. The lowest level of confidence is noted in relation to the Romanian Government and the Romanian Parliament (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5:** The level of trust in institutions in Cacica and Iacobeni

Regarding the four age categories, different profiles of trust can be noticed. Young people show the lowest level of church confidence among all age groups, 76.4% claim to trust the church, but regarding the other institutions the percentages are much lower.

The Romanian educational system is trustworthy for 53.5% of young people, although 31.5% of respondents in this age group are pupils or students. The press, the Romanian Government and the Romanian Parliament are invested with the lowest level of trust among all institutions.

From the perspective of the education level of the participants in the study, it is highlighted that those with a higher level of training have the tendency to be more confident in people belonging to different groups and more distrustful in the institutions.

## Conclusions

We find in the space of interfaith dialogue a high level of tolerance towards ethnic and religious alterity, even higher in the Cacica community compared to Iacobeni. We can interpret this aspect in the context of ethnic and religious diversity in the Cacica community, where space proximity determines people to face-to-face interactions, which will lead to the integration of what is different among familiar elements. Unfortunately, this does not extend to the same level of interpersonal trust, where different ethnic and religious groups are invested with a lower degree of confidence.

How can we evaluate these results at an extended level? We are exposed to intercultural dialogue in the context of globalisation, we interact day by day with people and institutions belonging to different cultures. We accept the differences, but how much trust do we give them? And if we come back to a restricted (community) level, which is the degree of social cohesion? But this is another topic for future research.



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