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Ethical Norms for Dialogues about Music and Their Political Dimension[1]

1. Introduction

Hardly any sociological publication has been as widely received recently in the German-speaking world as Andreas Reckwitz's *The Society of Singularities*, published in English in 2020 three years after it first appeared in German (Reckwitz, 2020)[2]. One of its central claims is that Western democracies are characterized by increasing political, social, and cultural polarization that is threatening them at their core. This diagnosis, which Reckwitz further elaborated in a book first published in 2019 (2021), is decidedly relevant to my field of work, intercultural music education.

Reckwitz presents society as divided into two camps. On the one hand are those who view politics and culture from a liberal, cosmopolitan, individualistic perspective—those who emphasize the rights of the individual and the value of the particular and the diverse. This view contributes to a dissolution of traditional ideas, such as culturally homogeneous nation-states. According to Reckwitz, at present this perspective still has an influence on political and cultural discourse in Germany, among other countries, but it is losing its normative persuasive power and binding force.

This camp is confronted, on the other hand, by an increasing number of individuals who Reckwitz argues once again long for worldviews that are collective, homogeneous, normatively closed, essentialist, guided by the primacy of nationalism, and in some cases even explicitly antidemocratic.

In response to this crisis, Reckwitz calls for a new cultural and political vision of liberalism and for a pedagogy that promotes democracy. In his view, political and cultural norms must continue to be conceived as individual, liberal in the sense of promoting openness, and dynamic. At the same time, however, especially in the education system, he sees a need for a common search for norms and forms of communication that are recognized by many people and thereby reestablish sociocultural connections.

What Reckwitz advocates is thus not least the right balance between normative construction and deconstruction, for instance with regard to cultural concepts or ethnic identities[3].

Precisely this topic is currently one focus of German-speaking intercultural music education. Olivier Blanchard (2021), for example, recently called for a form of music education that primarily deconstructs cultural ideas, while Johann Honnens (2018) and I (Kautny, 2018a/b) argue from different perspectives that this education must include both the construction and deconstruction of cultural ideas.

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[1] This article was translated from the German by Michael Thomas Taylor. The German version was written on the occasion of a conference at the University of Oldenburg and will be published in the conference volume: Dunkel, M. & Oeftering, T. (Eds.), *Politische Musik als Handlungsfeld politischer und musikalischer Bildung*, Münster: Waxmann (forthcoming).

[2] For representative examples of this reception, see Hollstein, 2019; see also the three reviews published in 2019 in the *Soziologische Revue* and Nassehi, 2020.

[3] For a more detailed discussion, see section 4 of this text.

In the following, I will first show how I attain this balance through a new reading of Rainer Forst's ethics of toleration[4], as a paradigm influenced by political science (section 3). I will then use this balance to derive an ethically based model of dialogue for intercultural music education (section 4). In conclusion, I then discuss whether Reckwitz can be employed to contextualize my reflections (section 5). To prepare these arguments, I will thus now clarify whether there are valid reasons at all to relate ethically grounded dialogues in music education to the sphere of the political (section 2).

2. Dialogues about Otherness and the Political Dimension of Ethics

Dialogues in the classroom about music can take on a political dimension in several ways.

Sometimes it is the music-related practices or songs themselves that render class discussions political, either because musicians see themselves and their actions as political or because listeners reinterpret music practices that were originally intended to be nonpolitical in a way that politicizes them (Rösing, 2004; Oeftering, 2016). As an example of a class discussion about political or politicized music, one can imagine a ninth-grade class discussing the construction of "race" in US hip-hop:

- Is Eminem's[5] construction of "whiteness" marked as racist and therefore as politically problematic?
- What role does Kendrick Lamar play in the context of Black Lives Matter?
- How have both artists positioned themselves politically with regard to the Trump administration?

I will return to this explicitly political dimension within the topic of class discussions. But beyond this manifest political ambit, the model of dialogue that I will present in section 4 of this text is also concerned with how students might engage constructively with all forms of music and music practices through dialogue with their classmates. And specifically, it is concerned with how they might do so with music that they perceive as other, unfamiliar, or strange, and which they may thus reject[6]. What ethical norms should govern a disagreement over music that is perceived as strange? We can identify at least several reasons why dialogues about music have not only ethical but also political dimensions, even if the object being discussed is neither political nor politicized.

a. On a general level, we should first note that ethical and political norms functionally relate to the same social spheres and can thus overlap: ethical norms provide a philosophical definition of the "good" or the "good life" (Lutz-Bachmann, 2013, p. 20; Pleger, 2017, p. 1). They offer a guide

[4] In the following text the term "toleration" is used synonymously with "tolerance". I prefer toleration, as I refer strongly to Rainer Forst's *Toleration in Conflict* (2013) and his conceptions of toleration. This usage also accords with academic debates in philosophy, political science, and the philosophy of education, where the term is widespread.

[5] Eminem and Lamar are two of the most popular und relevant rap artists in today's US hip-hop. Lamar is a highly respected representative of the African American traditions of hip-hop. His music is strongly associated with political movements supporting the rights of African Americans in the United States. Eminem is one of the first white rap musicians who is highly accepted within hip-hop culture because of his artistic skills. Due to the extraordinary popularity of his songs, which strongly refer to narratives of the poor white male, Eminem was partly accused of being a white pop star stealing hip-hop from African Americans (Kajikawa, 2009).

[6] For more detailed discussion about the aesthetic experience of otherness, see Kautny, 2018a/b.

for how to live "well" together with other living beings, that is to say, to be fair with one another. And if we choose a broad concept of politics, the search for what is ethically good can then become a search for what is politically right. Civic education, for example, considers "democracy not only as an institutionalized form of rule, but as something more, namely as a form of life and society" (Himmelmann, 2016, p. 125)[7]. A culture of debate in music education that is based on ethical rules can therefore be seen not only as a form of communication but also as a political mode of living together.

b. Furthermore, the political dimension of my model of dialogue becomes quite concrete through my choice of its discursive points of reference and ethical norms. My reflections on a culture of dialogue are framed by theories in political science (Forst, 2013), among other things. They reflect norms considered central both to pedagogies committed to democracy (Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2016) and to intercultural music education—for instance, to education that aims to cultivate respect for human dignity (Kautny, 2018a). These norms can thus be described as both ethical and political, depending on the context.

However, postulating ethicopolitical norms for an intercultural model of dialogue, as I will do in the following, poses a dilemma. My idea of an intercultural music didactics based on toleration shares one disadvantage with all ideas that are standardized and communicated by human beings, namely that they function as an imposition of power which in certain cases undermines participation and democracy. Language and its reduction of complexity determine what subsequently can or cannot be said, and hence what is excluded from discourse. For decades now, philosophical approaches and in particular those concerned with political critique have articulated serious concern about such "violent" determinations (Butler, 2005). Olivier Blanchard has accordingly called for a music didactics that does not primarily talk about cultures but rather deconstructs the ways in which music is rendered cultural. In light of the cultural and political tendencies described by Reckwitz (Reckwitz, 2021), a didactics that critically describes discourses in the sense elaborated by Blanchard and eschews cultural or ethical attributions would prove to be particularly relevant to the present moment. It is in any case beyond doubt that from a democratic point of view it is necessary to counter worldviews that are closed and/or based in essentialist understandings of nationalism with a deconstructive culture of debate that opens up norms.

At the same time, without such normative assumptions language and thus democracy are as equally inconceivable as intercultural music education built on democratic principles. Jacques Derrida, one of the founders and most important representatives of deconstruction, made it clear as early as the 1960s, through a philosophical consideration of language, that it is not at all possible for deconstruction to definitively escape from the formal and substantive determinations of language, that "[t]here is no sense in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to shake metaphysics. We have no language [...] which is foreign to this history; we can pronounce not a single destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest" (Derrida, 2001, p. 354)[8]. As important

[7] All citations from German sources have been translated by Michael Thomas Taylor.

[8] Derrida's book *Writing and Difference* was originally published in French in 1967. For discussions of this philosophical issue, see also Kautny, 2012; Flügel-Martinsen, 2016. See also the discussion of Foucault's attempt in his late texts "to rehabilitate a subject that is not completely dominated by power but remains capable of transformation" (Heß, Oberhaus & Rolle, 2020, p. 10). See also Butler, 2005, pp. 111-136.

as it was to Derrida in many of his texts to formulate a deconstructive critique of linguistic, ethical, and political norms, in other texts it seemed to him equally necessary to postulate political and ethical norms. Derrida's later texts, from the 1990s, were increasingly concerned with ethics and a notion of political utopia. Here, he seems to have considered it unavoidable to "posit" certain ethical-political norms and to declare them beyond deconstruction in order to be able to positively establish and envision a "democracy of the future" at all. Crucial to this project was the concept of justice, among others (Derrida, 2006, p. 223, footnote 4)[9]. Political, ethical, and pedagogical visions cannot be normatively grounded solely on the basis of deconstructively descriptive critiques of linguistic discourses (Honnens, 2018, p. 10).

As I see it, this dilemma makes it necessary to strike a balance in reflecting on an ethically grounded culture of dialogue—and on its didactic realization—between a positing of ethical-political norms and their deconstruction. Similarly, as I have argued in detail elsewhere (Kautny, 2018a), there is a need to equilibrate ethical-political and aesthetic normativity.

In the following, I thus outline my proposal for achieving these balances. I will do so mainly by offering a new interpretation of the theory of toleration formulated by the political scientist Rainer Forst (section 3), in order to then supplement and partly reformulate Thomas Ott's dialogic model for music education (section 4).

3. Toward a New Concept of Toleration

I now turn to the task of finding a good balance of ethically grounded norms that regulate music-related classroom dialogues with sufficient legitimacy while also allowing individual freedoms, especially with regard of aesthetic or cultural esteem, which tends toward normative closure. My focus will be on ideas, practices, concepts of identity, etc., that deviate aesthetically, politically, religiously, or ethnically from "the" norm.

I begin by engaging Rainer Forst's theory of toleration (2013), which I will then critically examine and expand with "deconstructive" ideas.

I have chosen to begin with this political scientist and philosopher because his theory can be read analogously to Honneth's theory—which was significant for (music-)pedagogical discourses of the 2000s (Vogt, 2009, pp. 46-49)—as an ethics of recognition. Forst can help us positively determine ethical-political norms that are fundamental to democratic-pluralistic societies: for example, a) legal recognition based on respect for human dignity; and b) the esteem of recognition for social achievements, or for identities that may be individual or collective, such as those based in politics or in music. Compared to Axel Honneth's model of recognition, which is comparatively better known in the pedagogical debate, Forst's conceptions of toleration are in my opinion more capable of depicting the reality of the disagreement that exists between different individuals and their normative positions[10]. Indeed, Forst conceives of toleration as a normatively ambivalent norm in which acceptance and rejection exist simultaneously, compete with each other, and must be weighed against each other in case of conflict. Toleration for Forst is a partial recognition of something or someone, which moreover requires discursive justification. The reasons for acceptance must at least slightly outweigh reasons for rejection. If this balance tips in the direction

[9] First published in French in 1993.
[10] On Honneth, see Kautny, 2018b.

of complete rejection, the boundary to intolerance that is implicit in toleration is crossed[11]; if it tips in the other direction, it becomes full recognition (Forst, 2013, pp. 17-26). Because Forst's theory of toleration creates spaces for dissent, it seems to me fundamentally interesting as a theoretical framing for a model of disagreement concerning music in music education that is as "open" as possible. This could be productively applied, for instance, to the ethical-political dimensions in Eminem's and Lamar's music.

Forst distinguishes between four different conceptions of toleration, which he extracts from historical observation of religious and political conflicts[12]. Two of them are based only on purely strategic acquiescence and are ruled out for my model because of their low ethical binding force. However, two others are conceived as being more ethically ambitious.

One of these is the *respect conception* (Forst, 2013, pp. 29-31). It draws from the recognition of legal equality, which in turn is rooted, among other things, in Kant's respect for human dignity. According to Kant, human beings possess dignity because they are capable of reason and therefore have the potential to act freely. This human dignity, which is understood, posited, and generalized as an absolute value, regards all people as equal. This idea, among others, has been the basis for deriving and justifying the various rights of freedom central to democracies, shaping the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany as well as laws, guidelines, and curricula at schools focusing on general education. One thing central to music education, for example, is freedom of expression and artistic freedom, which guarantees that musical practices and music-related identities are fundamentally protected from pedagogical intervention. This gives music-related judgments and music-related identities quite a lot of freedom. It is possible for this freedom to arise because respect makes it possible to perceive and recognize only *one* general human characteristic (dignity), while removing all particular characteristics (related to music, ethnicity, etc.) from consideration. To repeat: toleration expresses a normative conflict of values. Hence when we now speak of respect-based toleration, this indicates a conflict in which other aspects beyond human dignity cannot claim (full) agreement. Respect-based toleration may describe a constellation in which a person has only very limited esteem for another person's specific judgments about politics or music. But even in this minimal case, it requires respect for the human dignity of another, which entails preserving the equality of all. Such respect is the normative political core (and here I follow Forst) for any ethics within the framework of liberal democracies—and I would add: of their school system. Despite all justified criticism of the normative "positing" of an autonomous subject, this is in my opinion a norm that for ethical reasons cannot be dissolved in democracies.

[11] This is implicit as a negative limit of toleration.
[12] He extracts them from an examination of European political history.

Table 1: The relationship to music of Forst's conceptions of toleration as based in respect and esteem.

Conception of toleration	**Conflicting judgments *within* toleration** (as an inner attitude and/or verbal expression)		**Value systems**
	Disapproval	**Approval**	**Prioritization of Judgments (J)**
Example 1: Respect conception *(partial:* ethical-political *content*)	**Judgment 1 (Aesthetics)** "Eminem's beats are hard to take."	**Judgment 2 (Ethics[13])** "Eminem deserves respect as a human being. He has the right and freedom to express himself in the way he wants."	J 2 > J 1
Example 2a: Esteem conception *(potentially:* ethical-political *function*)	**Judgment 1 (Aesthetics)** "Eminem's beats are hard to take."	**Judgment 3 (Aesthetics)** "His flow is virtuosic."	J 3 > J 1 J 3 + J 2 > J 1[14]
Example 2b: Esteem conception (ethical-political *content*)	**Judgment 4 (Ethics)** "Eminem's lyrics devalue women, among other groups. This must be disapproved because of its potential negative social consequences."	**Judgment 5 (Ethics)** "Eminem's critical positioning toward Trump is a valuable contribution to the critique of society."	J 5 > J 4 or J 5 + 3 > J 4 +1 or J 5 > J 1…

The second important conception of toleration is the *esteem conception* (Forst, 2013, p. 31). It focuses on what people consider significant, special, and individual, and thus worthy of distinction and recognition. This kind of toleration expresses partial esteem: whether in the lower realm of acceptance or with strong, almost full esteem, for example, for certain music-related practices and associated music-related identities.

Music-related dialogues can be used to weigh different value judgments against each other, based for instance in aesthetics or ethics, as illustrated in Table 1. In example 1, we see how a discussion of Eminem's music could justify a tolerant viewpoint in which respect for dignity is given more weight than an aesthetically negative judgment (*respect conception* of toleration)[15]. Examples 2a and 2b show two different constellations of the *esteem conception* of toleration. Aesthetic (partial) esteem can be directly ethically and politically charged at the level of content, as indicated at the beginning of this text (section 2), if one considers the positive or negative social impact of

[13] The judgments 2, 4, and 5 stem from an ethical normativity that in this context evidently can also be regarded as a form of political normativity.

[14] In section 4 of this text, I show that the level of respect (judgment 2) must always be present in class dialogues, where it serves as a parallel ethical foundation to the esteem conception. This is suggested here as paradigmatic for example 2a, but of course it also applies to example 2b.

[15] I choose this example here because it has been and continues to be particularly controversial in ethical and political terms in the history of its reception (Kautny, 2022).

Eminem's music (example 2b). Example 2a, by contrast, shows how it might be possible to express esteem-based toleration in which it is "only" aesthetic reasons to approve or disapprove that oppose each other. This esteem, which at first glance appears to be purely aesthetic and nonpolitical in terms of content, may very well have an *indirect* ethical-political effect, for example when students express aesthetic judgments in a class discussion that positively reinforce or, as the case may be, devalue the music-related identities of fellow students, such as those of Eminem fans (example 2a).

The esteem conception of toleration holds an opportunity. Mutual esteem is socially and therefore politically important if we assume that it is positive for subjective identity formation, that is, for the capacity to develop self-esteem. Esteem may be necessary as a positive reinforcement of collective identities and for generating social solidarity, which would thus also make it ethically imperative[16].

But here there is also a danger. Esteem of what is particular or unique, and thus special, can be not only highly inclusive but also exclusive. The tendency toward normative closure, drawing boundaries, and exclusion exists of course in every form of recognition. However, Reckwitz describes processes of evaluation as having the potential to be particularly contentious (Reckwitz, 2020, p. 46). Esteem of something special (such as an individual) always implies disdain and potential devaluation of something different. As seen above, these practices of valorization and devaluation play an important but often unfortunate role in the formation of subjective and collective identities and in associated processes of distinction and integration. One thinks, for example, of the absolutization of positive or negative standards of value that are often ideologically misused in identity-related contexts.

In Forst's account, there are two aspects that counteract the danger of absolutizing a value. First, there is respect for human dignity, which views all people as equals and acts as a liberal, balancing counterweight to the esteem of what is different. And second, the idea of partial esteem itself presupposes that esteem may at times consist of a multiperspectival set of pros and cons. Toleration is a self-contradictory, ambiguous form of recognition that can provide space for controversial disputes—for example, in the classroom. But even if we follow Forst in balancing autonomy and equality (respect) with identity and difference (esteem), this does not change the basic problem Forst shares with Honneth's or Taylor's theories of recognition: they all operate with normative "positings" (subject, autonomy, values, identity, ethnicity, etc.) in which something is "inherent" that historically has unleashed its violent potential countless times (Butler, 2005).

What is thus needed is a critical perspective on the ethics of recognition that would allow normative attributions in dialogues about music to retain the potential to be reshaped, changed, or revised. We can gain such a critical perspective, for example, from poststructuralist (e.g., deconstructionist) and phenomenological philosophy.

a. From a poststructural perspective (e.g., Derrida, Foucault, Butler, et al.), the scope of human cognition is fundamentally to be viewed with skepticism. From this point of view, what we know and can say about phenomena, e.g., standards of value, no longer appears irrefutable and "natural". Phenomena that we *recognize* and to which we thus afford *recognition* prove to not be essential. Rather, they are constructed by human beings and can therefore also be deconstructed and changed.

b. In comparison to the respect for dignity and the (partial) esteem of what is unique or particular, this epistemological skepticism leads to a new view on ethics and aesthetics. In Butler,

[16] On the ethical justification of esteem with recourse to Honneth and Taylor, see Kautny, 2018b, pp. 52-55.

for example, the subject no longer appears to be sovereign and free but heteronomous and vulnerable, determined by the social world, language, and practices of recognition. For Butler, we are subjects who fail in our attempts to recognize each other because the practices involved are not only linguistically limited but powerfully corrupted (Butler, 2005). It is the unsettling experience of the foreign, one could add from a phenomenological point of view (e.g., Levinas, Waldenfels), that leads to the fact that we have no sovereign power over our own experiences (Kautny, 2018b, pp. 57-58). Following the phenomenologist Waldenfels, Vogt points out that aesthetic experiences are therefore also to a certain extent inaccessible to ourselves (Vogt, 2009, pp. 50-51); this moreover partially deprives them of political-ethical normativity. It is precisely the powerlessness within the practices of recognition, from which, however, we cannot escape as soon as we communicate, that gives rise to a double ethical responsibility.

On the one hand, it is important to reflect on, make visible, and revise the powerful shaping of the individual by the "social world" (Butler, 2005, p. 136) that is inherent in any practice of recognition through its linguistic attributions, norms, and so on. It is in this sense that Mecheril speaks of *reflexive* recognition (Mecheril, 2005).

On the other hand, there is no social life without practices of recognition and no ethics without norms, which is why norms must not only be demystified but shaped positively in insisting on the principle of recognition. Derrida, for instance, holds to an idea of justice. Levinas derives the norm of responsibility from the powerlessness of the Other (Oberhaus, 2016, pp. 57-59). And Butler speaks of humanity and of responsible, reflective subjects who must give an account of their communication (Butler, 2005, p. 136).

A "reflexive" toleration that goes beyond Forst must therefore normatively achieve two things as a form of recognition: both the determination of values that claim normativity (e.g., human dignity) and the deconstruction of other norms that have a powerfully constricting effect. I would now like to demonstrate this by developing and applying a model of dialogue.

4. Reflexive Toleration: A Model of Dialogue for Music Education

In the following, I refer to Ott's model of classroom dialogues (Ott, 2012), which I reinterpret in terms of esteem-based, respect-based, and reflexive toleration.

a. Phase 1: From Ott, I adopt the basic idea that the students (inwardly) take on or (verbally or nonverbally) express a certain position *before* the dialogue gets underway (Ott, 2012, p. 9): For Ott, it is imperative for students not to "devalue" their fellow students and the music they 'love'—be it hip-hop, arabesque, or classical—"from the outset". In terms of toleration theory, Ott thus demands that students be *willing* to show partial esteem (at least in the sense of acceptance). With regard to Forst's model of toleration, I would like to add that all students must also be prepared to respect the dignity of their interlocutors, i.e., their right to express their opinions, for example.

At this point, it is worth repeating that human dignity requires that no one be forced to value anything or anyone (Frankena, 1986, p. 154). Thus, at the end of the discussion, there can be no prescribed esteem-based toleration, for example, for Kendrick Lamar or Eminem. However, it may be ethical to require a *willingness* on the part of students to have partial esteem *prior to* the discussion. If people can only develop self-esteem if they themselves are valued, music-related identities would

be dependent on also finding spaces in which they experience music-related esteem[17]. For Reckwitz, general education schools in particularized societies are crucial locations that should provide spaces for negotiating esteem (Reckwitz, 2021, pp. 31-32). For ethical-political reasons, it would therefore be appropriate for music education to create opportunities for students to enter *potential* spaces of esteem for each other, for example in the context of a class discussion.

b. Phase 2: During the dialogue—here I continue to follow Ott—esteem cannot be prescribed. The freedom of one's own value judgment is not least of all underpinned by the constitutionally guaranteed autonomy of the subject, which prohibits anyone from being compelled to change their judgment of taste. However, respect for the dignity of all participants in the discussion is unrestrictedly required here as well, in order to allow them to express themselves freely about their music-related identities. And finally, a debate about Eminem and Lamar can lead to a discussion of their aesthetic and political positions—and hence also to those held by their fans among the students—in which they are fully endorsed (full recognition of esteem), partially recognized (toleration), or disapproved (intolerance). However, Ott and Forst both demand that students justify their own point of view, which as has been shown above must not be formulated in a manner that is discriminatory, for example, in racist terms or in any other sense that violates human dignity.

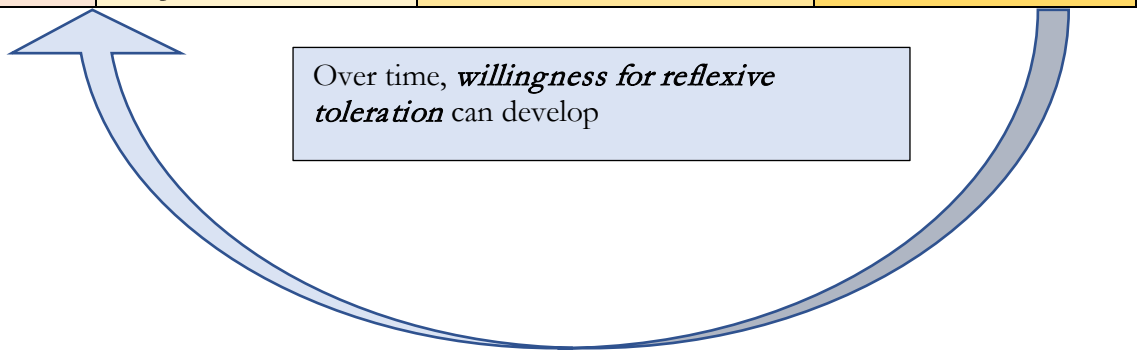
c. **Phase 3** is something that I add to Ott's model. In this phase, *all* the reasons that lead to acceptance or rejection, and thus to toleration, full acceptance, or intolerance, are critically examined. The older or more cognitively competent the students are, the more it is possible, in Blanchard's sense, to adopt a deconstructive perspective that considers value judgments to be socially constructed, contingent, and imbued with power. The "exclusivity" of the judgments is thus relativized and opened up, but without making the judgments disappear. In doing so, deconstructive forms of talking about music (culture) and identities are developed together in a careful, nonviolent way, as suggested by Johann Honnens (2018, p. 10), who deploys, for example, de-ethnicizing, hybridizing, or even parodizing ways of speaking for music education[18].

[17] See the responsibility of the subject "toward the Other" following Levinas (Oberhaus, 2016, p. 58).

[18] Music didactics might benefit here from techniques of coaching, e.g., from nonviolent communication (as developed by M. Rosenberg) and from mediation techniques as used in systemic consulting. I am grateful for this suggestion to Prof. Dr. Michael Rappe.

Table 2: Dialogue model of music-related willingness for reflexive toleration

When	a. Before the dialogue	b. During the dialogue	c. After the dialogue
Ethical norms	**WILLINGNESS TO BE TOLERANT** "A commitment to make an effort" (Ott, 2012) based on ... • **respect** for human dignity • **partial esteem** toward music-related identity & associated music (here in short: music/identity) The reasons for approval (respect & esteem) must outweigh those for disapproval to a great enough extent that a dialogue can take place	• **respect** for human dignity (mandatory in the sense of full recognition) • **esteem-based recognition** of music/identity is by contrast "free"; everything here is possible from - full recognition to - toleration or - intolerance **Duty to justify** one's own point of view, one's own judgments ...	**REFLEXIVE TOLERATION** **critical reflection on one's own judgments** about music-related identities & music associated with them The potentially negative consequences of one's aesthetic judgments become visible. One's own judgments are questioned, possibly regarding their all-encompassing validity. **Dismantling of power asymmetries** (see Ott, 2012)



If the practice of such dialogues is repeated over the course of a student's development in school, the willingness to be tolerant (phase 1) in higher grades potentially becomes a *reflexive willingness* to be tolerant, which from the beginning enables students to at least in part be open and revise the bases of their own judgments. This would promote a "depolarized" stance or communication practice (Honnens, 2018, p. 10) characterized by the simultaneous (transdifferent) coexistence or alternation between affirmative and deconstructive ways of speaking (e.g., about "race," ethnicity, etc.).

5. Looking Ahead

In conclusion, I would like to reflect on whether the dialogue model presented here, which is given ethical-political overtones through its normative foundation, can be thought of in terms of a larger political framework beyond music education. This question leads me back to Andreas Reckwitz and his sketch of ideas for schools. Reckwitz develops these ideas in the context of his widely

influential social analysis, which I would like to employ here paradigmatically as a political framework for my model because of its significance and topicality. I thus begin this conclusion by briefly outlining relevant points from his analysis.

Examining today's liberal, Western democracies, Reckwitz recognizes a lack of widely shared social norms and forms of recognition that would provide social cohesion (Reckwitz, 2021, p. 161). Currently, what he finds dominant is a form of thinking that promotes openness, leading to a strong valorization of individuality and diversity that goes hand in hand with the *deconstruction of* many norms and rules, e.g., with regard to religion, gender, art, ethnicity, or the nation-state. He notes this has undoubtedly ushered in welcome emancipatory developments, for example, for groups that have been marginalized. At the same time, the idea of social and cultural self-realization and the maximization of the "opportunities for individual growth" is also preeminent (Reckwitz, 2021, p. 152). He argues this especially benefits certain sections of society that prominently represent this discourse and lifestyle in politics and society[19]. In the competition for cultural realization and esteem of their own particular cultural lifestyle, academic, urban, and well-off population groups are at an advantage, while parts of the old middle class and the precarious underclass have lower chances of cultural recognition (Reckwitz, 2020, p. 317-318). This is accompanied, he argues, by socioeconomic liberalization. The liberalization, deregulation, and globalization of economic and labor markets had allowed some of the old middle class to take advantage of their social advancement and expensive cultural lifestyles, while other parts of the old middle class and precarious underclass were severely devalued socioeconomically and lost social standing (Reckwitz, 2021, pp. 33-72).

According to Reckwitz, many people are finding it more difficult to secure cultural and social esteem, and this experience is being harnessed and exploited by populist currents and their culturally homogeneous, collective-nationalist, and at times antidemocratic political programs (Reckwitz, 2021, pp. 154-158; see also Nachtwey, 2017).

As a way out of this plight, Reckwitz sketches a vision of politics and culture that is both liberal and collectively conceived (Reckwitz, 2021, pp. 161-163), which is fed both by respect for autonomy (dignity, law) and by social and cultural esteem. He demands that liberal, democratic societies must negotiate with each other—beyond the particular interests and views of individuals—over which social and cultural values, rules, or forms of communication can be jointly esteemed. In this common "construction" of binding norms, however, it is crucial to avoid entrenching norms that are too rigid, unchanging, and above all collectively homogeneous, as is the case in cultural essentialism and nationalism. Reckwitz thus calls for practices of recognition between commitment and openness, construction and deconstruction, respect and esteem, and individual libertarian and collective (communitarian) orientation (Reckwitz, 2021, pp. 27-32, 152). In this context, it is crucial to find and design public places where people from the most diverse lifestyles and lifeworlds can meet in order to negotiate values or forms of communication that they consider worthy of esteem (Reckwitz, 2020, p. 318). Schools would be particularly important here because they can allow students from highly diverse social or cultural contexts to meet and together practice the modes of recognition noted by Reckwitz (Reckwitz, 2021, pp. 31-32).

[19] Reckwitz describes a new middle class as the central pillar of this development (2021, pp. 48-51). See also Nachtwey, 2017.

The fact that the model I have presented here has strong parallels to those forms of recognition and communication which Reckwitz advocates should be obvious. Reflexive toleration is characterized both by the recognition of respect (dignity, law, liberalism) and—though to a much weaker extent—by the idea of valuing individual and collective identities (communitarianism). My model opens up these modes of recognition, which tend toward normative ossification and homogenization, through reflexive-deconstructive elements.

Despite this theoretical fit with a prominent "grand theory" and its proposed solutions, one should not overestimate the political dimension of my dialogue model.

First, it is not clear whether Reckwitz's ideas for a solution point to *the* way out of this difficulty, however much his most recent works have obviously touched a nerve in academia and the press. Reckwitz's practical approaches to solutions, which in contrast to his elaborate descriptions of society more often resemble sketches, have at times been strongly criticized[20].

Second, there are also theoretical differences between Reckwitz's approach and my model of dialogue, in which I give much higher priority to individual freedom over cultural esteem. Like Nassehi (2020), I find Reckwitz's idea of a strong, normative binding force of cultural esteem problematic. This binding force is, for example, deliberately conceived as normatively weak in reflexive toleration, and in the course of a class discussion it is sometimes even deliberately dissolved altogether.

Third, my model barely considers the socioeconomic dimensions that seem to be crucial for Reckwitz. Issues of social inequality and political power have their place in the third phase of my model, where the fusion of aesthetic judgments with positions of social power is to be reflected. This aspect can be accentuated more clearly, as I suggested at the outset, in cases where the dialogues in music education deal with decidedly political and socioeconomic topics such as political music.

Fourth, both the high demands of the model (phase 3) and the idiosyncrasy of aesthetic experience must be taken into account; both may often thwart the model's ideal progression.

Fifth, all of music education's ethical goals are faced with the limited reach of a marginalized subject that is being offered less frequently and often taught by those without proper training. In my opinion, a didactics of such a "minor" subject can only be politically effective if it conceives itself as part of a larger context of civic education, for example within interdisciplinary didactics and school development (Kautny, 2012).

In my opinion, it would be important for (intercultural) music education to find a stronger connection to the discourses of education in civics and democracy (Vogt, 2011, pp. 12-13; Friedrichs & Lange, 2016), among others, if its aim is to more robustly elaborate the concepts underpinning its political dimensions.

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[20] See Armin Nassehi (2020) for a critique.

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