Introduction

Ecumenical efforts are motivated by a conflict between the belief in the unity of the church and the observed reality of division. Ecumenical efforts are in various ways directed towards overcoming this separation and contributing to the church being the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic” church of the creeds.

This article examines movements towards church unity as processes of recognition. “Recognition” has during recent years become one of the main concepts in social philosophy to conceptualise how diverse societies function. The phenomenon of recognition is not alien to theological discourse, either, even though the language of recognition might not have been so frequently used. In ecumenism the idea of recognition has been present from the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement, while the concept of recognition has not drawn that much attention.

The general aim of this article is to investigate the phenomenon of recognition in ecumenical contexts with the help of contemporary theories of recognition. The article focuses specifically on one of the core aspects recognition, namely, what the recognition theories call the appropriate attitudes associated with acts of recognition. The three attitudes identified in recognition theories as the motivational background for recognition are love, respect and esteem. Of these three, love has specific relevance, since it lies in the core of what is called “recognition proper”, i.e. recognition as person. Love is one of the aspects of recognition that resonates strongly with both theological and ecumenical imagination. In ecumenical contexts love is often paired with truth as essential aspects of dialogue. In ecumenism, love in general terms is something that orients towards the other and motivates to move forward despite obstacles. Jiménes speaks of “will-to-friendship” and Tveit of “values of fellowship”. Various formulations of “ecumenical hospitality”, “spiritual ecumenism” and “receptive ecumenism” have also emphasised elements that in the language of recognition theories could be called attitudes.
Thus far the language of recognition appears quite promising for a more detailed analysis of ecumenical processes. Critics have noted that some of the seemingly beneficial aspects of recognition mask essential flaws.11 For some, the strive towards respectful and appreciative just communities where individuals flourish, the pursuit of recognition appears as a pathological struggle for superiority and oppression. This critique might itself make recognition unsuitable as a medium of ecumenical efforts. On top of the philosophical critique of recognition there are theological and specifically ecumenical questions having to do with how persons are perceived to relate to each other and God that might render the idea of recognition unhelpful for ecumenical pursuits. I will discuss these towards the end of this text.

I. Recognition: describing the phenomenon

To pinpoint aspects of the concept of recognition relevant for specifically ecumenical recognition I will start with Heikki Ikäheimo’s mapping of recognition’s “conceptual and theoretical landscape”.12

“Recognition” in general may be understood in three different senses. The first sense is synonymous with “identification” and means recognizing things as the particular things they are, as having certain qualitative features or generically as belonging to this or that genus or species. Issues attached to identification relate to the identity and identifying individuals and groups and are often discussed under “identity politics”.13

The second sense of “recognition” comes close to acknowledgement, acceptance or admitting. This sense of recognition may be applied to normative entities, i.e. entities or issues that may be valued, evaluated or taken responsibility for. This sense of recognition is relevant for demonstrating how institutions, norms and values are accepted and how normative descriptions of individuals and groups are created. Ecumenical dialogues have traditionally concentrated on this aspect of recognition and questions relating to the toleration of differences.14

The third sense of recognition is what is often perceived as recognition proper, i.e. the recognition of persons. It is in this sense of recognition where attitudes, play a central role. It is here that also love as an attitude enters the discussion.15

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9 KASPER 2007.
10 MURRAY 2007, 279–301.
11 See e.g. MARKELL 2001.
12 Discussion around “identity politics” arose with Charles Taylor’s seminal essay in 1994. Matters of identity are significant because they address the qualities that make identities and the power to discern which qualities matter. See IKÄHEIMO 2017, 567. Questions of identity are highly relevant for ecumenical encounters as well and have been discussed since the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. See e.g. HIETAMÄKI 2015, 204–19. This topics falls outside the scope of this article and should be discussed elsewhere.
13 Issues of identification and identity are central recognition and ecumenical recognition. A wealth of research already exists on the aspect of recognition dealing with identities and “identity politics”. E.g. TAYLOR 1994. Some discussion on identity politics and ecumenical recognition can be found in HIETAMÄKI 2015. Further discussion on identity politics and ecumenism falls outside the range of this article.
Before going into details on attitudes, it is useful to distinguish between two different directions or axis of recognition, a vertical and a horizontal one. Vertical recognition takes place between two different levels, a higher one (e.g. social institutions, God) and a lower one (persons, groups) and may be directed either upward or downward. Horizontal recognition takes place on one level, although some forms or horizontal recognition may be mediated by a form of vertical recognition (e.g. recognition of another person as a bearer of rights according to acknowledged institutions). For purposes that become clearer later it is important to note that the horizontal recognition mediated by vertical recognition or acknowledgement of (institutionalized) social norms can be conceptualized as the aforementioned vertical recognition. In other words, the recognition of a person as a bearer of rights may appears as the acknowledgement of the rights and the consequent appropriate action.\textsuperscript{16}

The purely interpersonal horizontal recognition and horizontal recognitions mediated by norms differ on the conceptual level in one important aspect. Whereas the validity of the purely interpersonal recognition is judged by the attitudes that constitute the recognition (affirmative attitudes), the evaluation of recognition mediated by norms is based on the appropriateness of recognitive actions.\textsuperscript{17} This differentiation will be later used to clarify some of the complexities and to explain some frustrations, disappointments and critiques of ecumenical relations.

Giving and receiving recognition involves relations of power. In the recognitive relationship of A recognizing B (as x), “A” is usually taken as the subject (of the act of recognition) and “B” the object (of the act of recognition). A as subject performs an act of recognition, whereas B as object remains a passive recipient of recognition. The act of recognition is mostly perceived to affect B in that recognition is seen to advance the development of healthy personality, the flourishing of particular identities or equal access to the society for B. Recognition is generally perceived as something positive; B is recognized as they are or are allowed to become what they truly should be. Consequently, non-recognition and misrecognition are considered harmful towards B. Less attention has been paid to what happens to “A” as the recognizer.\textsuperscript{18} Both the idea that correct recognition is always something positive and the disregard for effects of recognition towards “A” will be challenged later.

In the event of recognition “A” holds a position of power, because “A” may choose whether to recognize “B” or not. A also has relative authority in evaluating the appropriateness of the recognition. B may request, or even struggle, for recognition but to recognise or not is ultimately in the power of A. Ikäheimo notes that an act of recognition may be performed either unconditionally

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Ikäheimo 2017, 569–70.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Ikäheimo 2017, 570.
  \item \textsuperscript{18} The main critique of Markell 2003, 9–38.
\end{itemize}
or conditionally. While unconditional acts of recognition are performed without any instrumental value, conditional acts are performed to the degree that one is forced to or finds useful to perform them. The distinction is significant in analysing the use of power in recognition. Even when being in the position of A, a person might not be free to refuse an act of recognition. The act might also be tainted by an ulterior motive that takes the place of B in recognition. In the discussion of ecumenical recognition one is led to ask whether only unconditional acts of recognition, i.e. an unconditional care for the other, unconditional respect for their authority on some issue or gratitude on their contribution may be considered true recognitions and to what degree do these kinds of unconditional acts exist?

II. Theology and recognition

Theological approaches of recognition respond, very generally, to the question what happens to a person in an encounter with God? Risto Saarinen has shown that in the history of Christian theological thought “recognition” appears basically in three ways that he calls paradigms. These are the paradigms of (i) conversion, (ii) promise of self-preservation and (iii) existential attachment. In conversion paradigm person attaches her life to the object of knowledge and by this attachment her identity is transformed. Conversion paradigm puts emphasis on what happens in the act of recognition to a person on an ontological level. The object of recognition is the truth (agnitio veritatis), that, in the Christian discourse, is not something non-personal, but the divine Christ. In the conversion encounter the object of recognition (Christ) is the cause of changes that take place in the recognizer who may receive a new identity “in Christ”. The recognition of truths/Christ is an act that deeply changes the recognizer.

Compared to general recognition theories the theological “conversion paradigm” demonstrates a significant reversal of roles between the recognizer (A) and the recognized (B). While A is still the one who recognizes, it is B (Truth/Christ) who is the initiator and/or cause of recognition. B has an active role whereas A experiences the effects of recognition. Recognition in the conversion paradigm is vertical in the sense that the subject and object are not on the same level. Recognition is also interpersonal; it is not a set of propositions or norms but a person (Christ) that is recognized. The effects on A are on a personal level even though the language of “sinner” or “justified” refer also to status. It is not uncommon that a faith-relation between God and a Christian is described by the attitudes of love, respect and gratitude, attitudes Ikäheimo uses to designate an unconditional

19 IKÄHEIMO 2017.
20 I follow Veronika Hoffman’s proposal, that the “specifically theological content” of recognition is justification. HOFFMAN 2018.
21 SAARINEN 2016, 201–14.
22 SAARINEN 2016, 201–14.
form of interpersonal recognition. Theological opinions differ as to what degree it is possible for a person (A) to have unconditional attitudes toward God or other people. God’s relation towards persons is generally understood to be unconditional. Theological opinions also differ in what emphasis they put on the conversion of an individual and to what degree the encounter is mediated by the church as a sacramental communion. The relationship between individual recognitions and communal recognitions is essential for understanding ecumenical recognition.

The second paradigm, promise of self-preservation contains a variety of religious expectations defined by cognitive response to promises of protection, benefit and fidelity. This paradigm manifests strongly the hierarchical relationship between the promise-making “lord” and the promise-receiving “servant” and thus a strong heteronomy of the “servant” who recognises the promise. The focus in the second paradigm of theological recognition is in how persons are gifted with faith in the one promising their being and their future. Also in this approach, what is significant is what happens to the one who recognizes (A); the appropriate attitudes of the recognizer could be described as faith, love or obedience.

Recognition in the second paradigm is explicitly hierarchical and vertical. More than the first paradigm, the second paradigm focuses on normative statuses and the rights or powers attached to them. “Recognition” is about submitting oneself in the protection of the “lord” and becoming a part of an institution of lords and servants with assigned rights and responsibilities. By recognizing the lordship of the lord, a person is gifted with faith in the promises of the lord. In this model recognition is mediated by an institutional structure of lords and servants. One could ask to what degree such a recognition may be unconditional, if at the very foundation of the recognition lies an institutionalized structure of power imbalance. Recognition becomes synonymous with surrender and faith with submission. In this paradigm “love” is perceived quite compatible with hierarchical inferiority.

The paradigm of existential attachment speaks to the epistemological or cognitive horizons that become available via the attachment of the recognizer. In contrast to the two other theological paradigms in the third paradigm the object of recognition does not participate in the making of the recognizer. Instead, through the act of recognition the object becomes available to the recognizer. What changes in the recognizer is their cognitive/epistemic status, not their being. In Ikäheimo’s terms this form of recognition would mostly qualify as a kind of acknowledgement. It deals first and foremost with access to normative evaluations, not so much a relationship between persons.26

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23 Ikäheimo 2017, 571.
24 Saarinen 2016, 201–14.
26 Saarinen 2016, 236.
In sum, theological recognition, historically observed, appears to differ from contemporary perceptions of recognition in some essential points. Theological recognition emphasises more what happens to the person recognizing (“A”) in contrast to the what/who is recognized (“B”). Saarinen proposes that theological recognition is more about “promise” or “service” that entails change in the recognizer than something that happens to the object of recognition. Theological accounts of recognition tend to reverse the direction of effect making the recognizer (“A”) both the subject of recognition and the object of the effects of recognition. A is also paradoxically considered both an active recognizer and a passive recipient of the consequences of recognition. 27

Veronika Hoffmann has offered a contemporary theological conceptualisation of recognition in the language of justification. Hoffmann argues that theology of justification is in the core of any genuine theological accounts of recognition. For Hoffmann, essential to justification as recognition is the paradox of coinciding accurate and inaccurate identification. God is the only one who knows the depths of any person, yet in recognizing a person God creatively misrecognizes them not as sinners but as justified. In Hoffmann’s account God is the recognizer (A) who in the act of recognition takes a person (B) as something they are not (justified) and by this misrecognition creates the reality of justification. This interpretation is noteworthy for several reasons. Firstly, in contrast to majority of recognition theories Hoffmann sees that it is precisely misrecognition, not recognition, that leads to positive results for the person. In facing God persons should not struggle to be recognized as they are (sinners) but as God has promised to see and take them (justified). Hoffmann emphasises the creative power of this misrecognition, i.e. that the misrecognition itself creates the misrecognized reality. Hoffmann centres on immediate God-person relations instead of formal or institutional recognition. “We are not”, Hoffmann says, “first and foremost members of a church”. 28 At the same time, we are also members of various churches. Recognition has more aspects than the strictly interpersonal one. 29

What learnings can one take from the discussion over theological recognition to the discussion of ecumenical recognition? Ecumenical recognition appears not to be a straight forward process but more like a complex bundle of various recognitions not always in sync. Following Hoffmann, we can distinguish three categories of recognition that may help to understand ecumenical recognition. These categories are (i) recognition of facts, values and beliefs, (ii) formal recognition and (iii) interpersonal recognition. One of the main learnings from this categorization is that recognitions in these different categories work differently and do not necessarily converge.

27 SAARINEN 2016, 196–200. These views probably differ slightly in view of how much a theological tradition emphasises the passivity of the person in the salvific encounter with God.
28 HOFFMAN 2018.
29 HOFFMAN 2018.
According to Hoffmann this means that it is very possible e.g. for a person to recognize someone’s right to hold a belief (ii) without recognizing the belief as such (i) or to recognize someone as a person (iii) and a holder of a specific status or qualification (ii) without agreeing on a subject matter (i).

III. Ecumenical Recognition

In order to analyse the role of attitudes in ecumenical recognition it is beneficial first to identify what kinds of recognitive relations (institutional/interpersonal) exist in ecumenism. It has already been established that attitudes are critical to interpersonal recognition (recognition proper) and also that in theological terms the distinction between interpersonal and institutional recognition is ambiguous. Various parties to ecumenical encounters may evaluate the success of the “recognition” in the encounter differently, based on their different interpretations of the kind of recognition that should take place. Opinions also differ on whether one should, in theological terms, rather speak of reception than recognition. I will address this question first.

Recognition vs. reception

There are broadly two uses for the word “reception” in ecumenical theology. In the first use reception is associated with the specific method of official ecumenical dialogues that consist of discussion, the drafting of agreed documents based on the discussion and the receiving of the documents by the participating churches. The authority of the produced texts varies. Some dialogue documents are theological studies, others at some point result in joint agreements, signed by the authorized representatives of the churches. Because of their official status, agreed documents are often privileged in ecumenical research. As a consequence, ecumenical dialogues of relevance are perceived to take place “on paper”, or in the intellectual sphere of arguments and counter arguments. Reception becomes central, because it connects the intellectual dialogue and the reality of churches. “Reception” means that “consequences are drawn” from the agreed text. Churches take the results as their own and modify their being accordingly.

Reception processes differ from ecclesial tradition to ecclesial tradition, because traditions understand “drawing conclusions” or authoritative discernment, in different ways. Some churches, like the Catholic church and Orthodox churches generally identify authoritative teaching power first with magisterium, the teaching office, whereas in churches that do not have such an understanding of the authority of the ordained ministry the reception process is structurally more diverse. To

30 Jelle Creemer’s book on Pentecostal dialogues is a welcome exception to this tradition as it explores also the processes of discerning the composition of the dialogue commission as an explication of theology. See CREEMERS 2015.
31 HELLER 2014, 262–75.
complicate matters in some traditions the receiving or reaffirming of official documents is also called “recognition”. 32

Churches speak of reception also outside ecumenical dialogues. E.g. accepting of a person or a church into communion with other churches is called “reception”. The ordering of recognition and reception may differ. Some perceive reception the ultimate goal that follows recognition, other conceptualize the final goal of ecumenical pursuits as recognition that may be preceded by reception. 33

The conceptual lines between “reception” and “recognition” are blurry. To get hold of instances of “recognition” in various context Risto Saarinen has proposed to use a pragmatic diagnostic tool consisting of three basic features. These are the cognitive, socially binding and relational features. 34 The cognitive feature relates to an activity where the knowing person connects the perceived object with something that is already known. According to Saarinen this can also be called identification in a broad sense of the word. 35 The second feature, attachment, implies that a social bond is created between the recognizer and the recognized. Saarinen relates attachment with some form of normative evaluation and agency that has also emotional and instinctive features on top of cognitive. Availability, in Saarinen’s words points to the context that allows recognition to take place. 36

Conceptionalised like this, many instances of “ecumenical reception” could also be perceived as recognition. The first report of ARCIC can serve as an example: “By ‘reception’ we mean the fact that the people of God acknowledge such a decision or statement because they recognize in it the apostolic faith. They accept it because they discern a harmony between what is proposed to them and the sensus fidelium of the whole church”. 37 (emphasis added)

Acknowledgement, acceptance and identification (in the quotation: “recognition”) are key meanings attached to recognition. 38 In this article I assume that the notion of recognition is more appropriate for a comprehensive discussion on ecumenical relations. It comprises both the aspect of normative comparison and acceptance or refusal of arguments but also the performative behaviour of

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32 HELLER 2018; SAARINEN 2016, 172.
33 RUSCH 2007, 87.
34 SAARINEN 2016, 168–72.
35 In a broad sense means here using the concept of identification without taking a stance on whether the identification creates or merely reacts to an existing object or to what degree the object of identification can be called “identity”. SAARINEN 2016, 27–28, 184.
36 Saarinen tends to interpret religious recognition as in one way or another always as a recognition of persons. This is because recognition discourse tends to personify also non-personal objects and/or because in the Christian context often times religious recognition is mediated by Christ as a person thus making recognition happen between persons, at least in a mediated way. SAARINEN 2016, 27.
37 ARCIC I/Authority in the Church: Elucidation, para. 3. See also TILLARD (1982): “What is meant by reception? Simply the approach by which an ecclesial body, judging that it recognizes there its own faith, makes its own a rule of faith, a specific doctrinal point, a norm which an authority of the Church has determined. It is not a matter of acquiescence, pure and simple, but of the welcoming that justifies the harmony between this which is proposed and that which one “knows” of the faith.” Quoted in RUSCH 2017, 59.
38 SAARINEN 2017, 192.
“receiving” others in the sense of accepting their normative status (e.g. a citizen or as “Christians”).

Institutional ecumenical recognition

Churches are relevant recognition giving instances is several ways. Church as an institutional has the power and capacity to define a person’s status within the community by imposing sanctions or limiting interaction. Withholding a status form a person, especially a status that deeply affects the self-image and self-worth of a person like “being a Christian”, “being saved” or “justified” can have a powerful effect on a person. Some Christian traditions exercise this status defining power actively as a form of ecclesial discipline. Withdrawing status may mean temporarily denying a member of the congregation full access to the church or the community (e.g. to the Eucharist) or to some of the communities rites (e.g. baptism, marriage), removing a person’s status in the church as a whole (excommunication) or limiting or denying all forms of human interaction (shunning). Church’s withholding of recognition can be presented and/or perceived as God’s denial of recognition. God’s denial of recognition and a belief in God’s unconditional love and good will towards the human kind may be deeply disturbing for person’s religious and human existence. It is notable, in ecumenical contexts, that the status giving power of a church may reach beyond its institutional boundaries when a church does not recognise the status of a person who does hold that status within another church.

The success of ecumenical recognition is generally measured by the level of churches’ ability as institutions to recognise, or practise approval of each other. Alongside institutional recognition exists a wealth of recognitive praxis on the individual level. Here, on the level of individuals, attitudes and corresponding affirmative actions play a central role. Ecumenical recognition encompasses these two aspects or levels, the institutional and the individual.

The two aspects of institutional and individual level recognition are enveloped or mediated by a set of religious beliefs attached to the status of persons in the eyes of God and their corresponding shared life of faith as a congregation of believers, or church. Church as an institution is a complex of authoritative claims, norms, principles and rules that manifest the church’s normative rights and responsibilities. Both religious institutions and authoritative, institutionalized patterns of behaviour within them (e.g. ministry, sacraments, marriage) are justified by theological claims that may vary in different churches. An institution-to-institution ecumenical recognition, i.e. recognition by churches of churches, is mostly concerned with the aspect of recognition referred to

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39 I acknowledge the ecumenical challenge that the language of “reception” is in many ways preferred by the Orthodox theological tradition.

40 This may be seen e.g. in the description of the first World Conference of Faith and Order on the goal of ecumenical pursuits: “Whatever the way to the goal, complete unity will require that the Churches be so transformed that there may be full recognition of one another by members of all communions. Quoted in Bell 1955, 179.
as normative acknowledgement, or validity. Churches as institutions may acknowledge the validity or correctness of beliefs, the effectiveness of certain practises, such as the institution of baptism, or recognize the status of individual person or groups of persons.

Churches are not perceived only as religious institutions but also as mediators of God’s recognition and as God’s presence in the world. The church is the Body whose head is Christ. In the acts of recognition, the personal and the institutional intertwine and become hard to distinguish. Not only does institutional recognition mediate personal recognition but at times institutional becomes personal. The attachment of person-like features to churches’ recognitive praxis invites an interpretation of attitudes behind the institutional level of recognition. The church, or God, may be perceived to “reject”, “embrace”, “hate” or “love” those that the church recognizes. Because the institutional and personal subject of recognition become hard to distinguish, evaluation of the validity or appropriateness of institutional recognition starts to focus on the assumed (personal) attitudes, not the praxis that adequately communicates or makes the recognition tangible.41

For the purposes of this article the interface between individual attitudes and any forms of collectives is particularly interesting. Even though it can be argued that the recognitive actions of institutions are not motivated by attitudes, the institutions themselves may be taken as instantiations of collective attitudes and collectives as intentional agents.42 This interface between individual, collective and institutional merits further study.

Person-to-person ecumenical recognition

Ecumenical recognition is mediated also when it takes place vertically between persons. In person-to-person ecumenical encounters individuals identify, acknowledge and have each other as objects of their recognitive attitudes. How person-to-person recognitions are mediated may vary; some rely on the official teaching of the church, some on their reading of authoritative Biblical texts, some justify their praxis by shared spiritual experience, and so forth. The quality of interpersonal recognition is measured by the attitudes that constitute recognition.

In what follows I will focus on two attitudes that contribute to the success of ecumenical recognition. These two attitudes, trust and love, relate differently to recognition. Trust is an attitude that addresses the context in which recognition takes place whereas love is more seen as a motivating force.

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41 E.g. one can hold that “all persons are equal in the church” and still claim that “equality” does not need to be manifested in equal treatment. This is because emphasis is on the God’s recognitive attitude which is not required to result is equal treatment of every person. If one would look at the church as merely an institution one could point to differences in recognitive praxis by gender, orientation, race or social status and claim that not all are equal in the church.

42 List uses an enlightening conceptualisation of collective attitudes as either “aggregate”, “common” or “corporate attitudes”. Of these, especially common attitudes as attitudes believed to be held by also others in the community and corporate attitudes as attitudes held by a collective as an intentional agent might prove interesting for further study. See List 2014, 1601–22.
Trust is one of the main attitudes in personal ecumenical encounters. In theological discourse trust is most often associated with faith and/or certitude. Trust is faith as *fiducia* or certitude as knowledge (*agnitio*). Trust describes the faith-relationship between a person and God or person and the content of faith (Christ/Scriptures/doctrine).

Recognition assumes some measure of trust. Two examples can be given. In Saarinen’s theological paradigm of “promise of self-preservation” recognition encompass the heteronomous relationship between the promise-giving lord and the promise-receiving servant. Servant, in recognizing the lord, is gifted with trusting faith to the promise of their own future. In this paradigm, trust is a gift of recognition.

In the context of ecumenical relations trust appears both as a horizontal and as a vertical phenomenon. As a vertical phenomenon “trust” is about faithful trust in God, God’s guiding Spirit in the community of believers and the presence of the Spirit in ecumenical processes. This vertical aspect of trust often overcomes the horizontal aspect between persons in the community. Dietrich Ritschl has proposed a rehabilitation of “horizontal trust” in ecumenical relations. This would challenge ecumenical dialogues to reform their perception of doctrine, doctrinal language and the pursuit of doctrinal consensus as the criterion of ecumenical recognition. Ritschl’s point is that “horizontal” does not mean “sociological”; horizontal trust is fundamentally Christological. The horizontal and vertical aspects are not set up against each other. They are both subsumed by the presence of God as Christ in the community. Horizontal trust is trust in the presence of Christ in other communities. This is in general the way in which the World Council of Churches has described the goal of ecumenism; as the ability to recognize that the church of the creeds is present in other Christian communities. Trust is also not only a medium for ecumenical advance, it is not merely something one needs in order to advance towards more profound ecumenical achievements such as Eucharistic hospitality or formal recognition of ministry. Trust has a face value; it is about being a community.

Trust also has a forward-looking aspect. Trust is about betting on others to respect the trust that has been invested or a unilateral prior investment without certainty about the result. Trusting is risky. It makes one vulnerable to the attitudes and behaviour of the other. Conceptually overlapping with recognition trust has also been described as a gift. The gift-aspect of trust emphasises the

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43 SAARINEN 2016, 211.
44 In a theological sense the sociological phenomenon of trust may is a consequence of faith, but the specific character of that faith is not in question here. URBANIAK 2014, 1-9. For an example in ecumenical context see e.g. the World Council of Churches document The Church: Towards a Common Vision, para. 13.
45 RITSCHL 2005, 57, 179.
46 The Church: Towards a Common Vision, para. 9.
voluntary character of trust. Trust cannot be forced and it is always given with conviction. One important character of trust is that it is not naive but informed. Misplaced trust is dangerous. Rudolf von Sinner asserts that it is trust that allows persons to live together in a way that could be described as “assumed neighbourliness” or conviviality. In order for trust to be a strength in a community, it needs to be a collectively promoted attitude. Trust is only effective as a mutual attitude.\textsuperscript{47}

Mutuality is central to the effectiveness of ecumenical recognition. “Mutuality” does not mean that each recognize the other as the same as oneself (symmetrical recognition). It describes a relation between the recongniser and the recognised where neither ultimately has more power over the other in the act of recognition. Understandings on the necessity of mutuality of recognition vary. Some hold that in order for recognition to be “full”, recognition must be symmetrical. In reality, forms of mutual recognition are rarely completely symmetrical. Even asymmetrical relations of recognition may still be pragmatically useful for future engagement with the other, especially when practised in an atmosphere of trust. In a trusting relationship there is less need to show power or to be suspicious of one’s rights not being respected. There is trust that misrecognitions will be corrected, recognition will be received and that no one will be forcefully assimilated to the other by something like “coerced recognition”. This could be described as trust in the integrity of identities in ecumenical encounters.

An informed atmosphere of trust makes it possible to counteract some of the features of recognition considered pathological. One of the central pathologies of recognition is the use of oppressive power inherent in the act of recognition. E.g. Kelly Oliver has claimed that “recognition” is pathologically oriented towards the oppression of those seeking to be recognized by the group (or culture) that has colonized them and possesses the power to give and withdraw recognition. Those in a dominant position are the agents of recognition, also for the oppressed. Even if one would argue with the Hegelian imagery on the mutual dependency of the master (recognition-giver) and the salve (recognition-receiver), recognition for Oliver remains a “life and death struggle with another self-consciousness”. As long as the struggle for power remains, also the pathology of oppression remains. Kelly also points out that in real-life slavery, the master and the slave are not equal subjects in the struggle. The slave has internalized their position as recognition-receiver. What the slave ultimately desires, is not to fulfil their position in the oppressive struggle for recognition, but to become an agent of their own recognition.\textsuperscript{48}

A way out of the pathology of oppression may for Kelly take place by moving from a self-centred to other-centred love. For Kelly, “other-centred love” as an affect, i.e. as a movement

\textsuperscript{47} VON SINNER 2004, 328–32.
\textsuperscript{48} OLIVER 2001, 26–27.
towards the other, generates agency among the oppressed. A pathological recognitive relation is a struggle for superiority against inferiority. An affective relation is open and welcoming of the other. Kelly is not alone suggesting that love should be first and foremost perceived as a relationship that entails a complex of attitudes. Instead of self- and other-centeredness, e.g. Brümmer speaks of impersonal and personal relationships. Impersonal relationships are characterised by one person objectifying the other, rather than relating them as a person. An impersonal relationship is manipulative, because one party of the relationship is in control. The objectified party of the relationship has no agency and cannot either bring about or prevent the relationship from taking place. Brümmer’s impersonal relationship represents a case of pathological recognition. Irrespective of whether the attitude of the recogniser is benevolent or not, the one being recognised has lost their agency, which is an essential part of their personhood.

Personal relationships retain the agency of everyone involved. For Brümmer the riskiest form of relationship is a “fellowship”, a relationship that involves both parties entirely as a person. In an impersonal, manipulative or even in a personal, contractual relationship one of the parties either has the full control of the relationship or participates in it as an evaluator of the other’s usefulness. A fellowship, Brümmer argues, involves the bestowal of personal value and commitment to actions and attitudes towards the other in the future. Following Brümmer one could say that love as a characteristic of personal relationship both creates commitments, that foster trust, but involve risky personal investments that create insecurities.

Love and Recognition
Recognition theories show an integral relationship between person-to-person recognition and a complex of recognitive attitudes. Following Honneth, these attitudes most often include love, respect and esteem. They may be present in various degrees and constellations and they may function differently in different contexts, but in one way or another they all contribute to what is called “taking someone as a person”. They also are how the “taking as a person” happens. For Honneth, love is the primary form of recognition. “Love” encompasses several kinds interactions from intimate relations and friendship to family relations. Intimate love relations are constituted by “strong emotional attachments among a small number of people”\textsuperscript{52}. Recognition as love becomes real when persons mutually confirm each other in regards to their needs and thus recognize each other as needing creatures.Ikäheimo qualifies Honneth’s attitude complex even further. He introduces a distinction between “purely intersubjective” or immediately interpersonal and a

\textsuperscript{49} Oliver 2001, 28, 42–43.
\textsuperscript{50} Brümmer 1993, 158.
\textsuperscript{51} Brümmer 1993, 169–70.
\textsuperscript{52} Honneth 1995, 95.
“mediated interpersonal” recognition, both of which fall under the category of “recognition proper”. Both the purely intersubjective and mediated interpersonal recognition may appear in two variants, a conditional one and an unconditional one. What Honneth calls “love” is in Ikäheimo’s view an attitude that is not mediated by institutions or norms, that is unconditional and is characterised by a concern for the life, wellbeing or happiness of the other person.53

Honneth argues that love, or adequate experiences of love, are essential parts of one’s psychological development. It is necessary to experience love to become a healthy and functioning individual. This, in turn, is foundational to further social and political forms of recognition. While it is not difficult to agree with Honneth on the fundamental psychological relevance of loving care, Honneth’s critics dislike perceiving recognition fundamentally as a service to individual’s self-realization.54 The psychological undertone of Honneth’s recognition theory brings love to the fore, but both remains confined within intimate relations and runs the risk of instrumentalising others in service of one’s personal development.

Love in Theology
In recognition theories love is primarily perceived as an attitude motivating recognition and strongly connected to the idea of self-worth. As a theological topic love is much discussed. It is not possible to offer an extensive presentation of historical discussions on the theology of love within this text. It suffices to say that in theology, love appears in various forms reaching from the erotic to the desire to union with God and from the charitable to the particular love in intimate relations and to the general demand to “love your neighbour”. “Love” is one of the cardinal virtues, some have promoted a theory where love is detached from the body as a spiritual reality whereas others perceive love always as embodied. The perceived relationship between love and self and love and community has been differently conceptualised and love has been referred to as the ultimate motive by conflicting parties in church (and society).55 It has to be recognised that taking love primarily as an attitude does not do full justice to the rich and complex treatment of love in theology. Love as an attitude is taken as a starting point due to its prominence in recognition theories and the wider theological discussion on love is used to offer examples on how theological approaches may expand or even necessitate additional viewpoints.

The conceptual analysis of recognition in contemporary discussions has shown that the attitude of love appears in two kinds of interpersonal relations of recognition; in the horizontal relationship between persons and the vertical relationship between human persons and God.

53 IKÄHEIMO 2017, 570.
54 E.g. McBride argues that “recognition” is fundamentally not a psychological but normative phenomenon dealing with “our capacity to evaluate ourselves in light of variety of normative standards. See McBRIDE 2013, 67.
55 JEANROND 2010, 6–10.
Christian theology of love proceeds from a conviction that God is Love (1 John 4:8,16) and that divine love is the only criterion for human love. Especially protestant theological tradition has distinguished between the divine and human manifestations of love and questioned the capacity or possibility for human beings to properly love at all. Some theologies have proposed that while genuine love originates from God, one could find potential in the human capacity to love within the complex of human and divine love.\textsuperscript{56} In Luther, Christ gives himself in faith to the believer who participates in God’s love and becomes, in faith, Christ to others. In contradiction to a natural or human orientation to love what is desirable, Christ in the believer turns towards the sinner and makes it possible for the believer to love the unlovable.\textsuperscript{57} In Tillich, love is specifically the potential to reunite what is experienced as separate. Love creates a new transformative community of love. Rahner gives priority to the love of God as the source of proper neighbourly love and self-love. Both Tillich and Rahner assume the presence of creative desire in human love.\textsuperscript{58}

From this very brief sketch of love in theology one can already observe that in theological discussion the horizontal and vertical recognition relations often intertwine. Whether created or gifted, human love is of God’s love. Love is also, in the words of Werner Jeanrod, an ambiguous vocation; pure love belongs to God’s realm, not to the contextualized life on earth, even to the degree that some theological interpretations of love have been deemed unsuitable for building human communities.\textsuperscript{59} Even with the re-introduction of human desire as an accepted part of love, the theological analysis of love ends with the paradox of the unattainability of love. It does not follow from this that that love might not be a medium of recognition, it merely means that love as an aspect of recognition is qualified by the very fragile human capacity to love.

A second noteworthy aspect of theologies of love is that on top of the subjective aspect of love, love also has aspects that relate to social contexts and conventions.\textsuperscript{60} Against the idea that “love” is only an aspect of intersubjective recognition, love is often contextualized in friendships, partnerships and other institutions of love that organise desire and \textit{eros} for both individuals and the collective bodies of selves. Love is never detached from the social praxis of communicating love. Brümmer goes as far as to suggest that love has been mistakenly taken as an attitude when in his view it should be understood as a relation.\textsuperscript{61} While for the purposes of love as a motivation for recognition it is useful to conceptualize it as an attitude, also as such there is integral connection

\textsuperscript{56} JEANROND 2010, 105–6.
\textsuperscript{57} KÄRKKÄINEN 2004, 109.
\textsuperscript{58} JEANROND 2010, 170.
\textsuperscript{59} JEANROND 2010, 64, Jeanrond is referencing Hanna ARENDT (1929).
\textsuperscript{60} JEANROND 2010, 174.
\textsuperscript{61} BRÜMMER 1993, 33.
between the attitude, the orientation towards the other and the conventional institutional forms through which love is conveyed.

**Friendship and Love**

Friendship, as a dimension or manifestation of love has been considered as a nexus between personal and public realms of life. Unlike some other aspects of love, friendship seems to be less theologically laden. Friendship-love is not restricted to the religious realm but may be experienced in all spheres of society. According to Jeanrond friendship is “a summary term for forms of free relationships built on respect, trust, honesty, obligation and mutuality”. Friendship not only encompasses several aspects of recognition, classically e.g. Aristotle considers friendship as one of the possible outcomes of recognition. Against Honneth’s idea of love as intensive, intimate and uncontrollable affect, friendship-love appears more practical, and reliable. It is a complex that emerges out of respect, trust, honesty, obligation and mutuality. The demand to love one’s neighbour prevalent in biblical and Christian discourses seems to point more to this kind of love that is not first and foremost a spontaneous, intimate, affect but an attitude or virtue that one can train and develop.

Describing the attitude of love in terms of friendship might seem to downplay or dilute love into something less divine. Quite the contrary, friendship is one of the New Testament ways of describing the elevated status of Jesus’ followers. The followers of Jesus are called friends, not servants. Between Jesus and his followers, there is no relationship of servitude but of friendship, because Jesus’ followers have been made to know everything that also Jesus knows about God. Jesus’ followers have also been given the commandment to love just as God has loved them; by laying their life for others. And “no one has greater love than this”. (John 15:12-17) They have been appointed so that they may go and bear fruit and they have been given commandments so that they may love one another.

**IV. The Role of Love in Ecumenical Recognition**

In ecumenical theology “love” has been a contested attitude because it has been associated with “false ireinism”, a willingness to compromise truth for peace. Behind the criticism is an understanding of Christian community as a normative community with distinct limits. Discerning between the insiders and the outsiders is a question of truthfulness, and no one should be counted as an insider based merely on warm feelings. Proponents of this view might not be against ecumenism as such, but for them that ecumenical pursuits align with the goal of distinguishing between insiders

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64 SUMMERS 2009, 9.
and outsiders against receiving “just anybody”. Love is understood not as the motivation for recognition but as a failure of discernment.

A response to this criticism starts with a reiteration of the two previously mentioned orientations that rob recognition of its desired goal. These two orientations are the orientation to dominate and the orientation to separate from the other. In the orientation to dominate the subject (of recognition) considers itself to contain, by itself, the power to discern, the power to define and the power to be unmoved by its own decisions. Within the truth vs. love discourse this self-contained subject either uses their power to exclude or they fail to exercise discernment (i.e. “love”). In conjunction with this orientation to dominate is the orientation to separate from the other. In the act of discerning recognition the recognizer remains unaffected by the acts of recognition. The view contrasting love and truth focuses mostly on the end result of recognition. Those recognized have passed the test and are now within accepted boundaries. The problem with this view is that it concentrates solely on the knowledge that the recognizing subject has on the object. The other-centred approach suggested above, especially in the mediated way in which it manifests in the praxis of Christian communities, is less focused on knowledge than the behaviour or new practical situation based on knowledge.

Within the framework of recognition, love is not “lack of discernment” but something along the side of discernment. In the course of ecumenical recognition love is not only the critical attitude of recognition, it is also to the Truth that is the ultimate source of recognition. In a theological sense recognition changes, not only the status of the other person or community recognized, but also, and perhaps most importantly, the one giving recognition. In love, there is also receptivity. As religious recognition, ecumenical recognition is ultimately initiated by God’s initiative towards humans. Recognition of the “other” is recognition of the God’s truth. In facing Truth, ecumenical advancement often includes some metanoia or repentance and turning back to God.

From a theological point of view church is the central institution of love. The praxis of love is always somehow mediated by the body of the faithful that is the Body of Christ. Neither salvation nor ecumenical advancement is a solitary project. Both are about the emergence of the body of Christ as God’s creative and healing activity. This communal context of Christian love puts emphasis on the mediators of love/recognition. Love is not an abstract unconditional unmediated

65 The description of “membership organisations” comes from Stevens, see Stevens, 1999.
66 Patchen Markell points out this difference in focusing either on knowledge or on “what we do in the presence of the other.” Markell uses this distinction, originally from Cavell (Cavell, 1977) to point out the shortcomings of the concept of recognition and to promote the use of “acknowledgement” instead. For Markell the concept of recognition fails to encompass changes in the recognizing subject in relation to the knowledge acquired. Markell 2003 34–35.
67 This receptivity has been especially emphasised in the “receptive ecumenism” approach. See Murray and Murray 2012, 79–94.
68 For an example of how conversion has become a method of ecumenical dialogue see e.g. Lutheran World Federation and Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, From Conflict to Communion. Lutheran–Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017 (2013).
concern for the life, wellbeing and happiness of the other but the variety of mediating norms and 
institutions where attitudes emerge as appropriate actions. It is based on truth, it manifests in charity 
and is carried out in humility. Love as an attitude is other-centred, hospitable praxis that brings 
forth ecumenical recognition.

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69 See *Unitatis Redintegratio*, para. 11.
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