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### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to unfold Peter L. Berger's new paradigm of the "Two Pluralisms" for the German context, concretizing and localizing the management of religious plurality with regard to central societal fields. It is argued that, besides the bird's-eye view of the global and national developments, more differentiated analyses of smaller-scale units (like federal states, municipalities, and cities) are needed which zoom into the concrete local negotiation processes, opening them up with regard to their topics, actor constellations, dynamics, and effects. While Berger builds up his new paradigm in the connection of the social macro-level and the individual micro-level, this paper deals primarily with the *meso*-level and the *consequences* of the "Two Pluralisms" in the institutional contexts of politics/law, education, symbolic representation, and communication that are currently undergoing a significant change through secularization and religious pluralization while, however, have so far hardly been examined with regard to their dynamics and the *intended* integrative effects.

### **Keywords**

Religious pluralism, secularization, Germany, federalism, Islam, state-religion relation, multi-level governance, contract governance, religious education, religious space, interreligious dialogue, Peter L. Berger

### **Contact**

Anna Körs

anna.koers@uni-hamburg.de

University of Hamburg, Academy of World Religions, Von Melle Park 8, 20146 Hamburg, Germany

## **From National “Formulas of Peace” to Local Negotiation Processes**

In his book *The Many Altars of Modernity*, Peter L. Berger diagnoses, from a global perspective: “Religious pluralism produces two distinct political problems: how the state defines its own relation to religion, and how the state sets out to regulate the relations of different religions with each other. In practical terms, this leads to a search for what I propose to call formulas of peace“ (2014, 79). Especially the last chapter, *The Political Management of Pluralism*, deals with the search for formulas of peace, and Berger arrives at the “policy-relevant conclusion“: “Under modern conditions, some version of church-state separation is most likely to support a stable and humane political order capable of managing what I have called ‘the two pluralisms‘“ (ibid., 92).

Indisputably, the relations between state and church or religion, as the case may be, are an important institutional factor for the explanation of the political management of religious plurality, and a segregation is advantageous for claiming different religious interests although the connections are not unambiguous at all and the state-church relationship is always part of multicausal constellations and complex dynamics (Koenig 2009, 310). Thus, the German system of positive neutrality with diverse cooperations between the state and organized religion whose regulations emerged in co-evolution with the two mainline Christian denominations increasingly came under pressure from secularization and religious pluralization. It is currently especially confronted with the challenge to open up even for Islam as the third largest religious community with a share of adherents of nearly 5% of the German population. Hence, great efforts are being made by politicians as well as Muslim representatives to include their organizations into state-church law (“Staatskirchenrecht”).

This article takes the *Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age* established by Berger as a starting point for trying to concretize and localize the “two pluralisms“ and their management for Germany on the basis of selected societal fields. For this purpose, negotiation processes on the meso-level of mediating institutions in the fields of politics/law, education, symbolic representation, and communication are considered in which religious plurality is currently negotiated in Germany. Such negotiation processes always take place “locally“ or, in the federalism of Germany, within the sixteen federal states (in the following also: states) which are in charge of essential legal and political matters of religion, with clear variations in their way of handling religious plurality and scope of implementation left for the municipalities and cities. Here, the central significance of states and municipalities also results from the background that, despite immigration since the 1950s, it is not until the 1990s that the federal government understood Germany as an immigrant country, nor did it consider

integration politics as a task of national importance (Bommes and Kolb 2012) while religious policy as an independent policy area is developing only now (Liedhegener and Pickel 2016).

### **Religious and Ideological Plurality in a Comparison between German Federal States**

Due to secularization and religious pluralization, the religious situation in Germany has changed considerably in the course of the past decades. While 96% of the German population still belonged to one of the two great Christian churches in 1950 and only 4% were either non-denominational or belonged to another Christian denomination or another religion, sixty years later, in 2010, the proportion of those affiliated with the Protestant or Catholic churches dropped to approximately 59% – and the former “rest” of 4% rose to a share of 40%. Among the latter, 30% are without a religious affiliation and about 10% members of another Christian denomination or another religion, Muslims representing the largest group with nearly 5% (Pollack and Müller 2013, 34). Thus, in a worldwide comparison between 232 countries, Germany ranks among the 15% of the countries with a “high religious diversity” (Pew Research Center 2014, 15). There exist, however, considerable differences between the federal states.

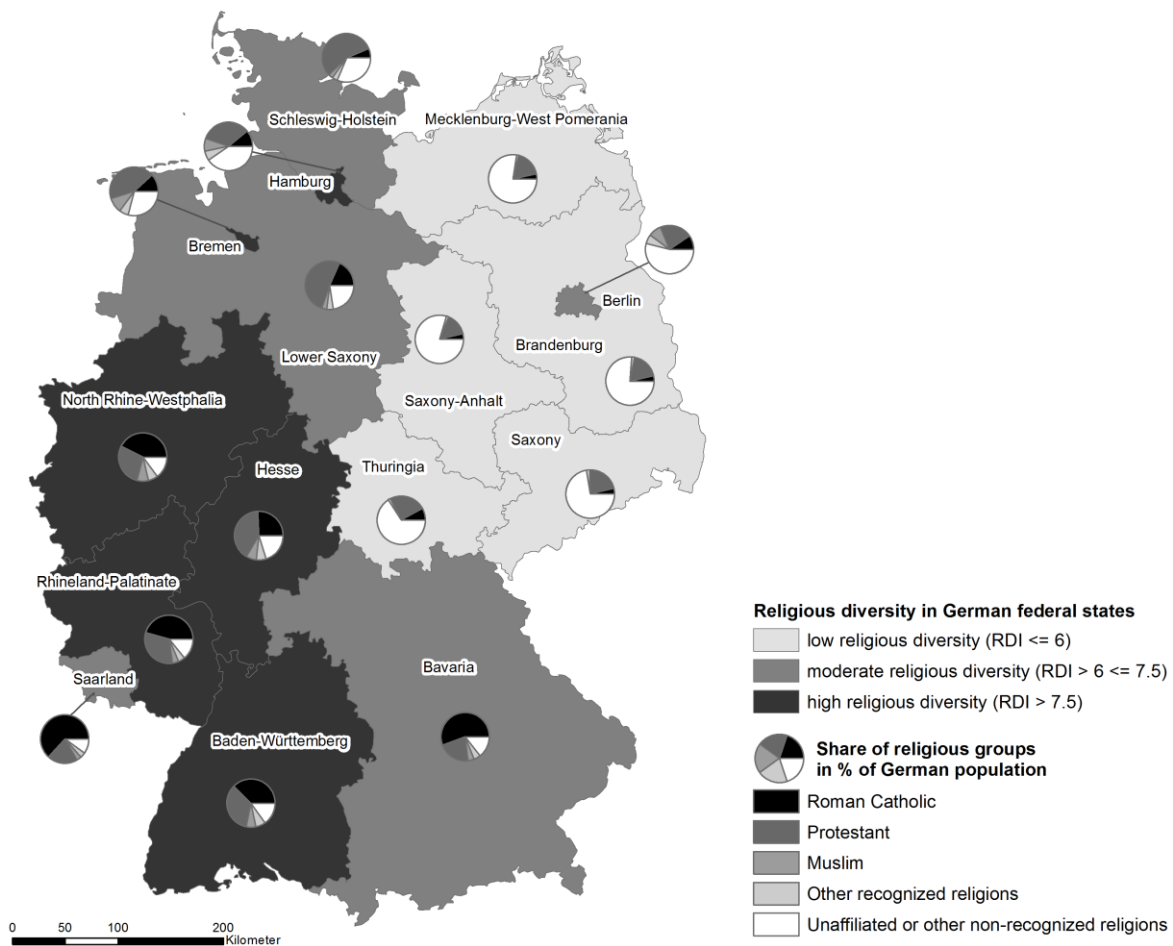


Fig. 1: Religious diversity in German federal states. Own figure. Sources: The calculation of the Religious Diversity Index (RDI) (for method, see Pew Research Centre, 2014, 8-10) refers to the population shares of eight groups – Roman Catholic, Protestant, Free Churches, Orthodox, Jewish, other recognized religions, Muslim, unaffiliated or other non-recognized religions – which were summarized into the five listed groups for visualization in the circle diagrams. The RDI is based on data from Census 2011 (Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder 2014), calculations by Yendell (2014, 63) based on estimates by Haug et al. (2009, 107) and Statistical Yearbook 2011 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2011). The higher the RDI is, the more religiously and ideologically diverse is the population of the respective federal state.

As figure 1 shows, basically three groups can be identified: The highest religious diversity is visible in a group of six West German states (dark grey) which are characterized by the fact that they show no absolute (non)religious majority but feature a mixed denominational influence through the members of the two great Christian churches while, at the same time, showing a high proportion of religiously unaffiliated as well as a high proportion of Muslims in the population. Besides, there is a group of five states (grey) with a religiously plural but still predominantly Christian or secular influence: each two West German states with a predominantly Protestant (Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony) or Catholic population (Bavaria and Saarland), while the city state of Berlin is predominantly characterized by a secular and, at the same time, clear religiously plural influence. Finally, the third group of five exclusively East German states (light grey) is largely secular and hardly religiously plural.

Thus, 98% of the Muslims in Germany live in the old federal states including Berlin (Haug et al. 2009, 106).

Here it becomes clear that the states already, to some extent, vary considerably with regard to their religious and ideological population composition, any religious policy (in its widest sense) thus meeting different prerequisites. However, nothing can be concluded from these structural differences, especially not an assumption that where there is hardly any religious plurality there is no reaction to that fact. The contrary is the case when especially in East German states associations like Pegida (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident) emerge and the AfD Party (Alternative for Germany), founded in 2013, with the slogan, “Islam does not belong to Germany” in their manifesto, enters the state parliaments with up to 24% of the votes (in Saxony-Anhalt, but even with about 15% in Baden-Württemberg). The question how the local management of religious plurality is influenced by further structural, political, economic and cultural factors and how this, furthermore, is connected with developments on a national, transnational, and global level, is an important research desideratum, remaining subject to further analyses. At this point, it should first be shown that the concrete negotiation processes take place in partly very different contexts, influenced by the local empirical-factual plurality.

### **Local Management of Religious Plurality in Selected Societal Fields**

In the following, concrete negotiation processes are outlined in selected fields with regard to their actors’ constellations, dynamics, and effects. This happens with a view of the internal variance in Germany on the one hand and of Hamburg as a deepening case study on the other hand which presents an interesting reference point with the legal authority of a city state as well as its self-claimed and attributed “pioneering role” when dealing with religious plurality (Foroutan et al. 2014; Spielhaus and Herzog 2015). The presentation primarily refers to Islam and its organizations and adherents which considerably pushes religious pluralization and the debate on the political management, the interreligious negotiations and the positioning in the religious field becoming visible besides the internal Islamic ones.

### **Law and Politics**

One of the central issues in the management of religious plurality is the recognition and legal equality of religious communities. In fact there are a number of different approaches (see Spielhaus and Herzog 2015, 16): In some states, thematic regulations were agreed on concerning, for example, holidays, funerals, or religious care in prisons (1), while in other states, different realms were regulated through contracts or contracts are being negotiated (2).

A formal legal recognition of a Muslim community as a public corporation (“Körperschaft öffentlichen Rechts”) is, so far, an exception that has happened in two states (Hesse and Hamburg, see below) (3). Again in other states, no formal regulations were agreed on so far (4). Thus, numerous paths to cooperation have emerged that not necessarily follow each other chronologically. Nevertheless the recognition of Islam and other religious communities in Germany is discussed mostly with a view on a status as a public corporation, contracts with the state possibly being one step on this path.

This applies also to Hamburg where contracts with regulations about holidays, education, funerals, and other relevant aspects were made between the Hamburg Senate and the Muslim associations as well as the Alevi umbrella organisation, each stating in its last article that the religious communities aim at attaining the rights of public corporation and that the parties agree on the restructuring of the mutual relations necessary for it (Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg 2012). In this regard, the contract conclusions and their intended further development follow the logic of an equal status with the Christian churches (and also the Jewish community) while, at the same time, leading to new positions and disparities in the religious field.

Thus, a central question in the course of the six years of negotiations in Hamburg was who was the negotiation partner on the side of the Muslim associations and who is represented by them (Haddad 2007). While a large proportion of Muslim communities in Hamburg is organized in the three great Muslim associations who were initially recognized as religious communities and became contract partners (SCHURA Hamburg, DITIB Nord, VIKZ), only a minority of the Muslims living in Hamburg belong to their congregations. The degree of organization of the Muslim population in Germany is estimated at only 10 to 15% (Deutscher Bundestag 2007, 5), so that Muslim associations only represent a minority among the Muslims. Moreover, demarcations between religious communities in the intra-Muslim field are also connected with the contracts. Thus, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat community (AMJ), based in Hamburg since the 1950s – which considers itself a Muslim community, locally maintaining multiple relationships with Muslim and other congregations while not being recognized as part of the Muslim community of believers by the Muslim organizations who are contractual partners – remained excluded from the negotiations. This is remarkable also in so far as, on the federal level, it is involved in the German Islam Conference since 2014, having reached a status as a public corporation first in Hesse in 2013 and in Hamburg one year after the conclusion of the contracts, so far as the only Muslim organization in Germany. The latter may be understood as an upgrading against the other Muslim associations in Hamburg, but nevertheless the AMJ remains in an outsider position in the intra-Muslim

field. In contrast, the Alevi community in Hamburg positioned itself as a non-Muslim community and insisted on a contract of their own in order not to be taken in as Sunni Muslims, rather positioning itself as an independent religious community with a strong proximity to the German mainstream non-Muslim majority. With the conclusion of a separate, nearly identical contract, they succeeded with this, the Hamburg political representatives granting the Alevis a special status despite their efforts for more uniformly organized partners (Haddad 2017).

This illustrates how presuppositional and negotiable the contracts are with regard to their shaping, being ambivalent in their effects and as an instrument of recognitions at the same time. As a legal measure for integration they are, on the one hand, an important step towards an institutional equality of Islam while, on the other hand, leading to standardizations in the intra-Muslim field which, in turn, are connected with appropriations, demarcations and new positions. In this process, the disparity with the Christian churches and other religious communities with a status as legal corporations remains, and the question arises if it is not, on the contrary, the privileges of the established churches that belong on the test bench, the relationship between religion and society needing a fundamentally new regulation (Bukow 2016, 247). It must also be noted that the legal equality of religious communities in general (Pollack 2014a) and the contracts in particular (Körs 2015a) are viewed much more sceptically in the wider population than in politics and in the participating religious communities. And finally, the contracts unfold their dynamics even in the interreligious field, changing the interreligious constellations as well as the relations with secular actors as will be shown in the following for the field of Religious Education.

### **Religious Education**

The equal participation in Religious Education was one of the central motives of the Hamburg Muslims and Alevis for the contracts, and even in Germany the introduction of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is one of the central integration projects with regard to Islam (SVR 2016, 43). Religious Education in Germany has a special status against the background of the experience with the totalitarian system of National Socialism, being the only subject in public schools guaranteed in Article 7 Paragraph 3 of the Basic Law, and is to be taught “in accordance with the principles of the religious communities”. Religious Education is thus a “shared matter”, the state maintaining the right to supervision while the religious communities are responsible for the design of its contents. While the efforts to introduce IRE in state schools date back into the 1970s, the problem was and still is that the federal states must first of all recognize Muslim communities as religious communities in order to introduce IRE as a

regular school subject in the sense of Article 7. Since this recognition has only happened in the course of the past years, there is currently a transitional situation with a number of very different models and trial courses.

On closer inspection, we find a maximal variance of models with as many approaches as there are federal states in Germany. Nevertheless, the states can be summarized in five groups: While the states with a high or moderate religious diversity either already introduced a denomination-oriented IRE as a proper subject (1) or intend to do so with corresponding trial models (2), other states invoked the so-called “Bremen Clause” according to Article 141 which provides for an exception from the fundamental regulation of Religious Education and go different special ways (3). In contrast, in most of the East German states with a low religious diversity, no IRE is so far offered, this, however, being partly intended like according to the coalition agreement in Saxony-Anhalt (4). Finally, in Hamburg interreligious-dialogical “Religious Education for all” is taught since the 1980s which will be discussed in the following (5).

The special feature of the Hamburg Model “Religious Education for all” is that the students are not segregated according to denominations and religions but taught together. The model is based on the opening of the Protestant Church towards non-Christian religious communities so that, early on, even representatives of Judaism, Islam, Alevism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Bahaimism participated in designing contents of Religious Education (Doedens and Weiße 1997). The central argument for the nationwide introduction of IRE, legal equality, therefore missed the point of reality in Hamburg in so far as Muslims were already involved, a separately taught IRE being interpreted rather as counterproductive as a political setback with regard to integration. Nor did the conclusion of the contracts lead to Muslims and Alevis wanting to enforce their own Religious Education but rather strengthened the model of “Religious Education for all” which is again in a process of change, being negotiated jointly by the participating parties. With the contracts, however, Muslims and Alevis did not only formally gain equal rights with regard to designing Religious Education but also with regard to the training of RE teachers and academic theology. For so far, “Religious Education for all” could only be taught by Protestant teachers, a fact that changed with the contracts so that the argument of equality with regard to the academic training and the introduction of Islamic theology at German universities as recommended by the German Council of Science and Humanities (WR, 2010) was valid even in Hamburg and arrangements for the university training were included in the contract.

With the institutional equality of Muslims and Alevis, however, a new disparity with other, formerly included, religious communities was created since, with the contracts, the circle of



participants in “Religious Education for all” was limited to the contracting parties. Especially for Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs who are currently still comparatively little organized, their exclusion seems to have become a catalyst for their institutional adaptation in order to conclude a contract of their own with the Senate (DBU 2016, 22). Besides, the contracts also alerted the secular associations and especially the Secular Forum Hamburg as their merger which demands, among other things, the consideration of non-religious ideologies in Religious Education (Weiße 2016, 47). And finally, “Religious Education for all” is based on the self-exclusion of the Catholic Church in Hamburg which teaches its own Catholic Religious Education in its more than 20 Catholic schools (ibid., 40).

Religious educational politics is thus a powerful instrument, and the discourses about Religious Education are also to be understood as discourses about the definition of religion and religious plurality. Besides the dominating theological and pedagogical perspectives, sociological approaches are therefore needed which consider Religious Education as a societal and political phenomenon, investigating it as the place for negotiating the significance of the religious (Jödicke 2013).

### **Space-Symbolic Representation**

Institutional equality of religious communities includes their space-symbolic representation in the public space. In many German cities, negotiation processes take place especially between Muslims and the non-Muslim mainstream society about mosque buildings and the visibility connected with them. According to a nationwide study, there are 2,971 Muslim communities in Germany in total with regularly employed religious ministers, their spatial distribution, according to a survey of 835 congregations, corresponds largely to the distribution of the Muslim population. As shown in table 1, solely in the two large and religiously diverse states of Baden-Württemberg and North Rhine-Westphalia, half of the Muslim communities (51%) are located, and correspondingly, half of the Muslim population (49.7%) lives there, while only 1.6% of the Muslim communities are located in the East German states, with only 1.8% of the Muslims in Germany living there. However, only 7 to 12% of the Muslim communities are recognizable to the outside as a mosque at all (Schmidt and Stichs 2012, 226-27). It is exactly these which could have great symbolic power for supporters of a religiously plural society – but especially also for its opponents as shown in numerous conflicts around the construction of mosques in German cities. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001 in the USA, mosques have increasingly become targets of plots and attacks which happen, according to the information of the police crime statistics, primarily in states with a correspondingly high proportion of Muslim communities and the Muslim population. Thus

North Rhine-Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg account for more than half (57.5%), the East German states only for 2.8% of the 219 criminal offenses in total registered in the years 2001 to 2011. While this is not surprising since politically motivated offences “with the attack target ‘religious site/mosque’” were registered, it is noteworthy that the reservations against building a mosque are greatest precisely in the East German states where mosques hardly exist or hardly any Muslims live (Yendell 2014, 65), which already points to the importance of contacts and encounters (see next section).

	German states	Distribution of Muslim communities <sup>1</sup> in % (n=835)	Distribution of Muslim population <sup>2</sup> in % (N=4,047,019)	Distribution of crimes with target mosque <sup>3</sup> in % (N=219)
1	Hesse	9.6	10.3	5.0
2	Baden-Wuerttemberg	17.6	16.6	19.6
3	North Rhine-Westphalia	33.4	33.1	37.9
4	Bremen	1.2	1.6	2.3
5	Hamburg	3.7	3.5	1.8
6	Rhineland-Palatinate	5.0	4.0	3.7
7	Lower Saxony	5.7	6.2	13.7
8	Berlin	4.3	6.9	1.8
9	Bavaria	14.0	13.2	7.8
10	Schleswig-Holstein	3.0	2.1	1.8
11	Saarland	0.8	0.8	1.8
12	Thuringia	0.4	0.2	0.5
13	Saxony	0.2	0.7	1.4
14	Brandenburg	0.4	0.1	0.0
15	Mecklenburg-West Pomerania	0.4	0.1	0.9
16	Saxony-Anhalt	0.2	0.7	0.0
	Total	100	100	100

Tab. 1: Distribution of Muslim communities, Muslim population and crimes against religious sites/mosques according to German states. Sources: <sup>1</sup> Schmidt and Stichs (2012, 234); <sup>2</sup> calculations by Yendell (2014, 63) based on estimates by Haug et. al (2009, 107); <sup>3</sup> data from the German Bundestag (Deutscher Bundestag 2012) on the politically motivated crimes committed during the period 2001 to 2011 with the target of “religious sites/mosques” according to Police Crime Statistics of Germany.

Even in Hamburg where there are three recognizable mosques – Imam Ali Mosque which is the only purpose-built one, the mosque of the Ahmadiyya community in a converted factory building, and Centrum Mosque in a converted bath – there is a discrepancy between presence and representation. In fact, there are 64 Muslim communities in the city, mostly situated in spaces which are inappropriate already in the practical sense and, besides, not representative at all (Körs 2017). At the same time, the process of secularization is also emerging in Hamburg with, according to their own forecast, every third of the 142 church buildings in Hamburg East, the nationwide largest Protestant church district, to be closed or transformed

until 2030 (Hamburger Abendblatt 12.06.2015). Although it is basically possible to take over and convert church buildings according to the guidelines of the Protestant Church, this is reserved to Christian and Jewish religious communities while a conversion to a mosque is ruled out (Nordelbische Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche 2007). And yet the conversion of a former Protestant church building to a mosque did happen in Hamburg: This became possible because, after the merger of the respective congregation, the church building was first sold to an investor who did not realize his original plans of building a children's day care centre but then, in 2012, sold the building to the Muslim Al-Nour Community which, so far, is located in an underground car park and which is since refurbishing the building. After critical voices and discussions all over Germany and also in Hamburg, the case is meanwhile considered a symbol for the local integration of Islam and a sign of recognition for the religious plurality (Körs 2015b). So far, the conversion of a church into a mosque is an isolated case in Germany and will probably remain so for the time being, but it illustrates in a special way that even spaces can essentially contribute to the management of religious plurality by making this plurality understandable and perceptible, being able to become a symbolic expression of their recognition and approval.

### **Interreligious and Religious-Secular Communication**

Managing religious plurality is ultimately a communicative task for all societal spheres, demanding "dialogical solutions" (Hafez 2013, 315). Here, it is especially interreligious dialogue which is considered a promising instrument for peaceful coexistence in a religiously plural and, at the same time, secular society. This becomes obvious when, on the European level, the 47 member states of the Council of Europe state that "interreligious dialogue can also contribute to a stronger consensus within society regarding the solutions to social problems" (Council of Europe 2008, 13), or when, on the local level, the Bishop of the Protestant Church interprets the contracts between the municipality and Muslims and Alevites as the "successful result of interreligious dialogue" (Spiegel 30.04.2013). Thus interreligious dialogue has developed beyond a theological concern to a societal project, frequently being seen as a political strategy "that wishes to contribute to the construction of a positively valued form of cohabitation of differences, under the assumption that this positive structuring will not happen by itself; rather the opposite" (Beyer 2014, 49-50).

If this is the normative claim to interreligious dialogue, the question arises, to be answered empirically, in how far it really takes place. Representatives of the religious communities hold a dialogue in national committees like for example the German Islam Conference as well as in many places in regional and local forums and networks with a highly symbolic effect. In a

nationwide study, 270 Christian-Muslim dialogue initiatives in Germany were identified, half of which (48%), according to an underlying survey of 132 dialogue initiatives, again are located solely in the two large and religiously diverse states Baden-Württemberg and North Rhine-Westphalia while there are hardly any initiatives in the East German states (3%) (Klinkhammer et al. 2011, 6, 42).

With regard to Hamburg, a relatively strong interreligious structure can be found: this is primarily marked with the aforementioned contracts and the model of “Religious Education for all“ but also with the Interreligious Forum Hamburg as a network of representatives from different religious communities as well as the Academy of World Religions of Hamburg University. Considering the total of 110 different religious communities in the city (Grünberg et al. 1994), however, the circle of participants remains selective and limited to the large religious communities, and even in their case, the question is by whom they are represented and who is thus being (not) presented.

Moreover, interreligious dialogue is already considered one of the more demanding forms of cooperation because, with the “dialogical skills” like openness and respect for the Other that are required for it, it presupposes something that is not given in the practical field of everyday behaviour and that is only to be created (Sennett 2012, 6). Thus, the question arises in how far even the less binding and everyday interactions and contacts which, at first, seem less important than close cooperation or trusting relationships, can contribute to an understanding. Since a great part of encounters with other people, especially in cities, actually happens rather casually, it especially depends, according to Vertovec (2007, 14), on “the acquisition and routinization of everyday practices for getting-on with others in the inherently fleeting encounters that comprise city life.“ Even such contacts can achieve a lot and are a key factor for a positive attitude towards the religious Other, as becomes obvious from studies which show: The more personal contacts with members of Islam come about, the more positive is the attitude towards them (Pollack et al. 2014, 224; Pollack and Müller 2013, 47).

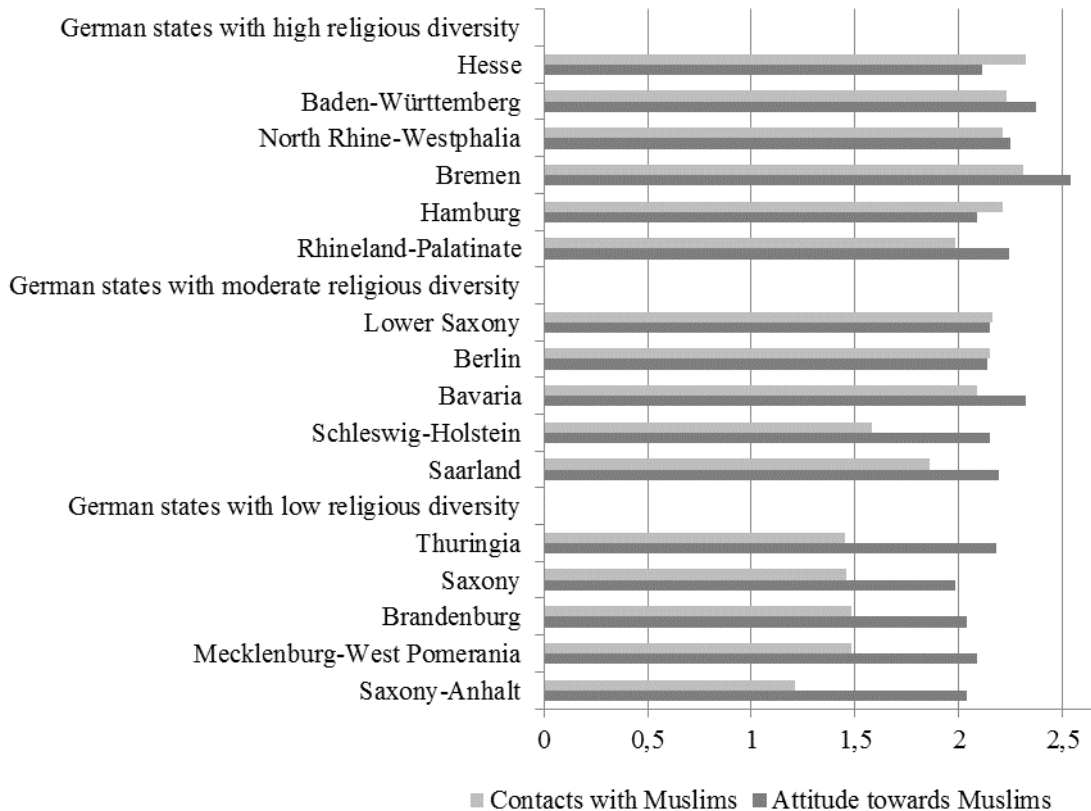


Fig. 2: Contacts with Muslims and attitude towards Muslims according to German states (mean values). Source: Own figure based on Yendell (2014, 63); contacts with Muslims: “Do you have a lot of contact with members of the following religious communities?” (here: Muslims); 4-scale (1=no, not at all; 2=no, rather not; 3=yes, some; 4=yes, very much; population averages; attitude towards Muslims: “How is your personal attitude to the members of the following religious groups?” (here: Muslims); 4-scale (1=very negative; 2=rather negative; 3=rather positive; 4=very positive); population averages.

However, even in a religiously plural society, these contacts do not happen automatically. Rather, the contact level between non-Muslims and Muslims, especially in Germany where 59% in West Germany and 84% in East Germany have no (or hardly any) contact with Muslims, is comparatively low, the lack of contact furthering negative attitudes towards the religious Other (Pollack 2014b, 54). As figure 2 shows, this applies especially to the East German states in which the contact level is comparatively low and, accordingly, the attitude towards Muslims turns out more negative; however, it also applies to Germany as a whole in so far as, even in states with a higher contact level, the attitude towards Muslims (with average values that are below the middle of the scale) is “rather negative“. Thus, religious plurality objectively increases the possibilities for interreligious or religious-secular contacts and relationships – or, with the words of Berger, “cognitive contamination“ (2014, 2) – which, however, do not happen automatically, nor do they necessarily lead to peaceful coexistence (see also Berger, 1994, 44-52), but they are to be shaped on the individual, institutional, and social levels (Körs and Yendell 2016).

## Conclusion

With the diagnosis of *Many Altars of Modernity*, Berger sees modernity, momentarily and in the future, as characterized by the “proliferation of altars“ (2014, 15) while, at the same time, building a bridge (back) to the secularization theory, thus drafting a plural interpretation of the world which integrates that which, in scientific analyses and discourses, frequent stands side by side or in opposition. The bottom line in Berger’s *Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age* is the twofold double perspective in which the relationship of religion and modernity is determined: through the competitions both between the different religious world views and between the religious and the secular discourses which, for their part, again take place both on the level of the individual consciousness and on the level of society. The present contribution tried to unfold this again, working in a direction opposite to the paradigm that naturally reduces complexity, for the German context, concretizing and localizing the “two pluralisms“ and their consequences with regard to central societal fields based on some empirical observations and findings.

It became clear that the negotiation processes develop themselves discriminatingly or with clear local variants and the management of religious plurality not only concerns politics and religions but includes other societal fields like especially civil society. It would therefore be necessary to expand the so far dominating perspective on the national political management of religious plurality through more nuanced smaller-scale analyses and by including a wider range of actors which would profit both from a horizontal comparison (e.g. between federal states or municipalities) and from a vertical consideration of the mutual relationships between the local, national, and transnational levels (e.g. through multilevel analyses). In this way, not only profiles would become recognizable but patterns, paths, and special cases could be mapped out, becoming identifiable with regard to their influence factors. Here, especially the view of the institutional contexts would be important that are currently undergoing a significant change through secularization and religious pluralization while, however, have so far hardly been examined with regard to their dynamics and the *intended* integrative effects.

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Anna Körs is research manager and vice director of the Academy of World Religions at University of Hamburg as well as co-leader of the international research project “Religion and Dialogue in Modern Societies”. Her main research interests are in the fields of sociology of religion, religious pluralization, governance of religious diversity, interreligious studies and congregational studies. This symposium is based on a conference held on October 22 and 23, 2015 under the auspices of the Academy of World Religions at University of Hamburg in cooperation with the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs at Boston University. Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Udo Keller Forum Humanum Foundation for its generous support in making the conference possible.