Julia Ipgrave, Thorsten Knauth,
Anna Körs, Dörthe Vieregge,
Marie von der Lippe (Eds.)

Religion and Dialogue
in the City

Case Studies on Interreligious Encounter in
Urban Community and Education

Religious Diversity and Education in Europe

edited by

Cok Bakker, Jenny Berglund, Gerdien Bertram-Troost,
Hans-Günter Heimbrock, Julia Ipgrave,
Robert Jackson, Geir Skeie, Wolfram Weisse

Volume 36

Globalisation and plurality are influencing all areas of education, including religious education. The inter-cultural and multi-religious situation in Europe demands a re-evaluation of the existing educational systems in particular countries as well as new thinking at the broader European level. This well-established peer reviewed book series is committed to the investigation and reflection on the changing role of religion and education in Europe, including the interface between European research, policy and practice and that of countries or regions outside Europe. Contributions will evaluate the situation, reflect on fundamental issues and develop perspectives for better policy making and pedagogy, especially in relation to practice in the classroom.

The publishing policy of the series is to focus on strengthening literacy in the broad field of religions and related world views, while recognising the importance of strengthening pluralist democracies through stimulating the development of active citizenship and fostering greater mutual understanding through intercultural education. It pays special attention to the educational challenges of religious diversity and conflicting value systems in schools and in society in general.

Religious Diversity and Education in Europe was originally produced by two European research groups:

ENRECA: The European Network for Religious Education in Europe through Contextual Approaches

REDCo: Religion in Education. A contribution to Dialogue or a factor of Conflict in transforming societies of European Countries

Although books will continue to be published by these two research groups, manuscripts can be submitted by scholars engaged in empirical and theoretical research on aspects of religion, and related world views, and education, especially in relation to intercultural issues. Book proposals relating to research on individual European countries or on wider European themes or European research projects are welcome. Books dealing with the interface of research, especially related to policy and practice, in European countries and contexts beyond Europe are also welcome for consideration. All manuscripts submitted are peer reviewed by two specialist reviewers.

The series is aimed at teachers, teacher educators, researchers and policy makers. The series is committed to involving practitioners in the research process and includes books by teachers and teacher educators who are engaged in research as well as academics from various relevant fields, professional researchers and PhD students (the series includes several ground-breaking PhD dissertations). It is open to authors committed to these issues, and it includes English and German speaking monographs as well as edited collections of papers.

Outline book proposals should be directed to one of the editors or to the publisher.

Julia Ipgrave, Thorsten Knauth, Anna Körs,
Dörthe Vieregge, Marie von der Lippe (Eds.)

Religion and Dialogue
in the City

Case Studies on Interreligious Encounter
in Urban Community and Education

Waxmann 2018
Münster • New York

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the
Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data
are available in the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de

Religious Diversity and Education in Europe, volume 36

MIX
Papier aus verantwor-
tungsvollen Quellen
FSC
www.fsc.org
FSC® C016439

Contents

Introduction

Julia Ipgrave, Thorsten Knauth, Anna Körs, Dörthe Vieregge
and Marie von der Lippe

Religion and Dialogue in the City: An Introduction

1. Introduction

Modern cities are invariably homes to a variety of lifestyles and social practices. Amid a diversity defined by economic, ethnic, social and cultural differences, religion has emerged as an increasingly important factor. Urban spaces throughout Europe are no longer solely defined by their dominant Christian denominations, but characterised by a mixture of different religions and worldviews. The largely migration-driven religious pluralisation process has brought profound change, making religious diversity a significant characteristic of larger cities. At the same time Europe has become increasingly secularised over the past decades (Berger, 2014; Davie, 2014). Being home to a wide range of religious and non-religious groups and individuals does not mean that cities are automatically also a space of interreligious and interfaith encounters. Whether a city is or can become a venue for interreligious encounter and dialogue, or if urban spaces are merely a place where various religions and worldviews exist side by side, is a central question for the continuing social cohesion of modern societies. Issues concerning interreligious relations may 'just as well mean confrontation and conflict as dialogue and cooperation […]' (Leirvik, 2014, p. 8).

While religion in its institutional form can offer its adherents areas of retreat that have the potential to quickly turn into separate spaces, religion can arguably also open doors and extend hospitality, inviting others to friendly exchange. As a means of interpreting life and reality, religion can legitimise segregation, superiority and also violence, but it can also be a driver of friendly encounters, exchange and practised coexistence. To investigate the role of religion and the coexistence of different religious and non-religious groups in the city, urban communities can serve as laboratories for investigating citizens' experiences of interreligious encounters.

2. Religion and dialogue in modern societies

In many urban areas throughout Europe, religious diversity has been a reality for decades. In this context issues of interest are how social practices relating to religion are adapted to urban spaces and how individuals interpret the relationship between religion and dialogue. Other questions pertain to how people from different religious and non-religious backgrounds perceive difference, and how they locate themselves and their own interpretations both individually and in the social context of urban life. Looking into issues concerning religion and dialogue a main interest also relates to

what kinds of opportunities exist for dialogical practice and eventually what forms these practices take in urban settings in today's societies.

The purpose of the project 'Religion and Dialogue in Modern Societies' (ReDi)[1] is to investigate these issues empirically – on the ground. In order to do so a range of case studies have been conducted in five metropolitan cities and regions: Oslo, Stockholm, London, Hamburg and Duisburg. All of them are religiously diverse, but differ in many other regards (economic, ethnic, cultural, social and political). Yet, for all their differences, they share the challenges facing open, liberal democracies with traditions of peaceful coexistence (Flood, 2012). Their very openness and liberality makes them vulnerable to criticism from those who tend to associate openness with unprincipled relativism and liberality with unbounded permissiveness, loss of tradition and of security. This, too, has been a factor in our research.

This volume presents selected findings of our research into dialogical practice. The results were derived through case studies addressing two fields of activity: 1) dialogue and interreligious encounters in the urban space and 2) dialogue in education. For the former we studied the urban space and the forms of dialogical practice that emerge in different contexts as well as the interpretations participants apply to them. We also looked at religious communities as institutional actors, studying their possibilities and willingness to enter into contact with other religions and societal parties, including secular ones, as well as their experience of such contact. In the field of education, we studied the possibilities of dialogue among young people in the context of schools. Here, too, a variety of case studies differing in their range and design were carried out to explore the prerequisites, conditions, potential and limitations of interreligious dialogue in the classroom.

While much previous research in the field has been conducted by active dialogue participants (see for instance Cornille, 2013; Leirvik, 2014), the participating researchers in this project agreed on an open, non-normative conception of (interreligious) dialogue. Maintaining this conceptual openness was however a challenge within the project as influential traditions in both theology and education studies have favoured normatively weighted understandings of the term 'dialogue'. Therefore, in the context of our research, 'dialogue' is used as a heuristic category to explore the

---

1   The ReDi project is running from 2013–2018 and funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany. The research group encompasses several disciplines: social studies, education studies, religious studies, and the theologies of various religious traditions. The project addresses questions on religion and dialogue at two distinct levels. At the level of *dialogical practice*, the project aims to explore the potential and the limitations of living dialogue between people of different religious and philosophical backgrounds and to gain an understanding of the forms, functions and potential of dialogical practice through empirical study. At the level of *dialogical theology*, an interreligious team of academic experts develops a dialogical conception of theology incorporating present approaches of plural, intercultural and above all interreligious theology and placing particular emphasis on observed forms of living interreligious dialogue (Amirpur, Knauth, Roloff, & Weisse, 2016).

various ways in which it has been employed and interpreted (in words and actions) by participants in the different research locations, and to analyse the various forms of communication that have been observed across religious differences. Thus emic and etic perspectives on 'dialogue' are included in the analysis. The requirement for its use is that the practices being explored should involve the intentional meeting of differences (not just chance encounters) entered into or engineered with a view to increasing understanding. In the process of bringing these different manifestations of 'dialogue' together in this book an interpretation of the term will emerge that can usefully be applied to different contexts of interreligious engagement.

The definition of the term 'interreligious', by contrast, has been agreed from the beginning as denoting a meeting between people and ideas of different faith traditions. The participants in the individual case studies may use the term variously, but for the purposes of description and analysis, the authors have used 'interreligious' to indicate meetings between people of different religious and worldview affiliations. Some of the interreligious meetings within the case studies involve different denominations, schools of thought and individual perspectives from within a broader tradition or combine elements of different traditions; some involve (or may even be facilitated by) people with non-religious perspectives. In such cases other terms such as 'intra-faith', 'interdenominational', 'inter-belief', or 'dialogue across religions and worldviews', have been applied.

In view of the ongoing processes of religious pluralisation both among and within communities as well as greater secularisation, we have defined 'interreligious practice' to include interactions between different religious communities, as well as within those communities and between religious and non-religious actors. We have chosen the term 'interreligious practice' to encompass a field beyond interreligious dialogue, which is often understood as a specific form of communication about religion- and belief-oriented issues aiming at mutual understanding, and thus also grasp the manifold less intentional forms of interreligious engagement, activities, relations and contacts we have found on the empirical ground.

3. A multiple case study approach

To investigate dialogical practice in urban space and education the project has been designed as a multiple case study approach in the two fields (Yin, 2014, p. 49 ff.).

As religious plurality continues to be a primarily urban phenomenon, the five cities of Hamburg, Duisburg, London, Oslo and Stockholm were chosen for empirical research, addressing a 'spatially delimited phenomenon' (Gerring, 2007, p. 19). While historically largely Christian cities and regions, all of them are now marked by religious pluralisation and secularisation (Pew, 2014, p. 8). Although these processes have taken place to varying extents and are informed by differences in local church-state relations (Minkenberg, 2008), the similarities between the cities were considered to ensure comparability. At the same time the specific contextual conditions, social

developments and discourses on religious plurality in each of the cities/regions have allowed for a variety of perspectives. Thus, each case has been defined by its respective national and local contexts.

This situation has been addressed through a methodological approach that is sensitive to context (Yin, 2014). In order not to isolate interreligious practice from its environment as a separate object of study, its contextual setting has been integrated in the research focus. This has allowed, for example, the inclusion of actors that are not immediately involved in interreligious activities and the study of why they are not involved. Such a context-sensitive approach is provided by the case study method as an 'empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon […] within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident' (Yin, 2014, p. 16). A further argument in favour of this approach is that though interreligious dialogue is not an entirely new concept and has an academic history particularly in theological discourses, current social developments have made it far more varied. Especially after the 9/11 attacks in the United States, interreligious dialogue has been associated with the intent of integration policies.

The empirical study of extant dialogue is a very young field. That is why case studies, being 'especially appropriate in new topic areas' (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 532), are particularly well suited to exploring the field of interreligious practices and generating hypotheses and theory in the process. The complexity of each of the cases in this study calls for a dense analysis that starts out by analysing and interpreting the units separately and in their respective contexts to take account of their different situations and particular circumstances. The individual studies are then related to each other in three comparative chapters (see part 3 of this volume). This gives the case studies 'comparative merit' (Sartori, 1994, p. 23) by turning them into mutual reference points and questioning them with regard to the generally applicable findings, issues, and questions for further research that they generated. The question of the comparative value of case studies and the general applicability of their findings is all the more relevant given the changeability and contingency of local histories, institutions and events.

It is therefore the aim of our research first to capture and explain the individual case in its singularity in order to relate the findings specific to the various cases to each other in a second, separate step. In this sense, our research design is neither case-oriented nor variable-driven, but takes a middle path between the 'familiar contrast of idiographic (focused on individual phenomena) and nomothetic (focused on generating generally applicable findings) approaches in research' (Mayntz, 2002, p. 8). We begin by addressing the complexity of the individual case, but take our study beyond to a level of generalisable findings through an integral comparative perspective.

As is customary in case studies, different methods were applied in the cases and/or units of analysis as their nature warranted. The fact that '[c]ase studies typically combine data collection methods such as archives, interviews, questionnaires, and

observations (…) (and) may be qualitative (e. g., words), quantitative (e. g., numbers), or both' (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534 f.) also applies to the present research. Given it is mainly an exploratory effort and particularly focuses on how interreligious practice takes place, it tends towards depth over breadth and emphasises the qualitative element. Survey methods include both interviews (guided, ethnographic, focus group and group discussion formats were used) and participant observation. The researchers have used both content and discourse analysis methods. In Hamburg, quantitative survey methods were used in addition to carry out a standardised survey of religious communities.

4. Interreligious practice in the field of urban space

Cities are often considered 'laboratories of religiosity' where many religions exist alongside each other and interact, where (partly through migration) traditional forms may receive new impetus, new forms of religious or spiritual practice mostly emerge, and where the religious spectrum grows in diversity. At the same time, cities are recording a growth in the number of people with no religious affiliation or faith, so called 'nones' (Woodhead, 2016).[2] This raises the question how best to address such a mix of religious diversity and secularity and what interreligious dialogue, often considered a political panacea for local processes of communication and peace-building, can actually achieve in practice. Our empirical research in this field thus aims to find out how and in what shape, under what circumstances, on which issues and with what effect interreligious dialogues actually take place in the urban environment.

Within the project the case studies in the four cities were designed differently. While the cases of both Hamburg and Oslo include two units of analysis and/or were studied in two distinct case studies, the research in London and Stockholm was designed more holistically, focusing on one unit of analysis. In Hamburg, interreligious practice was studied both as activities in selected neighbourhoods at the individual level and as a study of contacts and networks between communities and institutions throughout the entire city. In London, the research concentrated on a number of 'interfaith fora' and 'interreligious community projects' in three districts chosen for populations that are both religiously diverse and socio-economically disadvantaged. In Oslo, interreligious practice in the aftermath of the 2011 terror attacks was studied along with the broader question of youth involvement, and in Stockholm the focus lay on a future multireligious place of worship designed to foster interreligious communication.

Hamburg: In the city of Hamburg the representative congregation study by *Anna Körs* provides an overview of Hamburg's religious communities and highlights especially the potential of organised communities as bridge-builders. The study shows

---

2   Building on Peter Berger's paradigm of two pluralisms (2014), Linda Woodhead has suggested including a third kind of pluralism which is characterised by the growing number of people who report 'no religion' – the so-called 'nones' (Woodhead, 2016, p. 41).

that Muslim communities in particular are often strongly focused towards society and very consciously make efforts to engage with other religious communities and society at large. The study further indicates that interreligious contacts between communities are not a mere natural outcome of plurality. Instead they need to be developed and depend strongly on the position of a given community in the religious field and the degree to which the community is integrated into wider society.

The research work by *Mehmet Kalender* and *Anna Ohrt* focused on the interreligious practices of religious and non-religious actors in selected neighbourhoods in Hamburg in a broad-based case study. It concentrated on four aspects defined as motivations, conditions, potential and limitations of dialogical practice. The analysis of the data material produced showed that interreligious practice is not always religiously motivated, but often either pursues social and political aims (such as networking and empowerment) or follows individual motivations such as the expansion of social relations through establishing new contacts. The findings further showed a particular potential for creating social capital if participants are willing to develop interreligious relations and foster trust beyond the immediate encounter. At the same time the circle of participants seemed to be largely limited to those who tend to approach the religious 'other' with an open mind from the start. As a result of this mapping effort, Kalender and Ohrt have developed a system of categories for use in future empirical research.

London: In London, *Julia Ipgrave* studied various forms of interreligious activity in a selected area of the city. The research showed that the urban context and public discourses both influence interreligious practices in a variety of ways. A negative perception of religion in public discourse has the potential to bring people of different faiths together and motivate them to counter this image and defend their beliefs in a joint effort. To support these efforts and to reach out to groups that are hard to contact institutionally, the authorities and local government in London have enlisted the help of interreligious institutions. The result seems to be a broad spectrum of people with various beliefs and theological positions (including so-called exclusivist ones) engaging in interreligious activities.

The empirical studies in London show that social rather than theological issues provide the main motivation for interreligious practice, and that this tends to manifest more in joint activities (side-by-side) than in dialogical exchanges (face-to-face). Controversial issues are notably avoided to protect relations or public opinion, and the focus is more on good neighbourliness and the building of community relationships than on exchange of theologically meaningful content. The study further indicates that theological and spiritual dialogues concerning issues of belief, if they occur, depend on first laying foundations of mutual trust.

Oslo: The case study by *Dag Husebø* and *Øystein Lund Johannessen* focuses on the development of interreligious practice in the years after the terror attacks in Oslo and at the Island of Utøya in 2011. The study includes both religious and non-religious actors and organisations in its scope. Findings from the study show a great breadth of interreligious practice ranging from organised to more spontaneous meetings, including both formal 'top-down' dialogues involving religious community leaders

and 'bottom-up' dialogues among members of religious communities and unaffiliated individuals. The majority of dialogue initiatives reported in the study are of the 'activist' type, initiated and run by trained and experienced representatives of different (religious) organisations. The Norwegian Humanist Society (HEF) is notable through its involvement in most such initiatives championing individual religious freedom. The impact of the terror attacks of 22 July 2011 is felt when participants emphasise the importance of dialogue especially in their aftermath and even argue that the need to address and come to terms with them has given a boost to their efforts. Thus it may seem as though the experience of terrorism has strengthened the interreligious scene in Oslo and enriched it with new participants.

While Husebø and Lund Johannessen have mainly focused on adults, *Kjersti Siem* has looked at the perspectives of young people and their participation in interreligious dialogue in the urban context of Oslo. The findings show that young people have different motivations for taking part in interreligious activities. The study also shows that the participants have different experiences of such participation – some more challenging than others. The challenges they have experienced are both practical and ideal concerning everything from managing the dialogue-meetings to talking about issues which are considered religiously and politically controversial.

Stockholm: Finally, the case study by *Johan Liljestrand* focuses on a specific local project in Stockholm. Studying the reactions of actors to plans for a shared interreligious building (The Gods House) in a multireligious neighbourhood, he found a wide variety of perspectives and positions. In the process, a range of relationships emerged among the actors. At the same time the study shows that some actors deliberately chose not to involve themselves in the project either from lack of interest or outright hostility. The analysis focuses on how secular and pragmatic theological arguments were deployed in negotiating the design of the projected building, and how connections were established both between the various groups and within them through this process.

Seen together the different case studies in the four cities contribute complex and multifaceted knowledge of how dialogical practice is played out in the urban field. Despite the distinct differences found in each of the cases, a comparative analysis of the multiple case studies shows striking similarities both on the structural and individual level related to interreligious encounters and activities in the city (see Ipgrave & von der Lippe in this volume).

5.   Dialogical practice in the field of education

Along with the case studies in the urban field, the ReDi project also investigated the potential and limitations of dialogue in education settings. In many European countries preparing pupils to engage with religious, cultural and social heterogeneity is increasingly viewed as a key task for religious education in schools (Jackson, 2014). Looking more closely at the cities of Hamburg, Duisburg (in the Rhine-Ruhr region),

London, Oslo and Stockholm, it becomes clear that each of them have their own contextually different, historically shaped approaches to religious education in their school systems.

National and regional approaches today are also shaped by discourses at the European level as more and more educational policy decisions take place there (Schreiner, 2012; Jackson, 2014a, b). An important element of European educational policy is 'developing competences required for democratic cultures and intercultural dialogue' (Jackson, 2016, p. 20), and The Council of Europe has a key role in shaping approaches to education, religion and dialogue (Jackson, 2014a, p. 20). It regards interreligious education as a crucial element of a broader intercultural education (Schreiner, 2012; Jackson, 2014b; Jackson, 2016) and supports the application and implementation of dialogical approaches relating to religion in schools through its 2014 guidelines *Signposts: Policy and practice for teaching about religion and non-religious world views in intercultural education* (Jackson, 2014b). A similar line is taken in the *Toledo Guiding Principles* published by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2007. This document sees 'positive value in teaching that emphasises respect for everyone's right to freedom of religion and belief' (Jackson, 2014a, p. 26) and stresses 'that teaching about religions and beliefs can reduce harmful misunderstandings and stereotypes' (Jackson, 2014a, p. 26). One reason, though not the only one, for this growing interest in religion and education among European institutions is the global attention religious issues have received since the 9/11 attacks (Jackson, 2014a, p. 20). The past few years have seen increasingly heated debates where educational policies on extremism and its prevention through religious education in schools have moved into focus (Jackson, 2016, p. 19).

In view of these transnational and European developments, the ReDi project studies the potentials of dialogical practice in education. Our particular focus lies on the influence of contextual factors on the potential and limitations of dialogical interreligious learning in schools and Religious Education (RE) classes. Based on an open, explorative approach, we are looking at a wide variety of dialogue models that teach pupils to address religion and diversity in the context of their respective institutional environments: from dialogical, interreligious RE class ('learning from religions') through religious studies models ('learning about religion') to strictly denominational models ('learning into religion'). A broad definition of dialogue and interreligious learning is used in order to account properly for all practices and their respective self-understandings.

The studies carried out in the separate contexts of Hamburg, Duisburg, Oslo, Stockholm and London explore the potential and limitations of current approaches to religion and diversity through different, case-specific perspectives and questions. The researchers followed the process-oriented design of our research model in allowing questions and methodologies to be developed from the specific requirements and interests of each research context.

The case studies in *Hamburg* and *Duisburg* by *Thorsten Knauth* and *Dörthe Vieregge* are designed to be comparative, with a primary focus on the organisational

forms of school RE. In studying a Hamburg and Duisburg upper secondary school (Gymnasium), the combined study looks at a comparable model of RE – dialogical, inclusive religious education – taking place in two very different organisational contexts. In Hamburg, shared RE is the rule while the model run at the Duisburg school is an exception that is available only on an experimental basis and alongside denominational RE. The study seeks to illuminate how these different contextual conditions affect dialogical practices in the classroom. The findings show that dialogical practices in the two contexts differ considerably. While dialogue in the Duisburg religious education class remains at a level of exchanging and providing factual knowledge, dialogical exchange of individual personal convictions is constitutive in the Hamburg class. Both variants of dialogue confirm the pupils' experiences with religion and diversity within and outside the school.

The *London* case study by *Julia Ipgrave* looks at the denominational setting of a Catholic faith school in a multicultural and multireligious environment in the east of the city. It studies the influence of this specific constellation on the pupils' attitudes and patterns of interpretation regarding religion and diversity and explores the preconditions, forms, opportunities and limitations of dialogical practice in this setting with confessional religious education classes. The findings show that the denominationally defined setting offers opportunities to explore deeply religious identities within the students' group without necessarily sacrificing openness to others or the awareness of and engagement with religious diversity in daily life. At the same time a tension between the denominational approach of religious education and the multireligious environment is clearly felt by the pupils.

The *Oslo* education study by *Trine Anker* and *Marie von der Lippe*, just as the two case studies in the urban strand of this publication, looks at the impact of the terror attacks of 22 July 2011 in Oslo and Utøya. It explores how schools address these events in the context of mandatory non-confessional RE classes, and to what extent a religious education setting offers space to debate current events and especially to address religious extremism and fundamentalist ideology. This connects to the more general question of the possibility and the problems of preventing radicalisation in the context of scholastic RE. The findings show that the possibilities of religious education for this purpose are clearly not maximised in practice due to a narrow goal orientation of curricular guidance and a lack of specific competences of the teachers in dealing with sensitive issues.

The *Stockholm* case study by *Johan Liljestrand* looks at the relationship between religion and national identity of pupils and related attitudes towards religious plurality. It asks to what extent the potential and limitations of a dialogical approach towards religious diversity are informed by dominant (Christian) secular ideas of Swedish national identity in an objective and strictly academic religious studies model of RE. The findings confirm that the pupils' dominant interpretations of the relation between religion and Swedish nationality either conflate being Swedish with Christianity or conceive of religion purely as an individual choice that includes the option of critical distancing in a secularist liberal perspective. The fact that religious diversity remains,

as yet, excluded from conceptions of Swedishness presents an obstacle to interreligious dialogue in the classroom.

The selected cases provide robust insights into their respective contexts and on the basis of these studies a comparative analysis of their contextual specificities can be developed as a valuable source of insights into the potential and limitations of dialogical practice (see Knauth & Vieregge in this volume). Following the presentation of the individual case studies, the chapter will show to what extent the dialogical practices found in the studies with their respective potential and limitations are expressions of specific contextual conditions.

Based on the different empirical studies presented in this volume, *Geir Skeie's* chapter discusses if and to what extent 'dialogue between and among religions and worldviews' may be defined as a distinct field of research. Taking a self-reflective position on the project and introducing a meta-perspective inspired by ideas from the philosophy of science, Skeie contributes rich analyses of the challenges within the ReDi project related to terminology, research object and contextual factors.

In the final section the chapters of this volume are commented on by colleagues from interdisciplinary perspectives. From a sociological perspective *Alexander-Kenneth Nagel* focuses on the urban strand and emphasises some specificities with which the six case studies contribute in particular to the research field of interreligious studies. They all follow an open-ended empirical approach which allows one to capture a wide variety of interreligious practices; beyond description, these are systematised and are considered in their entanglements with other spheres of society and the local, regional or national efforts of diversity governance. He contextualises the research by referring to neighbouring debates from different fields of urban studies and suggests as a desideratum two perspectives for further research: the understanding of the causal mechanisms of interreligious practice and the expanding of the spatial and temporal context of research.

From a perspective of anthropology and intercultural education, *Gunther Dietz* comments on the ethnography of interreligious dialogues of the ReDi project. He focuses on the four case studies of the education strand and identifies certain contextual factors that limit the potential of interreligious dialogue inside contemporary urban schools. These are, inter alia, underlying and unquestioned public attitudes on diversity, religion and identity deeply rooted in master narratives as well as exclusionary or divisive structures of public opinion that are deepened and worsened by institutional frames. In this sense, the qualitative, explorative and ethnographic case studies reveal that contextual conditions are not mere context but end up being text itself that has to be included as such into the empirical analysis.

Peter Beyer, Gunther Dietz, Robert Jackson, Manuela Kalsky, Oddbjørn Leirvik, Alexander-Kenneth Nagel, Gert Pickel, Thomas Schlag, and Nikola Tietze for participating in our ReDi conferences and workshops and the intense exchange. We would like to commemorate Peter L. Berger, who has also been pursuing and accompanying our project with great interest and friendship and gave valuable impulses for our research. Julia Ipgrave and Francis Ipgrave have undertaken much valued work in improving the language of contributors whose first language is not English. Inga Sievert has proofread all chapters and has given us a great deal of technical assistance with the help of Nadja Lanzerath and Melis Yilmaz. Volker Bach and Halima Krausen have contributed some excellent translation work. We also express our thanks to the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research for its substantial financial support for the ReDi project.

And we are grateful to the editorial board of the Waxmann series 'Religious Diversity and Education in Europe' for including our book in their series. Last but not least we thank the Waxmann publishing house and particularly Beate Plugge for her excellent support.

References

Berger, P. L. (2014). *The many altars of modernity: Toward a paradigm for religion in a pluralist age*. Boston: De Gruyter.

Amirpur, K., Knauth, Th., Roloff, C., & Weiße, W. (Eds.). (2016). *Perspektiven dialogischer Theologie: Offenheit in den Religionen und eine Hermeneutik des interreligiösen Dialogs. Religionen im Dialog: Band 10*. Münster: Waxmann.

Cornille, C. (2013). *The Wiley-Blackwell companion to inter-religious dialogue. The Wiley-Blackwell companions to religion*. Hoboken: Wiley.

Davie, G. (2014). Managing pluralism: The European case. *Society*, *51*(6), 613–622. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115–014-9834–6

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *The Academy of Management Review*, *14*(4), 532–550.

Flood, G. D. (2012). *The importance of religion: Meaning and action in our strange world*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Gerring, J. (2007). *Case study research: Principles and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Jackson, R. (2016). Inclusive study of religions and world views in schools: Signposts from the Council of Europe. *Social Inclusion*, *4*(2), 14–25. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v4i2.493

Jackson, R. (2014a). The European dimension: Perspectives on religious education from European institutions, professional organisations and research networks. In M. Rothgangel, R. Jackson, & M. Jäggle (Eds.), *Religious education at schools in Europe. Wiener Forum für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft: Bd. 10,2* (pp. 19–41). Göttingen: V&R unipress, Vienna Univ. Press.

Jackson, R. (2014b). *Signposts: Policy and practice for teaching about religions and non-religious world views in intercultural education*. Strasbourg, France: Council of Europe Publishing.

Leirvik, O. (2015). *Interreligious studies: A relational approach to religious activism and the study of religion* (Paperback ed.). London [u. a.]: Bloomsbury.

Mayntz, R. (2002). Zur Theoriefähigkeit makro-sozialer Analysen. In R. Mayntz (Ed.), *Akteure. Mechanismen; Modelle; zur Theoriefähigkeit makro-sozialer Analysen* (pp. 7–43). Frankfurt am Main [u. a.]: Campus-Verl.

Minkenberg, M. (2008). Religious legacies and the politics of multiculturalism: A comparative analysis of integration policies in western democracies. In A. Chebel d'Appollonia & S. Reich (Eds.), *Immigration, integration, and security. America and Europe in comparative perspective* (pp. 44–66). Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Pew Research Center. (2014). *Global religious diversity: Half of the most religiously diverse countries are in Asia-Pacific region*. Retrieved April 22, 2017 from http://www.pewforum.org/files/2014/04/Religious-Diversity-full-report.pdf

Sartori, G. (1994). Compare why and how: Comparing, miscomparing and the comparative method. In M. Dogan & A. Kazancigil (Eds.), *Comparing nations. Concepts, strategies, substance* (pp. 14–34). Oxford: Blackwell.

Schreiner, P. (2012). *Religion im Kontext einer Europäisierung von Bildung: Eine Rekonstruktion europäischer Diskurse und Entwicklungen aus protestantischer Perspektive. Religious diversity and education in Europe: Vol. 22*. Münster: Waxmann.

Woodhead, L. (2016). Intensified religious pluralism and de-differentiation: the British example. *Society*, *53*, 41–46. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115–015-9984–1

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th. ed.). London: Sage Publication.

Case Studies from Hamburg, Duisburg, London, Stockholm and Oslo

*Interreligious Encounter
and Dialogue in Urban Community*

Anna Körs

How Religious Communities Respond to Religious Diversity

From Interreligious Dialogue to Interreligious Relations, Contacts, and Networks

Abstract

This article examines, from a sociological perspective, how religious communities and their congregations respond to religious diversity, that is the extent to which they enter into interreligious relations, and under what conditions they do so.[1] Starting from a 'dialogical turn' – in the sense of an increasing *normative* claim to a dialogical organisation of social processes aimed at recognizing diversity, and taking into account the high expectations of interreligious dialogue in particular – the article explores how far this corresponds to the *empirical* practice of religious communities. For this, it investigates the interreligious relations between individual congregations and how these are influenced by religious affiliation, religious beliefs, social integration, and context. The results are based on a representative study in which the leaders of 350 of the 547 identified congregations in Hamburg were interviewed.

The study shows that interreligious relations between congregations are a relevant phenomenon in the religious field and for its transformation in the course of pluralisation and secularisation. However, interreligious relations do not automatically result from religious diversity. Rather, they need to be developed and depend both on their position in the religious field and the degree to which the congregation is integrated into society at large. The high commitment to interreligious relations among Muslim and other non-Christian congregations in particular suggests an advanced process of integration (rather than the existence of 'parallel societies'). Even though religious beliefs turn out not to be essential for interreligious relations, exclusivist attitudes, however, continue to be a challenge in plural societies and require further empirical research.

The contribution is structured as follows: Against the backdrop of interreligious dialogue as a normative concept, the relevance of interreligious relations is first established as the empirical object of investigation of this study (1). Based on the assumption that interreligious relations cannot be considered as isolated from the context, the city of Hamburg is outlined in its relevant aspects as the study area that is of interest here (2). Subsequently the research question of how far interreligious relations are built and how they are influenced is considered theoretically and against the background of the research status in order to derive substantiated hypotheses from it (3). This is followed by specifications on method, sample,

---

1   The term 'religious community' is used for the spatially spanning community and its organisation, while the term 'congregation' refers to the individual spatially determinable gatherings of its members and adherents. For the exact definition of congregations which is used in this study see section 4.1.

and the included variables (4). In the results section, the findings of the data analysis are first presented (5), before then being discussed and interpreted (6).

1.   Introduction: from interreligious dialogue
to interreligious relations

The religious situation in Germany has changed considerably over recent decades. In 1950, about 96 percent of the German population still belonged by membership to the Protestant or Catholic Church. Sixty years later, in 2010, the proportion of the population belonging to these two great Christian churches has declined to about 59 percent, while about 30 percent have no religious affiliation and 10 percent belong either to another Christian denomination or to another religion, with Muslims being the largest group at around 5 percent (Pollack & Müller, 2013, p. 34). According to Peter L. Berger (2011) we therefore live in an 'age of relativity': nothing is self-evident, neither religious affiliation as such nor membership in a particular religion. In his global diagnosis of the contemporary world he considers modernity to be characterised by 'two pluralisms' (2014, p. 53): 'The first is the pluralism of different religious options co-existing in the same society (…). The second is the pluralism of the secular discourse and the various religious discourses, also co-existing in the same society.'

This situation calls for a new determination of the relationship both between the religions and between religion and secular society which applies not only for Germany, as for many other countries, but especially also for cities in which both processes – pluralisation and secularisation – can typically be found in an even more intensified way (Krech, 2008, pp. 36, 41). A central concern here is the formation of a common consensus of values, a process in which all subsystems of democratic society are challenged to cooperate and find 'dialogical solutions' (Hafez, 2013, p. 313). In this, dialogue is considered a promising instrument and there is an expectation that it should be able to accomplish this consensus, not only in dealing with religious diversity but also in other social areas. This is because religious pluralisation is also part of a more comprehensive process of differentiation in which society altogether becomes more complex (Berger, 2014, p. 57). The popularity and the almost inflationary use of the term dialogue – it appears more than 30 times, for example, in the coalition agreement of the German federal government, with references across the social range (CDU, CSU, SPD, 2013) – can therefore not only be traced back to its ambiguity but also correspond to an increasing social differentiation and the need for communication within and between social subsystems.

This, however, becomes more difficult the more what Richard Sennett (2012, pp. 8–9) attests to modernity is true: '(M)odern society is "de-skilling" people in practising cooperation. (…) (P)eople are losing the skills to deal with intractable differences as material inequality isolates them, short-term labour makes the social contacts more superficial and activates anxiety about the Other'. According to Sennett, demanding sorts of cooperation – those which try, 'to join people who have separate

or conflicting interests, who do not feel good about each other, who are unequal, or who simply do not understand one another' – thereby belong 'more to the ideal realm of what ought to happen than to the practical realm of everyday behaviour' and call for exactly those 'dialogical skills' which have become weakened in modern society (Sennett, 2012, p. 6). In other words: In this perspective, modernity will become increasingly less able to generate what is actually needed and, with this 'downward spiral', calls for dialogue will become louder. This is precisely what interreligious dialogue is supposed to accomplish: '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, pp. 49–50).

Interreligious dialogue has therefore developed beyond a theological concern (Amirpur, Knauth, Roloff & Weisse, 2016) to a social project, thereby virtually becoming a 'political beacon of hope' at both the European and the German level. In the 'White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue' the 47 member states of the Council of Europe state: 'Interreligious dialogue can also contribute to a stronger consensus within society regarding the solutions to social problems' (Council of Europe, 2008, p. 13). Interreligious dialogue is thereby considered to be part of an intercultural dialogue, propagated as a political strategy 'to prevent ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divides', which enables us 'to deal with our different identities constructively and democratically on the basis of shared universal values' (Council of Europe, 2008, p. 2). The central position of religious communities both in interreligious and religious-secular dialogue is especially underlined here: 'Apart from the dialogue between public authorities and religious communities, which should be encouraged, there is also a need for dialogue between religious communities themselves (interreligious dialogue)'. It is also considered to be 'the responsibility of the religious communities themselves, through interreligious dialogue, to contribute to an increased understanding between different cultures' (Council of Europe, 2008, p. 13). For this, both in national committees such as the German Islam Conference ('Deutsche Islam Konferenz') and in many places in regional and local forums and networks it is referred to with a fairly high symbolic effect by the representatives of the religious communities. Furthermore, several hundred initiatives for interreligious dialogue, trialogue, or multilogue have emerged throughout Germany since the 1990s that are influenced more by interested individuals and 'simple believers' rather than by officials and leading representatives of religious communities (Klinkhammer, Frese, Satilmis & Seibert, 2011, pp. 40 and 57 f.; Hinterhuber, 2009, pp. 70, 99).

This study, however, is not limited to interreligious dialogue as a specific and demanding form of communication which aims at mutual understanding, but focuses on interreligious relations in general in the form of contacts and networks. Such less intentional forms of interaction may initially appear to be less important, but in fact they are not only significantly more widespread in everyday (urban) life (Vertovec, 2007, p. 14), but are also highly relevant for the reduction of prejudices and the promotion of tolerance (Pollack, Friedrichs, Müller, Rosta & Yendell, 2014, p. 224; Pollack & Müller, 2013, p. 46 f.). For this purpose, it is precisely the level between

religious representatives and individual believers which moves into the focus, something which has remained rather underexposed in previous research, despite its considerable size: this refers to the meso-level of the religious communities, with 14,152 congregations of the Protestant Church (EKD, 2016, p. 8), 10,817 congregations of the Catholic Church (Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, 2016, p. 41), a numerically hardly comprehensible number of congregations of the many other Christian denominations, 2,231 Muslim and 111 Alevi congregations (Halm, Sauer, Schmidt & Stichs, 2012, p. 54), more than 130 Jewish (Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland, 2016; Union Progressiver Juden in Deutschland, 2016), several hundred Buddhist and Hindu, about 30 Sikh, a few hundred Bahá'í, and many more congregations throughout Germany. As great as the differences between all these congregations may be, their common ground is that people assemble in them in local places in order to practice their religion and possibly to come together for other social activities – and they therefore constitute a local *potential* for interreligious relations and interactions. The question is: To what extent do congregations actually participate in interreligious relations, and how is this influenced?

2.   Research context

Assuming that the various ways of dealing with religious diversity are played out on site and differ locally (Körs, 2017), the case of Hamburg, the second-largest city in Germany, and one equipped with the powers of a city-state in the federal system of Germany, is certainly not representative. Rather, with its self-ascribed as well as attributed 'pioneering role' in dealing with religious diversity (Foroutan, Coşkun, Schwarze, Beigang, Arnold & Kalkum, 2014; Spielhaus & Herzog, 2015) Hamburg offers an interesting reference point where current developments become particularly evident.

2.1   Hamburg as highly diverse city

Shaped by Christianity, the city of Hamburg is both religiously plural and secular at the same time, thus constituting the case of a religiously relativised city. The German micro-census of 2011 shows that 33.9% of the Hamburg population of around 1.7 million belong to the Protestant Church, 10.9% to the Roman Catholic Church, 0.9% to Evangelical free churches, 1.7% to Orthodox churches, 0.1% to Jewish communities, and 3.7% to other religious communities with the status of a body under public law. Statistically, the remaining 48.8% belong either to no religion or to a religion without the status of legal recognition, among them – as can only be estimated – about 10% Muslims and Alevis and about 1% Buddhists and Hindus. In terms of religion, therefore, Hamburg is a highly diverse city, and is characterised by the fact that there is no (non-) religious absolute majority, and that the population (still) belongs to a
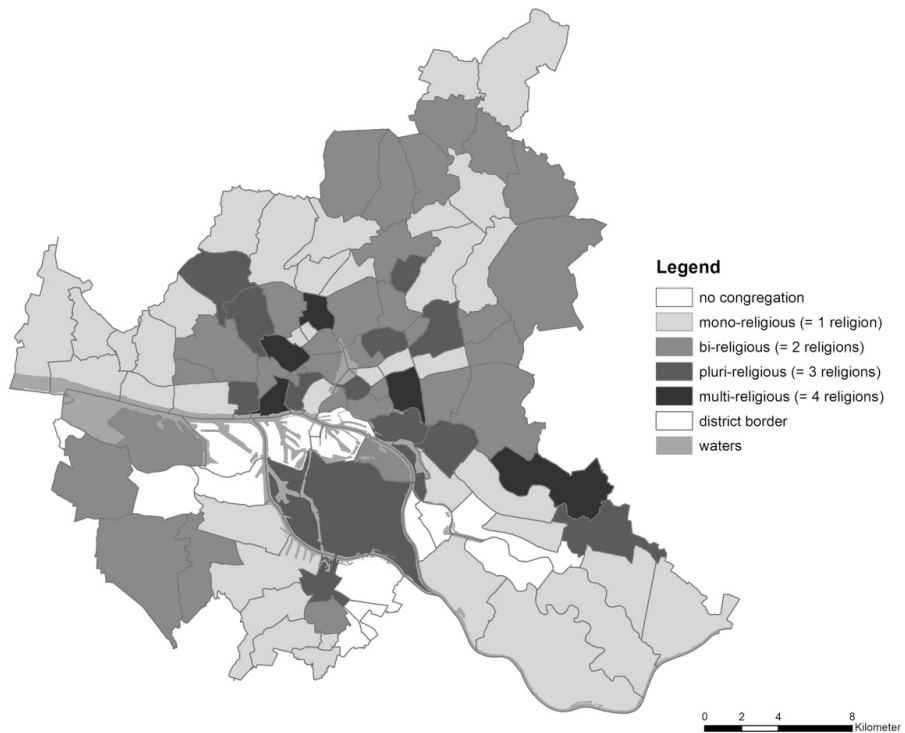
Figure 1:   Diversity of congregations in urban districts of Hamburg (N = 547)
Own figure. The map shows the diversity of the 547 identified congregations
in the urban districts of Hamburg, measured by the number of religions – from
the spectrum of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Alevism, Buddhism, Hinduism,
Sikhism, Baha'ism – that are represented in each district by at least one
congregation. While the light grey coloured districts are mono-religious, i.e.
the located congregations all belong to the same religion and generally to
Christianity, the grey and dark grey districts are diverse and either bi-, pluri- or
multi-religious, i.e. the congregations located here belong to two, three or four
different religions. The darker the colour of the district the more religions are
represented there by congregations. In the uncoloured districts, no congregations
were found, either because these are waterfront or otherwise uninhabited areas or
because former congregations have merged. However, religious life can still take
place in these areas, as in the 'Ecumenical Forum', an association of 17 different
Christian churches situated in the new upcoming district HafenCity.

substantial extent to the two great Christian churches and increasingly to other reli-
gions, while the proportion of the population without religious affiliation continues
to grow.

    This religious diversity is also reflected at the congregation level. More than 100
different religious communities were already identified in Hamburg in the 1990s
and documented along with their individual congregations (Grünberg, Slabaugh,
Meister-Karanikas, 1995). In recent decades, however, religious pluralisation has

clearly increased, especially in the Muslim and Buddhist but also in the Christian spectrum outside the Protestant and Catholic churches, and we find many districts with congregations of different religions, as shown in figure 1.

2.2   Hamburg as 'capital of interreligious dialogue'

Hamburg is not only religiously diverse in reality, but also understands itself to be the 'capital of interreligious dialogue', an estimation which is particularly supported by those engaged in the endeavour and which is readily promoted by the media.[2] While this is a self-conception which cannot be verified here, it does correspond with many events and developments that together bear witness to a diversity-open context in Hamburg which can only be sketched in the following.

Of particular interest are the so called 'Hamburg Contracts', concluded in 2012, in which the Hamburg Senate granted legal and in particular symbolic recognition to the Muslim and Alevi communities (Haddad, 2017; Körs, 2015). The contracts go back to a six-year negotiation process and were also supported by the Protestant and Catholic Church as well as the Jewish community, and were thus even interpreted as the 'successful result of interreligious dialogue' (by the Bishop of the Protestant Church, Spiegel, 30 April 2013). The political relevance of religious diversity is also visible in the current coalition agreement, which for the first time contains a separate section on 'Dialogue with the Religious Communities' and in which Hamburg is described as 'an open city of interreligious dialogue' (SPD Hamburg, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2015, p. 99). This political structure corresponds with a political culture among the population of Hamburg characterised by a comparatively high acceptance of religious diversity and, in particular, of positive attitudes towards Muslims (Dragolov, Ignácz, Delhey & Boehnke, 2014; Foroutan et al., 2014).

While this relates to recent developments, interreligious dialogue in Hamburg already enjoys a long tradition. Here the so called Hamburg model of 'Religious education for all', which is unique in Germany insofar as pupils are taught in classes of mixed confession and religious affiliation (rather than in separate classes), is of particularly high importance, and has led to an intensive exchange between religious communities including the Protestant and Catholic churches, the Jewish, Muslim, Alevi, and Buddhist communities (and later the Hindu and Baha'i communities) from as early as the 1990s (Weisse & Doedens, 2000). This early and, for the time unusual, instance on including non-Christian religions in providing religious education in pub-

---

2   For example, Hamburg was referred to as the 'capital of interreligious dialogue' as early as 2009 by the former Bishop of the Protestant Church visiting the Centrum-Mosque on the occasion of the city Shura Council's tenth anniversary (Hamburger Abendblatt, 23 July 2009) as well as more recently both by the chair of the Shura Council himself and by the representative of the Tibetan Centre during a meeting of representatives from five religious communities occasioned by the Paris terrorist attacks (Die Welt, 19 January 2015).

lic schools forms an important basis for the relations between religious communities, the government and authorities.[3] Furthermore, in 2000 high-ranking representatives of these communities founded the 'Interreligious Forum Hamburg', creating a forum where they meet regularly and use their communicative and symbolic potential 'for tolerance and the peaceful coexistence of all groups in this society' (Petersen, 2002, p. 28). In 2014, the 'Secular Forum Hamburg' was founded, in which seven organisations joined together to represent secular humanists positions of non-religious groups, and to promote tolerance and non-violence between people, cultures, ideologies and religions.[4] In addition to the religious and secular communities and political actors, the Academy of World Religions of the University of Hamburg is another central player in the interreligious dialogue in Hamburg. It was founded in 2010 as an academic institution devoted to interreligious dialogue in research, teaching and practice (Weisse, 2009). As one of its central areas of responsibility is teacher training for "Religious education for all" it was involved from very early on in the aforementioned networks, and also in the implementation of the 'Hamburg Contracts', which provide for a reordering of religious education. Though this outline is limited to a few key aspects of the development of interreligious dialogue in Hamburg, it nonetheless indicates the strong presence that it has throughout the city.[5]

2.3   Hamburg and its experiences with fundamentalism

However, Hamburg has also had numerous experiences with religious fundamentalism. This goes back in particular to the 9/11 attacks in New York in 2001 when Hamburg, as the city where the attacks were planned, became known through the media for the 'Hamburg terror cell'. This reputation may have gradually disappeared from the public consciousness, particularly through the impact of many later acts of Islamist terrorism in other cities that has revealed the global scope of the threat. Nevertheless, as Manfred Murck, the former head of the Hamburg Constitutional Protection ('Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz') states, 9/11 represents a watershed in the awareness of the threat: 'I believe that September 11th will always be connected with Hamburg', and he also sees 'a particular responsibility to remain alert' (Frankfurter Rundschau, 31 August 2011).

In fact, Islamist terrorism and extremist political Salafism are considered as the greatest challenges currently facing Hamburg (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2016).

---

3   In Germany, religious education in public schools is guaranteed by Article 7 Paragraph 3 of the Basic Law and is taught 'in accordance with the principles of the religious communities'.

4   Retrieved April 11, 2017 from http://www.sf-hh.org/home/index.php

5   At the same time, this also raises questions which need more reflection but must be left unconsidered here, such as the representation of the persons and organisations involved, the non-participation of religious communities and in particular of many Christian faiths, or how non-religious worldviews are dealt with.

Recent years have seen the closure of the Taiba-Mosque in St. Georg in 2010, the former gathering place of the 9/11 attackers which had been under observation since then as a 'symbolic location for jihadists from all over Germany' and a 'centre of radicalisation' (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 10 August 2010). Salafist Islamists strengthened their propaganda strategies and also tried to reach non-Muslims by publicly distributing copies of the Qur'an throughout the city on several occasions (Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg, 2016, p. 41). In 2013, extremist Islamist youths in several schools in the east of the city raised concerns and triggered public debate (Landesinstitut Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung, 2013). Such events show the limits of interreligious dialogue and can counteract it, but in practice they have contributed to its strengthening and development in Hamburg, as was the case in many other places especially after the attacks of 9/11 (Halafoff, 2013, p. 2).[6]

To sum up, therefore, the building of interreligious relations between congregations which form the focus of our study, takes place (or not) within the configuration of a (still) Christian and mainly Protestant, religiously diverse and secular society; a policy of integration based on the cooperation of the government and religious communities; a history of varied interreligious activities and networks supported by numerous actors; cultural openness among the population; countervailing forces such as the presence of fundamentalist groups; and the fact that, within the confines of a city state, all of this occurs in relative proximity. This context is taken into account in the following, both for the establishment of hypotheses as well as for the interpretation of the results.

3.   Theoretical considerations, research status, and hypotheses

In this section, the central issues of this contribution – the extent to which interreligious relations between congregations are actually present and the degree to which they are influenced by religious affiliation, beliefs, and social integration – are to be looked into both theoretically and against the background of the research status. For this purpose, studies from the German context are referred to as far as possible; however since research into congregations is comparatively limited, studies from other countries, especially from the USA, have also been considered.[7] From these, four hypotheses for examination are derived, one regarding distribution and three regarding statistical relationships.

---

6   See also the article by Husebø and Johannessen in this volume who also find an increase
     in interreligious activities after the terrorist attacks in Oslo in 2011.
7   Since theories of secularisation and de-institutionalisation dominated the field for decades,
     German sociology of religion has primarily dealt either with the great trends of religious
     developments in a macro-perspective or with individual religiosity in a micro-perspective.
     In contrast, the meso-level of social forms of religion, including congregations, has been
     little considered for a long time, but has recently gained in importance (for an overview
     of research on congregations in Germany see Körs, 2018a).