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Migration and interculturality

1 Introduction: Discursive disparities in the study of religion and migration

On 8 December 2015, the so called International Church Convent (ICC), an association of 130 migrant churches in the Metropolitan Area Rhine-Ruhr, issued a declaration on the situation of refugees in Germany. They committed themselves to actively support refugees and invite them in a joint welcome letter to make use of their help: “As most if its members are not originally from Germany, the ICC communities share the experience of foreignness and acceptance and at the same time the responsibility for people who are coming to Germany. Through their experience and the diversity of their languages the communities of the ICC have both a special gift and a particular responsibility to accommodate refugees in Germany” (translation AKN).¹ The example indicates that the recent immigration of more than a million refugees, for all hardships it may entail, has inspired a great deal of civic engagement and empowered religious migrant communities to come forward. In the same vein, a quantitative survey has shown that Muslims have been particularly active in the field of refugee aid as their experiences and cultural competences were sought for and appreciated after a long time.²

Against this backdrop the chapter will explore the issue of religious and cultural pluralisation in Germany under the conditions of migration. In the beginning some terminological and conceptual considerations are in order: As a matter of fact, the theme ‘Migration and Interculturality’ refers to a complicated field which is demarcated by semantics of religious and cultural ‘diversity’, ‘plurality’, ‘pluralism’, ‘difference’ and ‘inequality’. Needless to say, many of these terms carry significant normative implications, e.g. ‘diversity’ is frequently used in an affirmative way, whereas ‘inequality’ is often perceived as a state which

1 Internationaler Kirchenkonvent Rheinland Westfalen, Erklärung des Komitees des Internationalen Kirchenkonvents (Rheinland Westfalen) IKK zur aktuellen Situation der Flüchtlinge in Deutschland, in http://www.moewe-westfalen.de/fileadmin/media/1-AKTUELL/2015-2/IKK_Erklärung_zur_Flüchtlingsfrage.pdf (Stand: 07.08.2017).

2 Cf. Alexander-Kenneth Nagel and Yasemin El-Menouar, *Engagement für Geflüchtete – eine Sache des Glaubens? Die Rolle der Religion für die Flüchtlingshilfe* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2017).

must be overcome. ‘Difference’, on the other hand, may lend itself to skeptical notions of interreligious and intercultural encounter as controversial and quarrelsome. In the following I will dwell on the well-established distinction between plurality and pluralism: I will use the term ‘plurality’ to make descriptive reference to a multi-religious and / or multicultural constellation and ‘pluralism’ to denote an attitude, namely the positive evaluation of a plural setting.³ Empirically, plurality and pluralism are often inversely connected, as the German federal election in 2017 showed. The rightwing populist party “Alternative for Germany”, which strongly advocated anti-pluralistic positions, was particularly successful in areas where the degree of religious and cultural plurality was low. When I speak of pluralisation, I refer to an increase of plurality, not of pluralism.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a comprehensive review of research on religion and migration in Germany.⁴ Instead, I would like to state (and briefly elaborate) a critical observation: The academic discourse on religious migrant communities in Germany is undertheoretical and overmetaphorical as it unfolds in the shadow of political debates on integration and assimilation, which introduced a deficit-oriented stance on matters of cultural and religious plurality.

The observation that plurality is considered to be a challenge, rather than an opportunity, is closely related to a set of skeptical academic metaphors of religious migrant communities, namely ‘parallel societies’, ‘mobility trap’, ‘ethnic colonies’ and ‘cultural refuge’. The widespread concept of *parallel societies* employs a strong geometrical notion of parallels (two lines which never touch each other, but in infinity). Thus, it insinuates that migrant communities dwell in a state of permanent isolation and do not enter any sort of productive exchange with the country of residence. Encounter and mutual learning are but eschatological options in this scenario. The concept of migrant communities as a *mobility trap* goes back to the roots of the sociology of migration in the Chicago school.⁵ It acknowledges that immigrant organizations or milieus may offer own pathways of incorporation, e.g. through ethnic economies, but at the same time may impede immigrants from other, more promising trajectories of social upward mobility. The concept of *ethnic colonies* is well suited to illustrate the

³ Cf. Robert Jackson, *Rethinking religious education and plurality: Issues in diversity and pedagogy* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁴ Cf. Alexander-Kenneth Nagel, “Religion, Ethnizität und Migration,” in *Handbuch Religionssoziologie*, eds. Volkhard Krech, Detlef Pollack, Olaf Müller and Markus Hero (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2018).

⁵ Cf. Norbert F. Wiley, “The Ethnic Mobility Trap and Stratification Theory,” *Social Problems* 15(1) (1967): 147–159.

challenges of the over-metaphorical nature of academic debates on migration: even though the term has been broadly used in the German debate in a pluralistic manner to articulate an appreciation of migrant self-organization⁶, the very imagination of migrants forming a ‘colony’ carries implications of expansion which resonate all too well with xenophobic concerns of ‘Überfremdung’ or ‘Islamization’. In a similar vein, scholars from religious and cultural studies have argued that religious migrant organizations serve as a kind of *cultural refuge* where immigrants could recover from experiences of alienation and marginalization in the country of residence.⁷ While this idea of ‘diaspora integration’ has its merits in acknowledging the value of the respective cultures of origin (instead of demanding cultural assimilation), it tends to overemphasize the vulnerability and indigence of immigrants rather than to address their capacity of social and cultural entrepreneurship.

Recently, scholars have come up with new metaphors to challenge these skeptical imaginations, conceiving of religious migrant communities as hubs or *bridgeheads* of intercultural encounter⁸ or pointing to their *civic resources* and potentials⁹. Apart from their heuristic value, these counter-metaphors have to be translated into concepts which are empirically applicable. In previous contributions, I have proposed a relational approach to the civic potentials of religious migrant communities which accounts for networks of exchange and support within and beyond the boundaries of affiliation.¹⁰ In this chapter, I will focus on intercultural and interreligious relations within and between religious migrant communities. In the following section, I will provide a systematic de-

6 Cf. Friedrich Heckmann, *Ethnische Minderheiten, Volk und Nation: Soziologie interethnischer Beziehungen* (Stuttgart: Lucius und Lucius, 1992) and Rauf Ceylan, *Ethnische Kolonien. Entstehung, Funktion und Wandel am Beispiel türkischer Moscheen und Cafés* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2006).

7 Cf. Martin Baumann, “Religion und ihre Bedeutung für Migranten. Zur Parallelität von “fremd”-religiöser Loyalität und gesellschaftlicher Integration,” in *Religion – Migration – Integration in Wissenschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft*, ed. Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration (Berlin, 2004), 19–30, 26–27. Access through: www.remid.de/pdf/religion-migration-integration-2004.pdf (last access December 13th, 2017).

8 Cf. Martin Baumann, “Von Gegenorten zu neuen Brücken- und Heimatorten: Moscheen, Tempel und Pagoden von Immigranten in der Schweiz,” in *Orte der Europäischen Religionsgeschichte*, Vol. 4, eds. Jürgen Mohn and Adrian Hermann (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2015), 503–523.

9 Cf. Alexander-Kenneth Nagel, “Religiöse Netzwerke: Die zivilgesellschaftlichen Potentiale religiöser Migrantengemeinden,” in *Religiöse Netzwerke. Die zivilgesellschaftlichen Potentiale religiöser Migrantengemeinden*, ed. Alexander-Kenneth Nagel (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2015), 11–36.

10 Cf. op. cit., 21–27.

scription of phenomena of religious pluralisation and address the question how migration has changed the German religious landscape after World War II. In the third section I will turn from a description of religious plurality to an analysis of different measures of interreligious practice and use the fourth section to draw some conclusions as to intercultural opening as a field of action for the churches and other religious communities in Germany.

2 Migration and religious pluralisation in Germany

As the 500th anniversary of Reformation reminds us, Germany can look back to a long history of confessional diversity. Along with the political division of the country after World War II into the Federal Republic of Germany, based on a corporatist cooperative notion of state and church and the German Democratic Republic following a pattern of Socialist Laicism, the German religious landscape presents itself from a bird's eye view in a tripartite shape. While the Southwestern federal states of North Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Baden-Württemberg, and Bavaria exhibit a (more or less prominent) majority of Catholics, the states of Hessen, Thuringia, Lower Saxony, and Schleswig-Holstein as well as the city-states of Hamburg and Bremen are marked by a Protestant majority. In the remaining states, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, and Saxony as well as the city state of Berlin, the absolute majority of people are not affiliated with a (mainline) denomination. As a matter of fact, however, the tripartite structure of Catholic, Protestant and non-confessional regions does not reflect the whole story of religious diversity in Germany. During the last 50 years immigration has become a crucial factor for religious and cultural pluralisation. The following table shows – what I call – the religious immigration profiles of selected European countries and helps to situate Germany in the European context:

Table 1: Religious migration profiles of selected European countries

	Germany	Austria	Switzerland	France	Spain	Norway	United Kingdom
Christian	51 %	58 %	71 %	41 %	72 %	52 %	54 %
Muslim	30 %	24 %	11 %	46 %	17 %	27 %	22 %
Hindu	1 %	1 %	1 %	1 %	1 %	2 %	6 %
Buddhist	2 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	1 %	6 %	3 %

Table 1: Religious migration profiles of selected European countries (*Continued*)

	Germany	Austria	Switzerland	France	Spain	Norway	United Kingdom
Jewish	1 %	1 %	1 %	1 %	1 %	1 %	1 %
Other	2 %	1 %	1 %	4 %	3 %	3 %	6 %
Without affiliation	15 %	15 %	14 %	6 %	7 %	9 %	8 %

Source: PEW Global Religion and Migration Database 2010

The table is based on data from the Global Religion and Migration Database which was compiled by the Pew Research Center in 2010 and which “allows for cumulative counts of all migrants living in the world in 2010 [...], including those who may have moved across international borders decades ago.”¹¹ Information on religious affiliation is based on original data (where available) or estimated using religious affiliation data for immigrants to similar countries or the respective countries of origin.

At first glance, the German religious immigration profile reflects a common European pattern, i.e. a predominance of Christian immigrants in conjunction with a substantial Muslim minority. This observation stands in contrast to a widespread tendency of European media, politics and academics to ‘Islamize’ the immigration debate. Needless to say, this pattern results from a high level of migration within the European Union (EU), yet it also applies, when only immigration from outside the EU is taken into account.¹² It holds true to all Western European countries (except for France) and is particularly prevalent in Switzerland and Spain where almost three out of four immigrants have a Christian background and the share of Christian immigrants is more than five times higher than the share of Muslims. While most immigrants in Switzerland are labor migrants from continental Europe (especially from Germany), the religious immigration profile of Spain reflects colonial trajectories as most Christian immigrants come from South and Latin America. Likewise, the high share of Muslims migrating to France and the relatively high proportion of Hindu immigrants to the United Kingdom reflect their colonial history in North Africa and South Asia. Finally, the German religious migration profile is marked by a high proportion of Christian immigrants, a considerable minority of Muslims and immigrants without a

¹¹ <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/03/08/religious-migration-appendix-b/>.

¹² Cf. Pew Forum, *Faith on the Move: The Religious Affiliation of International Migrant*, Fact Sheet: European Union (2012), <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2012/03/europe-fact-sheet.pdf>.

religious affiliation (mostly from Eastern Europe). The slightly higher proportion of Buddhists reflects Vietnamese labor migration to the former GDR (German Democratic Republic).

Despite their systemic differences, both German states initiated a large scale of labor migration: The FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) signed a number of recruitment contracts with predominantly Roman Catholic countries, such as Italy (1955) and Spain (1960), as well as countries with a Muslim majority, such as Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963) and Tunisia (1965), in order to nourish its booming economy in the decade of the so called 'Wirtschaftswunder' (economic miracle). Likewise, the GDR recruited workers from fellow Socialist countries, such as Vietnam, Mozambique and Cuba, to compensate for the brain drain to Western countries. In the late 1980s labor migrants made up 1% of the overall workforce which was less than in the FRG, but still the highest share among the countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.¹³

In both states of Germany labor migrants were considered a fungible source of 'human capital' to support the local economy. This instrumental approach is reflected in the common term 'Gastarbeiter' (guest workers) which denotes both the primary function of the immigrants (i.e. to work) and the transient nature of their stay. Neither the FRG nor the GDR envisaged permanent residence as an option for their 'guests'. Labor migration was organized according to a principle of rotation which entailed a strict limitation of work contracts (e.g. 2 to 5 years). While the GDR was adamant in applying rotation and actively sought to prevent contact between migrants and non-migrants¹⁴, the FRG allowed long term employment and family reunification, thus creating the conditions for stable residence and religious institutionalization. As a consequence, the size and proportion of religious and confessional minorities has increased considerably as the following table shows:¹⁵

13 Cf. Klaus J. Bade and Jochen Oltmer, *Migration, Ausländerbeschäftigung und Asylpolitik in der DDR* (2005). Access through: <http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration/56368/migrationspolitik-in-der-ddr?p=all> (last access December 13th, 2017).

14 This system proved particularly rigid for female migrants. In case of pregnancy they were forced to decide between eviction or abortion. Cf. Michael Feige, *Vietnamesische Studenten und Arbeiter in der DDR und ihre Beobachtung durch das MfS* (Magdeburg, 1999).

15 Author's visualization, based on data compiled by the "Religious Studies Media and Information Service," accessed March 10th, 2014, <http://www.remid.de/statistik>.

Table 2: The ten largest religious minorities with a migration background (REMID and other sources)

Religion	Number
Roman Catholic	
Migrant Missions	3.500.000
Muslim	
Sunni	2.604.000
Alevite	500.000
Shiite	200.000
Alawite	70.000
Christian-Orthodox	
Greek-Orthodox	450.000
Romanian-Orthodox	300.000
Serbian-Orthodox	250.000
Russian-Orthodox	240.000
Syrian-Orthodox	100.000
Protestant	
Migrant communities	No official number; roughly 2.7 Mio Protestants with "migration background"
Other	
Jewish	190.000
Buddhist	140.000
Yezidi	100.000
Hindu	95.000

The distribution of religious migrant communities clearly reflects the German immigration history since the 1960s, as most immigrants belong to a Christian denomination: according to figures of the German Bishops' Conference, 3.5 million members of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany are organized in 400 mother-tongue missions ('muttersprachliche Gemeinden') guided by 500

priests.¹⁶ Altogether, there are about 4.4 million Roman Catholics in Germany who are either foreign nationals or have a so-called ‘migrant background’, i.e. at least one of their parents has immigrated to Germany.¹⁷ According to census data, roundabout 2.7 million people with a migrant background in Germany belong to a Protestant mainline or Evangelical church.¹⁸ However, most of the regional churches (‘Landeskirchen’) do not systematically record Protestant migrant churches on their territory. Last, but not least, more than 1.3 million people in Germany belong to a Christian-Orthodox church.

Altogether, there are roundabout 9.2 million Christians with a migrant background in Germany. In comparison, immigrants with a non-Christian religious background have, so far, been a clear minority. The biggest denomination are Sunni Muslims, most of whom are labor migrants from Turkey, while others have come as refugees from the Yugoslav Wars in the early 1990s. Moreover, there are half a million Alevites of predominantly Turkish or Kurdish origin, whereas a smaller number of Shi’ites has emigrated from the Iran after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. It is likely that the recent immigration of refugees goes along with an increase and diversification of the Muslim population in Germany (see below). An estimation of the Federal Ministry for Migration and Refugees in 2016 has indicated an overall number of 4.4 to 4.7 Muslims in Germany.¹⁹ Compared to these figures, other non-Christian minorities appear to be rather marginal in quantitative terms. Altogether, there are about 200.000 Jews, almost all of whom have emigrated from the former Soviet Union, some 140.000 Buddhists with a migrant background, mainly from Southeast Asia (plus 130.000 Buddhists without a migrant background), about 100.000 Yezidis, many of whom are refugees from Turkey and Iraq, and 90.000 Hindus, with a significant proportion of Tamil refugees from the Sri Lankan Civil War.

In reference to these rough numbers a methodological caveat is in order: the terms ‘community’ or ‘minority’ used here, are not meant to refer to any consistent group in a strict sociological sense. In contrast, the religious self-organization of Sunni Muslims (but also Buddhists and Hindus) in Germany has so far been strongly associated with their respective countries of origin. Furthermore,

16 Cf. <http://www.katholisch.de/beratung/seelsorge-von-a-z/auslanderseelsorge>.

17 Cf. Stefan Schohe, “Seelsorge für Migranten in Deutschland,” in *Migration als Ort der Theologie*, ed. Tobias Keßler (Regensburg: Pustet Verlag, 2014), 35–65.

18 Cf. <https://ergebnisse.zensus2011.de/>.

19 Cf. Anja Sticks, *Wie viele Muslime leben in Deutschland?*, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016). Access through: https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/WorkingPapers/wp71-zahl-muslime-deutschland.pdf?__blob=publicationFile (last access December 13th, 2017), 5.

it should be noted that the membership or affiliation rates of religious minorities are often estimations, since there are no coherent national statistics of religion in Germany.

This being said, how do recent processes of refugee immigration relate to the established pattern of religion and migration? The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees has collected data on the religious affiliation of asylum seekers. The following diagram shows the development during the last five years:

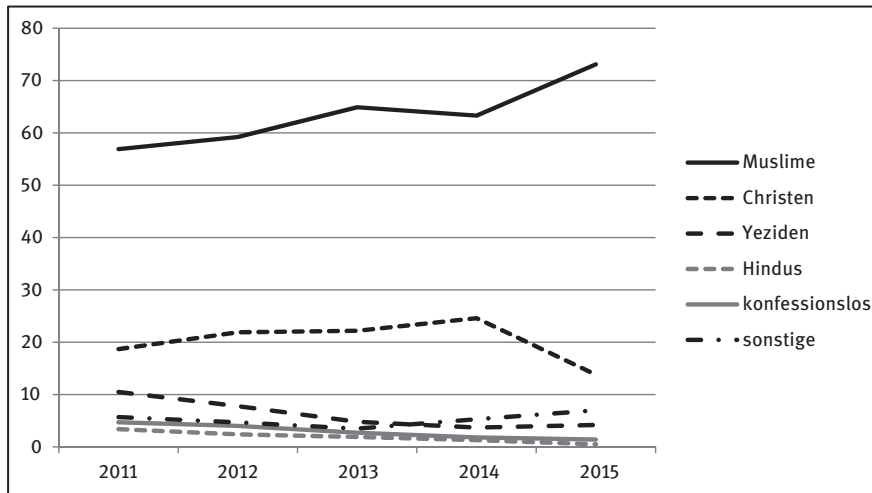


Figure 1: Religious affiliation of asylum seekers in Germany (2011–2015). The religious affiliations of asylum seekers in Germany are from top to bottom: Muslim, Christian, Yezidi, Hindu, without affiliation, and others.

Four points can be highlighted: Firstly, in the previous years, a clear majority of asylum seekers were Muslims, mainly from the Middle East and the Balkans. Secondly, from 2011 to 2015, the share of Muslims increased from 57 to 73 percent. Thirdly, the high proportion of Muslim immigrants marks a change in the religious immigration profile of Germany. Even though there is a history of recruitment contracts with Muslim countries such as Turkey or Morocco, many of the labor migrants after World War II were Christian (mostly Roman Catholic). Finally, the relative decline of Christian and Yezidi asylum seekers is due to the high absolute numbers of Syrian applicants since 2014 and hence should not be interpreted as a general trend. The overall numbers of Yezidi and Christian refugees have, in fact, roughly remained the same.

In effect, refugee immigration is likely to contribute to a further pluralisation of the German religious field and will most probably result in a slightly higher

share of the Muslim population. As mentioned earlier, the Federal Office for Migration has come up with an estimation of about 4.5 million Muslims in Germany by the end of 2016 (roughly 5.5% of the overall population). These figures indicate that the general tripartite structure of the German religious landscape (Roman-Catholic, Protestant, and Unaffiliated) is likely to remain rather stable in the years to come. More relevant than the quantitative increase of Muslims will be the internal pluralisation of Islam in Germany. During the previous decades, Muslim organizations have sought to acquire the status of a public corporation (*‘Körperschaft öffentlichen Rechts’*) which would have enabled them to collect a religion tax and to offer Islamic instruction in public schools. This form of institutional accommodation greatly failed since Muslim communities of various national and denominational origins could not agree on a common representative. Along with the crisis of one of the formerly important Turkish umbrella organizations, the further diversification of the Muslim field in Germany will demand new efforts of capacity building and institutionalization.

3 Modalities of interreligious practice

While the previous section illustrated general pathways of religious pluralisation in Germany as a result of immigration, I will now turn to the practical matters of interreligious and intercultural encounters and provide a systematic description of different measures of interreligious activities. In doing so, I draw on data collected in two empirical research projects, namely a project on “Interreligious Activities and Religious Encounter in the Ruhr-Area” (2010–2014), which was supported by the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Research of North Rhine-Westphalia and a project entitled “Interreligious activities and urban governance in the Ruhr Area”, which was funded by the Mercator Research Center Ruhr (2012–2013). During these projects we performed participant observation in more than 40 interreligious events and conducted 60 in-depth interviews with religious organizers in order to learn more about the rational of different formats of interreligious activities. The data was transcribed and analyzed, following a grounded theory coding procedure where five main categories of interreligious activities emerged, namely: neighborhood initiatives, dialogue meetings, prayers for peace, school services, and festivals that can be characterized by their particular social structure and composition as well as their distinct notion of diversity and cohesion.²⁰

20 Cf. for the following: Alexander-Kenneth Nagel, “Relational Diversity: Religious Pluralization

Therefore, our working definition of interreligious activities refers to all organized measures of interreligious communication that are based on a programmatic notion of religious difference. As such it does neither include situational or spontaneous modes of interreligious encounter, nor unconscious and implicit forms of interreligious interaction. We regarded a measure as ‘interreligious’ when it involved adherents from at least two religious traditions (e.g. Christian-Muslim; Christian-Jewish). As a consequence, we have not included all sorts of intrareligious exchange (e.g. ecumenical) in our sample, knowing that the distinction between religious traditions and denominations can be sometimes blurry (e.g. some Alevites in Germany do not want to be considered a Muslim denomination). Likewise, we have not investigated formats of intercultural work within a religious tradition (e.g. joint projects or working groups of the German established churches with migrant churches). This being said, five main types of interreligious activities can be distinguished:

Interreligious neighborhood initiatives

Interreligious neighborhood initiatives are dense local networks of religious adherents whose primary goal is to promote religious understanding and community cohesion in a local neighborhood. In terms of governance, they represent a localized grassroots approach to religious diversity ‘in the quarter’. Unlike other activities, they usually do not involve state actors, but are initiated by the established churches and take place in parish halls or even in private premises. Due to their local scale and relatively long history of collaboration, participants in neighborhood initiatives are quite well acquainted with each other on a personal level. The degree of religious, denominational and cultural diversity tends to be higher than in other formats as neighborhood initiatives basically address all religious communities in a given area without having to observe a certain quorum of religious traditions. Hence, in our sample, neighborhood initiatives were the only format that included representatives of smaller groups, such as Sikhs, Old Catholics or the New Apostolic Church. The social narrative of neighborhood initiatives rests on emphatic references to a common neighborhood as an inclusive spiritual social space transcending religious differences – and an exclusive notion of what marks a ‘proper’ religion. This notion became very explicit in several meetings when participants evoked the image of a pan-

and Politics of Cohesion,” in *The Humanities Between Global Integration and Cultural Diversity*, eds. Birgit Mersmann and Hans G. Kippenberg (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), 227–241.

religious community besieged by ‘non-believers’ who try to discredit religion and who were identified as a ‘common enemy’.

Dialogue meetings

Dialogue Meetings are discussion groups covering dogmatic or ethical issues in a comparative manner and on a regular basis. The social structure of these meetings is marked by a well-established core of activists, mostly religious specialists (clerics or teachers), and a loose periphery of casual visitors with issue-specific interests. Our sample of dialogue meetings involves a thematic range from theological matters, such as ‘the character of Joseph’ or ‘strong women in the world religions’, expanding to more general ethical questions, such as ‘social human rights’ or ‘How can we care for our elderly?’ The degree of religious diversity in dialogue groups is rather moderate and clearly centered around an ‘Abrahamic’ consensus of Christianity, Islam and Judaism as major conversation partners, often reflected by the self-designation ‘Trialog’. Similar to neighborhood initiatives, dialogue meetings usually do not involve state actors and are held in religious premises (often alternating between the participating mosques, synagogues and churches). Due to the controversial nature of some topics and the dialogic format itself, these meetings may attract a variety of stakeholders, among them sympathizers of Islamophobic movements. The social narrative of these groups relies on two different mechanisms that are often applied complementary to each other: cultivating difference and discovering common ground. While the cultivation of difference implies an acknowledgement and acceptance of the religious other (often grasped as ‘tolerance’), discovering common ground refers to a transgression of religious boundaries, e.g. by reference to a common origin or systematic similarities.

Interreligious Prayers for Peace

Interreligious Prayers for Peace are joint worship events which involve lections and liturgical elements from different religious traditions. Similar to neighborhood initiatives, they address a wide variety of religious groups and are characterized by a comparatively high degree of diversity. In our sample, peace prayers were the only interreligious activity which explicitly included polytheistic and non-theistic traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. In comparison to other activities, interreligious prayers had more participants (between 30 and 100), who were not or only loosely acquainted with each other. Further-

more, peace prayers offer a number of opportunities for public authorities to become involved: E.g. one prayer event was jointly organized by a city council and a renowned local dialogue initiative. It was held in the town hall and opened by the mayor who took the opportunity to advertise the achievements of his government regarding social peace. The balance between plurality and cohesion is achieved by a remarkable ritual design which stages religious boundaries in order to transgress them: Typically, peace prayers rely on consecutive readings or recitations by religious representatives and result in a common prayer for unanimity and understanding. In contrast to the previous formats, peace prayers are less based on cognitive interreligious exchange, but on joint religious experience and ritual performance. This approach is clearly not within the guidelines of the established churches of how a multi-religious prayer may look like. In one peace prayer, in our sample, the initiators were well aware of these restrictions and determined to challenge them: In his introduction of the final joint prayer, a Catholic pastoral assistant ('Pastoralreferent') acknowledged that some people might have hesitations concerning a joint prayer and called upon them to "remain in respectful silence" while the others prayed.

Interreligious school services

Similar to peace prayers, interreligious school services are multi-religious worship sessions held at state run or religious schools in order to celebrate events of successful enrollment or graduation. These services are typically offered at schools in multicultural districts and address both pupils and their families. In our sample, they involved Protestant and Catholic representatives as well as an imam of the Turkish Islamic Union (DITIB), the biggest Muslim association in Germany. Hence, the degree of religious diversity is rather limited and restricted to communities that are well established and acknowledged. It is likely that this restrictive policy is due to the public framework of school services which are held during schooldays in school venues and involve religious dignitaries as well as teachers. Taking into account recent scandals of DITIB imams collaborating with Turkish intelligence, it remains to be seen whether the described pattern of interreligious collaboration persists or whether schools reach out to find other Muslim partners. The interreligious setting itself is marked by a liturgical framework which is strongly inspired by Christian practice and includes short lections and prayers from each faith tradition as well as songs and sketches that have been prepared in class. On one event, Kinder Surprise Eggs ('Überraschungseier') were distributed to the graduating 10th graders in the manner of a Lord's Supper, regardless of their religious background.

The balance between plurality and cohesion is achieved through a guiding notion of the class community or age cohort embracing religious differences.

Interreligious festivals

Finally, interreligious festivals are interreligious events which take place on public premises, such as market squares or sport stadiums. These festivals may range from interreligious feasts over block parties to sportive tournaments, such as the annual interreligious soccer competition 'Anstoß zum Dialog' (Kick-off for Dialogue), which has taken place for more than a decade in the city of Dortmund and is organized around a game of soccer between teams of Christian and Muslim clerics, supervised by a Jewish referee. Interreligious festivals may combine different elements of the previous formats, e.g. the interreligious soccer tournament involved an interreligious quiz for children as well as Muslim and Jewish youth groups performing traditional dances. Unlike other activities, interreligious festivals are characterized by a large number of participants and high fluctuation; they usually do not include liturgical action, such as prayer or worship, and lack a clear-cut distinction between religious and cultural boundaries. Similar to peace prayers, interreligious festivals may become a stage for public authorities. For instance, the above-mentioned tournament included addresses of the mayor and the chief of police, who highlighted the analogy of sportive and intercultural fairness. The soccer game resembles peace prayers as it takes a 'ludic' or 'performative' approach of literally playing with religious differences. The particularity of religious traditions is being evoked, for instance by the composition of teams, and potential interreligious conflict is reframed as productive competition. In contrast, interreligious feasts, such as joint Iftar-celebrations, dwell on a strong sense of unity by commensality admitting diversity in the form of short explanations on particular religious festive dishes and dietary rules whereas the social narrative of interreligious block parties resembles neighborhood initiatives in their reference to a spiritual community of the quarter.

As a matter of course, this preliminary typology can neither claim to be exhaustive nor disjunctive. Even in our selective sample, activities remain that are being notoriously difficult to categorize. An example are interreligious get-togethers, such as the initiative 'ZusammenSetzen' (sit together), that take place in private premises and are largely based on personal encounter and biographical narratives. Other borderline cases are temporary interreligious roundtables or open days, which are established during the planning process for representative mos-

ques and tend to be issue-specific and apologetic. Finally, the typology does not account for the variety of artistic responses to religious pluralisation, e.g. interreligious rooms of silence in hospitals or airports.²¹ Nevertheless, the distinction between interreligious neighborhood initiatives, dialogue meetings, peace prayers, school services and festivals provides a snapshot of a highly dynamic field and elucidates the variety of civic responses to religious diversity. In the following conclusion I will elaborate on implications and mechanisms of these measures of interreligious work for interculturality as a field of action within the churches.

4 Interculturality within the churches: a neglected field?

While interreligious activities have become an established – albeit contested – field of action in the German mainline churches, intercultural work is often subsumed under the umbrella of ecumenism and thus fading out cultural differences and boundaries. Given the considerable numbers and the variety of origins of Christians with a migrant background, described in section 2, this *implicit approach* to interculturality may be regarded a desideratum. Simultaneously it should be noted that the German Protestant Church and the Roman Catholic Church are facing similar challenges, in spite of completely different structural mechanisms to accommodate Christian migrant communities.

In the *Roman Catholic Church* migrants can form native-language communities ('muttersprachliche Gemeinden') under an own (canonical) legal form called "*missio cum cura animarum*".²² In effect, Italian, Polish, Croatian, Vietnamese and other missions have been created. They are subject to central support and supervision of a bishop and use the premises of local parishes. In a recent publication, the national director for native-language chaplaincy ('Ausländerseelsorge') of the German Bishop's Conference has criticized the lack of exchange between local German-speaking and native-language commu-

21 Cf. Bärbel Beinhauer-Köhler and Christian Meyer, "In Bewegung. Gebetsräume für Juden, Christen und Muslime am Frankfurter Flughafen," in *Viele Religionen – ein Raum?!*, eds. Bärbel Beinhauer-Köhler, Mirko Roth and Bernadette Schwarz-Boenneke (Berlin: Frank und Timme, 2015), 195–212 and Alexander-Kenneth Nagel, "Kontaktzone oder Spannungsfeld? Multireligiöse Räume in religionssoziologischer Perspektive," in op. cit., 35–54.

22 Cf. Stefan Schohe, "Seelsorge für Migranten in Deutschland," in *Migration als Ort der Theologie*, ed. Tobias Keßler (Regensburg: Pustet Verlag, 2014), 35–65, 51.

ities. He therefore called for more efforts to “inculturate” the missions into local communities which would also require a “multicultural pastoral work”.²³

In the German (mainline) *Protestant Churches* the structural coupling with migrant churches is much looser, but different formats to accommodate cultural plurality have emerged. A very basic approach that has been practiced in the churches of Rhineland and Westphalia is creating an ongoing regional listing of Protestant native-language communities.²⁴ Other formats, which are often based on previous listings, are networking activities, such as the International Church Convent, mentioned in the introduction, or collaborative projects, such as the pilot project ‘Church Together’ (‘Gemeinsam Kirche Sein’), where the Lydia Church Dortmund is transforming into an international congregation. While ‘Church Together’ is a pilot project, it is exemplary for a more general trend of local parishes discovering migrant churches under their roof as a resource in the process of profile formation. Hence, in the best case, the challenges of church reform and retrenchment on the ground may inspire new forms of intercultural exchange and empower native-language congregations. Another measure of intercultural collaboration is higher education institutions, such as the University of Applied Sciences for Intercultural Theology Hermannsburg (‘Fachhochschule für Interkulturelle Theologie’), whose study programs on intercultural theology, congregational leadership and diaconia have become an important hub for the academic training of pastors of native-language congregations.

Despite these promising approaches to incorporate (Roman Catholic model) native-language communities or to collaborate with them (Protestant model), actual and substantial encounters are still rare.

Are there any lessons to be learned from the field of interreligious activities as it was mapped in section 3 of this article? First of all, a parallel working definition of intercultural activities would refer to all organized measures of intercultural communication that are based on a programmatic notion of contextual difference of being Protestant or Catholic. Such differences may be liturgical (e.g. the role of embodied worship practice or receptive vs. responsive reaction to a sermon), doctrinal (e.g. the concept of proper exegesis or the stance to same-sex marriages) or social (e.g. the degree of commitment to and social control through the congregation). Secondly, what can be learned from single formats of interreligious activities for intercultural work in a church context? E.g.

²³ Cf. op. cit., 46–47.

²⁴ Claudia Währisch-Oblau, “Migrationskirchen in Deutschland. Überlegungen zur strukturierten Beschreibung eines komplexen Phänomens,” in *Zeitschrift für Mission* 31 (2005): 19–39.

organized measures of intercultural dialogue might borrow the idea from inter-religious dialogue; It is not only about discovering commonalities, but also about cultivating theological differences. Such an approach might be helpful to challenge the deeply irenic nature of intercultural communication which is often based on an asymmetric constellation rather than theological unanimity. A format which is already widely used is intercultural open days during which a native-language congregation presents itself to the German speaking community. These events are significant because (and to the extent that) they invert the established role division of hosts ('the Germans') and guests ('the migrants').

Vice versa, the very challenge, to moderate cultural plurality and pluralisation, may provide a new and promising perspective for interreligious exchange between Muslims and Christians in Germany. While the mainline churches have slumbered away intercultural opening for several decades, they are now in the process of waking up. At the same time Muslim institutions have been facing an enormous increase of cultural plurality as a result of the recent immigration of Muslim refugees (see section 2). The challenges of cultural pluralisation are remarkably similar: They refer to very basic issues of language and communication, different encultured practices of worship (e. g. the performance of ritual prayer (*salāt*) and notions of religious superiority (e. g. Arab Muslims ridiculing Turkish Muslims for their pronunciation or a vanguard consciousness of some Christians from the global South in the context of reversed mission). Hence, intercultural pluralisation in Germany may indeed give a new impetus for interreligious exchange at eye level which may stretch from practical challenges to theological questions of religious enculturation.