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SYMPOSIUM: THE TWO PLURALISMS: A NEW PARADIGM, PART ONE

Religious Pluralization and Secularization in Continental Europe, with Focus on France and Germany

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Abstract Change processes are taking place in different European countries, based on different contextual backgrounds, with diverse motives, actors, and aims, but nevertheless in a way that similarly affects both religious pluralization and secularization. In European societies, religious pluralization is not only a fact, but it also poses a challenge for a better or a new understanding of the different religions themselves and for the role they play in society. The following contribution focusses on France and Germany, with special attention to one of the federal German states: Hamburg. The results show: A new interest in religion and interreligious dialogue on the one hand, and an ongoing secularization on the other are not in confrontation but related to each other. Despite an institutional tradition of separation between state and religion especially in France, there is a growing awareness that attention to religion need not counteract this tradition but may be necessary as an instrument including all parts of a religiously and culturally diverse population. This is also the case, in a different and striking manner, in Germany as a whole and in Hamburg in particular. We find a new interest in religion and dialogue in many different academic disciplines as well as by actors from different religious communities, in school, society, and politics.

Keywords Religious plurasisation · Secularisation · Europe · France · Germany · Academy of World Religions of Hamburg University · Dialogical religious education · Contracts between state and religious communities

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Seen from the United States of America, continental Europe can easily be thought of as a coherent region with so many commonalities that it really is appropriate to view it as a single entity. Seen by somebody who comes from one of the states in "continental Europe", the differences within this area appear much greater than the commonalities.

Nevertheless: What we see across the region of continental Europe is profound change with regard to the "two pluralisms"- religious pluralization and secularization -, or to be more precise: Change processes are taking place in different countries based on different contextual backgrounds, with different motives, actors and aims, but nevertheless in a way that similarly affects both religious pluralization and secularization. Religious pluralization is not only a fact in our societies, but it also poses a challenge for a better (or a new) understanding of the different religions themselves and for the role they play in society.[1] More research effort is needed to better understand the new constellations and functions of religions and their role in society.

And on the other hand, we see secular discourses as well as secular actors undergoing equally profound change.[2] The current developments in the region of "continental Europe" reflect a situation in which the theoretical framework in the field of religion, pluralization, dialogue and secularization has to be rebuilt. One major stimulus for this endeavor is found in the new proposal by Peter Berger. Instead of looking at either

[1] Berger, Peter L. & Weisse, Wolfram (2010): Im Gespräch: Religiöse Pluralität und gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhalt, in: Weisse, Wolfram & Gutmann, Hans-Martin (Eds.): Religiöse Differenz als Chance? Positionen, Kontroversen, Perspektiven, Münster: Waxmann, pp. 17–36.
[2] Casanova, José (2014): Secularisation, Religion and Multicultural Citizenship. In: Weisse, W., Amirpur, K., Körs, A., Vieregge, D. (Eds.) (2014): Religions and Dialogue. International Approaches. Münster: Waxmann, pp. 21–32.

religious pluralization or the secularization in our societies, the new paradigm opens up the possibility, even the necessity to consider both the "co-existence of different religions and the co-existence of religious and secular discourses" as two sides of the same coin.[3]

The assumptions tied to both religious pluralization and secularity have changed considerably. We know the presupposition that religions would be weakened and even disappear so that continental Europe would gradually but certainly become a widely secular society, turned out to be wrong. The assumption that secular discourses and structures would be strengthened by opposing religion and at the cost of religions and religious discourses also turned out to be – at least partially – wrong. On the other hand, religious pluralization did not counteract ongoing secularization, but contributed to the emergence of new discourses with other actors and possibilities, very different from those of the time when state-church relations dominated the field.

Thus, we can find profound change in both fields: The primary challenge to religions is the plurality of world views while secular actors have gone from viewing the "religious factor" and "religious plurality" as an opposition to seeing it as a reference point in discourse.

There is fundamental change in Europe, but in some cases the processes go in opposite directions, as in the cases of Russia and Norway. Without going into great detail, the gist is this:

In Russia we have seen the overthrow of the formerly exclusively secular discourse and secularist power structure of communism give the Russian Orthodox Church increasing political and social influence as a visible partner of the government. It must be fairly admitted that criticism of the government has been voiced from within the church, but in public, we see the Patriarch of Moscow as the partner of President Putin, and there does not seem to be much awareness of religious plurality in the country, at least not expressed in respect towards Muslims, Protestants, and other minorities. After 70 years of staunch secularism enforced by communist dictatorship, the state and the church have now redefined themselves, adding new elements of interaction between both.

In Norway, we see the opposite development: The country's Lutheran Church is not only losing membership, but also influence in the state. It has undramatically and gradually relinquished its past status as the established "state church" and the backbone of Norwegian culture and state. More an implosion, not at all a revolution, this development still has consequences for the self-understanding of the state and its officials and representatives. It also affects the understanding of the church, realizing that it is part of a plurality of religions and world views in modern society.

These two contradictory developments both address the challenge to reevaluate the role of religions, the importance of religious pluralism, and the forms and influences of secularism, including the relationships of religious and secular discourses and actors.

So much for these short characterizations. The focus of my contribution will be on changes in two other European countries, France and Germany, with special attention to one of the federal German states: Hamburg.

Laicism and Religious Pluralism Under Scrutiny in France

France has a longstanding and deliberate secular tradition: Since 1905, the legal separation of church and state has been the cornerstone of "*laïcité*" which is not only a fact of law, but a principle entrenched in public awareness and an integral part of the political and societal discourse on religion. Nevertheless the situation in France has considerably changed in view of the plurality and visibility of religions and of the role of the secular state in addressing the various religions. As a consequence, rather than discarding the principle of *laïcité*, its understanding had to change in order to uphold this idea/ideology while meeting the new demands of a plural society. What does this mean?

The French government has been aware for the past 15 years that parts of its population cannot be engaged without giving proper recognition to their religion. This mainly concerns the Muslim minority, many of them from the former French region – in reality, a colony– of Algeria. Here, the government sees the danger of a parallel society emerging – a horror to the centralized system of France, and a danger to the peaceful coexistence of its people.

The analysis of the situation in France shows that part of the problem is the lack of knowledge about religion. This is due to an interpretation of *laïcité* that banned any discussion of religious topics from public schools. Paul Ricœur, the great philosopher at the Sorbonne in Paris, criticized this as early as the 1990s, emphasizing that pupils in France learned about the goddesses of ancient Greece, but nothing at all about Christianity or other religions.[4] In order to overcome this deficit, the French government asked Régis Debray, a philosopher and politician, to write a report in order to sort out how it would be possible to introduce instruction on "religious facts" (*faits religieux*) in school without violating the basic concept of *laïcité*.[5]

[3] Berger, Peter L. (2014): The Many Altars of Modernity. Toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age. Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter, p. IX.

[4] Ricœur, Paul (1995): La critique et la conviction. Entretien avec François Azouvi et Marc de Launay. Paris: Hachette, chapter on "Éducation et laïcité", pp. 193–209.

[5] Debray, Régis (2009): Rapport à Monsieur le Ministre de l'Éducation Nationale: L'enseignement du fait religieux dans l'école laïque [report written in February 2002]. In: L'enseignement du fait religieux à l'ère de la mondialisation. Actes du workshop international organisé à Tunis an Avril 2009 [Series: Forum des Opinions – IV]. Tunis: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, pp. 191–209.

Debray presented his report in 2002 and encouraged the political authorities and the public to introduce religious themes into the curricula of French schools – not by creating a new subject, but in the context of teaching history, languages and arts. He referred to the basic concept of *laïcité* as a given, but proposed a shift of understanding it: An outdated "*laicité* of ignorance" should be replaced by a "*laïcité* of intelligence" (*laïcité d'ignorance à une laïcité d'intelligence*). Framing the issue in these terms proved a good strategy. Who would defend ignorance, and who would not be pleased to strive for an intelligent definition of *laïcité*, opening up to questions of religion, society and education in France? His report helped to open up the debate, but all in all, reality on the ground proved hard to shift. Words cannot change a traditional understanding, but they were able to indicate a new development in society, even if this was not yet embraced by the majority.

The new development in France has been characterized by the sociologist Séverine Mathieu in the short sentence: Religion in France is publicly represented by Islam.[6] This is the abbreviation for the fact that Catholicism – not to mention the small Protestant churches – is declining and appears to be fading away. Thus, the Muslim population is the primary example for the relevance of religion in the public sphere. This is why religion in general – including Christianity – has been receiving greater public attention. In order to secure peaceful coexistence, the secular government of France felt it had to acknowledge religion, and especially Islam, as part of the society and to accommodate Muslims as part of the population, not view them as the potentially destructive outsiders.

Jean-Paul Willaime, a sociologist specializing in *laïcité* at the Sorbonne in Paris and for years the head of the IESR (European Institute of the Science of Religion, a foundation of the government as result of the Debray report), states that religion is back in the French public sphere.[7] In keeping with the concept of the two pluralisms, he emphasizes "… we are living in a new age of modernity, and this new age of modernity profoundly reconfigures the relationship between state, society and religions".[8] As religions in his view are resources of identity, they should be granted the space to play a positive role "in democratic and laical societies".[9] That is why he sees room for a civic and laicist recognition of religions in the public sphere.[10] Jean-Paul Willaime is aware of the fact that he goes against a dominant opinion of seeing religions as a threat for democracy. But he counters that Europe has the chance to enable a constructive role for religions as their social situation has changed profoundly. In the "laboratory of Europe" Jean-Paul Willaime sees the possibility to develop a new understanding of *laïcité* that includes recognition of religion and dialogue and to work out a model of the relations between political and religious authorities in a democracy.[11]

I don't know how well you understand Jean-Paul Willaime after my short description, but I see him as an ally in France for the explication of the two pluralisms, as Peter Berger calls his new approach. His colleague in the Parisian IESR, the professor of the modern history of Judaism and European senator of ecology for the Green party, Esther Benbassa, voiced a stronger polemic against *laïcité* after the terrorist attacks in Paris, January 2015. She stated that it has become a word without meaning: "*Les terroristes [de Charlie Hebdo] sont des Français qui ont été baignés par ce discours dépourvu de sens*".[12] Her reason: Those who identify with religion – *et c'est leur droit* – don't learn anything by actors that are not shaped by ideologies. The consequence she sees is that schools should play a role providing information on religions so that the interpretation of and information on religion is not left to religious leaders who propagate an ideology. In order to pave the way for this task, she advocates immediate action "*d'une manière concertée et intelligente, et cesser de faire de la laïcité une nouvelle religion*".

Again, the strategy is a new and "intelligent" interpretation of *laïcité* as a basis for education on religions in French schools. Esther Benbassa adds: "*Nous avons besoin de sortir de ces guerres entre les laïquards et le corps religieux en general.*" Immediately followed up in order to avoid misunderstandings with: "*Les Églises n'entrereront pas à l'école pour autant.*"

New interpretations, new constellations of secular and religious discourses: This is entirely in line with Peter Berger's approach. The French reality has shifted, and there is a need to reinterpret state *laïcité* to enable society – and especially school – to learn more on religion and religious facts, so that a misinterpretation of religion such as we find so tragically evident in the terrorists of Paris, can be counteracted. I don't intend to comment on this further, but it is clear that more reflection will be needed on the theoretical implications and the changing context and public debate in France.

[6] Mathieu, Séverine (2009): Les adolescents et la religion. In: Béraud, Céline & Willaime, Jean-Paul (Eds.): Les jeunes, l'école et la religion. Montrouge Cedex: Bayard, pp. 85–102.

[7] Willaime, Jean-Paul (2008): Le retour du religieux dans la sphère publique. Lyon: Éditions Olivétan.

[8] "… je soutiens que nous vivons un nouvel âge de la modernité et que ce nouvel âge de la modernité reconfigure en profondeur les rapports entre État, société et religions". Willaime, opus citatus, p. 7.

[9] "dans des sociétés démocratique et laïque". Willaime, op. cit., p. 8.

[10] "il y a place pour une reconnaissance citoyenne et laïque des religions dans la sphère publique". Willaime, op. cit., p. 9.

[11] Willaime, op. cit., p. 10.

[12] Bernole, Claire (2015): Entrer dans une réflexion sur les religions. Questions à Esther Benbassa, sénatrice Europe Écologie-Les Verts, professeur en histoire du judaïsme moderne à l'EPHE. In: Réforme [Hebdomadaire Protestant d'Actualité], 26 mars.

The Plurality and Interaction of Religious and Secular Views: Changes in Germany

General Developments Change is also the watchword when it comes to religion in the public arena and academia in Germany. I can only give you a brief outline of what this means here:

Politics Greater attention paid by politicians to religions and the coexistence of people with different religions and religious education since about 15 years ago. For example, former chancellor Helmut Schmidt regards religion and the coexistence of different religions as one of the core themes of international politics in the 21st century.[13]

Philosophy as an Example for Academia New and broad interest in different academic disciplines. For example, Jürgen Habermas, who paid no attention to religion for decades, took up the subject of religion and society from 2001 onwards, stating that religious tolerance and interaction are key values for a multicultural and democratic society.[14]

Society A decline in church membership is flanked by a growing interest in questions which could be regarded as religious and growing numbers and identification with religion among those belonging to religions other than traditional Christianity in Germany.[15]

Media There is greater attention to religion, religious diversity, religiously motivated destruction, and the dangerous functions of religions.

We can say that even while secularization is still ongoing (e.g., decline of church membership, criticism of religious institutions mainly directed against churches), there is no forceful rejection of religion, indeed, we often find interest in religious themes and in other religions than Christianity.[16] The process of religious pluralization is also still ongoing both within the Protestant and Catholic spectrum as well as other religions and in growing diversity within other religions. Secular discourse and its stakeholders are in a process of change, as are religious discourse and its stakeholders.

[13] Schmidt, Helmut (2011): Religion in der Verantwortung. Gefährdung des Friedens im Zeitalter der Globalisierung. Berlin: Propyläen.

[14] Habermas, Jürgen (2008): Between Naturalism and Religion. Philosophical Essays. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

[15] Pickel, Gert (2015): Religiöse Pluralisierung als Bedrohungsszenario? Stereotypen, Ängste und die Wirkung von Kontakten. In: Amirpur, Katajun & Weisse, Wolfram (Eds.): Religionen, Dialog, Gesellschaft. Analysen zur gegenwärtigen Situation und Impulse für eine dialogische Theologie. Münster: Waxmann, pp. 19–55.

[16] Pollack, Detlef & Müller, Olaf (2013): Religionsmonitor. Verstehen, was verbindet. Religiosität und Zusammenhalt in Deutschland. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann-Stiftung.

Dialogue Between Religious and Secular Actors. The German City-State of Hamburg

Hamburg is one of the 16 federal states of Germany, and the country's second largest town. Its public self-understanding is – generally speaking – that of an open and secular society. About half of the population has no ties to religious bodies, whereas the other half are Lutherans, Catholics, Muslims, Alevis, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus etc.[17] While the public and academic sector of Hamburg used to embrace the idea that religion does not matter, we have seen this change over the past 15 to 20 years. There is a new interest in religion, especially in interreligious dialogue, from the side of schools and universities, from religious bodies as well as from secular actors in society and politics. Accordingly, we are now seeing developments in Hamburg where dialogue between different religious and secular actors is gaining more and more strength and public attention. This concerns not only the pluralization and the dialogue of religions at university, it is equally true for interreligious interactions among youngsters in school, and it is the case for the growing interaction between religious bodies and political authorities in the state of Hamburg.

Pluralization of Religion and Interreligious Dialogue: An Interdisciplinary Approach at the Academy of World Religions at Hamburg University and Public Interactions In Germany, the public discourse on religious pluralism mostly focuses on Islam. Its predominance is defended by pointing to over four million Muslims living in Germany and their justified calls for greater recognition and participation in public affairs. The current – and even more so future – situation in Germany will have to take account not only of Christians and Muslims, though, but also of a growing number of other faith groups, an increasing intrareligious differentiation into separate traditions or confessions, and individualized forms of religiosity and spirituality that defy traditional religious affiliation. Developing an analytical perspective on religious pluralism and the relations between people from different religious traditions or belief systems thus is a vital task for academia and society at large. That is what our Academy of World Religions at Hamburg University is doing. Its approach is deliberately dialogue-oriented, focusing not only on a coexistence of different religions, but on the interaction between them, especially with a view to extant dialogue orientation and future potential. Also, it integrates religions beyond Christianity and Islam, namely Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Alevism while also taking into account secular positions, i.e., perspectives of religiously unaffiliated persons

[17] In Hamburg with a total population of 1.7 million inhabitants in the inner circle of the city, about half of the population has no formal religious links. The other half consists of about 30 % Protestants (most of them Lutherans), 10 % Catholics (half of them from Eastern European countries and South America), 8 % Muslims, 2 % Alevis, 0.1 % Jews. (See Bürgerschaft Hamburg 2007).

and institutions.[18] Thus, the Academy's profile matches the central characteristics of the religious landscape in Germany and other European countries: pluralism, internal differentiation, individualization and secularization.

Apart from the basic tasks of a university body – teaching and research – the Academy of World Religions also participates in the public discourse on religion and interreligious dialogue in society and education. It arranges a semi-annual panel discussion between two of our professors and two politicians from the city-state's parliament on new research in the field of religion and dialogue. This provides the opportunity for a direct exchange of academic, religious and secular views. Another space of encounter between religious and secular views is the so-called "Long Night of Religions", which is jointly planned by the Academy of World Religions in cooperation with one of the largest theatres in Hamburg. An audience of about 1000 people from different religions and secular backgrounds see and hear texts and performances from different religions and can follow discussions of specialists from different academic as well as religious and secular fields.

At least in Germany, this is not a common activity on the part of a university, but we view it as an opportunity to expose these issues to the public and bring people and institutions together in a way that promotes interreligious dialogue – including secular positions.

Yet we can only do this on the basis of more traditional comprehensive research, such as in our large-scale European research project on "Religion and Dialogue in Modem Societies".

The Research Project "Religion and Dialogue in Modern Societies" (ReDi) is designed as practice-oriented research addressing the fundamental questions of interreligious dialogue both regarding its possibilities and limitations. Its interdisciplinary approach, including theology (and the humanities in general) along with social sciences and education, has been chosen to study complex phenomena of interreligious dialogical activity with regard to their impact on social processes of integration and peacemaking and thus gain practically applicable insight for their realization.[19]

At the first level of dialogical theology, our project identifies and explores the potentials and limitations to dialogue in different religious traditions in order to base an open, dialogical theology on extant approaches of openness to pluralism. This work is undertaken by a team of experts from different religious traditions with a focus on Hamburg-based researchers and cooperation partners from both within Germany and abroad. The dialogical theology thus developed refers back to empirical findings by integrating theological conceptions of laypeople, especially young people, rooted in the everyday experience of religious pluralism and living dialogical practice.

At the second level of research, that of dialogical practice, the project deploys empirical surveys to gauge the possibilities and limitations of living dialogue between people from different religious and cultural backgrounds and to study the forms, functions and potentials of dialogical practices. In this effort, two fields are in primary focus. On the one hand, we study the practices, positions and beliefs of religious communities and organizations as well as their ties and interactions both amongst each and with other secular actors (e.g., public authorities, politicians, NGOs, associations and other members of civil society). On the other hand, the broad field of religious education, both scholastic and extramural, is studied with a view to the possibilities and limitations it has for fostering interreligious understanding.

As interreligious dialogue always occurs within a specific context whose religious, political and socioeconomic conditions, societal discourses, and other local factors shape it, this contextual dependence will also be taken into account. We carry out our research as an internationally comparative study whose horizon extends beyond Hamburg to other European metropolitan regions, namely: North Rhine-Westphalia, London, Oslo and Stockholm.

While the main focus of our project is on dialogue between religions (or religious actors), it also encompasses dialogue within a given religious tradition as well as that between religious and secular actors. Insofar we also refer to the "two pluralisms" in our research.

The Secular City and an Open, Non-Confessional and Dialogical Religious Education in Public Schools Religious Education (RE) is the only subject that is guaranteed by basic law in Germany and thus takes place in all public schools. Unlike other federal states of Germany, where it is mostly taught in separate, religiously and confessionally homogenous groups, Hamburg offers an integrated and dialogical form that brings together pupils from different religious, cultural and philosophical backgrounds in one classroom.[20] This approach has attracted

[18] Weisse, Wolfram (Ed.) (2009): Theologie im Plural. Eine akademische Herausforderung. Münster: Waxmann. See also: Weisse, W., Amirpur, K., Körs, A. & Vieregge, D. (Eds.) (2014): Religions and Dialogue. International Approaches. Münster: Waxmann.

[19] Weisse, W., Amirpur, K., Körs, A. & Vieregge, D. (Eds.) (2014): Religion und Dialog in modernen Gesellschaften. Dokumentation der öffentlichen Auftaktveranstaltung eines internationalen Forschungsprojektes. Münster: Waxmann. – Amirpur, K. & Weisse, W. (Eds.) (2015): Religionen, Dialog, Gesellschaft. Analyse zur gegenwärtigen Situation und Impulse für eine dialogische Theologie. Münster: Waxmann. – Weisse, W., Amirpur, K., Körs, A. & Vieregge, D. (Eds.) (2014): Religions and Dialogue. International Approaches. Münster: Waxmann.

[20] Knauth, Thorsten (2007): Religious Education in Germany: a Contribution to Dialogue or Source of Conflict? Historical and Contextual Analysis of the Development since the 1960s. In: Jackson, R., Miedema, S., Weisse, W. & Willaime J.-P. (Eds.): Religion and Education in Europe. Developments, Contexts and Debates. Münster: Waxmann, pp. 243–265. See also: Weisse, Wolfram (Ed.) (2008): Dialogischer Religionsunterricht in Hamburg. Positionen, Analysen und Perspektiven im Kontext Europas, Münster: Waxmann.

increasing international interest[21] for its ability to foster dialogical encounters between pupils. In it, the classroom is not just a place where they are instructed *about* other religions, but one where an actual exchange *between* pupils holding different religious or secular positions is enabled. That provides the opportunity to practice difference without discrimination in the school environment, an experience that is central to participation in processes of social negotiation and a vital part of citizenship education.[22]

What are the results of field studies with regard to the views of adolescents in Hamburg schools on religious education and the inclusion of pupils with different religious and secular backgrounds? One major study in the context of a European research project named REDCo (Religion and Education. A contribution to Dialogue or a factor of Conflict in transforming societies in European countries) between 2006 and 2009 showed clearly that pupils in Hamburg (as in many other countries in Europe) value the fact that Religious Education as a school subject both allows them to learn more about religions and to discuss questions of religion that are connected with their personal experiences.[23] The pupils in Hamburg predominantly believe that at school, it is very interesting to have classroom discussions with pupils of other religions and world views.[24] This represents learning about and from religious views. An introduction into religious faith is seen as the function of the family and religious communities or organizations.

New empirical studies support the analyses done in the ReDi project.[25] They found that adolescents want to be informed about other religions, including hearing and discussing opinions of others in the classroom with their understanding of their own religion (and the very real differences between pupils of the same confession).

The overwhelming impression of the pupils in Hamburg is that religious learning of this type is interesting, and that opposing positions can usually be formulated without creating conflicts in the classroom. Adolescents in Hamburg associate religion and dialogue especially with issues of social relevance. Thus, they propose solutions to enable peaceful coexistence between people of different religions. Their attitude towards people of different faith is mostly open-minded. Many pupils believe that respect for other religions and the universal freedom to practice them are important. The respondents repeatedly emphasize that this must apply regardless of an individual's religious affiliation and frequently mention the right to a free and independent choice of religion in this context. Yet there are limits to this openness; pupils are only prepared to tolerate the free exercise of religion as long as nobody comes to harm. Coercion and extremism are mostly rejected. Only in a few cases do respondents declare their own religion the sole true one and express the desire to convince others of its truth. Overall, we find a strong prevalence of comments expressing openness and curiosity towards other religions and their adherents among the respondents. Nonetheless, some comments express rejection, even outright xenophobia directed at other religions. This is not surprising in itself. What is astonishing, though, is how some of these statements combine open-minded positions with strong expressions of rejection. Here we need further research in order to understand such combinations.

All in all, we can conclude that Religious Education classes in public schools can be viewed as a place where young people encounter peers of different religions and world views and enter into dialogue with them. Pupils often formulate the expectations they have of these classes: They want them to leave room for expressions of individual opinion, exchanges of views and conversations on religious topics, and clear up misunderstandings as well as reduce prejudice. Perhaps we can dare to say that how religious education in school is didactically planned and experienced by pupils is a testing ground for an exchange between different religious and secular positions. Perhaps the empirical studies to which we refer can help us achieve a deeper and more concrete understanding of the interplay of the "two pluralisms" in the theory of Peter Berger.

A New Status of Relations Between Minority Religions and the State: The Staatsvertrag (Treaty) Between the Hamburg Government and Muslim Organisations The growing pluralism of religious and secular discourses in the German city-state Hamburg recently led to the conclusion of

[21] Weisse, Wolfram (2013): Dialogical 'Religious Education for all' in Hamburg. In: Pedagogiek 33, pp. 166–178. See also: Weisse, Wolfram (2014): La religion à l'école dans le Land de Hambourg. In: Willaime, Jean-Paul (Ed.): Le défi de l'enseignement des faits religieux à l'école. Réponses européennes et québécoises. Paris: Riveneuve, pp. 67–81.

[22] Weisse, Wolfram (2003): Difference without Discrimination. Religious Education as a Field of Learning for Social Understanding? In: Jackson, Robert (Ed.): International Perspectives on Citizenship, Education and Religious Diversity. London: Routlegde, pp. 191–208.

[23] Weisse, Wolfram (2010): A European Research project in Religion in Education. In : Religion & Education Vol. 37(3), pp. 187–202, with responses of Erik Owens, Recep Kamakdcan, David Chidester, Federico G. Settler, Tim Jensen, pp. 203–222. – Weisse, W. (2011): Reflections on the REDCo project. In: British Journal of Religious Education, Vol. 33(2), pp. 1–15. – Avest, I. ter, Josza, D.-P., Knauth, T, Rosón, J. & Skeie, G. (Eds.) (2009): Dialogue and Conflict on Religion. Studies of classroom interaction in European countries [Series: Religious Diversity and Education in Europe, 16], Münster: Waxmann.

[24] Knauth, T. (2008): Better together than apart: Religion in School and Lifeworld of Students in Hamburg. In: Knauth, T., Jozsa, D.-P., Bertram-Troost, G. & Ipgrave, J. (Eds.): Encountering Religious Pluralism in School and Society. A Qualitative Study of Teenage Perspectives in Europe. Münster: Waxmann, pp. 207–247.

[25] Weisse, Wolfram & Kappetijn, Bianca (2015): Pupils' Views on Religious Diversity and Tolerance in Hamburg. A Qualitative Analysis. In: REJA (Religious Education Journal of Australia), Vol. 31(1), pp. 10–17. – Knauth, Thorsten & Weisse, Wolfram (forthcoming, 2016): Positions on Religion and Diversity among Young People. A Case Study at a Hamburg School. In: Amirpur, K., Knauth, T., Roloff, C. & Weisse, W. (Eds.): Auf dem Weg zu einer dialogischen Theologie. Münster: Waxmann.

formal agreements between the state and Muslim and Alevi communities that were preceded by 5 years of dialogue.[26] These treaties between a German state and Muslim and Alevi communities are highly symbolic expressions of recognition accorded to the Muslim minority and their integration into society.[27]

In 2007, the CDU (Christian Democratic Union of Germany), at that time governing the city of Hamburg, brought forward a motion that requests of the senate "to commence dialogue with authorized representatives of Muslim communities to conclude a binding written agreement on mutual rights and obligations".[28] The Greens (Alliance '90/The Greens, earlier: Green-Alternative List) joined them in supporting the idea of a dialogue between the government and representatives of Muslim communities, stressing the importance of these exchanges as an important element of a constructive integration policy.[29] Furthermore they requested the initiation of regular informal dialogue meetings between representatives of the city parliament and representatives of Muslim communities as well as regular invitations of Muslim representatives to the city's official functions and celebrations.

The plan to launch negotiations between the state of Hamburg and Muslim communities had first been mentioned in a document from October 2006: "The government of Hamburg declared its willingness to commence negotiations with the goal of enacting a 'church'-state treaty with the Muslims of Hamburg in the course of an Iftar reception."[30] That was the start for a long discussion process addressing issues including religious holidays, scholastic religious education, chaplaincies at public institutions, public-service broadcasting, construction of mosques, death care, but also common core values such as respect for state laws and religious tolerance.

In August 2012, to extensive media coverage, the government of Hamburg publicly announced the conclusion of the negotiations with the Muslim and Alevi communities.[31] Two days later, the members of the city parliament discussed the announcement in a parliamentary session.[32] The plenary protocol shows that the political parties had mixed feelings toward the proposed treaties. The assembly particularly addressed negative responses from the public, mainly those concerned about the adoption of Muslim and Alevi holidays, religious clothing, religious education, the construction of mosques and gender equality. The debate in parliament centred on the neutrality of the state, the possibility of integrating other religious communities at a later stage, the sufficiency of existing regulations, the separation of church and state, and the potential difficulty of dissolving the planned agreements at a later date.

In November 2012, the senate of Hamburg, represented by the governor of Hamburg, Olaf Scholz (SPD: Social Democratic Party of Germany), signed two treaties: one with Muslim communities, one with Alevi representatives. The contracts were then sent to the city parliament for ratification.

In a plenary session in November 2012, the parliament discussed the treaties again.[33] During the session, the members highlighted the symbolic character of the agreements and stressed the fact that they mostly covered regulations already in force. The views concerning their impact on relations between religious and secular discourses differed. On the one hand, the agreements were viewed as counteracting the separation of religion and state,[34] on the other hand as reinforcing said separation. All in all, they were described as enabling communication on an equal footing, unfolding their full potential through implementation and hereby marking the beginning of further cooperation. In a concluding remark, a member of the SPD described the debate about the treaties as "a good starting point for the initiation, or rather the continuation of an interreligious dialogue that will reach the majority of our society".[35]

The discussion went on in public hearings and I will now highlight some comments made in this forum. An expert on religious studies, Professor Gritt Klinkhammer, criticized certain passages of the treaties as discriminatory because the Muslim and Alevi communities (unlike the Christian Churches or Jewish ones) were required to affirm their conformity with the German constitution and particular parts of existing law. On the other hand, Klinkhammer stated that she regards the agreements as a chance for the further development of dialogue between religious and secular discourse as well as between different religious discourses, i.e., the Muslim and Alevi communities themselves.[36]

[26] I am indebted to Jana Ditz, PhD student at the Academy of World Religions, for her research, which I use in this chapter.

[27] Körs, Anna (2015): Die Hamburger Staatsverträge mit Muslimen und Aleviten im Spiegel der Bevölkerungsmeinung. Zur Notwendigkeit gesellschaftlichen Dialogs. In: Dirim, İ., Gogolin, I., Knorr, D., Krüger-Potratz, M., Lengyel, D., Reich, H. H. & Weisse, W. (Eds.): Impulse für die Migrationsgesellschaft. Bildung, Politik und Religion. Münster: Waxmann, pp. 209–224.

[28] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2007b): Antrag vom 02.01.07, DS 18/5553.

[29] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2007): Antrag zur DS 18/5553 vom 31.01.07, DS 18/5714.

[30] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2006): Schriftliche kleine Anfrage vom 13.10.06, DS 18/5126.

[31] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2012d): Schriftliche kleine Anfrage vom 25.10.12, DS 20/5649.

[32] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2012e): Plenarprotokoll 20/37, Sitzung am 16.08.12.

[33] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2012f): Plenarprotokoll 20/45, Sitzung am 28.11.12.

[34] In the protocol referred to as "Trennung von Kirche und Staat" (separation of church and state).

[35] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2012f): Plenarprotokoll 20/45, Sitzung am 28.11.12, 3411.

[36] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2013): Wortprotokoll/Protokoll 20/17, Sitzung am 12.02.13.

Altogether, Hamburg's tradition of dialogue was praised and it became clear that the city is very proud of its unique religious education model in which all pupils of different religious beliefs as well as non-believers are taught together (*Religionsunterricht für alle*). In response, the Muslim and Alevi representatives asserted that they wanted to take an active role in the further development and continuation of the model. In general, the treaties were seen as helpful and promising, especially toward the role of Islam in Hamburg's public life: "Islam does not have to hide in Hamburg".[37]

But there were different emphases in the political parties' view of the documents. The CDU caucus expressed fear of extremism that led them to support (in their words) "liberal and progressive forces" (*liberale und fortschrittliche Kräfte*) and to take action against "extremist forces" (*extremistische Kräfte*).[38] The Greens identified the treaties as providing official recognition to the Muslim communities in Hamburg on an equal footing to the Christian churches and the Jewish communities. The Left (Die Linke Partei) supported the ratification, stating: "In the extensive literal sense, Islam has arrived in Germany. Islam has come out of the back rooms"[39] The FDP (Free Democratic Party) was the only party that rejected the treaties entirely. Their reason for this decision included the potential difficulty of dissolving the treaties and concern over preserving the neutrality of the state. The SPD advanced their opinion that the agreements are "a big step for integration, for interreligious dialogue and especially against prejudice".[40]

The treaties were ratified by parliament in June 2013 with the approval of almost all political parties. Yet the process of recognizing and fostering trust in the Muslim and Alevi communities is ongoing, as is demonstrated by the comment of a member of the CDU caucus who referred to Muslims as "people of a world religion that is foreign to us".[41] We still observe an ongoing discussion in Hamburg within the political and public sphere.[42]

Looking to the Future

We are seeing a shift in the view of contemporary religions and their role in society throughout the whole of Europe, but it is moving in different directions. The general development can be characterized as consisting of two currents moving side by side: a new interest in religion and interreligious dialogue, and an ongoing secularization. Both are not in confrontation, but are related to each other. This is a new stage of a development that finds its theoretical expression in the new approach by Peter Berger opening up perspectives on the interplay of both religious pluralization leading to more contacts between people of different religions in our societies and the stakeholders of secularization who see religion as important at least within political strategies and for the sake of societal freedom.[43]

This is why, despite an institutional tradition of separation between state and religion that exist in practically all European countries to some degree, there is a growing awareness that attention to religion must not counteract this tradition, but may be necessary as instrument of including all parts of a religiously and culturally diverse population. As we have seen, this is even the case in France – the poster child of strict separation between state and (Christian) religion.

It is also the case in a different and striking manner in Germany as a whole, and in Hamburg especially. In a secular city like Hamburg, nobody would have imagined some 10 or 15 years ago that such interest in religion would arise at different levels – an interest by many different academic disciplines, between people of different religions in school and society, and at the level of formal contracts between religious communities and government. These developments show new forms of interaction between state and religious bodies. This is especially true for the treaties between the Hamburg government and the Muslim and Alevi organizations. They are an extraordinary instrument of mutual recognition in a democratic state and may well prove an influence moderating the public debate. In the face of widespread concern over violence and terrorism by Muslims worldwide, the treaties go counter to generalized mistrust: Muslims can be seen as inhabitants of Hamburg with the same rights and obligations within a democratic society.

All of these changes in continental Europe show how important it is to develop further theoretical frameworks in view of interreligious and secular viewpoints. The "two pluralisms" of Peter Berger enhance central impulses for the interpretation of newly emerging developments in the field of religion in the public sphere.

[37] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2013b): Wortprotokoll/Protokoll 20/18, Sitzung am 26.03.13, 22.

[38] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2013d): Plenarprotokoll 20/63, Sitzung am 13.06.13, 4825.

[39] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2013d): Plenarprotokoll 20/63, Sitzung am 13.06.13, 4819.

[40] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2013d): Plenarprotokoll 20/63, Sitzung am 13.06.13, 4831.

[41] Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (2013d): Plenarprotokoll 20/63, Sitzung am 13.06.13, 4824.

[42] See for the public discussion: Körs, Anna (2015): Die Hamburger Staatsverträge mit Muslimen und Aleviten im Spiegel der Bevölkerungsmeinung. Zur Notwendigkeit gesellschaftlichen Dialogs. In: Dirim, İ., Gogolin, I., Knorr, D., Krüger-Potratz, M., Lengyel, D., Reich, H. H. & Weisse, W. (Eds.): Impulse für die Migrationsgesellschaft. Bildung, Politik und Religion. Münster: Waxmann, pp. 209–224.

[43] Berger, Peter L. (2014): The Many Altars of Modernity. Toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age. Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 79–93.

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