GLOBAL PRAYERS

Contemporary Manifestations of the Religious in the City

Secular Resistance and First Post-Secular Steps: How Berlin Deals with Global Prayers

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Without doubt, the new presence of religiosity in urban centers the world over presents a challenge to political culture—especially when this culture, as in Berlin, defines itself as avowedly secular. In this essay I would like to reconstruct a controversy clearly illustrating the present positions in Berlin on how to behave towards the global prayers communities. The controversy centers on a dispute between, on the one hand, Neukölln City Hall and, on the other, the Bürgerplattform (Community organizing platform) founded by Leo Penta and the Brücken im Kiez project (Neighborhood Bridges; initiated by the author), funded by the Stiftung Brandenburger Tor (Brandenburg Gate Foundation). In this debate, Neukölln City Hall holds the classic secularist position; in contrast, in their relations with religious communities, these two projects are trying to develop "post-secular" positions. While Neukölln City Hall's stance reflects the views shared by the majority of Berlin residents, the two projects represent what are definitely minority positions. As yet, no political actor on the Berlin Senate or district level has publically spoken out explicitly in support of post-secular policy—although important political actors are following this experiment with interest, not least due to the growing feeling that the secularist position leads to a dead end. It is probably no surprise to learn that classic secularists—and here again, this means Neukölln City Hall—regard such attempts as problematically blurring borders, and explicitly reject them.

THE CLASSIC SECULARIST POSITION

The classic secularist position views the growing presence of self-organized immigrant communities with unease. This unease is fuelled by fears over the fate of civil society and the role these communities play in it. They are regarded—at least, the vast majority of them—as reactionary, patriarchal, homophobe, anti-women and undemocratic. Allegedly, they are exploiting the set of problems facing immigrants to disseminate their message.

Their presence harbors the risk of civil society disintegrating into parallel societies of diverse provenance.[1] These fears are only heightened by the new presence of openly religious men and women in Berlin being primarily experienced, in particular, as Islam and Islamism, and thus the presence of a religion regarded as problematic for various reasons. Since the late middle ages, Islam has been stylized as Europe's major "Other"; there are numerous narratives of martial conflicts and, last but not least, 9/11 underscored the present danger of Islam. For this reason, turning to orthodox Islam and/or Islamism is promptly read as resisting assimilation to the society of the Federal Republic of Germany—and so held directly responsible for the "failure" of integration.

It is no coincidence that Neukölln mayor's office in Berlin (and the Neukölln Social Democratic (SPD) Party) advanced to become nothing short of a center of militant secularism. When talk in Germany turns to the failure of integration, Neukölln is among the most frequently cited examples. In this process, two images of Neukölln are always telescoped together. On the one hand, Neukölln is characterized as a district of extreme violence, disintegration, and poverty; on the other, Neukölln appears as a district where conservative religious and fundamentalist communities exercise a significant influence. Here, the discussion

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1 For a critical discussion of these fears see Schiffauer 2008.

on Islam in Germany in the Petra Maischberger talk show, one of the top talk shows on the German public broadcaster ARD, was typical for having three of its six discussion guests from Berlin, and two of those from the Neukölln district. The next day the *BZ*, a leading Berlin tabloid, summarized the program rather aptly:

> *"The ARD broadcasts across all of Germany. ... But Maischberger's debate on Islam went into great depth on Neukölln. ... Horrifying isolated cases from the problem district of Neukölln had to stand for the general picture in the migration and integration debate. The taboo 'honor killing' phrase was mentioned, as was the example of Muslim women afraid of going to the swimming pool. ... The program resembled a random odyssey through a problem neighborhood, and yet was supposed to clarify the problems of people migrating to places all across Germany ..."* (BZ October 13, 2010)

In a striking way, these two images are superimposed in the media; the common denominator they share is the "parallel society."

The media discourse constructs north Neukölln as a "fundamentalist city," dramatizing the situation ("The situation is catastrophic"). It builds up pressure ("It's time for something to be done!"), and, thirdly, identifies a problem: the Muslim migrants in general and Islamic communities in particular are responsible for the dreadful situation in the city district. This interplay between dramatization, buildup of pressure, and identification of the guilty parties creates a particular agenda.

Given the high profile of Neukölln in the media, any politician would be faced by the problem of how to act. This problem is further intensified by a division in the city district—the north, strongly influenced by immigration, faces a petty bourgeois and conservative south, largely informed by mainstream German culture, and very receptive to the media dramatization. Most politicians would probably react spontaneously to the biased and slanted press reports on their district by relativizing or correcting the image presented (which would then provoke the journalists to protest). The brilliance of district mayor Heinz Buschkowsky (SPD) lies in defusing the usual game played by the media and the political sphere. Instead of contradicting, he ran with the opportunity created by the media to showcase his own policies. In this way, he not only demonstrates a populist solidarity by making the problem analysis, agenda-setting, and solution process his own affair, but takes it to an extreme. The title of his recently published book *Neukölln ist überall* (Neukölln is everywhere, 2012) speaks volumes. Here, Neukölln not only stands for a city district, but a set of problems as well—which are not just the way they are, but represent all of Germany. And the subtextual message is that the mayor can cope with them—as is evident from his outline of these problems:

> *"An independent world has been created. And it is becoming more perfect and closed from day to day. People of particular religious persuasions are moving to Neukölln, to be in the vicinity of their mosque and religious community. They form networks which should not be underestimated and only serve one purpose: to remain among themselves, to preserve their own*

cultural and religious norms, protect the children from sinful influences, and eschew a German lifestyle, German guiding principles, and German laws. Parallel societies are quite simply characterized by the fact that they partition themselves off and engage all their energies in a process of internal integration in and identification with the minority position. Nearly all of these side effects which represent an obstacle to integration are closely connected with a disinterest in education—often mixed with strong devoutness, pseudo-religiosity, traditional family rites, old-fashioned hierarchical relations, an acceptance of violence and the duty to obey. All of these brake blocks are derived from the spiritual meta-level of faith, and hence it is almost impossible to question them." (Buschkowsky 2012: 110)

Here, in a nothing less than masterful way, Buschkowsky takes up the *topos* of the fundamentalist city to profile himself as a hands-on politician who looks problems square in the eye without attempting to whitewash them. In the style of a skilled Japanese martial arts fighter, he leverages the energy generated by the media reports for self-promotion. In this process, a differentiated approach is out of place. There is no mention of how religious communities especially take a very decisive stand against street violence (this also applies to so-called "Islamist communities") by integrating the youth and presenting the community as a counterweight to the "street" as a place of moral decay, drug dealing, violence, and prostitution; there is no mention of how in this attempt they have managed to oppose the image of men as "street fighters" with a "Muslim image of men"—a counter-image which, in contrast to the "assimilated" image, was accepted by the youth; finally, there is no mention of the communities launching and strongly supporting educational initiatives. I will return to this point below.

The practical consequence of this analysis is a policy of robust boundaries. Here, there are two borders not allowed to be challenged: the first one separates the secular and religious sphere, and the second runs between an unproblematic and problematic—in this case Islamist—religiosity. In this context, the second border is derived from the first. A religion which more or less follows the logic of the secular sphere is unproblematic (Asad 2003)—and today[2] this means a religion advocating the values of autonomy, reflexivity, and individuality. A religion is problematic which casts doubt on these values or appears to cast doubt on them—a religion which emphasizes community life, holds fast to the truth of revelation, and aspires to shape life by reference to religious principles. In the latter case, a distinction is made between an orthodox Islam which may be problematic but can be tolerated, and the unacceptable fundamentalist groups following legalistic Islamism or Salafism. Here, the term "legalistic Islamism" characterizes groups which keep to the law and which the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution regards as non-violent. These groups are presumed to take a critical view of the German constitution, if they do not reject it entirely (Neukölln SPD "Grünau Declaration," September 6, 2012). At present,

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2 Here, there is a displacement: the concept of secularity has been read differently throughout history (just as there are different regional forms).

though, the most problematic communities are considered to be the "radical movements actively seeking to create areas removed from mainstream society where they can live a life pleasing in the sight of God, as they understand it, away from the influence of the norms of the free and democratic system of government" (ibid.).

A policy of exclusion and, furthermore, isolation is pursued towards these two "fundamentalist" groups, with the objective of containing these communities. By drawing clear boundaries, Neukölln City Hall hopes to neutralize their influence. While these groups are being excluded, an ambivalent relationship is maintained with the orthodox Islamic communities. They are regarded as, one might say, problematic but not (irretrievably) lost:

> "The belief in the inseparability of religion, state and society and a reduction of the significance of the individual, who only has the right to exist as part of the Ummah, the community of all Muslims, are not reconcilable with the guiding principle of a democratically constituted state, its separation of powers, and the inviolable dignity of the individual. At least at this point, Islam still has its Enlightenment and Reformation ahead of it. It is precisely these developments that are concealed behind the repeatedly used term 'Euro-Islam ...'" (Buschkowsky 2012: 106)

According to this, "Euro-Islam" is the benchmark these communities should take. The reference to the Reformation sets up Christianity—and Christianity in its present state—as a yardstick: Islam is only fully acceptable if it develops a structure resembling present-day Lutheranism.

In this spirit, the Neukölln SPD's "Grünau Declaration" also calls for a firm line against radical Islamist movements. The Declaration underscores the principle that religious belief is a private affair. It also emphasizes that the right of parents to determine the religion of their children ends at age fourteen, and wants to see this explicitly mentioned in Ethics classes at school. Moreover, it continues, since schools ought to be religiously neutral spaces, teachers should not wear conspicuous ideological symbols. In addition, although it would be acceptable for Islamic pupils to have a day off on religious holidays, there should be no other curtailments of lessons.

Here, school becomes a bastion of militant secularism. The diction resonates with an assertive defiance ("resolutely adhere to," "must be retained"; "explicitly avow"). Ultimately, though, this defensive position is marked by a fundamental scepticism towards religion. It is precisely the self-organized immigrant communities who are regarded as sand rather than oil in the integration mechanism. One might certainly presume that, in this view, the world would be better, or at least simpler, if these communities did not exist. The policy derived from this discourse views religion, in principle, as a wilderness which needs to be tamed.

In everyday life, such a view is realized in an integration policy informed by the logics of security and safety. In a report on "Network Activities and Intercultural Openness," Neukölln's Integration Officer, Alfred Mengelkoch, called for expanding the networking of schools, the youth welfare office, and the police (September 10, 2008). If one of these

actors is confronted by a person, family, or group with problems, they are to inform the others. To support this, exceptions are to be granted for data collection and exchange in problem areas. The public prosecutor's office, the report continues, is to be involved and can coordinate on a local level. "In this way, individual persons and individual families who disturb the social peace in an extreme manner can be named. Strategies are being established between schools, the youth welfare office, the municipal public order office, housing association and the police, and even with public transportation, and also implemented in consultation."[3] Mengelkoch offers three examples of this implementation—I quote:

> "A religiously conservative Lebanese family father wants his son to be allowed to take three days off school for the feast of Eid al-Adha, and he presents the school administration with written confirmation from two mosques ... For allegedly 'religious reasons,' he will not allow his son to take part in swimming lessons and his daughter to join sports classes. In addition, the mother wears a full hijab; the daughter, who has just started at school, has to wear a headscarf."

> "An 11-year-old Kurdish Lebanese pupil refused to cooperate in school, made anti-Semitic statements and said: 'Christians and Jews are our enemies; America and Israel are dogs, my mother said that you (the teacher) are also my enemy, you are also a Christian. You can't tell me what to do.'"

> "In 2007, the 20-year-old son and 17-year-old daughter of a family from Gropiusstadt converted in a Neukölln mosque which has been under observation by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution for years. The underage daughter, a high school pupil, married the son of a Kurdish-Lebanese family in an Islamic ceremony. The secular-minded mother forbade her to wear a headscarf. ... The son broke off his training as a grocery sales assistant shortly before his final examination. He refused to process pork. Instead of answering one of the exam tasks, he submitted a three page essay, a kind of declaration of the principles of his religious convictions."

These cases are typical of Neukölln City Hall's border management. First, it is noteworthy that in two of the three cases coordinated action by the state is initiated when constitutionally guaranteed rights are claimed. In dealing with these claims, the basis for action is not so much the law as majority society's commonsense—and that requires taking part in swimming lessons just as much as a non-problematic approach to dealing with pork. The one-sided power of definition is very clear. It is, as it were, the political sphere which defines the borders of the acceptable. In this process, there is no space planned for negotiating borders with the mosque communities.

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3 http://www.berlin.de/imperia/md/content/baneukoelln/bbmbbvv/microsoft_word___vortrag_udo_sept_2008.pdf?start&ts=1271147104&file=microsoft_word___vortrag_udo_sept_2008.pdf [last accessed May 16, 2013].

The communities which "cooperate" in this respect with the authorities are tolerated. Communities which do not cooperate are shown the "red card"; if they continue to be refractory, they will be added to the blacklist kept in the District Office. This makes quite clear the disciplinary effect of marginalizing Islamist communities. Alfred Mengelkoch's report contains the notable sentence in connection to the written confirmation mentioned above provided by two mosques: "The father obviously put the two mosques under pressure. Representatives of both mosques said [in the joint discussion] that one day off school was in order and wearing the headscarf before the start of sexual maturity (twelve years old) is not recommended ..." (ibid.: 2). It is beyond me to imagine how the father (himself active as a preacher) might have put the head of a mosque under moral pressure to take the stance he wanted, but with far less effort I could imagine the pressure that the mosque representatives may have felt during the "very large round-table meeting" described by Mengelkoch where the discussion with the father took place, together with representatives from the District Office, police, school administration, school supervisors, and teachers. In any case, since they backpedaled, they remained on this side of the border. They had a lot to lose.

In this process, Buschkowsky's policies display their particular fascination, since they are not only repressive, but connect repression with supporting those who are prepared to play this game. This is a carrot-and-stick policy, carried out with a remarkable single-mindedness. The mayor stands for an authoritarian patriarchalism, for a city father who is strict and caring at the same time. He speaks up for those who submit to him. He knows his district and knows how to deal with it. The media present an image of a rock standing firm in the flood of migrants. "In contrast to many integration experts, Buschkowsky is a man of the grass-roots level—someone familiar with the problems at first hand, who tackles them and doesn't spend his time poring over statistics and printed paper" (Voss 2011). The realism he represents lends credibility to the construction of the "fundamentalist city," though this is also because the policy of border setting which he pursues is highly performative. It creates a framework that functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

POST-SECULAR EXPERIMENTS

The secular positions represented by Neukölln's City Hall are undoubtedly supported by a broad majority. Such positions reflect commonsense views. However, in the shadows—and little heeded by the public sphere—work is ongoing to explore experimental alternatives. These experiments are based on a different assessment of the role and function of immigrant communities, regarding them as crystallization points of self-organization and identity confirmation (Schiffauer, in this volume). They contribute decisively to overcoming the manifold challenges with which migrants are confronted. They are networks of solidarity where one can find advice and support, for example, when trying to find an apartment or work. They are information networks circulating crucial knowledge—for instance, about education or the health and welfare system. They are interpretative communities where one can engage with people from a similar background to arrive at common evaluations; they are places fostering psychological stability, where one can find encouragement and help. Last but not least, they are also religious locations where one can draw spiritual strength. Without doubt, this also has to do with a retreat from main-

stream society. In my research into the post-Islamist generation of Millî Görüş[4], it became very clear that this retreat into a community is often only a first step; through the empowerment experienced there, many people are then able to take a second step back into society (Schiffauer 2010:158ff). It also became obvious that it is precisely the points regarded as a thorn in the side by the secular critique that facilitate empowerment: strong links to the community, a robust religiosity with adherence to symbols, and a life organized around religion. Biographical analyses have clearly demonstrated that a "fundamentalist"/"Islamist" phase of retreat, drawing of borders, and empowerment is followed by a phase of opening up and involvement.

The post-secular critique argues that a powerful secularism squanders this potential. Its pronounced skepticism towards strong communal religiosity sends out a clear signal with a straightforward message: your religious attitudes are a problem. They are not only unacceptable, but have to be actively curbed—and the more forcefully, the better. The instruments to achieve this aim are marginalization, pressure, and state control. The consequences of such a message are sociologically predictable: all-round defense, retreat, tactical cooperation, and growing mistrust. Since such a reaction only confirms the state actors in their analysis ("That's just what we always said"), the result is a vicious circle. The second generation is opening up to mainstream society, yet this is more than met by considerable reservations and frequently rejected as deceit and tactical maneuvering.

In many communities, two schools of thought are emerging among members of the second generation. "Integration advocates" argue that one should continue to open up, despite resistance to the process, since there is no alternative. The other school of thought advocating segregation claims that integrationists are dreamers: society will at best accept a green-tinted Lutheranism; integration is only possible at the cost of surrendering their beliefs. This school of thought similarly sees a future in Europe and endorses systemic integrations; however, it regards social and cultural integration with considerable skepticism. Strong secularism, the post-secular critique continues, makes it impossible to get the immigrant communities onboard in trying to solve the major problems in immigrant districts (school problems, delinquency, and decay). Strong secularism, it argues, would have to overcome its own inherent nature to replace a basic attitude of mistrust, defense, and skepticism by one of trust, approval, and a positive bias. Cooperation with the communities is only possible when one makes a leap of trust unburdened by compulsive control (or a demand for professions of loyalty). Here, one might note that what may seem naïve from a secular perspective is quite accepted in the United States and the United Kingdom, which are more exposed to the influence of religious plurality. The two first steps in post-secularism discussed here attempt to put this into practice.

The community-organizing platforms in Berlin initiated by Leo Penta are based on the idea of bringing together all those forces in a "problem district" wanting to see change. The objective is to empower them to negotiate with actors from the political and economic spheres on an equal footing. The "Wir sind da!" ("We are here!") community organization

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4 The Millî Görüş (National Vision) movement was founded in the late sixties in Turkey by Necmettin Erbakan. In Europe it has become one of the leading Turkish diaspora organizations (Schiffauer 2010).

in the Wedding and Moabit districts in Berlin, for example, presently has just under forty member groups from different religious, cultural, and social backgrounds, which represent over 15,000 people in these neighborhoods. The organization's main pillars of support are religious communities from all faiths, citizens' groups, and migrant organizations, but anyone who wants to contribute to improving the situation in the district is welcome to join. Borders such as those drawn by the state, for instance, are not accepted. Instead, work proceeds on the assumption that involvement in a community organization offers the best proof of affirming pluralism, social inclusion, and mutual respect. These community organizations demonstrate in themselves that, despite a pluralism of values, mutual cooperation is possible. It would be ridiculous to call for some kind of profession of loyalty, such as to a free and democratic system of government (which, for instance, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs regards as a mandatory requirement), *before* one cooperates. Such a mandatory profession of loyalty would signal from the outset that the prospective cooperation partner was not trustworthy.

Instead, the practice of community organizations shows how in and through the cooperation there is a general growth in public spirit, community spirit, and identification with society. In this process, without taking it as a topic in itself, the idea of secularity is practically renegotiated. Here, secularism appears to be a product of interreligious dialogue, in contrast to classic secularism (and in its Neukölln provenance as well) where secularism seems to be a platform to which everyone has to profess allegiance if they want to become seriously involved. The community organization is secular, but not as a result of rejecting (or banishing) religiosity, but rather from the fact that the members of the different religious groups enter into an egalitarian alliance with each other to pursue a joint political concern. Hence, secularism is less regarded as a worldview opposing religion than as a global supra-religious basis facilitating an equal exchange between different religious communities. In this sense, the secular discourse is a medium where religious views can be formulated in a language which is not just the internal language of one particular community. Secularism is the informal result, occurring of its own accord, of the cooperation between Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists.

The Brücken im Kiez project I initiated is on a much smaller scale. It starts from the view that the blockades in radical secularism mentioned above have an especially negative impact on the sphere of the school. From the schools' perspective, Islamic homes and communities are regarded as extremely problematic. They are regarded as authorities thwarting the secular state's responsibility for education and therefore need to be neutralized as far as possible. This basic attitude toward Islam is clearly perceived by the Muslim parents, and creates a significant distance to schools. This came out distinctly in a group interview Evelyn Lubig conducted in 2012 with Muslim parents. "We adults as well as our children notice ... a lot of prejudices: Muslims are uneducated, uninterested in education, backward, and enemies of democracy ..." and "It's the many little things, the disdain, disparaging glances, and reactions which express a certain contempt, and at some point they culminate, take on a shape, and create the impression: we are not wanted here, not welcome, we belong on the margins of society and should stay there ..." For the parents, such impressions concretize into a general suspicion that schools are centers of hostility towards religion

and, in particular, Islamophobia. Among the teachers as well as the parents, rumors circulate about actual or alleged misconduct of individuals in the other group, with both sides tending to blow the claims up into a major issue. This growing distance between schools and parents who have immigrated to Germany frustrates the schools' responsibility to provide education (which, in the child's interest, necessarily requires the cooperation of both sides): the schools complain that Muslim parents are almost impossible to contact. Conversely, the parents have the feeling that their involvement, in any case, is unwelcome.

The project started from observing how active Islamic communities are especially in the area of education. For example, Millî Görüş organizes extra coaching in school subjects and encourages parents to send their children—and quite explicitly their daughters as well—to secondary schools. The prejudice that Muslim communities are uninterested in education (or only interested in religious education) does not stand up to scrutiny—quite the contrary. As with Leo Penta's community organizations, the project began from a shared interest among diverse groups—in this case, an interest in the future of the children. The objective was to explore the possibility of cooperation with Muslim parents, communities, and schools—and analyze the difficulties that emerged in the process.

The prospects of cooperation were sounded out in "bridge-dialogues" between a number of Kreuzberg school principals and parents from Islamic communities. This was the first time both groups had exchanged views on an equal footing. The core question was how to tackle the complex of problems which had accumulated between the Muslim homes and the school. The discussion included, for example, how to deal with the desire for prayer rooms, how a better mix could be created in the school or the reasons for the low turnout of Muslim parents at parents' evenings. Initially, these discussions were notable for their considerable wariness and high degree of sensitivity. Both sides could clearly see that each had a legacy of slights and injuries. However, the discussions also showed how difficult the path is to a post-secular praxis.

It was also fascinating to discover how the contours of a post-secular culture became visible in the discussions. In this process, the borders of the secular and sacral were not blurred—just as little as the borders between basic ethical positions—but those involved took pains to replace the ideal of consensus, usually so venerated, with a culture of dealing with disagreement. How can one come to respect very different basic positions in, for example, dealing with physicality? How can one find pragmatic solutions and avoid differences being at the children's expense? It was very helpful when those involved in the discussions shared their problems; for example, when parents explained about the humiliation they often experienced at parents' evenings; or when a school principal expressed worries connected with establishing prayer rooms. What would happen if 200 pupils, and not just twenty, wanted to use a prayer room? What effect would that concession have on the school's reputation? Would it come to be regarded as a "Muslim" school, with all the implications that had for the mix of pupils? It was not uncommon to find areas of agreement precisely while exploring areas of disagreement; everyone was firmly convinced, for instance, that the ethnic, religious, and social mix in the district should also be reflected in the classes.

Such projects as the various Bürgerplattform community organizations or Brücken im Kiez sound out possibilities of coexistence in a post-secular society. They share the common

feature, first of all, of rejecting the stark borders around religion established in the project of secular modernity: they set the fact that religious communities can make important contributions to school against the clarion call for banishing religion from school or the political sphere ("we have to resolutely adhere to the principle that religion is a private matter"). This in itself does not call into doubt separation in principle between the secular and sacral, but does consider it desirable for secular and sacral spaces and spheres to be intertwined— that is, if the mosque comes to school and the school to the mosque; if citizens' groups get together in the mosque and mosques contribute to citizens' groups. If secular and sacral spaces are intertwined, each sphere loses its absolute character. The border loses the character of an enemy frontier, and becomes a boundary which can be and ought to be respected since it circumscribes a space necessary to breathe. This boundary can then be dealt with intelligently. The criterion that everything has to be openly taken as the subject of discussion and subjected to a regime of consensus can give way to a more differentiated benchmark (such as that formed in interpersonal encounters in the culture of politeness). The key bearer of this process is a second generation which has grown up in the religious communities and passed through the educational institutions in German society. They are a cross-border generation, and their contribution is irreplaceable. In the context of post-secular thinking, Berlin's law on neutrality (to which the Neukölln SPD has just renewed its commitment) forbidding women teachers from wearing a headscarf appears as "Stone Age secularism." A highly motivated and highly qualified generation of young women is being excluded from becoming involved in society. The law is excluding and neutralizing precisely the key bridge-builders between the secular and sacral spheres.

A further difference between secularism and post-secularism relates to how values are viewed. Classic secularism is actually marked by a language of apodictic fundamentalism: secular values are "non-negotiable"—they are constituted in the awareness of communalities regarded as the basis for diversity. In contrast, post-secularism assumes a plurality of values: representatives of religious communities cannot be expected to acknowledge a value such as sexual autonomy as a value *per se*; conversely, members of society with strong secular beliefs cannot be expected to make sense of an association between dignity and feelings of shame. While within a secular culture such differences would create a certain unease and—under the banner of progress and emancipation—the tendency would be to want to resolve them, the nature of a post-secular order finds it quite acceptable to respect both views. In a culture of dissent, the glorification of the "verdict of reason" would have to be replaced by acceptance of a "spirit of mediation." This would be embedded in the (seemingly anthropological) attempt to mediate the context in which the particular value systems and convictions are rooted—thus generating an understanding (though precisely not a consensus). At the same time, efforts would be made to find pragmatic solutions for value conflicts—which is possible since, as the examples of school or local district community organization show, the area of commonalities is far larger than strongly contrary attitudes, even though those do indeed exist. Dealing with difference intelligently is evident in the exploration of how far the other standpoint can simply be left as it is.

Fractal structures result from the interpenetration of areas previously separated. The antagonism between those supporting integration, who are open to the opposing faction, and

those advocating segregation, who reject the opposing faction, will split the secular camp just as much as the religious one. In this process, those worried about blurring the principle of secularism find themselves on the same side as those who see dialogue as threatening religious truths. They will be drawn into similar conflicts with those confidently calling for integrating people with other standpoints. There will also be a close parallelism between the reproaches and accusations directed at each other: the segregationists will always accuse the integrationists of betraying their own beliefs; integrationists will upbraid the segregationists for being out of touch with reality and narrow-minded. This fractal structure will even be apparent in the integrationist and segregationist camps (with radicals and moderates among both the secular and the religious factions).

SECULAR REACTIONS

The Bürgerplattform and Brücken im Kiez projects faced massive and oddly emotional resistance in Neukölln City Hall. The cooperation which extended to "fundamentalist" communities observed by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution was a clear border violation. Neukölln City Hall broke off the discussions initiation by the projects. In a belligerent style, Mayor Buschkowsky presented his reasons for disapproving of both postsecular experiments.

> *"But it is sometimes almost absurd which organizations [here: Stiftung Brandenburger Tor, W. S.] are willing to allow themselves to be misused as a refuge and cover of respectability. This results in totally distorting the level of debate. You suddenly find yourself in a conflict with someone you are actually not in dispute with at all. And above all, it provides a nearly unassailable position for a dubious association. The reasons for this may be, in some cases, naivety in some individuals [apparently referring to the Foundation's board of trustees and managing board, W. S.] and/or starry-eyed idealism, but it is sheer calculation by the front people [meaning me, W.S.]. Whoever imagines that several hundred jeering people from partially obscure groups with sympathies for the Hamas, Hezbollah, Salafists, and Millî Görüş offer an ideal image of Neukölln's future [apparently referring to the Bürgerplattform, W. S.] has a very different picture of the world from mine. I find such rituals repellent. Anyone who does not or will not recognize fundamentalism's corrosive effect on tolerance simply becomes, through that, an accomplice ..."* (Buschkowsky 2012: 102)

This description is informed by the "fundamentalist city" construct (AlSayyad in this volume). The two experiments are a threat since they undermine a united front against these dangerous activities. Previous allies are offering the enemy "refuge." They are playing a part in making the enemy "almost unassailable." This can only be because the "front people"—apparently proven fighters—are cynically, through "sheer calculation," exploiting the simplemindedness of well-meaning citizens. The anger then comes from the fact that the enemy is evidently scoring points.

Undoubtedly, this friend–enemy model requires the enemy to be distorted to the point of unrecognizability. In this context, the Bürgerplattform's stylization is interesting. I was at the event referred to here. There was a lot of applause—but no jeering whatsoever, not even once. Rather, the atmosphere was dominated by a remarkable optimism and a friendly spirit of mutual recognition. The message enacted was that everyone wanting to get involved has a voice. It is certainly remarkable how an event where civil society stages itself peacefully takes on, in Mayor Buschkowsky's description, the atmosphere of a Nuremberg Rally.[5]

In his polemical description, one can see the dynamics of drawing firm borders, as elaborated by Mary Douglas (1988). A strong boundary to others is legitimate and sensible if that otherness is so different in its alterity that, as Carl Schmitt put it, it threatens "to negate his opponent's way of life and therefore must be repulsed or fought in order to preserve one's own form of existence ..." (Schmitt 2007: 27). Radical alterity, though, is exceptionally rare in everyday life. Of course, there are extreme secularist and religious positions, but there are also all possible nuances between them—and where exactly the border runs between the one or other is usually not that clear (and therefore open to negotiation). If one wants to have a firm border, one would have to dissect these continua and legitimate this move by a binary construction of radical alterity. In anthropology, this is described as a process of "othering": the difference has to be exaggerated; diacritical features have to be highlighted, commonalities and coincidences have to be ignored, mixture ratios have to be overlooked. Since firm borders minimize contact, the "Other" becomes a surface for projections. The "Other" appears more alien, dangerous, and seductive than in reality. In a certain way, s/he gains a shimmering iridescence: on the one hand, the "Other" is totally opaque yet, on the other, one knows exactly what one thinks of her/him. The "Other" is exploiting every gap in the security system, every weakness, and if you give her/him an inch, s/he will take a mile. "The attempt at social colonization by revitalizing dogmas, in particular in everyday life at school, calls for constant watchfulness on the part of our school administrations and an unflagging readiness to face conflict ..." (Buschkowsky 2012: 107). Such reasoning creates a circular argument, and remains trapped in it: emphasizing the borders means emphasizing alterity, and emphasizing alterity again leads to emphasizing borders. Buschkowsky blames Islamic fundamentalism for distancing itself from society: "They form networks which should not be underestimated and only serve one purpose: to remain among themselves, to preserve their own culture and religious norms, protect the children from sinful influences, and eschew a German lifestyle, German guiding principles and German laws ..." (2012: 110). Yet when active members of this network appear at the community organization and explain that they want to move out of the parallel society and for that reason are seeking cooperation with people from other faiths and secular views, this is not seen as possibly refuting the theory of radical alterity. On the contrary, because the projects which provide space for participation blur the borders, a campaign is launched against them.

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5 See the press coverage in *Berliner Zeitung* (January 26, 2012), available at: http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/berlin/buergerplattform-neukoelln-gegruendet--wir-wollen-nicht-in-einer-parallelgesellschaft-leben-,10809148,11521076.html [last accessed May 16, 2013]. The atmosphere is clearly evident in the recording on youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34xgcl3q6fI [last accessed June 1, 2013].

The fundamentalist city discourse becomes ensnared in alterity. It fails to meet the challenges generated by new forms of immigration. In this respect, the two projects discussed here are trying to open up new paths and explore prospects and possibilities in a post-secular culture. In this process, they utilize the specific opportunities in the localities themselves. At the locations—in the concrete school, in the district—it is all about finding solutions to concrete problems. You have the chance to get to know the others in person, and so in principle are in a position to form your own opinions of them—yet this, though, assumes one is prepared to accept the risk of entering into a cooperation built on trust.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY ANDREW BOREHAM

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