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and Urbanesque Habitat

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Peter Jan Margry**

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logistically. We also want to thank Jayeel Serrano Cornelio from the Ateneo de Manila University and Karin Klenke from Göttingen University for moderating some of the conference's sessions with great intellectual spirit. Further, we are indebted to various colleagues who were involved in the creation of this book: first and foremost, our dedicated contributors, who sustained our persistent way of editing, and also Regina Bendix of Georg-August-Universität of Göttingen, who, as always, had the right sense for bringing people together for our conference. We are equally grateful to Victoria Bishop Kendzia for the correction of English, sensitively oscillating between necessary alteration and the preservation of the contributors' particular writing styles. Furthermore, we would like to thank Monique Scheer for reviewing some of the contributions.

Victoria Hegner and Peter Jan Margry
Berlin and Amsterdam,
April 15, 2016

Note

1 The conference took place April 9–11, 2014. All but two of the contributors were selected out of the 22 presenters at the conference. Mariske Westendorp, working on the same theme, was not able to participate in the conference and sent us her contribution afterwards. Later, we also added Synnøve Bendixsen to our fine list of co-authors.

1 Introduction

Spiritualizing the urban and the urbanesque

Victoria Hegner and Peter Jan Margry

The expression "Sunday assembly" will for most people at first instance refer to a religious gathering of a traditional and typically Christian kind. Since 2013, however, the naming of "Sunday Assembly" can be encountered in various countries and cities, but then couched with a different meaning.¹ It is the naming of a "group" that is displayed as a global and urban network of people, depicting themselves as "a global movement of wonder and good" and "a godless congregation that celebrates life." The Sunday Assembly's mission was initially described as "to help everyone find and fulfil their full potential," although it was again recently changed into a slightly less postmodern wording into "To help everyone live life as fully as possible" and "to wonder more" and "to help often."² The "Sunday Assembly" movement got off the ground quickly. While it has decelerated in recent years in terms of growth, it does continue to spread. Its members are wide-ranging in age: from their late twenties up to mid-sixties, mostly middle class in background. The movement envisions to create "godless" congregations in every town, city and village of the world where people want to have a congregation.

Reading their mission statement and vision, one might get confused as the choice of the organization's name will guide readers into the direction of religion, yet at the same time the group emphatically states that it is a secular community, one without a god. Then, as mentioned above, the connotations of the applied wording are important, as their denial only concerns "God," which leaves the potentiality open in terms of religiosity and spirituality of any other taste than the one connected to (the Christian) God. Moreover, holding their gatherings on Sundays and calling themselves a "congregation," their mission resonates as a seemingly religious movement whether it is in Amsterdam, Berlin, or elsewhere. During one Sunday gathering that took place on a gray October afternoon in a community center in a residential building in Berlin, the ceremony appeared as an experiment to blend different religious and spiritual teachings and ritual elements together and fuse them with some modern skepticism and pop-cultural flair.³ Approximately thirty people listened to edifying lectures (in lieu of, but not unlike, religious sermons) on the "relevance of virtues in life" and "the Dalai Lama's secular ethic." Attendees also joined in dancing to live music: popular songs by bands like the Police, Abba and Queen were performed live so that the participants could get into the "right spirit of community." Seeing how people rather timidly started to move according to the rhythms, one could notice how young, experimental and

“unsettled” in ritual structures the Assemblies still are. It was obvious that it is still too new for some, and several of the attendees were here for the first time and it felt odd for them to freely dance around and get “loose” among strangers. Dances then changed, with (meditative) moments of contemplation accompanied by the sound of a singing bowl, and again with the chance to share personal stories on how everybody “is trying to give his or her best” to make the world a better place. The goal of these ceremonies, constantly oscillating between intellectual and bodily performances, general lectures and confessional tales, is, as it says on the website, for one to be “energised, vitalised, restored, repaired, refreshed, and recharged. No matter what the subject of the Assembly, it will solace worries, provoke kindness and inject a touch of transcendence into the everyday.”⁴⁴

Taking into account their practice of dealing with the fulfillment of life, we consider this to be a religious movement. Helping and finding one’s “full potential” in a communal form, as the group emphatically propagates, is a mission that aligns other new spiritual movements, which resulted from a variety of “New Age” spiritualities and new religious movements that came into being in the past half century, often precisely dedicated to a broad quest for meaningfulness in modern life. Such cooperative movements are, however, paradoxically partly a consequence of the ongoing subjectification process within contemporary society, which has accelerated the deconstruction of the existing religious paradigms, changing them from a formal, traditional, or institutional kind into the present-day wide eclectic variety of personal believing (Saraiva et al. 2016).

As a contemporary example of spiritual seeking, the Sunday Assembly exemplifies quite well what this volume addresses: the urban and its peripheral life environment in the broadest sense, and the resilience of religion within the constructed human habitat that once was prophesied by scholars like Harvey Cox to become void of religion and gradually turn into a vast secular space. Yet as we all know, this has not come true at all, as an—initially—predicted seemingly secularization of society from its traditional religions has been superseded by the introduction of a great variety of religious forms and movements from other parts of the world and by new, eclectically created spiritualities, all serving in a partly global subjectification process of religiosity (cf. Heelas and Woodhead 2005). What is striking in the example of the Sunday Assemblies is that members see their mission not as a vanguard ideology for just city people, but that they express a deep felt desire for bringing their mission to as many countries as possible. They do that as much in the urban, the suburban and in a countryside that is “sensitized” for such kind of movements: the extended urban area of what we label later on in this introduction as the “urbanesque.” The urbanesque is a space not consisting of a dense build urban cityscape, but of more rural-built habitats in the “hinterland” surroundings, but where modern and “urban” thinking or mindsets have supplanted more traditional rural lifestyles.

Religion as an urban way of life

The presence of religion in society and particularly the interpretation of the presence and practice of religion have been changing dramatically over the past century.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, ethnologists and anthropologists cherished the idea that “true” and “authentic” life and tradition and hence “true” religion were to be found in areas of relative isolation, deep in the remote outback, or in fishing villages on isolated coasts. This idea or approach was constructed in opposition to the notion that the city, especially since the start of industrialization and its effects on society, was perceived as a focal point of change and renewal and as a consequence as the cradle of secularization. With very few exceptions, the city was seen as the environment where apostasy and atheism could blossom, as a destroyer of the religiously bound social community, a community continuously distracted from religious practice by the temptations of the secular (McLeod 1996: xxi). As early as 1844, a clergyman in London—the world’s largest city at that time and paradigmatic for the urbanization process—professed in one of his sermons “that the life of cities is essentially a worldly life” (Clapp 2012: 48, cited as well by McLeod 1996: xxi). As the proclaimed “religious crisis” seemed to intensify over the coming decades, particularly among the working class, as well as middle-class intellectuals, it was the American theologian Josiah Strong, who, in his widely acclaimed book *Our Country* (1885), was one of the first who designated the metropolis as the dangerous breeding ground for “evil” par excellence. A marked inclination towards mixed marriage was then regarded to be one of the main causes of the apostasy (Rogier 1945: 121). Strong saw the upcoming metropolis as a forceful development of irreligiosity, creating a threat to civilization at large. Almost a century later, religion indeed seemed to have somehow vanished from the cityscape and urban life altogether, as the American theologian Harvey Cox acknowledges in his highly regarded book, calling it programmatically *The Secular City* (Cox 2013 [1965]). There he professed that he could no longer see a role any more for religion in the urban environment. Although his argument was still much in line with Strong, he simultaneously differed in his perspective on the city in important and interesting ways. Along with various social scientists like Peter L. Berger in those days (Berger 1967; cf. Berger 1999), he put the idea forward that at this point in history, it was no longer Strong’s urban temptations that formed the threat to religiosity, but that the cultural changes of the 1960s created a new plurality of movements, placing religious “truth” in perspective and hence producing cities that would become fully secularized, with formal religion deeply marginalized within the urban environment.

The resilience of the city as a spiritual place proved to be much greater, as urban spaces continued to function as innovative “laboratories” for new religious movements and spiritualities. This proved to be no different since the 1960s. Neither did religion disappear, as it only took on other forms and expressions (Luckmann 1967). The fact that nowadays cities and metropolises have become such vibrant centers of religious practice has led social scientists to gradually reject long-held assumptions about the secularizing effects of urbanization and to stress instead the strong agency and resilience of religion in the urban environment. Harvey Cox is again a good example within this context. As early as 1984, he confessed that he was mistaken about his earlier predictions and that formal religions surely were not marginalized in the world. This time he called his book

Religion in the Secular City and proclaimed that religion had returned to the public sphere of society. It had been cities, as Cox saw it now, which facilitated the forceful religious revival due to the city's cultural liberality and its openness to social experimentation. Although Cox had been among several scholars at that time who questioned the main suppositions of the secularization theory, he was one of the very few who gave the urban locale such a prominent role for the future of religions. His book represents an important demarcation point within scholarly debate. As researchers started to acknowledge that religions seemed to be flourishing in society and on the governmental and political agenda, the topic of religion began slowly returning as an urban phenomenon on research agendas, after it had long been seen as diametrically opposed to city life and culture.

This particular change of perspective is, however, not solely due to changing perspectives on the process of secularization, but has to be simultaneously seen as an outcome of the success of cities and metropolises themselves as dwelling modes and the power of attraction for country dwellers and migrants. City or urban life has been more and more equated with modernity in a positive way and the city has become a metaphor for work and, moreover, a better and more fulfilled life. Some researchers label the process since the end of the 1960s, following a dramatic worldwide crisis of cities, as a (neoliberal) "urban renaissance" (Kaschuba 2015: 13; Punter 2010; Urban Task Force 1999; Porter and Shaw 2009). Before this crisis, cities and their downtowns were subjected to a fordist work and planning regime and subordinated to industrial production and modern traffic. They appeared as places for labor rather than desirable locales for living and cultural experiment. Inner-city districts were left to decay and were socially as well culturally abandoned by urban planners and politicians. It was movements like the "New Urbanism" which slowly brought a change of perspective in international Western urban politics, calling for the restoration of existing urban centers, and for varied, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and ecological practices (Jacobs 1992; Katz 1994).⁵ It was this particular sense of diversity and community, as well as environmental activism reclaimed for cities, that has turned the latter gradually into sought-after neoliberal life worlds with their own character, charm and charisma (Kaschuba 2015: 13).

Overall, today, as an expression of modernity, more people worldwide live in towns than in the countryside. One can argue whether "urban" is then still a useful differentiating denominator as, for example, most of Europe's population (ca. 80 percent) lives in urban areas. Urban culture has become the mainstream way of habitation. This development has not only taken place in Europe, but also in various places elsewhere in the world; the urban and metropolitan has become the desirable standard in nearly every respect, hence constituting also for religious and spiritual renewal and experiment, a fascinating cauldron.

Particularly since the turn of the millennium—and again especially since 2010—we thus have been witnessing a near boom of new studies on religions as they are practiced and are multiplying in cities worldwide (Livezey 2000; metro-Zones 2011; Pinxten and Dikomitis 2012; Gómez and Van Herck 2013; Cimino et al. 2013; Day 2014; Becker et al. 2014). As scholars of religious practice and

behavior as well as of urbanity, we nevertheless decided to bring the themes of the urban and religion together in a new way. First, we concentrate on religious innovations: on religious practices, worldviews, dialogues that are (still) rather experimental, often vaguely organized or only very recently institutionalized and still contested. We furthermore look at religious groups and communities that can be considered as a kind of grass-roots movement, created by people who are not necessarily officially designated religious experts and yet feature as powerful actors within the cityscape. We perceive these groups and innovations as distinctively urban. It is the city in its social, cultural and economic heterogeneity that grinds down traditions and makes way for alternatives; and it is again the city that provides a critical mass of people necessary to realize these alternatives.

In our understanding of the interdependence of religion and the urban context, we furthermore and explicitly merge perspectives of religious studies with a sociology/anthropology of rather than *in* the city (Hannerz 1980; Lindner 1993). Hence, this book is not so much about the variety of religious practices and innovations one finds in a city. Instead, the analytical lens focuses on the modalities of how urban environments in their socio-cultural distinctiveness and religion or religiosity are interacting with one another. In other words, we examine the processes of reciprocal exchange in the practice of religious movements and cityscapes in which they are couched. Our approach comes close to some ambitious projects over the last years, such as the "Global prayers" research group, which investigated "the renaissance of religion in the world's metropolises" over a period of four years (2010–14).⁶ However, we expand the perspective on what can be considered as religious and begin to include more prominently modes and practices that are highly syncretistic, fluid and shaped by the "new age" movement (Hanegraaff 1996). In so doing, we start to transgress well-established and state-authorized or contested religious modes and theologies such as those of Christianity and Islam, two religious manifestations that constitute a central focus in studies on religions in cities, in addition to Buddhism and Hinduism. This is not to say that we abandon the perspective on Christian, Islamic and/or Buddhist groups and communities altogether. On the contrary, we take those groups into our analysis, since they remain important urban actors. However, we continually concentrate on ways practitioners go beyond and shift deeply ingrained cosmological and theological understandings and/or experiment with organizational structures and forms of public visibility. As we explain in detail below, urban as well as religious studies need to reflect more intensely on and broaden the concept of religions, so they are able to capture the multiplicity as well as discrepancy of religious practices that are so characteristic for cities.

Recent studies that emphasize and focus on the mutual agency of cities and religions in general concentrate on the ways religions become politicized and communicate respect to powerful, disputed and/or subversive players within the urban governance system (metrozones 2011; Becci et al. 2013; Beaumont and Baker 2011; Al Sayyad and Massoumi 2011). This approach is particularly present in the concept of the "postsecular city" mainly developed by the geographer Justin Beaumont and the theologian Christopher Baker (Beaumont and Baker 2011).

Critics have already pointed to its rather problematic “linear temporality”: from the secular to a “postsecular city and age” (Lanz 2014: 24; Leezenberg 2010). Nonetheless, the concept offers a productive perspective on how religions, or—in a broader sense—faith-based organizations, create new alliances and bifurcations with the secular sectors in the city, often taking over social-political responsibilities, which urban municipalities are no longer able or willing to fulfill (Beaumont and Baker 2011: 1). Religions thus develop into indispensable actors of civil society, as much as they produce spaces for their ideas and values and thus shape the cityscape in significant ways.

We take this aspect of interplay between religion, the city and civil society into account. And yet we simultaneously shift the perspective significantly from the relation of the political and the religious in the urban realm towards the ways in which religions, religiosities and any forms of spirituality become embedded into the everyday routine of city dwellers. Hence, we look at religions in the city less as a political expression than as a specific urban way of life: as a manifestation of its transitory and fragmentary character, its specific sensuality, its fluidity and heterogeneous aesthetic, of the accessibility in diversity and diversity in accessibility (Hannerz 1980: 99). Certainly the idea of “diversity” and religious “plurality” gets politically instrumentalized within the urban context, as we show in this volume. They also work as the city’s “cultural potential,” to help, for example, in the social “integration” of migrants.

In this context, we sharpen our analytical focus on the city as a principal, multi-functional agent for change and renewal and draw attention to its socio-cultural and historical singularity as it models religious practices on site. As Robert Orsi has already pointed out more than a decade ago: “What people do religiously in cities is shaped by what kinds of cities they find themselves in, at what moment in the histories of those cities” (Orsi 1999: 46). Although the significance of local urban contexts in shaping forms of religions and religious expressions even in our global, highly transnational times, has long been acknowledged, only very few publications attempt to make this perspective explicit and fruitful in their analysis. Previous works mainly focus on religious groups as they engage with the politics of place-making and thus produce locality and furnish the city with a distinctive “religious topography” (Burchardt and Becci 2013: 12–17, esp. 17). Space, as a multidimensional construction, being physical, mental, social and likewise religious (Knott 2005: 127) is an important category for analyzing created forms of “locality,” which is a major focus of this book. However, we extend our perspective beyond the category of space and also see “locality” produced and reflected through specific modes of organizational structures, as well as aesthetic expressions, behavioral codes and formulated norms and values (of ex- and inclusion). For example, as Synnøve Bendixsen shows in this volume, young Muslims in Berlin generate their collective practice of conservative Islam distinctively and in various ways as “multicultural”—including practitioners of various ethnic backgrounds. They thus forcefully localize their practice and create a feeling of belonging to the city—that is, of being a “local”—since for them Berlin’s cultural specificity is per se lived “multiculturalism.”

One of the reasons why the potency of local urban culture, history and social space are so seldom taken into conceptual and empirical consideration lies surely in the risk it bears in perceiving the city as a topographically fixed cultural entity. We see the city as a dynamic and heterogeneous socio-cultural, economic and geographic formation. We understand the city as a kind of nodal point or area, where, as the political scientist Michael Peter Smith pointedly wrote, “global and transnational networks of meanings, power, and social practice come together with more purely locally configured networks, practices, meanings and identities” (Smith 2002: 109). From the city, those networks spread out again. Territoriality of local culture is replaced by a kind of urban cultural fluidity, meaning an ongoing, yet distinctive change of relationships, webs of cooperation and roles. (Lindner 1996: 323; Hannerz 1980: 276).

Theoretically, we are inspired by concepts such as the “habitus of the city” (Lee 1997; Lindner 2003), “the cumulative texture of local urban culture” (Suttles 1984) and the “urban imaginary” (Strauss and Wohl 1958). All of them with some nuances emphasize the idea that

... a city is not a neutral container, which can be arbitrarily filled, but a historically saturated culturally coded space already stuffed with meanings and mental images. It is these meanings and mental images which determine what is “thinkable” and “unthinkable,” “appropriate” and “inappropriate,” “possible” and “impossible.” (Lindner 2006: 210)

Religious practices and expressions, as they globally and transnationally generate themselves, are part of this fluid yet specific urban culture, its meanings and (materialized) images. They reproduce them and simultaneously shift and remodel them. Sometimes, religious practitioners and organizations use specific cultural images of certain cities intentionally to create forms of (political) participation and visibility locally as well as globally. A very illustrative example is Anna Niedźwiedz’s ethnography on the Catholic Church in Kraków in this volume. In various and highly creative ways, the Church authorities as well as Catholic “lay”-practitioners establish presence in the city and shape the cityscape by staging, remembering and re-inventing Kraków’s cultural and historical image as the city of John Paul II: the “Pope’s city.” Creating new sacred grounds and symbolic spaces devoted and connected to John Paul II, they not only localize their practice, but define themselves and “their new devotions and spiritualities within a newly-opened global context.” Discursively, they turn Kraków into an important Catholic city worldwide and in that way as well as into a successful touristic trademark.

Inquiring into the specific interplay between the cultural, social characteristics of urban contexts and religions certainly asks for a particular methodological repertoire. A useful approach constitutes a comparison between religious groups, practices, or initiatives (such as “interreligious dialogue”) in two or more different cities.⁷ We offer this specific and demanding research perspective in this volume through a contribution by Eva Dick and Alexander-Kenneth Nagel that

concentrates on forms of “interreligious dialogues” in two different German cities. Similarities and differences do not simply show how embedded are religions in urban (political) culture and social structures, but also illuminate the diversity of practices and groups that are still often perceived as culturally cohesive. As our research experience further shows, when looking at religions in urban context, we should strengthen our—what Paul Stoller once called—sensuous scholarship (Stoller 1997). Religions in cities develop complex sensory epistemologies and we have to understand them in their urban specificity: how religions sound, smell and taste tells us something about the urban experience as well as constituting it. We will start to approach the role of the senses in the interplay between religion and the urban in this book, by looking particularly at the function of religious music and dance (in Part III of this book).

Generally, urban cultures as well as religions are such complex dynamic formations, deeply shaped by social, economic, geographic and historical structures that a study on their interplay principally demands the crossing of disciplinary boundaries in methodology and analysis (Lindner 1996: 323; Coleman 2013: 50). We do so by bringing together researchers of different academic fields in this book. Our disciplinary scope encompasses geography, religious studies, ethnology, urban planning and cultural anthropology. We are—as the modern city itself—quite heterogeneous.

Therefore, we often do not share the same conceptual and/or descriptive vocabulary. Our perspectives sometimes differ and then converge again in astonishing ways. The particular diversity in our academic backgrounds—challenging as it is—seems to us to be the central way to capture the interdependence of religions as they are practiced in the city in all its complexity.

In this context, the theoretical paradigms, laid out above, brought us—in our differences—together and raised basic research questions, which ground and traverse the volume’s contributions. We find each other on the same course due to our general interest in how exactly the specific urban culture inscribes itself into new religious and spiritual views, performative acts and behaviors. And vice versa, we ask: do religious practices and new forms of religiosity recast the meaning of the urban space in any specific way? We concentrate our perspective on four aspects. First, we inquire into cities’ ascribed cultural and religious *plurality*. We are interested in the ways it is managed, re-imagined and thus remodeled by religious practitioners and “experts” themselves and in how this *plurality* is being utilized as an important socio-cultural and political resource by city authorities. Second, we focus on the role of *migration* and the relationship between the urban context and transnational mobility. How are religious practices not only transformed, reinforced, or newly invented in the city and thus localized, but also, in which way do migrants generate themselves as global actors and preserve transnational ties and thus link the local with the global? Third, we look at the function and creation of *space*. How do religious groups negotiate (sacred) space and visibility in the urban context and what kind of urban imaginaries come into play? As we dive into the interplay between religion and the city further, last but not least we ask: can the physical *body* be an agent of creation of (sacred) places and spaces

within the urban setting? What role do ritual movements, dress codes, dancing and visualizing emotions play within this context? In this way, we inquire into the function of material culture/materiality of the city including religious/sacred soundscapes as well as architecture.

In order to bring such queries from our theoretical paradigms to an answer, we first need to go into the main concepts used in this volume.

The spiritual, the urban and the urbanesque

The particular interdependence of urbanization, urban space, and religions and spiritualities has returned to the research agenda of scholars, and yet is still under-theorized. Therefore, one of the primary goals of this book is to develop a new threefold theoretical vocabulary for analyzing the relationship between the urban and religious beliefs and practices.

The first keyword to address the relationship is “spiritualizing,” as it appears in the main title of the book. This single active verb points at the outset of the volume to our praxeological concept: spirituality and religion are something people *do* and constitute. Spiritualizing in this book refers to performative acting growing out of and taking place as a result of the experience of the urban environment. “Sacredness” and/or “sacred spaces” in the city are active constructions that take (visible or secretive) presence in the city.⁸

Furthermore, “spiritualizing” refers to our idea that, in contemporary religious processes, a distinction between religion (religiosity) and the spiritual is becoming gradually problematic. To that end, this book employs the twinned concepts of religion and religiosity as broad and deliberately blurred analytical concepts that cross the boundaries of traditional institutional religions. “Religion,” as we understand it, also refers thus to new, alternative, or implicit forms and movements of religion and spirituality. We regard it better not to differentiate between the two, as in practice, people, especially within the Western urban habitats, often make no distinction between religion and spirituality themselves anymore. More and more, they even refer to themselves as in the popular adage “spiritual, but not religious” (cf. Fuller 2001). This stance implies that we do not take “religion” and a fortiori “religiosity” as the constrained form of the mainstream institutional religions, but as the inclusive wording for all forms of practiced religiosity of which also the spiritual, the new spiritual and New Age movements make part of, including implicit forms as the subjectified quest for meaningfulness in life (cf. Luckmann 1967; Bailey 1999; Partridge 2004; Carrette and King 2005; Knoblauch 2009; Mohrmann 2010; Margry 2012; MacKian 2012). From this inclusive and encompassing perspective, we were able to focus through a global lens at the wide variety of religious practices within the urbanized domain. Today’s religious studies need this broad perspective and paradigm on religion in order to deal successfully with the nearly infinite amount of religious expressions and hybrid forms which can be encountered in cities and their outskirts.

The expressions dealt with in this volume thus range from traditional Catholicism as it is re-invented by devotees in the face of urban demographic

changes, immigrant Asian and African religions, new—fundamentalizing as well liberalizing—trends in Islam, to New Age and implicit sensory-related forms like music and dance.

The second important keyword in this study deals with the city's "urban" character. This adjective seems at first instance rather clear and distinct. "Urban" is mostly equated with "(conflict-laden) diversity," "creativity," "innovation" and "cultural openness." We also use the term in this way. The city as its territorialized (material) expression, again, has often been described as a paradigmatic site of modernity. Those ascriptions are formulated in juxtaposition to the contrasting background of what is supposedly "provincial," "rural" and characteristic of a "village." However, in various parts of the world, the sharp distinction between cities and rural areas is vanishing, both culturally and topographically. Suburbs develop rapidly, metropolitan regions expand and rural spaces, as some researchers proclaim, are largely disappearing (Schmidt-Lauber 2010: 15; Kersting and Zimmermann 2015). When looking at and investigating the "urban character" of religions and spiritualities, we have to take those developments into account.

Hence, we must widen our category of the *urban*, and bring in a concept that is tightly linked with and formulated by the results of qualitative ethnographic research on location. Ethnographic research points out that present-day agglomerations and conurbations and their transition areas no longer match the traditionally inscribed idea of the urban as a phenomenon solely bound to densely built city centers and cityscapes. We experienced through our research that lively and innovative developments in the religious domain diffuse from city areas into wider cultural-geographical regions. Again, innovations often originate and blossom precisely in suburbs, in sprawled residential districts and in former industrial and business zones. It is from such sites that they pave the way for religious innovations in the city. This is partly due to a significant shift of the urban phenomenon of international migration and the ways incoming migrants settle in cities. The famous "ring" or zoning model of the Chicago School of Sociology (Burgess 1925)—according to which migrants, after their arrival, first find "home" in inner-city districts and then move out to the suburbs as they climb up the social ladder—is to some extent obsolete today. Because of high rents in now often gentrified inner-city areas as well as due to bureaucratic settlement politics of municipalities, migrants today often settle first in the outer ring of the city or even beyond (Hegner 2008: 51–77, esp. 54–6). It is then from there, from the outskirts, that they build their faith communities and start to create spaces for their religious practice, thus establishing pluralized topographies of faith. Furthermore, as Claire Dwyer illustrates in her contribution in this volume, migration has long reached the suburbs and sometimes international migrants even constitute the majority of their inhabitants. The suburbs and not the city, demographically speaking, work as gateways to create forms of impressive visibility of their religious beliefs. It is there where migrant faith communities build temples and monasteries "by activating transnational networks and flows of finance, social remittances, objects and people across national borders," as Dwyer writes. Thus they "offer new forms

of sacred geographies in the city, and in particular a distinctive engagement with suburban landscapes."

Comparable processes take place on those edges of suburbia where one places transitional zones into the rural and the semi-rural. There one finds (new) towns and villages and residential districts not (yet) taken in the process of conurbational absorption. Socially speaking, in such areas people commute and have a strong orientation to the city. Although such areas are not physically and geographically strictly urban, nor do they have an urban appearance, but the *living culture* one finds there and the residents' mentality are urban oriented (Korff 1985; Lindner 1996: 325).

As academia is in need of a more complete understanding of what is nowadays actually happening in religious everyday life practice, we became inspired to broaden the analytic framework of the ongoing debate and to engage with a new concept: the "urbanesque." This is a new term which we use here alongside "urban" as a complementary domain in order to understand religion as it is expressed in urban places. On its own, the "urban" category can no longer account for the cultural-geographic dynamics of the city environment and its urban mentality and living culture. Such living cultures and mentalities supersede the traditional physical "urban landscape." The concept of the "urbanesque" widens the analytical scope for the intense *interaction* between the urban cityscape in the strict sense and the expanded—urbanesque—environment. It also allows one to conceptually frame the specificity and diversity of small and mid-sized town life as well as suburbia, exurbia and the "urban" rural periphery, this last category being areas which are inhabited by commuters or former city inhabitants, who after having moved out, actually continue to practice urban values and lifestyles or have taken up an urban lifestyle.

The proposed category of the "urbanesque," as we see it, hence, provides a more complete idea and representation of what urban means today, and of where urban life stretches and is practiced and, for our purposes, where (also) new developments on the religious take place. It thus brings zones of important religious innovations into focus, which are usually overlooked in urban studies, as much as in religious studies. With this concept in mind, one finds striking examples of how residential and industrial zones or suburban regions become the laboratories for spiritualizing the city and its urbanesque environs. It illuminates how new religions or movements entering a city are able to recast and spiritualize the urban environment. Let us succinctly demonstrate this with the two metropolises that the editors live in: Amsterdam and Berlin. Our empirical and analytical vignettes take very different points of departure. We aim less for a comparative perspective; instead, we want to show the diverse ways one is able to approach the phenomenon of "spiritualizing the urban and urbanesque."

For Amsterdam, we focus on an exemplary site: the modern residential Bijlmer or Amsterdam South-East district (85,000 inhabitants). It was built as a new neighborhood in a polder on the border of Amsterdam in the 1960s and 1970s, and reflects the urban planning point of view of those days, when large numbers of city dwellers were resettled outside of town in completely new residential areas,

which mainly consisted of modern flats. Bijlmer reflected the idea of a semi-rural new town, with lots of greenery and a fully separate road system with dedicated parking isles. The planners' views were totally in line with Harvey Cox's ideas on secularization, and thus the vast new town was built without any church buildings. And as often happens with model towns, Bijlmer soon proved to become outdated with the first residents beginning to move away, leaving empty apartments and parking isles behind. From a modern "ideal" middle-class settlement, it turned into a lower-class ("black") migrant quarter. The district soon became a very multicultural one, with most of the inhabitants originating from the Caribbean area and Africa. Hence it became a most productive neighborhood for the residents' churches and various religious movements. It proved to be fertile soil for the accumulation of religious groups. Over the years, some 120 migrant church communities, of which 60 were more informal with a high mobility, moved around or found space in the Bijlmer district (Oomen and Palm 1994).⁹ The low-budget movements consisting usually of car-less immigrants who squatted the empty parking constructions and used basements and storage rooms, creating a whole new network of makeshift churches. Schools, community houses, sports halls and private houses also supplied the needed sacred space. Dozens of new and African and Caribbean religions were often forced, due to cost and lack of space, to share the same religious building, very much like what Michael Owen Jones found in the Los Angeles agglomeration, that is, hundreds of "storefront" churches that dot its urban sprawl, and which are to be seen as a front line of religious activity. These indicate how urban areas are functional places designed for living in coexistence, but also providing refuges for those in need of the consolation and support of religion and the spiritual life.

The situation in the Bijlmer gave the municipality of Amsterdam the idea to build a dedicated church of a multifunctional and multiconfessional design. The building *De Kandelaar* ("the candle holder") houses 15 African denominations (Van der Valk 2014), which were called "Church Centers" instead of churches.¹⁰

This solution was arrived at partly due to financial limits, but it was also the result of a governmental policy regarding the constitutional freedom of religion and to bring religions in coexistence with one another, in order to come to know and respect each other. But reality proved more difficult, as the African churches involved were often more committed to their improvised buildings and not to formal issues of accountability and they wanted to return to their makeshift churches. In its slipstream not only did the suburban Bijlmer district become spiritualized, but also the older residential districts somewhat closer to the city center of Amsterdam.¹¹ Such cases show how the urban can unexpectedly facilitate and affect religious expressions, while reciprocally the religious movements affect the cityscape and create community and social cohesion.

Shifting the focus to Berlin, we leave the analytical unity of an exemplary site and take up Peter L. Berger's now famous assessment of Berlin as the "world capital of atheism" (Berger 2001: 195). Focusing solely on Christianity—as Berger does—one can certainly conclude that Berlin is rather irreligious and non-spiritual. Only 30 percent of its inhabitants are members of the nationally recognized two

Churches: Catholic and Protestant.¹² Their numbers are shrinking rapidly, as are the number of buildings—chapels, community buildings, churches—maintained by the two major religious organizations. In 2005, there were still 578 of them, today the number is below 400 (*Statistisches Jahrbuch Berlin* 2005: 164; *Statistisches Jahrbuch Berlin-Brandenburg* 2015: 168). Only 5 percent of the Christians in Berlin and its immediate surroundings (called Brandenburg) attend Mass (*Statistisches Jahrbuch Berlin-Brandenburg* 2015: 168).

The mostly empty churches are protected under the law of listed historic buildings, which means they must be preserved for future generations and cannot be torn down. Hence, they often are re-designated as functional rooms for receptions and galas, and marketed as "exclusive event locations." Conversely, they are reassigned as buildings for social relief organizations or as art galleries.

From this perspective then, the city and its urbanesque habitat are being heavily de-spiritualized. Yet, if we look beyond Christianity, we find a very different situation. A recent study provided a survey on religious and spiritual communities in Berlin and its commuter belt, and counted more than 360 of them (Grübel and Rademacher 2003: vi). International migration undoubtedly plays a decisive role in the comparatively high number and plurality of religious orientations found, but so do the so-called new religious movements, or what the authors named "religious trends since the enlightenment" and "postmodern religiosity." The latter comprise at least a third of the counted groups, among them are Bahá'í, Western Buddhists, adherents of the "I AM" and Hare-Krishna movement,¹³ Rosicrucians, Freemasons, followers of the Holy Grail movement and of Scientology, Neopagan witches and many more (Grübel and Rademacher 2003: 499–602¹⁴). Meanwhile, Berlin's rural-urban areas also serve as a ground of religious/spiritual experimentation. In 1991, a small group of men and women set up the "Center for experimental societal organization" close to the German capital. They formed a community that lives together and offers seminars each year in shamanic and tantric practices, earth-based religions and meditation.¹⁵ The center "radiates" back to the city and works as a kind of hub and popular retreat for Berlin's new religious "scene."

Overall, Berlin and its surrounding provide such a myriad of new religious/spiritual groups that, in total, they are "even for insiders [of the "scene"] hardly assessable in detail" (Grübel and Rademacher 2003: 600). They remain rather fluid, barely institutionalized and perhaps "underground" in nature, and thus have developed wide-ranging ways of spiritualizing Berlin and its urbanesque habitats. Take, for example, the group of Neopagan witches, which is growing quickly in the city and comprises approximately 500–600 followers.¹⁶ Their site of worship is "nature," which they perceive as sacred and in opposition to the city, which—according to the witches—has alienated humans from "natural" forces and rhythms and thus from the divine over all (Magliocco 2004; Salomonsen 2002; Hegner 2013). For their rituals, the witches retreat to the lakes and recreational areas at the urban periphery and further to the forests and fields in the commuter zone. At their chosen ritual sites, they draw huge spirals on the ground or erect stone circles, which for them symbolize the sacred circle of life: birth, maturation, death,

and rebirth. Through those demarcations of space and through their performances, witches create a *spiritual topography* that traverses Berlin's urbanesque and the urban periphery. Witches spiritualize those areas as well as the city and its inhabitants. For, they believe, the ritual remnants—the spirals, the stone circles—unfold a specific “energy.” As urban dwellers, commuters included, pass by those ritual places, they might discover the symbols and thus—the witches are certain—will experience the ritual sites’ “sacred power.”

As the example of the witches demonstrates, new religious groups shape the cityscape as much as ideas of what the city represents models their religious practice. In this context, Berlin, with its specific religious plurality juxtaposed with its tendency towards secularization, represents a paradigmatic locale of the simultaneity of spiritualizing and de-spiritualizing processes in and around the city.

Spiritualizing the City: its contents and findings

To discuss the various ways cities are nowadays being spiritualized and spatially adapted and designed, we categorized the research results into three distinct themes, which are discussed here in more detail.

Part I of the book explores the “Politics of Religious Plurality and Identity.” The two contributions address the political-cultural instrumentalization of religion and the question of how and to what extent governmental institutions and religious organizations have to manage religious expressions within their mandate and to realize practical adaptations in the urban and urbanesque environment. Changes in urban culture, including religious pluralities as well as caesuras in demography, demand that religions creatively rethink established organizational structures and try out new forms of institutionalization and of public visibility, as well as of communication and religious claims.

To that end, Eva Dick and Alexander-Kenneth Nagel compare how during the last decade two German cities—Hamm and Duisburg—created different inter-religious dialogues and “faith governance” to make changes and additions in the cityscape possible and still uphold urban conviviality. As the concept of integration has become a leading policy objective on municipal agendas in Germany and within the recent intercultural paradigm, the governance of religious diversity has been included in many urban integration plans. Dick and Nagel examine how the varied initiatives and networks that developed, always involve the exploration of the margins of religious traditions and trigger new and hybrid religious worldviews (such as, dialogue meetings). Simultaneously, as the authors elaborate, these initiatives reinforce existing mechanisms and tendencies of exclusion. In this context, the study's comparative lens illuminates the extent to which inter-religious initiatives remain context-bound, shaped by the “kind of town” they take place in, that is, its specific history and political culture.

Tricia C. Bruce leads us into a complete different sphere of governance, which is a more one-sided one, feasibly carried out by the Roman Catholic Church through

its hierarchical structure. Her research concerns the extensive redistribution of church buildings connected to full new community building in the American city of St. Louis and its agglomeration. Bruce explains that the Catholic authorities had to exchange the logic of propinquity of previous church communities for a diasporic community, with members spread all over the outskirts of the agglomeration. Hence, parishes are no longer defined according to territory, but according to special purposes and different needs of Catholic subcultures varying by ethnicity, by worship style, and by primary mission. Only through this fundamental innovation of organizational structures could existing church buildings—magnificently built and central symbols of St. Louis's cultural image of being the “The Rome of the West”—be preserved and Catholic presence in the city and its greater area maintained. For the new communities, policies on architectural cultural heritage and the collective memory of the religious urban past became important, bringing in new forms of spiritual tourism as incentive for the urbanesque.

Part II of the book is entitled “Producing and Negotiating Religious Space” and discusses the various ways in which new religious movements generate presence in the city realm and beyond, by creating their own space and appropriating particular places and spaces, hardly without any governmental interference. The question of (in)visibility also relates to the issue of self-representation of religious movements, its aesthetics and urban spreading of their following. In this context, the section provides several perspectives. It shows how neglected, abandoned parts of the urban and the urbanesque are appropriated by religious groups and bring again urban deserts back to life. It further illuminates how religious practices can generate a specific perception or (religious) image of a city as a whole. Part II also draws attention to new sacral architecture that is a bricolage of different religious styles, and helps to shape the cityscape. By concentrating on innovative trends within Islam, the final chapter in this section looks at the creation of religious spaces and topographies within the urban and urbanesque habitat that remains discursively highly contested.

We introduce this section with Gertrud Hüwelmeier's contribution, in which she explores how religious place-making emerges from the ways in which migrants transport and introduce religious ideas, practices and sacred objects from one place to another, while simultaneously changing or redefining ideas about belief, ritual, locality and sacred space in the urban context. She demonstrates in “Praying in Berlin's ‘Asiatown’” how Asian religions have created through their migrants a kind of independent town as an expression of “recycled” place-making in former industrial and business zones. The established product markets—multi-ethnic bazaars—are fused with religious practices. Prayers and attendance at set-up altars are easily integrated into the daily work routine. Lately and additionally, sacred spaces such as a pagoda and a mosque have been built inside and outside of the buildings. Generally, Hüwelmeier draws attention to the intense interplay of local ties and global networks at these single locales and thus shows that the markets in their suburban and outdated industrial zones have become keys to religious transnationalism, whether or not in combination with market and trading activities.

Anna Niedźwiedz combines long-term fieldwork with personal observations and notes, and analyzes how the inhabitants of Kraków, in the middle of a process of general religious decline in Poland were able to re-spiritualize Kraków's cityscape in a mixed way. The global admiration and veneration of Pope John-Paul II became "nationalized" in Poland, and due to his Polish and Kraków upbringing, his cultus was specifically inscribed into its cityscape. At first instance, this came about when people began to make grass-roots street shrines in downtown streets, which led to a new, institutionalized popular devotional practice: the cultus of the "Papal Window." This public urban spiritualization facilitated again the creation and the success of new shrines of pilgrimage created in one of the redeveloped industrial areas outside of town, which were related to the Pope's life and to his favored devotion to the Divine Mercy. Those forms of religious practice and place-making, again, reproduce and generate Kraków's cultural and mental image of being the "Pope's city": an image that is an important resource of identification for Poles and Catholics all over the world.

Mariske Westendorp researches one of the densely populated cityscapes in the world. The density of Hong Kong's built environment is reflected in the meanings that individual religious practitioners ascribe to religious buildings as material mediators between themselves and the divine. She explores, based on their narratives, how Catholic and Buddhist practitioners in Hong Kong relate to specific religious buildings—churches and temples—and reveals that the location and the aesthetics of church buildings are not the most critical media for religious practice. They are taken as "peaceful and quiet shelters" for mere personal devotional practices within the turbulent environment of Hong Kong. As Westendorp moves on in her analysis, she points to Hong Kong's rather unique situation, as it is bounded by the ocean and the border with mainland China that cannot be geographically extended. Since land is thus not only scarce but expensive, particularly in the (ever-decreasing) urbanesque areas that allow a retreat from Hong Kong's hectic (that is, the New Territories), new religious centers do not spread in Hong Kong and beyond. Instead, they are concentrated in the inner city and are increasingly established in already existing residential, industrial, or commercial buildings. In a way, one can conclude, Hong Kong's situation as a geographical and cultural-political island, intensifies the spiritualization of central districts of this Asian megacity.

Claire Dwyer explains in her contribution on the spiritualizing of the suburbs how new religious architecture in suburban London and Vancouver brings in the sensation of the visual aesthetics. She explores the spiritualizing of the city by considering the transnational geographies of new forms of religious architecture built in the suburbs by migrant faith communities. The examples explored are a Tibetan monastery, in Richmond, Vancouver, a Jain temple in Potters Bar, London, and a Muslim center under construction in Harrow, near London. Dwyer argues that those buildings are examples of new forms of hybrid religious architecture creating new suburban sacred spatiality, subsequently also transforming the existing meanings of suburban space.

Synnøve Bendixsen's contribution brings us back to the multi-religious cityscape of Berlin. She addresses the spiritualizing of Berlin through a discussion of

how the image of a multicultural Berlin becomes part of how Muslim youth create a "fun Islam." Fun Islam, an emic term, actually refers to a conservative form of Islam. It puts forward the idea that pious strictness can be "fun," without segregating oneself from society; it thus has to be read as an (urban) response to the highly contested discursive field of the role of Islam in the "Western" world. By focusing on one of the most active Muslim youth organizations in the city, Bendixsen shows the complex ways young Muslims create spaces for their particular concept of Islam and negotiate religious presence in Berlin. Venturing into the city, as Bendixsen reveals, they aim to be perceived publicly simultaneously as Muslims and as "Germans" and "Berliners," who synthesize their piety with an openness towards a "multicultural" way of life in the city and its urbanesque.

Part III is entitled "The Agency of the Body and the Senses in Spiritualized Practices." This final part concentrates on the question of how cities and the urbanesque facilitate spiritual and religious movements in relation to corporality, emotions and the senses. The three contributions in this section focus particularly on the role of music and how listening to music, and dancing, singing and performing, through bodily and emotional engagement, are involved in establishing new religious movements with a need for dedicated religious spaces in the urban and urbanesque.

To that end Sarah Pike points out how trance or ecstatic dance is to be seen as a prayer to the self. Focusing on "Five Rhythms dance churches" in the San Francisco Bay Area as well as in other urban and urbanesque regions in the US, she depicts how the participants are "sweating their prayers," in reference to one's "Rhythms of the Soul." Although they claim their dance worship to be an "antidote of city life," dancers nevertheless bring their urban experiences in with them and take experiences forged in dance sanctuaries, again, back on to city streets and into other urban spaces. Pike examines this specific interplay of escape from and immersion in urban life that characterizes the spread of this New Age form of ecstatic dance. In this context, she draws particular attention to the places where those dances take place—old warehouses, school gyms and community centers—and shows how dancers transform these spaces into temporary temples of movement. This form of spiritualizing space, as Pike examines, is a complex attempt to separate the sacred from the city and its urbanesque. Since those buildings carry traces of their other lives, it requires selective remembering of particular urban pasts and forgetting of others.

Daniel Wojcik and Peter Jan Margry present another sensorial expression of spiritualization of the urban. Their research describes how the performance and especially the perception of John Coltrane's jazz music, has changed due to gentrification processes in the Western Addition and Fillmore districts of San Francisco. After a governmental order to incubate the free-floating movement around a Godly Coltrane into a formal Orthodox Church organization and an ejection of the Coltrane devotees of their initial "Harlem-of-the-West" locality due to rising property prices, the group moved to a different, completely renovated part of town. This resulted in a shift in its audience, which changed from a group of predominantly local African American jazz enthusiasts to a more "whitened"

audience arriving from all over the country and the world—an audience apparently more interested in the stand-alone sacred and transformative power of the sound of the album *A Love Supreme* than in the offered services of the African Orthodox Church and its members.

Raphaëla von Weichs also addresses dance music and prayer: “Singing is prayer two times” is the saying in Cameroon. She brings up a transnational perspective on “religious music,” musical performance and urban religiosity in Cameroon and Switzerland, and examines the performance and politics of “religious (Christian) music” in urban Cameroon and the incorporation of Cameroonian choral music into “African pilgrimages” in Switzerland. Music, especially urban “religious music” in Cameroon, von Weichs reveals, has brought new dynamics into modern city life and its urban religious practices. Its incorporative and transformative power, however, is particularly tangible in situations of translocal and transnational migration. This is especially the case when place-making is difficult to achieve and migrants live dispersed in cities and urbanesque habitats. In such processes of localization, the semi-rural sites (ancient Catholic abbeys) of newly invented Swiss African pilgrimages turn into a stage for (in the Swiss cultural context) innovative musical and religious practices, such as the performance of Cameroonian choir music. It becomes obvious that religious transformation is not confined to the city but results from a constant interplay between urban and rural places.

To conclude this introduction to these intriguing case studies, the editors would like to affirm that modern metropolises are spiritualized—they always were, in historically very different ways. Presently, we are witnessing a “spiritual boom”-time in cities and their urbanesque habitats: religions, religiosities and spiritualities pluralize and forcefully create urban public spaces or generate socio-cultural niches for their worldviews and practices. It is a development which is highly interrelated with the success of cities themselves as desirable life-worlds, identity-laboratories and (imagined) sustainable places of prosperity. An intense mutual agency and resilience makes religious practice thrive. These dynamics not only count for the “classic” urban space but need to be taken into account beyond the traditional borders of academic understanding. The migration of people all over the world brings new focal points for religious experiments, encounters and mixtures, and as people react strongly to the extended cityscape we have taken for this book: not a static physically built one, but the one related to people’s practices, agency and behavior. Such a perspective clearly shows that religious practice is no longer related to formal sacral buildings or exclusive sacral grounds but finds its extended habitat where the agency of older buildings and former industrial and business zones create new chances, and where new environments and emergent spaces nurture the spiritual impulse, and can adapt to the possibilities there.

In summary, this book exemplifies how urban space, newly defined in the broader culturally lived way, is the focal point of present-day religious practice and shows how this basic human expression is transformed by the urban domain, and by its power of belief, transforms urban culture.

Notes

- 1 See <https://sundayassembly.com>; in 2014, the article “the” was deleted from the official naming (originally “The Sunday Assembly”); also the wording of their mission and vision have slightly been changed since.
- 2 Website statements (<https://sundayassembly.com/about/>), accessed on respectively April 3, 2014 and August 18, 2015. As the movement is quite recent and is quickly developing websites, texts are due to change; see, for Amsterdam, <http://amsterdam.sundayassembly.com>.
- 3 Fieldnotes, October 25, 2015.
- 4 <https://www.sundayassembly.com/story>; accessed March 5, 2016.
- 5 <https://www.cnu.org/who-we-are/charter-new-urbanism>; accessed March 5, 2016.
- 6 <http://globalprayer.info>; accessed March 5, 2016.
- 7 At a symposium called “City as Context” in 1973, held by the American Anthropological Association in New Orleans, the cultural anthropologist Jack Rollwagen already suggested the method of comparative studies in two or more cities as a useful means to understand the cultural distinctiveness of urban locales: Rollwagen 1975: 54–6.
- 8 Also in implicit ways in “religion”-void suburban(esque) areas, cf. Schippers 2015.
- 9 Cf. Patrick Meershoek, “Bidden in de parkeergarage,” in *Het Parool*, May 18, 2004.
- 10 Also in other cities, plans exist for combined buildings, like Berlin’s “House of One,” which houses a church, a mosque and a synagogue under one roof: *The Guardian*, June 25, 2014.
- 11 Corrie Verkerk, “De heilige geest in alle stadsdelen,” in *Het Parool*, May 24, 2002; Remco Tomesen, “De nieuwe buurtkerk doet het goed,” in *Het Parool*, July 31, 2012; Sjaak van de Groep, “Het is weer volle bak in de vergrijste stadskerk,” in *NRC-Handelsblad*, March 16, 2012.
- 12 Amsterdam’s statistics are even lower: only 10 percent of its inhabitants belong to the Catholic or Protestant Church: http://www.ois.amsterdam.nl/assets/pdfs/2014_religie_in_amsterdam.pdf; accessed March 24, 2016. To the extent to which Berlin could be called an “exceptional case” for Germany, see Thomas Großbölting’s study on Germany’s “religious situation”: Großbölting 2013.
- 13 Grübel and Rademacher categorize the “Hare-Krishna Movement,” also known as the “International Society for Krishna Consciousness” (ISKCON), in a slightly different way as a “new community in the tradition of Indian religions”: Grübel and Rademacher 2003: 394–5.
- 14 Interview with representatives of the “Berlin office for sect-related issues,” January 14, 2009. The office monitors religious/spiritual groups outside the dominant monotheistic religions. The two main churches in Germany established similar offices; however, their “labels” sound less ideological, for example, the Protestant Central Office for World-View-Questions (*Evangelische Zentralstelle für Weltanschauungsfragen*).
- 15 <http://www.zegg.de/> (main homepage); accessed March 5, 2016. Earth-based religions are religions that worship the earth and nature as immanently sacred and advocate ecological activism.
- 16 It is difficult to provide rather reliable statistics. According to the religious studies scholar, Reena Perschke (2003), approximately 350–400 witches live in the city. However, the witches themselves say those numbers are far too low and don’t take recent developments into account. Estimates now range from 500–700.

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