

## English Summaries

<https://doi.org/10.1515/zfr-2023-0018>

### **The Perception of Religious Plurality and Its Consequences for Religious Identification: Qualitative-Empirical Findings on a Theoretical Debate**

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Religious pluralisation is considered an influencing factor by many theories in the context of the secularisation debate. In this regard, it is often assumed that religious pluralisation has a certain effect on individual religiosity, the latter then being considered an indicator for processes of secularization or individualisation. This article wants to shed light on the relations between religious diversity, its perception by religious individuals, and the consequences this perception has on religious identity or identification. To do so, it adds a qualitative-empirical perspective to the existing theoretical debates and quantitative surveys, drawing on biographical interviews with Christians and Muslims in Germany.

Various theories have put forward explicit or implicit theses about the effects of religious pluralisation on the religious field as a whole, modelling the individual as an important mediating variable. These assumptions can take quite different directions, cf. amongst others Berger's idea of the deplausibilisation of religion on the one hand, the approaches of rational-choice theories that model religious plurality as an invigorating market situation on the other. Both are based on fundamentally different understandings of how religious plurality affects individual religiosity. In addition to the discussion of these approaches and some critique of them, the article introduces further studies that investigate the consequences of interreligious contact on religiosity – e.g. in the constellation of religiously diverse marriages or families and their effects on religious membership or practice.

These mainly quantitative approaches are juxtaposed with an in-depth qualitative study. Based on biographical interview data on the experience of religious plurality in Germany, the article first elaborates which episodes of interreligious contact the interviewees experienced and to what extent these can be considered as formative in each case. In doing so, a contemporary historical perspective integrates the respective constellations of religious plurality in Germany since the post-war period. Here the importance of the discursive pre-arranging of religious plurality becomes particularly visible: Discourses prescribe how religious plurality is perceived

individually and shapes certain generational patterns of perceiving and assessing religious plurality and specific “religious others”. However, they do not do so one-dimensionally, but must be considered in the complexity of their biographical stratification on the one hand, and the ascription of individual positions in these discursive fields on the other. Such ascriptions depend not least on further demographic factors such as gender and religious affiliation.

Finally, the article sheds light on the consequences of the experience of religious plurality. In this regard, it outlines three patterns of how such experiences of plurality are integrated at the level of individual religiosity: one in which this experience has no decisive effect on the articulation of religious identification, a second in which it results in the deepening of one's own religiosity, and one in which more complex identification processes are initiated that touch on an individual's various religious dimensions. This last pattern shows how dominant discourses about religious identity can be dissolved or bypassed. In this case, individual combinations of membership, religious practice, religious convictions or sense of belonging do not correspond to the concepts of a coherent religious identity as it is often held by the community of origin. The article thus argues for investigating the connection between religious plurality and its processing at the individual level, which on the one hand shifts the usual assumptions about inter-religious contact zones and more strongly includes the level of media discourses as a new domain of social neighborhood. On the other hand, it illustrates the complexity in the individual integration of religious plurality, which evolves through the biographical dynamics of identification processes and the fragmentation of religious identity.

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### The Legitimation of Dehumanization, Misogyny, and Violence in Hinduism

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In view of the constantly increasing number of crimes specifically targeting women, hierarchically lower birth- (*varṇa*) and occupational groups (*jāti*) as well as “casteless” (*dalits*; *scheduled castes*) and indigenous groups (*ādivāsī*; *scheduled tribes*) in India, it is argued that the political rise of the BJP (*Bhāratīya Janatā Pārṭī*) and its resort to Hindu fundamentalism can be seen as a single, but nevertheless decisive factor in this. In order to plausibilize why the strengthening of traditional Hindu values contributes to an aggravation of social antagonisms and a further intensification of violence, the ideological foundations in Hinduism that legitimize dehumanization, misogyny, and violence are traced from their Vedic origins in the second millennium BCE to the present.

The idea of a natural inequality of human beings and their hierarchical division into four birth-based groups (*varṇa*) can be traced to the famed *puruṣasūkta* and thus the oldest layer of the Vedas. For the lowest stratum of the commoners or servants (*śūdras*) and the “Untouchables” and “casteless” (*Caṇḍāla*), who are excluded from the *varṇa* system, this idea of man carries inhuman implications. They are clearly exposed in the *Dharmasūtras*, *Dharmaśāstras*, and other textual testimonies, which not only provide ample evidence for a cruel and degrading treatment of *śūdras* and *Caṇḍālas* but also elaborate on the subject of gender and convey overt images of misogyny.

However, an emerging criticism of violence (*hiṃsā*) can be shown both in Brahmanism and in the religious traditions of Buddhism and Jainism that emerged from the ascetic *Śramaṇa* movements and dissented from the Vedic mainstream. Because of their critique of the Vedic sacrificial cult, Buddhists and Jains were particularly eligible to consummate the new tendency to internalize sacrificial rituals and radicalize the ideal of non-injury (*ahiṃsā*). The defense of Vedic Brahmanism against the universalistic claims of the ideal of *ahiṃsā* has been a symptomatic phenomenon for Hindu intellectual history ever since. It led to an enduring tension between violence (*hiṃsā*) and non-violence (*ahiṃsā*), (ritual) action (*karman*) and knowledge (*jñāna*) and the path of action (*pravṛtti-mārga*) of the householder (*gṛhastha*) and the path of renunciation (*nivṛtti-mārga*) of the itinerant ascetic (*pravrajita/saṃnyāsa*).

Hindu thinkers have generated various responses and attempted solutions in this regard. Arguably the most influential is to be found in the *Bhagavadgītā*, where the seemingly irreconcilable opposites of *hiṃsā* and *ahiṃsā* are claimed to be complementary aspects of a unified way of life: According to Kṛṣṇa, who attempts to persuade Arjuna to engage in battle and kill his own kinsmen, it is not the physical withdrawal from the world, but the spiritual renunciation of it that allows for a living synthesis of external *hiṃsā* and internal *ahiṃsā* in the inner-worldly asceticism of *karma-yoga*.

The *Bhagavadgītā* and its teachings have been interpreted and reinterpreted continuously in many ways in support of mutually exclusive doctrines. Some of these interpretations suggest that the battle and the violence and killing that accompanies it are not intended to be taken literally but only allegorically. However, instead of asking about the proper interpretation of the text, the question is pursued whether the text has indirectly or directly contributed to the actual legitimization of violence in theory and practice. As the writings and deeds of Indian revolutionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the positive reception of the *Bhagavadgītā* by National Socialists clearly prove, this question must be answered in the affirmative.

## Up or Out. Working Conditions and Satisfaction of Young Scholars in Religious Studies in Germany

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The present study is based on a survey (mixed-method design) of the working conditions and satisfaction of young scholars in religious studies (i.e., all those without a professorship). The survey was carried out in 2022 by the working group for mid-level faculty and junior staff (AKMN) of the German Association for Religious Studies (DVRW). It is an extended variant of a survey from 2015. The questionnaire survey was carried out from May to July 2022. The present study is a report on the univariate findings of the survey. With 48 participants (of an estimated 165 mid-level staff), this study is based on a relatively large sample.

Most respondents are employed on a fixed-term basis (89.6%) and part-time (58.1%) with an average contract period of 28.5 months, while their qualification phases last significantly longer than three years on average. respondents hold full-time positions (increase from 33.6% to 41.9%) or large part-time positions than in 2015, a significant proportion are not employed or have small part-time positions (increase from 10.7% to 20%). 29% cannot make a living from their university salary. All unpaid overtime (increase from seven to nine hours week) with part-time employed respondents working average 13 hours of overtime per week.

The number of people not planning any further has increased from 11% to 22.7% since 2015 that university employment does not offer appropriate perspectives for further qualification.

More than half of the respondents are generally satisfied with their working conditions, 23.4% are dissatisfied. The respondents are most satisfied with the flexibility of working hours and work organization, the opportunities to learn new things at work, with the social relationships among colleagues, with their own teaching, and with the actual content of the work. The lowest level of satisfaction is shown for job security, job prospects and the current contract period.

The surveys regarding stress and health revealed that 70.2% suffer from time pressure, 56.5% from overtime and 48.7% under pressure to acquire. health problems are exhaustion (46.8%), nervousness (42.6%), back pain (38.3%), sleep disorders (38.3%), depressive moods (31.9%), headaches (25.5%), panic attacks (15.2%) and cardiovascular problems (6.4%). Frequent exhaustion, nervousness, sleep disorders and depressive moods have each increased by at least ten percent compared

to 2015. more than 90 % of those surveyed saw a connection between working conditions and health problems, but

During the corona pandemic, the working situation has deteriorated significantly for half of the respondents. The most common reasons for this are negative social aspects such as general isolation and a lack of collegial exchange (45.2 %) and the difficulty of reconciling work and family (26.2 %) – especially with children. It can be assumed that the above-mentioned increase in physical and psychological complaints is partly due to the corona pandemic.

There are positive findings on diversity. here high proportion of people with a migration background (25.5 %) and (56.3 %) as well as a high proportion of women (increase from 50 % to 68.8 %) and parents (32,6 %).

Overall, the results of the 2022 survey indicate that the problems documented in the first study in 2015 have worsened. despite difficult working conditions, the scholars surveyed have a high level of intrinsic motivation, enjoy their work and would like to continue their work – permanently employed.