IMMIGRANT RELIGIONS AND STRUCTURAL ADAPTATIONS

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1. Introduction

International migration is one of the main agents of globalisation in the contemporary world[1]. Whereas global media bring images of distant peoples, cultures and societies to one's living room, international migration brings them next door, to one's own neighbourhood and local society. The global movement of people is in many complex ways interwoven with the global stratification of power, economics and politics, but despite these connections, it is an independent agent of change in itself. The transformative effect of international migration is the fact that it changes accustomed and taken for granted everyday practices and relations in local societies. It is the presence and the perceived challenge of the culturally and religiously other that triggers these local processes of adaptation. The changes affect both the original local population and the newcomers, and they have direct as well as indirect consequences. In the case of larger immigrant flows, the growing immigrant presence can even lead to major changes beyond the local society and have national and international ramifications[2].

Many immigrants continue with some aspects of their home country's ways of living in the new local context. This can take many forms, such as a political, religious or cultural activity. It is also customary that ties with the old home country, relatives and other important things are not completely left behind, but are continued long after the initial arrival in the new place of settlement. Moreover, novel forms of transnational networks are created, for instance in the case of global refugee flows, when members of the same family and ethnic group can be resettled literally around the world. This broadens the geographical scope of connections to an even broader field[3]. To which extent these are important for subsequent generations is an open question for the time being, but at least for some they continue to be of importance, even though the new society soon becomes the main frame of reference. Furthermore, cultural, political, religious and other interests towards things in the country of origin become sometimes of more importance than they were before. For example, it has been well documented that many migrants from Islamic countries to Europe have indeed become more religious, culturally aware and dedicated to their traditions after migration than

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[1] Arjun APPADURAI, *Modernity at Large*. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization, Minneapolis 1996.
[2] David HELD / Anthony MCGREW / David GOLDBLATT / Jonathan PERRATON, *Global Transformations*. Politics, Economics and Culture, Cambridge 1999, 284–286.
[3] Peggy LEVITT, *The Transnational Villagers*, Berkeley 2001.

they were before[4]. The development is especially expectable, when the immigrants are moved from a majority to a minority status. Then they have a greater need to reflect on their tradition, as the surrounding society does not support it[5].

Research on immigration is a growing field of inquiry in western societies. Australia, Europe and North America have all experienced a new wave of immigration during the last decades, which has led to numerous studies on immigrant populations, including studies on religion[6]. The European research has largely concentrated on Islam, but also other religions have been of interest[7]. Much of the research has been locally and nationally bound, but increasing efforts to combine data from different countries are taking place. The studies have been conducted in many disciplines, including anthropology, religious studies, sociology and theology.

The aim of this article is to discuss issues related to the consequences of migratory resettlement for religious organisation. The central argument is that immigrants recreate their religious activity in the new local society in a reciprocal relationship with the local religious context and usually adapt forms of religious organisation and activity that are not replicas of those in the home country or in the new society, but rather something in-between, beyond and new. The article is based on the author's fieldwork among immigrant religious organisations in the city of Turku[8], Finland, and supplemented with further research on immigrant religions in other western countries. The article is structured as follows. First, it presents the main characteristics of contemporary international migrations. Second, it will discuss issues related to the establishment of immigrant religions. Third, it will highlight the role of religious dialogue as platform for religious adaptation. Fourth, the paper will be summarised and some issues of further interests for the study of religion and immigration will be raised.

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[4] For instance, many Somali women have become more knowledgeable about Islam since their arrival in Finland and they have also started to wear the *hijab*, which was not common in Somalia. Marja TIILIKAINEN, *Arjen Islam*. Somalinaisten elämää Suomessa [Everyday Islam. The Life of Somali Women in Finland], Tampere 2003.

[5] Helen Rose EBAUGH / Janet Saltzman CHAFETZ, *Religion and the New Immigrants*. Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations, Walnut Creek 2000, 336.

[6] The study of immigrant religions is a very dynamic and rapidly developing field for the time being. However, there is a lack for good comparative studies and general accounts of the field. The following publications can, nevertheless, serve as a good platform for further studies on the subject. Martin BAUMANN, Migrant Settlement, Religion and Phases of Diaspora, in: *Migration* 33, 34, 35 (2002) 93–117; Helen Rose EBAUGH / Janet Saltzman CHAFETZ, *Religion and the New Immigrants*. Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations, Walnut Creek 2000; R. Stephen WARNER / Judith G. WITTNER (Eds.), *Gatherings in Diaspora*. Religious Communities and the New Immigration, Philadelphia 1998.

[7] The domination of interest towards Islam is quite clear in Europe, but during the last decade increasing attention has been directed to other novel phenomena, including African religions, Buddhism and Hinduism. The two following studies are examples of quality works on immigrant religions in Europe: Martin BAUMANN, *Migration, Religion, Integration*. Buddhistische und hinduistische Tamilen in Deutschland, Marburg 2000; Jørgen NIELSEN, *Muslims in Western Europe*, Second Edition, Edinburgh 1995. Perhaps the most underdeveloped area of research is how immigration has affected mainstream churches. The tendency to concentrate on exotic religions undermines the importance of European migration, which constitutes a significant part of the movement of people in the continent.

[8] Turku is the central city of South West Finland and has ca. 175,000 inhabitants. The city is the country's second largest immigrant centre and people of immigrant origin constitute 5% of the local population.

2. International migration and Europe

Migration across cultural and state borders, as well as through other obstacles, has been typical for humans since ancient times. The global spread of the human race is just one illustration of this human characteristic. In a European perspective, since the colonial times, it has been Europeans themselves that have left the continent and only during the post- World War II times has the continent become a target for immigration on a larger scale. Beside this, also increasing movement between European countries has taken place. However, the experiences of particular local societies, regions and countries are remarkably different. These differences in migration history are, nevertheless, highly central for the ways in which immigration is experienced in particular places[9].

The European post-war immigration patterns can be briefly summarised into two phases. The first phase began in the immediate post-war period and grew from the need of labour of some growing European economies, such as France, Germany, Great Britain and Sweden. These countries recruited large quantities of labour from abroad. The people came from less developing European countries (e.g., Finland, Greece, Italy and Spain), former colonies (e.g., Algeria, Indonesia and Pakistan) and other non-European societies (e.g., Turkey). The migrants were mostly young men. The states in question assumed that the migrants would later return to their countries of origin. The phase came to its end in the aftermath of the oil crises during the 1970s. During the period most European countries had only limited first-hand experience of immigrant populations[10].

The second phase started in the 1980s and has continued until today. The immigrants were increasingly refugees and asylum seekers, but also family members of the migrants of the previous phase. Also migration between European societies has continued, not least because of the expansion of the European Union and the collapse of the Eastern bloc. Now the immigrant receiving societies realised that the migrants were not temporary visitors, but they were there to stay. Political programmes were introduced in order to aid the integration of these people to their new home countries. This had also become necessary, because among the immigrants were now many more who had not entered the country for labour purposes, including refugees, spouses and children. During this period also those European societies that were not immigrant receiving countries in the first period began experiencing increasing immigration. This has been the case for instance in Finland and Italy[11].

Whereas migration is an age-old phenomenon, it has been argued that there are some novel features of contemporary international migrations. Stephen Castles and Mark Miller describe the current era as ›the Age of Migration‹ and identify five general, novel tendencies. First,

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[9]   For instance, Finland has only since the 1980s become a country of net immigration, whereas it was a country of net emigration from the 1950s until the 1970s. The experience is dramatically different from the situation in neighbouring Sweden that has had a significant immigrant population since the 1960s, including many Finns.

[10]   Annika FORSANDER, *Luottamuksen ehdot*. Maahanmuuttajat 1990-luvun suomalaisilla työmarkkinoilla [The Conditions of Trust: Immigrants in the Finnish labour markets in the 1990s], Helsinki 2002, 16–17.

[11]   Annika FORSANDER, *Luottamuksen ehdot*. Maahanmuuttajat 1990-luvun suomalaisilla työmarkkinoilla [The Conditions of Trust: Immigrants in the Finnish labour markets in the 1990s], Helsinki 2002, 16–17.

the *globalisation of migration* refers to the fact that migratory movements affect more countries than earlier and that the diversity of the migrants' areas of origin is increasing. Second, the *acceleration of migration* means that there has been quantitative growth of migration in all major regions. Third, with *differentiation of migration* is meant that in most places there are people who have migrated for different reasons, e.g. refugees and labour migrants. Fourth, the *feminisation of migration* implies that more women than earlier migrate. Fifth, the *growing politicisation of migration* refers to the fact that issues related to migration are becoming increasingly present on the political agendas of different countries[12]. All these five tendencies can be found in European countries.

Many researchers argue that there are further specific characteristics of contemporary international migrations. Key words in these studies include *globalisation, transnationalism* and *diaspora*. Peggy Levitt discussed the matter at some length in her study *the Transnational Villagers* and identifies some differences between new and old migrations. First, new communication and transportation technologies permit easier and more intimate connections between the country of origin and the new place of settlement, which heightens the immediacy and frequency of contact. The spread of global media is a part of this. Second, there is more tolerance of cultural and ethnic pluralism, which enhances the migrants' possibilities to sustain homeland connections and to continue with traditional practices in the new context[13]. The contemporary, official immigration policies in many countries are based on *multiculturalism* that explicitly encourages keeping one's religious, cultural and ethnic traditions, confirms Levitt's observation. Even internationally, assimilative policies are considered with some suspicion.

Based on Castles, Miller and Levitt, it can be argued that the contemporary migrant populations are more diverse than earlier and they have more resources at their hands to sustain this diversity in the new local context. Furthermore, the new local context in which the immigrants live reaches far beyond the local society, even to different countries and continents. Even though this transnationalism is not completely new, it is, however, more extensive, accessible and affordable due to technological innovations, such as air travel, telephone and the Internet. Following Roland Robertson, it can be argued that immigrants create global or transnational spaces in their new local environments that can be described as *glocal*[14]. This conceptualisation implies that traditional divisions between local, regional, national and international lives are blurred and a new broader reality beyond the nation-state is formed. This is the social space in which contemporary immigrant religions function. This circumstance leads us to ask what is the role of the local context in this increasingly globalised life world.

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[12] Stephen CASTLES / Mark J. MILLER, *The Age of Migration*. International Population Movements in the Modern World, Third Edition, New York 2003, 7–9.

[13] Peggy LEVITT, *The Transnational Villagers*, Berkeley 2001.

[14] Roland ROBERTSON, Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity, in: Mike FEATHERSTONE / Scott LASH / Roland ROBERTSON (Eds.), *Global Modernities*, London 1995, 25–44.

3. The establishment of immigrant religious organisations

The organisation of immigrant religions provides a window to the processes through which religious traditions are adapted to a new local society. When the immigrants become interested in organising collective religious activities and events or in promoting their interests in local society, they sooner or later realise that some supportive structures are needed[15]. For instance, the authorities might not accept individuals as partners of negotiations, but require a representative body (a congregation or an association); also the foundation of places of worship requires ways of handling finances in legally defined ways. In order to meet the requirements the community usually needs to organise itself in a manner that enables it to promote its cause, or its objectives can be severely hindered. The community may also organise itself under the umbrella of an existing organisation, which is common, for example, for many Christian migrant groups. The argument is that the organisation of immigrant religions rises from practical reasons and by organising the group in question is able to function more effectively and to promote its cause in a new local environment collectively.

The new local environment is, to varying degrees, different from the original one and this sets challenges to the religious activists to find ways in which to continue with religious practice. The challenges are largest to those who are culturally most distant from the surrounding society. The norm and model of religious organisation in all European countries is based on Christianity. The Christian religion has important characteristics which are alien to many other world religions. These include a local congregation or parish to which a person is supposed to belong as a member. This local organisation is also often part of a nationally organised church, which represents its cause on a national level. Minority religions are consciously or unconsciously expected to follow this model, and the legislative norms also guide in that direction[16]. For example, Ingvar Svanberg and David Westerlund note that Swedish Muslims are organised much like Protestant free churches with local congregations and a national organisation[17]. Furthermore, whereas large, national churches often have some kind of ›state church‹ status and special legislation, minority religions are often organised on a voluntary basis that is in many ways reminiscent of how voluntary associations (sports, hobby, etc. societies) in general are organised. At least in the Nordic countries, voluntary associations embody a democratic ideal, where each member has in principle an equal

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[15]　Based on my own research in Turku, there are two main reasons for organisation from the viewpoint of the religious communities. These are the need to arrange religious education for children and the wish to provide a place for collective worship. Tuomas MARTIKAINEN, *Immigrant Religions in Local Society*. Historical and Contemporary perspective in the City of Turku, Diss., Åbo 2004.

[16]　Obviously there are differences in the organisational traditions and legislation in different countries, but it is not possible to go into detail on that matter in this article.

[17]　Ingvar SVANBERG / David WESTERLUND, Från invandrarreligion till blågul islam? 50 år av organiserad muslimsk närvaro [From Immigrant Religion to Blue-Yellow Islam? 50 Years of Organised Muslim Presence], in: Ingvar SVANBERG / David WESTERLUND (Eds.), *Blågul islam?* Muslimer i Sverige [Blue-Yellow Islam? Muslims in Sweden], Nora 1999, 9–29.

amount of influence. This feature again is alien to many religious traditions. Thus, it can be expected that traditional religious authority structures can be fundamentally challenged by migration.

Let us now take three examples to illustrate the point. First, the number of Muslim immigrants in Turku started to rise significantly in the early 1990s. In 1991, they were given a room for prayer at the International Meeting Point that is run by the Cultural Center of the City of Turku. After one year, the group was so large that the space was no longer suitable, and search for a new place started. The city found a place, but it needed a registered association to which it could then rent the place. An association was founded and the place was given to them[18]. Second, ethnic, cultural and religious groups can apply for a small financial aid and meeting places from local authorities, but in order to be able to do that they need to be legally recognised as associations or congregations. Hence, during the last 15 years many ethnic and religious communities have founded associations, so that they could gain these benefits[19]. The Cultural Center of Turku has in most cases functioned as a middleman in the process and helped immigrants' to found the organisations. Third, one local mosque community has created an organisational innovation that incorporates democratic principles into the running of the mosque while simultaneously keeping the final power in a few hands. They have a couple of annual meetings in which matters of the mosque are discussed publicly in a larger group of people that has also the power to select the board that takes care of everyday matters. However, official membership in the association is reserved for a small number of people, who in practice have all the power in their hands. This arrangement secures the association against ›coupes‹, but also ensures that the voices of the members are heard. These three examples illustrate some processes of structural adaptation that are taking place among local Muslims. Does the organisation process have any further implications?

Simultaneously with organisation the communities become subject to national legislation and authorities. The organisations are also expected to behave in the ways similar associations do, and this includes, for instance, registering members, democratic leadership and open financial policy. Obviously, these ideals are applied in different ways, just as they are in native associations, but nevertheless a fundamental change in the form of organisation has occurred that often lacks parallels in the country of origin. If an immigrant religious community wishes to function effectively in a new local context, as well as to gain public recognition and benefits associated with that, it needs to adapt to the local organisational structures. In this sense it is a one-way change. Matthias Koenig argues that these processes unfold differently in different types of societies. In *statist* or *corporatist states* (e.g., France, Germany and the Scandinavian countries) the incorporation of religious minorities is led by the state and on a national level, whereas in *liberal states* (e.g., Great Britain) the

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[18] Tuomas MARTIKAINEN, Muslim Groups in Turku, in: *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20,2 (2000) 329–345.

[19] Tuomas MARTIKAINEN, *Moniarvoinen Turku*. Käsikirja uskonnollisista, maailmankatsomuksellisista ja etnisistä yhteisöistä [Pluralistic Turku: A Handbook of Religious, Ethnic and Secular Communities], Åbo 1996.

incorporation happens more on the local level[20]. If this is the case, it can be expected that the above examples from Turku would be later followed by initiatives to form national Muslim alliances, which are already numerous for instance in Sweden[21] and Norway[22].

The form of immigrant religious organisations is, thus, usually taken over from the surrounding society, but the function of this is often somewhat different than is customary in the local organisational tradition. It is well known that most immigrants are not registered members of Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, etc. religious organisations, even if such exist. For example, there are ca. 30 local Muslim organisations in Finland, but they only represent a fraction of the national Muslim population[23]. Even many people who take part in their activities are not formal members. From the viewpoint of this article, it can be argued that while many immigrant religions adapt organisational models based on Christianity, the application of these models includes novel features. This means that immigrant religions do not just assimilate to the local environment, but rather use available resources in ways that they find suitable for their own needs. In this way the establishment of immigrant religions is always a creative process and it is not possible to predict its outcomes exactly. With regard to religious organisation and membership, based on observations in Turku, it can be noted that those people who are most familiar with a congregational or parish structure and the idea of membership, are also most prone to follow the model. For instance, in comparing the affiliation level of Christian and Muslim immigrants in Turku, the Christians are significantly more organised than Muslims.

From the viewpoint of religious organisation, it looks as if the local context is of great importance. That is not surprising, either, as it is the main environment in which the immigrants are involved and their communities can often significantly benefit from adapting certain structures from the surrounding society. However, already by now we have seen that not only the structural environment, but also local authorities have a key role in these developments. In another political climate the authorities could be equally repressive and thus hinder these processes. That is what Peggy Levitt refers to as she argued that many contemporary societies accept a significant degree of ethnic, cultural and religious pluralism and also, directly or indirectly, support it. Thus, contemporary multiculturalism policies do not just encourage religious pluralism, but they also, at least to some extent, are actively involved in creating it. With regard to the role of transnationalism to religious organisation, it appears that the local context is still more important.

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[20] Matthias KOENIG, The Public Incorporation of Muslim Migrants in Western Europe – a Comparative Perspective, a paper presented at the 8th International Metropolis Conference 2003.

[21] Ingvar SVANBERG / David WESTERLUND (Eds.), *Blågul islam?* Muslimer i Sverige [Blue-yellow Islam? Muslims in Sweden], Nora 1999.

[22] Kari VOGT, Islam i Norge, in: Knut A. JACOBSEN (Eds.), *Verdensreligioner i Norge* [World Religions in Norway], Oslo 2001, 130–168.

[23] Tuomas MARTIKAINEN, Muslims in Finland. Facts and Reflections, in: Nils G. HOLM (Ed.), *Islam and Christianity in School Religious Education*, Åbo 2000, 203–247.

4. Religious dialogue and structural adaptation

Dialogue between religions in its contemporary form is a rather new form of inter-religious activity. It has replaced the straightforward missionary approach to other religions at least among the liberal Protestant churches, but also attitudes in the Catholic Church have been modified towards more approving views[24]. While theologians appear to be more interested in the consequences of immigration and religious pluralism to the societal role of the Christian churches, there are other aspects that should be given attention in this context. Religious dialogue, for those who take part in it[25], bears a great potential of change, including the appreciation of other religions, growing self-reflexivity and adaptation of new forms of religious practice. Moreover, religious dialogue is also discussion about what is religion and what it means to be religious in a particular context.

Dialogue takes place on many levels. It can be found, for instance, in large inter-religious conferences, bilateral religious discussions or in local grassroots groups. For the current purpose, two cases of religious dialogue groups will serve as examples. They represent a local grassroots and a national theological group. When the immigrant presence in a local society starts to grow, including the presence of the religious other, it is not uncommon that local groups of inter-religious dialogue are formed. The Forum of Religions in Turku (*Turun uskontojen foorumi*) was founded in the year 2000 and it was the first permanent local initiative that brought people of different faith traditions together, including different branches of Christianity, Buddhism and Islam[26]. The group is part of the transnational United Religions Initiative[27]. In their meetings the participants have discussed different religious issues, presented their own religions and visited various shrines. In addition, they have organised a few public events on various topics. The aim of the initiative is to further mutual understanding in a local context. Another initiative is the national dialogue group of Lutheran theologians and Finnish Muslims. They have met twice a year for about a decade. The aim of this group is to enhance mutual understanding and to increase knowledge of each other on both sides. The meetings take place in varied settings, but always include a presentation of the meeting place (often a church or a mosque), a common meal and two lectures on a given topic followed by a discussion. A common feature to both of these initiatives is that they centre on discussions and presentations of religious ideas, thought and practice.

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[24] For a topical presentation of the theology of religions, see for instance Viggo MORTENSEN (ed.), *Theology and the Religions*. A Dialogue, Grand Rapids 2003.

[25] The following text concentrates on communities that conduct or are involved in religious dialogue, but we should not forget that there are many communities that disapprove or are not interested in conducting dialogue. This ›non-dialogue‹ is a very important feature of inter-religious relations, which is often bypassed too lightly on many texts of religious dialogue.

[26] Prior to that there had been a local ecumenical group working since the 1950s, but it included only Christian churches.

[27] According to its webpage, «the purpose of the United Religions Initiative is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings". For more information on the initiative, see *http://www.uri.org*.

From the viewpoint of immigrant religions, the specific feature of inter-religious dialogue is that it creates a platform for discussions on how to understand what ›religion‹ is in the new local context. Many of the participants in religious dialogue are members of religious organisations having a long history in the country in question and, thus, they can serve as ›model religions‹ for the newcomers. Through presentations of faith articles, religious rituals and other discussions those involved start to get a better grasp of what it means to be ›religious‹ in this new context. Similar processes also take place in public and in the religious communities themselves, where it often takes the form of questions, such as, ›what is religion?‹ and ›what is culture?‹. From the viewpoint of this article, much of the contemporary discussion about religion and culture is actually better understood as part of the process by which immigrant's traditional religious practices are changed to conform to the prevailing local understanding of ›religion‹. In the western institutionally differentiated societies the societal place of religion is often different from what it is in the countries of origin of the immigrants. Hence, for the current argument, it is essential to understand that whatever else ›religion‹ may be, it is at least a socially defined category and institution, which is understood in slightly different ways in different contexts. In the new context it becomes topical to ask what is specifically ›religious‹ and thus elementary, and what is ›cultural‹ and thus prone to change. In inter-religious dialogue the immigrant partners are both recognised as ›religious‹ and they also see models of how different ›religious‹ communities function.

If religious dialogue is understood also as a forum for discussion of the essence of ›religion‹ in a particular context, many of the developments taking place in this framework make more sense. Then the presentations of particular religious traditions and their beliefs become central as they provide a framework for reference to which individual participants compare their own religious activities. Visits to churches, mosques and other shrines emphasise the importance of specific places dedicated to religious practice. Through these actions all partners strengthen their view that, indeed, these are typical features of religion. From this viewpoint, religious dialogue can be an effective setting of structural adaptation for immigrant religions. The intention is here not to play down other aspects of religious dialogue, but rather to point out that on a structural level dialogue can play a central role.

5. Summary and discussion

The arrival and establishment of immigrant religions as a result of growing international migration triggers many processes of structural adaptation both among the local as well as the immigrant populations. It has been argued that both religious organisation and dialogue function as important vehicles of structural adaptation for immigrant religions to the changed local environment. Beside these are also other important features, including media representations of immigrant religions, but they were not in focus in here. The main triggers for adaptation are practical reasons and objectives of immigrants' religious communities, so that they could effectively function in the new local context. However, structural adaptation is not a straightforward process of assimilation, but rather a creative and innovative one, which

can lead to the formation of cultural innovations, based on established forms. This strengthens the view that the immigrant religions are not direct copies of respective activities in their homelands, but rather new social formations. Moreover, it is difficult to predict the exact outcome of this process, even if some general developments are visible. The recognition of this dynamic allows us to appreciate better the immigrant religious organisations as potential forces of even wider cultural significance. Migration is a transformative force that, besides altering local religious landscapes, leads to the birth of hybrid cultural forms that transform aspects of particular religious traditions.

The contemporary multicultural climate in which immigrant religions function also enhances possibilities for new kinds of cultural creativity. Multicultural policies are not neutral politics without consequences, but rather affirmative ones promoting cultural, ethnic and religious difference. Multiculturalism is also part of the late modern reflexive project, in which culture, ethnicity and religion are expected to become aspects of one's lives, not self-defining centres. Within this framework, religious dialogue and theology of religions are centred on self-reflexivity, where participants try to reach to a fundamental core of their own, while simultaneously accepting a pluralistic state of affairs. Multiculturalism expects recognition of difference, but also actively creates it.

The norm and model of religious organisation and religion in European societies is generally based on Christianity. Therefore it is expectable than many immigrant religious communities adapt forms that are reminiscent of Christian churches. However, as indicated in the article, it is often only selected aspects of the Christian religious model that are applied into practice among immigrant religions. It can still be expected that central new emphasis among immigrant religions include the formation of congregation-like structures with formalised membership as well as a growing emphasis on religious doctrine and ritual conformity. This might also explain part of the movement towards religious orthopraxy which is taking place, for instance, among immigrant Muslims. In the immigrant context different local traditions of a particular religion come into dialogue with each other as well with other religions. In this context religious leaders and others are forced to rethink their orientation towards their tradition. For some religion remains effectively bound to ethnicity while others try to find the core of these different traditions and elevate doctrinal matters to the forefront. Often western converts are central in these processes, as it appears that for them it is easier to accept an abstracted, doctrine-centred religious model than to embrace the ethnically defined religion.

The examples used in this article emphasised that the local context is still highly influential. However, it still remains open to investigation to which extent the local conditions are conditioned by transnational forces. As many migrant communities have active and lively relations with similar organisations in other countries, it could be asked to which extent these connections function as bridges of religious innovations and models. Further areas of interest with regard to the structural adaptation of immigrant religions could benefit from including more developments within Christian churches into the, hitherto, slightly one-sided interest in more alien religious traditions, such as Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.

Summary: The article discusses aspects of the structural adaptation of immigrant religions to a new local society. After highlighting the key features of contemporary international migrations, the author then emphasises the deeply local responses to migratory resettlement. Immigrant religions are not replicas of their homeland models, but rather new cultural formations that are deeply affected by the surrounding society. The contemporary policies of multiculturalism affirm difference and, thus, support the organisation of immigrant religions. Participation in religious dialogue provides further models of religious organisation and activity that enhance structural adaptation.

Zusammenfassung: Der Artikel behandelt Aspekte struktureller Anpassung von neuen »einge-wanderten Religionen« an eine veränderte Gesellschaft. Nachdem die Spezifika der jetzigen interna-tionalen Migrationsbewegungen aufgezeigt werden, betont der Autor die tief greifenden lokalen Antworten von migratonsbedingten Bevölkerungsveränderungen. »Eingewanderte Religionen« sind nicht einfach Kopien von den Modellen, die sich in deren Heimatland befinden, sondern vielmehr neue kulturelle Formierungen, die sehr stark von den neuen Umständen geprägt werden. Die gegenwärtige politische Linie in Sachen Multikulturalismus setzt auf Unterschiede und unterstützt daher religiöse Organisation und Aktivität, welche strukturelle Anpassungen fördern.

Sumario: El artículo trata de la acomodación estructural de la nuevas »religiones inmigradas« a una sociedad en proceso de cambio. Después de mostrar los rasgos específicos de los movimientos migratorios internacionales del momento, el autor presta atención a las respuestas locales de los cambios de población debidos a la migración. »Religiones inmigradas« no son copias de modelos del lugar de origen, sino más bien nuevas formas culturales influenciadas por las nuevas condiciones. La actual visión política del multiculturalismo acentúa las diferencias y apoya por tanto las organizaciones y actividades religiosas que conllevan adaptaciones estructurales.