Introduction:

Institutional Responses to Religious Diversity

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Research on political and societal responses to religious diversity has focused on supranational institutions¹, the nation state², the city³ or specific institutions⁴ as the main levels of analysis. The institutional level offers a particularly fruitful angle of analysis inasmuch as the challenges posed by religious diversity are often experienced most directly in concrete institutional settings such as the school, the hospital, the military barracks, the prison, or the workplace. Institutions are “systems of established and prevalent social rules that structure social interactions”⁵ and the organizational setting in which these interactions take place. Both are challenged by the accommodation of a growing religious diversity. Often, it is at the institutional level that the governance of religion takes place, whether by formal regulations or in an uncoordinated manner, as people in these institutions are faced with the need to find practical solutions to manage the everyday consequences of increased religious diversification. Moreover, institutions are also socializing agents. They have the power to shape the behaviour and judgments/worldviews of individuals through their own particular institutional cultures, traditions and long established patterns of action.⁶ In this special issue, we have placed institutions at the center of the analysis, focusing both on the factors that shape institutional responses, on the responses themselves, and on their consequences for individuals and society.

The range and type of institutions examined in this volume is wide. Christine Brunn and Andrea Rea focus primarily on national frameworks and governmental institutions. Whereas Brunn examines institutional factors guiding the formulation of public policies in the area of immigrant integration, Rea directs his attention to the impact of national institutions on the establishment of programs of leadership training for Imams. This approach is different from the one adopted by Wolfram Reiss and Julia Martínez-Ariño & Mar Griera, who chose to investigate specific organizations at the subnational level, namely the military, the

1 Koenig 2015.

2 Bramadat / Koenig 2008; Bader 2008; Koenig 2008.

3 Molendijk / Beaumont / Jedan 2010.

4 Michalowski 2015; Becci 2015; Stoeckl / Roy 2015b, a.

5 Hodgson 1998, p. 2.

6 Bowen et al. 2014.

hospital and the prison. This yields an interesting comparison between total institutions such as the military and the prison, and more open ones such as the hospital. Finally, Regina Polak takes an inner-institutional perspective and inquires into the ways in which the Catholic Church deals with the increasing diversification of the population.

Our aim with this special issue is to initiate a process of cross-institutional comparison. Most of the current research is cross-national, even when dealing with institutions (paradigmatically Brunn's contribution in this issue). But is it only national specificities that shape institutional responses to religious diversity, or are there particular logics to institutions as such that invite for comparison (as Martínez-Ariño & Mar Griera argue in their contribution)? In our introduction we try to tease out from the individual contributions in this issue the potential of cross-institutional comparison and to delineate some lines of analysis that are worth to be researched further.

Analyzing institutional responses: exogenous factors and institutional logics as drivers for change

Within the literature we find two broad views on the functioning of institutions: an exogenous and an endogenous view. While the first view understands institutions as a set of internally produced rules, the latter sees them as shaped by external frames and regulations.⁷ To understand institutional responses on religious diversity both perspectives need to be taken into consideration.

The contributions in this special issue allow us to identify a set of drivers influencing institutional behavior and a number of logics regarding their functioning in the face of religious diversity. Starting with an exogenous view, pressure for institutions to change in order to accommodate religious diversity comes from different sources. Many of the institutions dealt with here are state-institutions, and therefore committed to respecting *human rights* and to protecting both freedom of religion and freedom from religion. As the population in Western European countries diversifies – among other reasons because of the impact of migration, conversion and the rising number of non-believers –, institutions face pressure to adapt to the new conditions in order to guarantee the principle of equality and protect individual liberties.⁸

Another exogenous source of pressure can be identified in *dominant frames* that influence the debate on religious diversity on an international scale. As shown by different contributions in this issue (Rea in on the institution of leadership training; Martínez-Ariño & Griera on the avoidance of radicalization in

7 Aoki 2007, p. 15.

8 As described by Warner and Azmi (2012) for different institutional settings in Canada.

prisons), one such internationally dominant frame is the discourse of *securitization*. Securitization is invoked in particular vis-à-vis Islam and it determines the responses to religious diversity in many institutions.⁹

Also national dominant frames are an exogenous source of pressure. Institutions function within broader national contexts of diversity management that provide different incentives and possibilities for accommodation of religious claims. Multiculturalism in the United Kingdom or *laïcité* in France are only two commonly referred to *national normative narratives* which result in dramatically different opportunity structures for institutions.¹⁰ Suffice to think about the great difference between the level of information available to military structures in France or in Austria regarding the religious diversity of recruits: in France it is prohibited by law to ask members of the military for their religious affiliation, in Austria Muslim recruits are even asked to specify the degree of intensity of their religious belonging (see Reiss in this issue).¹¹ Moreover, national normative narratives provide powerful cultural schemas that influence the way actors interpret religious claims, how they act upon these claims, and how they justify their actions.¹² National context thus remains a strong driver for explaining the specificities of institutional responses to religious diversity.

In addition to these exogenous drivers, we can also point out a number of endogenous factors that shape responses to religious diversity on the ground. Institutions themselves function according to specific logics that determine how religious diversity is dealt with. One of the endogenous logics we find at work in most institutions is the *logic of problem solving* whereby institutions continuously adapt to “an uncertain and ever-changing environment”¹³. As institutional actors are most directly concerned with practical aspects of religious diversity that challenge prevailing settings, first responses are often very pragmatic reactions rather than pro-active actions (for example the response of the military to particular religious demands as described by Reiss in this issue). Equally, a logic of problem solving may guide institutional actions when religious diversity is perceived as a threat to the stability of the institutional setting – as the establishment of chaplaincy to avoid radicalization in prisons (Martínez-Ariño and Grier in this issue)¹⁴ or to alleviate psychological stress in the military (Reiss in this issue).¹⁵

9 Cesari 2009.

10 Stoeckl / Roy 2015a.

11 See also: Krainz 2015.

12 See for example the study by Bowen and Rohe (2014) on judicial framings of Islam in France and Germany.

13 Chisholm 1995, p. 452.

14 See also: Khosrokhavar 2015.

15 See also: Todd 2015.

A well-researched logic at work in institutions generally is the logic of *path-dependency*.¹⁶ Institutions tend to reproduce patterns that have been worked out in time. With regards to religious accommodation, the role of (formerly) dominant religious groups proves particularly relevant. Good examples are prisons and military chaplaincies that have been established in the context of largely mono-confessional societies.¹⁷ When this was introduced for other religious traditions, the setup of established Christian chaplaincy has been extended gradually.¹⁸

The logic of path-dependency may run into conflict with yet another logic that is at work in several institutional contexts, namely a logic of *economic management*. Costs of service are an important argument also in public institutions. The logic of costs of services related to guaranteeing equal access to religious counselling, for example, may run into conflict with established, path-dependent ways of diversity management. Reiss in this volume gives a good example of how the accommodative Austrian system of military chaplaincy is hitting an upper limit as newcomer religions are being integrated into the system, and that as a result services provided may be reduced for all religions, also the long-established ones.

One more logic we find at work across several institutions dealt with by the authors in this issue is institutional mentality¹⁹ or the logic of *self-identity*.²⁰ Diversity is always a direct challenge to self-identity and some institutions experience and address this challenge more than others. Regina Polak in this volume looks into how the Catholic Church, used to holding a majority status in many European countries, may be required to revisit its self-definition in specific local contexts due to greater diversity of the flock as well as vis-à-vis other religions. She also explains that the institutional response to diversity is not only a pragmatic ad-hoc response, but actually involves a long process of theological introspection. Her analysis of theological resources for the acceptance of diversity in the Catholic tradition demonstrates that normative frameworks are subject to change, even in a dogmatic institution like the Catholic Church, and that they are, in some respect, not so different from normative national frameworks. Brunn addresses the latter in her contribution to this issue and shows that integration policies and the self-definition of a state (as an immigration country or not) are directly related.

16 North 1990; Mahoney 2000; Tilly 2006; Pierson 2004.

17 Stoeckl / Roy 2015b; Settoul 2015.

18 On resistances to this extension, see: Becci 2015.

19 Streib 2007, p. 179.

20 Bertossi refers to this as “organizational normative self-understanding”, see: Bertossi 2014.

Figure 1: Factors impacting institutional responses to religious diversity

Exogenous	Human rights
	National narratives
	Dominant frames: securitization
Endogenous	Logic of problem solving
	Logic of path dependency
	Logic of economic management
	Institutional self-identity

The contributions in this special issue demonstrate both the relevance of exogenous influences and of inner-institutional logics. Rather than preferring a primarily exogenous or endogenous view on institutional change, we find that both perspectives are important for the analysis.

Comparing Institutional Responses: Convergence and Divergence

The interaction between exogenous drivers and endogenous logics also explains why we observe both converging and diverging tendencies in institutional responses to religious diversity. In the case-studies examined in this special issue, national normative narratives prove to be influential and quite stable and are the most important factor for explaining continued divergence. Human rights and dominant frames such as securitization, by contrast, operate as drivers of convergence between nation-states. The pressures of human rights and dominant frames determines when and where new institutional responses to religious diversity are required. The actual responses however, do not lose their dependence on national normative narratives (see Brunn in this issue), and they are furthermore determined by a series of endogenous factors or inner-institutional logics.

Endogenous factors can be both factors of convergence as well as factors of divergence. Whereas the principle logics of institutional change are similar across different institutions, the way they determine how an institution deals with religious diversity is institution-specific. The logic of problem-solving, for example, forces all institutions to introduce changes in response to religious diversity. Equally, all institutions reactions are coined by logics of institutional self-definition or path-dependencies. Often path-dependencies resemble each other and lead to similar outcomes, as for example the predominance of one religion in the past accounts for hierarchies and imbalances in the way many institutions deal with different confessions as they adapt to religious plurality. The particular self-

definition of an institution, however, is highly specific and may account for divergence among institutional responses to religious diversity. The comparison between the hospital and the prison by Martínez-Ariño and Griera in this issue amply demonstrates this point, showing that the hospital's self-definition as the domain of asepticism, science and rationality makes it more resistant to engaging directly with the patient's religious needs, whereas the prison's self-identity as the place of discipline and re-socialization makes it more permeable to religion.

Securitization as exogenous factor is also a driver of convergence in the institutional responses to religious diversity across Europe, albeit with an ambiguous effect. On the one hand securitization increases the importance of Islam and generates pressure for governments and institutions to deal with the issue of religious diversity in the first place. It thus works as a driver for change. On the other hand, given the fear of radicalization, the new policies adopted by institutions with regards to Islam reveal a wish to discipline and control. They also display a certain degree of arbitrariness, as institutions struggle to find a middle way between the pressures created by commitments to human rights on the one hand and the need to exert control on the other.²¹

Conclusion: Developing a New Research Agenda

By way of conclusion we want to point out a number of promising avenues for further research on institutional responses to religious diversity. We are particularly interested in the way in which change occurs and the effects of different factors on the type of response adopted. In particular, more research is needed on the differential *impact of top-down versus bottom-up pressures for change*. As the contributions in this issue have shown, stimulus for change may be top-down or bottom-up. It may come from demands of individuals or groups in interaction with institutional structures (e. g. Sikhs in the Austrian military, see Reiss in this issue), pro-active inner-institutional reflection (e. g. Viennese church communities, see Polak in this issue) or the governance of religious diversity by a superior authority (e. g. cooperation agreements for chaplaincy in Spain, see Martínez-Ariño & Griera in this issue). Depending on the incentives for change, institutional responses are likely to differ in scale and long-term implications. While top-down initiatives for change, such as governmental programs to establish representative Islamic councils (as the French Muslim Council, see Brunn in this issue), are likely to have more far-reaching consequences, inner institutional bottom-up developments might be more efficient and long-lasting, as they emerge out of concrete demands. In fact, the contributions to this issue show that often accommodation of religious diversity functions as a bottom-up process from the institutional to the

21 Stoeckl / Roy 2015a.

national policy level in the form of “demand induced changes”²². Within the boundaries set by path-dependencies, inner-institutional logics foster pragmatic solutions that are quicker and more flexible. These solutions can then be taken up by governments (as for example the gradual establishment of provisional or private Islamic educational programs in Belgium, see Rea in this issue). Whether bottom-up changes lead to changes in national policy or not, and whether they are more likely to lead to stable results, are topics that deserve more scholarly attention.

Further, more scholarly attention is also needed as to the role of *institutions as socializing agents*. Institutional change has an impact on all actors involved: the religious actors, the public officials and the addressees of new policies, for example religious inmates in prisons or believing soldiers. Religious groups have a vested interest to become involved in institutional processes. They adapt to institutional specifics and even tolerate interventions regarding their religious practices. As Reiss points out in this issue, such institutional demands may reach from the categorization of degrees of religiosity to the definition of certain characteristics to assess religious practice, even where such assessments are unfamiliar to the religious tradition itself. The contribution by Polak in this issue shows another form of intervention, whereby institutions generates pressure for certain religious actors to adapt to hegemonic views on minorities and adopt a preconceived subject position. She describes how foreign-language communities in the Austrian Catholic Church are relegated to the role of offering folkloristic performances, a role they end up accepting because no other involvement is granted by the super-ordinate structures. When and how religious groups adapt to institutional pressure to change, and when by contrast institutional pressure generates resistance and marginalization (or even radicalization), are topics that deserve to be explored further.

Overall, the contributions to this special issue show that there is a high awareness among institutional actors regarding their potential to act as socializing agents and most institutions under observation utilize this potential deliberately. Also the state has recognized the potential of institutions as socializing agents: the idea of institutional influence on the behavior of religious groups and individuals has proven to be a central motivation to improve chaplaincy in prisons, foster state-funded education of religious leaders or attempts to establish Muslim representation boards as privileged interlocutors.²³ Despite the current prominence of policies geared towards Muslims, this socializing function of institutions is by no means limited to Islam. In national contexts where large majority religions dominate, small religious groups are in particular dependent on institutional re-

22 Wegerich 2001, p. 12.

23 For an insider perspective on how institutions impact on Islam, see: Ajouaou / Bernts 2015; Hafiz 2015.

sponsiveness in order to subsist.²⁴ Here, more research is needed that compares different denominations and does not treat Islam as a case *sui generis*, but rather as a case that deserves to be compared and contextualized.²⁵

Institutions in Europe today are faced with a diversification that goes well beyond the mere (re-)appearance or increase in importance of Islam. Even though much of the political attention is turned towards this particular religion, when we look at the level of institutions it becomes clear that the issues faced by institutional actors in everyday life refer to a much wider phenomenon of diversification of society, involving established religions, new religions and non-religion – what Stephen Vertovec has termed *super-diversity*²⁶. For the time being, the examples gathered in the contributions for this special issue confirm that institutional change takes place mostly in response to particular religious groups. This lies within the logic of path-dependency of European systems of governance of religion, as provisions for religious accommodation across Europe historically concerned small religious minorities who were opposed by a mono-confessional majority. From the analysis provided in some contributions in this volume we can deduct, however, that this pragmatic “on-demand” approach to adapt religious diversity will become more and more difficult for institutions. While demands for more specified solutions – e.g. regarding chaplaincy – are to be expected, the fact that Western societies are now characterized by super-diversity indicates that institutions will be further challenged by an ever more diversified secular-religious landscape in the future. Understanding how institutions adapt to this context of ever-growing diversification will remain a key challenge for scholars of religion in the years to come.

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24 On other religious groups in prisons, see especially: Fabretti 2015.

25 Mourão Permoser 2014.

26 Vertovec 2007.

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