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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# RELIGIOUS WORLD-DENYING AND TRAJECTORIES OF ACTIVISM IN THE FIELD OF STRONGLY RELIGIOUS CORPORATIVE ACTORS

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**Abstract:** This comparative case study links together the scholarly discourses on religiously-motivated world-rejecting and religious activism. It provides empirical evidence for differentiation between four ideal-typed patterns of religious activism as they relate to different trajectories and spheres of religious world-denying in strongly religious movements: Pattern I (world conquerors) targets inner-worldly sphere of activism in the particular state, using the full scope of political tools to promote its religiously-fueled political agenda. Pattern II (world transformers) creatively combines inner-worldly and other-worldly spheres of activism, applying political strategies in the most advantageous political situations and primarily focusing on strategic missionary activism in "the world." Pattern III (world creators) utilizes different forms of civic engagement to re-create "the righteous world" on the congregational level, but also participates in missionary activities. Finally, pattern IV (world renouncers) renounces any inner-worldly forms of political or civic engagement as "sinful activity."

**Keywords:** activism, case study, field research, identity politics, fundamentalism, hierarchical conflict, movement, organization, religion, religious world-denying, salvation prophecy

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## 1. Introduction

This multiple case inquiry addresses the following question: What spheres and trajectories of activism do strongly religious actors tend to employ considering their mode of world-rejecting? Several empirical studies highlight the role of religiously-motivated world-rejecting as an important factor which regulates activities of religious movements and their followers. For example, Wilson and Janoski (1995) emphasize the role of positioning to “the [sinful] world” and the salience of religiosity in shaping the *direction of volunteering activities* in the religious field. Dependent on the positioning of religious actors to “the world” or rather to their organizational environment, Wilson and Janoski (1995) differentiate between “this-worldly denominations” and “other-worldly denominations” (ibid., 139). McRoberts (1999) argues that religiously-based activism can be regarded as a *strategy of organization-building* employed by religious actors and targeting different directions, such as “worldly activism” and “church-related activism.” According to McRoberts (1999), congregational demands, the character of religious teachings, and the degree of moral asceticism and spirituality determine whether religiously-based activism focuses on “worldly” affairs or spiritual concerns. A similar argument is developed by Uslaner (2002), who points out “the religious and secular worlds” of religious movements’ participation (ibid., 245). However, these studies do not explore to an appropriate extent tangible patterns of activism as dependent upon different patterns of positioning to “the sinful world,” which are endorsed by strongly religious actors. This contribution is aimed to bridge this theoretical gap: I connect this discourse on religious activism with established theoretical considerations on directions and patterns of conflictive world-adjusting in the field of strongly religious movements, particularly in Abrahamic religions. More precisely, I draw upon the studies on religiously-motivated world-denying by Weber (1963[1920]) and Almond, Appleby and Sivan (2003), who concisely analyze rationalization processes and patterns of argument for different modes of conflictive world-rejecting in the field of strongly religious movements. I explore how strongly religious corporative actors with different modes of world-rejecting involve themselves in different forms of activism and hierarchical conflicts with “the sinful world” (i.e., their organizational environment), in order to fulfill their religious commitments, to achieve their salvation, and to create a “holy and perfect social order of God.” Particularly, this study analyzes (a) how strongly religious actors express different conflictive modes of world-relating in practice, (b) what identity-motivated strategies they develop on the basis of this, and (c) what spheres of social and political participation they focus on in order to carry out their world-creating or rather their organization-building activities.

In the following, I clarify the research concepts and theoretical framework of this study (section “Theoretical Framework”): Firstly, I briefly present Weber’s “Theory of the Stages and Directions of the Religious Rejection of the World” (1963[1920]) as well as Almond’s et al. (2003) analysis of different modes of religious world-rejecting. Secondly, I explain their applicability to research on religiously-based activism. Drawing upon these insights I define this study’s research objective and the research object. Subsequently, I discuss methodological issues such as the research strategy, the sampling strategy, as well as methods of data collection and data

analysis (section “Methodology”). In the empirical part, I analyze the spheres of strongly religious actors’ activities as well as their identity-related strategies, applied on the basis of each group’s established pattern of world-relating (sections “Findings I and II”). Finally, the discussion of the research results will take into consideration the methodological and theoretical implications of this study (section “Conclusion”).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Weber’s “Theory of the Stages and Directions of the Religious Rejection of the World” (1963[1920]) and Almond’s, Appleby’s, and Sivan’s (2003) analysis of different modes of religious world-rejecting give comprehensive insights into the nature of social action and social relations in the field of fundamentalist religious movements<sup>1</sup>: Firstly, both studies emphasize that world-adjusting is significant to the development of specific identity politics employed by strongly religious actors. Secondly, both studies provide incontrovertible analytical evidence for parallels between fundamentalist and activist types of social action. In the following, I explain these two statements in detail (passage A and B) and specify how these considerations serve to fulfill the research objective of this study (passage C):

(A) *Religiously-motivated world-adjusting and identity politics*: Weber (1963[1920], 539) creates a comprehensive typology of religious virtuosos in salvation religions. In his theory, Weber focuses on hierarchical positioning of religious virtuosos to “the sinful world” or rather to their organizational environment. Weber’s special attention goes to the value conflicts of strongly religious actors with different value spheres of “the world” such as political, economic, intellectual, erotic and aesthetic value spheres (Schluchter 1988). Drawing upon this analysis, Weber identifies the following directions of world-adjusting or rather world-denying, i.e., asceticism and mysticism, as directions of the search for salvation, each with possible other-worldly and inner-worldly direction of world-denying. However, this theory does not provide sufficient analysis of specific identity-based strategies practiced by strongly religious actors (with a particular mode of world-denying) in order to establish “the holy social order of God” in the inner- or other-worldly spheres of their activities (Kippenberg 2008). Almond et al. (2003) develop a similar argument, without referring to Weber’s ideal types of religiously-motivated world-denying. These scholars focus on the identity-based relating processes underlying social action of strongly religious actors (ibid., 17 and 156) and distinguish the following patterns of world-relating: These are world-conquering, world-transforming, world-creating and world-renouncing. World

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<sup>1</sup> In the following, the notions “fundamentalism” and “strong religion” employed by Almond, Appleby, and Sivan (2003) and Weber’s term “religious virtuosity” (1963[1920]) will be used as synonyms (see more in Michel 2014). All these terms are understood to be “discernible patterns of religious militance by which self-styled ‘true believers’ attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community, and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviors” (Almond et al. 2003, 17).

conquerors and world transformers are oriented towards the inner-worldly direction while defining the field of their activities and fulfilling their organizational goals, which are understood as a “divine plan” of God for “his people.” In comparison with these two modes, world creators and world renouncers focus on the other-worldly direction to define their pursuit of personal salvation (ibid., 148). Both Weber (1963[1920]) and Almond et al. (2003) identify the category “the world” as the differentiating principle, which marks symbolic boundaries of strongly religious actors to their perceived organizational outside. Preserved in the teachings of the salvation religions (Orrù 1989[1954]), the reference to the category “the world” draws the line between the “holy” own and the “unholy” dissenting, creating the coercive structures for all non-conforming members and non-members of strongly religious movements (Almond et al. 2003). This self-positioning produces a *hierarchical conflict with the organizational environment* and is supported by several rationalization processes. The latter can be related to the ethos of brotherhood, to the exclusively defined concepts of “the purity” and “the salvation of the Redeemed.” They also can be determined by the discursively construed status of “the people chosen by God,” i.e., by the idea of “Covenant with God” with its “divine laws” and its “divine plan.” Every fundamentalist movement wrestles with its organizational outside, developing specific strategies in creating “the holy” social order in opposition to “the worldly orders.” Following these considerations, I use the term “inner-worldly,” when strongly religious actors strive to establish “the holy order” outside their organizational boundaries. When religious virtuosos reduce their organization-building activities to their organizations, I employ the term “other-worldly.” Both notions “inner-worldly” and “other-worldly” have to be understood as “ideal types,” which can rarely be found in their “pure” form in the real-life context (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2010, 328).

(B) *Fundamentalist and activist types of social action*: Weber’s (1963[1920]) and Almond et al.’s (2003) insights into identity politics of strongly religious actors in their relationship with “the world” are applicable to research on religiously-based activism for the following reason: Both fundamentalist and activist types of social action share several characteristics in their definitions<sup>2</sup>. In this passage I define central characteristics of the activist pattern of social action and detect its relationship with the notion “fundamentalism.” Martin (2007) defines activism as “action on behalf of a cause” (Martin 2007, 19): It is characterized by the *centrality of the actors’ commitment* and by the vigor and passion of this action. Martin suggests that activism can be social or political and can be expressed through different violent and nonviolent methods, such as public protest and persuasion, noncooperation, or intervention (ibid., 20-27). Mukherjee and Banet-Weiser (2012) emphasize the role of *conflictive scenarios* with typical semantics of *dominance, resistance, and moral virtue*, characterizing activism as a pattern of social action. For these scholars activism is marked by a *discrepancy between overall societal conditions and specific goals* of particular interest groups or individuals. Behrendt (1932) highlights the *psychological facet* of the phenomenon “activism,” defining it as a habituated psychological attitude and

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<sup>2</sup> Almond et al. (2003) frequently use the term “activism” in their study. However, they do not identify similarities between the fundamentalist and activist patterns of social action.

social positioning, characterized by the *detachment of the endorsed beliefs and values from personal goal-and-means-calculations* (Behrendt 1932, 11): It is based on an “effluence of an ideology” which postulates specific goals to be achieved for their own value, not for the satisfaction of personal needs (ibid., 12). Dealing with antagonistically-directed tendencies of domination, activists use the *symbolic power of (activist) myths*, postulating specific enemy-friend-relations and a “religion of ‘the great [or heroic] man’” (ibid., 161). These myths define the ambition to social expansion and / or creation of a “perfect” social order. What Behrendt (1932) describes as the activist type of social action corresponds to Max Weber’s *value-rational type of social action*, which is characterized by a “substantive type of rationality” and by the subordination of personal interests and other motives to some particular value system (Kalberg 1980, 1161). This type of rationality defines the fundamentalist type of social action too (Schluchter 1988). In both fundamentalist and activist types of social action, social actors are driven by an uncompromising commitment to some exclusive value system, which they juxtapose to their organizational environment as a genuinely different, “paradisiacal,” ideal social order, propagating its preponderance and the claim to its domination. In both types, social actors establish clear enemy-friend-relationships and symbolic boundaries with the organizational outside (Almond et al. 2003; Behrendt 1932). In both types of social action, actors are involved in hierarchical status relationships as well as power conflicts in a particular social space while negotiating the principles of the social order. In both types of social action they use different tactics to establish their self-positioning ranging from direct protest and persuasion to self-exclusion and boycotting. Finally, the aforementioned studies by Wilson and Janoski (1995), McRoberts (1999) and Uslaner (2002) provide clear evidence that world-creating activities employed by strongly religious actors inside and outside their organizational boundaries can be regarded as the activist pattern of social action<sup>3</sup>.

(C) *Research objective, research object and research units*: Relying upon this research on religiously-motivated world-rejecting in strongly religious movements, I aim to explore whether and how religiously-motivated modes of world-rejecting might interrelate with the choice of spheres and strategies employed by strongly religious corporative actors with different modes of world-rejecting. I define the research object [*Forschungsobjekt*] of this study as organizational discourses of strongly religious corporative actors with different modes of world-rejecting (i.e., word-conquering, world-transforming, world-creating and world-renouncing). The research units [*Forschungsgegenstand*] in each organizational discourse include (a) discursive reproduction of the category “the world,” (b) discursive reproduction of particular spheres of world-creating activities, and (c) discursive reproduction of strategies employed by religious virtuosos to fulfill their organizational goals of salvation and establishing “the ideal social order” (i.e., “Kingdom of God”) in a particular social space.

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<sup>3</sup> Although fundamentalist types of social action manifest several activist characteristics, the reverse does not apply.

### 3. Methodology

To fulfill this research objective I combine the following research strategies and methodological approaches:

(A) *Multiple case inquiry*: Following Yin (2009), I employ a multiple case inquiry as a research strategy. I define four organizational discourses in strongly religious organizations with different modes of world-rejecting as research cases and subsume the research units (see above) as embedded units of analysis. I focus on the institutionalized stock of organizational knowledge that semantically relates to the research object and research units. Similarly to Weber (1963[1920]), I analyzed such parts of the organizational knowledge that were authorized by organizational authorities as official guidelines for actors' practice and which manifested themselves in activities of organizational members during my research. Following Yin (2009), I carry out the analysis of the research cases on different levels: (a) The within-case analysis explores the structure of each research case with its embedded units of analysis; (b) in the between-case analysis researchers compare embedded units of analysis from different cases, and (c) the cross-case analysis characterizes similarities and differences of the cases as the whole.

(B) *Selection of research cases*: I use the selective sampling strategy referring to the *theoretical relevance of each particular case* as the major selection criterion (Kelle and Kluge 2010). The research cases were selected according to their suitability for different patterns of world-adjusting. The organizational discourses of the following four strongly religious organizations<sup>4</sup> represent these research cases in this study: These are (a) a small (mainly) Catholic political party "Christliche Mitte – für ein Deutschland nach GOTTES Geboten" with explicit right-wing orientation and calling for conditions close to theocracy (e.g., such as a holy person at the head of the German government) (i.e., world-conquering); (b) a community of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Germany, which is highly involved with the LDS headquarters in the U.S. and participates in the activities commissioned by the latter (i.e., world-transforming); (c) a community of ethnic German Mennonites from the former Soviet Union, which resettled back to Germany in the former century and cooperates in several contexts with domestic evangelical groups in terms of civic engagement (i.e., world-creating); and (d) a community of ethnic German Mennonites from the former Soviet Union, which resettled back to Germany and avoids any contact with "the world" outside their community (i.e., world-renouncing).

(C) *Methods of data collection and data analysis*: The following methods of data collection were applied to analyze the institutionalized stock of knowledge in the selected organizational discourses: These are collection of materials for religious education and missionary work and unstructured participant observation during meetings open to the public in some cases (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2010, 53)<sup>5</sup>. For validation purposes<sup>6</sup>, the findings were compared

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<sup>4</sup> To avoid groupism (Brubaker 2007), I stress the empirical diversity of the congregational and organizational expressions of these particular denominations (Hero, Krech, and Zander 2008).

<sup>5</sup> In some cases, I used results from the field research, carried out in small and large cities in Western Germany from 2008 until 2011.

with insights from scholarly literature on particular movements and organizations and from qualitative interviews, conducted with experts, members and ex-members in several research cases. The process of data collection and data analysis was guided by the guidelines of *Grounded Theory* in the version of Strauss (1998): (a) I employed the strategy of the theoretical sampling to explore the embedded units of analysis; (b) I referred to the principle of the theoretical saturation to define the scope of data collection and data analysis; and finally (c) I used the staged-process of data coding, deriving core-categories and sub-categories from the empirical data. According to the guidelines of openness in the coding process, I considered the possibility of additional influencing factors (e.g., contextual factors, specific structures of the organizational discourses etc.), insofar as they interrelated with embedded units of analysis. Since I do not develop a Formal Grounded Theory, as proposed by this methodology, I formulate the formal merit of this study referring to the methodology of the *ideal type reconstruction* in the version of Przeporski and Wohlrab-Sahr (2010, 328-332): I define each case's central meta-theoretical categories and theoretical dimensions, which are responsible for these cases' reproduction and transformation. I sum up the results detecting the type field of the analyzed processes. The generalization of this study's research results is possible on the level of the ideal types that reflect the *theoretical representativeness* of the research cases.

After the following within-case analysis (section "Findings I"), I bring the findings together in the between- and cross-case analysis: I generate the ideal types and the type field of religiously-based activism in the strongly religious field (section "Findings II").

#### 4. Findings I: Within-Case Analyses

In this section, I reconstruct research cases in line with the research question and analytical tools of Grounded Theory in the version of Strauss (1998). After a short description of the cases in terms of their contextual and socio-demographic characteristics, the analysis focuses on two aspects: These are (a) organizational goals of world-creating activities, articulated in the organizational discourses of strongly religious corporative actors in the process of relation-building with their particular organizational environment, and (b and c) spheres and strategies of the identity politics implemented to fulfill these organizational goals<sup>7</sup>.

##### *Research Case 1: World-Conquering*

The first research case is represented by the social movement and organization of the small political party (mainly) of strongly religious Catholics: "Christliche Mitte – für ein Deutschland nach GOTTES Geboten" (CM). The CM split from the Catholic "German Center-Party" (Deutsche Zentrumspartei) and has been registered as an independent party in the German Federal Elec-

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<sup>6</sup> Brühl and Buch (2006), Przeporski and Wohlrab-Sahr (2010).

<sup>7</sup> References reflecting the organizational discourses are listed in extra sections (e.g., "References for the research case 1").

tion Guide since August 27, 1988. It has a headquarters as well as regional offices in thirteen of Germany's federal states (Bundeswahlleiter 2011). According to its own estimation, the party counts approximately six thousand adherents nationwide (Höhne 2009). During my field research, I observed approximately 350 people actively participating in different political activities of this organization and movement. On all levels of its organization, including the headquarters and the regional offices, the CM manifested strongly-developed network structures, vigorously communicating and co-operating with other ultra-conservative and right-wing social movements across the religious and nonreligious spectrum<sup>8</sup>. This movement also has several sympathizers and supporters working or participating in different other Catholic organizations and social movements affiliated with the Roman-Catholic Church<sup>9</sup>. Alongside the autochthonous members, the party accommodates mainly strongly religious Catholics originating from Germany, Silesia, Poland, Romania, and other southern and central European countries<sup>10</sup>. The structure of the party's organization can be characterized as a network of like-minded people. The active members of the party participate in the administration of political activities and stick closely together. This strong flocking-together results from long-term personal comradeship, from experiences of self-alienation and social deprivation, and common positioning based on the social dominance orientation and ideologies of unequal worth<sup>11</sup>.

The organizational goals of this organization are exclusively *political, inner-worldly and directed mainly to the political structure in Germany*. This movement and organization is designed to give a voice to ultra-conservative, strongly religious people. Its exclusively-coined identity combines the religiously-based hierarchical conflict with "the sinful world" emphasizing an ideology of worldwide domination and the need for conditions close to theocracy in Germany. The semantics of the inner-worldly political and devotionally-religious motivations are closely interwoven in the organizational discourse: Political events (such as demonstrations or "Federal Party's Day") are "religionized" by means of concomitant masses, sermons, and "crusades," while religious meetings (such as masses and retreat days in private chapels and official churches) are politicized and filled with political issues which may or may not be related to religious affairs. Practically all the institutions of religious practice in this case are used in political terms or even transformed into political institutions. This politicized, religiously-based self-understanding is connected to the traditions of inner-worldly political activism, well-known in the history of different social movements which adhere to Catholicism (Rahner 1986). This pattern of relationship with the organizational environment can be exemplified by a passage from a sermon held

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<sup>8</sup> E.g., die Deutschen Konservativen e.V., Priesterbruderschaft St. Pius X, Bürgerbewegung Pro Köln e.V., and Freundeskreis UN e.V.

<sup>9</sup> E.g., das Fatima-Weltapostolat U.F.L. in Deutschland e.V.

<sup>10</sup> The proportion of people with a migration background in this small political party has never been calculated and recorded in the literature (Thielking 1999).

<sup>11</sup> The social dominance orientation and ideologies of unequal worth (see Heitmeyer 2008; Sidanius and Pratto 1999) target group-categories such as e.g., "the Muslims," "the Jews," "the homosexuals," "Freemasons," etc.

by the priest representing the leadership of this party in August 2009 in his private chapel, located in a private estate and frequented by the practitioners of the Tridentine Mass:

The congregation stands up and sings several verses from *Sursum corda* (353, 52, 285). Everyone sings about the power of God, about his guidance, our obedience and humble, as well as his support in our fight against the enemies. The priest opens the Gospel and reads aloud about the New Covenant, which was given to the people by God: 'This was not the 'Covenant of the Letter,' but a 'Covenant of the Spirit.' The 'Covenant of the Letter' brings death. In contrast, the 'Covenant of the Spirit' brings salvation. [...] Brothers and Sisters in Jesus! This is a special Sunday, because this was the day, when this chapel was inaugurated 25 years ago. [...] Jesus declared his love to all the people and put his whole love in their hearts. That is why every one of us should give his/her heart honestly to Jesus. We are living in times, when the Christian church experiences extreme growth. Only during the last fifty years the numbers of the Christians has tripled and counts many billions of people. Though, there are still fewer Catholics than Muslims. [...] In our times, there are many sectarians, who claim that they have found the way to salvation for human beings. This is not the truth though. [...] Only inside the Catholic Church one can achieve personal salvation. 'Catholus' means 'for the whole world,' i.e., worldwide. Catholicism has a mission and there are no true Catholics without missionary work. Hence, we are commanded to help those, who are amongst the robbers. We have to bring them in our community. The Church is the holy institution. There are four aspects, characterizing the nature of the church as the holy institution: unified, holy, apostolic, and catholic. The fact that the Catholic Church is holy can be proven by the apostolic succession, which is not present in Protestantism, but which has been preserved in the Catholic Church.' (See memory protocol from August 2009)<sup>12</sup>.

The notion of missionary work in this case is practiced by the party's members in a specific way: The mission is not understood as teaching the Gospel to "unknowing" people. Rather, *the meaning of religious mission is equated to political activism*, which encompasses the following strategies as employed by the organizational members in different federal states of Germany: These are (a) distribution of flyers, newspapers and books (e.g., against abortion or against the construction of mosques in Germany), (b) political lobbying in cities' administrations, (c) running as a political party in election campaigns, (d) demonstrations (i.e., "crusades"), and (e) publishing of monthly newspapers and party books, which are based on negative generalized attitudes towards "different others" (Michel 2014, forthcoming, 19-23) and which are spread amongst religious and nonreligious ultra-conservative and right-wing groups in Germany. The social roles of the party's leadership encompass religious and political facets too: For example, the priest, who provides spiritual guidance of the party's members, motivates believers to inner-worldly political actions, instructs them in current political affairs worldwide and in "appropriate" political attitudes, which "are ordained by God." See protocol from March 2009:

In March 2009, during the retreat day and during the masses in an official church in a large city in Germany, the organizational discourse was constructed in the following way: During the Tridentine Mass the priest opens the Gospel and reads aloud: 'Who is not with me, is against me!' He reads out of the Gospel

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<sup>12</sup> All passages from the interviews, and memory protocols presented in this article were initially recorded in German and were then translated into English.

passages, telling about the Devil, the rage of God, about God's punishment of those who turn away from God, about the divine plan of God for his people, and about the holiness of God's laws and commandments: 'There is no salvation for people who do not guide themselves by God's commandments. That is why Christians should give their voice in the forthcoming European Elections for a Europe in line with God's commandments, because it is the struggle between Good and Evil! We should be grateful that God chose us as his tools and let his will happen through us.' After the mass, all participants come together in the parish house, located approximately ten meters away from the church building. In the front part of the room there are two tables, put together like in a conference, followed by 15 rows of chairs in the middle of the room, and ending with tables on the wall, full of additional information (books, newspapers, flyers, CDs etc.). The priest draws the participants' attention to these tables with material, published and written by himself and 'well-informed members of the CM.' He explains that participants can find there material additional arguments which they can use in their local unions and communities to persuade people. They can also inform themselves about acute problems of the time, such as the invasion of Europe by Muslims, or the deterioration of families due to the 'sexualization' and secularization of society. This material will help them to strengthen their political positions. [...] The priest reports that the number of subscriptions to the monthly newspaper of the CM, 'Kurier der Christlichen Mitte,' has increased from 230 subscribers 20 years ago up to 17.000 subscribers this year (2009), owing to the help of active party members in the distribution of party materials. He says: 'The party has already collected approximately 4000 votes for the European Elections.' He asks the participants of the retreat day to support the party in the collection of the votes for the European Elections to anchor the European constitution in Christian values (See protocol from March 2009).

Introducing themselves as political actors the party's members consolidate their strength for individual and collective political actions nationwide and in their local communities, independent from the anticipated positive or negative outcomes of their activities. Although the party's real political achievements in Germany are rather modest (Hoyer 2001), its role in reproduction of the (religiously-fueled) ultra-conservative and right-wing oriented discourse in Germany should not be underestimated since it supplies other similarly-minded organizations with "additional arguments," offering their organizational ideologies of unequal worth as "the expertise"<sup>13</sup>.

Summing up the first within-case analysis, I identify the inner-worldly field of politics as the predominant sphere of religious activism in this strongly religious organization and movement: The party's members focus first and foremost on the political field in Germany (stand: 2008-2011), using different tools for individual and collective political actions nationwide and in their local contexts.

#### *Research Case 2: World-Transforming*

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<sup>13</sup> In some cases the ideologies of unequal worth were interwoven with conspiracy theories targeting different groups of population in Germany and worldwide. For example, one organizational member with an authoritative position reported on a complot of "the Jews" and "the Freemasons" against the tsarist regime in the pre-revolutionary Russia. The interviewee also developed other similarly-structured argumentation mainly related to the group-categories "the Jews" and "the Muslims."

This research case is represented by a community of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints located in Germany. According to the church-approved Encyclopedia of Mormonism, the membership of LDS Church communities in Germany counted approximately 38,100 people in 1991 (Ludlow 1992, 1756), and 7.76 million people worldwide (Heaton 1992, 1519; see also Michel 2014, forthcoming). This organization encompasses remarkable ethnic diversity, which can be explained by its extensive missionary work (Kleiminger and Krech 2005a). The organizational discourse is strongly determined by the headquarters in the U.S., which supervises all organizational structures, keeps “the purity” of organizational ideology under surveillance, and monitors all collective and partly individual actions of organizational members inside and outside of this organization. This monitoring is ensured by the multifarious control practices preserved in the organizational discourse<sup>14</sup>. The relationship with its organizational outside is structured by the organizational ideology of the Mainstream Mormonism, i.e., the Brighamite branch of Mormonism (Shields 2007), aimed to fulfill “the divine plan of God” for “his people.” This ideology frames the organizational goals and the choice of spheres and strategies for their attainment.

The organizational goals in this research case are framed by the official doctrine provided by the LDS headquarters in the U.S.: Church members should understand themselves as “Saints” and “missionaries” acting in the messianic time and being commissioned by God and his “holy” organization to *build Zion inside and outside of their communities* by means of peaceful, world-transforming mission and political lobbying (Mauss 1995, 11). Only by devoting their life to these organizational goals can church members expect to attain personal salvation and transformation into a “godlike” existence with the exclusive right to enjoy eternal life and to inhabit “the Kingdom of God” (Lyon 1992, 1249f.; LTJA 1979, 410). This “divine plan of God” with the goal of a *peaceful and gradual world-transformation via educational activities and political lobbying* defines the self-positioning of the community to its organizational environment: Church members are expected to preserve their spiritual purity, avoid bad influences of “the world,” and “work in the world” as “missionaries,” and “God’s servants,” teaching the Gospel to the “unknowing” people (LTJA 1979, 117). Church members are expected to strengthen the “divine order” of God inside their community and all over the world. In line with this formation of self-positioning and group-membership, the identity politics take both inner-worldly and other-worldly directions to ensure the world-transformation. Organizational members are required to engage in church-related activities and to build God’s Zion inside their “holy organization.” To this end, members are involved in *other-worldly, church-related activism*. Alongside the demanding program of regular community activities<sup>15</sup>, members of the church promote expanding and strategically-planned missionary work in both their country of origin and abroad<sup>16</sup>. The de-

<sup>14</sup> Perry, Bons, and Wilkins (1992).

<sup>15</sup> See Arrington and Bitton (1979).

<sup>16</sup> „DER HERR HAT UNS BEAUFTRAGT, ALLEN MENSCHEN DABEI ZU HELFEN, EIN AUERWÄHLTES VOLK ZU WERDEN [Translation into English: GOD HAS COMMISSIONED US, TO HELP TO ALL PEOPLE, TO BECOME THE CHOSEN PEOPLE].“ (LTJA 1979, 276).

liberate export politics of the Mormon identity (Mauss 1996) calls for the growth of the church and defines missionary work as a strategy to achieve this goal. This expanding *missionary activism targets the inner-worldly sphere*<sup>17</sup>. Finally, church members are mandated to “be ready” for *occasional political activism “at the right time”* too: Instructed to follow the call of the President of the church at any moment, they are supposed to “come out” with their political attitudes in the politically advantageous situations. The instruction in conformity to the political systems of other countries does not interfere with the rule of loyalty to the superior law of God and his “holy organization,” which retains its priority. The church administration thoroughly calculates the potential success of collective actions, keeps all church members mobilized, and activates particular communities for political activism selectively, i.e., only in the most promising situations with advantageous power relations. When the power relations in a particular social space afford it, occasional political activism is well conceivable: For example, in 2008 the church members campaigned for “Proposition 8,” a California ballot initiative constitutionally defining “Same-Sex Marriages” as invalid (Gaines and James 2010). A similar strategy is applied in other areas: For example, if countries forbid missionary activities, the LDS Church has established education centers, which are not precluded from later becoming places of religious worship (Toone 2010):

PROVO, Utah — [...] Victor L. Ludlow [...] was lecturing on ‘The Prophetic Perspectives and Prophecies About the Middle East.’ The Thursday afternoon class, which took place on an upper floor the Wilkinson Student Center, was part of BYU Education Week. Ludlow centered his remarks around four basic prophecies found in the standard works: 1. Missionary work in region and/or among Muslims and Jews[;] 2. A temple in Jerusalem[;] 3. Two prophets to the Jewish nation[;] 4. Armageddon (two armies of armies against Israel)[.] Each prophecy was followed by a number of scriptural references. Missionary work was the topic where Ludlow spent most of his time. The Middle East, Mainland China, India, parts of south and Southeast Asia and parts of Africa are among the places where missionaries are not currently permitted, Ludlow said. When the gospel be taken to these places? ‘Someday, probably during the millennium,’ is a common response, he said. The former German missionary and mission president used to think the gospel would never penetrate the durable Berlin Wall, but it did. ‘Miracles happen,’ Ludlow said. ‘The Lord loves all of his children and he is preparing the way. He has different ways of preparing them.’ Ludlow, who spent time serving at BYU’s Jerusalem Center, described how there are strict instructions against sharing the gospel in the Holy Land, something that is hard for a former missionary and mission president, but the church is slowly building a strong relationship of trust with the local government in hopes of someday opening doors of opportunity. He also encouraged those present to do missionary work with Muslims and Jews living in the United States and not wait until the door opens over there. [...] The BYU professor shared a story about the opposition that came when the church was building its Jerusalem Center. [...] Regarding temples, Ludlow dispelled a myth that the church would convert the Jerusalem Center into a temple. ‘It was not planned or designed to be converted into a temple. It’s absolutely and categorically false. It was never on the agenda. But that doesn’t mean it couldn’t happen,’ Ludlow said sparking laughter (Toone 2010, n.a.).

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<sup>17</sup> The number of full-time missionaries of the LDS Church came to 52,060 people during the year 2005 (Watson 2006).

To summarize the second within-case analysis, three directions of religiously-based activism were extracted from the data: (a) Other-worldly church-related activism is directed towards the service in the “community of the Saints” and aims to strengthen community structures and reinforce religious habitués. (b) Inner-worldly missionary activism is directed towards the organizational environment locally and abroad and seeks to recruit new followers and to promote the growth of the organization via educational activities. (c) Inner-worldly political activism with occasional campaigning and political lobbying can emerge under the supervision of the organizational administration, if there are advantageous power relations in a specific social space.

### *Research Case 3: World-Creating*

This research case is represented by a community of ethnic German Mennonites, resettled back to Germany from the former republics of the Soviet Union in the last century. It is located in a large city in Germany and has more than 130 actively participating organizational members. The community integrates three generations of families with the so-called “migration background.” Members’ self-understanding is traced back to the turbulent immigration history of their ancestors and to their own immigration experiences: (a) Firstly, during the Protestant Reformation in Europe, when some Protestants from Germany migrated to the tsarist Russia under the reign of Catherine the Great; (b) secondly, during the Second World War in the former Soviet Union, when these people were displaced on suspicion of the alleged collaboration with the Nazi regime; and finally, (c) several decades ago, when they came back to their historical homeland, Germany, following the call of the German government. This history of persecution, scattering, displacement, and immigration is preserved in the collective and communicative memory of this bigger religious movement<sup>18</sup>. It frames this case’s symbolic and organizational boundaries (Kleiminger and Krech 2005b), which are discursively based on multiple estrangement processes. The latter are induced by the community members themselves and by others due to different socialization (in the former republics of the Soviet Union) and due to the strongly religious habitués. These experiences define the challenging social betwixt-and-between-position and a strong sense of ethnic identity with strong feelings of otherness, even in the second and third generations. This specific ethnic self-awareness and a strongly religious sentiment shape the relationship of the faithful with their organizational outside, i.e., “the world” (Deisel and Froese 1995). Associations of believers of this movement strive to build their church and community in an ecclesiastic way, according solely to the instruction of the Bible, as it is traditionally-determined and biblically-rationalized. In the current research case, this particular form of organization shapes the organizational discourse too (Jecker 2001): Members define themselves as a Mennonite church and organize themselves as an independent community with a community counsel (including a community leader, pastors, deacons, a cashier, and

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<sup>18</sup> Researchers highlight organizational and ideological diversity of the churches that associate themselves with Menno Simons, both in Germany (Kleiminger and Krech 2005a) and worldwide (Lichdi 2004).

a secretary) and a community assembly (comprising all quorate, adult community members)<sup>19</sup>. Like in the second research case, several control institutions ensure the homogeneity of the organizational discourse (Hoover 2006).

This community finds itself in its (routine) everyday life and fulfills its ordinary, ideologically-based organizational goals by developing its specific pattern of relationship with “the world,” i.e., *other-worldly creation*. This dominant type of positioning towards the organizational environment can be characterized by the strong opposition to the category “the sinful world” and by the “religious integralism” (Bielefeldt 1998, 475-477). The following quote from Francis A. Schaeffer’s book “The God Who is There” (which a member of this community gave me upon my request to learn more about the body of thought) characterizes this relationship to “the world” in this community:

No, Christianity is realistic and says that the world is characterized as evil and human beings are guilty through and through<sup>20</sup> (Schaeffer 1991, 49).

The representations of Jesus as the “King of Israel” and of the whole world (John 12:12-26) and as the only possible “gate” to salvation (John 10:9) are the central principles of the organization-building. The community’s exclusive self-definition and the history of migration provide the basis for the specific ethno-religious formation of the group-membership which legitimizes several strategies of identity politics employed in the community life: The self-definition as a morally-superior opposition to the organizational environment is expressed in *church-related and congregational*<sup>21</sup> activism with strong mental bonding to the community and cautious behavior towards non-members of the organization. Similarly to the second research case, members participate in community-related activities (targeting different religious, social, health-related, ethical, aesthetic, and community building needs) for ten hours per week or more. In collaboration with other (Mennonite) evangelical communities, the Elders of this community

<sup>19</sup> Although the “community assembly” as an institution provides the basis for “democratic-like” decision-making within the community organization, the authority of organizational positions such as “pastor” or “community leader” can play a crucial role in the mediation of intra-organizational conflicts and in cases of “non-conform” behavior of individual community members (for example, in case of a premarital relationship with non-members of this religious movement). The judgment of the Council of Elders carries a lot of weight. The possible exclusion of “non-conforming” community members is preceded by the formalized procedures of “surveillance through the whole community” and “praxis of judgment,” against which no one can appeal. The excluded receives a “certificate of qualification,” which characterizes the spiritual and religious “change” of the excluded from the viewpoint of the particular community and the Council of Elders (Vereinsregister 2010, interviews with members and ex-members of the community from December 2009 and February 2010). The exclusion from the community can mean the loss of the whole network and, possibly, the family.

<sup>20</sup> Translated from the German: „Nein, das Christentum ist realistisch und sagt, daß die Welt vom Bösen gekennzeichnet und der Mensch auf der ganzen Linie schuldig ist.“ (Schaeffer 1991, 49).

<sup>21</sup> See Swatos (1998).

organize educational workshops on topics such as “Christian marriage” or “Ethics.” In addition to this church-related activism, the congregational activism of this community encompasses the so-called colony-building activities (Oberpenning 2002): For example, members of this movement establish Christian schools to provide general education for their children. They also support each other in the construction of private houses for community members. In contrast to the church-related activism, the congregational activism encompasses activities related to the whole settlement in the particular social space. This congregational activism can be explained in part by the tradition of colony-building, which emerged during the history of multiple resettlements and migration of Menno Simons’ adherents. However, there are also the religious functionalized self-definitions as “(co-)workers of God” and the opposition to “the sinful world” with the typical fusion of different social spheres under the label “community,” which are used to initiate congregational activism in this case. Alongside the congregational activism, community members can be involved in *missionary activism* too<sup>22</sup>. This type of activism includes the distribution of “the word of God” (locally and abroad) in combination with activities such as community-building and humanitarian service: These activities aim to support new communities with religious education material and basic tools as well as to establish shelters for homeless children. Mental and spiritual support of people who are poorly integrated into German society or going through a life crisis constitutes another type of missionary activities: This type of mission is conducted with the purpose of integrating these people into the community. In order to attract new members to the community from the autochthonous population, members primarily refer to themselves as a “Community of Christ” [Christusgemeinde] and not as a “Mennonite Community.” Several initiatives with autochthonous evangelicals have been launched in the past decades<sup>23</sup>. This distinguishes this type of missionary activism from the political mission of world conquerors or expanding strategic missionary activities of world transformers, which is expressed among other things in political lobbying. The following portion of an interview with a community member illustrates some of this community’s missionary activity:

P.: For example, if we take statistics on infantile bonding: Researchers say that 30% of infants do not enjoy stable bonding at all. For the development of a society, this is catastrophic. We raise such topics strategically here and encourage our community’s members to break through this vicious circle, bringing our ideals of stable family life unspectacularly into society, where this is possible. This means that we try to go outside of our communities because we are not here to be a homogeneous group, which sees only itself, even if there are such tendencies. We say this is important to us, but we are here for our environment, and it does not matter whether they are Christians or not. We say that Christ is our center, and we are on our way to him AND to people. We are on our way to each other. We are in the world to help others and not to satisfy ourselves. We also call it ‘serving’ and we love doing it, especially for families. We make sure that we do not shut out people, who have problems or who are considered ‘difficult.’ My son is such a person, who always keeps an eye on people, their feelings, and their possible difficult situations. He

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<sup>22</sup> It is conceivable that cooperation of this community with missionary-oriented autochthonous evangelicals could support the development of this activism trajectory in this particular research case.

<sup>23</sup> See Jugend für Christus Deutschland e.V., ERF Medien e.V.

also offers a real relationship, which is very rare in our society. There are actually no stable relationships among people now. He also looks after particular people with difficulties [who are not in a community], talks with him/her about life, existence, and God, and provides contacts to Christian communities, so that the person can stick with them in difficult situations (See the interview from December 2009).

During my field research (stand: 2008-2011) I did not observe any collectively-conducted political activities in the community. However, some individual community members can engage politically, and the organizational structure of this religious movement can be used to influence specific political consciousness or voting behavior. The following passage from a memory protocol of a Sunday's Sacrament meeting recorded in February 2010 shows the possibility of political references in combination with general world-rejecting and the rather strong semantics of the "struggle in the name of God." It must be noted that this speaker is not a regular member of this community and actually represents evangelical street workers from the project "The Buzz" of the association "Jugend für Christus Deutschland e.V.". Although this example does not imply any collective, religiously-fueled political behavior, it shows the generalized dramatization of the social and political spheres as well as the requirement of an "authentic Christian behavior" in dealing with social problems and societal developments:

The preacher standing in front of the whole community charismatically dominates the stage. He addresses the community's members with much feeling, passion, and self-confidence: 'As you can judge from my dialect, I come from the South of Germany. I was trained as a preacher in Switzerland, in the best school of the word. When I received the topic for today's sermon 'Being done with the world' [German: 'Fertig mit der Welt'], I immediately thought that both 'being done' and 'the world' can be interpreted in different ways. In my pastoral duties, I sometimes meet people who feel exhausted and done with 'the world.' In situations of suffering and hardship, I always recall the prophet Elijah from the Old Testament, who fought for God very hard. He even had to kill other people in His name. In the end, he was done with his life and went into the desert. He suffered greatly and in the silence he found the way back to God and to himself. Yes. One should fight like Elijah in his life. Even if it means that one would lose one's head in this struggle. In our time, we have so many young people who are done with their lives, without having lived them. They waste their lives for alcohol and iPods. That is why the work with youth is so important and must be supported. In the place where I live, some people say about me that I am right-wing oriented or other bad things. But it is not true. I just want the young people to have their future and to show them the way, which would strengthen them in their lives, that is the way with God. With God one can cope with anything and can find trust and hope. I am not a politician, but if I look at our politicians, I have to ask whether they throw their worries on God, whether they address God in problem solving.' (See memory protocol from February 2010).

I summarize the findings of the third within-case analysis: Organizational goals and identity politics as well as spheres and strategies of their implementation produce a specific trajectory of religiously-fueled activism in the case of world creators. Church-related and congregational activism provides the basis for other-worldly creation. The tendencies to a partial inner-worldly transformation expressed in missionary activism might result from cooperation with autochthonous evangelical groups: This pattern of activism targets resolution of social problems

through “the word of God” and includes charitable activities, both locally and abroad. Although separate cases of religiously-fueled political engagement on the individual level cannot be excluded, this community does not define itself in political terms and is not involved in collective political activism or strategically employed political lobbying on the community level.

*Research Case 4: World-Renouncing*

The last research case with other-worldly renouncing as the ideal type of relationship with “the world” is also represented by a community of ethnic German Mennonite immigrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union. This community encompasses families of three or four generations. Establishing contact with this research case for scholarly purpose was very challenging, which underscores that other-worldliness is the main characteristic of their organizational discourse (Diekmann 2004). Located in a small, rural town in Germany, members do not seek interaction with the townspeople and are not eager to let others inside their organizational structures. The following passage from the memory protocol from March 2009 illustrates the structure of the symbolic boundaries to the organizational outside and their roots in the idea of “other-worldliness:”

I come to the community’s building at 11.00 p.m. as agreed with the Elder. On a sign in front of the building the word ‘Bethaus’ (house of prayer) is written. It is a big house with massive walls. The front doors of the house are closed. I notice that an elderly couple is coming out of the building using a side door. They get into their car and leave. I make my way to the side door and walk in: The building is astonishingly cold and spacious inside. I have an odd feeling because it seems that no one is expecting me despite the arranged appointment. There are several doors and corridors in the building, but no signs on any of the doors. An elderly woman happens to pass me without paying any attention to my presence. Her gaze is focused in the direction she is going. [...] I address her with the question: ‘Excuse me, may I ask you something? How can I find the Elder C.? I have an appointment with him.’ The elderly woman takes out the headset, greets me, and points to a door in the wall. There is no sign on it. I thank her and knock on the door. An elderly man opens it and lets me in. We greet each other. I introduce myself and tell him about the arranged appointment with the Elder C. The elderly man says that the Elder is not there, but I can ask him everything and he would forward my concerns to the Elder C. He invites me into another room. I follow him. The room is spacious and there is no furniture, except for several chairs and a table with a phone on it. He asks me whether I am from the newspaper. I tell him that I am from the university, where I am working on my project. He asks me where I am from originally. I tell him the place of my birth in Russia. He says: ‘Yes, many were banished there too.’ I nod and ask him where he is from. He says that he came to Germany from Kazakhstan in his thirties with his family. The man talks very slowly, looking at the floor for most of our conversation. At some point he looks at my skirt, which is ‘only’ knee-length, for a long time. Then he asks me why I contacted this community in particular. I explain that a friend of mine gave me the phone number of the Elder C. and said that I should mention him when contacting the Elder C.; if no one knows you, it is otherwise difficult to get in touch. The elderly man nods. Then he asks whether I believe in God. I answer that I am baptized in the Russian-Orthodox church and that my family is religious. At home I frequently attended church. But since we had moved to V. for my studies, I could not find another religious community, but I always go to mass. He says: ‘Buy the Bible and live by its guidance! Life is not over at the end of earthly life. Prepare for it right away!’ I nod and thank him for his advice (though I feel odd in this situation because I have the feeling that he does not accept my answer for one reason or

another). He adds: 'I mean it well, when I say it to you, because we cannot know whether we meet each other again.' I nod and thank him again, though I have an odd feeling. Then he tells me about a scholar who wanted to do research on Egypt. This researcher had to read the Holy Scriptures for this purpose. After he had read them, he got baptized and converted. After that the researcher said: I wanted to do research on Egypt and found Jesus instead. The elderly man addresses me again: 'Read the Bible with sincere trust in God.' I thank him again. Then he asks me whether I am married and whether I have children. I nod and say that we are planning to have children one day. He looks up at me and says: "Human beings cannot plan children. God gives children to them.' I nod and thank him again. The elderly man remains silent for a while. I ask him how I can reach the Elder C. so that I can introduce myself and my project. The elderly man remains silent. I ask him if he could let the Elder C. know that I was here today and if he could ask the Elder C. to call me back. The elderly man nods. On a piece of paper, I write down my phone number, my name, my university status, and the purpose of my research. I give it to the elderly man and ask whether I may come to the church on Sunday. I could then address the Elder C. after the Sunday meeting. The elderly man explains: 'The Sunday meeting is open to everyone. But you are not allowed to visit other community meetings because you are not the member of our community. The Elder C. often has appointments after the Sunday meeting, so it will be difficult to get in touch with him. Try to call the Elder C. at this number.' He writes down a phone number on a piece of paper and gives it to me. I nod and thank him again. We say goodbye to each other, and I find my way out of the building. The Elder C. never calls me back and I do not manage to reach him under the new phone number either (See memory protocol from March 2009).

The organizational discourse is determined by the institutionalized concepts of "other-worldliness" and "the Kingdom of God" inside the community's structure; by the anticipation of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ on Earth; by the institutions such as "guilt," "blame," community-restricted "obedience," and "loyalty;" by an ethos of brotherhood; as well as fear of "the worldly," "the sinful," and outsiders in general. It is also determined by conformity to the organizational ideology, control of one's own thoughts, and by obedience to the strict authority of the Elders. The passage from the following conversation with an elderly woman (about 65-70 years old) illustrates this. This conversation took place on a train on my way home after my attempt to get in touch with the Elder C. in the abovementioned small-sized town. I was wearing a long skirt and was waiting for the train when this elderly woman approached me and asked me: "Are you also a sister?" Evidently, my clothing style served as an identity marker, which led to the following conversation during our trip:

The elderly woman says that what's most important is the trust in God. This is the only way one has a chance for salvation. She says: 'We are already citizens in the Kingdom of God!' When her mother died, she was six years old, alone, and poor. But God gave her a good husband and three lovely children. One cannot manage life without God. God hears our thoughts. Sometimes she thinks of something, and God sends it to her immediately. That is why one should trust in God and live in line with God's guidance. If one is with God, nothing is against them and one should not fear anything. The woman says that when one is by God, the God safes one automatically. Once she had to go by train. An Armenian, a Turk, was sitting in front of her (my thoughts during the conversation: It was actually one person because she uses the verb "to be" in the third person singular 'is' throughout the conversation). She prayed the whole time and was afraid because of her luggage. She had a bag and a suitcase. She also told him about God and he did not do her any harm. That is why one should not be afraid of anything if one is with God. God is very patient with

human beings. She says: 'People are sinful, wear short skirts, and drink alcohol. But, although human beings are sinful, they are still alive because God is very merciful. When God is back on Earth, everything will change.' (Her face lit up when she said that). One should trust in God: 'Trust, OBEDIENCE, and LOYALTY – these are the most important things!' (She stresses these words) She says that she loves the youth at the church. She says: 'They are so nice and merciful. Really def people! TRUE Christians!' After that she corrects herself: 'No, the word 'def' is a bad word. Only street boys are 'def.' God can hear my thoughts. I should not think such words.' One should trust in God. When he is back on Earth, everything will change – she repeats again (Her face lights up again). She tells me that she enjoys going to the church because people there are so merciful and the Elders mean well, even if they have to be strict. She then says: The Elder C. is very strict, but he knows why he has to be strict. People are so sinful. That is why he has to be strict. She especially enjoys singing in the church. She does not miss any meeting. On Mondays, she usually visits a friend in the next village, but she is always back on Wednesdays afternoon to make it to the Wednesday meeting on time. She opens her bag to show me two skirts. She says: 'I am a dressmaker. And I made these skirts myself. Both are for the church. One skirt is for Sunday meetings; the other skirt is also for the church.' Throughout our whole conversation her bag remains open (my thoughts during the conversation: This woman told me many personal details and opened her bag to show me her skirts without really knowing me. She evidently relied on my appearance, which made her identify me as in-group. I compare this situation to that, when she was travelling with a person she denoted as 'An Armenian, a Turk.' She prayed the whole time to combat her fears in that situation where she identified her fellow traveler as out-group) (See memory protocol from March 2009).

The strict other-worldly orientation and its anchoring in the organizational goals determine the identity politics and spheres for the activist pattern of social action: The *renouncement of "the worldly" for the sake of personal salvation and the avoidance of personal contact with non-members* are the dominant strategies. Representatives of local institutions (schools, newspapers, and the city administration) who were interviewed expressed concern about the challenges that occur in a local space when dealing with an organization with such self-excluding tendencies<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> This is illustrated in the following passage from a conversation with a school teacher: "The problem we could see with religious students from Mennonite families was that they practically had to live in two worlds. [...] The worst was certainly the pressure, these children were under. They were practically torn between two worlds and many of them really suffered. Several families did not even want to send their children to our school, although our school has a Christian sponsor. We even had to invite the Elders and to conduct theological debates concerning education using the Bible. [...] Now, two new general education schools were built by these Mennonite communities in this area, so that we do not have children from these families in our school anymore. Practically, we never see people from these communities. They do not come to the town's celebrations and do not really invite us to their own activities in the community. I visited the community for Sunday meetings several times some years ago, just to learn more about them and their religion, but no personal contact developed out of it. Honestly, I can accept that, but I cannot adopt this way of life. In several communities one can really see tendencies of fundamentalism and sectarian structures. Though, I think, there are often bigger conflicts and schisms among Mennonites themselves than between the communities and the outside. We even had cases where an Elder from one community did not tolerate an Elder from another community to the extent that we could not get them to sit at the same table here at school" (See memory protocol from March 2009).

To summarize the findings from the forth within-case analysis, I introduce a community with other-worldly renouncement as the ideal type of relationship with the organizational environment. I identify church-related activism as the dominant and, in fact, the only mode of ideologically-based volunteering for the sake of “the holy” social order. Following the logic of this activist trajectory, organizational members engage in church-related activities which can be characterized by an uncompromising personal commitment to a religiously-defined exclusive value system, and strong subordination to organizational authorities, who define “the holy order of God” in this community. However, these activities remain invisible to outsiders since they are restricted to “the building of Zion” inside the “enclave.”

## **5. Findings II: Between- and Cross-Case Analysis**

By referring to the within-case analyses I showed how different patterns of world-rejecting interrelate with identity politics, as expressed in particular organizational goals, specific spheres and strategies of religious activism. In all research cases the goals of the organizations determined the activist trajectories of social action, which the organizations framed in terms of the targeted spheres of believers’ activities and the range of their influence. Notably, the understanding of mission and missionary work is determined by the organizational goals and identity politics in every analyzed case too: For example, when world conquerors target in their mission the political issues and the political structure of the particular society; world creators stress the importance of the congregational mission, and world renouncers attribute the church-related issues to the missionary activities. In all research cases the category “the world,” the semantics of world-rejecting, and the related patterns of tension with the organizational environment remain crucial factors for *variations in organizational goals and employed identity politics* with specific spheres and strategies of their implementation. I identify the following trajectories of world-creating activities in the field of strongly religious corporative actors: These are (a) inner-worldly conquering via political activism, (b) inner-worldly transforming via educational activities and occasional political activism, (c) other-worldly creation via congregational and church-related activism, and finally, (d) other-worldly renouncement with church-related activism. Inner-worldly conquering and other-worldly renouncement tend to focus on one predominant sphere of organization-building activities on the organizational level (targeting either the inner-worldly or the other-worldly spheres); while inner-worldly transforming and other-worldly creating tend to combine both spheres of activities, emphasizing one of them as the dominant modus of orientation. In the following, I summarize the findings referring to the methodology of the ideal type reconstruction in the version of Przeporski and Wohlrab-Sahr (2010, 328-332). While the inner-worldly and other-worldly spheres of religious activism are defined as the meta-theoretical categories and while specific strategies of religious activism are framed as theoretical dimensions (Przybosrki and Wohrab-Sahr 2010), I distinguish the following ideal-typed trajectories of religiously-fueled activism in strongly religious movements and organizations with different modes of world-rejecting (see Table 1):

Table 1 - *Ideal-typed trajectories of religious activism as interrelated with different modes of world-rejecting in strongly religious movements*

Research cases with different modes of world-rejecting	Dominant strategies of identity politics and directions of religiously-based activism implemented in line with organizational goals	
	Inner-worldly sphere	Other-worldly sphere
Inner-worldly conquering (Kingdom of God predominantly in the state)	Political activism (e.g., protest, campaigning) Missionary activism is reframed in political terms	The other-worldly activism is not applicable on the organizational level in its "pure" form. Transformation of ordinary religious meetings into political gatherings supports political activities
Inner-worldly transforming (Kingdom of God predominantly in "the world")	Strategic missionary activism (e.g., persuasion, education centers, political lobbying) targets gradual transforming of "the world" by spreading the teachings and organizational structures Occasional collective political engagement in line with the tactic "coming out at the advantageous moment and following the call of the church's President" (e.g., occasional protests and campaigning)	Church-related activism supports the inner-worldly activism (e.g., persuasion, fasting, exclusion and "therapeutic" treatment of "the non-conforming")
Other-worldly creating (Kingdom of God primarily in the local settlement)	Missionary activism focuses primarily on congregational issues, but also on the organizational growth in "the world" (e.g., charitable activities "in the name of God" attracting new members, persuasion and noncooperation such as setting up alternative social and educational services)	Congregational and church-related activism relates to the particular local settlement (e.g., persuasion, fasting, noncooperation, exclusion of "the non-conforming")
Other-worldly renouncing (Kingdom of God predominantly in the church community)	Not applicable on the organizational level	Church-related activism with the institutionalized ideas of "Kingdom of God and Citizens in the Kingdom of God" inside the organizational structures

The analysis shows that religiously-motivated world-rejecting is a strong factor which constitutes religious fundamentalism and activist patterns of social action. In strongly religious organizations, religiously-motivated world-rejecting of any pattern closely interrelates with organizational goals of the particular corporative actor. The ideal type of the conflictive self-positioning to the organizational environment defines identity politics and patterns of activism: (a) Inner-worldly conquering interrelates with political activism; (b) inner-worldly transformation (with tendencies to other-worldly creation) interrelates with occasional political activism at the advantageous moment, with expanding strategic missionary activism, and with church-related activism; (c) other-worldly creation (with possible tendencies to inner-worldly transformation) interrelates with congregational and church-related activism as well as with possible missionary activism; and finally, (d) other-worldly renouncing interrelates with church-related activism with strong tendencies to self-exclusion and distancing from the organizational outside, including all

spheres of social life. This study exemplifies the following relationship between meta-theoretical categories and their theoretical dimensions, detecting the particular type field of the investigated processes: The stronger the inner-worldly orientation of the strong believers, the more likely they tend to engage in political activism and in the world-transforming missionary activism. Vice versa, the stronger the other-worldly orientation of the strong believers, the more likely they tend to display self-excluding behavior, engaging in church-related or congregational activism.

## 6. Conclusion

The *theoretical advancement* of this study is the systematization and fusion of theoretical and empirical accounts on strong religion, religiously-motivated world-rejecting, identity politics, and activist patterns of social action by making use of empirical evidence from a multiple case study. As the analysis shows, the mode of religiously-motivated world-rejecting is a strong factor related to self-understanding as “true and strong believers,” to related patterns of identity politics and activism. Not every strongly religious organization involves itself in political activism. However, every fundamentalist corporative actor develops specific strategies for combating “the sinful” and imposing “the holy” inside and / or outside its organizational boundaries. Deliberately or not, it produces hierarchical status relationships and different patterns of hierarchical conflicts with the particular organizational environment. Strongly religious actors creatively define the meaning and the spheres of their mission, adjusting them to their organizational goals of world-creating: Their focus on the inner-worldly spheres predominantly corresponds to political and strategic missionary activism in their organizational environment; while their focus on the other-worldly spheres generates congregational and church-related patterns of activism. The research outcomes of this study are in line with the scholarly discourse, which emphasizes that religiously-motivated world-denying is an important factor influencing the choice of identity politics’ spheres (Almond et al. 2003; Green 2003; McRoberts 1999; Uslaner 2002; Wilson and Janoski 1995). For example, Green (2003) argues for the necessary differentiation between different patterns of activism adopted by strongly religious actors in their practice. The scholar depicts the diversity of activist strategies using quantitative methods of inquiry and analyzing personal attitudes of activists among the UUA clergy. Green (2003) denotes the following patterns of religious activists: These are “campaigners, protestors, contactors, educators, and a relatively inactive group of observers” (Green 2003, 577-580). The research results of the present study are comparable (though not identical!) to Green’s findings: For example, the world conquerors could be compared with “protestors,” while the world transformers could be compared with “educators.” In contrast to Green (2003) as well as in contrast to other aforementioned studies, I focus on how religiously-fueled modes of world-rejecting have an impact on the patterns of religious activism as well as on the spheres and strategies of its expression in the particular organizational discourses. This study adds to the scholarly discourse on religiously-based activism a stringent analysis and additional empirical evidence concerning the

differentiation between different spheres and strategies of activism employed by strongly religious corporative actors as dependent upon different modes of their conflictive self-positioning to “the sinful world.” This study does not aim to develop a *general theory or a formal grounded theory* of strongly religious corporative activists with different modes of world-rejecting. However, I transfer the results from the substantive grounded theory into the methodology of the ideal type reconstruction in the version of Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr (2010, 328-332). I draw upon the ideal-typed trajectories of strongly religious actors’ activism (see Table 1) to compose the type field indicating the following theoretical relationship: “The stronger the inner-worldly orientation of the strong believers, the more likely they tend to engage in political activism and in the world-transforming missionary activism. Vice versa, the stronger the other-worldly orientation of the strong believers, the more likely they tend to display self-excluding behavior, engaging in church-related or congregational activism” (see section “Findings II”).

The following *methodological considerations* can serve as impulses for further research: (a) According to the selective sampling strategy, this study does not include possible cases with “mixed” patterns of relating to the organizational environment in its research design. It is conceivable that the choice of spheres and strategies in identity politics of strongly religious corporative actors could vary in cases with “mixed” patterns of their relating to “the world,” which is worth further inquiry. (b) Although Weber (1963[1920]) and Almond et al. (2003) design their typologies considering salvation religions in general, this particular study does not take into account possible inter-religious differences. The latter can be explored in further research. (c) The criterion for the case selection was the ideal-typed relationship of strongly religious corporative actors with “the world.” However, it is possible that factors other than “world-rejecting” could exert an impact on the choice of activist patterns of social action and on the choice of spheres of religiously-fueled volunteering in a real-life context. Such influencing factors could be specific contextual circumstances, specific societal and organizational discourses, socio-structural and socio-demographic characteristics of strongly religious corporative actors in the related social context (Almond et al. 2003). Cases with other possible influencing factors and thus with variations concerning trajectories of religious activism were not included in the research focus of this study, - and this is worth further exploration. (d) The methodological issue of generalization of research results has been resolved in this study by drawing upon the methodology of ideal type construction (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr 2010): All generalizations are possible on the level of the meta-theoretical categories and their theoretical dimensions, responsible for the case-reproduction and transformation. In line with the research purpose and research object of this study, the findings are pertinent to organizational discourses only. Although organizational discourses are reproduced by individual organizational members, the methodological approach of this study does not allow the indication of any causal relationship between the identified trajectories of religious activism and individual actors’ practice in real-life situations. Hence, further research could transfer the insights from the current study into the objectivist paradigm (Brühl and Buch 2006) and test the detected ideal-typed relationships between meta-theoretical categories and their theoretical dimensions as hypotheses.

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