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Research Report:  
Publications by  
religious organisations  
during the Covid-19  
pandemic in Germany

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# About the Project

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The role of religion has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, taking on renewed significance in many societies, including those experiencing secularisation. RECOV-19 is a three-year, multi-disciplinary research project analysing the role of religion in societies emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. RECOV-19 compares the changing role of religions in four secularising global north contexts: Canada, Germany, the Republic of Ireland/Northern Ireland, and Poland.

In these contexts, it analyses the majority (Christian) and minority (Islam and others) religions' role in three key areas:

- Constructing **discourses around health, illness, and science**, including promoting the observance (or not) of lockdown restrictions and public health measures like vaccines
- Lobbying and liaising with **governments and policymakers**, including how religious groups have contributed to debates emerging from the pandemic, like addressing inequalities and mental health issues
- Incorporating **digital innovations** like blended online/in-person approaches to religious practices

The project utilises a mixed-methods approach, including analysis of documents produced by religious groups, analysis of media sources, surveys, and interviews. It features a multi-disciplinary team with researchers from Queen's University Belfast, the University of Montreal, the University of Bremen, and the University of Warsaw.

RECOV-19 is funded through the Trans-Atlantic Platform (T-AP) for the Social Sciences and Humanities, a collaboration between humanities and social science research funders from the Americas, Europe and Africa. It was awarded under T-AP's 'Recovery, Renewal and Resilience in a Post-Pandemic World' programme.

The following report provides an overview of the project's first step: analysis of documents and publications released by religious organisations regarding the coronavirus pandemic on the island of Ireland. For reports of the other countries, see: [Ireland/Northern Ireland](#) | [Poland](#) | [Canada](#)

^ The above description is an integral part of the project proposal, and the authors are Gladys Ganiel, Solange Lefebvre, Sławomir Mandes, Kerstin Radde-Antweiler.

## Sample

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The documents analysed in this report were retrieved from four religious organisations. Two Majority Religions in Germany were chosen, and two religious organisations which have minority status in the country. Majority and minority religious status was defined as relating to prominence in the population. Documents retrieved were official documents from recognised Authorities or representative bodies from the religious organisations. Documents retrieved were chosen if they were official statements or positions relating to Covid19, Government restrictions and guidance, or digital religion, excluding publications or reports which did not fall under this remit (for example, a publication announcing that a specific priest/Bishop has contracted Covid).

The first majority religion chosen for Germany was Roman Catholicism, with 26% of the population of Germany being a member of the Roman Catholic Church in 2021 (DBK 2022). In order to obtain a varied sample, documents were selected from three sources - the German Bishops Conference (Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, DBK) on a national level and two dioceses on a regional level, the Diocese of Dresden-Meißen and the Diocese of Regensburg.

The second majority religion selected was Protestantism. In 2021, 23,7% of the German population were members of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD 2022). Church Documents were selected from three sources: On the national level we chose the German Evangelical Church (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, EKD), on local level we chose the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Saxonia (Evangelisch-Lutherische Landeskirche Sachsens, ELKS) and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Bavaria (Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern, ELKB).

The first minority religion selected in Germany was Islam. Muslims make up around 6,7% of the population (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2016). Muslim documents were chosen from different sources, namely the member organisations of the Coordination Council of Muslims in Germany (Koordinierungsrat der Muslime in Deutschland, KRM): the Turkish-Islamic Union of the Institute for Religion (Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion, DITIB), the Islamic Council for the Federal Republic of Germany (Islamrat für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, IRD), the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland, ZMD), the Association of Islamic Cultural Centers (Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren, VIKZ), the Union of Islamic Albanian Centers in Germany (Union der Islamisch-Albanischer Zentren in Deutschland) and the Central Council of Moroccans in Germany (Zentralrat der Marokkaner in Deutschland).

## Sample

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The second minority organisation chosen was the Anthroposophical Society. On their website the AGiD states that they have 12.000 members in Germany and 42.000 members worldwide. Anthroposophical ideas and ideals are found not only with individual members, but there are successful companies, brands, schools, hospitals etc. that are founded on anthroposophical ideology. The Anthroposophical Society therefore is not so much an institution but more one actor in a loose anthroposophical network that connects different actors in society.

Country	Religious Organisations	Number of documents (statements/guidelines/press releases)
GERMANY	majority 1: Roman Catholic Church	329
	majority 2: Evangelical Church (EKD)	178
	minority 1: Islam	63
	minority 2: Anthroposophical Society	46
		616

Table 1. Number of documents per religious organisation for Germany.  
Source: own elaboration

^ The Sample was originally conceived during the project proposal phase, authored by Gladys Ganiel, Solange Lefebvre, Sławomir Mandes, and Kerstin Radde-Antweiler. The content presented above has been revised and edited by Hannah Grüenthal.

## Methods and Coding

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Qualitative content analysis aims to analyse large amounts of texts qualitatively and systematically. The relatively structured approach of deductive coding allows different researchers to produce comparable results even if the documents they are analysing are written in different languages or are different types of texts. The coding system was developed deductively, following Mayring's (2014:95, 2020:13) steps of deductive category assignment. In the first step, the three core research areas (discourses around health, illness and science; relations with governments and policymakers; digital innovations) were established as core categories. Based on the literature on Covid and religion in the four countries as well as theoretical knowledge on religion and digital media, state-religion-relations, secularisation theories and processes of change in religions, subcategories were developed and defined with examples from the data material.

After selecting the codes, the team ensured that each researcher had the same understanding of the meanings of the code in order to constitute an intercoder consistency procedure. A codebook (see code tree in Appendix 1) was written, and definitions of each code were added and vetted by each team member. Then, a coding test was decided to ensure that each researcher could code the same way. The team chose one text, coded using the code tree, and then checked and debated it among the researchers. This procedure was repeated three times until no significant coding difference was noticed. Even though the researchers were using the same code tree in order to keep the comparative perspective as the objective, new individual codes related to the specific context of each country could be created (5 in Germany, 4 in Ireland, 0 in Poland and 3 in Canada).

<sup>^</sup> The above methodology was developed by a team of researchers: Mathieu Colin, Hannah Grünenthal, Caoimhe Ni Dhonaill, Marta Kołodziejska, and Katarzyna Rabiej-Sienicka.

# Findings

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## DISCOURSES ABOUT HEALTH, ILLNESS AND SCIENCE



### Discourses about health, illness and science in the Roman Catholic Church

- The focus of segments regarding **religious practices** is on enabling people to do things together and thus build community while being physically separated, like praying at the same time. Also, it is emphasized that the Bishops and priests are praying for their people.
- When restrictions were lifted, there were several worship services promoted to mourn and pray for those who are ill and died, both individually and liturgically.
- Generally, religious practices in RCC documents are bound to the institution of the church and organized centrally.
- References to **physical health** are usually made to explain that in order to protect health, the church – and society – has to follow the restrictions. The RCC emphasizes its role in health protection as a public institution.
- Regarding **Mental wellbeing**, there are two main topics in the Roman Catholic documents:
  - 1) individual consequences, like loneliness and anxiety, for those who suffer under the restrictions and
  - 2) societal consequences of the crisis.

The individual burdens are recognized and solace is offered in faith. When the impact of the mental wellbeing of the individuals is put in the context of wider societal conditions, the church reminds people to remember their values and help stabilizing society.

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- In RCC documents, **physical health** and **mental wellbeing** are tightly connected. Usually, the point made in the arguments is that it is not enough to care for the physical body but that mental wellbeing is important for health as well. Spiritual care therefore is seen as one important way to secure mental wellbeing as well as physical health; it is also said to be relevant to salvation (“heilsrelevant”). In the Roman Catholic arguments, physical health, mental wellbeing, salvation and a functioning society all are linked and the church is the institution in which all of it comes together.



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## Discourses about health, illness and science in the German Evangelical Church

- Regarding **religious practices**, the focus is more on the individuals and how they can cope with the crisis.
- Community is built over the shared experience of crisis, for example by providing self-help-groups or an interactive prayer wall.
- From summer 2020 on, when the acute crisis with severe lockdowns is over, more and more worship services and public prayers to remember the dead are announced.
- Apart from worship services to remember the victims of the pandemic, the Evangelical Church supports counseling and self-help-groups, and is involved in regional networks to support relatives and mourners, where religious as well as secular groups are involved.
- **Theological arguments** are found in the documents mainly published around and concerning Eastertime and Christmas. The restrictions are framed as part of the festivities. To observe the rules is seen as common will and as the concrete realization of the Christian message and presented as a sign of responsibility and Christian charity (“Verantwortung und Nächstenliebe”).
- The idea of the pandemic as a punishment is mentioned only once and strictly rejected.

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## Discourses about health, illness and science in Islam

- State restrictions are thoroughly supported. To follow the state rules is presented not only as reasonable but also theologically commanded.
- The first and frequently brought up **theological argument** to follow the restrictions in Muslim documents is that it is Allah's Will to protect every life; not only the Quran but also scholarly expertise is quoted to justify restrictions.
- The pandemic as well as the individual experience of the pandemic is acknowledged as a situation of crisis, but one that invites the believers to strengthen their faith.
- The **role of community** during the pandemic is topic in three contexts:
  - those who work in healthcare and systematically relevant ("systemrelevante") occupations play an important role to keep society going during the crisis.
  - initiatives where Muslim youth help elderly people, for example by doing the groceries, going to the pharmacy, etc.
  - pandemic as a worldwide catastrophe, the partially miserable conditions in other countries, and the significance of donations from German Muslims.
- In all three contexts, those who engage for the community are met with gratitude and appreciation.

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## Discourses about health, illness and science in the Anthroposophical Society

- Theological arguments and explanations refer
  - to the body and how it is met by the virus and
  - to ideas about how Covid fits into and comes from the modern society's lifestyle, environment, etc.
- The circumstance that Corona is a deadly illness is not denied, but it is framed as a natural process. To meet this dread, from the Anthroposophical point of view not only the body must get stronger (for example by "strengthening its connection to the sun"), but also the social circumstances for those who are tested positiv must be improved.
- The anthropological point of view does not go well with a scientific understanding of the world. Therefore, **attitudes towards science** are articulated quite often and quite explicitly in the documents.
- All in all, discourses about health, illness and science in the anthroposophical context are deeply influenced by the anthroposophical worldview. Medicine, the body, and the human condition in its physical as well as metaphysical constitutions is – and has been since Rudolf Steiner – one of the core topics of anthroposophy. Discussions about the Coronavirus, therefore, touch the core identity of the anthroposophical movement.
- The general approval of a scientific worldview in German society, politics, and press media, coupled with a tradition of critique of Waldorf schools and anthroposophical methods of treatment and, later within the pandemic, a discursive connection of anthroposophy and "Querdenken", forced anthroposophists, and the anthroposophical society, to take up position and defend their worldview.

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## RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND POLICYMAKERS



### Relationships with governments and policymakers in the Roman Catholic Church

- Regarding **levels of cooperation/conflict**, the RCC in Germany backed the policies of the federal and state governments from March 2020, when the federal government declared a pandemic situation for Germany.
- Throughout, the enacted laws and regulations are seen as a set framework within which the Church can operate. While this framework is portrayed as inconvenient, it is seen as necessary in order to contain the pandemic and prevent contagion.
- There is criticism of specific decrees, such as when the Bavarian government imposed a nighttime curfew at short notice over Christmas 2020, making it impossible to attend Christmas masses. But neither the measures nor the authority of governments are fundamentally questioned.
- In the publications, the importance of the measures is repeatedly emphasized and the restrictions are described in several places as "reasonable and responsible"; the church presents itself as an institution of society that acts reasonably and responsibly, as do politicians.
- In connection with this, the high level of cooperation of the church and participation in political coordination processes with the state governments is also mentioned, both in the development of protection and hygiene concepts and in fundamental decisions on pandemic policy.
- The sources reveal an interesting shift in the attribution of power and responsibility: While in the first time of the pandemic the power to act and responsibility is mainly located with the politicians and the church as an institution, later the power to act is rather attributed to the faithful, who comply with and implement the state and church guidelines and rules.

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- The **social impacts of state restrictions** is discussed mainly with three objectives:
    - draw attention to those severely affected by restrictions, that is children and youth, (young) families and single parents, elder and sick people,
    - summon up the inner social cohesion of the German society, solidarity and the (christian) individual's part in it, and
    - bring to mind the impact of the pandemic in other (poorer) countries and the unjust contribution of medicine, medical materials, and later, vaccines.

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## Relationships with governments and policymakers in the German Evangelical Church

- In the protestant documents, the crisis is narrated as a chance for change, especially with regard to religious practice.
- A positive picture of society is drawn, cohesion of society is regularly mentioned. Not only is the contribution of each and everyone mentioned, but especially of those who work for others and keep society going, often under personal sacrifices. In the first months of the pandemic, the vibe is positive and encouraging. Later on the general tone gets more alarming. There are warnings of conspiracy theories, anti-democratic movements and the danger of a split of society. The longer it lasts, the more is the crisis depicted as a time of danger to the society as a whole.
- The Covid-Pandemic is treated as one of many crisis that hit society and are strongly interconnected: climate change, social injustice, the gap between rich and poor both within the German society and worldwide. Tied to that is the appeal to use the chance and change for the better with Gods help.
- The Evangelical Church declares from the beginning of the pandemic that it is vital to **cooperate** with the government and to follow the rules. Politicians are mentioned positively, as is the democratic system, in which they act.
- The Evangelical Church sees itself as an advocate for the weak and makes demands to the government to help for example children and youth or access to spiritual care in carehomes.
- All in all, the Evangelical Church's relations to government and policymakers is presented as that of an established societal institution. The church is aware of its resources and emphasizes its societal responsibility.

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## Relationships with governments and policymakers in Islam

- Muslim associations emphasize their **cooperation** with state and politics regarding the regulations. They regularly appeal to the mosques, which are self-administered, to follow the rules and thus help to contain the virus.
- To follow the restrictions is depicted as an act of muslim civic responsibility as well as an act of faith. Both dimensions are narratively tightly connected.
- When restrictions were lifted, religious spokespersons thanked the believers for their discipline and cooperation and stated the importance of religion to society.
- They emphasize that they are in contact with state authorities and work on concepts that are authorized; State authorities, health authorities and religious authorities are referenced in order to legitimize the course of action.
- With **impact of restrictions on religious practices** there were of course guidelines in the times of restrictions on how to secure distance, disinfection, facemasks etc. Apart from that, it was mentioned that the Hadsch was not possible this year for those who live outside Saudi-Arabia, as no visitors were allowed in the country.
- There are a lot of references to **key political actors** in order to legitimize the own position. There are quite some references to chancellor Angela Merkel and her speeches regarding Corona, as well as different federal presidents' comments on religions in Corona. Those references are used to legitimize the rules and guidelines.
- All in all the muslim associations emphasize that they are part of the society. They refer to the role of religion in society not only with respect to Islam, but on a general level. Also, they often mention how other religious organisations are equally affected by restrictions. To be responsible and to be a good citizen is tied to being a good muslim. Cooperation and contact with state authorities as well as references to politicians are mentioned in order to legitimize the own position.

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## Relationships with governments and policymakers in the **Anthroposophical Society**

- In the Anthroposophical documents, the **social impacts of state restrictions** are mentioned repeatedly. The main issue though is not social injustice or the situation of people who are particularly affected by the virus or the restrictions, but the impact on the society as a whole.
- The pandemic is seen as only one of several crisis that threaten society and the individual in it. One of the main threads that is identified in the documents is the division of society in question of restrictions as well as vaccination.
- In the anthroposophical worldview the individual is the center of everything. Society is just part of the environment where the individual is situated in. The solution to the societal questions therefore can only come from the individual.
- In Germany, the Anthroposophical Society, or Anthroposophists in general, were repeatedly accused of being “Querdenker”, deny the pandemic and its dangers, and being anti-democratic. The Anthroposophical Society took position to those allegations regarding the **anti-corona-movements**. In their publications, the Anthroposophical Society addresses these tensions and points out that the division was not between Anthroposophists and the rest of society, but between different positions within society and within Anthroposophists as well.
- The conflict in these cases is seen as taking place on the individual level and has to be treated and solved as such – on an individual level. The narrative is that as Anthroposophists, it is important to see the whole human being with their weaknesses and help them grow spiritually.



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## Relationships with governments and policymakers in the Anthroposophical Society

- On the other hand, the Anthroposophical Society as an organization answers to allegations in the 'public discourse', that is, press media articles. They explicitly condemn racism, right-wing extremism, and antisemitism in a press release following the anti-corona-protests ("Corona-Demonstration" der Initiative Querdenken) in August 2020. Some of the large German newspapers connected Anthroposophy or Anthroposophists to the Querdenken-movement and to extremist and anti-democratic thoughts. The statements and the manner how these allegations were handled fit into a tradition of allegations and counter-narratives between journalistic media and the anthroposophical movement. The press releases and statements did not so much address the members' attitudes towards the anti-corona-protests, but the journalists' attitudes towards Anthroposophy and the Anthroposophical Society.
- To prove their point, in the anthroposophical documents there are **key political/public/religious** actors mentioned, and those are usually actors from within the anthroposophical field: mainly medical experts, but also experts for societal questions. Politicians are mentioned to state that today's politics is worse than in former times, when the Green Party still was true to their goals of climate change and peace or the FDP (Free Democratic Party) still valued freedom – implicating that today both is not the case anymore.
- All in all, the Anthroposophical Society's relation to government and policymakers is characterized by their critical position regarding state restrictions and politics and their effects on social life, the individual and consequently society as a whole. The Anthroposophical Society sees its role not in influencing their members in one direction or the other, but have both sides to be heard and keep communication open. The discussion is heavily influenced by established controversies and animosities between Anthroposophists and established journalists.



# Digital Innovations in the Roman Catholic Church

- The **virtual religious rituals and practices** mentioned are mainly livestreams of mass services. The German Bishops lifted the obligation to attend church on Sundays and referred to online-livestreams and broadcasts in Radio and TV. Online digital formats are rarely mentioned.
- Most of the segments regarding virtual religious practices also mention **non-digital media**. Religious services are broadcasted by regional or even national TV- and radiostations as well as online. Similarly, non-digital ways of communication (such as telephone, letters or posters) are advertised parallel to communication channels online (like facebook groups or zoom-meetings).
- The **attitudes towards digital technology** are ambiguous: While the necessity of virtual practices as well as online-communication is widely mentioned and the benefits are appreciated, there are constant reminders that digital media are only second best, everybody misses real-life-events and is longing for “real”, face-to-face meetings again.
- Virtual practices are framed as part of the sacrifice that is needed to be made in order to contain the virus.
- All in all, digital media are treated as only second best option, but better than nothing in times of contact restrictions. While initiatives of single church members or priests are appreciated, there is a general scepticism and reservation against the use of digital media.

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## Digital Innovations in the German Evangelical Church

- In the protestant documents, the **attitudes towards digital technology** are mainly positive. The bishops repeatedly praise the “new and creative ways” that were found to meet the crisis.
- Digital media is often depicted as the most important tool to stay in contact during the pandemic; the EKD expects that the digital and hybrid offers will, at least partly, stay after the pandemic and that the new formats of mission will be further used.
- References on **non-digital media** are mainly about broadcasts of religious services in regional or national TV and Radiostations. Communication about rules and restrictions is led online due to regular and current changes.
- The **virtual religious rituals and practices** that are mentioned are mainly online-livestreams of church services or material to carry out services or prayers at home.

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## Digital Innovations in Islam

- Two aspects in **attitudes towards digital technology**: on the one hand, (social) media are seen as possibly problematic because of fake news and the circulation of hate and aggression. On the other hand, in times of the pandemic, (social) media offered the opportunity to stay in contact and for the children to receive education in religious questions.
- **Non-digital media** is mentioned to seek contact to those who cannot be contacted through the internet, for example in private or public letters and notice boards.
- **Virtual religious rituals and practices** are mentioned only once, when the DITIB livestream of the iftar-program is advertised.

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## Digital Innovations in the Anthroposophical Society

- Lots of References on **non-digital media**: references to journalistic articles in press newspapers, such as Zeit or Spiegel, or to anthroposophical statements and answers to those articles.
- The **attitude towards digital technology** is generally negative, but that is independent from Corona. Virtual communication and digitalisation is depicted as one of the disturbances in the social world
- Most events were rather cancelled than transferred online. One article reports about an “online-branch”, where anthroposophists meet online and discuss matters from an anthroposophical perspective; another one reports on telephone-meetings. Apart from that, there are no reports on virtual or non-presence events or practices.

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## Tables

[Table 1](#). Number of documents per religious organisation for Germany. Source: own elaboration

## Appendix

[Appendix 1](#). Code tree

[Appendix 2](#). Table 2. Overview of codes per religious organisation (total number of coded segments for all documents per organisation for three years) for Germany. Source: own elaboration

[Appendix 3](#). Context: timeline of the pandemic in Germany

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# The Changing Role of Religion in Societies Emerging from Covid-19

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RECOV-19 is a three-year, multi-disciplinary research project analyzing the role of religion in societies emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project investigates whether or to what extent the role of religion has changed during the pandemic in four contexts: Canada, Germany, the Republic of Ireland/Northern Ireland, and Poland. It has three main areas of investigation: discourses around health, illness, and science; changing relationships between religions and the state; and religious adaptations to the digital world.

RECOV-19 is funded through the Trans-Atlantic Platform (T-AP) for the Social Sciences and Humanities, a collaboration between humanities and social science research funders from the Americas and Europe. It received an award under T-AP's 'Recovery, Renewal and Resilience in a Post-Pandemic World' programme.

^ The above description is an integral part of the project proposal, and the authors are Gladys Ganiel, Solange Lefebvre, Sławomir Mandes, Kerstin Radde-Antweiler.

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# Appendix 1

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## Code tree

### DISCOURSES ABOUT HEALTH, ILLNESS AND SCIENCE

- Physical health
- Mental wellbeing
- Death
- Religious practices
- Justification by scientific/factual arguments
- Justification by theological arguments
- Justification by moral/ethical arguments
- Attitudes towards vaccination
  - Pro vaccination
  - Mixed feelings towards vaccination
  - Anti vaccination
- Role of community during the pandemic
- Role of relationships during the pandemic

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND POLICYMAKERS

- Freedom of belief
- Key political/public/religious actors
- Levels of cooperation / conflict
- Court cases
- Wider societal impacts of restrictions/state actions
  - Social impacts of state restrictions
  - Religious impacts of state restrictions
- Impact of restrictions on churches/religion
  - Financial
  - Organisational issues
  - Religious practices
  - Religious authority/authorities
  - Interreligious dialogue
- Anti-corona movements
- Post-Restriction Plans

### DIGITAL INNOVATIONS

- Non-digital media
- Digital tools/platforms used
- Virtual religious rituals and practices
- Impact on religious authority and community
- Impact of media on the society
- Impact of media on religious organization
- Attitudes towards digital technology
- Key digital actors

## Appendix 2

Table 2. Overview of codes per religious organisation (total number of coded segments for all documents per organisation for three years) for Germany. Source: own elaboration

Code	majority 1	majority 2	minority 1	minority 2	
	Roman Catholic Church	German Evangelical Church	Islam	Anthroposophical Society	total
<b>HEALTH, ILLNESS, SCIENCE</b>					
physical health	28	13	1	10	52
wellbeing	26	12	2	0	40
death	18	18	2	2	40
religious practices	40	40	6	0	86
justification by scientific/factual arguments	12	4	5	2	23
justification by theological arguments	22	14	14	13	63
justification by moral/ethical arguments	18	7	2	0	27
attitudes towards vaccination > pro vaccination	10	4	3	0	17
attitudes towards vaccination > mixed feelings towards vaccination	0	0	0	1	1
attitudes towards vaccination > anti vaccination	0	0	0	0	0
role of community during the pandemic	12	13	8	1	34

## Appendix 2

role of community during the pandemic	2	0	0	0	2
<b>Total: Discourses about health, illness and science</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>385</b>
<b>RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOVERNMENTS AND POLICYMAKERS</b>					
freedom of belief	15	6	1	2	24
key political/public/religious actors	13	24	10	14	61
levels of cooperation/conflict	71	33	19	4	127
court cases	0	0	2	0	2
wider societal impacts of restrictions/state actions > social issues	69	42	5	19	135
wider societal impacts of restrictions/state actions > religious	23	6	3	1	33
impact of restrictions on churches/religion > financial	21	4	1	0	26
impact of restrictions on churches/religion > organisational issues	18	17	2	2	39
impact of restrictions on churches/religion > religious practices	63	59	16	1	139
impact of restrictions on churches/religion > religious authority/authorities	8	0	0	0	8

## Appendix 2

impact of restrictions on churches/religion > interreligious dialogue	16	18	3	0	<b>37</b>
anti-corona movements	8	13	1	12	<b>34</b>
post-Restriction Plans	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total: Relationships with governments and policymakers</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>665</b>
<b>DIGITAL INNOVATIONS</b>					
digital tools/platforms used	83	124	4	7	<b>218</b>
virtual religious rituals and practices	69	40	1	2	<b>112</b>
impact on religious authority and community	7	0	0	0	<b>7</b>
impact of media on the society	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
impact of media on religious organisation	2	27	0	0	<b>29</b>
attitudes towards digital technology	46	57	5	8	<b>116</b>
key digital actors	4	3	0	0	<b>7</b>
contrast with non-digital media	49	52	2	28	<b>131</b>
<b>Total: Digital Innovations</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>621</b>
<b>TOTAL CODED SEGMENTS</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>1671</b>

## Appendix 3

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### Context: timeline of the pandemic in Germany

Total registered cases until February 2023: 38 168 908

Total Covid-related deaths: 168 086

2020

27/01/2020 - First Patient in Germany.

13/03/2020 - Christian churches and Muslim associations cancel religious events until further notice.

22/03 - 04/05/2020 - 1st Lockdown. Severe restrictions of public life: contact restrictions (meeting with max. 1 person from another household), restrictions on outdoor activities (only necessary routes), closure of restaurants and stores (exception: grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, banks), ban on cultural and religious events and church services, closure of schools and children daycare centers, ban on visits to care facilities and hospitals, recommendation on home office.

10/04/2020 - Constitutional Court approves ban on religious services to contain Corona pandemic.

20/04/2020 - First cautious relaxations of Corona protection measures. Many German states allow shopping in stores up to 800 square meters in size. Schools are gradually reopened.

27/04/2020 - Mouth protection is now mandatory in all German states, mostly for shopping and on buses and trains, sometimes only on public transport.

30/04/2020 - The federal and state governments agree on further relaxation of the Corona measures. The focus is on opening playgrounds, museums, zoos and places of worship.

06/05/2020 - Further easing of Corona restrictions. Nationwide, people from two households are allowed to meet in public spaces. People in nursing homes are allowed to receive visits from a fixed contact person. Religious events are allowed to take place under strict hygiene conditions (registration, mask requirement, distance, limited number of participants). Contact restrictions are relaxed, events with hygiene concept are possible; schools, gastronomy, businesses open under conditions.

"Hotspot regulation": graduated measures, depending on the number of Corona infected persons in the respective county. Introduction of mandatory mask use in public transport, stores and enclosed spaces.

29/08/2020 - Several demonstrations by the Querdenker movement; attempted storming of the Reichstag building.

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**14/10/2020** - New containment rules: In regions with a sharp rise in Corona numbers (more than 50 new infections per 100/000 inhabitants in 7 days), private parties are to be limited to a maximum of ten participants and two households. Restrictions of restaurants and bars.

**02/11 - 15/12/2020** - "Lockdown light": contact restrictions (two households), closure of restaurants, culture and tourism. Schools, businesses and religious sites remain open.

**06/12/2020** - Bavaria declares a state of emergency and adopts stricter measures against the spread of the virus, including a ban on going out at night.

**16/12/2020 - 28/03/2021** - 2nd Lockdown. In Bavaria, night curfew is in place with no exceptions for religious services; christmas night masses therefore are impossible. In other federal states, bans do not apply to religious services.

**27/12/2020** - Start of the nationwide vaccination campaign.

### 2021

**05/01/2021** - Federal and state governments extend and tighten the lockdown. Meeting with only one other person from another household. In regions with a 7-day incidence above 200, the permitted radius of movement is limited to 15 kilometers. Schools and daycare centers remain largely closed. When shopping and on buses and trains, everyday masks are no longer sufficient; a medical or FFP2-mask is now mandatory.

**08/03/2021** - Flower stores, garden markets and bookstores are allowed to reopen. Contact restrictions are relaxed: max. five people from two households are allowed to meet.

**23/03/2021** - Federal and state governments decide on Easter lockdown, extensive suspension of public life from Maundy Thursday to Easter Monday.

**24/03/2021** - Chancellor surprisingly rescinds Easter lockdown after massive criticism.

**21/04/2021** - "Bundesnotbremse" (Federal emergency brake) is decided: nighttime curfew restrictions, contact restrictions, school closures, and restrictions on businesses apply if seven-day incidence exceeds 100 for at least 3 consecutive days.

**13/05/2021** - People who are recovered and/or fully vaccinated against Covid-19 will no longer be required to quarantine or present a negative coronary test.

**07/07/2021** - End of vaccination prioritization; from now on, everyone in Germany can be vaccinated.

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**23/08/2021** - Introduction of 3G-rules ("Geimpft, Getestet oder Genesen" – vaccinated, tested or recovered) in almost all federal states: If the incidence exceeds 35, only vaccinated, recovered or tested persons are allowed to enter indoor areas such as hairdressers, restaurants, swimming pools or gyms.

**14/09/2021** - More and more federal states introduce the so-called 2G model: restaurants, pubs and cultural institutions open under lower Corona requirements, provided that only vaccinated and recovered people have access. Unvaccinated people will then also no longer be allowed to enter with a test.

### 2022

**03/04/2022** - End of federal infection control measures. Provisions such as mandatory masks and distance rules are regulated in the individual federal states; in most cases, mandatory masks apply in public transport and stores.

**20/03/2022** - Infection Protection Act comes into force. It provides only for basic protective measures against the coronavirus. Mask and testing requirements are largely eliminated. More extensive protective measures can be enacted by the states for "hotspots."

**01/10/2022** - Nationwide Corona protection measures change. Facemasks are no longer mandatory on airplanes, but for long-distance travel, an FFP2 mask must now be worn instead of just an medical mask. In addition, a partial FFP2 mask requirement now applies to nursing home residents, such as in common areas.

### 2023

**01/03/2023** - End of mandatory mask use in public transport, as well as for employees in doctors' offices and nursing homes.