**Legitimising mosque construction projects between the poles of support and resistance: a case study-based investigation in the Rhine-Ruhr Metropolitan Region**

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**eDiss, Göttingen State and University Library (SUB Göttingen), Göttingen 2023**

The dissertation deals with the legitimisation of mosque construction projects in urban society. A particular focus is on the multi-dimensional relations between mosque communities and their social environment.

Methodologically, this study is characterised by a case-based qualitative research design, which is primarily builds on expert interviews, the analysis of media coverage and official documents as well as participant observation. A total of five case studies were conducted in the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region.

The conceptual framework of the dissertation consists of relationalist considerations that put processuality and change, relationships and interactions as well as negotiations and constructions of social reality in the foreground of the analysis. For the conceptualisation of the relations, the author draws on network analysis methods. The central concept of legitimacy originates from neo-institutionalist approaches and was adapted by the author to the research framework.

The author explores the questions of how mosque communities legitimise their (often controversial) building projects, to what extent they receive support for their projects through their networks, and how the relations of the mosque communities changes through the construction of the mosque.

The study adopts a potential-oriented perspective that focuses in particular on the supportive potential of social networking. The process-oriented approach also allows to look at the networking resulting from the mosque construction projects.

On the basis of the case studies and comparisons, conditions for the success of mosque construction projects and numerous acts of legitimisation are elaborated.

As a result, four mechanisms are presented that show how existing networks has a beneficial effect on mosque construction projects, both for practical implementation and for the legitimacy of mosque construction projects. These include networks as a discursive resource, as a facilitator of low-threshold communication and transparency, as a basis for trust and goodwill, and as a basis for mobilising diverse support services.

Finally, the study reveals four mechanisms to which the observed change in networks can be attributed: Interactions in the planning and legitimisation process, (temporary) collective networking within the legitimisation process, public presence through legitimisation discourses, and attractiveness through the new architecture and socio-religious infrastructure. In the legitimisation discourses on the mosque construction projects, both local particularities and supra-regional Islam-related issues are expressed, which are presented in the study by means of narratives.

Hereby, this study ties in with social science research on the establishment of Islam in Germany and the networking of mosque communities with their social environment and illustrates the interrelation between these two aspects.

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