Conviviality in Contexts of Religious Plurality
Theoretical and Heuristic Deliberations[1]

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1 Conviviality: With-ness in the Midst of Asymmetry and Messiness

1.1 *With-ness*

Conviviality derives from the Latin *con-vivere* which means to live with (someone).[2] The term hints at our basic sociality which is constituted by living-with, and not just by being (*Dasein*). In its philosophical and theological underpinnings, it hints at the very basic question of what constitutes this *con*, this *with-ness*. It seems problematic to find the answer in the "identities" of individuals or groups who strive to bond with each other by imagining some sort of sameness while socializing together. Too often, nationalist thinking, driven by an obscure imagination of the *Volk* or the nation, has ended in violence. Yet also, too much fundamentalist thinking, animated by identifying one's religion with an essentialist rationale that claims some form of sameness from its followers, has ended in the drive to defeat or even destroy the other (Bieler 2023:127-129).

How then can we describe the *with-ness* that drives our living-together? Being is always understood as being-with something or someone. According to Jean-Luc Nancy, a *we* is a given for us long before we are able to articulate or justify it (Nancy 2000: 38). This existential *with-ness* offers a broad understanding of communality.

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2   See, for a multilayered understanding of the term throughout history and in current debates, Robinson in this volume.

If we go this route, we can say that each encounter is marked by the singularity of those who encounter each other. If this is true, the emergence of difference is at play in each and every interaction and is not just a topic for super-diverse communities. While the emergence of difference is enmeshed in the sociality of the human condition, it is not always recognized, nor does it automatically create *with-ness*. The emergence of difference is fueled by the encounter of unique persons meeting one another. If singularity is shared between people, an interstice emerges. Nancy cautions us not to be too fast in identifying what this space between might entail:

> Everything, then, *passes between* us. This 'between' as its name implies, has neither a consistency nor continuity of its own. It does not lead from one to the other; it constitutes no connective tissue, no cement, no bridge. Perhaps it is not even fair to speak of a 'connection' to its subject; it is neither connected nor unconnected; it falls short of both; even better, it is that which is at the heart of a connection, the interlacing [Yemrecroisment] of strands whose extremities remain separate even at the very center of the knot. (Nancy 2000: 5)

Nancy's description of the meditation of *with-ness* embraces the thinking of singularity, which also reveals the perception of difference, without either submitting to disconnected hyper-individualism nor to problematic collectivism. Reflecting on *with-ness* beyond these options, we can come closer to perceiving alterity without too much appropriation. If the singular is emphasized, *with-ness* might be expressed in terms of contiguity, yet not with a continuity that absorbs individuals into sameness. Dense moments of *with-ness* also contain experiences of distancing. Or as Nancy puts it: "All of being is in touch with all of being, but the law of touching is separation; moreover, it is the heterogeneity of surfaces that touch each other" (Nancy 2000: 5).

Continuity, we argue however, shows up within structural conditions that destroy or damage the possibilities for the singularity of each individual person to unfold. Persistent conditions such as systemic racism exist within and beyond convivial experiences. The question is how they materialize in interactions and relationships and how they shape the experience of *with-ness* amid difference in community.

Let's take the *con*, the *with-ness*, for a moment as an open, fragile space that can be approached from different angles. The circumambulation of these terms by the philosopher coincides in surprising ways with the attempts of ethnographers, who immerse themselves in critical conviviality research, to study these spaces, as we will see later. The *vivere* refers to the specific circumstances of how people relate to each other and to the environment they find themselves in.

1.2   Conviviality in Normative Terms and in the Mundane

Among others, social scientists especially urge us to examine the political agenda of convivialism (Convivialist international 2020). They approach the question of *with-ness* against the backdrop of its collapse on a global scale. In light of the failure to develop responsible and effective initiatives with regard to climate change, forced migration,

and the rise of right-wing populism, scholars from different disciplines urge us to frame conviviality in normative terms with a post-neoliberal perspective in mind.

Also, the theologian Matthew Ryan Robinson suggests that an account of conviviality is "most fundamentally about basic human social needs and drives, the practice of honing and training these in freedom, and aiming at the development of robust societal structures promoting the well-being of all" (Robinson in this volume).

Mainly in the francophone discourse, philosophers and political scientists emphasize convivialism as the art of living together that allows for global avenues of caretaking among humans and non-humans. This does not mean repudiating the legitimacy of conflict but using it as a creativity-sparking force that resolves disagreement in non-violent ways. The authors of the *Second Convivialist Manifesto* (2020: 1–8) commit, as social scientists, to five convivial principles that are considered foundational to global and local political initiatives and agree that all scientific inquiry should be driven by them. In brief, this is what the principles entail: *Common naturality* hints at the interdependence of all living beings, including humans, while *common humanity* refers to the respect that needs to be given to each human person beyond any social identity marker (race, gender etc.). *Common sociality* stresses that human beings are relational beings that express their needs and hopes within associations, communities, and societies. These three communal principles need to be balanced by two additional principles that take individuality into account. Accordingly, the development of social policies should allow for *legitimate individuation*. This means that each person is able to develop their individuality to the fullest, without harming others within a framework, with equal freedom. When there is space to express individuality, conflicts of interest will inevitably arise and persons will be in opposition to each other. The principle of *creative opposition* reflects the limits in which opposition can be expressed. If the framework established by the first three principles is damaged and disrespected, peaceful and deliberative conflict cannot serve the common good anymore and it turns into a destructive force.

In addition to these five principles, there is an imperative that cuts across all of them which the authors call *hubris control*. Hubris, or what Greek philosophers called *pleonexia*, is the limitless and compulsory desire for accumulation, to possess more. Hubris needs to be transformed into the urge to cooperate more in order to serve the goals of convivialism. *Hubris control* serves as a safeguard that regulates the risks contained in each principle. Thus, the five principles are subordinate to the absolute imperative of individual hubris control.

> For each principle, pushed to its extreme and not tempered by others, risks being reversed into its opposite: the love of nature or that of abstract humanity in hatred of concrete men; the common sociality in corporatism, clientelism, nationalism, or racism; individuation in individualism indifferent to others; the creative opposition in the struggle of egos, in the narcissism of the small difference, in destructive conflicts. (2020: 8)

These principles may inform the motivation, the political activism, and the ethical commitments of scholars who work ethnographically on questions of conviviality. However, ethnographic approaches to conviviality research have been less normative in their the-

oretical and methodological designs. Anthropologists and sociologists in this field have been interested in the mundane interactions of people encountering each other in mainly urban contexts marked by super-diversity. They are interested in contexts such as public spaces or organizational settings in which individuals or groups seek to negotiate convivial sociality.

1.3   A Critical Approach to Conviviality Research

Looking back at the two decades of conviviality scholarship in sociology and anthropology, Magdalena Nowicka identifies the following trend:

> Focusing the everyday social interactions, the current debate favours urban public and semi-public spaces. It is interested in how people reconcile equality and diversity and establish a friendly environment while assuring the recognition of uniqueness of individuals. A consensual sociality is here contrasted to the oppressive system of racial and gender inequality which operates on the basis of unchosen designations. The debate which operates with the modern liberal civil society framework produces evidence on conviviality as courtesy and as civility. (Nowicka 2020: 30)

Nowicka cautions scholars not to idealize the recognition of difference by obscuring injustices and inequality. Furthermore, she criticizes the focus on intercultural settings, since this focus risks reproducing the construction of difference that it wants to critically analyze. Also, by concentrating on civic society the politics of the state are easily neglected. And finally, by stressing courtesy and cooperation, experiences of alienation and emotional distance are often ignored (Nowicka 2020: 31).

Taking Nowicka's critique seriously, we seek to develop a critical approach to conviviality research. We critique a naïve, overly utopian focus that exaggerates the social transformation such interactions can generate without paying enough attention to structural forms of social inequalities and marginalization. As a research concept that seeks to create a more nuanced understanding of interactions in super-diverse communities, conviviality needs to be more capacious than the common English usage of the term, which simply implies having a good time in the company of others. A critical concept of *doing conviviality* cannot start with normative concepts of community cohesion that serve a simplistic rhetoric of cultural or religious harmony and unity.

Having said that, we do not want to underestimate the religiously grounded practices of fellowship (*Geselligkeit*), through which moments of mutual bonding occur, although dissonance and conflict may occur simultaneously. We want to understand convivial practices that create a sense of *with-ness*, belonging, or togetherness in their potential and in their ambivalence. This ambivalence is fueled by political structures that create intense vulnerability, caused by unjust access to economic and educational resources, by the instability of residency status, and the overall systemic racism and whiteness that governs all of these areas.

For this we draw on Hunter and van der Westhuizen's concept that understands:

[...] whiteness [...] as a formation, a logic, and an assemblage through which global coloniality is enacted relationally in the inter-connection between material, symbolic, and affective. [...] From this point of view, there is no such thing as white people, but there are people racialised as white, humans caught up in the racialising logics of global colonial forms of subjectification and who are constantly called to the many material, cultural and affective lures of whiteness. Whiteness falsely promises self-understanding and certainty in existence. But this self-understanding can only ever be achieved through the perpetuation of violence on the self and the other because of the mastery which is demanded through a commitment to the idea of race. (Hunter and van der Westhuizen 2022: 2)

We are thus interested in inquiring how convivial practices are shaped by whiteness. In this vein, we reject using difference as a sanitizing term that conceals various degrees of violence which can be attached to the very distinctions that create a sense of difference. Yet the drawing of distinctions is not automatically attached to violent hierarchization. It can also bring forth playfulness or *Geselligkeit* and be a healthy mechanism against the tendency of communities to become overtly homogeneous. If there is no room for expressing difference and for the perception of alterity, religious fundamentalism as well as essentializing group thinking lurk around the corner.

1.4   *Doing Conviviality*: A Praxeological Concept

Taking these points of critique seriously, we seek to develop a critical concept *of doing conviviality* that tackles the basic question of *how* individuals and communities negotiate perceived, ascribed, and experienced difference in contexts of religious plurality in super-diverse communities. Like conviviality, we situate the notion of difference in the context of practice theory. Accordingly, it is connected to the analysis of how such differences are produced and what effects they have.

We suggest an understanding of conviviality as referring to practices by which people negotiate a sense of *with-ness* in the midst of messy and asymmetrical relationships. Thus, the notion of *doing conviviality* best describes the praxeological concept that we work with heuristically. *Doing conviviality* thus opens up a field of tensions and contradictions in which individuals and groups seek connection with others while dealing simultaneously with difference. We are interested in what role lived religion plays in these processes. We do research on religious understandings of community and conviviality, in situations where precarious moments of *with-ness* emerge and then dissipate again. We call this *thin conviviality.*

We return to the very basic question of what constitutes *with-ness.* We suggest conceiving of *with-ness* first of all as *potential* that can unfold within a wide range of unstable and fragile practices. It can involve moments in which a sense of affective connection arises even without mutual cognitive understanding. Those moments can be inspired by rituals when a shared transcendent horizon is discovered among those who are present. A sense of togetherness might emerge e.g. from the recitation of the Qur'an, or when people pray the *Our Father* simultaneously in different languages. *With-ness* can also be

experienced at times in political practices of solidarity in which injustices are addressed by unexpected, uncommon coalitions.

With-ness is embedded in practices. Accordingly, we look at practices of *doing conviviality*, not at its essence or being. Our approach has been inspired by the work of Sarah Neal et al. (2019), who relate conviviality to an understanding of community that focusses on the question of how community works – and not primarily on what it is (Neal/Bennett/Cochrane 2019). Neal et al. focus their research on processes of conviviality in leisure clubs. Instead of understanding community as a socially bounded entity that is established through acts of inclusion or exclusion, Neal moves practices of communing to the center of the debate. Analyzing practices of belonging, attachment to places and people, and networking, as well as modes of perceiving difference and connection, assists in rethinking the notion of community in the context of practice (Neal/Bennett/Cochrane 2019: 73). Exploring such practices in more nuanced ways allows for partiality to emerge; some practices and senses of belonging might pertain only to certain aspects of a group's activity (Studdert/Walkerdine 2016: 613). In addition, it allows for a process orientation that considers the impact of changing or oscillating attitudes of individual members or of collectives on the formation of group identities and the imagination of community as a bounded entity.

We emphasize the *relational character* of the *con-vivere* – it is a living-with-practice. The *con* emphasizes practices that have a relational character hinting at encounters between persons and with the non-human world. These practices depend on interactivity, on verbal and nonverbal communication, on ritualized performativity, on practices of exchange with regard to food, languages, money or symbols. The *con-vivere* focuses on various qualities of relationships that are evoked, sustained, transformed, or dissolved over time. The focus is on how such connections are formed, how they create a sense of togetherness, and how they are understood in a transcendent horizon. Accordingly, the religious interpretation of *doing conviviality* is of special interest for us.

Our concept of *doing conviviality* is inspired by the work of Paul Gilroy (2004), who introduced the idea of conviviality as **"**processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life" (Gilroy 2004: xi) in urban spaces that have been shaped by super-diversity. Gilroy suggests that conviviality introduces:

> [...] a measure of distance from the pivotal term 'identity', which has proved to be such an ambiguous resource in the analysis of race, ethnicity, and politics. The radical openness that brings conviviality alive makes a nonsense of closed, fixed, and reified identity and turns attention towards the always unpredictable mechanisms of identification. (Gilroy 2004: xi)

If we highlight the *doing* of difference what comes up is the *messiness of interactions* where people relate to each other, negotiate every-day-life situations, and experience togetherness, separation, community, and isolation. As people interact in both public and more intimate spaces, understanding and misunderstanding, recognition and misrecognition occur, sometimes simultaneously.

2. *Doing Conviviality*: A Heuristic Framework

In the following we present a concept of conviviality that serves heuristically as an open, mid-range framework for qualitative research that is concerned with communal processes in super-diverse religious communities. By developing conviviality as a sensitizing concept, we ask how interactive practices are embedded in particular social and affective dynamics and shaped by structural forces that influence individual and communal encounters. The proposed framework is not meant to be forced upon empirical situations that can be observed. As a sensitizing concept it invites us to sharpen our attentiveness in the field and to pay attention to aspects that did not previously come into focus.

For the development of a heuristic framework we suggest distinguishing *six dimensions*: We begin with sketching out the *repertoire of convivial interactions* that encompasses the range of qualities that characterize encounters as well as the media that facilitate them. Second, we focus *on circulating normativities.* Third, we suggest paying attention to the *dynamics* that animate such interactive practices. We name just three here: the dynamics of boundary making and belonging, the dynamics of doing and undoing conviviality, and the messiness and potentiality of conviviality. Fourth, we take the *spatio-temporal constellations* into account in which these interactions are situated. Fifth, we seek to approach the *affective environments*, by which we mean not so much the feelings of individuals but rather the affectivity that arises between actors and in groups that are embedded in spatial contexts. Finally, *structural conditions* penetrate convivial processes. These are revealed in conflicts around access to economic and political resources. They are also reflected in precarious living conditions, such as one's residency status, or systemic issues, e.g. the racialization of Islam. Structural inequalities between religious communities are also a matter of the political governance of religious diversity. The dilemmas that are produced in political and legal recognition processes of religious communities are a significant example of such structural imbalances.

While it is useful for heuristic purposes to distinguish these phenomena, it is also important to understand how they are interwoven and influence each other. In the lived experience of conviviality, they unfold as complex processes.

2.1 The Repertoire of Convivial Interactions

We suggest understanding conviviality as a set of practices that are in constant motion. *In motion* relates to the fluid and repetitive as well as the process character in which these practices unfold in particular moments and over time. These practices are situated in fleeting interactions as well as committed relationships, they are embodied as informal and formalized exchanges, as well as routine and improvised performances. Ritual actions in public worship, ranging from formal to informal and verbal to non-verbal, as well as group patterns, are considered in their capacity to convey a sense of togetherness. We also ask to what extent such practices make tensions and frictions visible. We are interested in the ambiguities of conviviality and how, if at all, these are addressed.

This repertoire of convivial interactions introduces a variety of qualities. These might include an *aesthetic quality*, when interactions are grounded in acts of (re)presentation, in the acts of *doing* conviviality (Ketges 2022). It has a *normative quality* insofar as it suggests

a convivial habitus or even forces moral inclinations upon a group with the intention of motivating their actions. Normative claims about religious conviviality might be stuck in unrealistic idealizations that do not match the ambivalent experiences that people have. It eventually has an *affective quality* as it seeks to help reorient affects in a particular way. Distinguishing these three qualities can assist in analyzing the repertoire of *doing conviviality* with regard to its fluid, ambiguous, and processual character. In the lived experience, these qualities are most often intertwined, they rub against each other and deepen each other.

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Doing Conviviality, © Ralf Bieler/Andrea Bieler

2.1.1   Ephemeral Encounters

Convivial moments are created through informal chats, telling jokes, gossiping, or sharing confidences that are joyful or heavy, as matters of every-day-life and on a one-to-one basis. They emerge in small groups that gather rather spontaneously. They occur in moments when people pass by each other, greet each other or when the gaze of another person is received and responded to within a few seconds of an encounter. These moments have a fleeting and ephemeral character. They can also emerge in shared ritual practice through ephemeral moments of contact or dense experiences of effervescence, which can generate a more enthusiastic sense of belonging while also occurring in the midst of experienced difference (Meyer 2022, Walthert in this volume).

   The research of Tilmann Heil has been informative in our endeavor to reflect on the ephemeral quality of conviviality. Heil's concept of conviviality neither focuses on community cohesion nor on grand acts of solidarity but rather addresses fleeting and unremarkable interactions (Heil 2015: 319–322). Heil deals with conviviality as the negotiation of minimal sociality and consensus. He is interested in informal spheres of everyday interactions such as greeting or dwelling in urban spaces. His research highlights

the diasporic knowledge that migrants bring as they engage with a diversity of places and encounter changing constellations of difference (Heil 2019: 3). Urban spaces such as parks, streets, and squares reveal, at times, diffuse forms of social organization and show how people who live with sustained, recognizable difference improvise in everyday interactions. These improvisations are multifaceted and can range from embrace, openness, and respect to subtle forms of uneasiness, avoidance, indifference, and even forms of domination. (Heil 2015: 319). They imply practices of translation and negotiation that have normative, tactical, and pragmatic aspects that often go unnoticed. Aspects of Heil's approach can be productively integrated into studying convivial practices in religious community settings that are more structured, since they also provide spaces for improvisation and negotiation.

2.1.2   Ritualized Interactions

Besides the fleeting or ephemeral encounters, we recognize that people draw on and refine their religious and cultural resources in a steady and repetitive manner as they seek out creative ways of living together. Being-with-practices in ritual, music making, translation efforts, shared meals, place making, and space creating mediate opportunities for conviviality. Repetitive ritualized practices however are also in constant motion. They are never the same. Each repetition contains innovations or slight shifts from what has been done before. A sense of *belonging in motion* might occur over time as these communities create their own traditions through the repetition of ritual practices.

Due to the proposed praxeological approach to conviviality we work with a practice theory that moves beyond the thought-action dichotomy. This has consequences for our ethnographic work as well. We avoid constructing distinct spheres such as thought and action, ethos and world view, religious experience and reflection, or structure and antistructure that can be reintegrated through ritual or other practices of communing. Instead of assuming certain patterns from the beginning, we carefully seek to understand how interactions play out in the field in a variety of ways and if meaning making is implied.

In this vein, Catherine Bell's concept of *ritualization* is helpful (Walthert in this volume). She introduces the term *ritualization* as a strategic practice:

> Viewed as practice, ritualization involves the very drawing, in and through the activity itself, of a privileged distinction between ways of acting, specifically between those acts being performed and those being contrasted, mimed or implicated somehow. That is, intrinsic to ritualization are strategies for differentiating itself – to various degrees and in various ways – from other ways of acting within any particular culture. At a basic level, ritualization is the production of this differentiation. At a more complex level, ritualization is a way of acting that specifically establishes a privileged contrast, differentiating itself as more important or powerful. (Bell 1992: 91)

Bell notes that those strategies of privileging and distinguishing one set of activities from another can include a wide range of possibilities. Strategies of ritualization are highly contextual. The lines of differentiation that are drawn in the act of setting a practice apart are fluid and unstable; they can only be understood in the context of actual communities.

Ritualized interactions are part of the repertoire of *doing conviviality*, they are frequently organized in advance and are repeated in a regular order. Ritualized interactions reflect the aesthetic, the normative, and the affective repertoires of doing conviviality.

2.2 Circulating Normativities

As already mentioned, the repertoire of convivial interactions frequently implies a normative quality in which aesthetic as well as affective dimensions are intertwined. These normativities may derive from political convictions about what the practice of conviviality should look like in communities. These might include political stances regarding the governance of religious diversity; they might also relate to broader discussions, e.g. on global conviviality with regard to migration politics.

Normativities can also be expressed as moral stances, insofar as they suggest a particular convivial habitus, for instance through suggestions of what "appropriate" community membership looks like in terms of patterns of participation or the suitable offering of financial support. At times, moral inclinations, e.g. in the realm of sexual ethics, can be forced upon a group with the intention of motivating particular actions.

Normative assumptions about living together can also be religiously grounded; they can circulate in the field and influence competing opinions of what religious communities should be about and how processes of community building ought to be developed. The praxeological approach to conviviality is interested in analyzing how religious inclinations and convictions are folded into particular practices through symbols or metaphors. Analyzing the range of normative qualities in religious expression, as seen in affective arrangements, in religious speech, in religiously grounded interpretations of the past, in the present, and in visions about the future, is of pivotal concern. Yet, the inquiry can also take the opposite direction: it can ask how certain practices shape a religious sense of living together and of doing conviviality in the "right" or the best way.

Regarding Christian communities, for instance, we are interested in understanding how convivial assumptions are intertwined with images of the Divine, of Christ, and of beliefs about how the work of the Holy Spirit manifests itself in community. Analyzing the circulation of such beliefs can allow researchers to reconstruct theological insights that are operating in such communities.

Finally, it should be mentioned that religiously grounded normativities expressed through community events or spelled out in mission statements, might be different than the experiences that individuals or groups have. Normative statements about religious conviviality might be mired in unrealistic idealizations that do not match the ambivalent experiences people have. An important research question then would be: what is the effect of the experienced mismatch. The mismatch could create mistrust in the integrity of a particular community; yet it could also be a motivating factor for regularly revisiting the tension between normativities and experiences and for interpreting this tension.

2.3 Convivial Dynamics

Since convivial processes are never static, we are concerned with the dynamics that shape and change them. If *with-ness* is fundamentally entangled with the emergence of difference, we are particularly interested in practices and perceptions through which difference is created. To a certain degree, such dynamics can be discerned with ethnographic methods. We are able to observe how various layers of difference are constantly expressed, refined, and negotiated. The construction of difference in asymmetrical terms occurs within the community and through interpellations from the outside; all of which have an effect on the sense of self that individuals develop and on processes of *doing conviviality*. Convivial dynamics can be identified in the intertwining of boundary making and belonging, in deconstructive processes of doing and undoing conviviality, or in the synchronicity through which the messiness and the potentialities of conviviality arise.

In the following, I focus on the dynamics of boundary making and affective belonging. We suggest asking how various senses of belonging emerge, how they are stabilized and unsettled, and how these are related to practices of boundary making between individuals and subgroups. In academic debates, these dimensions are often discussed separately. However, for the sake of the development of a heuristic framework of doing conviviality, we propose probing how these dynamics are intertwined; how they are foregrounded in different ways and yet related.

2.3.1 Belonging

The less the ties between people are obvious, the more issues of belonging become complex.

If persons, as religious and social beings, only partially share cultural forms of self-expression, the question of what makes them feel that they belong to a community, a tradition, or a place becomes vital. The ponderings of what constitutes *with-ness* are fundamentally connected to the search for what establishes a sense of belonging for a group of people, to a place, or to a religious cosmos. Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka understands belonging as an "emotionally charged social location" (2011: 1). This social location evokes the intricate interplay of three very basic dimensions of human experience and practice: commonality, mutuality, and attachment. As soon as all three dimensions are activated and influence each other a more robust sense of belonging can emerge. Such a sense of belonging includes both individual and group-negotiated qualities (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013). It thus makes sense to distinguish between an individual's belonging to a collective (*Zugehörigkeit, appartenance*) and broader togetherness (*Zusammengehörigkeit)*, which refers to the social and affective processes within a community.

Pfaff-Czarnecka's proposal advances the sketch of our heuristic framework as it combines interactive, material practices with affective processes that create a sense of mutuality. She differentiates three dimensions of belonging: "(1) perceptions and performance of *commonality*; (2) a sense of *mutuality* and more or less formalized modalities of collective *allegiance*, and (3) material and immaterial attachments that often result in a sense of *entitlement*." (2011: 2)

Commonality is understood as the perception of sharing cultural forms (piety, language, life-style), values, and constructions of collective memory (ibid: 3). In super-diverse religious communities, commonality is not to be taken for granted. It is thus of interest what happens when the aforementioned features are not shared among all members. This situation is present when communities experiment with different forms of multilingualism, since they reject the idea of one dominant language. Commonality cannot be presupposed when it comes to the construction of a shared past or a shared collective memory. Especially in situations of multi-religious plurality the question arises of how perceptions of commonality transpire and how they are intensified in commitments that express collective allegiance. Increasing mutuality can be a highly ambivalent endeavor as seen when regimes of belonging are imposed onto certain groups by state actors. Creating opportunities for social participation by simultaneously forging civic commonality potentially creates political and affective dilemmas that are difficult to navigate.

The second dimension of belonging is forged by *complying to rules ordering social relations.* Pfaff-Czarnecka states:

> Families expect obedience, loyalty as well as pooling of resources. Associations and organisations expect participation, acceptance of common goals, and a sufficient contribution of time and resources. Belonging to a nation means sharing in given polity's well-being and enjoying civic rights, while reciprocating by performing civic duties, in particular, by paying taxes. For entering a national space and durably remaining, migrants need to present themselves as particularly deserving. (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2011: 205)

We may add, religious communities might expect the affirmation of creeds or specific world views or a particular notion of transcendence, God, or the Ultimate. Such commitments are frequently accompanied with the acceptance of religious authority or the deconstruction of this authority. Belonging to a community is also expressed in economic behavior or through practical matters such as the regular paying of tithes and a certain sense of decent behavior in ritual spaces. All of these aim at deepening a sense of religiously grounded mutuality.

This third dimension of belonging relates to phenomena that imply *attachment.* Here, the relationship to the non-human world, to places and landscapes is highlighted:

> Attachments make people belong to spaces and sites, to natural objects, landscapes, climate, and to material possessions. These are forged through such disparate links as embodiment, resonance of smells and tastes [...] as well as rights, citizenship and property rights in particular. Growing up in a locality can create a strong sense of belonging – and so does the ownership of land or a house. (ibid: 206)

Attachment refers to affects that can endure for a long time.

Especially in the case of religiously inspired conviviality, the relationship to objects, special places of worship, or pilgrimage sites are significant, as are practices attached to special places. These practices fuse the cognitive and the affective or highlight the affec-

tive dimension of religious sociality. In this vein, it is beneficial to inquire how convivial practices in situations of multi-religious plurality create affective senses of belonging through identification, embeddedness, connectedness, and attachments (Mattes et al. 2019: 300–301). The issue of attachment centers on how a felt sense of belonging to a religious community, amid people of diverse backgrounds, is engendered by evoking trust, feeling safe, and having possibilities. It can be cultivated through attachments to particular languages, landscapes, places, and cultural practices (Röttger-Rössler/Slaby 2018). Tacit, sensual, and physical elements are important to a sense of belonging and can include food, smells, artifacts, and rituals (Mattes et al. 2019: 301). It can also emerge in religious communities that share particular worldviews about the human person, the divine, and the cosmos. Attachment to the immaterial world includes the importance of ancestors and the religiously inspired hopes that motivate believers. It can be a sense of belonging to God, to Allah. It can be a faith and trust in that what is ultimately relevant in one's life. Belonging in religious terms is frequently expressed in religious sensibilities embedded in practices of both communal ritual and individual introspection. These sensibilities might also carry moral convictions about proper conduct in particular matters of life. The areas of sexuality, family, or gender relations especially mark spaces in which these sensibilities produce senses of belonging. These sensibilities are in motion, too. They travel e.g. against the backdrop of diasporic experiences and change over time and between generations. Despite the differences, these commonalities between people can engender a sense of embeddedness in a community, of being part of a larger entity, and of being accepted by others. A sense of belonging often plays out in multidirectional ways, it can be directed towards various groups, or it can be experienced in partial and fragmented ways.

2.3.2 Boundary Work

Since the study of interactive practices is prevalent in conviviality research it is critical to gain deeper insights into the ways difference is constructed through various forms of boundary work (Nagel in this volume). Against the background of a praxeological concept of doing conviviality we proceed from the assumption that the sense of belonging to a national, racial, or religious group is created through interactive acts of interpellation, recognition, and misrecognition by others. All of these have an effect on the individual sense of self and on the self-image of a group. Hence, it is understood as a social construct that is actively produced in both acts of recognition (we belong to the same group) and of boundary making (we differ) (Sökefeld 2007; Römhild 2007). Consequently, we do not conceive nationality, ethnicity, or religion in essentialist terms, as a matter of predefined, fixed collective identities, but rather as a process of constituting and re-configuring groups by defining the boundaries between them (Wimmer 2008a, 2008b). A variety of strategies can potentially be employed in processes of boundary work that range from expanding or limiting the domain of people included in one's group to emphasizing transgressive senses of belonging. Since the latter strategy is a pertinent thread in Christian ecclesiology, it is of particular interest to see if or how it influences practices of boundary making in religious communities. In this vein, processes of perception through which individuals identify as belonging to distinct groups due to their primary

language or dialect, presumed shared genealogy, national affiliation, or cultural heritage can be considered in relation to religious beliefs and practices.

While it is necessary to be attentive to the dangers of re-inscribing group identity constructions as essentialist categories through the research process, it is important to analyze such processes as they emerge in the field with their inherent logic. It can be assumed that these categories are still powerfully at work, through practices that range from reiteration to contestation, and hence also shape the inner workings of multi-religious settings or super-diverse Christian communities. When researching such (de)constructive processes related to national and racialized identities, the fluid and changing character of such group identities needs to be taken into account. New dynamics might develop due to changing diaspora situations such as generational disagreements or challenges to religious beliefs, practices, and value systems (e.g. with regard to gender relations and sexuality). All of these might shape a person's sense of belonging to a particular group over time. If one considers various generations of migrants these differences might become even more blurred. It is also necessary to investigate whether individuals in such communities practice forms of belonging that might draw from different religious and cultural resources and hence create a hybrid sense of being a religious person.

Alexander-Kenneth Nagel offers instructive suggestions about how boundary work can be observed empirically and how it comes up in communication, performances, and material manifestations (Nagel in this volume). For instance, *semantic positioning* occurs in the usage of pronouns through which social distance is expressed (us versus them, those people...). *Speech acts of demarcation* (I as a Muslim) mark distinctions, while speech acts of transgression blur boundaries (in the face of God we are all equal). Nagel calls a third type of communicative boundary work *boundary intervention.* Such interventions render implicit symbolic and social boundaries visible (Nagel in this volume).

In order to understand the dynamics of convivial interactions more fully we suggest studying the mechanisms of how practices of belonging and boundary work are often times intertwined. We outline three examples: First, a diverse community demonstrates their togetherness in the context of a vacation week by listing on their website the various nationalities of participants. In this case, the demarcation of difference becomes paradoxically the marker for describing togetherness (Bieler in this volume). The dynamics of boundary drawing, by highlighting national difference, serves to present togetherness as a self-imaging practice. A second example: Affective belonging as an ephemeral *withness* can be experienced in multi-religious situations. This is the case when the atmosphere of a Christian ritual is experienced as comforting to a Muslim participant. She feels soothed by listening to Christian Taizé-chants in the darkness (Hoffmann in this volume). The affective environment that this chanting practice evokes creates a sense of momentary affective belonging in which the religious distinctions still exist, yet they are affectively softened. Here, boundary softening becomes a means to evoke a felt sense of belonging, even if only for the time the ritual lasts. The final example describes how opposite boundaries can be harshly expressed in situations of ethical disagreement around issues of sexual orientation. Luca Ghiretti describes the shifting of boundaries around the congregational "we" which turns into a distancing "they" when it comes to the question of whether the blessing of same-sex-couples should be permitted in the community. For one person who strongly opposes this possibility, her sense of affective belonging

seems to be challenged; it is not only a matter of ethical deliberation and thus of cognitive boundary drawing but in a dramatic way a question of if she can still belong to this church (Eugster-Schaetzle et al. 2023: 226-232). Listening to the voice captured on the audio recording of the interview reveals how emotional and, in some ways, fragile this statement comes across.

All three examples demonstrate that normative claims are embedded in the intertwining of boundary work and affective belonging. In the first case, the claim is: we are a diverse church (over against the many homogenous Protestant churches). The second example holds an implicit claim: togetherness and even comfort can be experienced amidst religious difference. The final situation describes the emotional quality of drawing an ultimate boundary that is hardened by different sexual morals. If it is crossed, conviviality will be destroyed.

2.4 Spatio-temporal Constellations

Convivial dynamics are always entrenched in spatio-temporal constellations. Space and time can be focused on in multifaceted ways. Space is present in the *physical design* of places in which communities convene, in social practices of *spacing*, and in the emergence of *affective space*. The dimension of time is prevalent in its diachronic and synchronic quality. Empirical conviviality research is interested in the interweaving of diachronic and synchronic perspectives through practices of ritualizing and narrating belonging and togetherness and imagining the community that is yet to come.

The *physical design* of sacred places and their surrounding environments has an influence on convivial experiences. The architecture of a place encompasses human-oriented affordances with regard to sensual perception and bodily movement. The interior of a room lends itself to a certain functionality: a place for worship, for a communal meal, or for a business meeting might all look different. Particular architectural structures might offer possibilities for meeting in a circle or for the more hierarchical structuring of groups, e.g. when ritual specialists and so-called laity are seated with a significant amount of distance between them. Physical thresholds or anterooms separate the inside from the outside. Places for ritual and worship can exhibit very different architectural structures. They can be housed in a former factory building, in a mosque built in the 1980s, in a church building from the 19th century, or in a multi-purpose room that serves as cafeteria as well as a ritual space.

The physical design of a constructed place allows for certain interactions to happen. The architecture provides possibilities for the interaction of individuals or groups. It also enables human interaction with artefacts and symbols in interior spaces and the spatial reconfiguration of space goes hand in hand with a reorientation of the community. When objects such as a Torah scroll or a cross are carried through a sacred space, the reordering of bodies present in the space happens simultaneously. This process of ordering things and people in place has been coined *spacing* by the sociologist Martina Löw (2016). Spacing needs to be accompanied by efforts of interpretation. When both come together the social production of space unfolds. For instance, the ritualization of crossing thresholds marks the significance of special places for worship, e.g. when shoes are taken off and are left in the anteroom, when practices of washing take place before entering the space

or when persons engage in particular greeting practices. The outside and the inside are marked in these acts of threshold crossing and might also be accompanied by ways that ritual participants change their attitudes when entering a space of worship. Yet there are also practices of negating such distinctions between inside and outside or even between the profane and the sacred. If the latter is the case, the spacing efforts might insist on resisting the threshold imagination. Of particular interest for conviviality research is how such threshold crossings are accompanied by contact and greeting rituals in which participants also relate to the space in which they convene. Such practices of greeting potentially speak to the affective as well as to the normative dimension of conviviality and its implied sense of togetherness. They can be conceived as practices of doing conviviality that reinforce a sense of space (Meyer 2022: 95).

Accordingly, we might say that by means of a variety of embodied interactions physical places are transformed into social spaces which hold the potential for conviviality to unfold or be hindered. This can happen with or without words. Esther Maria Meyer highlights in her research the non-verbal interactions which foster processes of community building (*Vergemeinschaftung*) in embodied practices of spacing in the context of intercultural worship (Meyer 2022). Verbal communication however can also be a central spacing practice (Radosh-Hinder 2022).

Analyzing the affective character of space is the third aspect when it comes to considering space in *doing conviviality.* We will delve deeper into this layer in the following section.

When it comes to the concept of time we want to highlight the diachronic and the synchronic dimensions. In ethnographic research the synchronic dimension of time is crucial. In participatory observation, researchers immerse themselves in events; the data reflect particular occurrences in the here and now which are reflected upon afterwards. Yet the diachronic perspective of time is also present in the history of effects (*Wirkungsgeschichte*). Oral narratives, written texts and music as well as symbols and visuals carry a trace of the past and some part of it becomes actualized in the observed moment. All of these oral and visual artefacts circulate in a space which has its own distinct history shaped by such circulations over time. In that sense we might speak of the spatio-temporal constellation of events that we seek to explore in order to grasp doing conviviality more fully.

Yet, the narrative dimension of the spatio-temporal constellation does not only draw from an imagined past. It also sketches visions of the community that has not yet been realized, that is painfully absent and simultaneously hoped for. This hope might be grounded in different affects which could range from joy to despair.

2.5 Affective Arrangements

The focus on interactive practices can be enriched not only by exploring dynamics in the described spatio-temporal sense but also by attending to affective arrangements in which convivial practices are embedded. Jan Slaby introduces the concept *affective arrangements* as a way to think about social spatiality and the dynamics of affect:

> An affective arrangement comprises an array of persons, things, artifacts, spaces, discourses, behavior, expressions or other materials that coalesce into coordinated formation of *mutual affecting and being-affected* [...]. The concept thus pertains to the mutually formative combination of socio-material settings and local – as well as non-local (i.e., mediatized) affective relations. (Slaby 2019: 109)

This concept is instructive for our understanding of *doing conviviality* as an interactive practice as it emphasizes the mutual dimensions of affect as the perpetual motion between affecting and being affected. Affective arrangements depend on relationality, on the interplay of affecting and being affected. Furthermore, the concept also highlights the interaction of humans with the non-human world, and thus with artifacts, space, and various forms of mediatization. In this vein, it also opens possibilities for considering atmospheres in a broad array of settings. Atmospheres can be described as affective qualities situated in spatial environments where physical, aesthetic, and dynamic features appear as an integrated gestalt: e.g. a boisterous party, a somber funeral, or an edifying ritual. Thomas Fuchs coins the term *Umraum* by which he means an atmosphere in its entirety (Fuchs 2013: 19).

Since arrangements of affect are situated in physical space, they are subject to spatial conditions that hold possibilities as well as constraints. For instance, seating arrangements force participants to relate to each other in particular ways in terms of distance and closeness. They shape the possibility of eye contact, of discretely being with oneself, or of bodies touching one another.

Furthermore, affective arrangements can be structured by particular soundscapes as persons pray together in unison; bodies join in shared movement; voices arise and melt into each other in the cacophonic soundscape of many languages. Ritually induced sounds and smells direct attention to the significance of the moment. Since such spaces are inhabited by humans and non-human artifacts the dynamic of being affected can also relate e.g. to referencing visual symbols or embodying divine realities. These might be objects to which persons feel a particular affective attachment. Often such symbols hint non-verbally at significant religious messages.

Thomas Fuchs' deliberations regarding affective space can augment the concept of affective arrangements. Fuchs also has a particular interest in the interplay of embodied affectivity and affective space. He describes the basic structure of the latter as being composed of atmospheres, moods, and feelings. All three are overarching expressions of what he calls the *affective character* of a situation or an environment that is experienced in embodied resonance (Fuchs 2013: 19-21). Persons experience affect-infused environments which are filled with impressions (*Anmutungen*), affordances, visible expressions, and materialized statements that convey certain messages. Persons are affected in such environments by impressions that are conveyed by certain objects in space: the colorful stain glass window in a church appears to glow as the sunlight shines through or the bleeding corpus on the cross might have an uncanny aura that causes feelings of discomfort. Objects arranged in environments create affordances; they draw attention and motivate persons to engage in specific body postures, like bowing, sitting, dancing, or standing still. Some spaces are made for circular dances; others for linear processions.

Fuchs speaks of the *expression of character* (ibid: 19) which shows itself in the physical gestalt of something or somebody as embodied interactivity (facial expression, body posture, proximity of bodies). Gestures, such as e.g. the *orans position* in prayer, shape the affect of belief shown in these body postures. There is a difference between someone who sits with eyes closed and head bowed in a church pew and someone who stands with eyes open and arms raised so that the torso is no longer protected. The first body posture embodies the interiority of faith, the latter is a pose of openness and dedication.

The final aspect we want to draw from Fuchs is the *visual, acoustic, or tactile contours* (*Gestaltverläufe*) (ibid: 20) that induce certain moods or feelings and inspire movement sequences. One of the most powerful acoustic mediums is music, which can unleash different embodied affects through a multitude of rhythms and dynamics (e.g. crescendo, crescendo adagio) as well as melodies that exhibit a variety of moods.

Affective characters imply impressions made by persons, things or situations which affect us, appeal to us, or trigger feelings and moods that cause us to act in a particular way. Being affected is experienced in atmospheres; while moods are experienced as the transformation of embodied affect such as when we feel elated, crushed, attracted, or repelled. Persons may experience excitement and arousal as an expansive dynamic of the felt body, they may experience something like shrinking or narrowness when they feel ashamed or confined. The felt body (*Leib*) becomes the space of resonance through the affective space.

We claim that affective environments are significant for mediating togetherness. The feeling of belonging to a group (*Zusammengehörigkeit*), being part of something "bigger", or feeling connected is embedded in atmospheres in which shared resonance is experienced. Moods (*Stimmungen*) are felt bodily by individuals and between people. They are also spatially situated. Moods and atmospheres are non-intentional; they are not directed towards an object or another person. This is how they can be distinguished from emotions which imply directionality. These different qualities have an impact on the affective dimension of conviviality. Persons are touched by them in different ways. They can be moving to a person in a moderate way or they can be overwhelming in a drastic and intense way. Individuals might also resist them and experience an aversive mood. Emotions are directed towards another person or a deity, they are e.g. tenderly or forcefully directed towards the other. Friendship between two or more individuals can be a strong driver of convivial living; it can also create divisions in larger groups. The love of God can be experienced as a shared bond that constitutes a religious community or as something that divides people. By mentioning these ambivalences, we stress that the affective dimension of *doing conviviality* can be multifaceted and full of tension.

The interplay of moods and atmosphere intensifies the affective dimension of togetherness. They do not have to be in sync with each other. The mood of an individual, e.g. who is grieving or bored, can be in tension with the atmosphere of excitement of a collective ritual. While a sense of togetherness is evoked by atmosphere, individuals might reject it or just feel isolated. This is what we call *atmospheric dissonance*; while *consonance* describes the harmonic synergy of moods and atmospheres.

Thomas Fuchs' deliberations regarding the *affective space* can enrich the concept of affective arrangements. From a phenomenological perspective, he offers some helpful differentiations that are useful for ethnographic work. The distinctions between impres-

sions (*Anmutungen*), affordances, expressions of character, and contours of motion have observable features that can help to deepen the analysis of affective arrangements.

However, it cannot be denied that sometimes atmospheres and moods appear fuzzy. At times it is difficult to observe them and to put them into words in ethnographic research since they are prelinguistic phenomena (Meyer 2022: 85–87; Eugster-Schaetzle et al. 2023: 203–207). The sociologist Elgen Sauerborn offers three possibilities for how to research affectivity as a social phenomenon (Sauerborn 2024: 305). She suggests distinguishing between the *observability*, the *tellability*, and the *experienceability* of affects. In ethnographic research it is possible to observe the facial expressions, the body language of individuals, and the physical exchanges as people interact with each other. Another approach would be to explore the affective dramaturgy of a ritual, a football game or a birthday party. Ethnographic research enables us to study affect in the here and now. The researcher, however, needs to pay attention to how she affects the field with her presence.

Interviews, group discussions, or discourse analyses are suitable for analyzing the narration of affect, as a person is asked in a particular situation how she feels about a certain matter. Or people are asked in hindsight, by looking back at a certain situation, to reflect on how they felt during it. In this case, the interviewees are requested to engage retrospectively in an act of self-reflection. In many cases it seems to be easier to speak about the interplay of affecting and being affected by reflecting on it after the fact. However, the narration of affect can be done strategically with a certain agenda in mind. With regard to conviviality research normative claims about togetherness might be supported by describing affects that express sincerity or passion. The resistance to such normative claims can also be expressed in affects that are connected to experiences of alienation or isolation.

The third possibility for the study of affectivity resides in the *experiential dimension*. An ethnographic approach enables the exploration of affective dynamics in which the researchers are included. This can be done by taking into account the affective dynamic between researchers and interviewees. Creative participatory methods integrate and draw on the body knowledge of all participants. In the context of *embodied research* (Vachelli 2018) bodies come into focus in their own materiality which is also discursively formed.

2.6 Structural Conditions

Ethnographic research that focuses solely on micro practices is in danger of neglecting the structural dimensions. By attending to convivial processes in contexts of super-diverse religious communities, it is necessary to focus on the structural conditions that have an influence on the micro, meso, and macro levels. To produce a critical account of doing conviviality these levels need to be considered in their distinctiveness as well as their interdependence. Certain issues are pervasive and have a multifaceted impact on all three levels. This pertains e.g. to the lack of economic resources, an insecure residency status, and structural racism in its various forms.

The *micro level* encompasses relationships between individuals; and the pertinent question is what structural conditions shape these interactions. This level also encompasses an individual's relationship to a community. On the micro level, structural issues affect belonging (*Zugehörigkeit*) in a religious community and influence opportunities

for participation and social possibilities. Here the diverse living conditions individuals must grapple with come into focus. In religious communities these conditions might differ from extremely precarious to fairly safe and influence the sense of belonging (*Zugehörigkeit*) to a community an individual is able to develop. For instance, for persons with a stable residency status it is easier to become a member of a group and to participate more intensely on a regular basis. This is however often not possible for people whose residency status is not legally clarified or who are undocumented persons. Also, people who have to work very long hours to make a living have fewer opportunities to engage in volunteer work. If their first language is not the language of the community, the possibilities for participation might also be constrained.

When it comes to face-to-face interactions such structural dimensions eventually weigh on encounters since they potentially create situations of asymmetry. How these situations are negotiated is a pivotal question for conviviality research. The structural conditions might be fully or partially concealed by those who live on the more vulnerable end. They might be ignored or obscured by those who belong to the more advantaged group and whose habitus is shaped by whiteness (Jahnel in this volume). If these questions are not explicitly addressed, they might uphold a paternalism that prevents relationships based on true mutuality. A classic example of this matter is the question of hospitality. When who extends and who receives hospitality is negotiated paternalistic patterns are often mobilized; yet there is also the possibility for creative configurations of who is host and who is guest (Ketges in this volume; Bieler/Kunz 2019).

The meso level focuses on communities and organizations and is concerned with the study of groups and the relationships between groups. The study of situations of multi-religious plurality would be a classic example insofar as groups from different religious traditions encounter each other. In these settings individuals must often represent their religious traditions. An important question, especially in multi-religious settings, is how equality is presupposed or envisioned under circumstances of structural inequality. In these contexts, it is worthwhile to analyze the balance of communication within the interpersonal network of relationships and the process of representing a specific religion within these multi-religious settings (Radosh-Hinder 2022: 151–191; Radosh-Hinder in this volume).

On the meso level, communities have to deal with classic topics of power negotiations. Reflecting on the internal dimensions of power, the following issues appear relevant: the question of voice, access to resources, and structures of decision making.

The topic of voice concerns the structures that are put in place that allow everybody to speak and be heard and that dismantle mechanisms that silence individuals or groups within a community. The question of who speaks on issues of conviviality, either in affirming or in critical ways, invites an inquiry into the circulation of power. Learning more about dissenting voices that express non-belonging or problematize asymmetrical relationships and hierarchies in structural matters is crucial. Of similar importance is noticing topics that are not talked about in order to avoid potential conflicts for the sake of desired harmony (Radosh-Hinder 2022: 227–229).

Access to resources in terms of financial assets or property ownership is crucial since it significantly shapes the ability to develop meaningful projects that foster conviviality. If an equal share of resources is provided to members and sub-groups in a community,

their ability to fully participate is strengthened. If this is not the case, asymmetrical relationships will be continually reproduced. This relates also to the ability to participate in decision making processes.

The *macro level* encompasses politics of national and international scope that have an impact on individuals as well as communities. Major themes in migration politics have a bearing on individual living conditions. They affect the possibility of gaining a secure residency status; they regulate access to the labor market and to educational resources. They also influence whether persons have the chance to live together with their families. How these matters are reflected in communities that strive for more meaningful conviviality is thus a crucial question.

In addition, studying *doing conviviality* on the macro level engages the questions of how the state governs matters of religious diversity and access to attendant financial and political resources.

3. Conclusion

At the end of these theoretical and conceptual deliberations we want to return to our initial proposal. We suggest focusing on the doing of conviviality within a praxeological framework. By situating our inquiry this way, we do not stay with Nancy's project of thinking about *with-ness* as *being with*. By shifting the question of what constitutes *with-ness* from the ontological concern of *being* into the realm of *doing*, a whole new range of concerns emerges that is expressed in the repertoire of convivial interactions. The proposed framework is intended to assist in exploring interactive practices that are embedded in particular social and affective dynamics. These are shaped by structural forces that press upon individual and communal encounters. In the realm of doing conviviality, spatio-temporal constellations are pivotal. It is within this dynamic complexity that we conceive of *with-ness* first of all as *potential* that can unfold within a wide range of unstable and fragile practices.

The proposed sensitizing concept can help to orient this exploration. It should not be understood as a fixed set of requirements that must govern each facet of the empirical research.[3]

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3   My chapter in this volume, "Conviviality in Motion: Reflections on Empirical Findings for a Grounded Ecclesiology," elaborates on how the praxeological concept of *doing conviviality* is embedded in the practical theological research process.

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