

Master's Thesis

The Perception of Islam in Berlin

A Qualitative Study of Young Germans' Attitudes

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Abstract

This thesis examines how young non-Muslim Germans living in Berlin perceive Muslims and Islam and what their explanations for these views are. To do this, 13 qualitative face-to-face interviews were conducted. Islam is mostly considered by German non-Muslim people as backwards and Muslims are confronted with several prejudices. Moreover, being Muslim is often equated with not being German. The patterns found consisted of Othering, stereotypical gender roles and drawing connections to extremism. However, the participants are aware that they are socialised with prejudices. Additionally, there is a lack of contact to Muslim people which also results in less knowledge about them and Islam. During the investigation of these topics many generalisations, biases and stereotypes were found.

Key Words: perceptions of Islam, Othering, Islamophobia in Germany, attitudes in Berlin, anti-Muslim stereotypes

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Introduction

Due to labour shortages, the government of Germany signed employment contracts with other countries in the 1960s (Faas, 2010). In consequence, many people, particularly from Muslim majority countries such as Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia, were recruited to work in Germany. Although the initial purpose of these so-called guest workers was to work in Germany temporarily, many stayed after the previously agreed end date of the contracts (Faas, 2010). The German government made significant efforts to convince the immigrants to return to their home countries but was unsuccessful in most cases. In 2006, naturalisation tests for citizenship applicants were introduced which aimed to challenge stereotypical Islamic beliefs (Faas, 2010). These tests had the purpose to show “ideological conformity” (Faas, 2010). Western values were tested, and the candidates were confronted with questions containing extremism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism (Ramm, 2010). Germany expected the applicants to share these ideologies (Ramm, 2010). In the following years, more naturalization tests and requirements came into force. Faas (2010) argues that these naturalization tests showed “a tendency to trace violence and sexism back to the Qur’an and Islamic culture” (p. 73). After being appreciated as cheap labourers in the beginning, especially Muslims were quickly seen as foreigners, inferior, and unwelcome. Religious discrimination and anti-Muslim violence increased strongly (Faas, 2010). Since 9/11, Islamophobia and the perceptions of Muslims as terrorists and religious fundamentalists has risen (Foroutan, 2013).

Nowadays, around one third of the German population still perceive their country as “dangerously over-exposed to foreigners” (Pohl, 2017, p. 34), meaning above all Muslims, refugees as well as Sinti and Roma. Structural discrimination in school, at work and in the justice system are only a few of the devastating consequences (Paz & Kook, 2021). This again complicates the standing of them in society and reinforces their exclusion and inequality. Contrasting the supposedly high value of tolerance, Muslims are rarely found in German

leadership positions (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021). During the so-called refugee crisis between 2014 and 2018, many refugees, mainly from the Middle East, arrived in European countries (Sayan & Kalisch, 2018; Wigger, 2019). Germany welcomed more than one million refugees, most of them from Muslim majority countries (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021). This was a higher number of arriving refugees than ever experienced before (Wigger, 2019). The number of Muslims in Germany increased from 3.3 million Muslims in 2010 to over 6 million in 2018 which is 7.5% of the total population (Paz & Kook, 2021). Particularly German media started assuming all immigrants were Muslims and presented the Islamic faith as the main reason for many societal problems (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021). Calls for stricter immigration laws and deportations got louder (Wigger, 2019). Moreover, far-right and strongly anti-Muslim organisations, such as *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes* (PEGIDA; in English: Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident) and the right-wing party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD; in English: Alternative for Germany) have risen tremendously (Wigger, 2019).

Despite the above, ‘multiculturalism’ is clearly part of Germany (Ramm, 2010). Due to migration, the cultural and ethnic diversity especially in the European big cities increased heavily (Sayan & Kalisch, 2018). Berlin as the urban capital of Germany is considered as more tolerant and open. Sayan and Kalisch (2018) argue that “the mixing of citizens with diverse ethnical backgrounds helps to avoid or reduce potential conflicts, ignorance, and segregation” (p. 33). To investigate if this is true, Berlin was chosen as research object. It has been a city of immigration for several decades (de Graauw & Vermeulen, 2016). However, to the best of my knowledge, in no other research were young non-Muslim German people living in Berlin interviewed to talk about their attitudes towards Islam. This gap in research will be filled with this thesis. By investigating which stereotypes and misconceptions exist and their origin, a foundation for resolving them is established. For this purpose, the research question of this master’s thesis is:

How do young non-Muslim Germans living in Berlin perceive Muslim people and Islam and how do they explain the reasons underlying their perceptions?

In order to answer this question 13 qualitative interviews with young German non-Muslim people in Berlin have been conducted as part of a grounded theory approach. Several recurrent patterns were found regarding which perceptions were shared and how they were formed. The following chapters present the theoretical framework for this research and illustrates the applied methods. Afterwards the findings are analysed and discussed.

Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses the following concepts: German identities, perceptions of Muslims, Othering, and Islamophobia. Because they were major themes that emerged from the data, this chapter reviews what previous research has said about them to better understand the views of the participants.

German Identities

The first concept is German identities. There is not one sole German identity, but a multitude of them influenced by different aspects. The plurality of experienced German identities has changed throughout history. The time after World War II was characterised by brutalisation and guilt (Foroutan, 2013). Afterwards came the divided nation followed by a reunification even though the values in the two parts differed greatly. Due to all these characteristics and the cruel history, many people nowadays see themselves more as a part of a European collective identity than a German one (Foroutan, 2013).

Although Germany has a past with immigration, it was not officially recognised as part of its history until the beginning of the 21st century (de Graauw & Vermeulen, 2016). While it is

common in other European countries that non-citizens are allowed to vote, this right is denied to non-citizens living in Germany (de Graauw & Vermeulen, 2016). In addition, the strict immigration laws make it difficult for immigrants to get German citizenship (de Graauw & Vermeulen, 2016). When talking about immigrants, their integration is demanded to preserve the German ‘Leitkultur’ (in English: leading/guiding culture) (Ramm, 2010). Moreover, the West wants other societies to adopt their conception of the world (Huntington, 2015). By anticipating immigrants to (one-sidedly) assimilate to German values, the perceived superiority and dominance of German culture is demonstrated (Ramm, 2010). Ramm (2019) argues that this is a form of “western fundamentalism” (p. 194). Soysal (2000) explains that immigrant groups in Europe are expected to demonstrate universalistic principles. This also applies to Germany where immigrants are asked to adopt German values, norms and traditions and embrace German culture (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021; Müller, 2017). Soysal (2000) argues this is about “asserting the ‘natural’ right of individuals to their own cultures” (p. 8). Additionally, Muslims are often portrayed as not willing to integrate, being close to religious extremism and in need of enlightenment (Müller, 2017).

As part of this ‘Leitkultur’ Germans mean that they perceive themselves as tolerant, enlightened, modern, liberal, and civilized (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021; Foroutan, 2013; Müller, 2017). Although secularism is always praised, the current dominant ideology is more of a Christian secularism (Müller, 2017). Fischer and Mohrman (2021) argue that “Christian moral frameworks have become so deeply embedded in everyday life that they are considered neutral, objective approaches to judging behavior” (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021, p. 213). Christianity determines not only public holidays, but also which values and traditions are highly regarded. Additionally, to be perceived as German (by Germans) is often defined by whiteness. This is deeply connected to the attachment to Christianity. Often whiteness does not (only) refer to skin colour but also to cultural and religious aspects in Germany (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021). As in many European societies whiteness is considered as the norm (Wigger, 2019). Non-white

people are often assumed to not be German. Moreover, non-Christians are mostly not considered white and thus not German. Christianity and whiteness are both so present as German characteristics that they are unquestioned (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021). Fisher and Mohrman (2021) argue that while “Germany has openly and actively addressed Nazism and its anti-Semitic past, it has failed to identify, let alone interrogate, its attachment to whiteness and Christian secularism” (p. 216). Whiteness and Christianity are thus still structurally privileged, especially over Muslim people (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021).

Perceptions of Muslims

The perceptions of Muslim identity by Germans have many layers and differ by the Muslim person’s gender, social class, immigration status, ethnic group, skin colour and other factors (Garner & Selod, 2015). In general, there are many stereotypes about Muslims. In addition, Muslim identities are challenged a lot by societal discourses such as the decades-long headscarf debate (Faas, 2010). Prejudices and negative attitudes are often determined by false beliefs and misinformation (Ata & Baumann, 2021). This concerns, for instance, the misunderstanding of the word ‘jihad’ and the meaning of the hijab (Ata & Baumann, 2021). Attitudes are influenced by the media but also by individual social-psychological variables such as self-esteem (Ata & Baumann, 2021). Generally, the more knowledge about Islam a person has, the more positive the attitudes towards Islam are (Ata & Baumann, 2021). This results from more awareness and prioritising equality which can cause the perception of more similarities to their own religion, if religious, and separating Islam from terrorism (Ata & Baumann, 2021). Islam is often viewed by as backwards (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011). The existing stereotypes of Muslim people are being promoted by the media. When it comes to ethnic minorities, religiosity in the media is often equated with fundamentalism and political engagement with fanaticism (Trebbe, 2009). Especially Muslim men are represented as criminals in the media (Wigger, 2019). Jews and Muslims are portrayed much more negatively than Christians in Germany (Esser et al., 2002).

Mainly because sexism, sexual violence, and patriarchal violence are traced back to Islam (Ramm, 2010), thus sexual violence is ethnicised and racialised in blame of Islam (Wigger, 2019). Moreover, Islam is connected to forced marriages, ‘honour killings’, anti-Semitism, and homophobia, especially by the media (Ramm, 2010). Instead of treating these inequalities as societal phenomena they are seen as characteristics of Islam as a religion. Garner and Selod (2015) argue that Muslims “as well as being homogenized into a genderless mass, [...] are constantly racialized in different, gendered ways” (p. 15). Muslim people are represented as if there is only one Islamic culture instead of it consisting of a multitude of facets, individuals, and identities (Ramm, 2010; Wigger, 2019). Due to the major focus on the perceived oppression of women in Islam, Muslim women are often seen as victims and Western people think they need to be liberated (Ramm, 2010). The Muslim man is perceived as patriarchal and violent because of his supposedly backward religion (Ramm, 2010; Wigger, 2019). Especially the events on New Year’s Eve 2016 in Cologne shaped the perceptions of Muslim men (Wigger, 2019). That night big groups of (mainly Muslim) migrant men sexually assaulted German women next to the Cologne train station (Wigger, 2019). In the following weeks migrant men were presented in the media as a serious threat to society (Wigger, 2019). Wigger (2019) explains: “Sexism [...], was not imported into Germany when it decided to temporarily open its borders to refugees; it remains a persistent homemade patriarchal issue, which has affected the lives of women in German society and across the globe for centuries” (p. 267).

Othering

Even though Muslim people represent the largest religious minority in Germany, they are not part of “the collective German ‘we’” (Paz & Kook, 2021, p. 2984). This distancing by the German society from the Muslim people leads to the Othering of them. The process of Othering Muslims and Islam does not only happen in Germany but in many other parts of Europe as well (Foroutan, 2013). Othering, as a postcolonial concept, describes “discursive practices which

render others into “Others” and thereby engender a collective self-image” (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011, p. 29). This is particularly applicable in the case of Germany. Foroutan (2013) explains that the “search for a national connector may explain the tremendous need to differentiate the “other” in Germany, a country that has long struggled with its identity-building process” (p.10). Everyone not belonging to the categories considered part of a German identity (Christian, white and applying Western values) is Othered. Thomas-Olalde and Velho (2011) argue that separating “people into natural members who belong to ‘us’ and ‘Others’ who do not belong, into the West and the rest, is a powerful colonial way of thinking that is still with us today” (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011, p. 37).

By constructing a negative Other, the Self is perceived as the positive contrast to it (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011). That makes it easier to disapprove the Other. In addition, the Other is objectified and often considered of lesser value and inferior (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001; Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011). The West and the Other are constructed as “a static model of two homogeneous entities” whereby hierarchies and differences within these entities are not recognised (Scharff, 2011, pp. 130). The Other is a homogenous mass without identities (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011). It is the trope of the subject in the West versus the object in the rest of the world. Thomas-Olalde and Velho (2011) argue that regarding Islam there is a creation of a ‘normal’ by European societies which means themselves. This is also applicable to the German society in which Christianity is seen as the norm and Islam as the Other. Everyone not part of the normal is criticized, seen as different and in the case of Islam, distant from modernity (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011). The Islam is portrayed as unenlightened and unemancipated (Ramm, 2010). Therefore, ‘parallel societies’ are socially created by arguing there are insurmountable differences (Ramm, 2010). The call for integration of the Other also happens because it “safeguards, creates and assures the Self” (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011, p. 40). Usually, Othering is not perceived as discriminatory but as normal (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011). All of this is based on the colonial history of Europe (Wigger, 2019). Wigger

(2019) explains that “symbolic boundaries between those who are seen to ‘belong’ and those who are regarded as outsiders” are created (p. 255). If someone belongs is defined by religion and migration history (Wigger, 2019).

Islamophobia

Due to the stereotypical perceptions and Othering Islamophobia developed. Muslims are homogenised into one group associated with the same values and practices which are regarded negatively (Garner & Selod, 2015). As explained before, the Muslim world is perceived by the West as backwards, constructing a progressive self-image of the West (Scharff, 2011). Before, the racialisation of Muslims was derived. Racialised groups are part of a hierarchy in which white Europeans are on the top (Garner & Selod, 2015). Racialisation itself describes the practice of “ascribing sets of characteristics viewed as inherent to members of a group because of their physical or cultural traits” (Garner & Selod, 2015, p. 12). This means that typically considered Muslim characteristics are perceived as ‘racial’ and Muslims experience racism (Garner & Selod, 2015). Thomas-Olalde and Velho (2011) argue that “racism in Germany is, due to post-NS patterns of defence, usually presented as a right-wing phenomenon at the margins of society or attributed to National-Socialism which is perceived as a concluded epoch” (p. 45). This creates a blind spot for the common structural and individual anti-Muslim racism in Germany, which has in fact risen (Wigger, 2019).

Methods and Data

For the purpose of this research, 13 qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted. No more interviews were carried out when theoretical saturation was achieved. As part of a grounded theory approach, the interviews had the goal to draw generalisations from the participants’ answers in order to contribute to theory (Bryman, 2016).

Qualitative interviews were chosen as the method for this research to explore perceptions and opinions of the participants regarding Islam and their reasons for these. I argue that in depth interviews allowed for a deep and nuanced understanding of individuals' perceptions. During the semi-structured interviews, an interview guide served as support in the interview situation. However, the wording and process in general was flexible (Bryman, 2016). This allowed me to react to what was being said and to ask follow up-questions. The interview guide is attached in Appendix A.

Sample and Data Collection

To find participants, I used theoretical and snowball sampling. I asked my friends and family in Berlin if they knew young, German non-Muslim people willing to participate in my research. By not directly including my friends and family as participants, I hoped to reach out to participants with broader political ideologies than only my closest social environment. "German" for this research was defined as having been born and raised in Germany. Moreover, the participants had to live in Berlin or the surrounding areas at the time of the interview. I recruited a relatively balanced sample by gender which resulted in seven female and six male participants. Additionally, the "young" participants had to be between 18 (age of consent for scientific research) and 30 years. I decided to only include young Germans to narrow down the scope of the research. Furthermore, making connections and theoretical conclusions is better achievable within a single generation rather than introducing a broad age span. I argue that this is a strength of the research design presented here since it allows me to go into detail with the analysis rather than making broad and generalized claims. This is the next generation of policymakers, and therefore the people who shape the future. In the final sample the age of the participants varied between 20 and 28 years. Table 1 represents the participants. Pseudonyms are used here and throughout the thesis.

Table 1*Participants in the interviews*

Interview Number	Name	Gender Identity	Age
1	Ida	F	20
2	Charlotte	F	24
3	Marie	F	28
4	Viktor	M	22
5	Paula	F	24
6	Samuel	M	26
7	Berta	F	23
8	Nathan	M	27
9	Jakob	M	22
10	Katharina	F	20
11	Dora	F	26
12	David	M	26
13	Emil	M	23

During the interviews, the spoken language was German, but the quotes used in the thesis were translated to English. 11 of the interviews took place in Berlin in person during the time period between the 20th April 2022 and the 27th April 2022. The last two interviews were conducted online the following week over Zoom. The length of the interviews (excluding the Implicit Association test) varied between 28 minutes and 85 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and afterwards transcribed, coded and analysed.

The Implicit Association Test (Muslim/Arab version) was the starting point of the interviews. This test “measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report [...] it shows that you have an implicit attitude that you did not know about” (Project Implicit, 2011). It is accessible online for everyone. The test showed the participant if they prefer Muslim/Arab people over other people and vice versa. This happens via “good” and “bad” associations with Muslim/Arab people and non-Muslim/non-Arab people. After finishing the test, the results of all the people who took the test before are visible. In that way the participants could also understand their own implicit biases in relation to a broader sample of people. The test was not used to draw conclusions as to what opinions the interviewees have, it served more as a non-traditional icebreaker to start the interviews.

In the beginning of the interviews, I stated that I am not an expert of Islam myself. The participants were told that everything they said would help in this research. Furthermore, they were assured again that they were not being judged and that the audio file would not be published.

Ethics and Privacy

Before conducting the interviews, I got informed consent from the participants. They signed an informed consent form in order to participate in my research. The form can be found in Appendix C. With this method, I guaranteed that the interviewees agreed with their participation in the project and that they understand the content of the research as well as their rights as a participant (Bryman, 2016). In addition, the interviewees agreed with the audio-recording of the interviews and the transcription afterwards. The interviewees were anonymised by using pseudonyms. To avoid implications with particular names, the pseudonyms were selected out of the German phonetic alphabet. An ethics and privacy checklist can be found in Appendix B.

Analysis and Positionality

During the interview process field notes were taken to recognize recurrent patterns and concepts. Following ground theory, after conducting the interviews and coding the data, the theoretical framework was designed to fit the results of the interviews. For this purpose, open and axial coding was chosen as the adequate method. The emerged topics are presented in the next chapter of this thesis.

Being a white non-religious German woman, I decided not to talk to members of the marginalised group (Muslims in Germany) about these topics. I do not want to put the burden on the people themselves from an outside researcher perspective. Rather, by doing these interviews I hoped to figure out what current misconceptions, problems and prejudices are to support further research in looking for possible solutions. I am aware that my own opinions and biases influenced the coding process and the interviews themselves. I tried to mitigate this influence by continuously referring back to the interview guide while I spoke to the participants during the interview.

Findings and Analysis

After coding and analysing the 13 interviews, several trends emerged from the data. This chapter will discuss the findings of this research, namely how German non-Muslims perceive Islam and Muslims, and why they think they perceive them like that. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss how they perceive the existence of Islamophobia.

Perceptions of Muslims

Othering

Often when talking about Muslims, 11 participants used a *we/us* Germans vs *them* Muslims perspective. This means that Muslim people were Othered by the interviewees. Instead of

seeing Muslims as German, the participants perceived them as foreigners or outsiders. In addition, Paula for instance does not only see Islam as something different but in consequence also links it to something bad: “*you somehow associate it as something foreign and something bad accordingly*”. This is in line with existing studies in which Muslim people were perceived as different by Germans and Europeans in general (Foroutan, 2013; Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011). In contrast, being German was often put on one level with being Christian by the interviewees. In many cases Muslims were referred to as they/them as the counterpart to Germans as we/us. Conversely, that signifies that the participants who used this trope do not consider Muslims as Germans but as another group. By comparing the relevance of Bayram/Eid al-Fitr to Christmas “for us Germans”, the interconnectedness of being German and Christianity is illustrated. This links to the theory which argues that Christianity is intertwined with societal German norms and is therefore considered neutral and normal (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021). During the interviews, when showing a picture of a girl with a headscarf and a blonde girl without a headscarf playing together in school, eight of the participants immediately associated the veiled girl with Islam and the other girl with Christianity and being German.

While it emerged often in previous research that Germans are passionate about (particularly Muslim) refugee integration (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021; Müller, 2017; Ramm, 2010; Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011), this did not emerge from the data. As I did not specifically ask questions about integration, only two participants mentioned the topic. This is not in line with other research, which has shown that integration is a big part of German society’s concerns (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021; Müller, 2017). However, Muslim people are often presented as not wanting to integrate at all (Müller, 2017). The following quote is in line with this:

Viktor: “*The most important thing for [...] devout Muslims, who come here to, let's say, free Europe, is that they really integrate here in the sense that they respect women's*

rights, for example, and many [non-Muslim German] girls have told me that they often feel uncomfortable, especially because of, let's say, Arabs or Muslims. They don't know that from their countries, that women can move freely, that women are not objects. And I think that is also very important that you teach them that. That women are people and not objects."

The use of the term "free Europe" shows how the interviewee perceives Europe as free and Muslim countries as less free. Moreover, to imply that Arab and/or Muslim people do not know how to treat women respectfully is a generalisation coming from fears and opinions (Wigger, 2019). By stating that these values need to be taught to them shows how the interviewee sees Muslims/Arabs as subordinate and in need of change. Four other participants also mentioned that Muslim norms are not compatible with Western values. This shows elements of the typical trope of "the West vs the rest" (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011) and an expected presence of Western values in all different cultures, which is also shown in the next quote:

Jakob: "I do believe that with the famous Western values, with the liberal values that we have and the values that we have with the German Constitution stupidly put, we have values that are very much worth preserving and that you can really build on. And that's why I don't find it problematic that people educate their children according to Islam, as long as it's within the framework of the German Constitution and the values that are just widespread here, as long as it stays within that and doesn't clash."

By saying that educating a child with Islamic values must be compatible with the Western values demonstrates how these are seen as better and more important. Specific Western values mentioned in the interviews are gender equality and tolerance. Viktor said the following:

"if a woman is in a marriage or man [...] and she cheats or he cheats on the spouse or wife, she is stoned for it. That's really still the case, it's not even medieval [...] so stone age, from the bible and that's of course really gross[...]. Or homosexuals, I think, I'm

not quite sure in many countries [...] homosexuality [...] is condemned with the death penalty. That's also really blatant like that. Because of course there are here maybe, with us here, or in general in so Christian countries, so gays are seen maybe as ill people, but in most cases they are not murdered [...] they are not being publicly murdered by the government. That's the bad thing, you know. That the government also has such an influence and of course that also comes from religion."

The interviewee is describing practices like stoning as something happening casually in Islam and is describing Islam as very regressive. This is a typical picture drawn of Islam (Scharff, 2011). At the same time, he is referring to it as something from the bible but states two sentences later that in Christian societies homosexual men are treated better than in Islamic ones. This demonstrates how Christianity is seen as a more modern and progressive religion than Islam. A few other participants also paradoxically criticised the intolerance of Muslim people toward LGBTQIA+ people despite their own intolerance towards Muslim people. Viktor also states that he would not be happy if huge mosques would be built in Germany because

"that would be the first sign that our [...] culture goes so in a direction that [...] does not fit us. I would say that would be a step backwards. [...] religion should only be something personal, [...]not somehow that I suddenly hear about minarets and then all of a sudden, I have to start praying on the street, [...] we should develop all the time all the time you know, we have to explore Mars and not somehow, [...] live like 1500 years ago".

I asked him if he thinks the same about building churches and he replied: *"not really, because I know exactly that [...] the church [...] wouldn't really dictate life the way the mosque does"*. A few sentences later, he also talked about a discussion he had with his priest and said *"imagine discussing with an imam like this, [...], that would be impossible, [...], then you'd probably get beaten up"*. These quotes show his double standards regarding Christianity and Islam (here: churches and mosques). Additionally, he explicitly calls Islam regressive, mainly in comparison

to his “modern” priest. The imam in comparison is stereotyped as an aggressive Muslim man, unwilling to be open to other world views. I argue that by doing all that he talks down the cruelties of Christian history, for instance colonisation.

Several participants referred to Ukrainian refugees by saying that they perceive the public and politics as much more welcoming than for (Muslim) refugees from Syria and other countries. As examples they mentioned that asylum procedures were simplified. Furthermore, there is much more support for children in school. Two participants argued that refugees before were represented as criminals and the people from Ukraine now are just presented as people who need a new home. This could be explained by former studies which prove that non-Western migrants have a much harder time to be accepted in German society than migrants from cultures which are considered part of the Western world. This also resembles Othering as non-Western migrants are portrayed as foreign people cannot be integrated as easily as Western migrants (Huntington, 2015).

Gender Roles

While gender inequality in the West is seen as an individual problem, in other cultures it is considered as a cultural and traditional problem (Scharff, 2011). When talking about gender roles in Islam nine of the participants perceived women as oppressed and not free, and men as superior. From their point of view, the standing of women in Islam is bad and not equal. The man is usually considered to be the provider for a family and the woman as forced caregiver of the children and the household and subservient to the man. A lot of generalisations were happening in that context in the interviews. These typical perceptions of gender roles in Islam are supported by theory. Muslim women are often regarded as “passive victims of patriarchal oppression” (Scharff, 2011, p. 122) and Islamic structures. They are depicted as traditional, subordinate, and powerless (Scharff, 2011). In contrast, women in the West are portrayed as equal, liberated, and empowered, not considering the inequalities they experience every day in

Western societies (Scharff, 2011). Here are two quotes from the interviews that are in line with that theory:

Dora: *“always this separation woman man, that is difficult in the faith, [...] because I think, I grew up so quite differently and also our society conveys something quite different, so equal rights of man and woman. [...] I find that difficult, yes simply, why make a difference, if actually so the modern society says, everyone is equal and I think that is, I have the feeling also the biggest difference to other religions, at least those that I know now so”*

Again, “our” modern society is referred to as counterpart to the unequal Islam. All the other religions are considered as more equal regarding gender whereas Islam is the regressive outlier. Later in the interviews she said explicitly that in the Christian faith women are equal to men. In the next quote something similar happens:

Viktor: *“It's of course not so good for the women, I mean [...] they are not treated so equally, they are not allowed to be in the same room as men and I think that's also not that's just the problem because the mindset of these people is that the woman should protect herself from the man but in reality the man should be taught that the woman is not an object and that he should somehow just restrain his urges or something like that”*

In this quote the interviewee explains that gender inequality lived out by Muslim people is based on their mindset. This is heavily generalised, and he is again referring to Muslims as “these people” who need to be convinced and be open to see the error of their ways. The interviewee states in the interview later that if Muslim people (in this case: refugees) do not want to accept that women and men are equal “what do you want here then? Then go back”. By saying that, he implies that people do not have the right to live in Germany if they do not want to assimilate to the German values. Nathan perceives gender roles in Islam as follows:

“The woman should take care of the kitchen, the household and the children, keep herself veiled and in the first place then, just to the father or husband, [...] show skin or face. Marriages are just not always then closed in mutual agreement, [...] a bit more regular than in our world”

Nathan’s description is full of homogenizing and stereotyping of Muslim men as dominating the daughters and wives. He leaves no room for nuance or variation. Moreover, he talks about “*our world*”, clearly stating that he considers Muslims not as part of it.

Particularly when talking about the hijab 11 participants said that they are always wondering if it is the free decision of the woman to wear it or if the father or husband decides for them. Many of the interviewees do not believe that it is a voluntary decision and think that the majority of women, wearing a hijab, are forced to do that. This shows that the participants themselves objectify Muslim women and assume that they have no own opinion or voice. The practice of veiling is considered by the Western world as “a symbol of submission and subordination” (Paz & Kook, 2021, p. 2982). Ida supports this thesis by stating: *“that’s still quite old-fashioned, that the woman is the property of the man”*. Again, Islam is considered as not modern, and the Muslim woman is portrayed as having no decision-making power in that practice.

The headscarf debate in general was a main topic in the interviewees’ answers. 10 participants brought it up themselves and most of them had an opinion about that. This debate is especially interesting because it is a highly intersectional topic. Veiled women do not only experience discrimination because of their gender but also because of the intersections with other socio-political categories as race, religion, and ethnicity (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). Being veiled Muslims, the women “are perceived as a cultural threat to Western modernity” (Paz & Kook, 2021, p. 2981). Muslim women in Western societies such as Germany are “subject both to patriarchal forms of regulation relating to their body and dress within the Muslim community, and to negative stereotypes and ‘gendered Islamophobia’ within

mainstream society” (Paz & Kook, 2021, p. 2992). By six participants, the hijab is seen as something incompatible with women’s rights and feminism. This shows that they see it as based on patriarchal structures. This, however, is a contradiction in itself as the concept of what women are allowed and supposed to wear challenges the tenets of inclusive feminism.

Especially Viktor had clear points of view on that topic. Talking about women with niqabs Viktor said *“I would not feel comfortable in a society where all women walk around like that. So I wouldn't like to live there”*. In addition, he complained about how he was not allowed to wear a cap at work and wondered *“then why can someone wear a headscarf, you know? So [...] if you kind of give everyone equal rights, then you have to give everyone equal rights”*. He also said that children’s headscarves should be prohibited because *“if in Germany as a child the norm is not to wear a headscarf, then [...] she should not wear a headscarf in my opinion. [...] I think it's okay if it's a Muslim country where it's the norm to wear a headscarf, then I don't have a problem with it, but here in Germany or just generally in Europe, where it's not the norm, then children shouldn't do it”*. These quotes show that the interviewee does not agree with a woman’s right to veil if they want to. The comparison of a cap to a headscarf shows how he reduces a religious and cultural symbol to the level of merely a piece of clothing.

Muslim men in general were often perceived as strictly religious by the participants. During this research, participants were shown a picture of a traditionally dressed Muslim man. Upon seeing this picture, Viktor perceived him as someone of

“the very strong believers with a beard so yes, [...] that is for example a person where I would keep a bit of distance [...]. If I were to somehow ask for directions on the street, then I would actually rather avoid him, so I wouldn't really get into a conversation with him, especially if he wanted to convey something to me, that he would tell me something [...], Islam is the only true religion [...] and the West is bad [...] that would be pointless, [...] except if I wanted to become a Muslim somehow now, for example, then I would

probably want to approach him. But if I want to live the way I do now, so freely, then I wouldn't do that [...]. What should we actually talk about? He has a completely different outlook on life than I do. And there will probably only be conflicts”.

This quote demonstrates that the interviewee does not see the need to interact with Muslim men. He presumes that the man would want to convert him. Very strong Othering and seeing Islam as not compatible with Western societies happens here. Nevertheless, Viktor was the only one who expressed such a radical view.

Terrorism

In the interviews, it often occurred that Islam was connected to Islamism and terrorism. In general, many of the interviewees mentioned the Islamic State (IS) when talking about Muslim people. During many interviews, key events such as 9/11, Charlie Hebdo, the so-called refugee crisis, and the New Year's Eve in Cologne were brought up. In the following quote, Katharina describes her emotions while seeing a woman wearing a hijab shortly after the Islamist terror attacks in Paris.

“I think when it was in Paris, for example, these attacks, I was around 12 and I still know exactly, I was alone at home and watched TV in the evening and then it had just happened, then first all the IS images and also shown by the women, then I was just already so, oh shit, if I now see one of them, then I will also be blown up.”

This quote illustrates how the interviewee immediately linked a Muslim person to terrorism. It shows how crimes by individuals have the power to shape the image of a whole group. Katharina generalized that after the terror attacks every obviously Muslim person was a threat. The involvement of media in this situation will be discussed in a later section. Furthermore, this is in line with theories which explain that the Western world perceives the hijab as “the

quintessential marker of the Muslim world and as a practice synonymous with religious fundamentalism and extremism” (Paz & Kook, 2021, p. 2982).

Reasons behind Perceptions of Muslims

Lack of Contact

The majority of the participants did not have any Muslims in their social environment. This is surprising, since it contradicts the fact that most of the participants mentioned that they consider Berlin as different than the rest of Germany (explicitly rural areas in the south of Germany and East Germany). They say that the people in Berlin are more tolerant, open and most of all that there is a lot of cultural variety. Therefore, everyone has the possibility to meet a variety of people. The responses of the two participants who currently are in contact with Muslim people did not significantly differ from the ones of the other participants.

Dora: “It is so difficult when the prejudices are somehow inside you. I think they will not disappear. You can just still behave differently, I say. I still think it's difficult to get rid of them completely. I also find it difficult, I don't have any Muslim friends, but I don't explicitly go looking for them and ask people outside, would you like to be friends with me? That also seems strange”

This quote shows how Dora would like to have Muslim people in her social environment, but she does not know how to reach out to them. It demonstrates how she feels that Muslim and non-Muslim people live more isolated from each other. Also, in five other interviews the participants made clear that contact and prejudices are mutually dependent. It seems like no contact leads to prejudices, but prejudices also lead to no contact. Some of the interviewees blamed Muslim people for the situation and argued that Muslims stay within their own bubble, as Viktor:

“real Muslims, I wouldn't call them uh, friends, because they are rather so reserved, they don't really want to [...] have something to do with the "infidels", because we drink, we eat pork, we are haram.”

In this quote, there is again an *us vs them* scenario. The interviewee says that Muslim people isolate themselves because they did not accept non-Muslim people's behaviour.

Participants that did not grow up in Berlin explain that they did not have the chance to meet Muslim people before they came to Berlin because in their hometowns there were none. However, some participants also expressed doubt that Berlin is different. The next quote shows that:

Marie: “I believe that there is a larger proportion of people who are somehow more reflective, more open and perhaps have more points of contact than somehow in other places in Germany and at the same time I believe that this is nevertheless also very parallel, [...] that people with very different attitudes live very close to each other [...] Does that make us more tolerant per se, if we somehow have to live with different people in a small space? Not necessarily, I think.”

This participant mentions what other interviewees said as well, namely that it might just be wishful thinking that Berlin is more tolerant than the rest of Germany.

Six participants talked about individual Muslim people in their past. Sometimes the interviewees connected the behaviour of these people to their general view about Muslims. However, often the participants also saw them as exceptions and not representative by making clear that these people were not strongly religious. For instance, Ida does that by saying the following:

“she has very much cut herself off from her family and has also not really followed the religion now, so but her family is actually strictly religious, but she not really. But she

has nevertheless still done a lot, she has just not worn a hijab or something like that but still did a little.”

This quote shows how Ida is relativizing the religiousness of her friend. In other interviews that happened in similar ways. I conclude that the participants seemed to feel the need to justify their friendships by saying that the people were ‘Western enough’.

Socialisation (Education, Media)

Among all the participants, there appeared to be little knowledge about Islam itself. However, this did not prevent them from forming strong opinions about it. During the interviews, participants often mixed up elements of Islam with Judaism.

By talking about their results of the Implicit Association tests, the interviewees already explained to me what they thought their result should have been (no/slight/moderate/strong automatic preference for Arab/Muslim people over other people or vice versa). Most of them said that they try to view Muslims as not different from other people but know that they have been socialised with prejudices. Some of the participants talked about how they learnt prejudices from members of their family but not all. A few participants hoped for more tolerance by a change of generations as they perceive young people as much more tolerant than old people.

Although I have not explicitly asked about that, almost all of the participants criticised the school subject religion. In many German (elementary) schools, the children have to choose between protestant and catholic religion. If someone does not belong to either of them it depends on the school whether you just have a free block or have to participate in one of the Christian religion subjects or sometimes other subjects as philosophy are offered. Since education in Germany is decided at state level the situation is different in Berlin than in other federal states. The curriculum was changed a few times in the last years but currently religion

is not a mandatory school subject anymore (Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa, n.d.). Besides, often teachers only deal with Christianity in the subject and other religions are considered as side issues. At least many participants (who grew up in Berlin) have visited a mosque as part of this subject while they were in elementary school. The following quote illustrates that well:

Katharina: “that maybe in religion classes you don't just really teach Christianity, but really but really teach all religions and don't just touch on it once, you can see how much I know about it. I think, if you knew more about it and already from an early age, it wouldn't be so difficult, [...] at the secondary school it was so that all those who were of the Islamic faith were taken out of the religious education and [...] that was also nonsense, because [...] why do you call the subject religion, if then Islamic children should not even participate?”

This interviewee but also many others were very critical about this practice within religion classes as Muslim children get isolated at a very young age. Besides, five participants criticised the presence of Christian norms and traditions in the German school and work system. As argued before, Christianity is so deeply embedded in German culture that it is considered as “normal” (Fischer & Mohrman, 2021). For example, Marie argues:

“We live in Berlin, I think that the majority of people probably do not have a religious affiliation, or something like that, and yet all the vacations and such things are centred around Christian holidays, and so on, so I find that there are, [...] very clear, low estimate, then somehow the eternal debates about headscarf bans, about somehow minarets and so on [...]. Where I would say yes, it starts early that the child [...] learns inequalities [...] I think if you look at which languages are taught, which languages are somehow seen as a positive benefit and then I think to myself there are somehow many

adjusting screws where you could do something to be more contemporary, to go with how our society is composed.”

The topic of how the media promotes Islamophobia came up very often. Nine interviewees noticed that Muslim people (especially men) appear disproportionately often on crime reporting and other news. It is remarkable how many of the participants were criticising that and admitted that they are influenced by it. Furthermore, they said that they believe that especially older people can be affected by that portrayal easily. As mentioned before, the interviewees had to describe what they associate with the picture of a traditionally dressed Muslim man. Paula said the following:

“that's what you see in the media when you talk about terrorist, Islamic Islamist groups somehow, that's somehow the man with a full beard and somehow dark eyes [...] but yes, so somehow there comes for me then of course somehow this, oh god so, who is that? And maybe I would change the side of the street if this person came towards me, but I'm still trying to work against that a little bit and to make myself believe that that's not the case, that this is just as likely to be a good person as a bad person and that doesn't have any connection to his appearance, but that's what somehow comes as an association, but yes, somehow a negative impression.”

This quote illustrates strongly what an influence media can have. It creates the stereotype of the bad Muslim terrorist man with a beard and dark eyes and hair. In consequence, people apply that to reality and perceive them as a threat. Furthermore, this response is in line with theory about racialisation of Muslims. External appearance markers (“full beard and [...] dark eyes”) are considered as typically Muslim. The participant linked the appearance (markers) of the man in the picture to Islamic extremism. Jakob argues that as well:

“I do believe that an alarmingly large proportion of the German population is very, very sceptical about Islam, precisely because of this, well, I always blame the media a

little bit, but I do believe that the image that the, I'll call him the normal German, who doesn't live a very religious life and isn't very interested in other religions and doesn't keep himself busy, that the image he gets when he watches the news every night at 8 p.m. makes him rather suspicious of Islam."

This confirms what older studies argue. Members of ethnic minorities and particularly Muslims are often presented on the news as criminals (Esser et al., 2002; Ruhrmann & Sommer, 2009). Suspects who belong to an ethnic minority, in contrast to German perceived offenders, are "marked with nationality, origin, by reference to a lack of language skills, as well as by their appearance" (Esser et al., 2002, pp. 150-151). The origin of German suspects is not named and often there are explanations presented for their actions. Moreover, the reporting of criminal acts committed by ethnic minority suspects is very excessive compared to other criminal acts regarding the frequency of the reporting, and the severity of the act (Ruhrmann & Sommer, 2009). In general, members of ethnic minorities are often actively presented as criminals or terrorists, for the rest of the time their role is rather passive (Ruhrmann & Sommer, 2009). Especially recipients who are not in daily contact with members of ethnic minorities and do not critically question this portrayal are susceptible to that (Weber-Menges, 2005). As a result, the recipients develop negative associations with ethnic minorities or feel confirmed in their already xenophobic attitudes towards these groups (Weber-Menges, 2005).

Islamophobia

About half of the participants consider Islamophobia a big problem in Germany, the other half does not. During one interview, the National Socialist Underground (NSU) came up regarding this topic. When arguing that Islamophobia is a huge problem some participants described personal experiences. Dora for instance told me of an incident at her internship. Someone else also applied for an internship there who did not have a traditional German sounding name and her boss explicitly said that the person will not get the internship because

of the name. Katharina also had two experiences to tell. In her hometown a mosque is being built and *“every week there are either some pig's heads in front of it or some Nazi slogans are sprayed on it”*. Additionally, she told that with her Muslim ex-boyfriend they had to plan

“how we can best get into the club and which girl goes with whom, because he just had many Islamic or Arab friends; but it never worked [...], apparently not due to their behaviour, but simply due to their origin.”

These experiences illustrate how Islamophobia appears in everyday life in Germany in different situations. However, when talking about Islamophobia in Germany, participants often referred to the rise of the AfD. This shows quite well that even when people in general are saying that they have prejudices, they do not want to admit that they are showing signs of Islamophobia (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011). They only consider the very extreme right to be Islamophobic or racist, but stereotypes are perceived as normal.

Discussion and Conclusion

The goal of this research was to answer the following research questions:

How do young non-Muslim Germans living in Berlin perceive Muslim people and Islam and how do they explain the reasons underlying their perceptions?

During the investigation of these topics many generalizations, biases and stereotypes came up. Particularly Muslim women were associated with many stereotypes. Furthermore, Muslim people are strongly Othered. Gender roles are perceived as very traditional and Islam in general is considered as backwards. This all is situated in contrast to Christianity and the German culture, which are both viewed as modern and progressive. In addition, among the participants there was a significant linkage of Muslims to terrorism and crime. The participants are aware that they are socialised with stereotypes and prejudices by family, school and the media.

Additionally, there appears to be a lack of contact to Muslim people which also results in less knowledge about Muslim people and Islam. Islamophobia in Germany is considered as a problem which is generally seen as less present in Berlin.

Several existing theories were confirmed by my findings. Particularly the practice of Othering Muslims happened a lot during the interviews. Moreover, the earlier discussed mentioning of stereotypes regarding Muslims' behaviour and values can also be found in theory. Six participants mentioned that they put a lot of effort in "unlearning" these stereotypes about Muslims. Having these stereotypes, however, was perceived as normal and natural. In fact, several participants were complacent. For most of them, there seemed to be a comfort in the current status quo and no need to take any action to change it. I argue that this can be problematic as it puts the blame on other factors but not on the people themselves. By saying that, I do not aim to judge my participants as individuals, rather I challenge the society itself by naturalising resulting disadvantages for Muslims out of societally embedded biases. This is underlined by the lack of contact between the participants and Muslim people. The eternal circle between lasting stereotypes and not having contact needs to be interrupted. Most of the participants, however, felt clueless in how to do that. However, another finding was the major focus on education in school and the subject religion. This cannot only shape the standing of Muslim children in school but also how pupils learn about other religions. Additionally, it can influence how Muslim (and other non-Christian) children feel in school. The participants regarded a big change in the education system as inevitable to reduce prejudices. Acknowledging stereotypes and awareness are key steps to unlearning them but action is important as well. Therefore, two potential strategies to achieve this will be suggested in the last paragraph.

The greatest strength of this research consisted in the depth of the conversations. The participants seemed to feel comfortable enough to not only talk about their experiences but also

(sometimes) controversial opinions. Although the interviewees are not my friends and family, they knew people who belong to these groups. This increased the social desirability factor in their answers. However, the lack of knowledge about Islam demonstrated that the participants did not inform themselves about Islam in preparation for the interviews. This shows that the social desirability factor was not too high. Moreover, questions about the knowledge of the participants were included to determine misconceptions as well as conscious and subconscious stereotypes. I argue that these questions also helped in reducing the social desirability as they addressed facts, rather than meanings. The questions asked were open so as not to lead the participants' replies in a particular direction. This seemed to work as the answers of the participants varied greatly. Some questions were optional and depended on the answers given before. By using an interview guide this research is highly replicable.

Nevertheless, this research also has several limitations. Although I did not include my friends and family, this research is not generalisable to the total population of Berlin. Therefore, the external validity is minimised. However, this was not the aim of the research. Instead, it aimed to dig deeper into different points of view and to look for recurring frames and patterns. Furthermore, during the process of data collection a few complications appeared. Obviously, the choice of participants was bound to my social environment which is limited. Therefore, it consisted of a relatively homogeneous group regarding skin colour, education, and occupation. Moreover, there was a significant number of people who declined my request for participation. Therefore, I conclude that my sample potentially consisted of people who were already reasonably open-minded for this topic. That means that even in my social environment it is still a particular group of people participating. I succeeded in having a relatively balanced sample by gender, but in hindsight that was not an important factor to the research. The gender identity of the participants did not seem to influence their perceptions of Muslim people. Another insight is that during the transcribing process I was struggling with technical problems as programs recognized women's voices remarkably worse than men's voices.

Further research should investigate other parts of Germany to study the differences and similarities to the views of people in Berlin. Moreover, views across different age groups or people who have one non-German parent could be investigated. It could also be interesting to research if and how ideologies changed for people when they moved to Berlin. To look at all that through the lens of colourblind racism would be another way to do it. Furthermore, to find out more about in which ways Muslim people are racialised would be another intriguing research topic.

With this thesis, I have tried to find out what current misconceptions about Muslim people are. It does not seem useful to exclusively address this problem on an academic level, but it is important to integrate the complete population in the process of breaking down stereotypes. Most of the existing prejudices do not exist because of real experiences with the discriminated group but because of taught fears and unawareness. The other goal of this thesis was to investigate where stereotypes are coming from to look for possible solutions. As the participants felt that they did and still do not get enough opportunities to learn about Islam, this is one important factor that needs to be changed. Hereby, the focus should be an improved education to spread knowledge and awareness. I argue that especially stereotypically Islam-associated phenomena as sexism and homophobia are more general societal problems than Islam-made. By learning more about the religion itself, these misconceptions can be eliminated. To achieve this, the curriculum in schools should be changed to be more inclusive and informative. Moreover, the media have many opportunities to support tolerance. This could work through a more positive representation of Muslim people in the mass media. Moreover, information should be provided about Islam and its traditions to counteract misconceptions. If there is no natural contact to the discriminated people, another connection must be established. Interventions must be developed in order to have Muslim people included in the German *us*, rather than the *them*.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Are you surprised by your results? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Do you have Muslim people in your social environment?

What do you know about traditions in Islam? (What are the roles of the different genders in Islam? What do you know about why women veil? What do you know about the Quran? Do you know what the jihad is? What do you know about praying? Do you know why Muslims fast during Ramadan? Do you know what “halal” means? What do you know about similarities and differences to other religions/faith groups? Do you know what the Quran says about other religions? What do you know about ...?)

Then I showed pictures portraying aspects of Islam and asked the participants what they associated with the pictures.

What are your thoughts about religion more generally?

Was there another question you expected me to ask?

Optional questions:

When looking at the graphs of the general results of the IAT, do you think they would be different if the test had only been taken in Germany? Why?

Would you say that Germany has a problem with Islamophobia? If yes, do you have an idea what can be done against it?

Appendix B

Ethics and Privacy Checklist



CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Jennifer A. Holland, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: The Perception of Islam in Berlin - A Qualitative Study of Young Germans' Attitudes

Name, email of student: Sara Halldorn, 627734sh@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Dr Bonnie French, french@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: March 2022-June2022

Is the research study conducted within DPAS YES

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. YES

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? NO

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 1. | Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? | NO |
| 2. | Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? | NO |
| 3. | Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? | NO |
| 4. | Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants?
<i>Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).</i> | NO |
| 5. | Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? | NO |
| 6. | Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? | YES |
| 7. | Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? | NO |
| 8. | Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? | NO |
| 9. | Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? | NO |
| 10. | Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? | NO |

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

This research aims to explore views by the German population on Muslim people and the Islam. Instead of only using media content or other already existing data it enriches the topic much more to include and talk to real people. In that way, it can be talked about the topics much more in-depth.

In this research I will talk to the participants about their views on the Islam and their perception of Muslim people. Therefore, we will talk about political opinions and religious beliefs. I will not explicitly ask for these things but they will probably come up during the interviews. As this topic is highly political and defined by views on a religion this is not avoidable.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

The interviewees have to sign informed consent forms in order to participate. Moreover, I will anonymise the participants afterwards by using pseudonyms. The participants are aware that they are allowed to stop participating at any point in the process. The interviews will take place in a comfortable area and I will do my best to provide a safe space. I rather would like to encourage a conversation at eye level than a researcher-interviewee situation.

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

By taking the Implicit Association Test the participants may struggle with their results. However, by looking at the percentages of other people provided in the end the participants will realize that whichever result they have is normal. Moreover, I will talk to them about everyone's bias.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

I will ask my friends and family if they know people who would like to participate in my research. Therefore, I am using snowball sampling.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

The sample will consist of 13 people.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

As there are a bit more than 6 million Muslim people living in Germany the size of my sample population is around 76 million non-Muslim people in Germany.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

The data will be stored on SURFdrive until august 2022 and will then be deleted.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

I am myself responsible for that.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Regularly, at least weekly.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

I will use pseudonyms instead of giving the real names. Personal details of the participants will be kept in other files than the rest.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Sara Halldorn

Name (EUR) supervisor: Dr Bonnie French



Date: 20.03.2022

Date: 20.03.2022

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Informationsblatt Einverständniserklärung

Vielen Dank, dass Sie sich bereit erklärt haben, an dieser Studie teilzunehmen. In diesem Informationsblatt wird erklärt, worum es bei der Studie geht und wie Ihre Teilnahme darin aussieht.

Ich, Sara Halldorn, studiere Social Inequalities an der Erasmus Universität Rotterdam (Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences). Die Studie wird im Rahmen meiner Masterarbeit durchgeführt.

Das Ziel dieser Studie ist es, herauszufinden, wie junge Deutsche muslimische Menschen und den Islam wahrnehmen. Zu diesem Zweck werden Interviews mit in Deutschland geborenen und aufgewachsenen Menschen geführt. Um Ihre Meinung zu erfahren, bitte ich Sie daher, sich von mir interviewen zu lassen.

Das Interview wird aufgezeichnet und dauert etwa eine Stunde. Die Tonaufnahmen werden transkribiert (d. h. schriftlich festgehalten). Teile des transkribierten Interviews können für Veröffentlichungen (z. B. Zeitschriftenartikel und Buchkapitel) verwendet werden.

Die von Ihnen im Interview gemachten Angaben werden für Forschungszwecke verwendet. Sie werden nicht in einer Weise verwendet, die eine Identifizierung Ihrer individuellen Antworten ermöglichen würde. Um dies zu gewährleisten, werde ich Pseudonyme verwenden.

Die Rechtsgrundlage für die Verarbeitung von Daten ist Ihre eindeutige Zustimmung.

Wenn Sie Ihre Rechte geltend machen möchten oder Fragen zum Datenschutz im Zusammenhang mit dieser Studie haben, können Sie sich an den Datenschutzbeauftragten der Erasmus-Universität wenden (privacy@eur.nl). Wenn Sie eine Beschwerde zum Datenschutz einreichen möchten, können Sie dies bei der nationalen Aufsichtsbehörde für personenbezogene Daten in den Niederlanden (Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens) tun.

Ich werde die einzige Person sein, die Zugang zu den Daten hat.

Die Daten werden bis August 2022 gespeichert.

Sollten Sie zu irgendeinem Zeitpunkt Fragen zur Forschung haben, können Sie sich gerne an mich wenden. Eine weitere Ansprechperson ist meine Betreuerin Dr. Bonnie French (french@essb.eur.nl).

Sara Halldorn (627734sh@eur.nl; +4915776362736)

Einverständniserklärung

Ich, der*die Unterzeichnende, habe die Informationen zur Studie gelesen und verstanden.

Ich habe die Möglichkeit erhalten, Fragen zur Studie zu stellen.

Mir ist bekannt, dass die Teilnahme an dieser Studie vollkommen freiwillig ist.

Mir ist bekannt, dass die Teilnahme an der Studie eine Befragung und eine Tonaufnahme (mit Transkription) beinhaltet.

Ich habe ausreichend Zeit erhalten, um meine Entscheidung zu überdenken, und bin mit der Teilnahme an der Studie einverstanden.

Mir ist bekannt, dass meine persönlichen Daten wie Name, beruflicher Status, etc. nicht an Personen außerhalb des Projekts weitergegeben werden.

Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass meine Worte in Veröffentlichungen, Berichten, Webseiten und anderen Forschungsergebnissen zitiert werden können, mein Name jedoch nicht verwendet wird.

Ich erkläre mich damit einverstanden, meine Urheberrechte an jeglichem Material im Zusammenhang mit diesem Projekt an Sara Halldorn abzutreten.

Mir ist bekannt, dass ich jederzeit aus der Studie aussteigen und meine Zustimmung zurückziehen kann und dass mir keine Fragen gestellt werden, warum ich nicht mehr teilnehmen möchte.

Ich erkläre mich mit der Erhebung, Verarbeitung, Nutzung und Speicherung meiner persönlichen Daten für die Zwecke dieser Studie einverstanden.

Mir ist bekannt, dass ich das Recht habe, auf meine Daten zuzugreifen, sie zu berichtigen, zu löschen oder ihre Verarbeitung einzuschränken und eine Beschwerde bei einer Aufsichtsbehörde einzureichen.

Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass die Forschende mich nach meinen politischen Meinungen und religiösen oder philosophischen Überzeugungen fragt und diese Daten verarbeitet.

Name des*der Teilnehmenden: _____ Datum:

Unterschrift der Forschenden: _____ Datum:

Informed Consent Form

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this study. This Information Sheet explains what the study is about and how I would like you to take part in it.

I, Sara Halldorn, am studying Social Inequalities at the Erasmus University Rotterdam (Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences). The study is being conducted as part of my master's thesis.

The aim of this study is to find out how young Germans perceive Muslim people and Islam. To this end, interviews are being conducted with people born and raised in Germany. To find out your opinion, I therefore ask you to let me interview you. In order to elicit your views, I would like you to be interviewed by me.

The interview will be audio-recorded and will last approximately one hour. The audio-recordings will be transcribed (that is, put into writing). Segments of the transcribed interview may be used in published forms (for example, journal articles and book chapters).

The information provided by you in the interview will be used for research purposes. It will not be used in a manner which would allow identification of your individual responses. In order to guarantee this, I will use pseudonyms.

The legal basis for processing data is your unambiguous consent.

If you want to invoke your rights or if you have a question concerning privacy about this study, you can contact Erasmus University's data protection officer (privacy@eur.nl). If you would like to lodge a complaint concerning privacy, you can do this with the national supervisory authority in the Netherlands on personal data (Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens).

I will be the only person having access to the data.

The data are being stored until august 2022.

If you have any questions about the research at any stage, please do not hesitate to contact me. Another person to contact is my supervisor, Dr. Bonnie French (french@essb.eur.nl).

Sara Halldorn [627734sh@eur.nl; +4915776362736]

Certificate of Consent

I, the undersigned, have read and understood the study information provided here.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I understand that participating in this research is completely voluntary.

I understand that taking part in the study will include being interviewed and audio-recorded (and transcribed).

I have been given adequate time to consider my decision and I agree to take part in the study.

I understand that my personal details such as name and occupational status will not be revealed to people outside the project.

I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, Web pages and other research outputs but my name will not be used.

I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any material related to this project to Sara Halldorn.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study and withdraw consent at any time and I will not be asked any questions about why I no longer want to take part.

I give my consent to the collection, processing, use and storage of my personal data for the purposes of this research.

I understand that I have the right to access my data; rectify, erase or restrict the processing of their personal data and to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority.

I consent to the researcher asking about and processing my data related to political opinions and religious or philosophical beliefs.

Name of Participant: _____ Date:

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: