

Religion Monitor 2008

Muslim Religiousness in Germany

Overview of Religious
Attitudes and Practices



RELIGIONMONITOR

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Editorial

Promoting Mutual Understanding of Cultures and Religions

Liz Mohn

Globalization and its impact on private and professional contexts are giving rise to a search for values and guiding principles within society. International understanding that goes beyond political and language barriers – which numerous public figures have called for – must also remain cognizant of the world's diverse historical, cultural and religious roots. A person's religious beliefs in particular determine his or her personal philosophy and actions to a degree that should not be underestimated.

To get a better idea of the role religion and faith play in modern life, the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Religion Monitor interviewed over 21,000 people from 21 countries around the globe. Representing millions of others, the survey's respondents discussed their thoughts and beliefs, their conceptions of God, their values and numerous other aspects of their innermost lives. The survey's findings are more than just statistics; they represent the many individuals who were willing to talk about their religious practices, world views and considerations of life's larger meanings. The Religion Monitor thus provides us with an intimate look at the world's religions and, as a result, allows us a better understanding of the globe's diverse cultures.

Through its survey – carried out on each continent in a standardized manner – the Religion Monitor reveals in impressive fashion the degree to which the globe's religions are in fact comparable. Clearly, despite their many centuries of divergent development and their resulting differences, the world's faiths are similar in a multitude of ways, both in terms of structure and content.

With this brochure, the Bertelsmann Stiftung would like to introduce you to select findings from its Religion Monitor. Both the Bertelsmann Stiftung and I, personally, hope that the information it offers will help adherents of all religions better understand each other and, consequently, help increase tolerance among people everywhere.



Liz Mohn
Vice-Chair of the Bertelsmann Stiftung
Executive Board and Board of Trustees

Overview of Muslim Religiousness in Germany

The Most Important Results of the Religion Monitor



• Centrality of Religiousness

Muslims in Germany are characterized by high religiousness. 90 percent of Muslims in Germany above the age of 18 are religious; including 41 percent highly religious. For comparison: for the German society as a whole, the Religion Monitor 2008 revealed that 70 percent of the German-speaking population is religious, including 18 percent highly religious.

• Confessional Differences

Personal religiousness is most important to Sunnis: 92 percent of Sunnis in Germany are religious, including 47 percent highly religious. Of Shiites, 90 percent are religious, including 29 percent highly religious. As for Alevis, 77 percent are religious, and 12 percent can be rated as highly religious.

• Faithful Speakers of Turkish and Arabic

Divided by language groups, the highest religiousness can be found with speakers of Turkish and Arabic (91 percent religious or highly religious), wherein people of Turkish origin show the strongest tendency towards high religiousness (44 percent). 85 percent of the people of Bosnian origin, and 84 percent of the Persian-speaking group are religious.

• Religiousness in the Diaspora

Based on the Turkish-speaking group, a slight diaspora effect can be ascertained. According to the Religion Monitor 2008, 85 percent of the population in Turkey is religious, and this value is 6 percent higher among Turkish migrants in Germany.

• Strength of Faith

78 percent of Muslims in Germany express firm belief in the existence of God and life after death. This belief is significantly stronger among the younger generations than among senior citizens (80 percent compared to 66 percent).

• Women Pray in Private

Personal prayer as a form of private religious practice is more common with women: 79 percent of them pray regularly and gain strength from their personal prayer; that can only be said of 59 percent of the men. With regard to prayer, younger Muslims again achieve higher values than the older generations (70 percent among the 18- to 29-year-olds; 65 percent among the generation 60+).

• Men Practice Faith Communally

Public practice, e. g. mosque attendance for Friday prayer, is important to every third interview partner, results partly differing significantly according to ethnic and confessional origin. 24 percent of Shiites attribute a special role to publicly practiced faith. Only 9 percent of Alevis, but 42 percent of Sunnis consider communal experience of faith important. There is a great difference between genders: public practice rates highly with every second male, but only with 21 percent of Muslimas.

• **Great Religious Tolerance**

Muslims in Germany are characterized by a high level of tolerance towards other creeds. 86 percent think one should be open to all religions. This value is the same for all examined groups, no matter which gender, age, confession or origin.

• **Consequences for Daily Life**

For Muslims, religiousness is most important when it comes to questions concerning the meaning of life (57 percent) and important events in life, such as births, weddings or deaths (66 percent). Religion hardly influences their political views: 16 percent say Islam is important for their personal political opinion. 26 percent want their own Islamic party in Germany. Religiousness has a far greater impact on the choice of a spouse for women than for men (53 percent compared to 39 percent).

• **Muslim Commandments**

86 percent of Muslims strictly comply with the ban on eating pork. As far as alcohol is concerned, they are less austere: 58 percent claim never to drink alcohol. Here, too, the younger Muslims adhere to Islamic commandments closest: 90 percent of the 18- to 29-year-olds never eat pork, and 59 percent of them drink no alcohol at all.

• **Education and Upbringing**

Family and education are core aspects in the lives of Muslims in Germany (each 94 percent). And religious upbringing also plays an important role: 66 percent say they have been brought up in a religious tradition themselves. For 51 percent, personal religiousness rates highly in the upbringing of their own children.

The Religion Monitor

by Dr. Martin Rieger, Director Cultural Orientations Program, Bertelsmann Stiftung

What significance does personal religiousness have in daily life? Do religions influence modern societies? Are we about to experience a global renaissance of religion? Are certain societies going their own ways? The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Religion Monitor is aimed at providing basic data that help answer these questions and more. The Religion Monitor is an innovative scientific instrument for comprehensively analyzing religious dimensions on an interdisciplinary level. Sociologists, psychologists, religious scientists and theologists

have developed a questionnaire based on a substantial notion of religion that can be applied to all religions and corresponds with the broadest forms of individual religiousness. Special thanks are owed to the religious scientist Dr. Stefan Huber, who significantly contributed to designing the Religion Monitor. The Religion Monitor considers a relation to transcendence the main characteristic of religious experience and behavior. At the same time, it remains sensitive to all forms of religious expression. The questionnaire has been trans-

Organizational chart for the Religion Monitor

	Sociology theology psychology	General intensity	Specific topics
Core dimensions	Intellect	Interest in religious topics	Religious reflexivity; religious search; meaning; theodicy; spiritual and religious books
	Ideology (belief)	Belief in God or something divine Belief in life after death	Notion of God; world views; religious pluralism; religious fundamentalism; other religious ideas
	Public practice	Church service; congregational prayer; attending temple	Interreligious practice
	Private practice	Prayer – Meditation	Prescribed prayer; house altar
	Experience	Personal experience	Religious feelings
	Consequences	Experience of being at one; General relevance of religion to everyday life	Relevance of religion to various aspects of life (e.g. family, politics); religious commandments
Centrality	Non religious Religious Highly religious	Religious and spiritual self-perception	

lated into 20 languages. It was the basis for a representative survey carried out in the year 2007 in 21 countries on all continents and in all world religions. That made it possible to compare religions on an unprecedented scale.

On account of the random sample polling of 1,000 people selected on a representative basis over the course of 18 years, it was previously only possible to make statements on large religious groups in the countries surveyed. That also applied to Germany, where the religious emotions and practices of Catholics, Protestants, and non-denominationals were examined. Considering the significance of Islam in the German society as well as in many other European societies, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has now further developed the Religion Monitor and polled 2,000 Muslims throughout Germany. In this context, the cultural-lingual background as well as the large factions within Islam in Germany were taken into account and examined individually.

Some of the results of this survey and initial comments are presented here.

The Religion Monitor contains almost 100 questions concerning six core dimensions of religiousness:

- interest in religious matters
- belief in God or something divine
- public religious practices
- private religious practices
- religious experiences
- relevance of religion to everyday life

Basic studies have established that each of these six dimensions must be taken into account in order to gain a comprehensive and differentiated understanding of the individual and social role of religiousness. It does not suffice to draw conclusions from one dimension and apply them to another. That makes the Religion Monitor so valuable compared to many other studies, most of which are limited to the dimensions of religious ideology and public practice.

The survey also distinguishes between the matter, i.e. the concrete manifestation of reli-



giousness, and the category of centrality, which measures the impact of religiousness or the intensity of its presence in the personality. The more central religiousness is in a person's life, the more it determines his experiencing and behavior.

Thus, the results of all question modules were consolidated according to a point system in a centrality index comprising the classifications 'highly religious', 'religious' and 'non-religious'.

Highly religious: Religious matters play a central role in the personality of this ideal type. They are experienced intensely and permeate the entire experiencing and behavior of the person. The 'highly religious' actively introduce their belief in public discussions.

Religious: In this group, religious matters and practices do occur, but do not play a central role in the personality. Therefore, they are only experienced with medium intensity and only refer to a narrow area of experiencing and behavior.

Non-religious: Religious practices, matters, and experiences hardly feature here. They play practically no role in the personality or in the field of experiencing and action.

The classification helps develop individual profiles and draw important conclusions about the degree of religiousness within the

Media response

• Correcting preliminary assessments

"The survey corrects impressions made by numerous headlines and preliminary assessments. This applies in particular to the 'return of religion,' hoped for and feared by many."

Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung

• Faith sets in motion

"The religion survey of the Bertelsmann Stiftung proves that faith sets Christians and Muslims in motion more than ever, all around the world, including Germany."

Stuttgarter Nachrichten

• Revealing

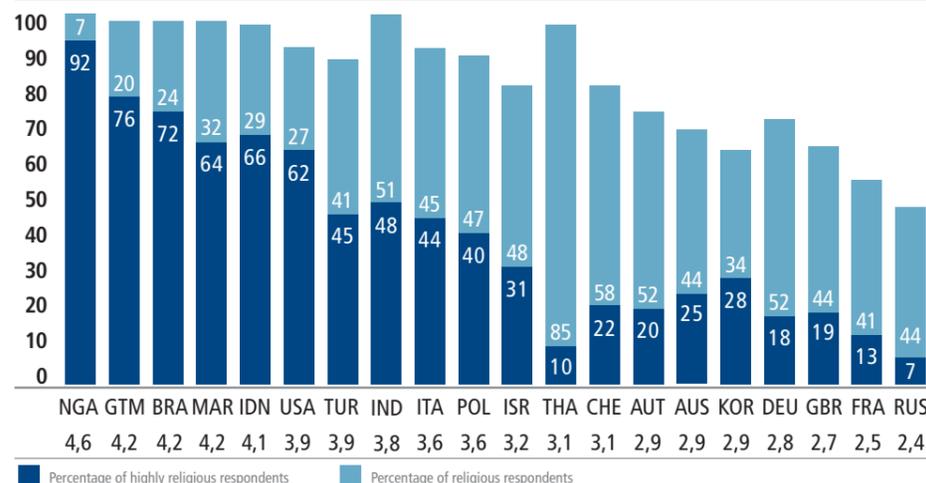
"This study reveals the truth behind many clichés surrounding the significance of faith."

Welt am Sonntag

society. Deductions can be made from them about the ramifications on social developments.

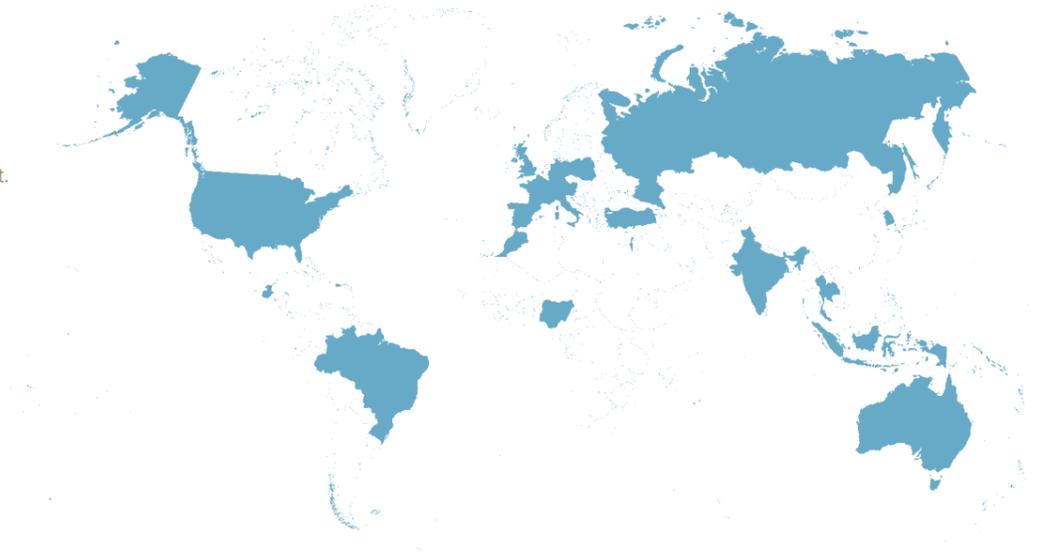
The graph on page 10 shows the percentage of 'highly religious' and 'religious' in the international survey. For more information, please refer to the publications recommended at the end of the brochure.

Percentage of highly religious and religious respondents for 20 countries



Centrality of religion averages for each country are given along the x-axis below each acronym, on a scale from one to five
 AUS=Australia, AUT=Austria, BRA=Brazil, CHE=Switzerland, DEU=Germany, FRA=France, GBR=Great Britain, GTM=Guatemala, IDN=Indonesia, IND=India, ISR=Israel, ITA=Italy, KOR=South Korea, MAR=Morocco, NGA=Nigeria, POL=Poland, RUS=Russia, THA=Thailand, TUR=Turkey, USA=United States of America

Worldwide findings: Surveys for the Religion Monitor have been carried out in all countries shaded blue on the right.



Varied Forms of Muslim Religiousness in Germany

A General Overview of the Results of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Survey

by Dr. Jörn Thielmann

The random sample takes into account socio-demographic factors such as gender division or various age groups (from 18 years) as a percentage of the overall population. The survey was weighted according to the cultural-lingual background of the interview partners. The target persons were determined by means of an onomastic process based on screening typical surnames of analyzed groups (i. e. Turkish, Bosnian, Persian, and Arabic names); this method seemed most appropriate for ensuring high representativity of the study. All interviews were conducted by phone, in the respective mother tongues of the interview partners, or in German. Many thanks are owed to TNS Emnid, in particular to Torsten Schneider-Haase, for the always reliable coordination and execution of the survey.

The Religion Monitor will be repeated at regular intervals in order to show and analyze the trends of religious development. In addition

to this representative survey, there were other qualitative polls, the results of which are not taken into account in this brochure. The quantitative and qualitative survey is supplemented by means of an online tool. Under www.religionsmonitor.com you can have your own religiousness measured. Absolutely anonymously and free of charge, you can generate your own profile of religiousness. That will show you the meaning and influence of religion and spirituality in your life. The online tool is also accessible for groups. For example, school classes or other groups can use it individually and generate their religious group profile by entering a code. This service is presently available in German, English and Turkish. Further language versions will follow.

Finally, particular thanks are owed to the many scientists and authors who have developed the Religion Monitor and analyzed or commented the results.

Introduction

Even after forty years of significant presence of Muslims in Germany, knowledge concerning the variety of Muslim life in our society is not widespread, even among scientists. The results of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's study on Muslim religiousness in Germany – the first one that has collected such differentiated and representative data on the personal religiousness of Muslims in Germany – can permanently change that and make the public aware of the variety of religious beliefs and practices of our Muslim fellow citizens.

In what follows, I will first outline the history of Muslim presence in Germany and then introduce the main results of the study in six steps (centrality and five core dimensions: intellectual dimension, ideological dimension, public religious practice, private religious practice, consequences).

Brief History of Islam in Germany and State of Research

Islam can be traced back to the 17th century in the territory of present-day Germany. In the 1920s, the first Muslim Associations were founded in Berlin, and the still existing mosque was built in Berlin-Wilmersdorf. Nevertheless, the number of Muslims in Germany has only been significant since the 1960s, when workers from Turkey, Yugoslavia, Tunisia and Morocco immigrated. Today, they number roughly 3.5 million, including approximately two million Turks. In the meanwhile, more than 800,000 Muslims have become German citizens. Exact numbers do not exist. So far, research has mainly focused on Turkish Muslims and those of Turkish origin. The present study of the Bertelsmann Stiftung widens this focus considerably.

During the first years of migration, Islam was just another religion. Little or nothing was

known about it, but it was approached neutrally or even positively (for instance, most of the first collective Muslim prayers were held in Catholic churches, including the Cologne Cathedral). That changed fundamentally when the Islamic Revolution took place in Iran in 1979 and radical, violent Islamic organizations developed in the Middle East in the 1980s. Islam was then perceived as an unenlightened and pre-modern religion that mixed faith, politics, and life-form and is resistant to secularization. This change of perspective coincided with an increasing visibility of Muslims in Germany, for example on account of the Caliphate State movement of Cemaleddin Kaplan and other organizations that were founded during that period. Islam was observed almost exclusively in its Turkish manifestations and became a problem for integration, women's rights and the welfare of children. The events of September 11, 2001 worsened this situation and added the threat of terrorism to the debate. Researchers¹ focused on the religiousness of young Turkish Muslim activists and revealed their high degree of individualization. Politicians discovered Islam as a political instrument for the integration of a section of the population that is considered problematic. Islam was now ethnicized – every migrant from a country with a Muslim majority was regarded as a Muslim, whether he was religious or not – and culturalized – Islam became the all-determining power of a Muslim culture.

The study of the Bertelsmann Stiftung on Muslim religiousness can help develop new views on Muslims in Germany and take a – perhaps surprising – look at the variety of Muslim life, beliefs and practices.

An Overview of the Results of the Study²

A total of 2,007 persons were interviewed on the phone: 1,034 men (52 percent) and 973 women (48 percent). 76 percent of the interview partners had a Turkish, 14 percent had an Arab, 6 percent had a Bosnian and 4 percent had an Iranian background.³

As far as the age structure is concerned: 31 percent of the interview partners were between 18 and 29, 34 percent were between 30 and 39, 20 percent were between 40 and 49, 8 percent were between 50 and 59, and 6 percent were above 60.

The study also collected interesting socio-demographic data: 72 percent of the interview partners have no children or not more than two (35 percent have no children!) – so they almost correspond with the German average. 8 percent have four or more children. These numbers contradict the common stereotypes of Muslim families having many children. For the first time, we also learn about the distribution of Muslims: 13 percent of them live in villages, 27 percent in small towns, 29 percent in medium-sized towns and 31 percent in big cities. So far, researchers have largely neglected Muslims in rural areas and small towns. But interestingly, the size of the town or city has no effect on the centrality and contents of religiousness.

The connection to Muslim organizations is rather weak, as is often noted in discussions on their representativeness in the context of the Deutsche Islamkonferenz [German Islam Conference]. The vast majority of the interviewed Muslims (78 percent) are not members of a religious society or association. It is also worth noting that 65 percent of the interview partners do not want an Islamic party in Germany.

The great majority of Muslims in Germany are Sunni (65 percent), which was to be expected considering the large percentage of Turks. 9 percent are Shiites, 8 percent are Alevis⁴ and 8 percent of the interview partners could not or did not want to give an answer. A surprisingly high percentage of the interview partners (11 percent) belong to another denomination within Islam that was not specified. It cannot be said whether this number includes members of Ahmadiyya Islam, mystic brotherhoods, or Syrian Alawites. Future studies should focus more on such details. It is interesting that only 57 percent of the interview partners



with an Iranian background classified themselves as Shiites and 29 percent identified themselves as Sunnis. A much higher number of Shiites was expected. Perhaps the Sunni Kurds and Baloch who make up 10 percent of the population in Iran are overrepresented in Germany. It should also be noted that 14 percent of the interview partners with an Arab background said they were Shiites, so they are probably from Lebanon or Iraq, or they belonged to the Arab minority in Iran.

Basically, this study shows that Muslims in Germany are far more religious than the average population. With its three-stage index on the centrality of religiousness (non-religious, religious, highly religious), the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Religion Monitor 2008 established that 18 percent of Germans are highly religious and 52 percent are religious, whereas 41 percent of Muslims are highly religious, and 49 percent

are religious. Only 5 percent of the interviewed Muslims consider themselves non-religious. Unlike with Germans, age and gender have no effect on the centrality of religiousness with Muslims.

Analyzed by denominations, the percentage of highly religious is largest with Sunnis, i.e. 47 percent compared to 29 percent with Shiites and 12 percent with Alevis. Alevis have the highest percentage of non-religious (21 percent compared to 2 percent of Sunnis and 9 percent of Shiites). Maybe that is because Alevis experienced decades of disintegration and has only been undergoing a revival since the 1990s in Turkey and the European diaspora, so there has been a break of tradition with a lasting effect.

If we take the migration background into account, it shows that the percentage of high-

ly religious is lowest with persons from Iran (27 percent) and Bosnia (31 percent) compared to the interview partners with a Turkish (44 percent) and Arab (37 percent) background. The percentage of non-religious is also highest with Iranians (13 percent) and Bosnians (11 percent), compared to 4 percent of the interview partners from Turkey and 5 percent of those from Arab countries. That corresponds with international analyses of religiousness with Iranians and is probably a result of the religious character of the political structures in Iran and the exile situation it causes.

Questions on the intellectual dimensions of religiousness were also compiled in a three-stage index (low, medium, high). Here, there are hardly any differences between young and old. However, women (54 percent) deal with religious questions more than men (38 per-

cent). Again, the differences between the denominations are significant: 50 percent of Sunnis, but only 34 percent of Shiites and 27 percent of Alevi deeply think about religion and are interested in religious questions.

Of course, the highly religious deal with religion most (71 percent). More than others, they also critically analyze religious teachings they agree with in principle (42 percent of them compared to an average of 32 percent). The age and gender have no effect on the critical analysis of religious teachings, nor have the migration background and denomination.

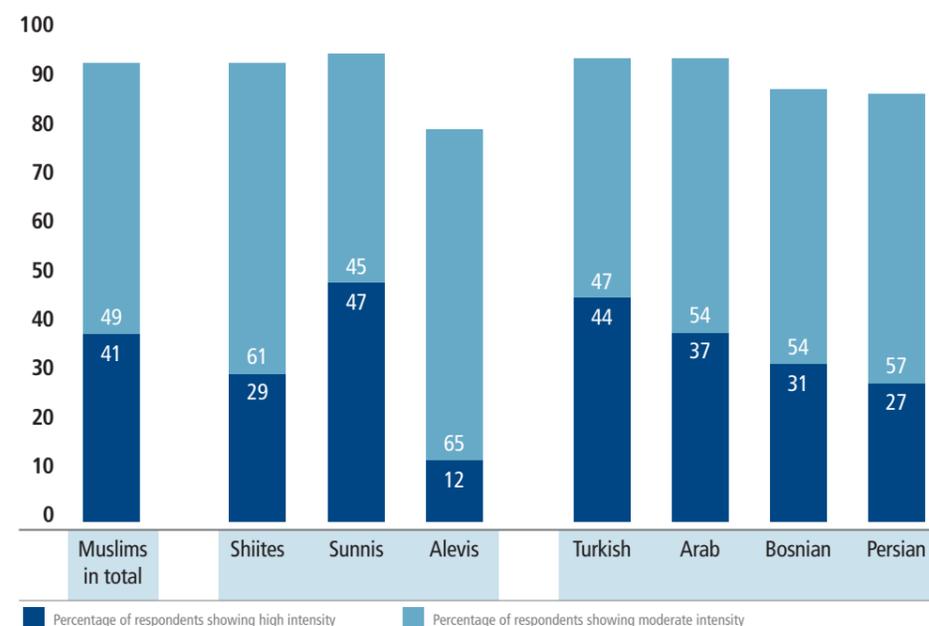
41 percent of Muslims – women a little more (45 percent) than men (38 percent) – often or very often reflect individual aspects of their religious views. Again, the highly religious are

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Centrality of religiousness, by confessions and language groups



very contemplative: 57 percent of them often or very often reconsider their religious views. Migration background, age and denomination are of no relevance in this context.

Questions on the ideological dimension of religiousness (belief in God and life after death) were also consolidated in an intensity index and display high values on the whole. An average of 78 percent of Muslims – even 93 percent of the highly religious – strongly believes in God and life after death. Again, the percentage of strong believers is highest with Sunnis (84 percent compared to 71 percent with Shiites and 48 percent with Alevi). Interestingly, however, belief in God and life after death diminishes with age: 80 percent of those under 29, but only 66 percent of those above 60 strongly believe in God or something divine and life after death.

In Germany, Muslims' faith in God is open for pluralism and tolerance: 67 percent of Muslims think there is a kernel of truth in every religion, and this percentage is even larger with highly religious Muslims (71 percent). Only 13 percent do not agree fully, or at all. 86 percent think one should be open to all religions. Only 6 % do not agree fully, or at all. But

that does not lead to syncretic beliefs: only 33 percent of all Muslims fall back on teachings of various religious traditions themselves, and 36 percent rather reject that. Again, age, gender, migration background and denomination are irrelevant here.

As far as religious questions are concerned, 52 percent of all Muslims do not believe that their own religion is more in the right and others are mistaken. Only 24 percent think Islam has a preeminent position. 36 percent of highly religious Muslims are convinced of the preeminence of their religion, but 38 percent are not.

A significantly higher number of interview partners with a Bosnian (63 percent) or Iranian (75 percent) background reject the preeminence of their own religion, and the same applies to Shiites (65 percent) and Alevi (75 percent).

Only 31 percent of all Muslims (45 percent of the highly religious) believe that especially Muslims will attain salvation. 37 percent – including 24 percent of the highly religious – reject this opinion, but Shiites (50 percent) more than Sunnis (31 percent).

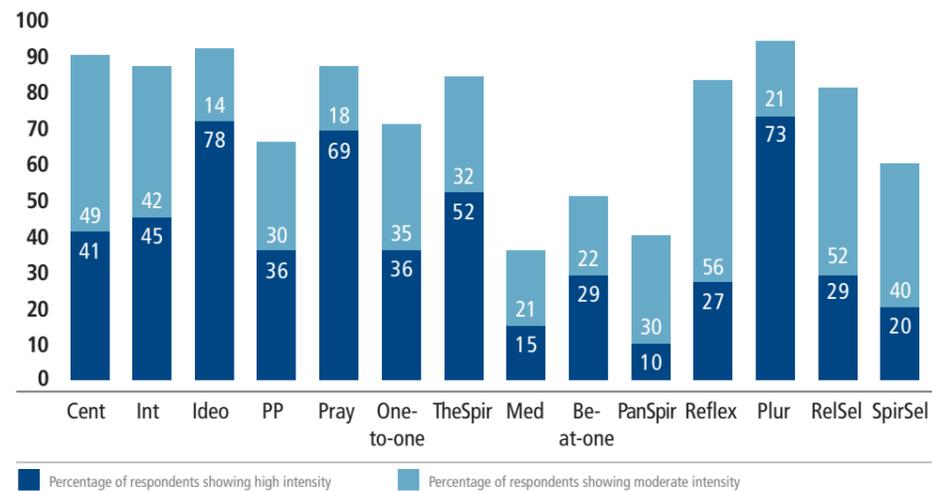
41 percent of all Muslims are not prepared to make major sacrifices for their religion. 20 percent have no firm opinion on this question. 33 percent of all Muslims are prepared to make a sacrifice. As expected, this percentage is larger (50 percent) with the highly religious, but it should be noted that almost a quarter of them would not make a major sacrifice for their religion. The number of Shiites (51 percent) and interview partners with an Iranian background (60 percent) who are not willing to make sacrifices is significantly above average. Older Muslims (especially those between 50 and 59) are far more willing to make sacrifices (43 percent) than the average.

52 percent of Muslims tend not to convert others to Islam, and 35 percent even reject doing so (this value increases significantly with age). As expected, the percentage of highly religious Muslims who try to convert others is larger (44 percent). In accordance with their religious tradition, 78 percent of Alevis reject missionary work.

The dimension of public religious practice (importance of and participation in communal/Friday prayer) was also compiled in an intensity index. Surprisingly, there is not much difference between the various age groups: 35 percent of those above 60 take part in communal or Friday prayer at least one to three times a month, compared to the overall average of 34 percent. However, the number of those who never participate increases with age (from 34 percent of those between 18 and 29 to 43 percent of those above 60). It is somewhat surprising that only 42 percent of the highly religious take part in communal or Friday prayer every week. As expected, the number of men (35 percent of all men) who take part in communal or Friday prayer every week is higher than that of women (10 percent of all women). 52 percent of women never take part in communal or Friday prayer. However, it must be pointed out that 52 percent of all Muslims rarely or never take part in communal or Friday prayer. The fact that 68 percent of Shiites rarely or never take part in communal or



Muslims of moderate or high religiousness in Germany



Percentage of respondents showing high intensity | Percentage of respondents showing moderate intensity
 Centrality of religion | Intellectual dimension | Ideological dimension (belief) | Public religious Practice | Prayer | One-to-one Experience | Theistic Spiritual paradigms | Meditation | Experience of Being-at-one with all | Pantheistic Spiritual Paradigms | Religious Reflexivity | Religious Pluralism | Religious Self-concept | Spiritual Self-concept

Friday prayer is probably because there are not many Shiite mosques, and they are distributed unevenly. Considering the religious traditions of Alevis, it is not surprising that 77 percent of them never take part in communal or Friday prayer.

Most Muslims did not only go to a single mosque last year: 14 percent of them went to two, 9 percent went to three and 13 percent went to more than three. That means 36 percent went to at least two different mosques, and 29 percent always went to the same one. However, a significantly higher number of highly religious Muslims go to several mosques: 53 percent went to at least two different ones and 23 percent even went to more than three.

If we look at private religious practice, a very strong prayer life becomes apparent: 39 percent of all Muslims (61 percent of the highly religious) perform at least one of the five obli-

gatory prayers (salat) every day. And 28 percent of all Muslims (44 percent of the highly religious) perform all five obligatory prayers. Far more Muslims with an Arab background (47 percent) pray five times a day than those with a Turkish background (26 percent). However, roughly 20 percent of Muslims do not perform the obligatory prayer.

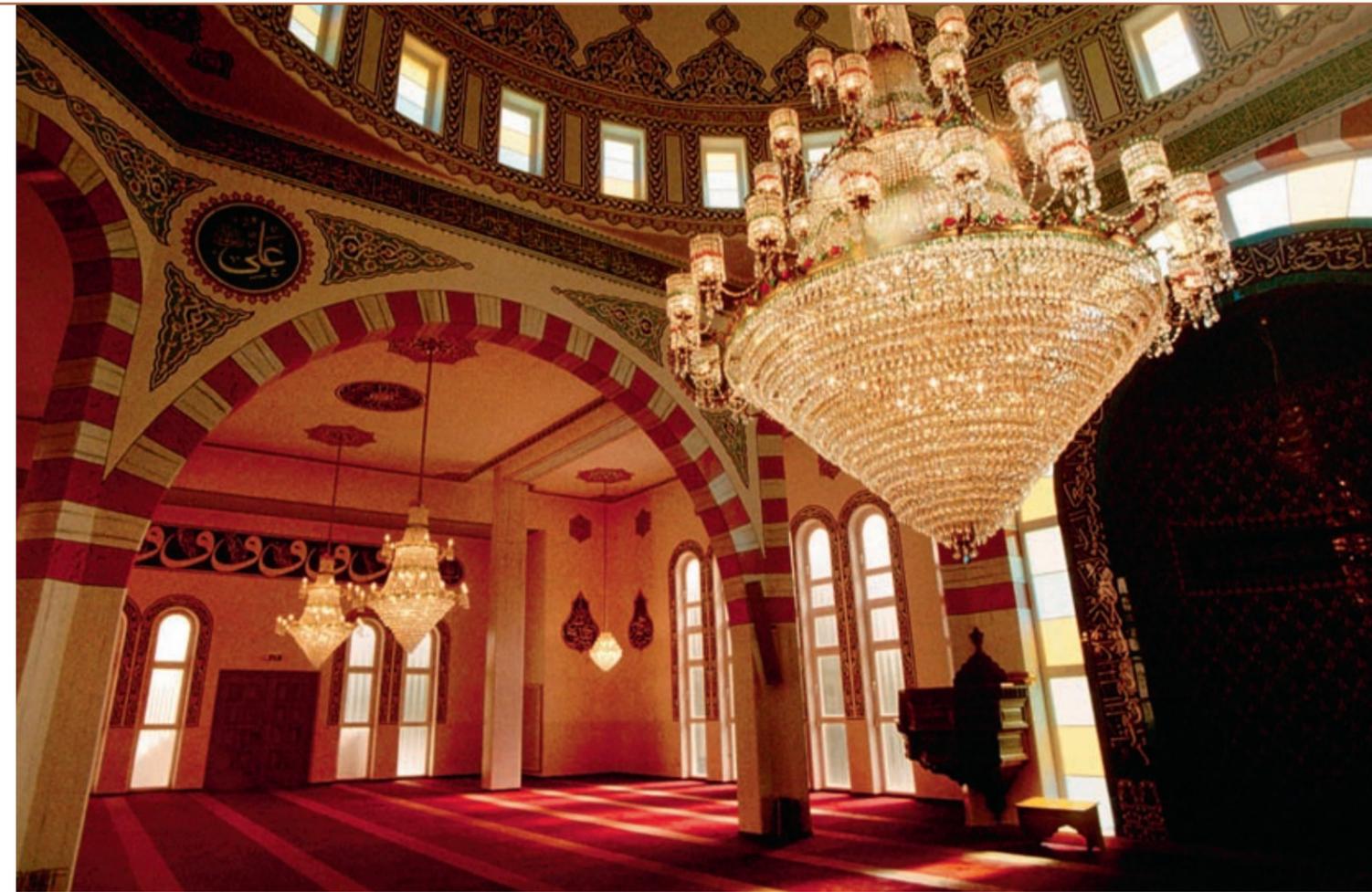
Even more Muslims partake in personal prayer (du'a): 60 percent (even 84 percent of the highly religious) pray at least once a day. The frequency of personal prayer increases with age. Only 8 percent of all Muslims never partake in personal prayer. Meditation, however, is virtually irrelevant. Only relatively few (13 percent) meditate at least once a day, but this value also increases with age. No mystical practices of Sufism can be clearly ascertained. Therefore, future studies on Muslim religiousness should focus more on personal prayer and Sufi practices.

Almost all Muslims (at least 90 percent) consider their own family with their children and spouse quite or very important; the same applies to education. Job and profession are a little less important (an average of 86 percent). On the other hand, the interest in politics is surprisingly low (only 37 percent of all Muslims find politics quite or very important, but this value increases with age). As for the consequences of religiousness, it is remarkable that there are different orders of priority for religious rules: two thirds of all Muslims (the young more than the old) consider fasting during Ramadan, pilgrimage, giving alms (zakat), dietary rules or ritual purity laws quite or very important, but only 36 percent say the same about dress regulations. Even roughly 20 percent of non-religious Muslims consider dietary or purity laws quite or very important. Therefore, it is not surprising that a vast majority abstains from pork and alcohol. That indicates a cultural overlap of religious standards and practices. The majority (53 percent) – more men (56 percent) than women (50 percent) – is not in favor of wearing a headscarf. That even includes 37 percent of the highly religious. Those below 40 are more in favor of wearing a headscarf, but the majority of those below 29 (52 percent) is against it. The effect of religiousness⁵ is strongest (quite/very) on how Muslims bring up their children (for 51 %), deal with nature (52 percent), illness (51 percent), personal crises (55 percent) or important family events (66 percent). Independ-

ent of age, gender, migration background or denomination, religiousness is less influential in matters of sexuality (36 percent), job (25 percent), partnership (45 percent), choice of a spouse (45 percent), leisure time (26 percent) and especially political views (only 16 percent!), but the more central religiousness is, the higher are the percentage numbers.

Résumé

In summary, it can be said that the religious beliefs and practices of Muslims in Germany mainly depend on how central religiousness is in their lives. However, high centrality is not bound up with rigid dogmatism or fundamentalism: highly religious Muslims in Germany are discerning and contemplative; their acceptance of religious pluralism is high, and they deal with religious consequences in everyday life rather pragmatically. If the migration background and denomination are taken into consideration, the picture of Muslim religiousness in Germany becomes varied. Sunnis are often more religious than Shiites, and people with an Iranian or Bosnian background take a more detached stance to religion. In most cases, there is not much difference between the age groups, but sometimes the young are more religious than the old. As in many other religions, women tend to be more religious than men, but do not participate in public or communal aspects of Islam to the same extent as men.



Notes

- 1 For an overview, see Thielmann, J.: Islam and Muslims in Germany: An Introductory Exploration. In: Al-Harmarneh, A. and Thielmann, J. (ed.): Islam and Muslims in Germany. Leiden 2008, p. 1–29.
- 2 On the make-up and structuring principles of the Religion Monitor as well as its concepts, cf. the contribution by Stefan Huber in Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.): Religionsmonitor 2008. Gütersloh 2007, p. 19–29.
- 3 These percentage numbers are based on weighted data, i. e. the actual number of respondents were weighted, so they correspond with the distribution of the four groups in the Federal Republic of Germany.
- 4 Unlike Sunnis, Shiites only recognize the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet, the Fourth Caliph Ali, and his descendants as legitimate leaders. Alevis are an independent religious group that reveres Ali, but has no consistent religious dogma and rejects the Five Pillars of Islam; it is disputed whether they belong to Islam. Cf. the relevant entries in Elger, R. (ed.): Kleines Islam-Lexikon. 5. aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage. Munich 2008.
- 5 Respondents who identified themselves as “not religious at all” were excluded here.

Religiousness and Enlightenment Are Not Mutually Exclusive

„For example, religion lessons should not be taken off the syllabus. They should be included. And something that cannot be ignored in this survey and should be made clear is that religion is not against education. On the contrary – religion educates people.“



Statement by Professor Dr. Rita Süßmuth on the Significance of Interreligious Dialogue

These latest results by the Religion Monitor debunk many clichés. Basically, it has shown the central areas of religiosity to be different than previously thought. What has previously been denoted as a rejection of religion or disinterest stems from empty churches. But in reality, people are much more religious than we think – and that applies throughout all age groups. People are still on that quest. People are still asking who steers their fate, whether there's a God there for them, a higher being, and what significance it has for their life.

When I saw the results on the religiosity of Muslims in Germany, six points that are extremely important for interreligious dialogue stayed with me: Firstly, up until now, we've viewed Muslim religiosity with a very political aspect although, in reality, politics and political views play a very minor role for Muslims. Secondly, religiosity plays a much stronger role in everyday situations and lives of Muslims, with varying emphases of course, but it is therefore especially important for the existential aspects of life. The third point is that religious education is of high importance to Muslims, while on the other hand, there is no consistent instrumentalization of the professional field by religion – religion there plays a rather reserved role. The fourth point is that the religious field is made up of a high proportion of 18 to 29-year olds. That's conspicuous throughout the entire complex of religious questions, so one cannot speak of people turning their backs on religion. The fifth point is that in spite of what we believe, great value is placed on education, and not only among men. And six: the study contradicts the prejudicial belief in Germany that Muslims have a lot of children. 56 percent, which constitutes the largest group, have between one and two children. Only 30 percent have three children.

What do all these conclusions mean for interreligious dialogue? That religiosity and enlightenment are not mutually exclusive at all, but rather that religiosity has far-reaching significance for all parts of society. That's why it's important for us to keep a firm grip on interreligious dialogue and not to forget how the population that lives here thinks. We owe it to them. We have to work harder to dispel the usual prejudices with facts. In addition, the openness to other religions stands out. Exclusion can no longer be acceptable; we have to ask, "What connects us, what can we learn from one another?"

We often ask ourselves where these people get their strength. From joy, hope, gratitude! All of these things are central to their daily life. And then there is the high value that is placed on love. These things emphasised by the study must be made as clear as possible and passed on to the relevant people. For example, religion lessons should not be taken off the syllabus. They should be included. And something that cannot be ignored in this survey and should be made clear is that religion is not against education. On the contrary – religion educates people. And on the basis of this new information, we should ask ourselves how the interreligious and intercultural dialogue that is being practiced in politics can be built on. Anyone who is ignorant of their own religion can neither understand anyone else's nor defend their own.

Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth was the German Minister for Youth, Family, Women and Health from 1985 to 1988 and Speaker of the German Bundestag from 1988 to 1998. From 2002 to 2004, she was the Chairwoman of the Sachverständigenrat für Zuwanderung und Integration [Board of Experts on Immigration and Integration in Germany].

Sunnis and Shiites in Germany

A Brief Analysis of the Results of the Study
by the Bertelsmann Stiftung

by Prof. Dr. Peter Heine and Riem Spielhaus

The public and scientific interest in followers of Islam in Germany that started in the 1980s and has increased ever since, has led to a few very limited quantitative studies, but mainly to qualitative research focused on Muslims in this country. Often, the need for nationwide quantitative empirical surveys has been emphasized on various sides, in particular because numbers on minorities among the population play a major role in the development, shaping, and legitimation of political strategies. This study on Muslimas and Muslims in Germany differs from other parts of the Religion Monitor with regard to its political impact, especially since surveys of this kind usually leave considerable scope for the most diverse interpretations.

The following explanations refer to the information concerning denominations polled in the Religion Monitor. The central question is whether there are differences in the core dimensions of religiousness that correlate with the affiliation of the interview partners with different religious currents within Islam. In other words, this study aims to determine whether religious practice, theological beliefs, and the relevance of religion to everyday life are a function of Islamic subgroups. As we will see, denominations can hardly be separated from migration backgrounds, so the differences between the denominations cannot all be

attributed to theological views and practice. The Religion Monitor compiles the self-assessments and self-reports of the interview partners. This form of quantitative study, however, does not clearly indicate the motivation behind the statements or the actions inquired about.

Denominations in the Religion Monitor

The Religion Monitor asked whether the interview partners were Sunnis, Shiites or Alevis. Of the interviewed Muslimas and Muslims in Germany, 9 percent classified themselves as Shiites, 65 percent as Sunnis and 8 percent as Alevis. A remarkable percentage (19 percent) of all interview partners did not classify themselves with any of the denominations listed, but answered “other denomination” (11 percent) or “don’t know/no answer” (8 percent). More than a third (36 percent) of the Bosnian interview partners, but only 13 percent of those of Iranian origin did not classify themselves with any of the denominations. Although—or perhaps because—the concept of a duality between Shia Islam and Sunni Islam dominates the academic and political discourse on Islam, the discourse is thwarted by a polarization of counteracting movements within Islam.

Prof. Dr. Peter Heine

is professor at the philosophical faculty and chairman of the examining board of the institute of Asian and African studies, both at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. His main research areas include Islam in Germany and the Sunni-Shiite conflict.



Riem Spielhaus

is an Islamic scholar at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. The organizational forms and religious practices of Muslims in Germany are her main research area. As a scientific expert, she is a member of the discussion group of the Deutsche Islamkonferenz.



Similar differences in the identification with Islamic denominations were ascertained in the Religion Monitor surveys in several countries with a significant Muslim population.¹ The self-identification as a Sunni or Shiite only played a role in countries where this classification was connected to political mobilization in sociopolitical conflicts. The answers of Muslimas and Muslims in countries in Asia and Africa revealed a different degree of awareness as well as religious and cultural relevance of denominational affiliation.

The high number of those who say they belong to other denominations points to further connections on a religious level; that might be mystic movements, Islamic schools of jurisprudence, or transnational networks and religious groups that have acquired global significance over the past decades. As for Germany, it can therefore be ascertained that the significance of the polarization between Sunnis and Shiites or the affiliation with Islamic denomi-

nations is more limited or complex than generally believed.

Migration Background

The correlations between the migration background and the denomination of the interviewed Muslims in Germany are worth further examination. They echo the regional distribution of Islamic denominations in the countries of emigration. 68 percent of the people of Turkish origin, 65 percent of the interview partners with an Arab background, and 51 percent of the Bosnian interview partners are Sunnis. More than half (57 percent) of the interview partners from Iran are Shiites. Some interview partners with a Bosnian or Arab background said they were Alevis, but the absolute majority of Alevis have a Turkish background. A total of 9 percent of the interview partners of Turkish origin in Germany, but only 3 percent of the interview partners in Turkey professed Alevism. In all probab-

ity, that cannot be put down to methodical weaknesses of the survey (e. g. concerning the dispersion of the survey participants, or selective readiness of certain groups to participate) alone.

These deviations can be interpreted as a confirmation of qualitative surveys which reveal that the religious minority with a Turkish origin in Germany has, on the one hand, a greater feeling of security and religious freedom compared to people in Turkey, and on the other hand, stronger group identification in their double minority position as migrants. Another explanation might be that members of minorities were more ready to emigrate and took the chance to leave Turkey when foreign workers were recruited. Moreover, there were many Alevis among the political refugees who sought protection in Germany in the 1980s. The remarkably high percentage (29 percent) of the interview partners with an Iranian background who classify themselves as Sunnis can be explained similarly. According to official figures, less than 10 percent of the population in Iran is Sunni. Here, it is again likely that

more Iranians who belong to a religious minority went abroad. With regard to the centrality of religiousness, which will be dealt with in the next section, it is also relevant that, at least for some of the interview partners from certain countries (e.g. Iran and Turkey), the motivation behind the emigration was the quest for more religious freedom. They either wanted the freedom to pursue a different religious practice, or no religion at all.

Centrality of Religiousness

Based on the answers to the questions concerning the five dimensions of religiousness – religious reflexivity, faith, communal religious practice (congregational prayer), private religious practice (prayer) and experience of God – the Religion Monitor makes it possible to assign the interview partners to one of three categories regarding the centrality of religiousness (non-religious, religious and highly religious).

Based on the classification according to items, Alevis have the highest percentage of non-



Denomination within Islam Which denomination do you belong to? Are you...?

	total	migration background				centrality of religiousness		
		Turkish	Bosnian	Iranian	Arab	non-religious	religious	highly religious
basis (=100%)	2007	1525	118	81	283	100	985	829
Shiite	9	6	7	57	14	16	11	6
Sunni	65	68	51	29	65	31	59	74
Alevi	8	9	5	1	2	32	10	2
or do you belong to another denomination?	11	11	17	8	9	8	11	11
Don't know, no answer	8	7	19	5	10	13	9	7
total		100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: The table is to be read from top to bottom

religious interview partners (21 percent), followed by Shiites (9 percent) and only 2 percent with Sunnis. Whereas the latter have the highest number of highly religious (47 percent), around four times more than the Alevis (12 percent). The Shiite interview partners are roughly in the middle with 29 percent highly religious members. Almost two thirds of the Alevis (65 percent) and only four percent less Shiites (61 percent) can be classified as religious. However, that does not mean that denominations themselves determine the centrality of religion. Especially here, the correlations between centrality of religiousness, migration background and denomination must be taken into account. More than half of the interview partners of Iranian origin are Shiites, and the

percentage of Iranians among the Shiites is also high. Hence, it cannot clearly be said which influencing factors are stronger: migration motivation, ethnicity or denomination.

A large majority of the polled Muslims in Germany can be classified as religious or very religious (90 percent). However, far less (66.5 percent) engage in a communal religious practice with medium or high intensity. On the other hand, private religious practice in the form of daily prayer is quite common. A third of all interview partners pray at least 2-4 times a day, and 28 percent say they perform all five obligatory prayers.

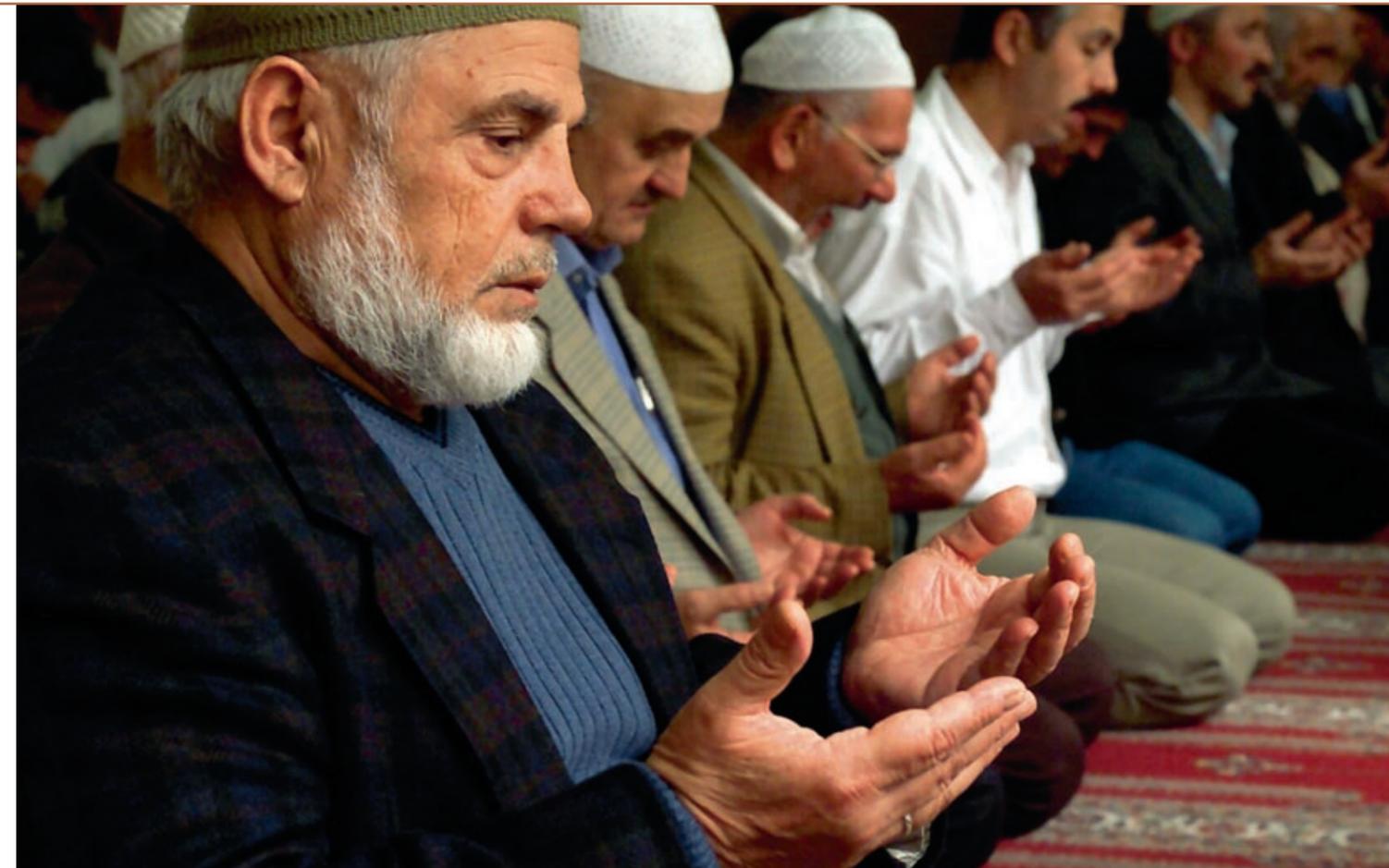
Religious Upbringing

Two thirds of the Shiites (65 percent) and Sunnis (73 percent) respectively, but not even one third of the interviewed Alevis (27 percent) answer the question whether they were brought up religiously in the affirmative. Here, a strong connection between the denomination and the perception of one's own upbringing can be made out. In this context, it is remarkable that a correlation between upbringing and centrality of religiousness can also be established. While 81 percent of the highly religious had a religious upbringing, 79 percent of the non-religious say they did not.

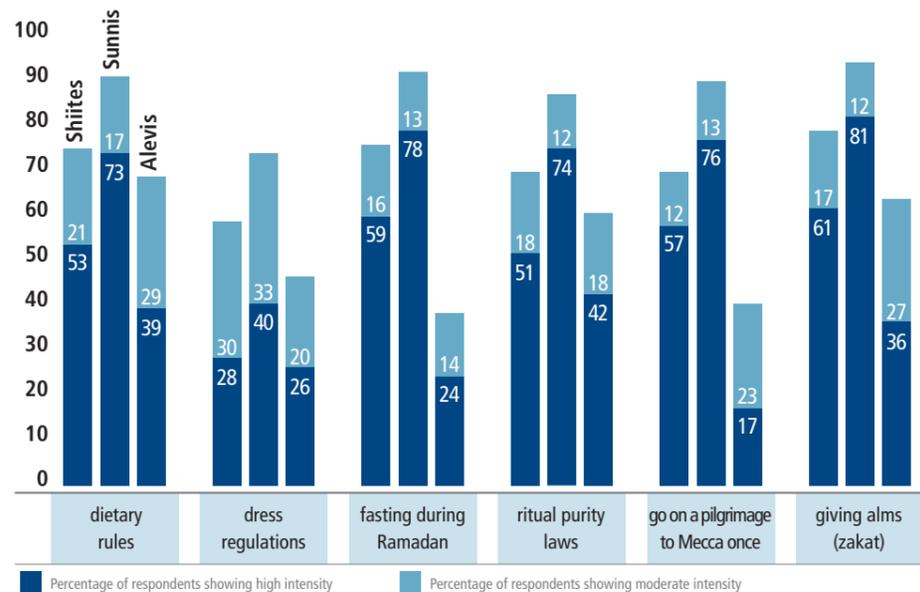
Importance of Religious Rules and Rituals

The set of questions concerning religious duties in Islam included in the survey is interesting from the perspective of Islamic studies. For the majority of the interview partners, giving alms is most important of all, even if only half as many Alevis (36 percent) as Sun-

nis (81%) consider it very or quite important to pay zakat. Among the Shiites, 62 percent answered this way. The synonymous commandments of fasting during Ramadan and purity rules rank second among the religious duties for Sunnis and Shiites alike. The pilgrimage to Mecca and the adherence to dietary rules rank third and are of equal importance to the Sunni and Shiite interview partners. Sunnis and Shiites consider dress regulations least important among the religious commandments. Only 40 percent of the Sunnis, 28 percent of the Shiites and 26 percent of the Alevis said they were quite or very important to them. However, the views on dress rules vary, as the answers to the question concerning the compulsory headscarf show. A third of the Sunnis, a quarter of the Shiites and six percent of the Alevis think a Muslima should wear a headscarf. In the eyes of the Alevi interview partners, the commandments had a different order of importance than in those of the Shiites and Sunnis: following zakat, the purity rules are most important to them; third come



Importance of religious rules and rituals, by confessions



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the dietary commandments followed by dress rules and fasting during Ramadan. The pilgrimage to Mecca ranks fifth. Still, 40 percent of the Alevis want to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their life. Thus, Shiites and Sunnis have similar priorities regarding the importance of commandments, but Sunnis consider each of them more important than the Shiite interview partners. Alevis differ by assigning less importance to the commandments and by setting different priorities.

Personal and Communal Prayer

Personal prayer plays an important role in the religious practice of half the Alevi and Shiite interview partners and two thirds of the Sunni interview partners. Only half of them or even less consider congregational prayer very important. Merely ten percent of the Alevis display a high, and another ten percent

display a medium level of communal religious practice. As far as Alevi interview partners are concerned, differences in the religious practice of the denomination were hardly taken into account in the questions, so the degree to which the answers mirror the religious practice cannot be determined.² But the significance of the differences makes it seem likely that personal practice plays a far greater role than communal religious practice, and Sunnis again display significantly more intensity here than Shiites and Alevis.

There is less difference between the answers of Shiites, Sunnis and Alevis to questions concerning the consumption of alcohol or pork (independent of the intensity of their faith). Half of the Alevis say they rarely or never drink alcohol, and less than ten percent of the Shiites and Alevis often drink alcohol. That applies to less than five percent of the Sunnis.

Double as many Shiites as Sunnis, and four times as many Alevis as Sunnis occasionally drink alcohol. The majority of the interview partners of all denominations do not eat pork. However, ten percent of Shiites and Alevis respectively, but only one percent of Sunnis often or very often eat pork.

Implications of Religious Beliefs for the General Lifestyle

All things considered, it can be ascertained that the awareness of belonging to Islam strongly influences very personal aspects in the lives of Muslims (upbringing, marriage, family, relationship to nature, reaction to personal crises and changes), whereas working life, leisure time and political views are less affected by religion. However, differences can be made out between the members of different denominations. The number of Shiite interview partners who assign a high or very high relevance to religion in the spheres of life inquired

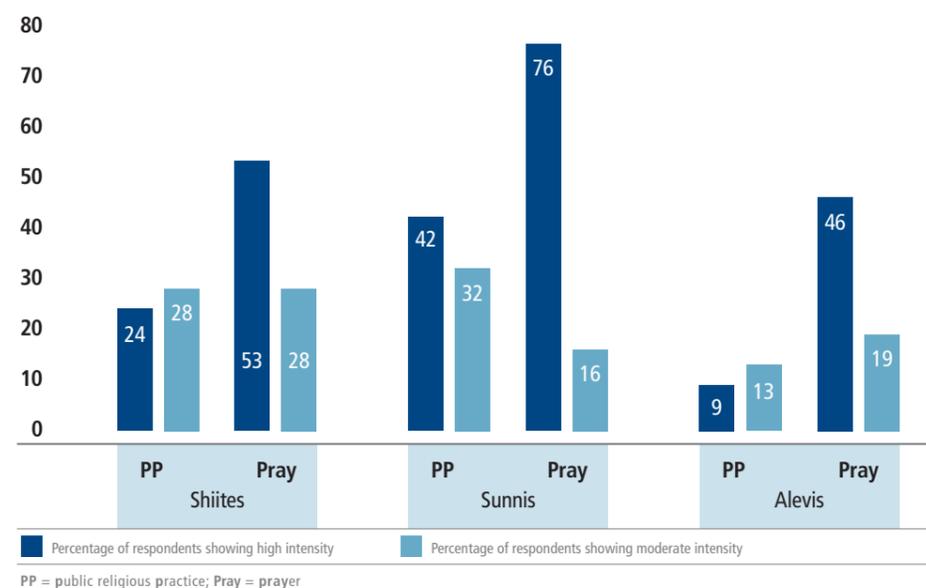
about is always a few percent lower than that of the Sunni interview partners. The Alevi interview partners differ far more. All in all, religion is highly relevant for the general lifestyle of Sunnis (except for job, leisure time and political views). That applies to a lower, but still predominant percentage of the Shiite interview partners. The majority of Alevis rate the influence of their religion on their lifestyle as low.

The Importance of Individual Spheres of Life

The vast majority of the interview partners in all denominations consider family and children quite or very important. In conformity with the statements on religious practice and religious reflexivity, more than half of the Sunnis and one third of the Shiites say that religion is very important to them. For only 13 percent of the Alevis, religion plays a very important role, and this self-assessment also corresponds



Public and private practice (prayer), by confessions



with the other data collected in the survey. The sphere of politics, however, is important to a larger number of Alevis. Ten percent more Alevi interview partners (30 percent) than Shiites and Sunnis (20 percent) say that politics are very important to them.

In summary, it can be said that the main differences between Shiites and Sunnis concern the intensity and centrality of religiousness. That is confirmed by a comparison with a third denomination, the Alevis. The analysis of denominations and migration backgrounds in the Religion Monitor also shows a disproportionate distribution of religious groups in relation to the distribution in the countries of origin. Quantitatively, it can be shown here that minorities within Islam (e.g. Sunnis of Iranian origin) account for a higher percentage of Muslims in Germany than in their countries of origin.

Notes

- 1 See comparative evaluation of the Religion Monitor on Indonesia, Israel, Morocco, Nigeria, and Turkey. Three quarters of the interview partners in Nigeria and almost two thirds of the interview partners in Indonesia said they belonged to a denomination other than those listed.
- 2 The questions concerning fasting and mosque attendance do not take the special characteristics of Alevis into account. Alevis follow other fasting rules than Sunnis and Shiites, and they call their prayer room 'cemevi' instead of 'mosque'. For instance, it remains unclear whether the interview partners took 'mosque' as a synonym for 'cemevi' or did not answer the question in the affirmative although they regularly attend cemevis and other Alevi community centers.

Alevis in Germany

Commentary on the Data of the Survey Muslims in Germany

by Prof. Dr. Martin Sökefeld

Prof. Dr. Martin Sökefeld

is (as of October 2008) professor at the institute of ethnology at Universität München. His main research areas are identity theory, politics, diaspora and transnationalism, Muslim groups and societies. He is specialized on the regions Europe and Turkey as well as South Asia (Pakistan, Kashmir).



The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Religion Monitor on Muslims in Germany is the first study that supplies quantitative data on Alevis in Germany. Alevis are a religious cultural minority that has only recently been the focus of scientific and – albeit less – public attention. Starting in the 13th century, a period of social upheavals in Anatolia, Alevism developed from political-religious protest movements. It incorporates elements of Shia Islam and Sufi teachings, but presumably also pre-Islamic Shamanism and Christian thought. Alevis – then called Kızılbaş (redheads) – were regarded as heterodox apostates and, at times, severely persecuted by Sunni Islam which was dominant in the Ottoman Empire. Most of them retreated to hardly accessible mountainous regions and did not disclose their religious identity. Only in the past few decades has this practice of takiya, hiding one's religious affiliation, largely been given up. Even today, Alevis are not recognized as a religious community in Turkey. Alevi rituals were long forbidden. To a certain extent, stigmatizing prejudices are still maintained against Alevis today. Social change in Turkey, especially the domestic migration to

large cities, has dissolved the traditional social organization of Alevis for the most part. A few decades ago, Alevism has started to re-institutionalize in the form of associations.

The Importance of Religion for Alevis

Alevis have been immigrating to Germany since the mid 1960s as workers, like other people from Turkey. The actual number of Alevis in Turkey and Germany is unknown, because censuses do not cover affiliation to Alevism in either of the two countries. According to estimates, there are between 300,000 and 700,000 Alevis in Germany.

In Germany, too, Alevis initially practiced takiya. Along with the development in Turkey – and closely connected to it—an Alevi movement developed in Germany in the 1980s with numerous new associations. Today, there are approximately 150 Alevi associations in Germany, and more than two thirds of them are consolidated in the parent organization Alevitische Gemeinde Deutschland based in Cologne.

In general, religion plays a rather subordinate role in the lives of Alevis. Alevis are strongly secularized. In the seventies and eighties, Alevis were significantly influenced by left-wing views, so many of them no longer interpreted Alevism as a 'religion', but a (non-religious) 'culture'. Alevi beliefs and religious practices are radically different from those of orthodox Islam, be it Sunni or Shia. Like Shiites, Alevis also revere the family of the prophet and the Twelve Imams, but they reject sharia and consider most of the 'five pillars' of Islam non-binding. Fasting during Ramadan, Islamic prayer, and pilgrimage to Mecca are of no importance to them. Alevi beliefs center on notions of the unity of God and creation. Alevism is a deeply undogmatic religion. There is no central authority that would determine dogmas or issue binding interpretations. Texts hardly play a role because Alevi thought has been handed down orally, so various regional differences have developed. Instead of praying five times a day, as prescribed by Islam, Alevis are supposed to meet once a year for a communal ritual called cem. Cem is a kind of antithesis to the obligatory Islamic prayer: women

and men take part together, music and ritual dance (semah) play a core role and the rite is concluded by a joint meal.

The Results of the Religion Monitor

Much of the Religion Monitor data confirms the image of a strongly secularized community for which religion does not play a major role. According to the results of the study, Alevis do not reflect religious issues as often as members of the other polled denominations, for instance. The vast majority of Alevis said they were not brought up religiously (71 percent), they rarely or never read religious books (70 percent) and hardly abide by religious commandments in their everyday lives (59 percent). Only few Alevis (7 percent) believe that their religion is more in the right than others when it comes to important issues, and only 13 percent classify themselves as quite or very religious. According to the summarized index of the Religion Monitor on the centrality of religion, 21 percent of Alevis are not religious at all, 65 percent are religious to a medium degree, and

only 12 percent can be considered highly religious. The index on public religious practice conveys a similar picture: 75 percent of Alevis are rated low (practice is of little importance), 13 percent as medium and only 9 percent as high. In all these numbers, Alevis significantly differ from Sunnis and (albeit less) Shiites, for whom religion is far more important. It also becomes clear that Alevism is not a missionary religion: only 9 percent of the interviewed Alevis try to convert others to their religion, compared to 23 percent of Shiites and 31 percent of Sunnis. Hence, the broad trend of the data confirms what qualitative studies on Alevis in Germany have already established.

Still, there are some surprising deviations from this general picture that, from my point of view, call for explanations. For instance, 26 percent of Alevis consider dress regulations important – but there are no specific dress regulations in Alevism beyond what is considered appropriate by regular European standards. 24 percent of Alevis consider fasting during Ramadan important, although it is not a religious command-

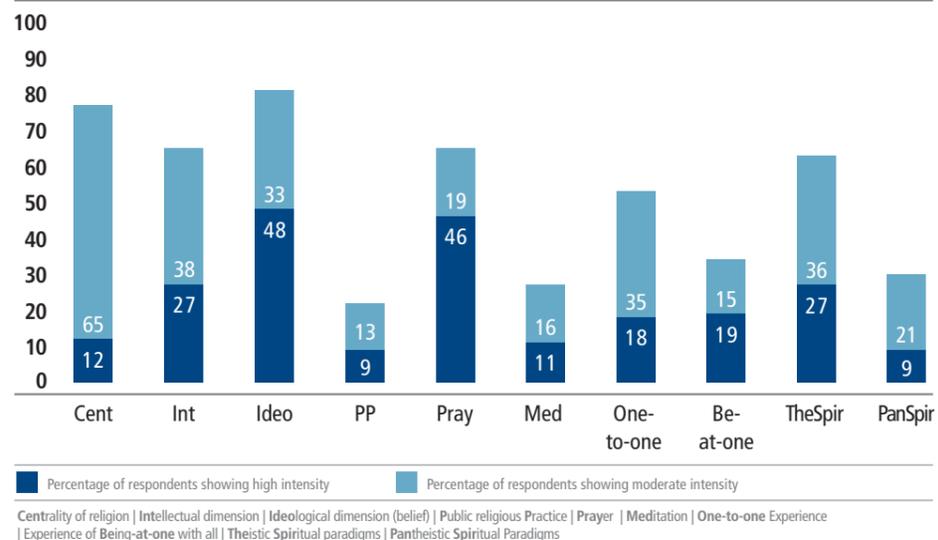
ment in Alevism. And an equally surprising 17 percent of Alevis say pilgrimage to Mecca is important to them. For 15 percent, participation in communal prayer / Friday prayer is generally important, and for 19 percent Muslim obligatory prayer is significant. 5 percent said they actually participate in communal prayer, and 2 percent claimed to pray five times a day. According to the survey, 5 percent of Alevis even said women should wear a headscarf, although Alevis always refer to the rejection of the headscarf – and the irrelevance of the pilgrimage, fasting during Ramadan and Muslim prayer – as a main difference to Sunni Islam.

The relatively significant percentage of deviations from the general picture of Alevism contradicts my experience gathered over years of research on Alevis in Germany.

Of course, there are always religious ‘eccentrics’ who do not act and think like most of their co-religionists, and there are surely Alevis who fast during Ramadan or want to go on a



Centrality of religiousness and core dimensions with Alevis



pilgrimage to Mecca. A certain feeling of uncertainty vis-à-vis the massive pressure sometimes exerted by Sunni Islam – Alevi organizations always complain about Sunni assimilation attempts – might also play a role. And there are also Alevis who have converted to Sunni Islam, or whose forefathers have converted, but still call themselves Alevis. But that surely does not explain why almost a quarter of the interviewed persons who identified themselves as Alevis consider fasting during Ramadan important.

What other explanations are there? First, it should be clarified what the survey means by the terms ‘Alevis’ and ‘Alevism’. The initially described Anatolian Alevis who have emigrated from Turkey form by far the largest group of people called ‘Aleviten’ in Germany. But

there are other traditions and groups that use the same term. In Syria, for instance, there is the community of Alawites, and the name of the current Moroccan royal family is ‘Alaouite Dynasty’. The spelling is not the same, but the slightly different name is not noticed during an oral/phone interview. The Syrian president belongs to the Syrian Alawites, also referred to as Nusayrīs. Their religious views differ radically from those of Anatolian Alevism. The Syrian Alawites practice religious secrecy; only the initiated have access to their occult doctrine, and little of it is publicly known. In addition to their specific rites, Alawites also practice the ‘regular’ Muslim rites such as the obligatory prayer and fasting during Ramadan, unlike the Alevis. There are, in fact, Alawites from Syria in Germany, most of whom emigrated to the former GDR.

Indeed, the category ‘Alevi’ in the Religion Monitor is heterogeneous, as far as the migration background is concerned: only an estimated 90 percent of the interview partners are from Turkey. Others who also call themselves ‘Alevi’ have stated a Bosnian, Iranian or ‘Arab’ background.² There is also an Alawite minority that follows Syrian traditions in the Hatay Province, in the border area between Turkey and Syria.

Still, the roughly ten percent of Alawites who are not from Turkey cannot explain why almost a quarter of Alevi consider fasting during Ramadan important. There are bound to be some Anatolian Alevi in this quarter.

The Anatolian Alevi (to cut things short, I will hereinafter simply refer to them as ‘Alevi’ again) have their own fasting period, not in the Islamic month of Ramadan, but in the month of Muharram. The Muharram fasting, which is also important to Shiites, commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussain and his companions in the year 680 at Karbala. It is very different from the fasting during Ramadan: Alevi observe a fast for only twelve days, and they do not abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sunset, but only avoid certain dishes. However, only very few Alevi practice this fasting strictly. Most of them make do with a few days of abstinence, if at all.

During interviews, Alevi implicitly assume that the interviewer is not familiar with Alevism, as I know from my own research experience. They often answer ‘Sunni’ questions in an ‘Alevi’ manner. Hence, it is well possible that Alevi think of Muharram fasting when asked about Ramadan fasting, because Ramadan does not count for them anyway. A similar mechanism might account for some of the answers that refer to communal prayer / Friday prayer as being important. The questionnaire asked about ‘communal prayer or Friday prayer’, but Alevi might very well have been in mind when they hear ‘communal prayer’ and answer accordingly.

The low percentage of Alevi among the interview partners from Turkey is also surprising: only about 9 percent of the interview partners with a Turkish background identified themselves as Alevi. The stratified random sample was only based on a small number of interview partners and is therefore subject to statistical chance and cannot be taken as a basis for projecting the number of Alevi in Germany, but the significant deviation from the usual estimates still calls for an explanation. Perhaps *takiya*, hiding one’s religious affiliation, still retains some importance and the Alevi interview partners did not all identify themselves as such. However, it is more significant that the survey procedure probably systematically sorted out part of the Alevi, because affiliation to Islam was referred to in the first step, and affiliation to Alevism in the second. The survey – in particular the questionnaire – was based on the clear assumption that Alevism is part of Islam. But that is hotly disputed among Alevi in Germany, especially nowadays. Particularly the parent organization *Alevitische Gemeinde Deutschland* regards Alevism as an independent religion that does not belong to Islam. That can be explained by the fact that the historical relations between Alevism and ‘orthodox’ Islam (for centuries, Alevi were not acknowledged as Muslims anyway) have always been charged with tension, and the currently prevailing image of Islam is extremely negative. Not all Alevi think Alevism does not belong to Islam (in a survey I conducted some years ago among members of Alevi associations in Hamburg, 37 percent were of this opinion), but those who do are usually strongly convinced and defend their position vehemently. It is very likely that many of Alevi who think this way did not classify themselves as Muslims and therefore dropped out of the survey.³ That reduces the number of Alevi who are very critical towards Islamic practices (Ramadan, obligatory prayer etc.) in the survey. Since especially the associations that belong to the Alevi community think Alevism is not part of Islam (and even they do not all agree), it would be interesting to find out whether



membership in an association affects the answers concerning Ramadan, obligatory prayer, pilgrimage etc. But the stratified random sample of Alevi is very small, and such a correlation would not be statistically convincing, so this question was not evaluated.

Conclusion

The study has produced very interesting data. However, these data do not necessarily convey a thoroughly realistic picture of the views and practices of (Anatolian) Alevi in Germany.

Notes

- ¹ To simplify matters, I have summarized the two categories ‘quite important’ and ‘very important’ in the survey as ‘important’.
- ² A number of Afghan interview partners were probably also included in the ‘Arab origin’ group, because there is no category of ‘others’ regarding the migration background.
- ³ The randomly selected participants in the study were asked whether they belong to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, another religious community or none at all. The interview was only continued with those who professed Islam in this question.

Interviews



“Religions Are the Cement that Holds a Society Together”

Interview with Prof. Dr. Abdullah Takim on the results of the Turkish-speaking group

Professor Dr. Abdullah Takim was born in Istanbul in 1972. He took oriental studies, Islamic studies and philosophy at Bochum and has been a guest lecturer for Islamic religion in Frankfurt am Main since 2007.



Did any of the results surprize you?

No, the high levels of religiosity didn't surprize me because throughout history, Muslims have always been very religious and since the 1970s, there has been a re-Islamization of Islamic countries, which of course has political reasons. The high levels of religiosity can also be explained by the migration of Muslims to Germany and the resulting diaspora situation. In addition, you have of course the worldwide boom of interest in religion generally.

Why is faith “fashionable” again?

Firstly, religiosity was gauged for a long time by whether a person belonged to a church or other religious institution. But we've come to see, with the help of the Religion Monitor among others, that religion is more than that. It has to do with culture, tradition and upbringing. In times of globalization, people seek something with more meaning because material things alone aren't enough.

What does that mean for the high religiosity of Turkish-speaking Muslims?

When they come to Germany, they suddenly find themselves in an alien environment. The intellectual luggage they carry is their language, tradition and the Islamic religion. It's a cultural system of values that they cling to and orient themselves by until they find their way. Religion gives a person their identity and shapes their life.

What role does it play in integration?

The results of the Religion Monitor show that openness to other religions is very high. I think that religions – when they're understood and practiced correctly – can become the cement of society. Religion has an integrating function, but only when the majority in society accepts Muslims and their culture and system of values.

And do they?

To be frank, the majority in society does not have a good knowledge of Islam. By the same token, Muslims know too little about German society, their culture and history. That is only changing slowly.

What problems does that cause?

One problem is that those Muslims educated here aren't accepted on the labor market despite a very good education. So gradually, the academic elite returns to their native country. There are problems with those that stay behind because there are no more multipliers and mediators. That is why German society must open up and allow Muslims to carry responsibility. It's only when you carry responsibility that you are part of a society.

Do the facts that have emerged from the Religion Monitor shed light on any solutions?

The survey has created a better foundation for determining whether a problem has to do with religion, tradition or the social situation in Germany.

What kind of concrete solutions do you envisage?

It could help solve problems in the health sector. The poll shows that Muslims are very religious. If these sensitivities were recognized by hospitals for example with the establishment of a mosque, then Muslims would feel accepted by German society. This acceptance would help doctors and patients to work better together. It would show that patient treatment that is sensitive to religion was of importance.

“We Need to Consider the Reality of Muslims’ Lives”

Interview with Dr. Mustafa Cerić on the survey results for the Bosnian language group

Dr. Mustafa Cerić was born in Visoko, Bosnia, in 1952. After studying theology and philosophy at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, he went to the United States as an imam, earned his doctorate in Chicago and returned to his homeland in the late 1980s, serving as imam in Gračanica and Zagreb as well as teaching at the University of Sarajevo. During the siege of the city between 1992 and 1996, Cerić became a symbol of Bosnian resistance. Today he is the Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



What was your first impression of this study?

I think its findings provide an accurate picture of the attitudes of Bosnian Muslims toward religion. These people are very religious and believe in God, but they attach less importance to practicing their religion. Just like the Europeans.

What role does tradition play in this context?

I find it surprising that Muslims eat pork, and that they attach so much importance to the Zakah tax, the obligatory donation given to the needy. Unfortunately I am not surprised by their alcohol consumption.

You would prefer that Muslims do more to preserve their religious culture?

Certainly, I want them to maintain their religious and cultural identity. But I am proud that some 80 percent of all Bosnian Muslims are open to other religions and cultures. That is important for achieving integration. It is a middle course between assimilation and isolation. I am not in favor of assimilation, which means a loss of identity and being ashamed of one’s origins, nor of isolation, which cuts people off from the society of their host country. Above all, it is important to respect the laws of the host country. Second, people have to learn the language. Third, we need to be of use to the society in which we live.

What role do values play?

Muslims arrive from Eastern countries with only a suitcase. After a while they find a job and a place to live. They find themselves changing, while at the same time they discover their own identity. They undergo

soul-searching. They need our help as they struggle to reconcile memories of their childhood and homeland with the new realities they find in European society. That is a challenge for us all.

The problem, then, is to bring people of different cultural origins together.

That’s right. In my experience, Muslims are very fine people. However, they live in fear and anxiety. European society expects them to behave in a certain way, while Eastern society has very different expectations. The result is sometimes a kind of dual personality, which these people find very difficult.

The greatest challenge for European Muslims is to reclaim, in their faith, their self-respect and self-confidence, so that they are comfortable in their own skin. It will be a long time before we will arrive at a European version of Islam.

What do you think, in general, of the studies carried out by the Religion Monitor?

They have been very informative. This special study has taught me a great deal, not only about Bosnian Muslims in Germany, but about Muslims in general. Sometimes people are afraid to consider the reality that Muslim people face. You have broken the ice, and I thank you.



“Values and Tradition Provide Security”

Interview with Soheib Bencheikh on the results of the Arab language group

Soheib Bencheikh was born in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia in 1961. He studied Islamic theology in Cairo, Brussels and Paris; he was the Grand Mufti of Marseille and is regarded as a keen Democrat who builds bridges between cultures. Bencheikh warns against the political instrumentalization of religion.

How do you view the results overall?

I think the results on religious practice are very high. My own estimate would put them generally at between 12 and 15 percent.

What role do tradition and history play?

Take Ramadan as an example. It’s less an issue of religious practice than a symbol of identity. I believe 65 percent of people take part in this tradition, not necessarily as a sign of their faith but rather as the key to their own “community”.

According to the results, religiosity is also very influential when it comes to naming children at 44 percent. Is that a tradition too?

Yes, but in my opinion, it’s a question of identity and not religion. Of course, parents give their children Arab names. But that doesn’t mean it’s a sign of faith. Instead, it’s a tradition, a question of identity.

How do you view the role of religion regarding the integration of Muslims?

The major question is whether a person’s religion is compatible with the laws of a country or whether religious sentiments violate the law. Germany is a country which permits freedom of religion. It is a democracy where everyone in the country can participate in legislation. Everyone has the personal right to practice religion as he or she wishes.

How important is education for integration?

Religious education and upbringing can teach values. But it isn’t the level of education that counts, it’s the kind of education. If it teaches strength and self-confidence, then that’s the right kind.

What role does family play?

I use an example from France: the Moroccans are more traditional than the Algerians. The Moroccan children retain their language, their religious tradition. The Algerians don’t. Here you find a loss of those values – even the language – and it happens very quickly. It’s down to the parents: they don’t practice their religion.

Could the results of the Religion Monitor be useful to you personally and your work?

I find that it shows fairly high religious sentiment and religious practice in Germany. I don’t think it’s that high in France. That has to do with France’s history. It’s a secular country and religion isn’t as present. By contrast, Germany generally recognizes religion and supports it.

“People’s Religiosity Must be Taken Seriously”

Interview with Hamideh Mohagheghi on the results of the Persian language group

53 year old Iranian lawyer and theologian Hamideh Mohagheghi is co-founder of the Islamic women’s network Huda, chairwoman of the Muslim Academy in Germany and lecturer at the University of Paderborn.



Were you surprised by the results of the Persian language group?

I was pleased by the high level of religiosity. I didn’t expect that 84 percent of those surveyed would be religious and that 27 percent of those again would be highly religious.

What’s your verdict on the differences between the language groups?

I didn’t expect that the number of religious people would be so much higher among Turkish Muslims than the other language groups. I expected those kind of numbers to occur only among Arab Muslims. So I’m surprised that both language groups are level at 91 percent.

The number of mosque visits by those in the Persian language group is far fewer than in the other groups. What’s the reason for that?

Many people in this language group do not link religiosity to visiting the mosque. Religion is a private thing for them and doesn’t have to be lived out in public.

The influence on political views is also lower among people in the Persian language group. Why?

I assume that there were a lot of Iranians among those surveyed so it would be down to the culture and history of Iran. It’s only been since the revolution that religion has directly intervened in politics and thus taken on political significance. Before that, it didn’t play a great role.

Just like the religious education in the family home?

Yes, because ethical moral values play a role there whereas religious rituals do not necessarily do that. Children are given the freedom to go their own way.

What role is played by education?

Of course, religiosity has a lot to do with the level of education. That’s not to say that the more educated a person is, the less religious he or she is. It can be completely the other way around. The decisive thing is that educated people take a different and more distinct view of their own religiosity. They are less attached to conservative, traditional ideas.

Given this background, is there anything to be learned from the results? Can one change anything by reacting to it?

Things can be improved if people take religiosity seriously. You hear again and again that religion isn’t important for a person’s identity. But religion is an important pillar of one’s identity. Society should give people the chance to live their faith. After all, you can be a religious person and recognize democratic values and human rights at the same time. The results should teach us that religiosity is nothing negative and that we should view religion as something positive; as an opportunity – not a hindrance – to integrate. It is anything other than that as long as one stops equating it with the kind of traditions and regional customs that are an obstacle to integration.



Muslim Religiousness by Age Group

A generational comparison

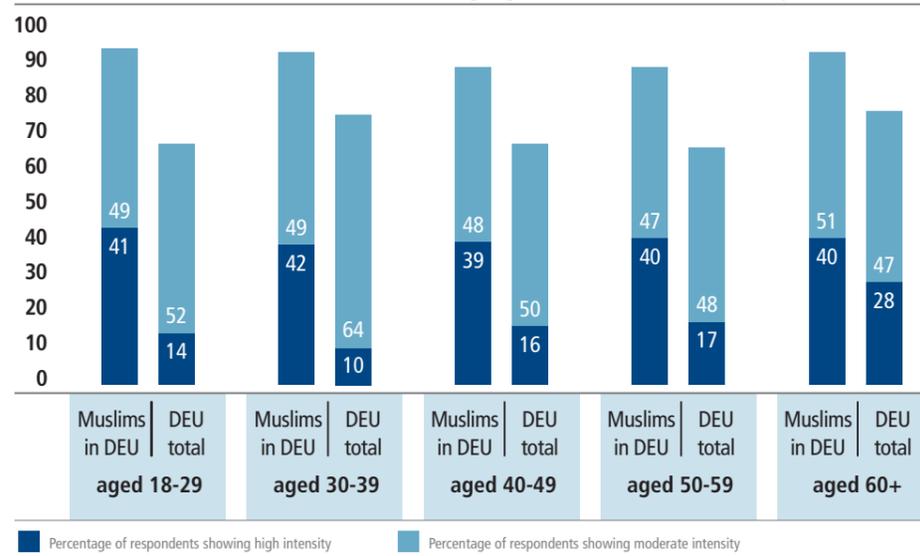
by Dr. Michael Blume

Islam in Germany is in flux, and the younger generation, which has grown up in Germany, is playing an important role in this process. Data from the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Religion Monitor confirm and expand on the picture painted by earlier research. We are also learning more about gender issues and, with the help of unprecedented data, about the nature of the faith experiences of younger Muslims as well as their elders.

A Return of Religiousness among Various Demographic Groups, including Muslims

Most theories on secularization during the 20th century have been based on the premise that rising educational levels, greater security and increasing prosperity lead to an essentially linear decline in religiosity. Accordingly, religious traditions have been seen as dying out and of concern primarily to older people. Both

Generational comparison of the centrality of religiousness between Muslims and the total population in Germany



DEU=Germany

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Dr. Michael Blume

is involved in the interreligious dialogue as a religious scientist. Dr. Blume does research on the connections between religion and demography at Universität Heidelberg and is a member of the international network of researchers of Evolutionary Religious Studies (ERS) on the evolutionary history of religiousness.



in German society as a whole and among Germany's Muslims, however, it appears that the share of highly religious individuals among the younger generation is again on the rise, albeit from very different starting points.

Twenty-eight percent of people over the age of 60 in Germany are highly religious; this percentage steadily declines to only 10 percent for individuals between the ages of 30 and 39 – but among young adults it rises again, to 14 percent. Among Muslims in Germany, the percentage of highly religious 18- to 29-year-olds – 43 percent – is greater than among any older group, including senior citizens (40 percent).

These results are even more definitive when we consider specific questions of faith, such as belief in an afterlife. Twenty-six percent of all Germans between the ages of 18 and 29 and an impressive 65 percent of their Muslim peers believe “strongly” in life after death, the highest rate of agreement of any age group, even including Germans and Muslims over the age of 60 (24 percent and 55 percent, respectively).

These surprising findings are primarily a function of the demographic situation. Throughout the world, and in all of the world religions, religious individuals are more likely to commit themselves to (a stable) marriage and (more) children than their secular neighbors of simi-

lar educational backgrounds and income levels. So when having children means giving up a career and doing without a higher income, at the same time when the population is shrinking (in such countries as Germany and, in recent years, in the western regions of Turkey as well), the process of secularization is meeting its demographic limits. Among the younger generations, the share of children who come from religiously engaged families is again increasing, and aspects of youth culture are once more, and in new ways, showing the influence of religion. Note that while 53 percent of Muslim senior citizens in Germany report that they were brought up in a religious environment, the relevant figure for those between the ages of 40 and 49 is 58 percent, and the highest proportion, so far, is found for 18- to 29-year-olds: 74 percent. Religious taboos are more likely to be passed on as well; 90 percent of 18- to 29-year-old Muslims “never” eat pork, which is true of only 84 percent of 40- to 49-year-olds and of even fewer Muslims over the age of 60 (73 percent). As for the ban on drinking alcohol, today a higher percentage (59 percent) of 18- to 29-year-old Muslims in Germany than of the middle generation (40- to 49-year-olds, 52 percent) or senior citizens (over 60, 54 percent) report that they strictly abstain from drinking. This demographic trend toward greater religiosity is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. Seventy-five percent of nonreligious Muslims in Germany consider having a family with children to be

“very important” – compared with 81 percent of religious Muslims and 90 percent of the highly religious.

From Engaging in Day-to-Day Religious Practice to Professing One’s Religion

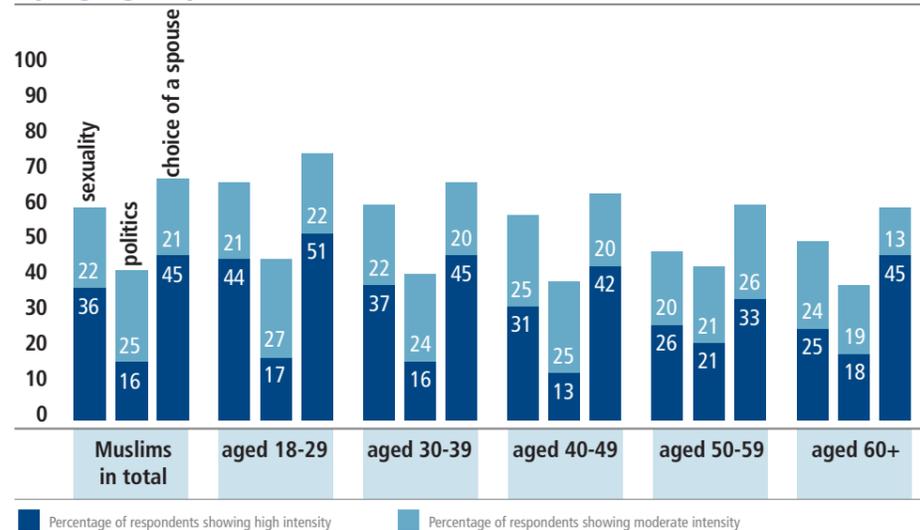
Young Muslims, who are increasingly likely to have lived in Germany for a long time, perhaps from birth, are also confronted with the challenge of defining their own identity and affiliation between their country of origin and Germany. For many of them, religion, which spans national borders, is becoming increasingly important. At the same time, even Muslim elementary school students find themselves having to answer questions that would hardly arise in a traditional Muslim environment – for example, why most Muslims do not eat pork or why they fast during Ramadan. The situation has been considerably exacerbated by often inadequately nuanced reporting on subjects relating to religion and Islam, which increased dramatically after the attacks of September 11th. Since that time, particularly young

Muslims in Germany are confronted with questions about their religion, and sometimes put on the defensive. While day-to-day religious practice is certainly declining, as Muslims increasingly conform to the German, still largely secular environment, for years we have seen more attention paid to taboos and professions of identity (“Yes, I am a Muslim!”). To mention one example, members of the younger German-Islamic generations are more likely to underscore how important the obligatory prayers, five times each day, “actually” are, although they in fact pray less frequently than their elders.

Forty-two percent of Muslims over the age of 60 report that the requirement of salat, the obligatory prayers to be said five times a day, is “very important” to them – and 35 percent follow that injunction on a regular basis. Even among 40- to 49-year-old respondents, however, we begin to see a discrepancy between beliefs and actual practice. While 46 percent stress that prayer is “very important,” only 30 percent pray five times each day. And although 52 percent of young adults between



Implications of religiousness for various spheres of life, by age groups



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18 and 29 years of age believe that these prayers are “very important,” fewer than one-half of the members of that group (23 percent) follow that rule in their day-to-day lives.

Similarly, 51 percent of Muslims between the ages of 18 and 29 report that they are “quite” or “very” interested in religious topics. Only 21 percent say that they have little or no interest – the lowest results of any age group. Even among people over the age of 60, 27 percent respond that they have little or no interest in these subjects. Again, however, there is a gap between professed beliefs and practice: Despite the high level of interest they report, only 27 percent of 18- to 29-year-old Muslims read religious or spiritual literature often or very often, while 46 percent do so rarely or never. These results are practically identical to those for respondents over the age of 60 (28 percent often/very often, 45 percent rarely/never). In contrast, it is not only the family but also the mosques that are becoming increasingly significant as a source of religious information: Seventy-three percent of 18- to 29-year-olds have participated in congregational prayer at a mosque during the past year, as opposed to

only 65 percent of those between the ages of 40 and 49, and – still fewer – only 55 percent of Muslims over the age of 60.

Fundamental Questions: Headscarves, Sexuality and Politics

With these results in mind, it may come as less of a surprise that increasing numbers of young Muslims favor wearing a headscarf: 34 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds and even 37 percent of 30- to 39-year-olds, compared with 29 percent of 50- to 59-year-olds and only 27 percent of those over 60 years of age. Echoing the results of the recent study on “Muslims in Germany” conducted by the German Ministry of the Interior, the Religion Monitor has found considerably more support for wearing headscarves among Muslim women than men; 38 percent of women, but only 28 percent of men, argue in favor of headscarves. These findings cannot be explained in terms of the usual clichés, but they are more understandable when we consider the relationship between the sexes. It appears that wearing a headscarf can be a way for women to signal their loyalty and commitment to potential

partners, but also to demand such commitment in return – the Muslim version of the question posed by Gretchen in Goethe’s Faust (asked of Faust as he pressed for sexual relations: “Tell me, what does religion mean to you?”).

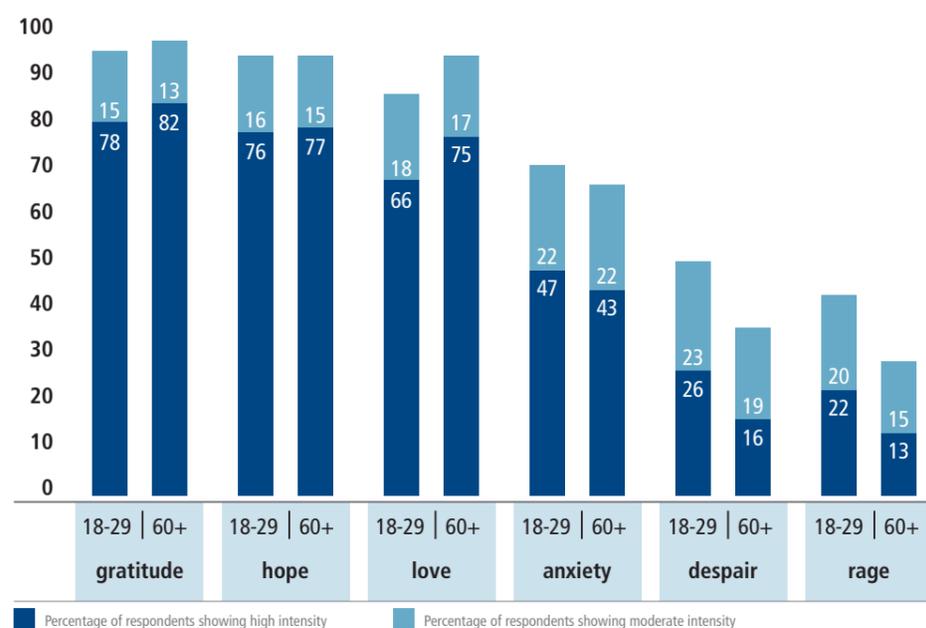
This is also reflected in the fact that 35 percent of Muslim women consider religiosity to be “very” important in their choice of a spouse, as opposed to only 24 percent of the male respondents. Similarly, 52 percent of highly religious Muslims report that religiosity plays a “quite” or “very” important role in their sexuality, compared with only 26 percent of religious individuals and a tiny minority – 7 percent – of the nonreligious. Here, too, younger respondents are more likely to take a stronger stand; 44 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds, as opposed to only 31 percent of 40- to 49-year olds and 25 percent of those over the age of 60, report that their sexual behavior is quite strongly or very strongly affected by religion. These results suggest that in the past, too lit-

tle attention has been paid to the role of individual decisions and peer groups when researchers have discussed the influence of the family on religious clothing and sexual norms. Moreover, the data show that in an environment perceived as uncertain, visible manifestations of religious faith serve as a signal of commitment for potential partners, while demanding a similar commitment in return. The identical findings of these two studies, one conducted by the Ministry of the Interior, the other by the Religion Monitor, would seem to suggest that more attention should be paid to responses from Muslim women, and that further study is needed.

At least in Germany, however, the political motives sometimes suspected of being behind Islamic religiosity play only a marginal role. Only 12 percent of highly religious, 6 percent of somewhat religious and 2 percent of non-religious Muslims report that religion has a very strong influence on their political attitu-



Comparison between the sentiments of Muslims between 18 and 29 and Muslims aged 60+ towards God or something divine



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des. And such influence is even weaker among the younger generation; while 13 percent of senior citizens report that religion strongly affects their political views, only 7 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds agree.

Experiencing God: A Resource and a Problem

A unique feature of the Religion Monitor is its focus on the experiences people associate with God. At first glance our findings are positive: Across the Muslim generations, it is such feelings as gratitude, hope, love and support that predominate, with over 70 percent reporting such experiences. On the whole, Islam is seen as providing help in the respondents’ lives, and God is perceived as benign. However, a more detailed analysis also shows that positive experiences, for example a sense of God’s justice, are somewhat less common among the younger generations (61 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds compared with 75 percent of senior citizens), while certain negative associations – with such feelings as anger (22 percent versus 13 percent), despair (26 percent versus 16 percent) and fear (47 percent versus 43 percent) – are considerably more common.

Furthermore, 60 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds believe “quite” strongly or “very” strongly in the “influence of the devil,” compared with 41 percent of 40- to 49-year-olds and only 32 percent of those over the age of 60. Further research will need to determine whether these generational differences are simply typical of different stages in life, or whether, as much appears to indicate, they reveal certain conflicts of family and identity experienced by the second and third generations of Muslims living in Germany. The high level of interest in religious questions shown by the younger generations, which seems to be increasing still further, indicates that people are often urgently seeking answers for their own lives. These questions appear to have been only inadequately answered by German-Islamic literature or the as-yet underdeveloped councils of mosques. Islam itself is not the problem, but there are problems with which many Muslims, particularly young people, are struggling. This situation opens the door to disintegrative or extremist influences, which underscores the need for dialogue, further research and instruction in Islam in the German schools – in German, and offered by teachers who have been trained in Germany.

What Does School Have to Do with Allah?

Observations on the Statistical Association between Religiosity and Education for Muslims between the Ages of 18 and 28

by Prof. Dr. Harry Harun Behr

Between Biography and Educational Expectations

“All we want is for our children to have it better than we did,” said the father of a Muslim student in the Hauptschule, summing up his educational expectations for his children. “We want them to be good students who will have positive memories of their time in school.”¹ Fathers like him attach great importance to providing a religious component for Muslims in the public schools, for example in the form of instruction in Islam. Their fathers, in turn, came to Germany long ago, not planning at first to unroll their prayer rugs in this country. Like them, most of their children and grandchildren would not describe themselves today as particularly religious, even if visible expressions of religion, such as certain types of clothing, are increasingly common.

Nevertheless, religious elements have become more important to the succeeding generation. Some people judge the role of religion by looking at the height of minarets in Germany; for those who work in the schools there are other clues. More and more young mothers under the age of 30 are involved in the lives of their

school-age daughters and sons – whether these women wear headscarves or not. Fifty-two percent of individuals in this age group oppose the wearing of headscarves, 14 percent are undecided, while 34 percent are in favor, and these figures remain more or less constant for men and women. Whatever their views on a public display of religious faith, however, they want the schools to provide instruction in Islam. Asked why they do not simply send their children to the mosque to learn about their religion, many parents respond, “I want my children to get better grades in German, math and English. Islam requires learning just as it does prayer, which is why they do better in school with Islam.”

With Islam? Regardless of their religious views, gender or preferred theology, young Muslim parents have increasingly high expectations for their children’s educational attainments, as practical experience in the public schools has shown. “To have it better” means earning more money, enjoying more career choices and greater social prestige, and thereby attaining a higher level of satisfaction. Muslims appear to believe that their religion has practical bene-

Prof. Dr. Harry Harun Behr

has, as a German convert to Islam, significantly contributed to the development of the course Islamische Religionslehre at Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg and has been Professor of Islamic religious education at the educational science faculty of the university since summer semester 2006.



fits in the educational context. As a school subject, it is expected to help further a child’s school career; Muslim students are supposed to learn to think, rather than to pray.² The hope is to establish a positive reciprocal relationship between religious attitudes and the motivation for success. Public opinion surveys do not show positive attitudes toward Islam; people regard it as dangerous baggage brought with them by immigrants and an impediment as they seek to become full members of society.

Cause for Optimism

The profile of the educational attainments of Muslims has changed, and it continues to do so. Ten years ago, the focus was on strategies to deal with the disproportionately high percentage of Muslim children in schools for students with special needs; today educational researchers are rubbing their eyes in amazement – they are witnessing rapid changes that are expected to continue for at least another generation of the post-migration era. Even now, 29 percent of Muslims have successfully completed at least the ninth grade of the Hauptschule, 22 percent have completed the Real-

schule, 14 percent have attained the necessary qualifications to attend a technical college and 27 percent have passed the Abitur examination entitling them to study at a university – with certain regional variations.

This is not simply a generation that has overcome deficits like a limited command of two languages, nor are we talking about people who prefer to remain in the protective environment of a parallel society. Rather, we are dealing with young Muslims, men and women, who are doing their best to attain the educational qualifications that will allow them to participate in society at a higher level. The ball is now in society’s court: As French political scientist Gilles Kepel has pointed out, society now needs to decide whether it even wants to allow naturalized citizens to succeed. Furthermore, educational institutions often fail to comprehend the fact that a supposed educational disadvantage can turn into a competitive advantage.³ Speaking Turkish in the schoolyard? Why not? According to Germany’s Federal Statistical Office, about one-fourth of the country’s roughly 8.6 million families with children come from an immigrant background. It fol-

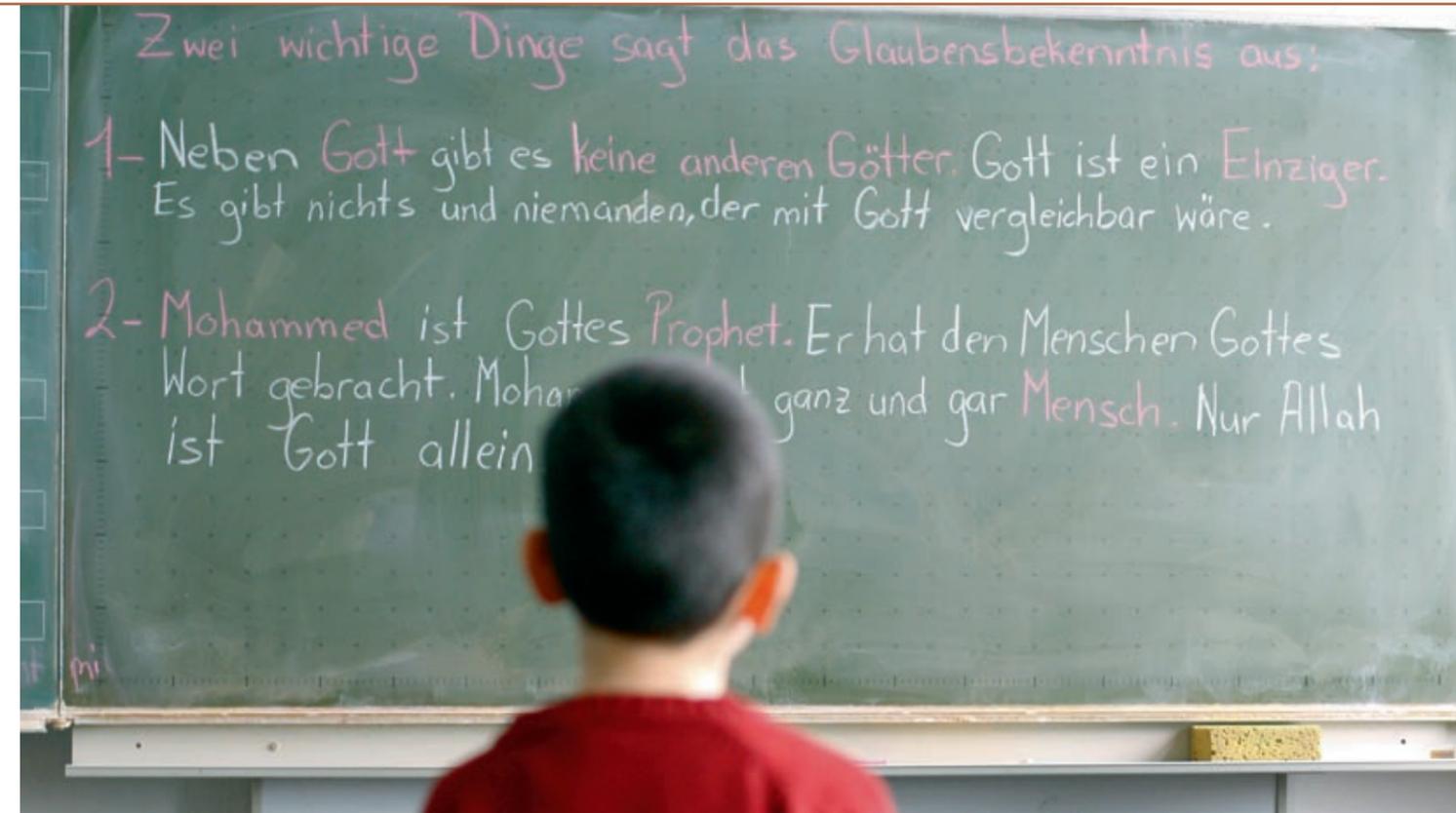
lows that our knowledge society would be well advised to abandon simplistic, familiar and comfortable assumptions and, instead, not only to express support for integration, but to take active steps to achieve it and to provide appropriate rewards.

If Not Prayer, Then What?

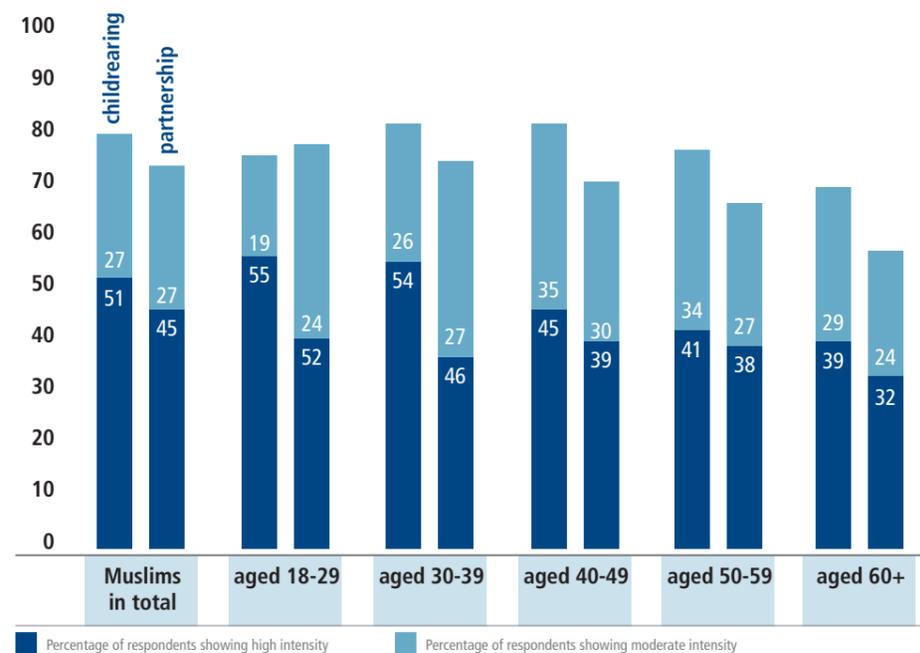
We are also dealing with a generation that has given more serious thought to religion than its parents and grandparents did. Their situation is a reflection of society as a whole: Younger people are not only focusing on Islam, their own religion, but showing curiosity about religion in general.⁴ Their hunger for education, and not only for a classical education or, specifically, for good report cards, but also for a greater understanding of Islam, flies in the face of the theory that a lack of education is caused by cultural factors.

Educational experts have observed that both religious and nonreligious Muslims of either gender, whatever their ethnic or sectarian background, attach a great deal of importance to regular employment: Between 83 and 94 percent agree that it is important to have a regular job. It is certainly nothing new to point out the causal relationship between educational level and quality of life. But the numbers show something else – young people are exhibiting a positive attitude toward education that is reflected in their report cards when they leave one school level for the next, a recognition, shown in their school performance, that there is a correlation between effort and success.

When respondents were asked whether they would be willing to make substantial sacrifices for their religion, there were not very significant differences (no: 24 percent; probably not: 14 percent; no firm opinion: 25 percent;



Implications of religiousness for childrearing and partnership, by age groups



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probably yes: 15 percent; and definitely yes: 18 percent). But they were more likely to respond in the affirmative when the question was phrased in terms of striving to learn and making a temporary sacrifice for the sake of a later reward. The principle of equity, found throughout Islamic theology, refers not only to compensatory equity or equity based on need, which is crucial in society, but also to the principle of equity based on performance.

Our empirical findings allow us to formulate more precisely what education means to these respondents. Its indisputable importance is reflected in the highest absolute results (92 percent of respondents described the importance of education as great, 8 percent as moderate and 0 percent as minor or nonexistent; these results remain roughly constant regardless of the respondents' gender, culture of origin, religion or intensity of religious affiliation). Also of significance are personal

characteristics that are intensified when linked to religious factors; 72 percent of individuals under the age of 30 plan to convey to their children a positive attitude toward religiosity, with 14 percent more women than men expressing that intention. Even among those who are less engaged in religious matters, a majority – 55 percent – expect religion to be a “somewhat” or “very” strong influence on the upbringing of their children (11 percent more women). The numbers are similar (53 percent) for the important question of how much influence personal religiosity has on partnerships, a dimension of an individual's upbringing that is separate from concrete issues of education. Just what kinds of attitudes – of significance to education – are involved when young Muslims talk about religion but mean education? What can we conclude when Muslims express great respect for classical religious practice, but this is not reflected in equal measure in their daily lives? (Between 71 and 75 percent

consider it “somewhat” or “very” important to follow religious dietary laws or to fast during Ramadan, but only 37 percent report that they are equally strict in adhering to those rules; 25 percent do so only minimally or not at all.) What is it that matters here, if not praying to Allah and practicing piety?

Religious Intelligence

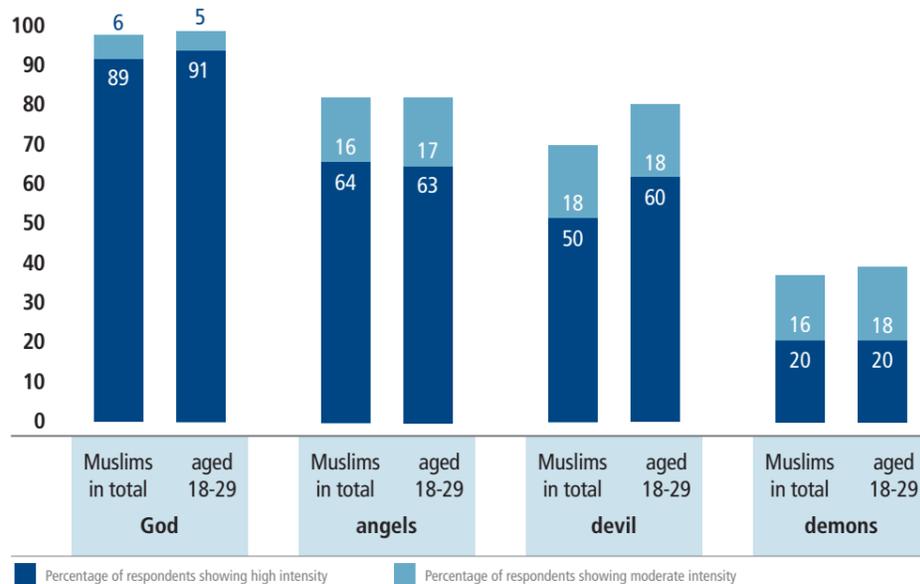
Muslims consider the cognitive dimension of Islam as their religion and way of life to be an advantage: In the Islamic universe, holding fast to God, angels or the afterlife is not necessarily at odds with the chauvinistic counterposition of the intelligentsia, which is that today all of us know better. On the contrary, even those who show little interest in practicing their faith consider it unwise not to believe. Muslims are able to reconcile with the postmodern cultures of reason the notion that faith in God (in

Arabic tawakkul) as outlined in the Koran is linked to the self-confidence of the believer.⁵ Of course, those who are less engaged in religious practice show greater reservations in this context, but with the expected degree of ambiguity. For example, 76 percent of individuals in the relevant age groups expressly state that they believe in life after death, as do 91 percent of those who are very religious, regardless of their age; only 46 percent of those who are decidedly nonreligious do not believe “at all.” And exactly what is it that people believe in? Seventy-eight percent of young adults believe in paradise, 77 percent believe in hell, 64 percent believe in angels, and 60 percent even believe in the devil.

Thus belief in an afterlife, in the sense of salvation, is of great importance for the age groups in question. At the same time there appears to be a trend toward more openness, as respon-



Comparison between the belief in God, angels, the devil and demons of all Muslim generations and the young age group



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dents no longer see this dimension solely in terms of their own religious worldview. Thirty percent of the young Muslim adults surveyed reported that they also consult the teachings of other religious traditions, while only 22 percent rejected that idea out of hand. It appears that the old tribal manifestations of religious affiliation no longer play the role they did in the past. Muslim identity, in the sense of belonging to a clan, an ethnic group, a nation, a linguistic community or, indeed, a disadvantaged social group, is increasingly seen as an obstacle to an individual’s own religious identity, which needs to be created anew. In that process, greater emphasis is now placed on the questions of “Who do I want to be?” “What is important to me?” and “What do I want to be held accountable for?” The goal is a more individualized, pluralistic and open view of religion, which expressly includes other beliefs. Sixty-four percent of respondents believe that

there is a kernel of truth in every religion, and as many as 86 percent believe that people should, in general, be open to every religion. It will be difficult to maintain the hypothesis that this attitude is shared by Muslims in Turkey, Bosnia, Iran and Arab countries in general (the four main cultural regions from which our respondents come), but it is likely that there, too, such views are associated with the respective level of education. These figures also appear to confirm that young Muslims in Germany are achieving higher levels of formal education. The reverse of this more open attitude – a call for more rigorous adherence to Islamic laws and a return to the green flag of Islam – is finding less and less resonance among Muslims, whatever their educational background.⁶

Overall, it is evident that curiosity is an increasingly important motive for exploring religious

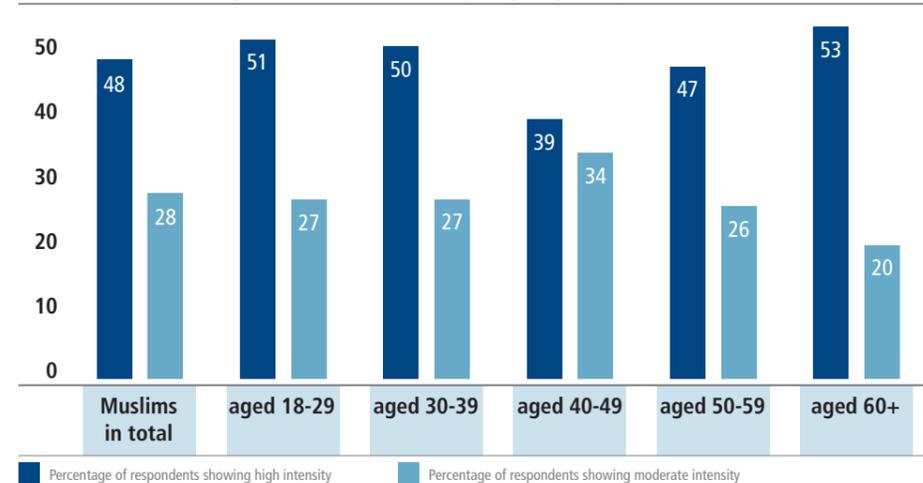
topics, and this may well result in sustained interest⁷ in learning more, not only about one's own religion, but also about the world. This interest, however, cannot be equated with an active, spiritually motivated search for a religious orientation (responses ranged between 17 percent "agree strongly" and 22 percent "not at all"), nor with a greater willingness to read religious literature (ranging between 9 percent "very often" and 18 percent "never"⁸); rather, it indicates an increased desire for authentic information free from distortion by religious ideology or tendentious media reports. This is another reason for the correlation between instruction in Islam and school success: Many Muslims have greater confidence in the public schools, as a state institution, to provide accurate information about Islam, free from a secondary agenda. When parents see that Islam is fairly integrated into the school curriculum, therefore, it enhances their willingness to become involved in other school issues, while also increasing students' motivation to strive for success.

This, by the way, also argues for the positive effect that religious instruction has on education,⁹ - with the caveat that these results apply to thinking about religious topics as they relate to the meaning of life. Sixty-two percent of respondents think about religious subjects frequently or very frequently; only 21 percent have little or no interest in religious topics; even among those who describe themselves as not very religious or spiritual, 66 percent devote some thought to the meaning of life. Accordingly, the more limited context of religious instruction also plays a role in more general skills, for example the ability to think in terms of abstract concepts and to communicate verbally, and of course in the local language, about these matters.

Islam, like religion in general, is regarded as particularly useful and effective in overcoming life crises (only 17 percent report that it offers "little" help or "none at all"), provided that it is not the cause of such crises. Here is important to explore how people differentiate



Interest in religious matters, by age groups



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between the spiritual, social, ethical and historical dimensions of Islam and its traditional cultural manifestations. The ability to make this distinction depends on a number of basic educational dimensions that are independent of religion.

It appears that certain subjective, positively charged emotional responses in the context of religious experience (a sense of security, gratitude, strength, love, hope - between 56 and 78 percent "often" and "very often") are particularly important for an individual's religious self-concept and can be of importance in the educational arena, for example with respect to a tolerance for uncertainty: I will persevere, even if I am not yet certain that it will pay off.

The situation is similar when it comes to an attentive and empathetic perception of the world (a mere 7 percent think about the suffering and injustice in the world only "rarely" or "never") as well as to the ability to engage in self-criticism and to change one's perspective: Sixty-six percent engage "occasionally," "often" or "very often" in a critical consideration of religious teachings with which they fundamentally agree, and as many as 72 percent, with a similar distribution of frequency, critically reassess individual aspects of their religious views.

This points to another interface between specifically religious areas of competence, on the one hand, and skills related to general learn-

ing processes, on the other. Young Muslims in their twenties are currently leaders in their willingness to consider religious topics objectively. This emancipatory element of religious identity, which was officially underscored at the meeting of the premiers of the German states held in Berlin in October 2001, is recognized as positive, not only with respect to education and integration policy, but also in terms of the self-discovery of young Muslims in Germany. The group's conclusions referred to "instruction in Islam that can help young Muslims to reflect on and strengthen their religious identity in our society." It should be noted, however, that even today these respondents have not been provided with this kind of instruction.

Another aspect, however, not only causes ambivalence among the age group in question, but also constitutes a curious feature that is repeatedly observed when dealing with young Muslims: Sixty-eight percent report that fear plays a role in their religious experience; for 24 percent this is true "very often." Sources of anxiety such as a treacherous Satan, a punitive God or an angry father impede learning, dim hopes, undermine confidence and exert a negative effect on education. We should also note the fascination the occult has for young and very young Muslims, a trend that is taking on worrisome dimensions and affecting even Muslim university students, despite their high level of education.¹⁰ The author was recently asked by a Muslim student, "Is it true that a fig tree next to a house will destroy the happi-

ness of the marriage within?" It is some consolation that female respondents showed significantly, although only slightly (between 10 and 15 percent), higher results than their male peers for many of the positive effects on education described here.

Conclusion

When Islam enriches people's lives, it can have a positive effect on their educational careers in two respects: at the individual level, by encouraging attitudes that foster the motivation to achieve and are helpful in dealing with life crises, and at the structural level, when Islam becomes part of the general school curriculum and gains public recognition as part of normal life. Achieving this state of affairs is one of the challenges facing Muslims in Germany. This requires that they attain an educational level that is more than merely good. This is something Muslims have recognized – they watch their children enter the schools and want more than just for them to have it a bit better than their elders did. They want their children to play an active role in shaping society. If society refuses to let this happen and insists on clinging to cultural protectionism, it will lose this generation. The exodus of well-educated Muslims of both sexes has already begun, as they seek out countries where it is not the headscarf that matters, but the mind beneath it. We cannot help but be reminded of Gottfried Keller and his story about clothes defining the man – or woman.



Notes

- 1 Demirhan, T.: "Das kann nur von Vorteil sein." In: Behr, H. et al. (ed.): "Den Koran zu lesen genügt nicht!" Fachliches Profil und realer Kontext für ein neues Berufsfeld. Auf dem Weg zum Islamischen Religionsunterricht. Series: Islam und Bildung. Vol. 1. Münster 2008. p. 37.
- 2 Cf. Behr, H.: "Ein ordentliches Fach? Neue Wegmarken für den Islamischen Religionsunterricht." In: Herder Korrespondenz. Monatshefte für Gesellschaft und Religion. Vol. 61, June 6, 2007 issue. Freiburg 2007. pp. 298-303.
- 3 Gomolla, M. and Radtke, F.-O.: Institutionelle Diskriminierung. Die Herstellung ethnischer Diskriminierung in der Schule. 2., revised and expanded edition. Wiesbaden 2007.
- 4 Cf. Isik, F.: "Endlich Islamunterricht in deutscher Sprache." In: Behr, H. et al. (ed.): "Den Koran zu lesen genügt nicht!" Fachliches Profil und realer Kontext für ein neues Berufsfeld. Auf dem Weg zum Islamischen Religionsunterricht. Series: Islam und Bildung. Vol. 1. Münster 2008. pp. 35-36.
- 5 Cf. Behr, H.: "Welche Bildungsziele sind aus der Sicht des Islams vordringlich?" In: Schweizer, F. et al.: Mein Gott – Dein Gott. Interkulturelle und interreligiöse Bildung in Kindertagesstätten. Stiftung Ravensburger Verlag. Beltz Pädagogik. Weinheim and Basel 2008. pp. 31-47.
- 6 Regarding the image of women, for example, cf.: Behr, H.: Allahs Töchter. In: Kügler, J. and Borrmann, L. (ed.): Töchter (Gottes). Studien zum Verhältnis von Kultur, Religion und Geschlecht. Münster 2008. pp. 157-167.
- 7 Cf. Behr, H.: "Wer garantiert mir, dass Muhammad kein Verrückter war?" In: Nachrichten der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern. No. 4 April 2008, Vol. 63. Munich 2008. pp. 111-114.
- 8 Cf. also Behr, H. et al.: "Ich kann sogar manchmal bei Lucky Luke oder bei Asterix was Spirituelles finden." Empirische Beobachtungen zur sich wandelnden Rolle der Bibel im Rahmen der Lektüre religiöser Texte. In: Baumann, Gerlinde and Elisabeth Hartlieb (ed.): Fundament des Glaubens oder Kulturdenkmal? Vom Umgang mit der Bibel heute. Leipzig 2007. pp. 15-47.
- 9 Cf. Uzun, D.: "Die Koranschulen reichen uns nicht." In: Behr, Harry H. et al. (ed.): "Den Koran zu lesen genügt nicht!" Fachliches Profil und realer Kontext für ein neues Berufsfeld. Auf dem Weg zum Islamischen Religionsunterricht. Series: Islam und Bildung. Vol. 1. Münster 2008. pp. 33-34.
- 10 Cf. Rochdi, A. and Rochdi, E.: "Bin ich hier richtig?" Eine Erhebung der Schülerinteressen im Islamischen Religionsunterricht. In: Zeitschrift für die Religionslehre des Islam, Vol. 1 2007, Issue 2. Nuremberg 2007.

Religiousness of Muslim Women in Germany

by Prof. Dr. Dr. Ina Wunn

With increasing self-confidence, Muslimas in Germany are speaking up and demanding social and political participation, even – and especially – in matters of religion. Over the past years, they have uncompromisingly been defending their rights against German politics which are marked by secularized Christian values, e. g. by demanding Islamic religious education, but also against the male Muslim establishment: a young generation of scientifically educated Muslim women is presently reinterpreting the Qur'an – with the help of traditional and generally acknowledged scientific methods (hermeneutics), but with completely new results that brand the usual relationship between men and women in many Muslim countries as un-Islamic and present Islam as a religion of hitherto unknown possibilities – particularly for women.

Who are these Muslimas who practice and profess their religion in the Western world, and especially in Germany? Where are they or their parents from, what kind of lives do they lead, what do they believe in, and how do they practice their religion?

The Social Environment

Most of them are young or middle-aged women (up to 49) with a Turkish background who were either born in Germany (36 percent) or emigrated at an early age. That means the result of the survey might not be quite representative as it focuses on the younger generations, perhaps because the generation of immigrants had many children and because the older generation is very mobile: many of them have retired in their original home country after a successful working life in Germany and can therefore no longer participate in surveys. The younger generation is committed to Germany: almost half of the interview partners have German citizenship. Family sizes have also changed over the past decades: many of the immigrant families had five or more children (not covered by the survey), whereas nowadays, only few (12 percent) have more than three children, but prototypical family structures are still considered important. Marriage and family rate highly with 88 percent of women (82 percent of men), especially with middle-aged women of Turkish origin. And 'family' still means the (extended) family, and not only partnership, which is very important to only 77 percent of women, but 81 percent

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of men. Despite this clear commitment to marriage and family, women take their jobs almost as seriously as men (65 percent compared to 69 percent), but it is worth noting that Alevis, who are less religious, and – from an ethnic point of view – Bosnians are particularly committed to their jobs (74 percent of Alevis and 77 percent of Bosnians, but only 65 percent of Sunnis consider 'job' very important). Women place special emphasis on leisure time (considered very important by 46 percent) and education (considered very important by 85 percent of women). The numbers thus confirm the results of qualitative scientific studies: young Muslim women with a Sunni-Turkish background are very interested in education, and most of them have higher school-leaving qualifications than their male competitors. Muslims are also involved in activities beyond their families. Only 22 percent of the interviewed men and women are members of a religious association, but this number probably does not reflect the true situation. Perhaps it is considered sufficient if the head of the family is a registered member of a mosque community, even if most of the other family members also participate in the life of the community. That would correspond with the percent-

age (19 percent) of those who hold an honorary post, thus showing public commitment. In the past, women were at most involved in internal activities, e. g. charity bazaars, whereas they are now no longer afraid to represent their interests in official committees and parent organizations. That largely excludes party politics in Germany, however. Most Muslim women attach only moderate importance to politics (38 percent), but that does not indicate a lack of political interest. Rather, they give top priority to certain issues and concentrate on them, e. g. school education or the full recognition of Islam in Germany.

What is the typical German Muslima like? She is young or middle-aged, mostly with a Turkish, less frequently with a Moroccan, Arab, Iranian or Bosnian background; she is German or has been living in Germany for many years and attended – or is still attending – school here, trying to attain the highest possible qualification. If she lives in a Turkish-Sunni environment, however, her life is nevertheless centered on her traditional family – not only partnership – with a husband and up to three children, despite the increasing importance of job and spare time.

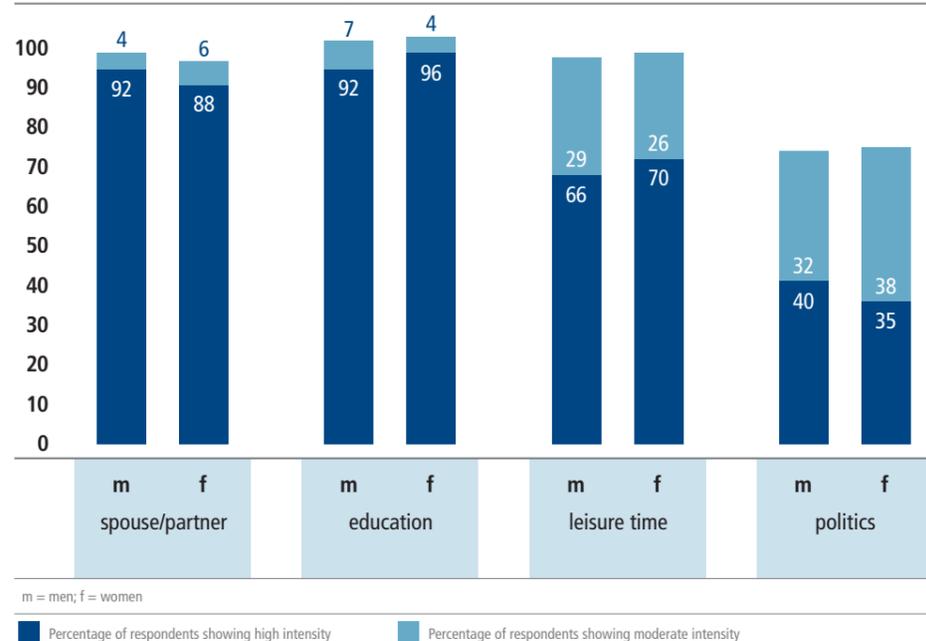
Religion and Everyday Life

A moderate or high degree of religiousness fits very well into this respectable lifestyle that is slightly conservative, but still adapted to German conditions, and there is hardly any difference between women and men here: 91 percent of women and 90 percent of men are religious or highly religious, and 81 percent of the interviewed women (compared to 75 percent of men) firmly believe in the existence of God and life after death and therefore frequently reflect religious issues (70 percent of women often or very often reflect religious matters). However, religiousness only plays a very important role in the lives of 56 percent of women (and 43 percent of men), and after having been interviewed on various parameters, only 10 percent consider themselves highly religious, and

25 percent rate themselves as quite religious. There are some interesting aspects about these numbers: most women characterize themselves as 'highly religious' in a general social context, but that is not confirmed by their actual interest in religious matters. So, in addition to the marital status and educational interest, particularly religion serves to build a self-image: of course, a decent Muslim woman must be family-oriented, eager to learn and thus religious, and that is how she presents herself to the public, even to the anonymous public of a survey. Her actual interest in religion is far lower, although still relatively high. Even the old familiar cliché of 'barefoot and pregnant' women focused on children, kitchen and church seems to be confirmed by German Muslimas: they are more religious, and



Importance of various spheres of life for Muslim men and women



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were brought up more religiously than men. This strong tendency towards religion is reflected not only by the importance women attach to personal prayer and their sense of having close communication to God – 51 percent of women, but only 33 percent of men partake in personal prayer several times a day (du'a) –, but also by the accuracy with which the interview partners observe the regulations of their religion.

55 percent of women closely adhere to dietary rules and particularly abstain from alcohol (69 percent of women and 47 percent of men) and pork (91 percent of women and 82 percent of men). They are also far more compliant in fasting during Ramadan (64 percent consider fasting very important). Women take the obligatory pilgrimage, alms-giving and the obligatory prayer (considered very important by 59 percent of women, but only 43 percent

of men) equally seriously. In view of their strict compliance with this catalogue of duties, it is not surprising that 61 percent of women abide by ritual purity laws, too. If we compare these numbers to the importance attached to religiousness, it might be surprising that fasting, dietary rules and purity laws seem to be far more important than personal faith, but that confirms the observation that German Muslimas have a clear tendency towards orthopraxy: obviously, compliance with ritual rules in religious practice and private life, including the choice of a spouse, has priority over the theological aspect of religion. With reference to the above hypothesis that not only religion itself, but also defining oneself as religious is important for establishing an own identity as a German Muslima, mostly with a Sunni and Turkish background (characteristically, other ethnic groups and inner-Islamic denominations rate many values differently, but the answers

were not segregated by gender, so they cannot be commented here), purity laws and strict compliance with the obligations resulting from the Five Pillars of Islam primarily serve to maintain a civil or family order considered proper and important within a society, the values of which are perhaps regarded as arbitrary. This is supported by the fact that 38 percent of women and only 28 percent of men attach much importance to the wearing of a headscarf. Women also take the practice of obligatory prayer more seriously than men (36 percent of women compared to 21 percent of men pray five times a day), but perhaps their jobs make it more difficult for men. In religious practice, men only outperform women in Friday prayer (51 percent compared to 21 percent). More than any other sphere, that clearly shows the different meaning religion

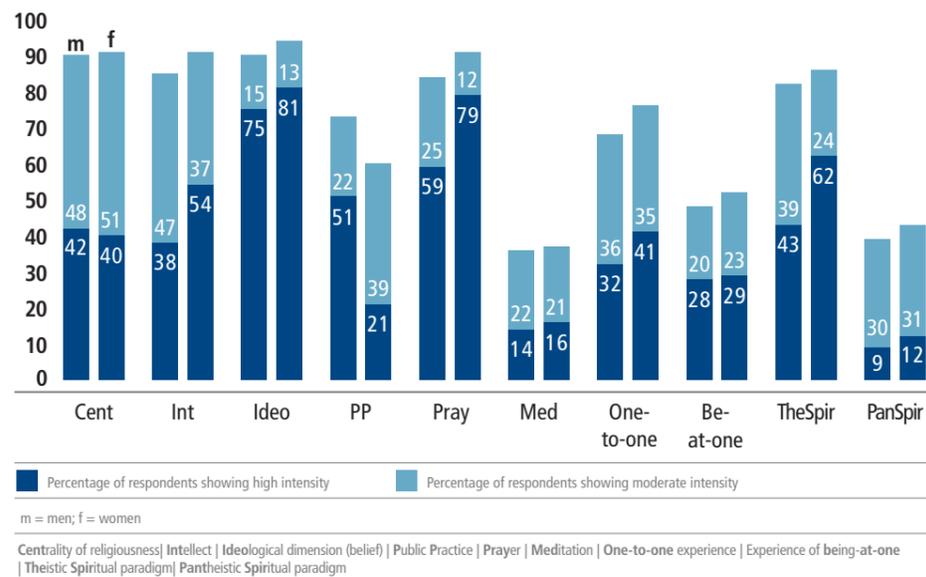
has for women and men: while women strictly adhere to and enforce religious rules in their private family lives, mainly in order to stabilize the family and maintain decency, men focus more on the public and community-building aspect.

Personal Faith

But what do these young and middle-aged women believe in? Which contents determine their religious views? They believe in a personal God who often intervenes in their lives, sometimes in a very concrete manner (62 percent), and is perceived as a personal being with whom they can communicate through prayer. At the same time, 16 percent of the interviewed women profess that they often meditate (they probably mean dhikr), and more



Centrality and core dimensions with Muslim men and women



than 50 percent say they experience being at one. That is primarily part of Islamic Sufism; Sufi orders – which consistently practice meditation – are increasingly spreading in Germany, and one of the major parent organizations (VIKZ) has a Sufi-orientation.

67 percent of women, but only 60 percent of men firmly believe in life after death, resurrection, immortality or reincarnation. 54 percent believe in paradise, just as many believe that there is such a thing as hell (men 54 percent), and 36 percent believe that the devil has special powers. Thus, they meet the Islamic requirement to absolutely believe in Allah, his prophets, his books, his angels, and in Judg-

ment Day, so even these answers cannot necessarily be assessed as statements of personal belief, but as standard answers to religious questions; they comply with the officially demanded creed and thus represent another element of orthopraxy. The answer to the question of compliance with religious commandments in everyday life tells us more about the faith of Muslim women: a meager 16 percent (11 percent of men) shed a different light on the above answers. Still, 28 percent of women say they firmly believe in supernatural powers, and the demons that are omnipresent in Islamic cultures (Jinn and Ifrit) play a moderate to major role for 39 percent of all women. On the other hand, astrology, which was so influential in the Middle Ages,

has completely lost its importance: only few men and women (14 percent) believe that the stars influence their lives.

Tolerance in Matters of Religion

Muslim women are religious, they believe in God, and they are prepared to comply with religious commandments, be it because they consider them essential for well-ordered social relations. But that is by no means all: 15 respectively 18 percent of women said they were moderately or strongly seeking something in their religiousness. It remains unanswered what they are seeking or if meditation and experiences of being at one are part of their quest. Here and there, competing religions and their teachings might play a role in this quest, because 42 percent of Muslim women (and even 45 percent of men) think there is a kernel of truth in every religion. And 34 percent of women do not take it for granted that their own religion is in the right and others are mistaken. Women are a little more narrow-minded than men when it comes to accepting other religions (and they might rather be thinking of middle-class morals), but they are further from proselytizing: 32 percent of women (compared to 37 percent of men) have no intention of converting others to their religion.

Ultimately, Muslim women in Germany can be characterized as follows: they care about religion. Religious commandments and regulations influence their daily lives with their

various obligations, but especially their family lives. However, that is not necessarily a sign of particular religiousness, but rather a firm orientation framework in a society with a value system that is not always easy to understand. Religion also plays a major role in the search for an own identity as a migrant or descendant of migrants: they clearly feel like Muslimas and identify themselves as such. This context also creates possibilities of social commitment, as women's viewpoints can be represented within the communities, and Muslim interests can be defended in society.

As far as faith is concerned, women often take the liberty to stray from the official line. They correctly profess to believe in God, his prophets, his book (or books), his angels and in Judgment Day, but they still admit being seekers. Here, they fall back on the possibilities of their own traditions, including Sufi thought and practices, but are also interested in other religions (preferably in the exchange between Muslim and Christian communities or in inter-religious dialogues on a regional level) or consult religious books (presumably, mainly the devotional literature offered in mosques). Many of them are devout; they practice their faith in their daily lives more or less, and are consciously and emphatically Muslimas, which they publicly demonstrate by wearing a headscarf and fasting. But that does not mean that they would deny other religions' claim to truth or even their right to exist – there are unlikely to be many fundamentalists among German Muslimas, nor would an Islamic party be likely to win a majority.



Highly Religious and Diverse

Islamic Aspects of the Religion Monitor

by Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Gudrun Krämer

Islam is widely seen as a religion whose adherents are withstanding the trends toward the secularization, de-institutionalism and individualization of religious beliefs and practices that have become prevalent, above all in western Europe. They are seen as ascribing even greater importance today to the so-called re-Islamization of their religion that began in the 1970s – and on all levels, publicly and privately. The political framework of this development has been explored to a certain degree, and the correlation between advancing globalization and policies focusing on cultural identity and authenticity is largely taken for granted. Until now, however, these assumptions have only had a weak empirical basis.¹ One of the present survey's major advantages is that it does not limit its assessment of the "Islamic world" to the Middle East, but includes numerous other countries as well. Morocco, Turkey and Indonesia, for example, are countries with Muslim majorities, even if they are quite different in terms of how religion, law and politics interact there. In Nigeria, Muslims and Christians are approximately equally represented, while Islamic believers make up only a minority of Israel's overall population.

At the same time, the data must be approached with caution. Surveys on the topic of religion in general and individual religious ideas and practices in particular are still unusual in the countries under examination (with the exception of Israel) and religion is to a high degree a political issue. Moreover, the disparity of the sociological data must also be mentioned. At the time of the survey, 60 percent of the respondents in Morocco lived in cities (of which, 49 percent lived in a major metropolis), and 40 percent in rural areas. In addition, 60 percent – much more than in the other Muslim countries – had no formal education, although 87 percent were gainfully employed. In Turkey, 66 percent lived in a city (of which 41 percent lived in a major metropolis), only 9 percent had no formal education and only 47 percent were gainfully employed. In Indonesia as well as in Nigeria, the survey restricted its inquiries to respondents living in major cities. In Indonesia, all interviewees had a formal education and 54 percent were gainfully employed. In Nigeria, 13 percent had no formal education, while 27 percent could not or did not want to provide a response to this question; (only) 48 percent, moreover, were gainfully employed. In Israel, 78 percent of the respon-

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dents lived in a city (34 percent in a major metropolis) and only 2 percent had no formal education; 66 percent were gainfully employed. The findings were most consistent regarding marital status (the share of married respondents ranged from 57 to 72 percent) and the number of children (the share of childless respondents ranged from 31 to 42 percent). The data diverged to the greatest extent in the area of formal education and employment.

Statistics on Religion

Like all world religions, Islam is diverse, with various subgroups existing among Sunni believers, who make up 90 percent of all Muslims worldwide, and Shiites, who account for almost 10 percent. This plurality can be seen among Sunnis, above all in their four recognized legal traditions (whose function and significance would, however, require more in-depth analysis). Among Shiites, in addition to the Twelvers or Imamates concentrated in Iran, Iraq, the other the Persian Gulf states and Lebanon, the internationally dispersed Ismaili must also be mentioned. As for smaller groups such as the Alevi, Alavi, Druze and Ahmadiyya communities, one issue of particular interest is

whether they conceive of themselves in specific political contexts as Muslims – and whether (other) Muslims recognize them as such. Beyond such groups, which are often referred to as "confessions" in western literature, a wide range of religious beliefs and practices can be found almost everywhere – and can often be classified only insufficiently as orthodox or non-orthodox (or, alternatively, as "folk religions").

Given all of the above, it is important to note that neither Sunni nor Shiite Islam recognizes an official religious institution with a defined instructional authority or inscribed membership. In Islam, therefore, the question of religious authority is quite acute, be it a matter of individual personalities (Sufi sheiks, Shiite theologians, media-savvy preachers, political activists) or specific institutions (such as Azhar University in Cairo). In this context, attitudes toward the holy scriptures (the Koran, supplemented by the Sunnah, the traditional "ways of the prophet") as a "fundament" not only for "fundamental" Muslims and the binding nature of Islamic legal norms (application of the Sharia) are of significant importance. Aspects that are of special interest are the form and extent

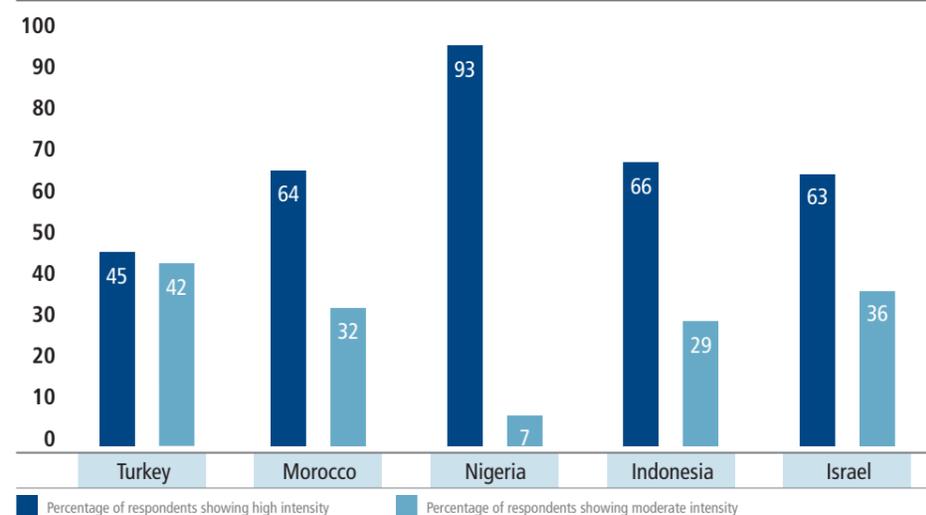
of Islam’s Sufi (mystic) traditions as well as the syncretic and emerging tendencies that are combining with (or might combine with) Sufi practices in one way or another. These aspects of Islamic religiousness are, it must be said, not systematically included within the comparative survey. Thus, from an empirical perspective, it is not possible to provide a satisfactory answer to the question of how religiousness in countries impacted by Islam continues to pluralize and the extent to which processes of individualization and institutionalization are taking shape, as can be increasingly observed among Muslims in western nations. The social functions exhibited by individual religious groups and institutions are another aspect also requiring further study (as they relate, for example, to relationships, networks, solidarity and social welfare, all of which ensure more than “identity” or “authenticity”).

Some of the study’s most interesting findings are how respondents assign themselves to the respective groups, especially the Sunni and

Shiite communities, which have such conflict-ridden relationships in countries such as Iraq, Pakistan and Lebanon. In many cases, major differences exist in how the interviewees classify themselves and how external observers do so. The responses in Israel are the least problematic, where 78 percent of respondents refer to themselves as Jews, 10 percent as Muslims, 2 percent as Christians and 1 percent as “other.” Moreover, 8 percent say they do not belong to any religious community – a category of negligible importance in the primarily Islamic countries under comparison. Overall, 88 percent of Muslim respondents classified themselves as Sunni and 1 percent as Shiite; 10 percent said they did not know or gave no response. In Morocco, 100 percent of those queried said they were Muslim, of which 85 percent said they were Sunni (with 1 percent Shiite and 1 percent “other”); 14 percent did not know or gave no response. In Turkey, 99 percent said they were Muslim, of which 79 percent considered themselves Sunni, 10 percent “other” and a mere 3 percent Alevi



Percentage of highly religious and religious Muslims in five surveyed nations



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(even though their share of the overall population is generally said to be much higher); 7 percent did not know or gave no response. In Indonesia 89 percent of all respondents said they were Muslim, with 9 percent calling themselves Christian and 1 percent Buddhist. Among Muslims there, only 2 percent identified themselves as Sunnis (who in fact make up the vast majority), and 62 percent as “other”; 36 percent did not know or gave no response. Finally, in Nigeria 52 percent said they were Christian and 48 percent Muslim, of which only 5 percent considered themselves Sunni, 5 percent Shiite and a full 81 percent “other”; 9 percent did not know or gave no response. In the majority of cases it can be assumed that respondents either are not aware of the difference between Sunni and Shiite,

that it has no meaning for them or that they avoid such a distinction consciously to emphasize the unity of Islam and the Muslim community.

Overall Assessment

All available data suggest that a high proportion of the Muslims queried consider themselves religious, have a personal conception of God, share basic Islamic beliefs and pray in accordance with Islamic requirements. In addition, they consider the teachings of their faith relevant, not only in their personal lives, meaning when searching for greater meaning and when dealing with crises of all sorts, but also when relating to their social and natural environments.

Overall, with the exception of Turkey, the share of respondents classifying themselves as highly religious is well over 60 percent (see Illustration 1); in Turkey this category comprises a full 45 percent of respondents. The country exhibiting the highest level of religiousness by far (93 percent of respondents highly religious, 7 percent religious) is, interestingly enough, Nigeria, a finding that applies to both Muslims and Christians there. Only a minute number of respondents, less than 1 percent, consider themselves non-religious. One notable point is the high level of significance accorded to religious education (87 percent on average; see Illustration 2). This is true even for Turkey, where 72 percent of all respondents have had a religious education, despite the country's secular orientation following the reforms implemented by Ataturk in the 1920s.

On an ideological level, the vast majority of interviewees believe in a personal God who takes an interest in their individual fate. Few hold naturalistic beliefs which see a divine presence in nature or the cosmos or which

even see nature as guiding earthly happenings. In keeping with Islamic teachings, a clear majority of respondents believe in the existence of angels and spirits (jinns, queried as "demons" in the survey) as well as in life after death. Both in terms of experience and practice (personal experience in contrast to the experience of being at one, prayer as opposed to meditation), no clear distinction can be made between theistic beliefs, on the one hand, and pantheistic or monistic beliefs, on the other, as are often found in Sufi traditions.

Everyday Impact on Individual Areas of Life

In general, religiousness is accorded a high degree of importance by respondents. Beyond all religious preferences, moreover, the value of family, spouse or life partner, education, work and career are also esteemed. The adherence to religious obligations – prayer, fasting, charity toward the poor, pilgrimage to Mecca – plays such a clear role on an everyday basis that it cannot be viewed separately and solely part of religious practice.

For comparative purposes, however, respondents were only asked about prayer and more general worship-related activities that are not necessarily directly identified by interviewees with the obligations named above. In general, respondents accord a high level of importance to prayer in its various forms – the obligation to pray five times a day, Friday community prayers in the mosque and individual, mostly freely formulated prayers.

No concrete assessment can be made of tendencies toward fundamentalist ideas and activities, since neither attitudes toward scripture nor the observation of religious requirements relating to food, clothing or behavior were addressed.

As much as it is assumed that religion influences the everyday life of Islam's adherents, the value that respondents ascribe to politics and their respect for law and order vary markedly from country to country. Political attitudes, which might be of particular interest in light of current events, only correlate to religious beliefs to a limited degree; across all countries some 40 percent of respondents say that their religiousness has little influence on their political views.

Tolerance and Diversity

Again in light of current considerations, both the idea and practice of tolerance are of interest in terms of attitudes toward religious diversity in general and toward other viewpoints, lifestyles and members of other religious communities in particular. The implications are apparent, not only for communal life and coexistence with others, but also for the res-

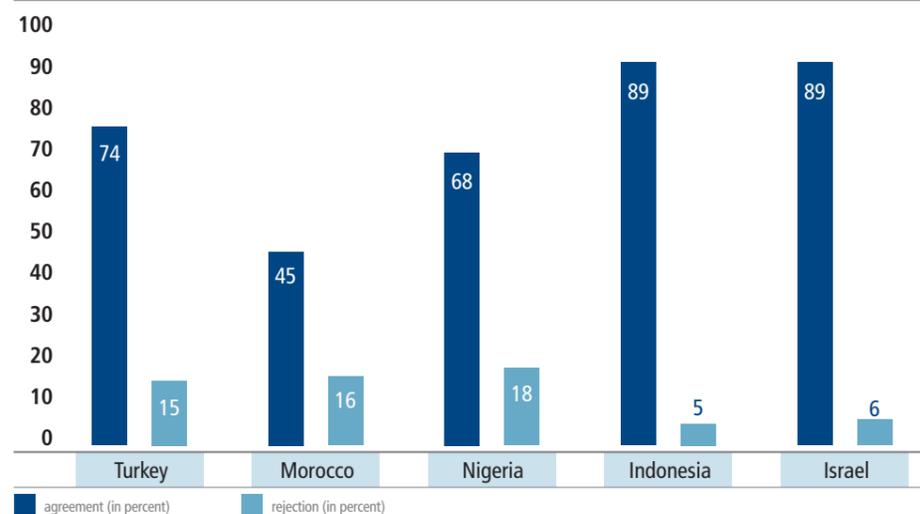
pondents' ability to critically appraise their own religion as well as their behavior and thought as guided by their religious beliefs. For many countries influenced by Islam, religious diversity is not a modern phenomenon and has not only resulted from recent mass migration trends (and is thus not part of immigration-related issues), but is a centuries-old reality, even if it has not always been expressed in the same manner over the course of time. India, Indonesia, Iraq and Nigeria are prime examples of countries home to religious diversity. The perception of religious diversity and the practical implementation of religious tolerance are in fact particularly complex. On the one hand, respondents widely endorse the idea that every religion offers a core of truth and that one should have an open mind toward all religions (some 70 percent on average agree).

In terms of shaping their own religiosity, however, approximately half of all respondents do not consider teachings from other religions, with only 26 percent willing to do so. It is also hardly surprising that – despite the openness expressed elsewhere – a majority (58 percent) of those queried say that their own religion is "right" and, above all, that primarily members of their own religious community will experience salvation (60 percent), although considerable differences among countries are clearly visible here once again.

Notes

1 This contribution is based on the popular-science publication on the international results of the Religion Monitor. Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.): Religionsmonitor 2008. Gütersloh 2007

"I think there is a kernel of truth in every religion" – comparison of Muslims in five surveyed nations



Only Those Recognized with Their Religion Will Become Integrated

„Whoever reads the study carefully will see that fears of religious fanaticism are unfounded because there is no indication of it. That’s one of the main messages of this study.“



Statement by Professor Dr. Barbara John on the Significance of Religion to Integration

The data has confirmed – and it’s not necessarily anything new – that religion and its public and private practice has become a socially relevant subject among immigrants, especially migrants from Muslim regions.

Up until now, German society has usually reacted with rejection or consternation. The majority of Germans view being religious or even just the demonstration of religiousness to be antiquated. But that’s different elsewhere in the world: In the USA, Australia and Canada, all classic countries of immigration, we see more openness to religious faiths on a public as well as private level.

In those countries, importance is placed – particularly by the political establishment – on encouraging the individual’s own religious view of the world, and even more so on promoting the recognition of a higher “power”. Of course, that’s different here. That is why we have to consider devoting more attention to the subject of religion, especially in integration policy. It’s a subject that must be dealt with sensitively in public institutions, especially schools. The widespread backbiting by teachers about girls wearing headscarves, about old-fashioned mullahs, the sometimes open scorn shown to those who regularly visit a mosque, or the observance of Muslim rules clearly shows a lack of respect. The study tells us that religiosity is central to the lives of migrants in our country. It provides them with a system of values and strongly shapes their social relationships and with it their relationship to the society in which they live. If religious immigrants always feel a sense of rejection, they’ll have difficulty ever identifying with that society. On the contrary, they’ll end up withdrawing into the kind of behavior that is then criticized by society at large as an “unwillingness to integrate”.

Whoever reads the study carefully will see that fears of religious fanaticism are unfounded because there is no indication of it. That’s one of the main messages of this study. There is no sign of anyone on a religious mission or of anyone claiming the absolute truth. On the contrary, people fully recognize the significance of other religions. The conclusion to be drawn is that the separation of church and state is positively viewed by and even desired by the overwhelming majority of Muslims.

I was thrilled that so much significance was placed on education. The rather uninspiring educational successes of many migrant children usually suggest the opposite is true. In reality, what is often lacking is the family support for children to stay in education. Anyone who cannot climb to academic heights – and become a doctor or lawyer for example – often loses the interest and support of their family. That means a whole range of professional educational opportunities is being squandered. Young people are subsequently attracted by the prospect of swift earnings in an unskilled job – to the detriment of the next generation. That’s why more and better information is necessary for parents and students.

Professor Dr. Barbara John chairs the “Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband Berlin”, an association of social organizations, and heads a government commission on integration courses at the German Federal Office for the Recognition of Refugees.

Islam in Germany, Islam in the World

by Dr. des. Ferdinand Mirbach, Project Manager
in the Cultural Orientations Program of the
Bertelsmann Stiftung



Interest in Islam has soared in virtually inflationary proportions in Germany in recent years. One major reason is the Islamic fundamentalist eruptions that have been witnessed in New York, London or Madrid. Another reason is the quite obvious transformation of German society. The face of the Federal Republic is changing under the influence of several million people hailing from Muslim countries who have come to make Germany their new home: minarets shoot up alongside church towers; women wearing headscarves line German shopping malls and the turkey döner - an Islamic dish, which cannot be faulted - has become Germany's most popular food. But what does this religion really stand for? What do its followers really feel and what do they believe in? Who are the Muslims of Germany and the world?

Muslims in Germany

There are some 3.2 to 3.5 million people from a Muslim background or of Muslim origin living in Germany today. This estimate includes Muslims with German citizenship (around one million people) and migrants from predominantly Muslim nations. Around 2.4 Turkish Muslims or those of Turkish origin constitute the largest group, followed by 190,000 Bosnians, 130,000

Iranians, 124,000 Moroccans, 95,000 Afghans and 95,000 Iraqis.¹ The number of German-born Muslims - converts for the most part - is estimated at around 50,000.

A further breakdown within the Islamic faith shows that around 2.5 million Muslims living in Germany are Sunni, a further half a million are Alevis hailing from Turkey, and 200,000 are Shi'ite. According to their own sources, there are around 40,000 Ahmadis living here, not to mention numerous smaller denominations such as Alavites, Zaidites and Ismailis. Neither should one underestimate the number of Muslims who formally belong to the Islamic Ummah (the world's Islamic community) but for whom religion plays no functional role and identify with Islam due to their family background. These people are usually referred to as "cultural Muslims" ("Kulturmuslime").

The religious and cultural diversity of Muslims living in Germany is also reflected in the low level and disjointed organization of the Muslim community. The local mosque is the smallest organizational unit in which members of the same nationality generally come together. Quran study sessions and religious lessons are offered within the community, which also

conduct and organize weddings, funerals and circumcisions. In addition, they also organize recreational and sporting events as well as offering counselling. Mosques usually enjoy the legal status of a registered association and most belong to associations or umbrella organizations that are active at a national level. Only around 10 to 15 per cent of Muslims are members of mosque associations and organizations. The largest Islamic organizations in Germany are the Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB), the Islamic Council for Germany, the Central Council for Muslims in Germany (ZMD) and the Association of Muslim Cultural Centers (VIKZ). In spring 2007, these associations amalgamated under the title the "Coordinating Council of Muslims in Germany" (KMD) and since then, claim to represent Islam in Germany.

Estimates put the number of mosques in Germany at around 2,600 of which around 150 can be defined as the classical kind with a dome and minaret. The number of mosque buildings has increased dramatically over recent years and several of the currently 100 constructions still in the planning phase have already come to national attention. Usually, there has been controversy over the size of the mosque or the

height of the minaret. Germany's largest mosque at the current time is in Marxloh, Duisburg, and has space for 1,300 congregants. Mosque buildings serve not only as a place to gather for prayers, but also as a social venue for a thriving community. Unlike churches in the Christian sense, the mosque is not a sacral space.

For the most part, the imams at these Muslim houses of prayer have been taught in Turkey or Arab countries and sent to Germany for a limited period of time. There is often criticism that these "imported imams" ("Import-Imame") are ignorant of the day-to-day realities of Muslim life in Germany, which is why more political effort is being made to enable the education of imams at German universities. Currently, there are professorships in Islamic religious education at the universities in Nuremberg, Münster and Osnabrück where not only imams are being trained, but also school teachers for Islamic instruction. These endeavors aim to reflect the growing significance of Islam in Germany and to match the well-grounded religious needs of school children and adults without leaving the field open to religious zealots and fanatics.

What Islam Stands For

Islam spread from its birthplace on the Arabian peninsula to southwest and central Asia, as well as north Africa and southeastern Asia as far as the Philippines; in Europe, the rulers of the Ottoman Empire left behind Islamic populations in the Balkans, in what today is Bosnia, Albania and Kosovo. Since the 19th century, immigration and the search for work has brought Islam to all corners of the world, especially western Europe and North America. The largest Muslim populations are in Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Turkey and Egypt. Today, a fifth of the world's population – around 1.2 billion people – are Muslim.²

Muslims are united by their belief in one God whose teachings are anchored in the Quran holy book, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad; Muslims interpret the Quran as the revelation by the one, true God. The terms Islam and Muslim are derived from the Arabic verb “aslama” (to submit, to surrender); Islam means “submission”, while a Muslim is someone who “submits oneself”. Muslims reject the appellation “Muhammadan” with good reason: Muslims pray to God, not Muhammad.

Its founding by a prophet is a fundamental characteristic of Islam. Muhammad regarded himself as God's messenger on a mission similar to that of the prophets of the Hebrew Bible: Abraham (Ibrahim); Moses (Musa); and Jesus (Isa), whom Muslims consider a prophet and not the son of God. The mission always had the same goal: to dissuade people from idolatry; to warn people of the Day of Judgment; and to proclaim the existence of the one, true God and his laws. This message was primarily aimed at non-believers and polytheists. Followers of the other two monotheistic religions – Judaism and Christianity – are recognized and respected as believers, although they are rebuked in the Quran for altering the revealed laws, for example, for elevating Jesus Christ to the true man and true God at once. In the view of Islam, it was only this apostasy from God's commandments that made a new prophetic mission necessary. Muslims therefore regard Muhammad not only as another prophet in a

long series, but as the last one, the “seal of the prophets”, who did not only confirm the teachings of earlier prophets, but drew a line under them. His teachings, written down in the Quran, are considered to be the final, inviolable truth, which makes a critical exegesis of the Quran or even the progression of Islam so difficult.

Nevertheless, there are reform movements that criticize what they regard as an inflexible interpretation of Islam and question unreflected obedience of the system of norms developed by Islamic jurisprudence. Among other things, they highlight the need for Quranic verse to be updated to fit a contemporary context. It is nevertheless beyond dispute that a reform of Islam can only succeed as the result of an internal process. Alongside the secular republic of Turkey, reformers have placed their hopes particularly in the around 15 million European Muslims who have the freedom and opportunity to put Islam under critical scrutiny.

Islam in Day-to-Day Life

For Muslims, there are five basic religious tenets known as the “Five Pillars of Islam”. They must be observed by all religious adult men and women.³ The first pillar is the confession of faith, in which Muslims declare their monotheism and recognize the teachings of the prophet Muhammad; at the same time, the Quran is recognized as God's revelations to Muhammad. A second pillar is the ritual prayer that every Muslim must perform five times daily. It is performed after a ritual wash and facing toward Mecca. A third religious duty is the fasting during the month of Ramadan. Fasting means the foregoing food and drink and sexual abstinence, but is restricted to the hours of daylight. Alms-giving is another religious duty for Muslims. The Ummah has always seen itself as a community of solidarity in which its stronger members stand up for the weak. That principle still applies today, although alms duty is no longer imposed in most Muslim countries and a voluntary donation is enough to purge and purify oneself. The fifth pillar is the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.



One essential part of the pilgrimage is the walk around the Kaaba seven times. Due to the high cost, not every Muslim can fulfil this duty; however, those who do may assume the esteemed title “hajji”.

In Islam, the revelations don't only originate from God but come from various sources. Although the Quran contains a series of commandments and prohibitions, it often remains vague. Quranic verse prescribes the observance of prayers several times a day, but the five prayers originate from the Sunnah, widely understood to be the teachings of the prophets as transmitted through the generations. Since the actions of the Prophet is considered to have

been guided by God, an upstanding Muslim orientates his lifestyle to that of Muhammad. Together, the Quran and Sunnah are regarded by Muslims as the fundamental basis of an Islamic religious law called Shari'ah.

Another issue that has been stigmatized is the wearing of headscarves – and equally the banning of it. In the Quran, there is no mention of women being ordered to wear such a garment, although there are Suras (chapters in the Quran) that could be interpreted to mean something of this sort. In reality, the veiling of women is a question of interpretation that is even contentious among Islamic theologians. In practice, some Muslim women appear only

in public wearing the burqa (covered head to toe), some wear headscarves while others go without any form of veiling. The other major religious obligations in everyday life concern eating and drinking. Muslims are forbidden from consuming alcohol (or intoxicating substances in general) and pork meat.

The beginning with Muhammad

Islam originated in Mecca on the Arabian peninsula. The prosperous trading city was the birthplace of Muhammad around 570 CE. Orphaned at an early age, Muhammad was brought up by relatives and first gained social position and financial independence at the age

Chronological table: from Muhammad to today

around 570 AD	birth of Muhammad in Mecca
around 610	Muhammad's first revelation by the angel Gabriel
622	Hijra (migration) of the prophet to Yathrib (Medina) year 1 AH
632	death of the prophet in Medina
632-634	First Caliph, Abu Bakr
638	Caliph Omar conquers Jerusalem
656-661	Caliphate of Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law
660-750	Umayyad dynasty
680	Battle of Karbala
732	Battle of Tours and Poitiers. Charles Martel defeats the Moors
750-1250	Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad
874	"disappearance" of the Twelfth Imam of the Shiites
929-1031	Caliphate of Cordoba
1071	beginning of the Turkish conquest of Asia Minor
1085	Christian reconquest (Reconquista) of Toledo
1095-1099	first Christian crusade and conquest of Jerusalem
1187	Salah ad-Din conquers Jerusalem
1258	Destruction of Baghdad by Mongols. End of the Abbasid Caliphate.
1335	beginning of the Turkish conquest of the Balkans
1453	conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans
1529	first siege of Vienna by the Ottomans
1683	second siege of Vienna by the Ottomans
1798	Bonaparte's landing on the coast of Egypt
1830	beginning of the French colonial rule in Algeria
1919	beginning of the Turkish National Movement under Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk)
1920	Treaty of Sèvres. Division of Turkey and the Middle East by the Entente Powers.
1923	proclamation of the Turkish Republic as a secular state
1924	abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate by the Turkish Grand National Assembly
1961	recruitment agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and Turkey
1963	recruitment agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and Morocco
1979	Islamic Revolution in Iran
1992	founding of the independent republic 'Bosnia and Herzegovina'

| BertelsmannStiftung



of 25 when he married the older widow of a businessman. He received his first revelation around the year 610 CE: The angel Gabriel is said to have appeared to him first in dreams and then during a period of meditation and solitude on Mount Hira, and proclaimed to him the word of God. Finding himself in a hostile environment marked by tribal feuds, Muhammad at first only disclosed the message to a small circle. Nevertheless, he attracted hostility and mistrust and in the year 622 CE, he was compelled to migrate with his followers to near the city of Yathrib, later known as Medina, city of the Prophet.

This migration, known as the Hijra, marked a turning point in the history of Islam and became the beginning of the Islamic calendar. In Medina, Muhammad also managed to win political and military power. It was not least through his militaristic endeavours that he

succeeded in bringing many tribes into the new community ("Ummah"). By the time the Prophet died in 632 CE, the majority of Arab tribes were part of the Islamic Ummah. This historical process could also be described as the beginning of Arab nation building, in which tribe members no longer answered to tribe members, but rather one Muslim answered to another.

With no clear successor to Muhammad, the position of caliphate ("caliph" meaning "representative") was established. Disagreement soon arose among the various ruling families over the issue and the dispute finally led to the Ummah splitting into two major religious denominations, Sunni Islam and Shi'a Islam. The family of the Prophet founded the Shi'a denomination to stake their claims against the ruling Umayyad dynasty. Supporters of the Prophet's relatives and descendants suffered

a painful defeat at the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE, an event that formed the basis for the Shi'a religiosity, strongly influenced by suffering and martyrdom. Nevertheless, these internal Islamic conflicts did little to slow the expansion of the new religion. By the Middle Ages, Islam had spread as far as Asia, north Africa and – in conflict with Christian Europe – Spain. Islam flourished on the Mediterranean under the Turkish Sultanate, before the First World War heralded the demise of the Ottoman Empire and ushered in the secular Republic of Turkey. In Europe, Islam only managed to cultivate a historic tradition in the Balkans. Europe's new, larger Muslim groups are mainly the result of labor policy and the migration of refugees during the 1950s.

A World Religion in Diaspora

The history of Islam in Germany is essentially one defined by immigration. The first small Islamic communities formed in Germany before the First World War. Even so, the 1925 census shows only 3,000 people registered as members of any other religion than Christianity or Judaism. Muslims first began arriving in West Germany in large numbers after the bilateral recruitment agreement with Turkey in 1961. More Muslim migrants have since followed, coming for example from the Balkans, north Africa and the Middle East. These groups include educated elites, but largely consist of political refugees, asylum seekers and war refugees. The problem faced by those who came to Germany was the lack of Muslim social infrastructure such as prayer facilities, educational institutions and shops meaning their long-term religious needs could not be appropriately met. This is not solely the fault of the German government, but also of the migrants themselves who often only envisaged a temporary stay. It's this neglect of Muslim and migrant interests that still poses such a challenge for integration policy today. The diverse nature of reasons for immigrants coming here and the wide range of their native countries explains the current heterogeneity of Islam in Germany. Undoubtedly, there are more Turkish Muslims than any other, but

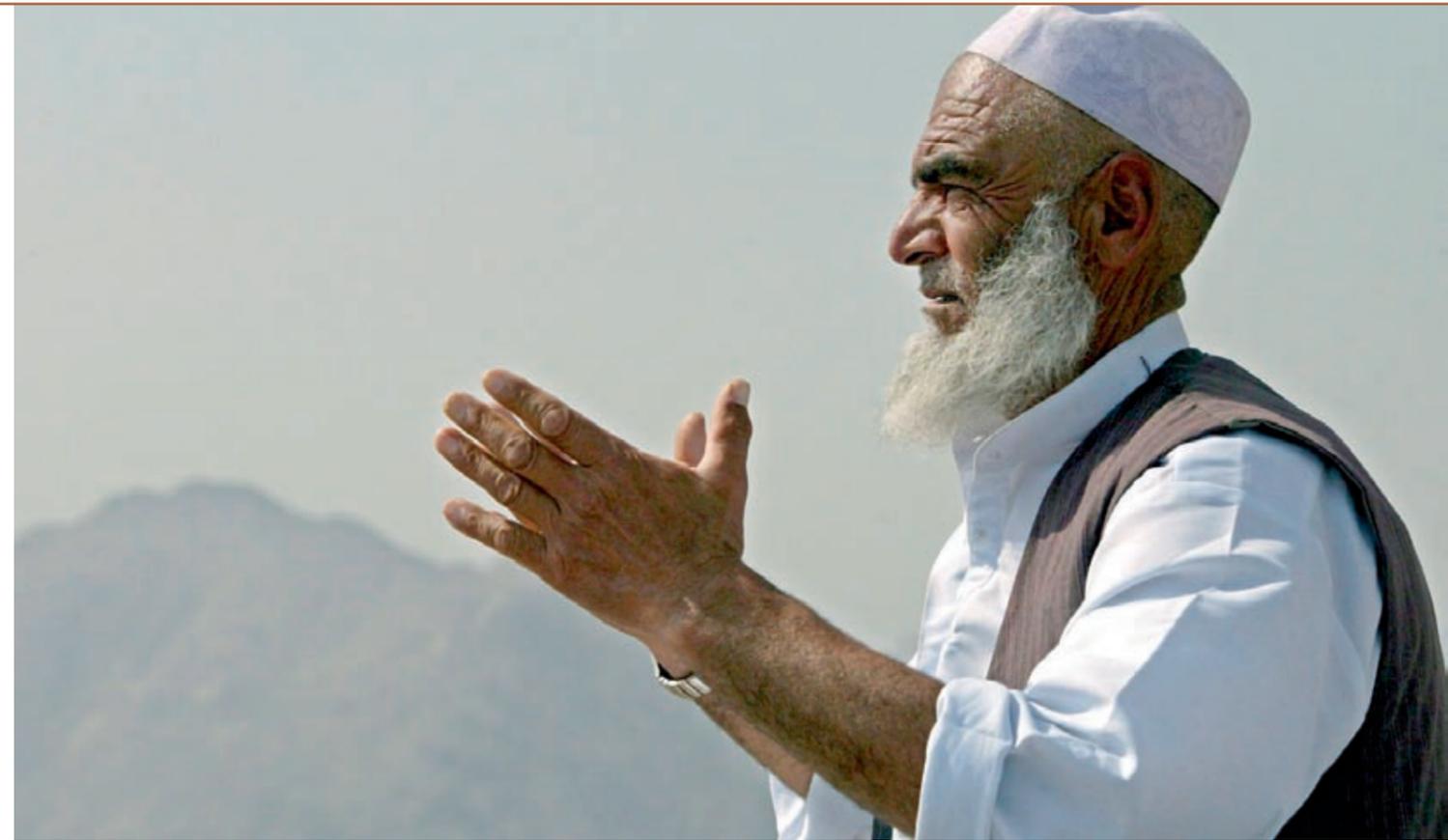
Muslims of other national origins also practice their religion according to their own particular convictions.

Nowadays former Muslim migrants are in their third or fourth generation and they are changing the country. Even the mosques with minarets are no longer a novelty in city skylines, and occasionally one even stumbled upon an Islamic cemetery. The grandchildren of Germany's first guestworkers are now being socialized here and go to school here. The number of school age Muslims is around 1.2 million, which has created the urgent need for government-regulated Islamic lessons. After all, Germany's Muslim population is considerably younger than the old-established population. Some predictions estimate that given the current demographic development, further immigration and higher fertility rates, some German cities could have a predominantly Muslim population by 2050.

No Dialogue without Knowledge

It's already beyond doubt that the significance of Islam for Germany and Europe will only continue to grow in future. Immigration and the higher birth rate among Muslim women alone mean the number of Muslims in European nations will increase. Many Muslims are more deeply rooted in their faith than European Christians; this is partly due to the diaspora situation among immigrant Muslims for whom their religion is an important point of reference and identity in a culturally foreign environment. At the same time, the fact that these immigrants hail from so many different countries and practice such diverse religious traditions means there is no "single" Islam. The personal biography of each Muslim man or woman means each one has a different interpretation of their faith and practices it very differently, all of which accounts for the rich diversity of Islam in Germany.

That is why it is so important to find out more about Islam and the people behind this faith. Sufficient knowledge is needed to overcome personal fears; it's a fundamental precondition



for dealing with widespread Islamophobia. Only those who possess this knowledge will be able to enter into constructive dialogue. Such an interreligious dialogue as an analysis of one's own articles of faith and those of others is a precondition for peaceful coexistence in multi-ethnic societies. By means of the Religion Monitor, the Bertelsmann Stiftung aims to contribute to this dialogue.

Notes

- 1 Source: Government response to "Bündnis 90/Die Grünen" Parliamentary Party survey "The state of judicial equality of Islam in Germany", 18.04.2007
- 2 Cf. Halm, H.: Der Islam – Geschichte und Gegenwart. Munich 2000.
- 3 For a good insight into Islam see, for example, Spuler-Stegemann, U.: Islam – Die 101 wichtigsten Fragen. Munich 2007.

Mini Islam Lexicon

Alevism Alevism originated during the 13th century in Anatolia. It combines elements of Shi'a and mystic Islam. There are between 300,000 and 700,000 Alevism living in Germany. They regard neither the Five Pillars of Islam nor Islamic law as binding. Alevi women do not traditionally wear headscarves.

Ali Cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet and is considered by the Sunnis as the fourth "Rightly Guided Caliph". As the first imam, he is regarded by Shi'ites as the first legitimate successor to Muhammad.

Alms giving Alms giving (zakāt) is one of the five basic obligations of Islam. The proceeds go mainly to the poor.

Angels Belief in angels is essential to the Islamic faith. It states that angels are winged, celestial creatures who fulfil a messenger role between God and Mankind.

Confession of faith The acceptance of Islam is completed with the public recitation of the Islamic creed (shahāda). This forms the first of the five basic obligations of Islam.

Dietary laws Muslims are prohibited from the consumption of pork products and blood. Only meat from an animal that has been slaughtered in the name of God (halāl) may be consumed. Islamic law also prohibits the consumption of alcohol.

Direction of prayer The direction for ritual prayers (qibla) is indicated by a niche (mihrāb) in the wall of the mosque. Muslims pray facing the Kaaba, a stone cube located in the centre of the large mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Faith In addition to the five basic obligations in Islam, there are six tenets of faith. They include belief in the existence of one God, belief in his angels, belief in his revelations, belief in his prophets, belief in the afterlife and belief in fate and predestination.

Fasting Fasting during the month of Ramadan (saum) is one of the five basic obligations of Islam. Fasting means the complete foregoing of eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse during daylight hours. Alevism only observe the Muharram month of fasting, which is not a religious obligation for them.

Five Pillars of Islam The term used for the five basic obligations of Islam. These include the basic creed of Islam (shahāda), ritual prayer (salāt), alms giving (zakāt), fasting during the month of Ramadan (saum) as well as the pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj).

Friday Prayers Friday prayers are the most important of the week. Attendance is compulsory for every adult Muslim man. Women can choose whether to attend..

Hadith Term for the written records of Muhammad's teachings and life.

Hijra The hijra – the term for the withdrawal of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in the year 622 – marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

Imam Name for the prayer leader during prayer gatherings. While Sunnis use the term imam to denote the leader of official Friday prayers, Shi'ites regard imams as leaders of the Islamic faith, but only recognize Ali and his descendants in this role.

Islam With 1.3 billion followers, Islam is the second largest world religion after Christianity. In Arabic, Islam means "submission to God", "the complete surrender to the will of the one, all-powerful and all-knowing creator Allāh".

Islam in Europe Estimates put the number of Muslims living in the European Union at around 13 million. The number of Muslims living in Germany is estimated at between 3.2 and 3.5 million. Particularly in western-oriented EU states, Muslims are confronted with the separation of state and religion and the acceptance of a secular lifestyle.

Monotheism Islam is a monotheist religion. The belief in only one true God is central to the Islamic faith (tauhīd).

Mosque The sacred place where Muslims gather for official and private prayers. A distinction is made between the Friday mosque where prayers and sermons are held, and smaller assembly rooms.

Mufti Name used to denote an Islamic legal scholar who issues verdicts. These are not binding, but rather recommend a course of action.

Muhammad The founder of Islam who was born in Mecca in 570 CE and died in 632 CE in Medina. Known as "God's messenger" and the "Seal of the Prophets", Muhammad is regarded as the final recipient of the divine Truth as told to him by the angel Gabriel.

Muslim Term for the followers of Islam. The term "Muhammadan" is generally rejected by Muslims because they pray to God and not to Muhammad.

People of the Book Islamic law deems Christian, Jews and Zoroastrians to be "People of the Book" since they possess their own monotheist revelation scriptures. Although they are regarded as inferior to Muslims, they are tolerated as "protected peoples" under Islamic law in return for the payment of a special tax.

Pilgrimage The pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) forms the fifth basic obligation of Islam. Every able-bodied Muslim should make the pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lifetime.

Prayers of supplication During prayers of supplication (du'a), the believer asks God directly for forgiving a sin or to fulfil a wish. No particular timetable or position is prescribed for these prayers.

Quran The holy scriptures of Islam containing God's revelations to the Prophet Muhammad.

Reformist Islam Confrontation with western secularist societies has led to many European Muslims in particular calling for a reform of Islam, especially regarding religious legal restrictions and the acceptance of new western moral concepts.

Resurrection Muslims believe in the Day of Resurrection (yaum al-qiyāma) on which they will either be condemned to hell by God or sent to enjoy the pleasures of paradise as a good Muslim. God's mercy plays an essential role in people's hopes for this.

Ritual Prayer The ritual prayer (salāt) is the most important Islamic duty and is to be performed five times daily at certain times with the body facing in a certain position.

Shari'ah Islamic law, i.e. law imposed by God, based on the Quran, Hadith as well as conclusion by analogy and consensus, which covers all obligatory rules for Muslims.

Shi'ites Shi'ites account for between 10 and 15 percent of the Muslim population. They believe the only true successors to the Prophet Muhammad are Ali and his descendants.

Sufism The mystical inflection of Islam. Followers of Sufism emphasise the esoteric Truth of Islam. Among their goals are to achieve oneness with God and to internalize shari'ah.

Sunnis Term denoting the followers of the four Islamic schools of law, which constitute 85 and 90 percent of the world's Muslim population and make it the largest group. In contrast to Shi'ites, Sunnis define themselves as followers of the words and practices of the Prophet (sunnah) and as representatives of the community of Muslims.

Ummah The worldwide community of Muslims.

Veil Veils are traditionally worn by women and pubescent girls.

www.religionsmonitor.com

Internet Portal for Determining an Individual's Religiosity

Religion is a highly personal matter.

At www.religionsmonitor.com, users can generate a profile of their individual level of religious belief.

“How religious am I?” “To what extent do religious attitudes influence my daily life?” These questions are of concern not only to members of traditional religious communities, but also to many who do not adhere to conventional religious beliefs. The Religion Monitor provides all interested parties with support as they look for answers.

More than just an academic tool for specialists, the Religion Monitor offers Internet users around the world the chance to examine their own level of religiousness – regardless of whether they are religious in a traditional sense or whether their attitudes are informed by more individual experiences.

The online questionnaire is taken from the survey carried out globally on behalf of the Religion Monitor. Once they have responded to the questions, users can generate their own “religiousness profile” and compare it to the findings for their country of residence. In addition, group access offers the opportunity to show which aspects of religiosity are accentuated in a specific group, for example a school class.

Within months of going online, tens of thousands of people in almost 100 countries have made use of this opportunity. In order to make the survey accessible to even more people, the existing German, English and Turkish questionnaires will soon be supplemented by Spanish and Arabic versions.



Comments on www.religionsmonitor.com

• Outstanding service

“The online survey is an outstanding service! My students filled it out during religion class. Suddenly even those youngsters were willing to discuss their feelings and religious experiences who had previously been hesitant to discuss their attitudes and who had labeled themselves atheists.”

Religion teacher

• Astounding results

“The Religion Monitor generated astounding results at one of the family get-togethers our parish regularly organizes. One evening we were discussing the extent to which children should be given a religious education. By answering the survey's questions it became clear that our attitudes were not as similar as we had originally thought.”

Church assistant

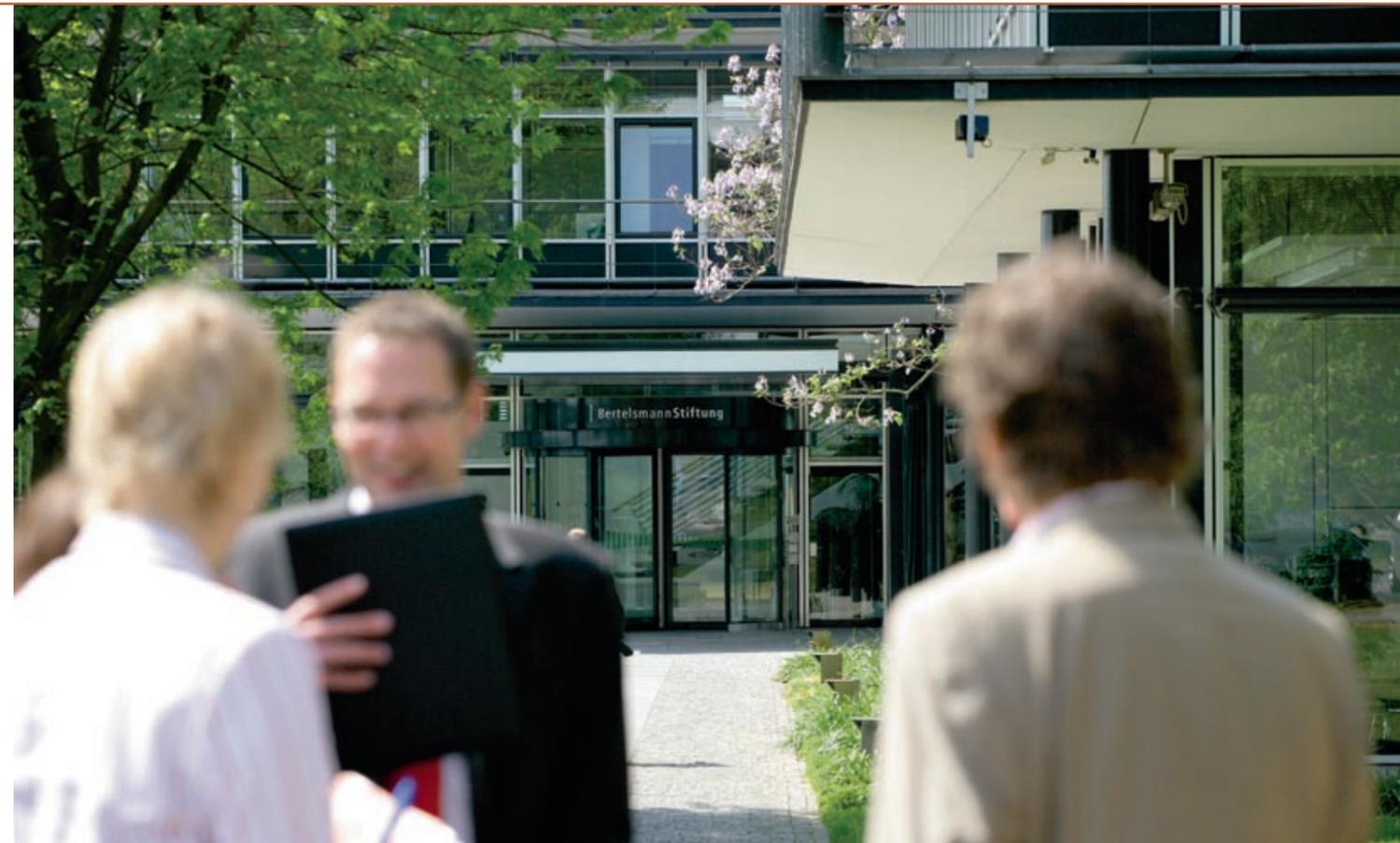
• Multifaceted nature of religiousness

“Initially my personal profile surprised me, since I was classified as ‘highly religious,’ even though I don’t belong to a church. Your questionnaire makes clear, however, that religiousness is much more than just the teachings of the major religions. A personal quest to discover life’s meaning is much more multifaceted – and is often not taken seriously. Thank you for appreciating this phenomenon as well.”

Survey respondent

The Bertelsmann Stiftung

Dedicated to promoting responsibility in an open society – the Bertelsmann Stiftung works with independent experts to develop approaches for ensuring society's ongoing viability. For more than 30 years it has been committed to increasing social participation and efficiency.



Our Mission

Founded by Reinhard Mohn in 1977, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is a private operating foundation. It is politically nonpartisan and works independently of corporate influences. Our projects derive from our founder's original vision: to stimulate social change that leads to increased social participation and efficiency.

Our Core Beliefs

Together, we are the society we live in. As a result, we all bear responsibility for society's future. As a foundation, we at the Bertelsmann Stiftung consider ourselves a key societal player. If we are to work together to shape the future, we must be resolute, courageous and open to new ideas. Our core values are freedom, solidarity, competition and goodwill, and only when all four come together does society become truly humane. To ensure this is the case and to inspire us in our endeavors, we search for best practices worldwide and, in exchange, offer up our own ideas within an international dialogue.

Our Goals

At the Bertelsmann Stiftung, we are committed to:

- Ensuring that individuals take responsibility for shaping society
- Ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to develop his or her skills and talents
- Dismantling the impediments that prevent individuals and society as a whole from realizing their full potential

We believe these are the prerequisites for promoting social participation and integration in a globalized world. Together with political, business and civil society actors, we develop effective, viable solutions designed to achieve these goals. In working for change, we focus on both individuals and society as a whole, as well as on political and economic systems.

Our Core Issues

On both the German and international level, we address the issues of social development, education, health, employment, culture, social participation and integration.

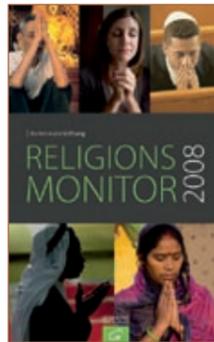
In doing so, we identify future challenges early on and develop long-term strategies. In today's globalized world, cross-cultural and interreligious encounters are gaining in importance. The Religion Monitor and other projects within the Cultural Orientations Program are therefore key elements in our ongoing work.

How We Work

Together with independent experts, our 300 employees design innovative projects addressing issues of key social importance. In carrying out our projects, we focus on transparency and quality. We thus offer concrete, future-ready solutions for political, business and social contexts. In serving as a catalyst for change, we rely on cross-border competition as a way of identifying the globe's best ideas and approaches.

This commitment is illustrated by just a few of our projects: Demographic Change Campaign, Work/Life Balance, Bertelsmann Transformation Index, Early Childhood Education, Initiative for Employment, Alliance for Healthy Schools and Education, Center of Excellence for Communities and Regions, Corporate Social Responsibility, Agenda: Modern Governance and the Neue Stimmen International Singing Competition.

Publications



Religionsmonitor 2008

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Ed.), Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1st edition 2008,
288 pages, paperback, ISBN 978-3-579-06465-9
EUR 14,95 [D] / EUR 15,40 [A] / SFr 27,50

Written for a general audience, this volume details findings from Religion Monitor surveys carried out in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Authors include Bishop Wolfgang Huber, Walter Cardinal Kasper, Paul Zulehner and others.



Was glaubt die Welt?

Analysen und Kommentare zum Religionsmonitor 2008

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Ed.), Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 1st edition 2008,
approx. 700 pages, hardcover, ISBN 978-3-89204-949-4
Publication date: October 15, 2008

This specialized publication in German language discusses the Religion Monitor's findings from an international perspective. Detailed analysis is provided by experts such as José Casanova, Hans Joas, Volkhard Krech and David Voas.



What the World Believes:

Analysis and Commentary on the Religion Monitor 2008

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Ed.), Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 1st edition 2008,
approx. 700 pages, hardcover, ISBN 978-3-89204-989-0
Publication date: October 15, 2008

This specialized publication discusses the Religion Monitor's findings from an international perspective. Detailed analysis is provided by experts such as José Casanova, Hans Joas, Volkhard Krech and David Voas.

Data from the Religion Monitor are evaluated on an ongoing basis. Findings for individual countries are available for download at the website www.religionsmonitor.de. In addition, interested parties can participate in the online survey at www.religionsmonitor.com. Visitors to both websites can subscribe to a free online newsletter that provides regular updates detailing current developments.

Contact

Our experts would be glad to answer any questions you might have about the Religion Monitor. We also appreciate suggestions and feedback.

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Ninety percent of Muslims in Germany are religious, and 41 percent of that group can even be classified as highly religious. For them, belief in God, personal prayer and attending a mosque are important aspects of their everyday routine that have direct consequences for their lives and actions – whatever their gender, age, denomination or national origin. These are only a few of the results presented by the Bertelsmann Stiftung's Religion Monitor.

The Religion Monitor is analyzing in more depth than ever before the question of religiosity among different groups. Psychologists, religious scholars, sociologists and theologians are engaged in comparing the individual levels of religiosity of a representative sample of more than 2,000 Muslims in Germany. Their findings make an important contribution to greater understanding and dialogue between Muslims and the non-Muslim majority in German society.

www.religionsmonitor.com

