The Paradox of Equal Belonging of Muslims

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ABSTRACT: The goal of this article is to demonstrate the paradox of equal belonging of Muslims. Adapting Axel Honneth and Ferdinand Sutterlüty's model of normative paradox, we show how the ongoing process of social integration of Muslims produces reverse effects of disrespect. The refusal to grant fundamental rights to minorities calls into question not only the recently created image of Germany as a new nation of immigrants, but also constitutional principles of the democratic state. While German legislation clearly protects the rights of minorities, when it comes to the attitudes of the population in Germany toward Muslims as the biggest religious minority in the country, there is a reservoir of antidemocratic attitudes that must be taken into account. This article presents the first results of a representative telephone survey conducted among German citizens, with more than 8,000 respondents.

INTRODUCTION

"We are Christians, we are Muslims, we are Jews, we are Charlie!" were the words on the banner held by people who gathered in front of the Brandenburg Gate on January 13, 2015 for the vigil to commemorate the victims of the terrorist attack in Paris. Four days prior, Islamic extremists killed twelve people in front of and inside the offices of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, shot and killed a police officer on the street, and murdered four people in a Jewish grocery store. The vigil in Berlin had been organized by the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, and the Turkish Community in Germany, as a gesture of tolerance, freedom of opinion, human rights, and as a stand against religious fanaticism. The goal was to clearly show that the murderers in Paris had, in no way, acted in the name of all Muslims, but as representatives of a radical ideology that they promoted as their true Islam, on the basis of which they deemed countless Muslims to be outside of the "true faith," and thus legitimate targets for deadly attacks. Although ISIS terrorist groups and so-called lone wolves actively seek to target Western individuals in certain countries, and, in some cases, in Europe, according to studies, the overwhelming majority of victims of Islamist terror are Muslims (Neumann 2014). As stated in US government reports, "In cases where the religious affiliation of terrorism casualties could be determined, Muslims suffered between 82 and 97 percent of terrorism-related fatalities over the past five years" (National Counterterrorism Center 2012). In Western countries that have significant immigrant populations, and that have been partially affected by Islamist terror, fear often leads people to seek the responsibility for the terrorist attacks within Islam itself. Muslims in Germany, however, are clearly positioning themselves outside of this scenario, and refuse to regard Islam and Islamic extremism as identical to one another. Aiman Mazyek, head of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, took a clear stance in his speech:

With their act, they [the terrorists] have committed the greatest blasphemy. With their actions, they have betrayed Islam and dragged its principles through the mud. […] We will not allow our faith to be abused. […] And we, Non-Muslims and Muslims, will work even harder than before and be critics of our society and communities. Young people will invest more in education and volunteer to help Germany progress. […] We are united by the fact that we oppose violence and intolerance […]. We are all Germany! (Mazyek, January 13, 2015).

The Shiite umbrella organization also condemned the attacks as an act against humanity: "With this horrible act the attackers have derided and insulted the Prophet Muhammad and the religion he proclaimed, Islam, more so than the caricaturists could ever have done. This attack is an act against humanity and simultaneously an attack on the values of Islam" (Islamic Community of Shiite Communities in Germany, Jan. 8, 2015). The Coordinating Council of German Muslims (which represents the four major umbrella organizations DITIB, VIKZ, the Islamic Council, and the ZMD, and acts as a point of contact in politics and society) announced, "Terror has no place in any religion. We strongly condemn this cowardly act. Our condolences and our deepest sympathy go out to the bereaved" (Pürlü, Jan. 7, 2015).

The opening passage of this Introduction serves to illustrate that Muslims in Germany take an active role in communicating that they perceive themselves as part of the democratic society, where they stand side by side with other representatives of society to condemn terroristic attacks that, by their means, are also directed towards them. In parallel with these clearly defined positions, and with the reflective processes within Muslim communities about reform and efforts to interpret the Koran and to fight over interpretational sovereignty, the wave of national, right-wing movements against a so-called Islamization of Europe continues to grow.

Starting in the winter of 2014, political "pedestrians," who come together under the banner of PEGIDA, which stands for "Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident," began drawing attention to themselves and attempted to bundle the numerous and diffuse fears circulating among the German population. German politicians, for the most part, took an apologetic tone, instead of resolutely defending the boundaries of established democratic norms, according to which it is not permitted to defame people based on their national or ethnic origins. This lenient reaction to PEGIDA served to somehow acknowledge and justify the movement's origin, which was borne in feelings of alienation among a population that fears being "swamped" by foreigners and by cultures that are perceived as contrary to the European way of life. The consensus was that these fears must be taken seriously, despite the percentage of Muslims in Germany being only approximately five percent (Haug, Müssig, and Stichs 2009).

But, we must go further back in history if we are to truly understand this situation: Germany did not turn into a country of immigrants overnight; the notion of being "swamped" by foreigners does not seem fitting to describe the process as it actually occurred. Ten years after World War II, Germany initiated an intensive recruitment of foreign workfare—called "guest workers." After noticing that these people were not going back to their home countries, but were staying in Germany and even bringing their families, the government decided to impose a ban on recruitment in 1973. By the time of the recruitment ban (*Anwerbestopp*), 14 million migrants had already arrived in Germany, and only a few million had left (Bade and Oltmer 2003). Sixty years of migration history, if we start

counting from the first recruitment treaty of 1955, have transformed Germany into an immigrant society by empirical facticity. However, considering the political debate and popular attitudes, it seems that there is still a way to go until this facticity is also accepted affectively. In political terms, the first time Germany was described as an immigrant society occurred in 2001, although the country did not yet regard itself as such a society at that time. This was reflected in the defensive debates surrounding the reform of Germany's citizenship legislation (2001), a result of which was that use of the principle of *ius sanguinis* (which means that a person could become a German citizen/national despite not being born in Germany, but who had at least one parent who was a German citizen, and which had been applied since 1913) was transformed into the right to choose a citizenship (*Optionsrecht*) by means of the principle of *ius soli*, which made it much easier to become a German national even if one had not been born as one. The discussions about a "German mainstream culture" (*Leitkultur*) that occurred during the citizenship reform debates highlighted the narrative and the cultural changes that would still need to be addressed within the majority society before Germany could consider itself a culturally diverse immigrant society, not only in in the empirical sense, but also in terms of its self-understanding.

The year 2006 can be regarded as a turning point within the discourse on this topic: Germany's role as host of the World Cup championship, and the coining of the slogan, "The world as a guest among friends," was accompanied by a new perspective among Germans of their country being a welcoming place, where they made an effort to be perceived as open to the world, colorful, and friendly. Politically, this new orientation was supported by the first German Islam Conference (DIK), specifically created in 2006 by the Interior Minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, to counter increasing alienation between Muslim and non-Muslim members of the population. The five years following 9/11 can be characterized as a time period of strong mistrust toward Muslims, with a series of security measures being installed by Otto Schily, the former minister of interior, in order to maintain surveillance of the Muslim population in Germany (Bleich 2009). Some scholars even criticized the DIK as being an event supporting reductionism in the light of security politics (Teczan 2012; Schiffauer 2008; Hafez 2014). Nevertheless, in that same year, 2006, the first-ever *Integration Summit* was held in the Chancellery, during which the phrase, "Integration is not a one-way street" was created. This can be regarded as an instance of paradigm-change, as, until then, integration had been described and perceived as mainly being an obligation on the part of migrants to assimilate into German society (Joppke 2007). The political culture in Germany began to become more pluralistic and diverse. In the wake of the *Integration Summit*, increasing numbers of organizations for migrants and associations became involved in the process, and their roles as participating, demanding, and constitutive participants also led to more visibility for migrant activists within the political discourse (Thränhardt 2013).

In light of these developments, it was all the more astounding to witness the success of an anti-Muslim book published in 2010 by Thilo Sarrazin, a former board member of the German Federal Bank, which presented a generally derogatory and culturally essentializing message (Heinz and Kluge 2012). The book, as well as the subsequent debates it unleashed, revealed entrenched lines of conflict regarding the question of whether or not cultural, ethnic, religious, and national minorities belonged to Germany. Within the following public debates, one could observe the instability of the narrative that Germany, in fact, was a country of immigration. The discourse focused on the central question of whether the largest religious minority in Germany—the Muslims and their religion of Islam—belonged to Germany or not. This question was hypothesized based on the integration ability of Muslims into German, or Western, culture. Central stereotypes of Muslims that were

discussed intensely within the public sphere during the Sarrazin-Debates were centered around violent behavior, segregation tendencies, and lack of educational aspiration (Mühe 2012; Meng 2015).

These stereotypes of Muslims being unable to integrate, combined with the message that German society is allegedly being foreignized—all linked with the accusation that politicians are simply sitting idly by and "betraying the nation"—have been repeatedly maneuvered into the discursive space and engaged with in the media since November 2013, as a result of widespread citizens' protests under the banner of PEGIDA. Since the publication of Sarrazin's book in 2010, certain stereotypes manifested within the public space, and are increasingly blazing a trail in political publications and driving the mobilization of right-wing movements (Geiges, Marg, and Walter 2015; Popp and Wassermann 2015).

This wave of stereotypes in the public discourse makes visible how fragile the aforementioned, and only recently achieved, self-understanding as a country of immigration is within German society. The readiness to be an open country of immigration seems to be continually called into question when it comes to the specific topic of Muslims in Germany. This religious minority seems to be a great challenge to the narrative of the new immigrant society. The outgrouping of Muslims can be observed within several controversial debates about the cultural, spatial, and symbolic recognition of religious diversity. "When it comes to Germany, we can observe a paradox of pluralism, whereby, on the one hand, pluralism is welcomed by the majority of the population, but on the other hand, it is simultaneously limited in regard to the largest minority group, in line with the motto: "We want diversity—but without Muslims!"[1]

In light of this situation, two questions arise: 1) How does such a paradox come to be, and 2) What are the reasons for it? This article attempts to answer these two questions. In the following, we will outline Axel Honneth and Ferdinand Sutterlüty's model of the normative paradox, and apply it to the recognition of religious rights of Muslims. This will be followed by a discussion about the possible reasons for the normative paradox in the case of Muslims.

THE MODEL OF THE NORMATIVE PARADOX

In his theory of recognition,[2] Honneth delineates the three types of recognition that subjects require: love, rights, and solidarity. Subjects demand these in order to attain self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem, as part of successful identity building. According to Honneth, subjects attain self-confidence through recognition in their emotional relationships, self-respect through recognition in the sphere of rights, and self-esteem through intersubjective recognition as subjects with individual abilities and achievements (Honneth 1995). *Normative paradoxes* are created when legitimate demands for recognition produce counter-effects during the process of their implementation (Hartmann 2002). Honneth and Sutterlüty name four conditions that must be fulfilled in order for a normative paradox to exist (Honneth and Sutterlüty 2011, 73): 1) In the case of claims for recognition, "it must be possible to reconstruct the normative intentions;" 2) The implementation of claims for recognition "must be interpreted as normative progress according to broad understanding of society;" 3) The implementation must bring about "unwanted" and "unintended consequences caused by changing socio-economic, socio-structural and cultural contextual conditions […] that are not in line with the original goals or even diametrically opposed to them;" 4) The "initial guiding moral claims and ideals must continue to be

valid." One example of a normative paradox pointed to by Honneth and Sutterlüty is the finding of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) in their study "Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture," whereby general achievement criteria in the educational system do not serve to decrease social inequalities and class privileges, but rather contribute to their perpetuation, as recurrent class-based differences form part of the evaluation of pupils and students (Honneth and Sutterlüty 2011, 78).

THE PARADOX OF THE EQUAL BELONGING OF MUSLIMS

The normative paradox being analyzed here occurs within the dimension of social esteem, and so we will briefly discuss this dimension in the following text. According to Honneth, subjects obtain self-esteem through mutual recognition of individual abilities and achievements. These conditions of recognition require the existence of a shared value horizon against which practices can be deemed to be worthy of recognition (Honneth 1995, 126-27). What Honneth has in mind here are constitutional societies with values and norms that provide equal amounts of freedom and autonomy for every member, and in which individuals can realize their aspirations in harmony with these values (Honneth 2002; 2014). This approach has been criticized as relativistic (Kauppinen 2002). Honneth also recognized this weakness in his theory, and clarified that his approach is based on the assumption that, in a historical comparison, constitutional and liberal societies provide the best conditions for individual fulfillment through reciprocal recognition in various dimensions (Honneth 2002). According to this view, lawful life practices that are incompatible with the values of the respective society cannot expect to receive social appreciation. In the first instance this is not a problem, if one starts with the assumption that, in modern civic-capitalistic societies, the provision of social appreciation is mainly derived from the generally shared merit principle (Honneth 2011). As a result, an individual can experience general social appreciation for merit-based life practices, and aspects of social appreciation for other forms of lawful life practices that do not correspond to the generally shared value horizon (Laitinen 2006). Problems begin to arise when subjects, and their individual abilities and achievements, experience general devaluation as a result of their belonging to a group that is associated with value-incompatible practices. This leads to disrespect that contradicts the value horizon of a liberal society (see Honneth 1995; Honneth and Stojanov 2007). Thus, on the one hand, there are lawful practices that cannot expect to be met with general social appreciation, while, on the other hand, it is against the rules of the society for these practices to be maligned.

The normative paradox of the equal belonging of Muslims consists of the claim for more recognition that arises as a result of the process of social integration. This claim is part of the generally shared self-understanding of a liberal democratic society. However, in the concrete case of its implementation, this claim experiences a negative valuation.

This argumentation will now be analyzed and supported with empirical data in relation to the cases of a circumcision ban, mosque construction, and the wearing of the headscarf by female teachers. These are main elements in the public discussion about the belonging of Muslims to German society in general, but are also concrete aspects when it comes to the acceptance of religious diversity. All of these elements are related to religious rights derived from the basic right to freedom of religion. These rights are legitimized through constitutional law or democratic means, from which the normative claim arises regarding the recognition owed to these practices, at least in the sense that they not be stigmatized or maligned. Seen from a historical perspective, the fact that such practices are not disrespected in such a manner can be regarded as normative progress for a society.

Paradoxically, however, the widely shared normative claim of Muslims to belonging, which derives from the basic right to religious freedom, is devalued in many parts of the population. In light of this situation, we will now elaborate on the aforementioned cases in more detail. The empirical data presented here stem from a nationwide representative telephone survey (dual-frame RDD) with 8,270 German-speaking participants aged 16 years and older, conducted between 24th of September 2013, and 15th of April 2014. The response rate was 15 percent. Decreasing and minimal response rates are an internationally observable phenomenon (Leeuw and Heer 2002). However, low response rates do not mean that the results of the survey are necessarily skewed (Keeter et al. 2006). Data were weighted to adjust for unequal probabilities of selection, and for over- or undersampling of certain subgroups (the variables used were sex, age, education, professional education, and federal state).[3]

Circumcision

One of the main debates in the field of religion and politics over the last few years has centered on the question of religious circumcision for boys. This practice is part of both Islam and Judaism and represents a fundamental part of these religions (Rohe 2012; Knobloch 2012). This practice was tolerated in Germany for many years without legal regulation. In 2012, however, the district court of Cologne ruled that circumcision is a form of bodily harm, which led to a widespread and controversial debate in public. In this context, it was repeatedly claimed that Jewish and Muslim parents were disregarding the basic rights of their children, and that the wellbeing of their children was less important to them than their traditions. The debate's construction of a veritable dualism between "German legal thought" and "Jewish-Muslim ritual" (Darnstädt 2012) went so far that the Central Council of Jews in Germany regarded it as a flaring up of anti-Semitism, and even Chancellor Angela Merkel intervened to warn against the introduction of a nationwide ban on circumcision (Jones). In the end, the German Bundestag passed a law allowing parents to have their children circumcised without a medical reason being required. The Bundestag justified the law in a resolution that stated "Jewish and Muslim religious life must continue to be possible in Germany" (Deutscher Bundestag 2012b).
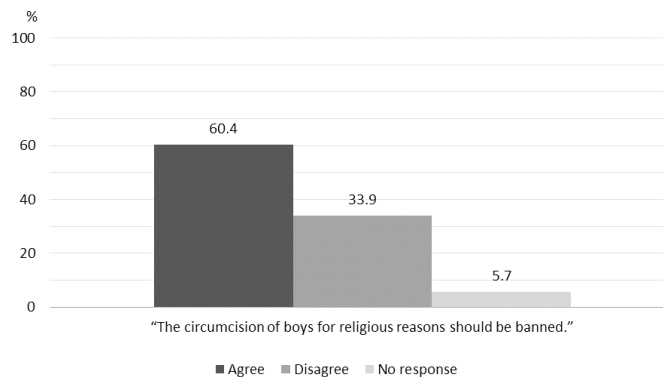
Figure 1: Recognition of religious rights of Muslims – circumcision (N=8,270)

These attitudes about banning circumcision clearly show how the population is struggling with the right of cultural autonomy for religious minorities, which is prototypical for a post-migration society in which competing norms and values are being negotiated. This attitude is reflected in our survey results, which show that, almost three years after the circumcision debates, 60.4 percent of respondents still want to legally prohibit the circumcision of boys.[4]

The draft legislation by the federal government "on the extent of personal care during circumcision of a male child" (Deutscher Bundestag 2012a) found a majority agreeing with the Bundestag that it should be banned. Despite final legislation maintaining the legality of religious circumcision, the majority of the population continues to remain in opposition. It is clear that the negative image of circumcision employed in the public debate continues to have an effect. We can therefore conclude that the exclusionary discourse shapes attitudes more so than the current state of legislation.
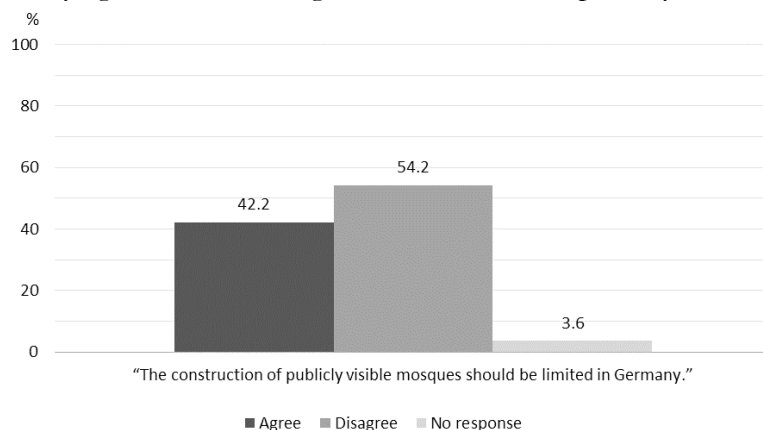
Mosque Construction

While the issue of circumcision equally affects two religious minorities in Germany—Jews and Muslims—there have been several socio-political disputes over the last few years that concerned only the right of Muslims to visibly live their faith in Germany. This includes recurring debates about the construction of representative mosques.

There are currently 2,600 mosques in Germany (Häusler 2011), most of them located in back courtyards, on industrial sites, or in former stores (Leggewie, Joost, and Rech 2002). As they do not possess domes or minarets, they are not immediately recognizable as mosques from the outside.

The visible and representative mosques that have been constructed since the 1990s are an expression of the fact that Muslims have increasingly regarded Germany as their new home (Kraft 2002; Rommelspacher 2009). Prestigious mosque structures have repeatedly been the source of great conflicts, for example in the cities and neighborhoods of Cologne-Ehrenfeld, Duisburg-Marxloh, Berlin-Heinersdorf or Leipzig-Gohlis. In addition to the actual mosque building, the possibility of the muezzin call and the construction of minarets were particularly polemicized during these conflicts. The ban on minarets that was firmly established in the Swiss constitution via referendum in 2009 (Behloul 2010), further fueled the German debate.[5]

Mosque construction projects are of great significance in this context because it is in this arena that negotiations occur regarding the symbolic position within the urban space granted to Muslims by the established non-Muslim majority population (Leggewie, Joost, and Rech 2002).

As shown by the numbers in the graph below, 42.2 percent of the total population of Germany agrees with limiting the construction of publicly visible mosques:

Figure 2: Recognition of religious rights of Muslims—mosque construction (N=8,270)

The acceptance of the construction of publicly visible mosques represents a gauge of the recognition of Muslim life in Germany from an urban planning and spatial perspective. The construction of visible mosques, therefore, represents an equalization of Islam with other religions, because the presence of visible buildings of other religions, such as Christianity and Judaism, is deemed a matter of course in Germany and is not the subject of public debates. Here we are talking about the completely practical recognition of the fact that Muslims and Islam belong in Germany, and belong in the cityscape, to the same extent that other religions and their members belong. In regard to this question, we see that about 40 percent of the population in Germany is not willing to grant Muslims this degree of spatial recognition. It is possible that the spatial presence leads to competition with those who feel that their prerogative, in terms of symbolic establishment, in the public space is being challenged (Spielhaus and Färber 2006). As a result, a conflict-laden situation has arisen between, on the one hand, the negotiation of the democratically legitimate fundamental right (namely the right to not be prevented from freely practicing one's religion), and on the other hand, the concept of not visibly changing the social space in a way that would reflect religious plurality. It must be noted that this exclusion is mainly observable in regard to Muslims and not toward other religious minorities.
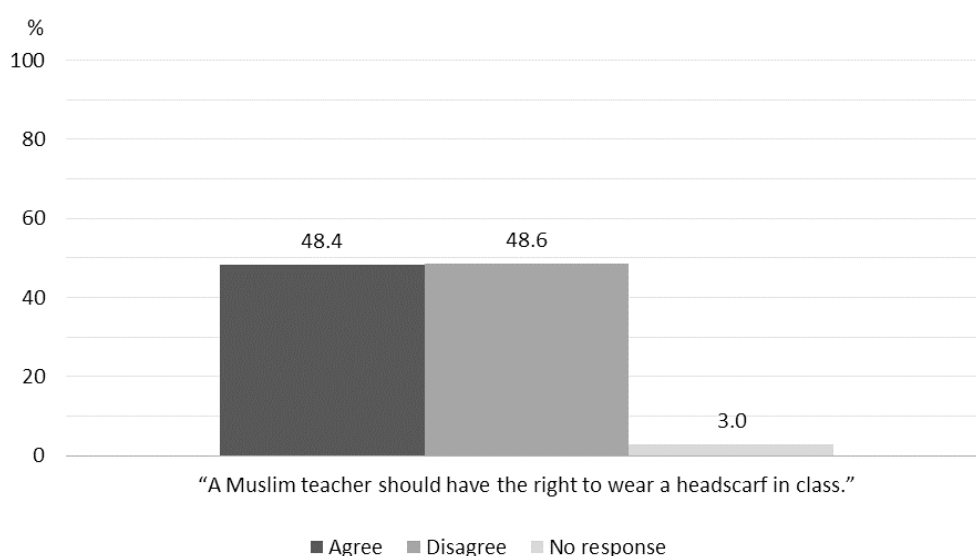
The Headscarf

Although the issue of circumcision affects the private life of religious believers, and the construction of mosques affects the public presence of Muslim life in the social space, there are also a number of conflicts that revolve specifically around the relationship between state and religion.

These conflicts became apparent in the debates on the level of neutrality in schools when it comes to questions of religion and worldview, debates that have been held in the last few years regarding crucifixes that, even today, still hang in most classrooms in Bavaria, as well as the wearing of a headscarf by female Muslim teachers. Both of these conflicts ultimately progressed to the level of the Federal Constitutional Court.

In March 2015, the Federal Constitutional Court made public its decision that, when it comes to adherence to religious regulations regarding the covering of the body, even teachers can refer to the basic right to freedom of religion (1 BvR 471/10 and 1 BvR 1181/10). According to this ruling, the wearing of a headscarf by a Muslim teacher is protected by the right to religious freedom guaranteed in the constitution.

In the political conflict surrounding the wearing of the headscarf by teachers, participants continually debate what role and significance the headscarf truly has in Islam and among Muslim women. One answer from the perspective of Muslim women was provided by the study, "Muslim Life in Germany" (MLD), commissioned by the German Islam Conference (DIK), according to which more than one quarter (27.6 percent) of all Muslim women in Germany wear a headscarf (Haug, Müssig, and Stichs 2009, 186). The main motive for wearing a headscarf, cited by 92.3 percent of respondents, was that covering the head is a religious obligation. In second place, cited by 42.3 percent of respondents, was the reason that a headscarf provides security to the wearer. The third most frequently noted reason was the wish to be recognizable as a Muslim. Expectations on the part of others, such as family members and/or spouses, was given a subordinate place among the answers, with only 6 to 7 percent of respondents offering this as a reason (Haug, Müssig, and Stichs 2009, 197). Based on this study, for most Muslim women in Germanywho wear the headscarf it is a self-determined act of religious expression. However, almost half (48.6 percent) of the

German population thinks that teachers should not wear headscarves. As these data stem from a time prior to the headscarf decision made public in March 2015, it is possible that changes in opinion have since occurred in regard to this issue. A survey that was conducted several days after the repeal of the headscarf ban by the Federal Constitutional Court implies that such a change has occurred, and comes to the conclusion that a majority of 53 percent of respondents are in favor of the court's decision, while a minority of 37 percent believe the decision to be wrong (TNS/ Emnid 2015). Whether attitudes toward the wearing of the headscarf by female teachers changed permanently, or whether the change came about as a result of the court's decision, is a question that requires further research.[6] What is notable about these results is the fact that, in comparison to our survey, the number of respondents who agree with the wearing of the headscarf barely increased, while the number of people who reject the headscarf has somewhat decreased.


Figure 3: Recognition of religious rights of Muslims – headscarf (N=8,270)

We have arrived at the paradox of the equal belonging of Muslims via theoretical deductions based on the assumption that constitutional law and the Federal Constitutional Court are central institutions of a liberal democratic society, and that these institutions are generally recognized within that society. The acceptance of these institutions can be illustrated on the basis of empirical data. Representative surveys show that 91 percent of respondents place great trust in the Basic Law, and that 86 percent place great trust in the Federal Constitutional Court (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach 2014, 2). Furthermore, 85 percent of respondents report that they are proud of the freedom and of the rule of law in Germany (Vorländer 2009, 15). These widely accepted constitutional institutions legitimized both the circumcision of boys for religious reasons, as well as the construction of religious buildings, and most recently, the wearing of the headscarf by female teachers. We were able to show, however, that these three rights are viewed disparagingly by a large part of the population, and that a willingness to restrict these rights exists within the population. The resulting situation can, therefore, be identified as constituting a paradox of equal belonging of Muslims. This paradox is also reflected in the high levels of agreement of respondents with the statement "Muslims in Germany have the right to make claims." Sixty-seven percent of respondents agreed with this statement.
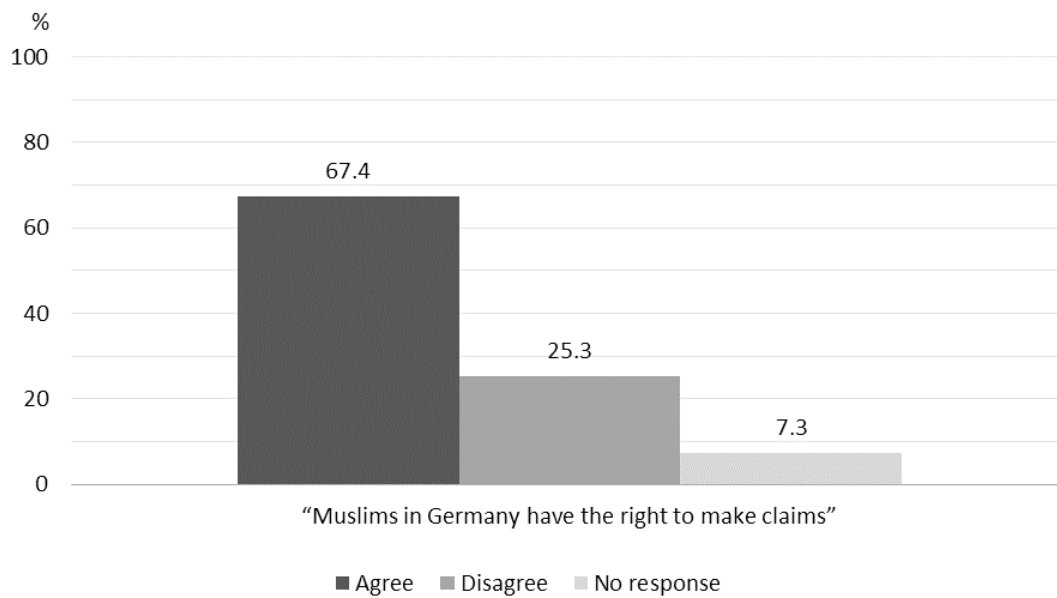
Figure 4: Recognition of Muslims claims (N=8,270)

The response to the statement "Muslims should receive more recognition from us" confirmed this view, with 68 percent of respondents agreeing with this statement, which also implies that there is a lack of recognition afforded to Muslims.
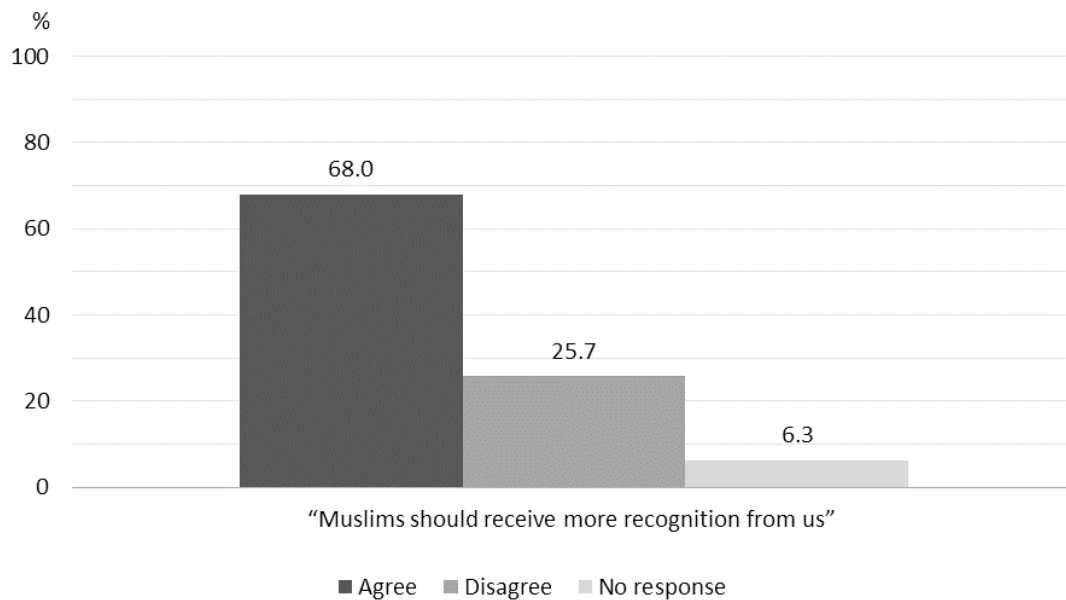
Figure 5: Recognition of Muslims in general (only non-Muslims, N=8,015)

Despite anti-Muslim sentiment that has been empirically proven to exist, and to reach all the way into the center of society (Zick and Klein 2014; Decker, Kiess, and Brähler 2014; Pollack et al. 2014; Foroutan 2012), the German population is also characterized by a high level of agreement (almost 70 percent of the population) with the idea that Muslims in

Germany are worthy of more recognition. However, when the population is presented with demands for specific religious rights, the result, paradoxically, is a reversal of opinion among the population. This reversal is demonstrated by the responses that show that 60 percent of the population would ban circumcision, almost half would ban the wearing of the headscarf by teachers, and more than 40 percent would limit the construction of mosques. Here we can clearly see that the attitude of the population is incongruent with German legislation, which is built on the concept of a plural democracy with rights for minorities—which includes the right to religious self-determination (Basic Law, Article 4(1), (2)).

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THE PARADOX
OF THE EQUAL BELONGING OF MUSLIMS

We were unable to find any studies that deal with the normative paradox of the recognition of Muslims. Sutterlüty (2011) applies the model of normative paradox to interethnic relationships, and provides the first clues to possible reasons for diversity-based paradoxes. In his fieldwork conducted in two city districts with high ethnic-cultural diversity and a high proportion of socially underprivileged population groups, he finds a "paradox of ethnic equality." Thus, "German residents" in principle agree that members of other ethnic population groups should have equal opportunities for access to the central activity areas of society, but the realization of that equality principle in terms of social upward mobility for minority groups leads to negative and exclusionary classifications by the majority group. In this process, the majority group does not visibly and logically devaluate, or exclude the minority ethnic group as such, but instead attributes negative behavioral characteristics to it.

Sutterlüty sees the motivations for the negative classification of ethnic minorities as resulting from economic competition, as well as from beliefs about ethnicity based on heritage. We would like to offer two explanations for the normative paradox of the equal belonging of Muslims in which these factors may also play a role. We cannot test these explanations empirically with our data, but they appear sufficiently plausible in terms of their theoretical nature. The paradoxes to which we refer arise as a result of a lack of democratic awareness, or despite existing democratic awareness.

Ideally speaking, liberal democracies embody the ideals of a free society based on a constitutional framework (Fukuyama 1992). Though the path to this ideal state is arduous (Fraser 1990), liberal democracies are characterized by achievements such as freedom of association, religion, speech, mobility, and political organization, which provide individuals and minorities with opportunities for self-realization and with protection (Kymlicka and Cohen-Almagor 2000). In light of these achievements, and based on the equality principle, this means that, "For all their ongoing dissent on questions of world views and religious doctrines, citizens are meant to respect one another as free and equal members of their political community" (Habermas 2006, 5). It is conceivable that many citizens are not aware of these aspects of the democratic process. For example, Honneth proposes that one explanation of the racism among young people in Eastern Germany is a lack of democratic awareness within socialization practices (Honneth and Stojanov 2007). Following on from this explanation, one could surmise that the reason for the observed paradox regarding equal belonging of Muslims stems from a lack of democratic awareness among parts of the population, which leads to these groups failing to identify the religious rights of Muslims as being part of the democratic process that should be respected.

When democratic awareness based on the religious rights of minorities does exist, i.e., when subjects consciously regard the provision of religious rights as part of democratic processes, then the disrespect of constitutionally legitimized behavioral practices can be seen as an anti-democratic act. If this disrespect is only enacted toward certain groups, i.e., Muslims or Jews, then this behavior can be identified as Islamophobia or anti-Semitism (Shooman 2014), because this behavior involves the disparaging of Muslim and Jewish life practices that are grounded in the constitutional right to religious freedom. In this sense, the paradox observed here may lie in the fact that the democratic self-understanding of citizens stops when it comes to specific religious practices. In other words, society is generally accepting of Muslims, but there are obstacles that get in the way.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we analyzed the normative paradox of the equal belonging of Muslims within the field of social acceptance. The act of disrespecting lawful religious practices of Muslims does not fit into the value horizon of a liberal democratic society, and yet it does happen. These negative attitudes may not have any broad social consequences at first, and may, perhaps, only be observed by affected Muslims, but they possess the potential to challenge overarching democratic principles.

The citizens of Germany have exclusionary positions toward Muslims as visible political agents. Sixty percent of the respondents believe that the ritual of circumcision for boys should be legally banned. Nearly half of respondents (48 percent) support the statement that female teachers should not wear a headscarf, and 42 percent support restricting the construction of mosques. However, the practice of religious rituals and the construction of sacred buildings in the public space are civic and religious basic rights, and the urge to limit them is a sign of a lack of democratic awareness.

The attacks on mosques over the last few months in Germany, as well as the qualitative intensification of verbal protest, i.e., in defamatory missives to public representatives of Muslim minority groups, their alliance partners (journalists, scholars, activists), and Muslim individuals, and the increase in anti-Islamic protests, such as in the wake of PEGIDA marches, all point to the fact that a part of the population is decidedly willing to turn their attitudes into action. Heterogeneous societies shaped by immigration discourses must do more to educate their populations about basic democratic rights, and must more-clearly address the dangers of disrespect and exclusion present to immigrant societies.

ENDNOTES

[1] We can observe a great openness and engagement toward refugees at the moment (Köcher 2015). However, at this point we cannot foresee whether this fundamental willingness to help will affect the attitudes of people toward Muslims in general. At the same time, we can also observe attacks on refugee accommodations. Upcoming research on the transformation process in Germany during the refugee crisis will examine the impact this has had on attitudes toward Muslims.

[2] For a critical discussion, see Fraser and Honneth 2003.

[3] The study was conducted by the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. The technical report (Beigang, Kalkum, and Schrenker 2014) with a detailed description of the methodology and implementation of the survey can be obtained under the following link: https://www.projekte.hu-berlin.de/de/junited/Forschung/repraesentativbefragung/methodenbericht

[4] The categories "agree," "disagree" and "no response" are aggregates of multiple answer choices: The category "agree" includes the answers "completely agree" and "mostly agree;" the category "disagree" includes the responses "completely disagree" and "mostly disagree;" and the category "no response" includes the answers "don't know" and "refusals." Due to potential rounding errors, the sum of all responses cited in the study may not always correspond to the total value of 100 percent.

[5] This was reflected in the debate on Islam criticism in Germany at the beginning of 2010. See the compilation of the Heymat Project: http://www.heymat.hu-berlin.de/debatte_islamkritik, last accessed on 26.11.2014.

[6] These differences could also result from methodological reasons, such as differently worded questions.

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