Religious Plurality in Germany: Attitudes and their Determining Factors[1]

Gert Pickel & Alexander Yendell

Abstract

Germany is presently transforming into a modern immigration state, leaving behind its image of a "guest worker" country. Parallely, it is confronted with growing religious plurality and rising religious conflicts. Moreover, religious labeling of groups other than the Christian or undenominational majority population becomes more significant. Against this background, the paper discusses the views of the population in Germany towards religious plurality, practices of religious minorities as well as attitudes towards members of different religious groups. The results reveal a considerable amount of negative attitudes towards foreign religious groups in Germany. More specifically, Islam and Muslims are mostly viewed as negative by the German population. Structural equation models with manifest variables show that, in particular, the frequency of contacts have positive impacts on attitudes towards people of different religious affiliations.

[1] This text is a translated and modified version of the article *Pickel, Gert; Yendell, Alexander "Einstellungen zu fremdreligiösen Gruppen in Deutschland und ihre Bedingungsfaktoren. " Ed. Löw, Martina. Vielfalt und Zusammenhalt. Verhandlungen des 36. Kongresses der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie in Bochum und Dortmund 2012. Frankfurt am Main, New York: Campus. 2014. 247-264*

Religious Plurality in Germany: Attitudes and their Determining Factors

1. Introduction – Attitudes towards religious groups as a subject of research

In 2010, a German politician of the Social Democrats, Thilo Sarrazin, published a controversial book about immigration to Germany. Sarrazin argued that Germany is destroying itself by its immigration policies and one of those groups who he thinks does not show attempts to integrate itself is the Muslim population. Sarrazin`s book was the best selling non fictional book since World War II and its' controversial arguments lead to an intensive debate on immigration. During that debate in 2010 and 2011, two camps seem to have divided Germany. One group were filled with indignation about Sarrazins statements. They pointed out that people from different cultures are able to live happily side by side. Others were glad to have an honest debate on the "lack of willingness" of individuals with a migration background to integrate into German society. In this debate, fear and the perception of a Muslim threat to German society appeared, as well as a resentment of cultural diversity. Undeniably, these debates brought to the fore issues such as integration and social cohesion. The toleration of people with a migration background and/or with non-christian confessions was put at the top of the agenda.

Even if the many critics of Thilo Sarrazin hate to admit it: with his controversial book he became an "agenda setter". But not only Sarrazin himself fuelled the discussion. Articles in the print and online press, debates on television, as well as results of opinion polls, showed that the German tolerance of migrants and especially Muslims is not very high. It is not surprising that against this background a far right movement like the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA) has risen.

One obvious point in these debates is, that the growing tension between social integration and the increasing religious plurality is emphasized. Not guestworkers or immigrants, but rather religious groups are more and more often marked as problematic groups. Religious pluralism is the result of the increase of people with non-christian religious affiliation. For most European countries this is normal. Yet, religious pluralisation is not viewed as a relatively natural occurring result of changes within social structure. Rather it is viewed against the background of its sociopolitical effect. Depending on the normative or political position, either the willingness of migrants to integrate or the readiness to take in migrants on the part of the integration society is brought into question.

As a consequence of these developments there exists a fear of an increase of culturally induced conflicts in Germany (and also in other European countries). Some discourses refer to Samuel Huntington's (1996) thesis of a "clash of civilizations", which particularly made religious differences responsible for conflicts between societies. And also Levent Teczan (2011) who sees above all, the labelling of religious communities as a foreign group, as a new element of this public discourse.

But are these statements based on social reality? Are stereotypes of religious groups really very common within German society? Is tolerance of other religious groups limited? Or is Germany already a multicultural society despite the statements of the German government and is the debate on integration overheated? And if there are deficits regarding the tolerance of non-christian religious groups, what are the reasons for them?

The goal of this article is to reveal where the limits of tolerance of other religions and religious groups are in West and East Germany. This leads to a central, multidimensional question: How are non-christian religious groups perceived? Which attitudes towards these groups do people in Germany have, and which are the determining factors, which influence these attitudes?

To answer this question we will analyse quantitative data of the survey with the title "Perception and Acceptance of religious Plurality" (PARD), which was conducted at the University of Münster. The survey focusses on attitudes towards religious pluralism in Germany, Denmark, France, Netherlands and Portugal. In order to explain these attitudes several influences are tested such as socio-economic deprivation, subjective perceived deprivation, political attitudes, forms of religiosity as well as socio-structural factors. Hypotheses which will be tested are the contact hypothesis, which postulates a stereotype reducing effect of contacts with members of out-groups (Allport 1954), the concept of the Authoritarian personality (Adorno et al. 1950), which assumes a correlation between authoritarian attitudes and the devaluation of foreigners, and also the social capital theory (Putnam 2000), which postulates positive effects by building up trust.

2. Problems of religious pluralism in Germany

2.1 Religious pluralism and the integration debate

One noticeable point within the heated debates of the last few years has already been mentioned: a lot of attention has been given to the religious imprint of groups. This serves to describe a perceived problematic group. A few decades ago, foreigners or "guest workers" were singled out as a significant different group from the majority population. Now it is more common to identify "outsiders" by religious labelling. This serves to define Muslims as a problematic group. (Tezcan 2011: 298). This implies, that all members of a religious group are the focus of stereotypical labelling. This means that religion as a personality trait becomes part of the discussion.

The initial point for attitudes towards other religious groups concerns their expansion in recent decades. In Germany as well in other European countries a continuous process of religious pluralisation has occurred. Not only has the proportion of unaffiliated continuously grown (Pickel 2012), membership of both the catholic and protestant churches has decreased. Meanwhile other organisations and forms of membership have increased.

The growing religious plurality becomes visible in the increase of Muslim citizens to 4.3 million and a proportion of between 5 and 6 percent, and the growth of the Christian-orthodox church to 1.8 million members (Haug et al. 2009: 106-108). In addition to the consequences of the integration of mostly foreign religious groups, there are also the higher birth rates of immigrant groups who have contributed to this shift - and continue to do so still. As a result of this development, the visibility of foreign religious groups has increased substantially in German society within a relatively short period of time.

What has this ongoing development of religious pluralisation to do with the integration debate?

At least four points can be noted. First, in recent years more and more information can be found on the concrete problems in the integration of immigrants with a particular religious affiliation (school, employment, citizenship, crime, ghettoization). In fact, these problems are not new, but they have moved more into the public arena. Here also the visibility of Muslims in public contributes to a new perception.

Perceived problems, which are communicated by the media or within conversations, are cognitively associated with this visibility. Secondly, increasingly legal conflicts over religion (e.g. religious freedom vs. physical integrity rights; religious education in school) have arisen- and been observed by the public. Thirdly, media attention to foreign religious groups has increased (especially for Muslims). Reasons for this are on the one hand international conflicts between the Western and Muslim world (Islamist terrorism and the "war on terror"), and on the other hand the polarisation of political positions on religion. At the same time the majority of media representations tend to give a problematized image of Muslims and "Islam". Moreover, the debates are more and more of a normative character with a strong reference to "culture" and "cultures". This normative character is also expressed in contrary positions in society and politics. Thus, the positions in the debate on integration split up into supporters of the assimilation of the "others", while another opposite group supports the idea of the coexistence of multiculturalism. Both positions face each other relatively irreconcilably and can be found in political positions. While supporters of multiculturalism emphasize the value of religious freedom and emphasise a transnational understanding of culture, supporters of assimilation see national cohesion at risk and demand a "guiding culture". The situation is similar to the "finger-pointing" regarding problems of integration. Supporters of assimilation see a lack of willingness to integrate on the part of migrants (and also people with a migration background). But which position is represented by the majority of citizens?

2.2 Attitudes towards people with different religious affiliations

The empirical findings show a certain ambiguity in the response behavior: On the one hand attitudes towards most foreign religious groups are moderate to mostly positive (table 1). Both Hindus and Buddhists and even atheists meet little hostility among citizens in West and East Germany.

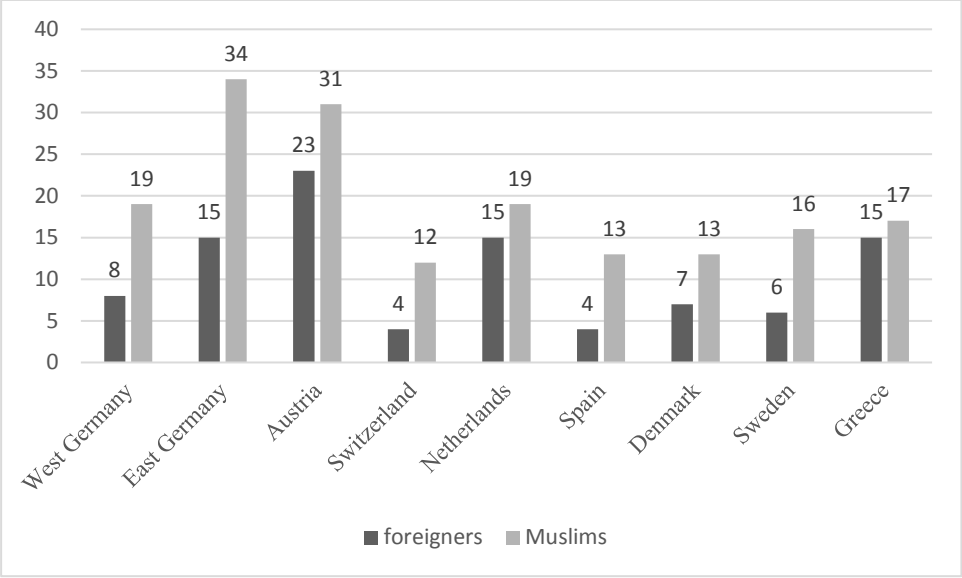
Table I: Attitudes towards members of different religious groups and atheists

	Muslims		Jews		Hindus		Buddhists		Christians		Atheists	
	West	East	West	East	West	East	West	East	West	East	West	East
very positive	6	3	8	6	5	4	13	8	35	23	11	28
rather positive	28	23	50	47	45.0	33	52	42	55	56	43	46
rather negative	41	40	23	20	20	22	14	19	6	11	23	10
very negative	17	22	5	10	5	10	4	8	1	4	8	4
don't know	5	9	9	13	20	27	13	19	1	5	11	9
no response	3	3	4	3	5	4	4	5	2	2	5	3

Source: PARD 2010, own calculations; see also Yendell 2013: 232, values in percent.

But this is only one side of the coin. Because at the same time, in both parts of Germany the majority express a negative view of Muslims: so the population has actually mainly positive views on different religious groups, but it changes with a specific labelling of religions (also Yendell 2013: 231-233; Pickel and Yendell 2016; Pickel et al. 2016). At least it seems to be a labelling, because the knowledge of the religion "Islam" among citizens is scattered rather sparsely. A difference should be noted, that one hardly knows who are Hindus or Buddhists, as respectively they are difficult to identify in everyday life. At the same time only about two percent of all Muslims live in East Germany - and there the negative attitudes are even more prevalent than in Western Germany. With this finding, it is clear which group is the focus of the integration debate - it is the Muslims.

Figure 1: Attitudes: rejected Muslims **Figure 1: Attitudes: rejected Muslims**

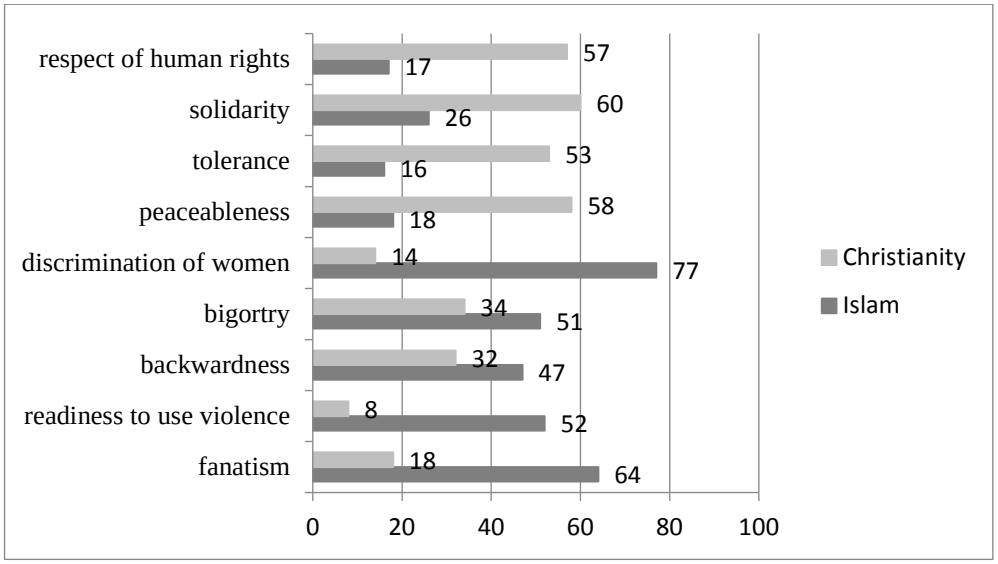


Source: EVS 2008 (N = 23536), own calculations; question: „On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbours?"; approval rating ; figures in percent.

This is confirmed by results of the analysis of an alternative question in the European Values Study: it can be noted that only a minority have rigid attitudes towards Muslims or foreigners (fig. 1). However, it must be noted that the question used measures a rather harsh and manifest form of rejection. These minorities are quite large: At least one-third of East Germans and almost one-fifth of the West Germans would not like to have Muslims as neighbours. Muslims are much more often rejected than foreigners. In the minds of respondents there seems to be a differentiation in terms of a religious labelling of individuals and groups.

Both results clearly show the normative and political charge of the integration debate concentrating on the generalised labelling of "Islam" or "Muslims". Against this background one could also call the integration debate in Germany an *Islam debate*. This labelling is based upon a *religious-ethical ascription, which clearly differs from "classical" immigration* debates – but it absorbs the feelings of foreignness into the development of stereotypes. This is also visible in the images, which people assign to Islam (figure 2).

Figure 2: Stereotypes: Christianity and Islam



Source: PARD 2010, own calculations; question: “What comes to your mind when you think of... – Islam … - Christianity?”; approval rating; figures in percent.

From the perspective of most Germans, Islam distinguishes itself by violence, fanaticism and discrimination against women. Tolerance, peacefulness and solidarity are in the view of Germans, foreign to Islam, which is classified as backward-looking. This blanket judgement seems to be influenced by the media and conflicts which occur outside of Germany. Clear stereotypes of both

religions exist, with Islam judged clearly worse than Christianity. Based on this perception feelings of alienation are connected with a sense of being threatened.

At the same time, references to the alleged backwardness and anti-modernity of Islam, especially in the attitude towards women or in the observance of human rights, help to legitimize socially constructed stereotypes. Is it not understandable that one opposes the oppression of women and the patriarchy, which Islam demonstrates? Aren't the reports of honor killings and violence against women evidence of the lack of adjustment to modern society by Muslims? And doesn't the wearing of headscarves show symbolically this opressive backwardness?

Against this background, religious pluralism - mainly understood as an increase of Muslims in the country - is the basis for conflicts for about three-quarters of the population in Germany (table 2). And in the Allbus 2010 three-fifths of the Germans see a relatively strong potential for a conflict between Christians and Muslims in Germany (Götze et al. 2013: 288).

This result matches that of Samuel Huntington (1996), who postulates a clash of civilizations, which obviously many German citizens would also see. The approval of 41% of the population in West Germany and 44% in East Germany to such a statement, show how widely spread this fear is. If in addition to that there is a fear of real threat like the often mentioned fear of Muslim terrorists, the claim for consequences are not unreasonable. 43% in West-Germany and even 55% in East Germany support the limitation of islamic faith and two-thirds of the West Germans and three quarters of the East Germans support the idea of limiting the immigration of Muslims to Germany .

Table II: Statements on Islam and Muslims and Attitudes towards religious symbols

	Limitation of immigration of Muslims		increasing number of Muslims is a cause of conflict		Fear of terrorists among Muslims		Limitation of islamic practices of faith	
	Germany-West	Germany-East	Germany-West	Germany-East	Germany-West	Germany-East	Germany-West	Gemrany-East
agree strongly	30	43	25	34	23	35	15	27
agree somewhat	36	33	47	40	39	33	28	28
disagree somewhat	21	15	20	18	26	23	39	31
disagree strongly	9	6	5	5	11	7	14	9
don't know	3	3	3	3	1	2	4	5

Source: PARD 2010, own calculations; question: "Now I would like to ask you some questions about Islam. What is your opinion on the following statements?" statements: "The immigration of Muslims into Germany should be limited"; "The increasing number of Muslims in our society is a cause of conflict."; Sometimes I fear that there could be many terrorists among the Muslims in Germany."; "Practicing the Islamic faith in Germany must be severely restricted."; see also Pollack 30ff; figures in percent.

Other figures show that the willingness to integrate Muslim citizens, especially regarding their religiosity and its symbols, has narrow limits. Some three quarters of the German population, from both East and West, reject the building of mosques and minarets and the introduction of a Muslim holiday. Germans still assume a certain cultural background - namely Christianity. Even if Christian religious affiliations seem to wane in the process of secularization (see Pickel and Sammet 2011), Christianity is – as expected – much more legitimated than Islamic culture. The criticism from parts of the majority population, that Muslim citizens contribute only little to their integration, appears to be associated with a limited tolerance to a visible and institutionalized religious pluralism. These attitudes are certainly volatile. Public debates and terrorist attacks can at any time inflame the situation. At present, pragmatism still prevails in dealing with Muslims, but this does not necessarily always have to be the case. Another terrorist attack like 9/11 could change the situation dramatically.

However, the relevance of such perceptions of attitudes towards foreign religious groups requires examination. These were so far - certainly with great plausibility - accepted, but do they sustain a causality test?

3. Factors explaining attitudes towards foreign religious groups in Germany

3.1 Theories and hypotheses

For an explanation of tolerance to members of foreign religious groups, some sociological and social psychological theories are available. These theories take a more general view of stereotypes of other social groups, but can readily be applied to this question. One important theory for the explanation of stereotypes, is the Social Identity Theory(SIT) (Tajfel). According to the SIT, prejudices arise due to processes of identification with social groups. The need for positive self-esteem within a group, leads the individual to emphasise the appreciation of the ingroup (ingroup) and devalue other groups (outgroup). In this process the frequently occurring assignment of group-based stereotypes can encourage feelings of threat. Concepts linked to deprivation are relevant here. They are used in particular in times of economic recession to explain rejection of strangers and postulate a relationship between perceived discrimination against the majority population and the devaluation of minorities that compete with the majority for scarce resources. Accordingly, it is expected that low social status and / or the subjective perception of socio-economic deprivation correlates with xenophobic attitudes. Authoritarianism, a personality-based approach, can also be used to explain negative attitudes towards foreign religious groups. Sticking to conventions, power orientation and subservience characterize an authoritarian personality (Adorno et al. 1950). In the sociology of religion, research on prejudice arising from religious dogmatism is named as an explanatory factor based on the concept of authoritarianism. It is assumed that religious dogmatic attitudes negatively affect how religious communities are viewed.

While these approaches deal with the predictors of stereotypes and prejudices, others emphasize an opposite effect. The most prominent theory in the research on prejudice, is the so-called "contact hypothesis" (Allport 1954). According to this hypothesis, individual personal contact with members of the outgroup may lead to a reduction of prejudice, as can wider knowledge of the respective out group. However its claim to credibility has to be considered. A certain problem exists in the causal direction of the statements of the contact hypothesis. It is conceivable that not only contacts help reduce prejudice, but that unprejudiced persons increasingly tend to establish contacts with strangers. Whether contacts reduce prejudice or openess towards strangers makes contacts likely, still remains difficult to assess.

However, it is to be assumed that contacts at least exert a stabilizing effect. In this context the social capital hypothesis is in line with the contact hypothesis, postulating that membership of volunteer organisations and consolidated face-to-face contacts produce trust (Götze et al. 2013). Specifically, "bridging social capital", is supposed to have a positive effect on interpersonal trust and attitudes toward foreign religious groups.

3.2 Empirical explanations for attitudes toward foreign religious groups in Germany

To explain the negative attitudes towards Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews and atheists in the old and new federal states of Germany, we have produced a total of twelve structural equation models with only manifest variables, which can be derived from the described theoretical considerations. The dependent variable here is the attitude towards Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, atheists and Christians, which has been presented in table 1. In reference to Edinger and Hallermann (2001) we assume that prejudices can be best explained by a complex system of hypotheses, which results in the consideration of a very large number of items in the model. The path models offer the advantage that they – unlike conventional regression analyses – take the multicollinearity between the influencing indicators as well as measurement errors into account and reduce the probability of false interpretations (Weiber and Mühlhaus 2010: 25). Cases with missing values were excluded from the calculation due to the necessary statistical requirements. For both, the West German and East German models, it can be concluded that the models approximate well to reality. The values are for all models under the recommended limit of 0.05 for a good model fit (Browne and Cudeck 1992: 239). Thus, all models have a high validity.

The results: A strong influencing factor is xenophobia. This factor correlates relatively strongly in both East and West Germany with regard to attitudes towards Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Jews. Little correlation exists in the attitude towards atheists. In East Germany, a negative relationship between xenophobia and the attitude towards Christians is also noted. A little correlation exists with regard to the attitude towards atheists. In East Germany, a negative relationship between xenophobia and the attitude towards Christians is also noted. Even if in interpreting, a problem of tautology occurs, it seems necessary to leave the item in the model, since it contributes a considerable proportion of explained variance. The indicator can be viewed as an indicator of xenophobia, describing the syndrome of group-

related enmity (Heitmeyer 2008). A general rejection of strangers proves especially disadvantageous for Muslims and other foreign religious groups. The effect on the attitude towards Muslims is the strongest.

The most interesting factor concerns the element regarding the frequency of contact. In both parts of Germany, the more frequently people have contact with Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and atheists, the more likely their attitudes towards the respective groups are positive. The frequency of contact is the only indicator that is significant in all models. This can be viewed as a confirmation of the contact hypothesis. It is likely that the differences in western and eastern Germany are to a large extent a result of the different frequency distributions of the variables.

Table III: Factors influencing attitudes towards Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and atheists in West Germany – path models with simple causal structure (beta coefficients)

Germany-West	Christians	Muslims	Hindus	Buddhists	Jews	Atheists
freuqenx of contacts with Muslims	.187 (***)	.280 (***)	.112 (***)	.193 (***)	.183 (***)	.358 (***)
relative deprivation	n. s.	.056 (*)	.063 (*)	.061 (*)	.110 (***)	n. s.
authoritarianism	n. s.	.063 (***)	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.
religious dogmatism	n. s.	-.117 (***)	-.309 (***)	-.263 (***)	-.151 (***)	-.209 (***)
national pride	.169 (***)	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.
xenophobia	n. s.	-.374 (***)	-.245 (***)	-.214 (***)	-.291 (***)	-.104 (***)
religions lead to conflict	-.111 (***)	-.110 (***)	n. s.	n. s.	-.079 (**)	n. s.
political attitude	n. s.	n. s.	.095 (**)	n. s.	.107 (***)	n. s.
sex	.071 (*)	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.
age	n. s.	n. s.	.075 (*)	.074 (*)	n. s.	n. s.
frequency of chruch attendance	.270 (***)	.079 (**)	.072 (*)	n. s.	.154 (***)	-.223 (***)
R^2	0.219	0.343	0.244	0.22	0.25	0.37
CMIN	57.267	66.175	61.33	54.11	58.089	60.879
DF	64	61	66	64	65	62
P	.712	.303	.640	.806	0.716	0.516
CMIN/DF	0.895	1.085	0.929	0.845	0.894	0.982
RMSEA	.000	.000	0	.000	.000	.000
PCLOSE	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

Source: PARD 2010, own calculations; the items authoritarianim, net household income, redundancy, level of education as well as urban vs. rural area have no significant impact in any model; ***: p <= 0,001, **: p <= 0,01, *: p <= 0,05, n. s.: not signifcant (as direct influencing variable); all questions in the appendix

That means, that the slightly more common negative attitudes in East Germany can attributed to the comparatively low level of pluralisation and the associated rare contacts with other religious people in East Germany.

The idea that religions lead to conflict rather than peace, reduces the acceptance of members of Abrahamic religions in West Germany.This also applies to East Germany (Fig. 6), with the exception of the attitude towards Jews. Stereotypes, it seems, are - as already suggested in the descriptive part - intensified by perceived religious conflicts. Fittingly, the rejection of Muslims has increased after September 11 in both parts of Germany. In particular, the media is assumed to be involved in the formation of stereotypes by focussing on "bad news" (Schiffer 2005).

The concept of deprivation plays remarkably little significant role in the explanation of attitudes to foreign religious groups. This applies to unemployment, household income and position on the social ladder. At least some consideration was given to the question of economic equity. In West Germany, this subjective relative deprivation has a slightly negative effect on the attitude towards Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Jews. In East Germany, the indicator exerts a slightly negative effect on the attitude towards Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and atheists. However, the feeling of social deprivation in East Germany has no negative effect on the attitude towards Muslims. Overall, we note, however, that the link between deprivation and negative attitudes toward foreign religious groups is low.

Authoritarianism correlates in different directions with the attitudes. This indicates validity problems of the authoritarianism items. Religious dogmatism, however, shows an effect: Anyone who believes that there is only one true religion, is more prone to reject Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and atheists. With care, this could be also be called a fundamentalist position. In West Germany, however, this applies to Muslims, in East Germany this is not the case. There it is rather striking that a religiously dogmatic attitude is slightly positively related to the attitude towards Christians.

Table IV: Factors influencing attitudes towards Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and atheists in East Germany – path models with simple causal structure (beta coefficients)

East Germany	Christians	Muslims	Hindus	Buddhists	Jews	Atheists
frequency of contact with Muslims	.373 (***)	.150 (***)	.168 (***)	.220 (***)	.138(***)	.497 (***)
relative deprivation	.061 (*)	n. s.	.097 (**)	.095 (**)	.072 (*)	-.057 (*)
position on the social ladder	-.081 (**)	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.
religious dogmatism	.087 (**)	n. s.	-.134 (***)	-.129 (***)	-.088 (**)	-.074 (*)
national pride	.109 (***)	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.
xenophobia	-.082 (**)	-.461 (***)	-.381 (***)	-.303 (***)	-.383 (***)	-.068 (*)
religions lead to conflict	-.105 (***)	-.090 (**)	.097 (**)	n. s.	n. s.	.097 (**)
political attitude	n. s.	.074 (*)	.068 (*)	k.d.E.	.102 (**)	.089 (**)
sex	-.059 (*)	n. s.	n. s.	-.089 (**)	-.079 (**)	n. s.
age	-.051 (*)	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.	n. s.
frequency of church attendance	.084 (*)	n. s.	.137 (***)	.117 (***)	.102 (**)	-.164 (***)
R^2	0.317	0.318	0.295	0.286	0.28	0.372
CMIN	79.761	103.554	103.365	109.365	96.107	98.63
DF	63	73	72	72	70	70
P	.075	.011	.009	.003	.021	.014
CMIN/DF	1.266	1.419	1.436	1.519	1.373	1.409
RMSEA	0016	.020	.021	.023	.019	.020
PCLOSE	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

Source: PARD 2010, own calculations; the items authoritarianim, net household income, redundancy, level of education as well as urban vs. rural area have no significant impact in any model; ***: p <= 0,001, **: p <= 0,01, *: p <= 0,05, n. s.: not signifcant (as direct influencing variable); all questions in the appendix

From the view of the Sociology of Religion, it is interesting that church attendance – under the control of other variables – can affect attitudes towards foreign religious communities positively. This applies to West Germany as well as East Germany not only as expected regarding Christians, but also regarding Hindus and Jews. In West Germany - unlike in East Germany - church attendance has a positive effect on attitudes towards Muslims. In East Germany, frequent churchgoers are also more positive towards Buddhists, in West Germany, this does not apply. As we expected , church attendance has a significant but negative effect on the attitude towards atheists. The result that church attendance exerts a positive effect on attitudes towards members of other religious communities, may be surprising at first glance. However, it is not surprising when you consider that church attendance is associated with religious

dogmatism. Many people who frequently attend church are also rather religiously dogmatic. Nevertheless, church attendance itself has a positive effect on attitudes towards members of other religious communities. With some caution, this can be interpreted as the effect of religious social capital (Götze et al. 2013).

4. Conclusion – Stereotypes, successes of contact and the media debate on Islam

Summarizing the results, in Germany a considerable amount of negative attitudes towards foreign religious groups is to be stated. But not all religious groups are affected by these negative attitudes in the same way. While the members of most religions (including atheists) are perceived more positive or at least neutral, the attitudes towards Islam and Muslims is mostly negative. Thus it can be stated that the current "integration debate" is essentially a "debate on Islam". For this, a combination of general xenophobia, feelings of threat and negative media perception are responsible. No longer the "foreign" immigrants, but the Muslims labelled dangerous (Tezcan 2011) are those who will be encountered by the Germans in East and West. This is less about specific problems , more about stereotypes.

This shows the even greater proportion of people with diffuse and rather negative attitudes towards Muslims in East Germany compared to West Germany. In East Germany contacts are much less than in West Germany. Contacts again - this reveals the performed regression analyzes – usually leading to trust and therefore have a positive impact on the integration of people with different religious affiliations. However, the effect of direct contatcts is limited. They are covered on the overall social level through the media, which reinforces stereotypes (eg bad news on Islam). This is partly due to the limited number of contacts, and also because of the great formative power of the media-transmitted conflict and perception of threat. Specifically, the perception of Islam as a religion of conflict in combination with a media coverage which produces an image of Islam as a religion of terror and violence confirms stereotypes - and produces them. More media reports on intra-German problems with Muslim citizens reinforce these sterotypes Religious dogmatism support these processes even more.

What does this mean for attitudes toward foreign religious groups? It is not the religious diversity per se, which raises integration problems. Rather it is the possible consequences and scenarios in the minds of citizens which pose problems for the social (and political) cohesion in Germany. A rather negative and limited trusting attitude towards a specific outgroup does not necessarily lead into social exclusion

and conflict, but it also provides no protection when the population reacts negatively to individual events (eg terrorist attack by Islamists in Germany). Accordingly, there is a tolerance to members of foreign religious groups, but it has limits - and these are apparently narrower than expected.

References

Adorno, Theodor W., Else Frenkel-Brunswik,, Daniel J. Levinson, and Nevitt R. Sanford. *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Harper and Row, 1950

Allport, Gordon W. *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co, 1954

Browne, Michael, and Robert Cudeck. "Alternative Ways of Assessing Model Fit." *Sociological Methods and Research*, 21 (1992): 230–258.

Edinger, Michael, and Andreas Hallermann. "Rechtsextremismus in Ostdeutschland. Struktur und Ursachen rechtsextremer Einstellungen am Beispiel Thüringens." *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 32 (2001): 588–612.

Götze, Claudia., Yvonne Jaeckel, and Gert Pickel "Religiöse Pluralisierung als Konfliktfaktor? Wirkungen religiösen Sozialkapitals auf die Integrationsbereitschaft in Deutschland." Eds. Gert Pickel, and Oliver Hidalgo. *Religion und Politik im vereinigten Deutschland. Was bleibt von der Rückkehr des Religiösen?* Wiesbaden: Springer VS. 2013. 271-305.

Haug, Sonja, Stephanie Müssig, and Anja Stichs "Muslimisches Leben in Deutschland. Forschungsbericht 6." Ed. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge und Deutsche Islam-Konferenz. Halle (Saale) (https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Themen /Politik_Gesellschaft/DIK/vollversion_studie_muslim_leben_deutschland_.pdf?_b lob=publicationFile). 2009.

Heitmeyer, Wilhelm. (ed). *Deutsche* Zustände, Folge 6. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. 2008.

Huntington, Samuel P. *Kampf der Kulturen. Die Neugestaltung der Weltpolitik im 21. Jahrhundert*. Wien: Europa Verlag, 1996.

Pickel, Gert "Bedrohungsgefühle versus vertrauensbildende Kontakte – Religiöser Pluralismus, religiöses Sozialkapital und soziokulturelle Integration". Eds. Detlef Pollack, Ingrid Tucci, and Hans-Georg Ziebertz. *Religiöser Pluralismus im Fokus quantitativer Religionsforschung*,. Wiesbaden: Springer VS. 2012. 221-264. 2012.

Pickel, Gert, and Alexander Yendell. "Islam als Bedrohung? Beschreibung und Erklärung von Einstellungen zum Islam im Ländervergleich. *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 3-4 (2016): 1-37, doi:10.1007/s12286-016-0309-6

Pickel, Gert, Alexander Yendell and Yvonne Jaeckel. "Religiöse Pluralität als Bedrohung oder kulturelle Bereicherung? Die Wahrnehmung von Bedrohung durch Religion im Ländervergleich. " Eds. Ines-Jacqueline; Werkner, and Antonius Liedhegener. *Religiöse Identitäten in politischen Konflikten. Theoretische Zugänge und empirische Beispiele.* Wiesbaden: Springer VS. 2016. 83-121.

Pickel, Gert; Yendell, Alexander "Einstellungen zu fremdreligiösen Gruppen in Deutschland und ihre Bedingungsfaktoren. " Ed. Löw, Martina. *Vielfalt und Zusammenhalt. Verhandlungen des 36. Kongresses der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie in Bochum und Dortmund 2012.* Campus. Frankfurt am Main, New York: Campus. 2014. 247-264

Pollack, Detlef. "Wahrnehmung und Akzeptanz religiöser Vielfalt in ausgewählten Ländern Europas: Erste Beobachtungen." Chapter 1 in Pollack, Detlef, Olaf Müller, Gergely Rosta, Nils Friedrich, and Alexander Yendell. *Grenzen der Toleranz: Wahrnehmung und Akzeptanz religiöser Vielfalt in Europa* . Wiesbaden: Springer VS.2014. 13-34.

Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community.* New York: Simon & Schuster. 2000.

Rippl, Susanne. „Vorurteile und persönliche Beziehungen zwischen Ost- und Westdeutschen." *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 24 (1995): 273–283.

Tajfel, Henri. *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge: University Press, 1982.

Tezcan, Levent. „Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zur Gegenwartsgeschichte des Verhältnisses zwischen Christentum und Islam in Deutschland". Eds. Pickel, Gert., Sammet, Kornelia (eds.). *Religion und Religiosität im vereinigten Deutschland. Zwanzig Jahre nach dem Umbruch.* Wiesbaden: Springer VS. 2011. 293-309.

Sarrazin, Thilo. *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen.* München: Deutsche-Verlags-Anstalt, 2010.

Schiffer, Sabine „Der Islam in deutschen Medien." *APuZ* 20 (2005): 23–30.

Weiber, Rolf, and Daniel Mühlhaus. *Strukturgleichungsmodellierung. Eine anwendungsorientierte Einführung in die Kausalanalyse mit Hilfe von AMOS, SmartPLS und SPSS.* Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 2010.

Yendell, Alexander. „Muslime unerwünscht? Zur Akzeptanz des Islam und dessen Angehöriger. Ein Vergleich zwischen Ost- und Westdeutschland." Eds. Gert Pickel, and Oliver Hidalgo. *Religion und Politik im vereinigten Deutschland. Was bleibt von der Rückkehr des Religiösen?* Wiesbaden: Springer VS. 2013. 221-248.

Appendix

frequency of contact with Muslims: ”Do you personally have contact with members of the following religious groups?”; 4 point scale (1= yes, a lot; 2= yes, somewhat; 3:=no, rather not; 4=no, not at all)

relative deprivation: “Compared with how others live in (country): Do you think you get your fair share, more than your fair share, somewhat less or very much less than your fair share?” (1=More than fair share; 2= Fair share; 3=somewhat less; 4=very much less)

Position on social ladder: “Some people believe, that they belong to high society, whereas others believe they belong to underclass. Please try to imagine a ladder with seven steps and each of them stands for a social status. Where would you and your family stand om such a ladder? 7 means “on top” and 1 means “at the bottom.

authoritarianism: “We should be grateful for leaders who can tell us exactly what to do and how to do it”; 4 point scale (1=disagree strongly; 2=disagree somewhat; 3=agree somewhat; 4=agree strongly)

religous dogmatism: „There is only one true religion.“; 4 point scale: 1=disagree strongly; 2=disagree somewhat; 3=agree somewhat; 4=agree strongly)

national pride: “I’m proud of my nationality”; 4 point scale (1=disagree strongly; 2=disagree somewhat; 3=agree somewhat; 4=agree strongly)

xenophobia: “There are too many foreigners living in Germany”; 4 point scale (1=disagree strongly; 2=disagree somewhat; 3=agree somewhat; 4=agree strongly)

religion leads to conflict: “Looking around the world, religions bring more conflict than peace”; (1=disagree strongly; 2=disagree somewhat; 3=agree somewhat; 4=agree strongly)

political attitude: “Some people are talking of „left“ and „right“ when trying to describe different political ttitudes. Where would you place your own political attitudes on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means ‘left’ and 10 means ‘right’?”; 10 point scale (1=left; 10=right)

frequency of church attendance: “How often do you attend religious service?“ (Never, less than once a year, several times a year, about once a month, 2-3 times a month, every week or more often)
religion leads to conflicts: “Looking around the world, religions bring more conflict than peace”; 4 point scale (1=disagree strongly; 2=disagree somewhat; 3=agree somewhat; 4=agree strongly)

educational background: not completed school, German „Volks-/Hauptschule“, German „Realschule“, polytechnic high school (8th or 9th Class), polytechnic high school (10th class), German Fachhochschulreife, German Abitur, degree at university of applied sciences, university degree)