Germany

Discrimination of highly educated Muslim men in Germany

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Summary

In the German debate about the integration of Muslim immigrants it is repeatedly stated that education is the key for successful integration and full participation into German society. A commonly cited argument runs as follows: if Muslims learnt the German language properly, they would be more successful in the German education system, thus improve their situation in the job market which is in desperate need of highly educated people. However, recent research studies have shown that ethnic and religious discrimination in the German job market is still an issue. The practice of discrimination is not only limited to low qualified sectors, which are currently quite competitive due to structural changes, but also encompasses the highly qualified sectors where Germany has been experiencing a recruitment problem for many years.

For those highly educated Muslim men who not only privately practice their religion but are also actively involved in “legalist” Islamist organisations on a voluntary basis, the job application process can raise very specific challenges as their affiliation to these organisations is not welcomed by some potential employers. Furthermore, in Germany discrimination of Muslims is mainly discussed in the context of headscarf-wearing Muslim women. This study will focus on Muslim men facing discrimination because of their religious identity and affiliation to allegedly controversial Muslim organisations. A particular emphasis will be placed on the analysis of the transition phase from education to employment by exploring the application strategies developed by young Muslim men.

In this work package the argument is put forward that discrimination against highly educated Muslim men is practiced within a socio-political context of increasing anti-Muslim racism. Anti-Muslim racism is characterised by mechanisms of dichotomisation,

essentialisation and hierarchisation - denying permeability, hybridity, and dynamics of cultural identities. The socio-political context is primarily shaped by policy measures of integration of Muslims and counter-terrorism, and the inherited ideological-historical relationship with the problematic 'other', namely the Orient.

Introduction

The widely spread notion that good education is the key for the successful integration into the German labour market, and thus full participation in German society at large, is only valid to a limited extent. A certain type of highly educated young Muslim men is confronted with a very particular form of discrimination on entering the job market. To date, this phenomenon has received very little attention from the German public or academia. Although no long-term reliable (neither qualitative nor quantitative) data is available on the extent of this phenomenon, the symbolic signals this special form of discrimination convey are crucial in various ways – on the one hand for the people who are directly affected by discrimination and on the other hand the Muslim community at large.

In this work package we deal with young Muslim men who – in an era of increasing anti-Muslim racism – have successfully completed the German secondary and higher education but experience discrimination in finding an appropriate job because of their affiliation to controversial Muslim organisations. Referring to the concept of anti-Muslim racism, German authorities' policy towards "legalist" Muslim organisations will be subject to a critical analysis.

In the following section we will give a brief overview of the education and integration policy in Germany. Before moving on to the analysis of the interviews we will introduce Germany's Islam policy and how it deals with controversial Muslim organisations. In the main part of this paper the forms of and reasons for discrimination of highly educated Muslim men will be analysed, as well as the application strategies and self-perception of the victims of discrimination.

The methodology of the fieldwork consists of nine in depth, semi-structured individual interviews held in Germany between May and July 2011. The interviewees were all highly educated Muslim men with a university degree who had gone through a job application process and were affiliated to controversial Muslim organisations. The interviewees had a Turkish or Arab ethnic background, as do the majority of the Muslim community in Germany. In addition to the interviews, relevant studies concerning both the discrimination of highly educated immigrants and the way controversial Muslim

organisations have been handled have been critically analysed in order to contextualise the statements of the interviewed people.

1. Debates on education and integrating Muslims

It is no great secret that the situation of Muslims in education is critical. The vast majority of Muslim pupils go to *Hauptschule*, and only a very small percentage makes it to the *Gymnasium*.[1] While approximately one third of the "autochthonous" German pupils successfully receive the *Abitur,* only about nine percent of students with a Turkish immigrant background (who constitute about two thirds of the Muslim population in Germany) leave school with an *Abitur* (BMI 2010: 209-221). Although the total number of Muslim students in higher education has been on the rise in recent years, their share in the total student body still remains unsatisfactorily low. This is a very important aspect because (young) Muslims in Germany lack positive role models who have succeeded in the segregated German education system. Despite its highly segregating and impermeable character, a small number of Muslims, mainly from socially and economically marginalised families, still make it through the three-tier German school system.

It is clear that the level of education and with it the integration into the job market directly influence social status, access to key positions in society, share in social prosperity and resources, and participation in political decision making processes (Gesemann 2009:451). Therefore, the integration of immigrants can only be successful if the access to the host society's key institutions is supported by investing in the processes of education.

Pupils from immigrant families still have far fewer opportunities in education than their "autochthonous" German peers. Pupils with an immigrant background are overrepresented at *Haupt-* and *Sonderschulen,* and generally leave school with a

[1] As the German constitution regulates that education is among the competences of the federal states, each of the 16 German federal states has its own school system. After four years (with the exception of a few federal states) of primary school, pupils are assigned to one of the following types of schools on the basis of their grades:

- *Hauptschule* goes up to the ninth grade and prepares pupils for skilled vocations and trades. Graduates from *Hauptschule* usually seek apprenticeship positions.
- Pupils who go to *Realschule* graduate after the tenth grade where they are prepared for the area of administrative and clerical jobs. After the tenth grade they continue either an apprenticeship or an advanced vocational training.
- At a *Gymnasium* pupils can get an *Abitur* – the general certificate for entering higher education – after the 12th or 13th grade.
- The so-called *Gesamtschule* is a type of comprehensive school awarding graduation certificates equivalent to the above listed types of schools.
- *Sonderschule* offer educational programs for students with special needs, be it psychological or physical.

certificate from the *Hauptschule* or no certificate at all. They are less likely to find an in-company training place, are more likely to take training courses in the transitional system, which do not lead to vocational qualifications or remain without a profession-oriented basic education. This leads to lower chances on the job market, a significant higher unemployment rate and an above-average dependency on transfer payments (Gesemann 2009:452).

In 2001 the results of the PISA study triggered a fundamental public debate about Germany's education system when the "country of poets and thinkers" only ranked in the bottom third in comparison with other leading industrial nations. This was a wake-up call for policy makers in Germany. In the controversial debate that followed, reasons and explanations for Germany's bad performance were sought. One dominant argument was that students with an immigrant background (meaning Turkish or Arab) were responsible for Germany's disastrous performance. Without the immigrant pupils Germany would have performed much better, so the argument went.

Since the "PISA shock" in 2001, Germany has been debating the suitability of its three-tier school system which, according to its critics, is segregating, exclusive, discriminatory, impermeable, and particularly affects students with an immigrant background. The PISA study also revealed that a pupil's success or failure at school is to a great extent dependent on his/her social background, meaning that it is disproportionately likely that a pupil from a wealthy and educated background will be successful in school while students from underprivileged households are far less likely to do well in school. In Germany, education problem becomes a class problem. This is crucial to note in the German integration debate, as most immigrants who came to Germany had either little or no education, so from the very beginning they were socially and economically underprivileged, and belonged to the lower class in German society.

Critiques of the German education system have been arguing for many years that the school system needs to be more inclusive and permeable for newcomers who are outsiders from the outset. After realising that Germany has become a country of immigration, further demands have been expressed, namely that the new demographic and social reality of Germany also needs to be mirrored in the education system: existing curricular ought to be critically revised, textbooks – especially those dealing with Islam[2] – need to be rewritten, and more diversity in its personnel is needed.

[2] A recently published study by the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research has found that school books in Germany, as in many other European countries, "adhere to simplified depictions of Islam and thus perpetuate the perception of Muslims as a (predominantly) religious collective of non-European 'others'. The majority of history and politics textbooks examined (...) give, or strengthen, the impression that there is 'one' Islam and 'one' modern Europe—two mutually exclusive and internally homogenous entities that are confrontational in their contact with each other—yet which are largely without overlap or similarities. The lack of differentiation between Islam as a religious model and Muslim cultural

Currently only two percent of the teachers in Germany have an immigrant background while about 30 percent of the pupils have an immigration background (in certain urban areas this share is even higher, at around 40 to 50 percent).

In the public debate, an increasing number of voices are asking for more teachers with an immigration background as they are could to serve as role models for pupils on the one hand, and function as mediators between the school and parents on the other.[3] In 2007, in its statement on the National Integration Plan, the German government evaluated the growing integration problems among the second and third generation of immigrants as a result of deficits in the German education system:

> In an international comparison, the influence of social origin and emigrational background on educational success are relatively high in Germany. Systematic and consistent support for school pupils with a background of migration learning German also appears to have been less successful than in other countries. There is still much progress to be made within the field of integration, particularly concerning numerous second and third generation immigrants (The Federal Government 2008:12).

In an integration policy that "focuses on the wide range of abilities, efforts and commitment on the part of the immigrants," educational policy takes a crucial role so that "children and young persons with a background of migration have access to excellent educational possibilities in order that they are able to develop their potential" (the Federal Government 2008:13). These statements show that at the political level awareness for the need of comprehensive reforms in education policy is also present. In recent years, the government has made efforts to integrate Islam and Muslims into Germany. The recently launched initiatives in the field of education policy, such as the training of Imams at German universities and the introduction of Islamic religious instruction and education in public schools as a regular subject ought to be understood in this broader context, which we will describe below.

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and political practices is essential to this perspective. Approaches to Islam and Muslims in (...) textbooks are thus dominated by essentialized conceptions of a religiously-based difference and collective associations. Views of 'Islam' as a control system that, while antiquated, nevertheless to this day dominates all areas of life for Muslims, occur particularly frequently. Such a lack of differentiation and portrayals of Muslims as a collective could foster a form of 'cultural racism' that understands religious difference as unalterable. The focus of these polarizing distinctions does not lie primarily in the presentation of Muslims as religious foes in violent conflicts however—as, for example, is the case in narratives about the Crusades—but rather in a presentation of Muslims as pre-modern, and therefore as 'others' who are out of place in Europe. Even historical representations that appreciate and valorise the Arab-Islamic Middle Ages do not shake this polarizing perception, but instead support the perspective of stagnant cultural development in the case of Muslim societies." (GEI 2011:3)

3 In the aftermath of the "PISA shock" several encouraging and promising mentoring and scholarship programs and projects targeting disadvantaged immigrant pupils and students were initiated. It was particularly German foundations which took the lead in this, such as the START-Stiftung, Robert-Bosch-Stiftung and Mercartor Stiftung.

2. Islam policy and integration

In this section we will outline the logic of Germany's "official" recent Islam policy and demonstrate how it is intertwined with security and integration policy. A special focus will be put on the work of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution as their assessment of Islamic organisations and Muslims in Germany play a crucial role for the highly educated male Muslims we have interviewed.

Shortly after the official realisation at the turn of the 21st century that Germany is de facto a country of immigration, government authorities, at national, regional and communal levels started to develop Islam policies in order to integrate Islam into Germany. However, introducing an Islam policy can be read as a reaction to the events of 9/11, because it is security issues that have increasingly determined the debate about Muslims integrating into Germany. In this context, one key motivation was to prevent radicalisation among Muslims in Germany through an effective Islam policy – this new approach is referred to with the concept of security through integration. According to Schiffauer[4] this concept is quite concerning because

> integration only functions through participation and a certain level of trust; security policy functions through control, fundamental mistrust, and sanctioning. The logic of an Islam policy is often derived from the mighty effort to overcome this tension (Schiffauer 2011:14).

Furthermore, Schiffauer criticises the dominant rhetoric of the German authorities:

> "One has the impression that on the side of the German dialogue partners a very clear notion of an 'European Islam' with respective to Islam exists, which declares its commitment to the value system of Germany, although this is not expressed explicitly anywhere (Schiffauer 2011:26).

This Europe-compatible Islam should not only be compatible with the German constitution, but Muslims ought to identify themselves with the German constitution at heart. A "mere confession" to the constitution is not considered as sufficient, and an "inner devotedness" is expected (Schiffauer 2011:26).

A value-creating religion, which gives stability and orientation to individuals (such as Christianity), is regarded as something positive but a strongly communitarian religion (such as Islam) is considered as incompatible with the value of the individual. Related to this is the perception of religious symbols. While "weak" symbols, which relativise the value of religion, fit into the secular landscape very well, "strong" symbols threaten it – such as the headscarf, high minarets and the Muslim call for prayers.

According to Schiffauer only an Islam similar to contemporary German Lutheranism will be accepted: limit the role of religion to intrinsic values and search for

[4] In the following I will primarily refer to the studies of Werner Schiffauer, as he is a leading scholar on issues of migration and Islam in Germany. In German academia he is a prominent critic of integration and Islam policies of Germany authorities. He is the only scholar in Germany whose research also encompasses the role of German intelligence authorities in this context.

the meaning, be distanced towards religious questions of salvation and truth, maintain a strong relationship with the congregation and the emphasis on rituals and symbols as contradictory to self-realisation (Schiffauer 2011:28). This specification of values of self-determination, individuality and reflexivity suggests the chosen strategy in order to reform Islam. From the German politician's perspective, if the Muslim organisations were only willing to concede in terms of the headscarf, swimming lessons and class trips, a big step towards the right direction could be taken. In this context Schiffauer speaks of a *conditional acceptance* because Islam can only establish itself in Germany as long as it is in accordance with the notion of Islam presented by the German authorities (Schiffauer 2011:29).

The dynamics between the "established" (the "autochthonous" majority society) and the "outsider" (the Muslim immigrants) can be described as a patronage system characterised by German authorities' mechanisms of discipline, surveillance, and control (Schiffauer 2007:112). However, the hitherto established mechanisms seem to be challenged by a new generation of highly educated young Muslims, who, with a new self-confidence and by invoking their basic rights as equal German citizens, question the long established patronage system.

The policy towards Islam in Germany can be characterised as a policy of containment and formation. While on the one hand one can find policies of inclusion, support and cooperation with desirable actors, on the other hand strategies of exclusion and isolation of undesired groups can also be found (Schiffauer 2011:14). One effective tool of containing, isolating and excluding undesired Muslim actors is the surveillance by the *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution) on which we will now focus.

1.1. The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (FOPC)

In this section we will briefly outline the work of the FOPC concerning legalist Islamists as it plays a crucial role in the discrimination of the highly educated young Muslim men we have interviewed for this case study.

The protection of free democratic basic order[5] and the security of the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany is defined in the first paragraph of the

[5] In the German debate on integration and the threats from Islamists it is often referred to the free democratic basic order. According to the FOPC the free democratic basic order includes:

1. Right to form and exercise an opposition within the framework of the Constitution
2. Equal opportunities for all parties
3. Independence of the courts
4. Multi-party system
5. Observance of the law by the administration
6. Accountability of the government
7. Division of powers

Bundesverfassungsschutzgesetz (BVG – the act regulating the cooperation between the national government and the federal states in matters relating to the protection of the constitution and on the FOPC) as the paramount task of the FOPC. According to the BVG the FOPC and the *Landesämter für Verfassungsschutz* (State Offices for the Protection of the Constitution) have the task of collecting and analysing information, intelligence and other documents concerning:

> "1. Efforts
> a) directed against the free democratic basic order or
> b) against the existence and the security of the Federation or one of its states or
> c) jeopardising foreign concerns of the Federal Republic of Germany by the use of violence or the preparation thereof or
> d) directed against the idea of international understanding (article 9, paragraph 2 of the German constitution), especially against the peaceful coexistence of peoples
> 2. Intelligence activities carried out on behalf of a foreign power (counter intelligence)"[6]

The FOPC publishes an annual report to inform and educate on anti-constitutional efforts in Germany. In accordance with its fields of work the FOPC report covers groups of

- Right-wings extremists
- Left-wing extremists
- Islamism / Islamist terrorists
- Foreign extremists (without Islamism)
- Espionage and counter sabotage, and
- Scientologists.

The FOPC defines Islamism as follows:

> "Islamism is a political, mostly socio-revolutionary movement – heterogeneous in itself – which is supported by a minority of Muslims. With reference to the original Islam of the 7th century, its adherents - the Islamists – call for the 'reinstitution' of an 'Islamic order', in their understanding the only legitimate state and social order which is to replace all other orders. Under this 'Islamic order' all areas of life are to be shaped in a way bindingly laid down by God in the Koran and by the example of the Prophet and the early community" (Sunna)."[7]

It also proposes a distinction between "radical-revolutionary" and "legalistic" Islamism. As for this case study only the "legalistic" form of Islamism is relevant the FOPC's definition will be introduced. According to the definition of the FOPC "legalistic" Islamism:

> comprises organisations which, exploiting the instruments of the state of law (= legalist) try to impose Islamist positions on social life in Germany, or at least to achieve freedom for organised Islamist activities in Germany and which consequently contribute to

8. Sovereignty of the people
9. Observance of the human rights

http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/en/en_about_bfv/constitution.html (3.9.2011)

[6] http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/en/en_about_bfv/tasks.html (3.09.2011)

[7] http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/en/en_fields_of_work/islamism/ (14.07.2011)

> disintegratingly establish an Islamist sub-society. Against this background it has become obvious that Islamism has to be dealt with in many different ways.[8]

Even though the FOPC is supposed to be well balanced and neutral in its analysis and evaluation of Muslim organisations in Germany, in assessment of the FOPC-reports Schiffauer comes to the following conclusion:

> Reading the (…) reports, one gets the impression that the agencies' assignment of duties does not result in an unbiased examination of the positions of the organisations observed, but rather in a systematical attempt to counter the public claims made by these organisations – which amounts to showing that 'actually', a secret agenda is indeed being pursued despite constitutional rhetoric. A precise reading of the reports highlights the fact that the Internal Security Agency is very selective with the information it provides. Whatever fits the picture is quoted (anti-Semitic statements in sermons, for instance); what doesn't fit the image (for example, active contacts with the Jewish community or engagement in their inter-religious dialogue), however, is filtered out. The fact that youth work in these communities attempts to promote Islamic self-confidence is criticized as anti-integrationist; the fact that the communities also encourage sending children, both sons and daughters, to German upper schools, all are not mentioned in any report. When interpreting quotes, the reading most unfavourable for the IGMG is chosen. If contradictory statements from the organisation appear, only in exceptional cases do the agencies examine whether this is a result of factional struggles; rather, they are quite simply explained by the image of speaking with a forked tongue (to the outside world, they speak in accordance with the accepted German public opinion, while maintaining other positions internally). Occasionally, statements are turned into their exact opposite. Under the distrusting gaze of the Verfassungsschutz, communities are stylized and are portrayed as significantly more extremist and closed off than an unbiased examination of them would indicate (Schiffauer 2008:57-58).

Schiffauer points out that the notion of the FOPC as an independent authority fighting against the "enemies of the constitution" is misleading as the reports are not produced in a political or ideological vacuum but are in fact highly politicised. These concerns not only determine which Muslim actors are included in the annual report but also to what extent they are covered. Strikingly, in the FOPC's annual reports there is no reference to these constraints (Schiffauer 2008:59). He further criticises:

> instead of providing a differentiated picture listing arguments for and against anti-constitutionalism and pointing out the limitations related to the narrow data basis, authoritative judgements on the constitutionality of an organisation are passed (Schiffauer 2008:59).

The evaluations by the FOPC of Muslim organisations such as IGMG (Islamic Community of Milli Görüs) or IGD (Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland), the two main "legalist" Islamist organisations being observed, need to be interpreted in the new context of security considerations. These organisations are increasingly presented as a supporting platform for the radicalisation of young Muslims and "what was depicted as anti-constitutional, but not dangerous in any real sense before 9/11 is now considered a first step towards a security risk." (Schiffauer 2008:59)

[8] http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/en/en_fields_of_work/islamism/ (14.07.2011)

According to the FOPC the radicalisation scenario in the Muslim milieu is the following:

> In communities of legalistic Islam, socialisation takes place within an 'isolated Islamic view of the world' which, if appropriate chances and structures are present, makes a transition to more radical forms of Islam possible or even likely. Communities of legalistic Islam are, so to say, regarded as the milieu in which revolutionary, or even violent, Islam finds a protected space and can recruit. Here, common ideas are produced which permit access to more radical circles (Schiffauer 2008:74).
> The link between (inferred) 'anticonstitutionalism' and (vaguely defined) 'security risks' produced in radicalisation scenarios, has a very strong impact because a demand for concrete measures is connected to it. It may lead to a situation in which other agencies are ever less willing to critically examine the statements contained in the Verfassungsschutz reports, because the fear of making a political mistake is increasing. In case of imminent danger, it is better to act overcautiously (Schiffauer 2008:59).

The knowledge and expertise produced, generated and disseminated through the FOPC has far reaching socio-political ramifications exceeding the realms of its tasks as defined in the BVG. It frames and limits the scope of action of other societal and governmental actors, who transmit this knowledge further into society through Media, their networks and via other means (Crisis Group 2007:15).

The FOCP possesses power and influence in defining who belongs to "us" and who does not; who poses a threat and who does not; and who can be a dialog partner and who can not. The FOCP annual report has de facto become an official document declaring to the German public who is a "good" and who is a "bad" Muslim.

The FOPC takes up a crucial role in Germany's policy on Islam. The FOPC publishes an annual report in which it lists groups which pose a threat to the free democratic basic order of Germany. This report serves as a reference point in the public discourse – it more or less determines whether a person or a group can be a dialogue partner or not. Once you are personally named in the report or are affiliated to an organisation mentioned in it, you can face difficulties in naturalisation, finding funding for projects or employment, as it will be shown later in this report.

The auspices of German integration policy have undergone tremendous changes since 9/11. Not only was integration policy reduced to the integration of Muslim immigrants into German society but also almost all issues related to it were subsumed under security issues. Schiffauer summarises this policy as follows: "The central danger facing our state comes from Islamic terrorism which is penetrating Germany through immigrants from Muslim countries" (Schiffauer 2008:56).

3. Discrimination of highly educated Muslim men

After having outlined general trends in education and integration in the context of the recently developed policy towards Islam in Germany, in the section below we will

examine how this policy affects young Muslim men who are affiliated with the milieu of "legalist" Islamism as defined by the FOPC.

I have conducted interviews with Muslim men who have obtained a higher education degree in Germany but have experienced discrimination in employment. Even though the cases selected are not representative in quantitative terms, they still clearly demonstrate how an important and influential part of the Muslim community in Germany can be discriminated against and excluded from the job market. First we will discuss which sectors our interviewees have experienced discrimination and which reasons were given to them. Then we will turn to the application strategies developed by the interviewees in order to analyse how Germany's policy towards Islam is affecting highly qualified Muslim men's self-perception as well as self-presentation.

3.1. In which sectors does discrimination take place, and why?

In the private sector an internationally renowned German logistics company fired a highly qualified engineer with the following reason: "We can no longer employ you because of your religious and political activities in your leisure time!" In this particular case in a proactive manner the FOPC approached the employer in order to inform him of the "security threat" in his company. No further reasons or explanations were given to the Muslim man. The employee's contract was simply dissolved, even though he was a highly sought after person in the company. In addition, in his team leader's yearly assessment he expressed how overwhelmed he was by our interviewees' dedication, the quality of his work and how it would be hard to replace him.

Interestingly, while public authorities have for years now been regularly and openly collaborating with our interviewee in various fields related to local integration and security issues, such as crime prevention, youth integration and participation, he is still being observed by the FOPC at the same time. There seems to be a contradictory practice in dealing with "bad" Muslims, leading to frustration and demotivation of the affected person. Our interviewee perceives this as a double standard: on the one hand he is accepted as a contact person and involved as a key mediator, on the other he is excluded and discriminated against.

Other interviewees reported experiences of discrimination in the public sector. After his graduation from university and completion of his traineeship at a school, a newly trained mathematics and economics teacher – key subjects German schools are desperately seeking teachers for due to shortage of personnel – can not find a position as a teacher because of his affiliations to "legalistic" Islamist organisations. Initially our interviewee had very positive career prospects due to his sought after combination of subjects. Even without a personal face-to-face interview he received a job-offer from a

public school. However, when the school carried out safety assessment, routine procedure for all future teachers, they received the information that the applicants' file has a registration by the FOPC. This information led the school to not hire the applicant. The applicant was not given the chance to speak in person to the school representatives in order to defend his case. He was only able to communicate with the school in writing through his lawyer.

What makes this case very special is that our interviewee is not only accused of being affiliated to "legalistic" Islamist organisations but investigation proceedings from the past also place a considerable strain on him. In the meantime the investigations proceeding were discharged as none of the accusations could be upheld. However, even though the investigations were discharged the school was not willing to employ our interviewee. This case demonstrates how an entry in the FOPC records – be it justified or not – can negatively influence a person's career perspectives.

Another case of discrimination in the public sector took place at a German public university where a researcher was fired shortly after his appointment because of his affiliation to a "legalistic" Muslim organisation. Initially, not only the academic qualifications but also the Muslim and Turkish background of our interviewee was advantageous for the position of a researcher in a project on Muslims in Germany. Already during the personal interview and even before the entire recruitment procedure ended, the hiring professor informed him that he was his top candidate and that he would be given the position. At that time our interviewee was neither a member nor a functionary of a "legalistic" Islamist organisation. However, he had written a few articles for publication for a Muslim organisation observed by the FOPC and for a very short period of time he volunteered with them for humanitarian aid work abroad. Neither in the application process nor at the beginning of the employment relationship was this issue raised. However, shortly after our interviewee started in the position, one of his new colleagues found the published articles via a Google search and immediately informed the professor, who promptly dissolved the employment contract.

These example cases show that in various employment sectors highly qualified Muslim men who are affiliated with "legalistic" Islamist organisations are confronted with discrimination. What these cases have in common is that, initially, the male Muslims were the top candidates for each position: not only did they meet the required professional and academic expectations of the respective employer but they also possessed a certain 'otherness' (such as speaking Arabic or Turkish or just having a different cultural or immigration background), which was initially advantageous. The interviews have revealed that the discrimination of highly educated Muslim men in accessing the job market is not limited to a particular sector. As was exemplarily shown

above, instances of discrimination are reported from several employment sectors, be it private or public.

At this point it is worth elaborating a little further on the reasons of the decision given by the employers to the Muslim men. An interesting common pattern can be observed when the employers approach the candidate or employee in order to inform them about the decision that they cannot offer the candidate a position or that they need to dissolve the existing employment contract. They express their deep regret about the development claiming that they would have decided differently if they had had the option. At the same time they declare to the candidate or employee their helplessness and powerlessness in the situation. They convey the impression to the affected individuals that there are other important dimensions which they as employers need to take into consideration. They are deeply worried about their image, in case the public or partners find out that that they are employing someone affiliated with Islamic organisations observed by the FOPC. It is feared that this will lead to serious image damage. Even if the employer is convinced that the affected person is “innocent” and actually a qualified and sometimes even an irreplaceable person, the price at stake is too high and not worth the risk. In a way they are outsourcing their competences and responsibility in these cases, as they appear to be risky and not worth the inconvenience. Even if there is a notion that discrimination and injustice is at play here, they are not willing to take on an argument with the “superior” apparatus of the FOPC. The assessment of the FOPC is not challenged, either due to the level of respect and trust of the FOPC, or employers feel helpless and overwhelmed in the situation because of their lack of knowledge of these sensitive issues.

Although the victims tried to prove that they were “innocent” and that the accusations were not sustainable, the employers did not give the candidate or employee a full chance to defend himself. This shows that these issues are too sensitive and that employers simply do not dare question the assessment of the FOPC. This also demonstrates that the trust in the work and expertise of the FOPC is very deeply rooted, thus, the FOPC-reports have huge ramifications. In a way, employers trust the assessments of the FOPC blindly.

3.2. Application strategies

Highly educated male Muslims who are or have been active in “legalistic” Muslim organisations are usually aware of the issues illustrated above. Apart from the reoccurring public discourses on controversial Muslim organisations in the Media, the respective Muslim organisations themselves proactively bring up the issue in their

activities in order to shed light on this delicate issue from their own perspective, and thus inform and sensitise their members in this context:

> "We have a very open and proactive discussion culture concerning this issue. From a very early stage we started to communicate with our members. 'Ok, what are the accusations against us and what is our position?" We are very confident to say that the accusations cannot be uphold and are groundless. We want our members to be prepared if they should be confronted with such problems (…) What does not happen infrequently is that our members are confronted with discussions around the issues of the protection of the constitution or accusations of extremism. They are questioned around this sort of topics. This starts at school already. We know from cases where pupils have had our logos on their pencil cases or notebooks and were questioned by their teachers about it. Then the teacher googles, finds any pages, and feels compelled to question the pupil about it"

Along the same lines another interviewee stated that

> "When we kick-off an activity – let's say a seminar, a workshop or a course for youngsters, we introduce our organisation. For a few years now it has become a tradition that we problematise our issues with the FOPC in this context. I think no other youth organisation in Germany feels the need to do that. But in a way we need to do that. Can you imagine that a 15 year-old boy has to deal with issues of FOPC? To me this shows that something is wrong in this country! For us this is a total waste of resources and unnecessarily burdens our members!"

As the statements demonstrate, an awareness of the problem is being raised among the members of these organisations from an early stage on, in order to challenge the FOPC's dominant view towards their organisations.

Our interviewees stated that in the process of compiling their application materials they reflected on if and to what extent they should include their religious identity and the activities related to it. While some have dealt with this issue more intensively than others and consulted experienced friends, others developed their own strategy. Although the way of dealing with this issue differed from case to case, in general terms the following types of reactions describe the strategies developed.

a) Be as transparent as possible - "I have nothing to hide!"

"I will stand up to my work as to my religion!" The applicant does not try to hide his religious identity neither in his application nor in the interview. Actually, he was looking for an opportunity during the interview to discuss the issue of religion with his potential future employer. However, even though the applicant made it very clear that religion plays a very crucial role in his life, the employer did not bring up the issue at all. Considering the following statement by the applicant, which he made during the interview, one rather has the impression that the employer purposely tried to avoid talking about issues related to religion:

> "I have told them that I will stand up to my work as to my religion (…) but there were no further questions (…) when we talked about my experiences concerning projects, I also told them about my pilgrimage to Mecca, where I met important Saudi business people, for whom I then did projects when I returned to Germany (…) At that point I was a bit surprised that they did not ask further. I said that on purpose so that we could also talk about issues of religion in the workplace. Right from the very beginning I wanted to clarify things concerning

> my religion, such as the daily prayers and the Friday payer (…) Also, when you look at my application papers (…) you will not find anyone else other the person who is sitting in front of you now. I applied with a long beard (…) but of course with a suit and a tie. I also put in my CV that I am engaged in the community, do activities with youths and that I organise various activities. That was all in my papers. It was important for me to show my employer that I also have another side in my life. I am not a robot, I am also active somewhere else. It was important for me that he or she knows these things from the very beginning."

The applicant even handed in references from mosques that had been observed by the FOPC, where he was actively involved in integration and social work, and in counselling concerning family, relationships, youth, conflict, drugs, crimes, and divorce. Taking the above statements into account it seems as if the employer was not interested in the religious activities of the applicant at all.

Another person who became a "Google victim" describes his experience and application strategy as follows:

> "Let me put it this way: of course, I asked myself whether it was a mistake to write for the magazine of XY. Already back then, when I was about to start writing I was asked if I want to be mentioned with my real name. And for me it was actually very clear, that I didn't want to hide that (…) I thought 'Why? I stand behind it! I am not writing anything bad or wrong.' Someone asked me this and I said: 'No, write my correct name!' When this incident occurred I asked myself if it was the right decision back then but it was clear straight away: of course, it was the right decision! I have nothing to hide (…) And afterwards I did not change my strategy and said: 'Ok, from now on be more careful, appear less on the website of XY or in its magazine, do not go to their events anymore. Not at all!' But it was also not the other way around that I thought: 'now more than ever!' So, my dealing with XY did not change. I still, even though not on a regular basis, write things (…) And it's never an issue, of course my real name is there, my correct email address. I don't have a problem with that. And if again an idiot will get in my way and say: 'So, I will not let you go further!' than it's his problem, not mine. That is my sincere attitude concerning this issue. Particularly as I still think that I did not do anything wrong."

This direct and transparent application strategy was preferred by three out of our nine interviewees. Although the applicants are aware of the possible negative effects on their career perspectives they choose this strategy because they want to work in an environment which is open and inclusive for them personally, including their activities for "legalistic" Islamist organisations.

Another young male Muslim, who has had the role of a gatekeeper, sheds light on this issue from a slightly different perspective:

> "When I worked for a foundation as a coordinator for a special scholarship program tailored for students with an immigration background, I was aware of my position as a gatekeeper. Of course, I encouraged young Muslims in my network to apply for this unique program, as I knew that they would greatly benefit from it in terms of content and in career perspectives. There I had pupils from the 13th grade and students in their first or second year at university who were already dealing with these sorts of issues. As I knew about their background I encouraged them not to hide anything and be as transparent as possible. I advised them that they should do whatever they feel comfortable with. But I ensured them, that it would not be disadvantageous for them if they decided to openly name their Islamic organisation. And most of them wrote their organisation's name and even handed in a recommendation letter from them (…) Strikingly, the applicants from my network were the ones who convinced the selection committee most. They were just outstanding. They were the ones who could not only articulate themselves in the most eloquent way but they also stood out with their intercultural and social skills in the group interviews. Apart from that they had a very good common knowledge and were informed about contemporary societal issues. This was a very fulfilling experience. I did not need to intervene. I did not feel that they were

> discriminated against because they were Muslims or because of their affiliation to certain controversial Muslim organisations. This showed me that if these young people were given equal opportunities they would really rock this society and this country."

This statement by a gatekeeper underlines the argument that members of "legalistic" Islamic organisations start to think about these issues fairly early – as the example above shows this can already begin at high school when they start applying for university, scholarships or jobs. This also gives an indicator that the Muslim applicants would actually prefer to put in the name of the Islamic organisation in their application if they could predict that it would not be interpreted negatively.

b) "My religion? Maybe later!"

In contrast to the approach illustrated above, others do prefer a more indirect strategy of dealing with the issue of religion and their organisational affiliation to "legalistic" Islamists. Although from their application one can obviously derive that they may have a Muslim background they prefer not to explicitly put the name of the controversial Islamic organisation on their application, but chose to paraphrase their voluntary activities by stating in very general terms that they have actively been engaged in an "immigrant organisation", "intercultural youth group" or "integration community". By applying this strategy they wish to overcome the first obstacle, which is the paper application and to be invited for an interview where they can convince the employer with their personality.

> "It's quite a paradoxical situation and for me sometimes even painful that I cannot put the organisation's name, to which I owe a lot, on my application! I want to be treated like others, who can openly say that they are members of a protestant or catholic religious organisation who also work for the betterment of our society. They do not need to worry about the FOPC. They probably don't even know that it exists. In my Muslim organisation I have learned so many things, it has shaped my personality in a positive way. Without it I would not be the person who I am today."

Another person puts it this way:

> "Because, by now the atmosphere here is poisoned, which has negative consequences. Furthermore, if somebody does not know my Muslim organisation, then after a quick research on the internet he/she will notice that the organisation – mildly put – is controversial and is becoming even more controversial. In this atmosphere, in which many Muslims are under suspicion, and are accused of fundamentalism and Islamism, this would only strengthen it."

Male Muslims choosing this strategy find themselves in an unpleasant dilemma: on the one hand they do not want to deny their religious identity or organisational affiliation; on the other hand they know the negative consequences they might face if they explicitly disclose it in their application. They do not want to hide or disguise their identity but they feel no alternative other than paraphrasing their Islamic activities in order not to attract attention in a way which might jeopardise their application. Although they do not

distance themselves from the controversial Muslim organisation, and still sympathise or are still active on a voluntary basis in the Muslim community, they prefer not to "shout it from the rooftops," as the disadvantages may overweigh the advantages. This can be very frustrating and discouraging for the individuals concerned, as they have to accept the fact that it is not only their personal academic or professional qualifications but also the assessment of FOPC that determines their career perspectives.

c) "I have nothing to do with them"

Some young male Muslims even decide to distance themselves from or try not to be publicly affiliated with the organisation, as they fear negative consequences for their career prospects in short or long-term perspectives. Even though some people might distance themselves from the organisation as they do not identify themselves with the aims and goals of the organisation anymore, there is a segment of people who still appreciate the work and activities of the organisation and under different circumstances would like to be part of it. They do have a guilty conscience about their way of dealing with the situation;

> "I know that many people avoid this organisation because they think that it can be disadvantageous for their career prospects. Actually they like the organisation and the work they are doing. And maybe deep inside they would like to join the organisation. I believe that they even feel a bit cowardly, that they feel ashamed for not being courageous. Well, everyone deals with the situation differently (…) I know of people, who, because of the reasons mentioned above, will not be active with this Muslim organisation (…) I know of one case, but that was a while ago. He had asked me, because he was studying law and that was the time when I (…) had access to the documents, he asked me to take out the folder where his name was listed and to erase it. Well, to blank him out because he did not want to be associated with this organisation because of career reasons. But he was very active in his local community in the mosque (…) But I have often heard conversations of people, who were actually suitable for the work but they said "No, no! I will not do that. I do not dare."

From this statement one can interpret that young male Muslims distancing themselves from "legalistic" Muslim organisations (either by resigning membership or from active positions or by not becoming members in the first place) is not a mass phenomenon, but is however an issue which should not be underestimated. Muslim organisations, which are in need of qualified young people, cannot include these educated and skilled young Muslims in their activities. This can be read as another indirect form control and exclusion in the policy towards Islam in Germany.

No common or dominant application strategy among young highly educated male Muslims could be identified. However, what is observable in all the cases is the feeling of not being regarded as "normal" and of not being able to present themselves as they wish; of being treated unfairly and with double-standards; and that they are somehow forced by the public discourse to "disguise" themselves which in several cases caused

feelings of remorse. In doing this they feel bad but see no other option in order to successfully pursue their career perspectives.

3.3. Google – detective work on the internet

Young Muslims who are either involved in public relations work of their organisations or appear in various publications of the organisations face a very special problem: once their name is mentioned or their picture is published on the internet in the context with a "legalist" Islamist organisation, the information is out and cannot be withdrawn anymore. For our interviewees the issue of being "googled" played a central role. Many interviewees said "if you google my name, you will find …" So, the internet seems to play an important role in the application strategy of qualified Muslims as they are anticipating that their potential employers may google their name once they have their application in their hands.

Several interviewees reported that either they themselves or people they know have refused to publish their name on the website or any other publication of the Muslim organisation they are affiliated with. One interviewee stated that once he saw his name and mobile number on the website of the Muslim organisation he is part of, he immediately contacted the online-editor and asked him to remove his name from the website as he did not want his contact details to be accessible for the public and he anticipated negative long-term consequences: "You never know how, where, when and in which context that information will be used. I just want to be on the safe side. I don't want to risk anything. Unfortunately, this is a serious issue, nothing to play with."

On the other hand, we had interviewees who were quite aware of this problem but their strategy in dealing with this issue differed considerably from the previous case. Their approach to the issue was a more "courageous" one as they care little about what their potential future bosses might say:

> "I will be as transparent and natural as possible; I do not want to hide anything. I want to be as I am. If he can't handle it, it is his problem. I do not want to work for an employer who, in principal, has an issue with my voluntary work in my free-time. If that is the case, sooner or later it will be an issue. I want to be as natural, transparent and honest as possible."

Not many people have this kind of approach to this issue, as this requires a high level of optimism concerning alternative job positions and the luxury of having the choice between different options. Therefore, many think that one has to be so highly qualified in his field that one is a very in demand person and irreplaceable for that position. Here the idealistic outweighs the pragmatic approach.

Strategies have even been developed to overcome the "google-problem". For instance, one of our interviewees used to be a leading figure of an Islamic organisation

for which he did a lot of public relations work and has many results on Google which are not favourable for him as most of them put him and his work in a very problematic context which a layperson would interpret with great caution. However, our interviewee has also published articles related to his academic research and journalistic work which put him in a different and more neutral context. In order to get rid of the negative news related to his Islamic activities he began linking these articles to his start page in order to raise the hits for these pages and eventually these became the first results to appear on Google when searching for him there. In a proud and happy manner he informed us that the other day a women whom he met for the first time in a work context told him that she read his newspaper articles and that she knows that he is a journalist. Although somewhat laborious and tiring, his new strategy has proven to bear fruits. The same person told us that this was not the case several years ago in a different context. Then, while working abroad for a prestigious German cultural institution as a program coordinator, a program participant from Germany told him on their first encounter "I googled you, I know who you are!"

> "At that moment I did not react to it, but for me it was quite clear what she wanted to say. Because at that time, when you googled my name, one did find articles related to XY, which was portrayed as an extremist organisation or an organisation which has ties to Islamists. Well, I could have asked her what she meant by her comment but in that moment I just did not feel like it. She brought it up when we were walking up the stairs. It was difficult to react to it. Then I did not want to open a Pandora's box. During the program, which lasted for several days she got to know me, then nothing happened anymore. Well, I don't know if she did something with it. But in that moment I was shocked. I have always counted with it, that the people where I worked at that time would inform themselves. So I am very, very cautious. But apparently nobody did that and then this. (...) But of course I was afraid that she would go to my boss and tell him about it."

In a small talk manner, the program participant is informing our interviewee that she is fully aware of whom she is dealing with. This shows that for these young Muslim men there is this constant thought at the back of their mind that they might be confronted with this issue: "You always have to explain yourself and try to build trust, because the other side is mistrusting you."

3.4. Brain drain?

Ironically, and to our surprise, one of our interviewees drew our attention to the fact that, in contrast to the negative developments in Germany described above, in Turkey engagement with "legalistic" Muslim organisations can influence career prospects in a positive direction today:

> "We know about the good relations. These are not parties as was the case back with the parties of Erbakan. But one knows that the contacts between the AKP and the IGMG are not the worst. If you have distinguished yourself in the IGMG through certain competences, it can be the case that the networks around IGMG can be advantageous in finding a job or with applications in Turkey. There I also know cases. But I am not aware of anyone who

> would purposely join IGMG in order to increase his career prospects in Turkey. I don't know about that but it probably exists, too."

This statement illustrates that not only highly qualified young Muslims with a background in professions typical for Muslims such as the natural sciences or business but also Muslims from atypical fields such as the social sciences are leaving Germany too. These people are considered experts on Muslim or Turkish minority issues in Germany; they are multilingual, familiar with German mentality, social dynamics, political and judicial institutions, culture and traditions; and have wide, existing networks which are useful for the new Turkish policy towards its migrant population in Western/European diasporas. However, one should keep in mind that these are very exceptional cases and not yet the rule, although still demonstrate how diversified, multifaceted and complex this phenomenon can be.

It is very likely that we are dealing here with a "brain drain" of an important and influential typology of functionaries within the IGMG which, by referring to Antonio Gramsci, Schiffauer calls "organic intellectuals" (*organische Intellektuelle*) and characterises as:

> "the intellectual, which came from a certain milieu (…) and is rooted in it. These intellectuals are the thinking and organising element of a particular group. They consider their task in their engagement for the milieu of origin. Internally they are using their acquired intellectual skills for the reflection of the milieu, for the analysis and the organisation of it's specific interests. Externally they are representing the milieu vis à vis the majority society" (Schiffauer 2010:159)

In this context one should also mention that it is very likely that due to the recent developments in several Arab countries one can also expect a "brain drain" from Germany to the Arab countries which are in a revolutionary transition process. It is not unlikely that not only those who were sent to exile from their respective home countries will return, but also those who were born, raised, trained and educated in Germany but still feel a strong (emotional and ideological) connection to the countries of their ancestors. If those people have already experienced discrimination or an excluding and an unwelcoming atmosphere in Germany, the chance is even higher that they will turn their backs on Germany. It can be predicted that if the "home goers" will do a good job and be happy and satisfied in their respective "home countries," more young qualified Muslims will follow their steps in the near future.[9]

[9] Considering the recent historic revolutionary regime changes that have been taking place in the so-called Muslim world one can expect a growing attraction of these countries for Muslims living in Western Diasporas. Particularly those who feel excluded, discriminated and stigmatised are very likely to seriously consider immigrating to their "home countries". Although this is not a serious mass phenomenon, yet, one can expect that more qualified Muslims will try their luck in their "home countries," in the near future in order to rebuild and establish the country. After the "Arabellion" their affiliation with controversial Muslim organisations will not have a negative effect on their career prospects, on the contrary, for the first time they might even prove to be advantageous. A significant number of Muslim leaders with an Arab

3.5. Discrimination and self-perception

As demonstrated above, highly educated Muslim men who are affiliated with "legalistic" Islamist organisations are facing a special form of discrimination. The question is: what does this sort of experiences do to the affected people, how do they perceive German society and how do they identify themselves with the society they live in?

In general our interviewees had an overall positive image of Germany before they experienced discrimination in the job market. Although quite a few of them had already experienced some sort of exclusion or discrimination during their time at school or university, the general attitude towards and identification with German society was prevailingly positive. Despite the shortcomings, appreciation and praise of German education (high quality of schools and universities), social programs (especially scholarship and support programs), politics (participation in democratic procedures) and the judiciary (rule of and equality before the law) was repeatedly expressed. In their statements a certain pride at having achieved something in Germany, despite all the difficulties and challenges, and often as one of the first in their respective family circles, is prevalent:

> "To be honest (…) until this incident I felt very comfortable here in Germany. I got to know many positive aspects of this country, which I even internalised. I took them and changed many things in my life. What they don't know is that I love the people here in many respects (…) They do not know about my daily life, my work, my people (…) I always liked it to be here in Germany. Actually I always wanted to improve and develop myself. I wanted to do something for the Muslims here, for this country."

They wish to contribute to the society they live in and to be role models for other marginalised young people by showing them their personal example, and that they can make it too, if they work hard.

Almost all of our interviewees described how, through their active involvement in Muslim youth work, they have not only learned about the basics of Islam and found a Muslim community but have also developed key social, intercultural and managerial skills which prove to be particularly advantageous compared with other candidates, competitors or colleagues in the application process or working environment. It was

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background came to Germany because of either political or educational reasons. While in the past memberships or involvement in controversial Islamic organisations hindered Muslims entering certain countries, now it is unproblematic. In the case of Turkey, where the Muslim conservative AKP (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi – Justice and Development Party) has been in power uncontested for almost a decade now, the friendly relationship between the ruling AKP and the IGMG is clear. With the exception of the half year presidency of Necmettin Erbakan in 1996, who was the founder of the IGMG movement and until his death in 2011 the spiritual leader, the IGMG has never had better relations to a Turkish government than now. IGMG representatives are now officially being invited to Turkey as experts on immigration and integration issues of Turkish minorities abroad and when representatives of the Turkish government visit Germany they also meet with representatives of IGMG.

also in these organisations where they not only learned about civic education and engagement but also practiced it:

> "Only during my engagement with the organisation XY did I understood how important social and voluntary engagement is, and not only in a narrow religious context, but if you want to be a practicing, devout and serious Muslim. The organisation somehow helped me to reconcile my Muslim religious responsibilities with my civic responsibilities as a German citizen."

For our interviewees, these "legalist" Islamist organisations are social spheres where personalities and characters are shaped and formed and values, lifestyles, knowledge and skills conveyed. This means that (former) members often feel a special bond to these organisations as they owe so much to them. Most of our interviewees stated that they would be different people if they had not been involved in Islamic youth work and, therefore, feel a sense of debt and gratitude towards these organisations. A university graduate describes his experience as the following:

> "Although I am not very active in XY anymore, I am fully aware of what I actually owe to this organisation. I will give you a very simple example: When I had my university degree in my hands, I mean when I finished university, I went to XY who back then was the chairman of the local mosque where I grew up. XY is a metal worker; a devout Muslim, not very educated, a great person, and back then he was like a big brother for me. I had a position at the mosque he was in charge of; I was responsible for the youth section. Indirectly I have learned so much from him through this work, for example; to stand up for a cause, dedication and willingness to make sacrifices, and if necessary to work for nights on end to realise projects. These basic things are also concerning interpersonal relations. Social skills like resilience and teamwork, these things I have learned through working with XY. With my degree I went to XY to say thank you. I thanked him for imparting these values to me, which later on helped me to successfully finish my studies. He obviously was touched by it, he liked it and he was happy for me. What I want to say by that is that I never regretted the work I did for YX. Of course, I do not like everything happening at XY and the also what many youngsters are doing there, I am very critical with that, but still I can personally say: This organisation has shaped me and I learned a lot in and through this organisation."

The organisation not only helped him to acquire important soft skills and intercultural competences, which are indispensable in working environments today, but also helped him to develop a positive relationship to society by encouraging him to contribute positively to Germany by being an active participant in all spheres of life, be it societal, cultural, academic or political.

While the "legalistic" Islamists gave young Muslim men orientation and strengths for life, they feel excluded and marginalised by the majority of German society. One of our interviewees stated that he wants to be treated and perceived like any other "ordinary" young religious German person who is active in a (religious) youth organisation, such as the aej (*Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Evangelischen Jugend in Deutschland e.V.*– youth branch of the German Protestant Church) or the BDKJ (*Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend* – youth branch of the German Catholic Church) for example; and that he would also love to mention the name of his Muslim

organisation on his CV with a certain pride and naturalness. He exemplifies the different treatment of Muslims by giving the following example:

> "Once I had a meeting with a representative of a Christian youth organisation because we wanted to do something together in the field of inter-religious dialogue. Prior to our meeting I visited their website to get an update on the organisation. I was struck by the slogan of the organisation katholisch, politisch, aktiv (Catholic, political, active). This would never be possible with our organisation. Imagine the reaction if we would put "Muslim, political, active" as our main slogan on our website. This made it so clear to me that what is normal for the other is not normal for us! I was so struck by this that I brought up this issue when I met the representative of the Church youth organisation, and, interestingly, she also agreed that it would be really weird if we were to use this slogan."

The statement above can be considered as largely exemplary for the self-perception of a significant number of young Muslims actively involved in "legalist" Islamist organisations and illustrates the diametrically opposed perceptions of the situation: while state authorities and the Media portray them as "bad", "dangerous", "problematic", and "suspicious" Muslims, the young Muslims consider themselves as "good" and "exemplary" citizens.

The reactions on how to deal with these sorts of discrimination experiences differ from case to case. Only two of our nine interviewees contracted a lawyer in order to take their case to court. However, the lawyer was reluctant to sue the company and encouraged his client to pursue an out of court settlement with the company. Our interviewee thinks that his lawyer chose this way to proceed because of the pressure by the FOPC.

Consequently, when he was first informed by his employer that he can no longer be employed because of his "religious and political activities," our interviewee was fully determined to take this issue to court, as he was quite confident that he had not broken the law and would thus win the case. However, within a few months his initial attitude of Germany as "a country of rule of law and I will fight for my right!" changed, he became very disappointed and had to shift his notion of the German judicial system:

> "This is the greatest disappointment of my life here in Germany. All the time I believed in the rule of law, I believed that in Germany there are courts where one can file a lawsuit and be given justice. I believed that in this country rights are not relinquished, regardless of your background. But now I am doubting! (…) And I know they [the secret services] have nothing with which they can classify me as a security threat with. I have nothing to hide! My life is so transparent, so clear. Everybody knows about me (…) So I want to tell them: hello, you destroyed my carrier! Sad! To be honest I am really disappointed, very very disappointed because I know that this is coming from the state. They are lying, they are lying to the people. Now I can say that openly. Back then I said: no, there are rights here and so… No! They do not exist! (…) I swear they broke my heart. I say: that's enough! But I find it wrong; they are making a great mistake. The direction, which the secret services are going, is counterproductive. They think they are achieving something but they are achieving nothing."

These last statements show that the continuing experiences of different treatment and discriminatory practices lead to a great disappointment and disillusionment with respect

to the German political, particularly judicial, system in which they initially trusted so deeply.

3.6. Discrimination and anti-Muslim racism

As discrimination is not taking place in a social or political vacuum it is difficult to fully understand the very essence of discrimination without understanding the broader socio-political framework of racism. In this context Essed notes:

> Racism is always historically specific (Hall; 1978, 1980) (…) [It] is created and reproduced out of a complex set of conditions. Even when it draws on cultural and ideological remnants of previous historical processes, the specific forms racism takes are determined by the economic, political, social, and organisational conditions of society (1991:12).

In this paper the argument is put forward that discrimination against highly educated Muslim men is practiced in an atmosphere where anti-Muslim racism is a growing phenomenon. The socio-political context is primarily shaped by contemporary policies of the integration of Muslims and counter-terrorism measures on the one hand, and the inherited ideological-historical relationship with the problematic 'other', namely the Orient, on the other (Meer&Madood 2011:69, see also Attia&Shooman 2010:24).

In a broader concept of racism, religion and insofar Islam can be understood as a demarcation criterion. In this context Balibar states:

> "Ideologically, current racism (...) fits into a framework of 'racism without races' (...) It is a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but 'only' the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions" (1991:21).

According to Shooman, anti-Muslim racism can be characterised through:

a) dichotomisation: construction of a progressive, enlightened, and emancipative Western, Christian-occidental "us", versus an irrational and backward Islamic, Oriental "them"; which are diametrically opposed static and incompatible cultural entities;
b) essentialisation: belief that cultures are unchangeable, and therefore considered as static entities, leading to naturalisation of cultural characteristics; and
c) hierarchisation: while demonising the 'other' goes hand in hand with idealising oneself, the degrading of the 'other' serves the upgrading of the "self" (2010:pp. 102-103).

In short, through the above described mechanisms of dichotomisation, essentialisation and hierarchisation, anti-Muslim racism denies the permeability, hybridity, and dynamics of cultural identities, which are in a permanent state of flux (Shooman

2010:104). Accordingly, while all actions of a person who is marked as a Muslim will be reduced to the religion of Islam, the individual Muslim's self-ascription and representation is ignored. In this connection, at the level of daily social interactions a phenotypical 'otherness', a strange sounding name or – as this study has demonstrated – an affiliation to a "legalist" Muslim organisation can turn into a stigma (Shooman 2010:104), and thus lead to discrimination.

As mentioned above, anti-Muslim racism cannot be regarded as a phenomenon of isolated individual attitudes; it should rather be understood in its broader socio-political context. Therefore, all actors and agents which produce and disseminate knowledge and information for the society as a whole, such as opinion makers from academia, the Media and politics, are of significance. In turn, the discourses shaped by those actors come into effect at a structural or institutional level, by for example influencing laws, shaping policy measures, or leading to discrimination in key life spheres, such as education or employment (Shooman 2010:105). By stating that "structures of racism do not exist external to agents – they are made by agents – but specific practices are by definition racist only when they activate existing structural racial inequality in the system" Essed draws the attention to the reciprocal agent-structure-relationship (1991:39). Furthermore, she points out that it becomes quite problematic a) when agents are both socialised with and permanently confronted with representations that rationalise the absolute dominance of the supposedly homogenous and autochthonous majority society and b) when these ideas are (unwittingly) acknowledged as "normal". In this case agents will pull together thereby (re)producing related types of racism tailored to the particular interests and needs and situations (Essed 1991:46).

At this point Essed's insightful remarks concerning the relationship between power, domination and racism are of particular significance:

> "Domination constitutes a special case of power (…) [P]ower is never the property of an individual. It belongs to a group as long as the group stays together. Therefore, power pertains to the human ability not only to act but to act in concert. Group power exists as long as the group stays together against the 'others'. This introduces the second characteristic of power as a quality of the group. Arendt's view of power provides a basis for understanding the crucial role of racist ideologies, not only as rationalisation of existing inequalities but also as determinants of future uniformity of action. This means that ideology is the binding element between practices involving different actors and situations. To keep the group intact it is necessary to cultivate ideologies supporting the idea of innate group differences based on "race" or ethnicity. Group power can only empower individuals when they have a sense of group membership. Therefore, it is necessary to keep alive a permanent sense of "us" (dominant group) as opposed to "them" (dominated groups) (1991:39-41).

Opinion and decision makers are actors in a power structure in which power can be utilised in order to (re)produce, disseminate, and thus perpetuate racism. The FOPC, which was also an object of this work, seems to be a public authority for which the above statements are applicable: It has a pivotal role in defining who is a "good" – to

be positively included into the public discourse – and who is a "bad" – excluded and marginalised from society (e.g. Muslims).

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to examine the discriminatory practices against highly educated Muslim men and to unravel practices of anti-Muslim racism in this context. A case study was conducted analysing the job application strategies of male Muslims, who not only consciously practice their religion but are also affiliated with controversial Muslim organisations, which are categorised as "legalist" Islamist organisations by the FOPC.

The paper showed that for male Muslims their affiliation to "legalist" Islamist organisations could pose a major hindrance in the transition phase between higher education and the job market, leading to discriminatory practices in various employment sectors, both private and public. From an early age on male Muslims develop awareness for the potential challenges they may face in various life spheres, such as education or job market, due to the assessment of the FOPC, which is unquestionably taken as a framework for reference by German majority society. Muslim men have developed different application strategies in dealing with this issue ranging from openly disclosing their affiliation to "legalist" Islamist organisations, through to paraphrasing, hiding and denying it.

Significant for all cases is the sense of not being perceived and treated as "normal," but rather as a dangerous 'other'. The public discourse causes them to feel pressured to "disguise" themselves, which often leads to feelings of remorse. While these Muslim men are presented as problematic and suspicious Muslims, they see themselves as exemplary and good citizens. Although Muslim men tended to have an overall positive image of Germany, personal experience of discrimination caused great disillusionment and disappointment with respect to German institutions, which eventually lead to feelings of alienation towards German society.

This paper has also shown that there is evidence that the German policy on Islam uses the above described tools of dominance and power in order to contain, marginalise and exclude a certain type of Muslim. As Attia and Shoomann state, not only a differentiated approach towards Muslims and Islam is required but also a critical self-reflexive view on the hegemonic production and order of knowledge, and the prevalent practice of power and dominance. This approach is necessary because it

constitutes an essential framework upon which vulnerable minorities, such as Muslims, can refer to (2010:44).

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