

Muslim Experiences of Hatred and Discrimination in Germany

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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The purpose of this study was to quantify the intensity of hate experiences felt by Muslims in Germany. These experiences were classified into the five categories of hate practice, hate ideology, hate as discrimination, cultural schema in the meaning of hate representation in media, and hate policy.

In a general comparison, participants expressed hate policy as more intensely experienced over any other types of hate crimes. They also consider personalised hatred in social communication as much less intensive than ideological hatred or hatred reproduced in media representation. This shows that the experiences of hatred through media, social policy and ideology, which in turn supports, legitimises and reinforces the experiences of hatred in everyday life are powerful in Germany.

As mentioned above, respondents felt hate policy most keenly in their everyday lives. Some 69% reported to broadly similar degrees that they considered that discriminatory acts against Muslims were condoned by politicians, seeing policies or practices at work or school negatively affecting Muslim people, seeing political policies (local or national) that negatively affected Muslim people and feeling that politicians do not care about Muslims.

There is another type of Islamophobic hatred experience whereby Islam or Muslims are directly humiliated, hated or blamed. We call this type of hate experience, hate ideology. In our survey, just over 67% of respondents admitted to experiencing this in their lives through a range of behaviours such as seeing negative and insulting images of Muslims in the media and witnessing politicians describing Muslims as innately problematic.

Hate ideology is followed closely by hate representation (62%) in the scale of hate experiences. Hate representation is the perception that the mass media is responsible for creating a negative mindset for all citizens against Muslim minorities. A total of 76.4% of respondents believed that those who discriminate against Muslims are highly driven by media content with 70.5% stating that if people knew more about Muslims, they would act much better than the way they do now.

Another common and direct type of hatred is the experience of hatred in everyday life that may occur in any interpersonal and social communication in the public space. This is what we call hate practice. The intensity of different kinds of hate crimes in this group are ranked according to the responses to eight questions asking Muslims if they had experienced a range of hostile behaviours including hearing offensive remarks about Islam and Muslims, being stared at by strangers, hearing Islamophobic comments from politicians and being verbally or physically abused. An average of 52% of respondents said they had experienced this type of hatred.

The final category of hate crimes is hate as discrimination. This classification encompasses behaviours where prejudice is translated into discriminatory actions against Muslims in the areas of education and employment. Although at 43% this type of discrimination ranked lowest in the hate crimes schema it is nevertheless important because it has more serious long-term adverse effects when compared to other types of hatred.

Our survey found that the four variables of gender, religiosity, the extension of being visibly Muslim, and work status have demonstrable effects on the experience of hatred. Women have more experience of hate crimes than men. Those respondents who regard themselves as more religious and visibly Muslim also report a greater experience of hate crime. And the unemployed are more likely to experience hate crimes than non-working people, and lower economic groups more than higher economic groups.

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