

**Prediction of Anti-Muslim Sentiment on Campus: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Prejudice in Two University Populations**

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the prediction of anti-Muslim attitudes in two undergraduate student populations: one in Western Canada, and the other in Northern Germany. The questionnaire data for this cross-sectional study was collected in 2013 (N = 1,800). In order to identify anti-Muslim attitude patterns, we carried out a hierarchical regression analysis testing university-specific connections in relation to socio-demographic factors, gender role stereotyping, prejudices against new immigrants and violence acceptance against minorities. Our results indicate that socio-demographic factors were a weak predictor for anti-Muslim attitudes in all samples. For the German sample, prejudices against immigrants was the strongest predictor for anti-Muslim opinions, followed by gender stereotypes and violence acceptance against minorities. In the Canadian sample, we detected the prediction for anti-Muslim opinions by gender stereotypes, followed by prejudices against immigrants and violence acceptance against minorities.

Adding up both survey samples, a little more than 20% of all students endorsed statements that express a strong bias against Muslim minority groups. Approximately 63% of the respondents partially agreed with the statements listed in our questionnaire. A surprisingly small percentage (1.9%) of participants disagreed strongly in response to survey items that expressed negative attitudes towards Muslims.

Based on Scotson's and Elias' analysis of power dynamics in established-outsider relations,<sup>1</sup> we identify social prejudice of students at the two universities as an expression of social control mechanisms (e.g. "praise and blame gossip"). The latter are collectively constructed by the established ingroup in order to separate between "we-images" and "they-images" and, in doing so, apply *pars pro toto* stereotypes towards minority groups such as Muslims.

**Keywords:** Anti-Muslim attitudes, power dynamics, stereotypes, prejudices against immigrants, gender stereotypes, violence acceptance against minorities, cross-cultural analysis, prejudices on campus/university.

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<sup>1</sup> See Norbert Elias/John L. Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders: A Sociological Inquiry into Community Problems*, London 1965.

## Introduction

In this article, we discuss the prediction of anti-Muslim attitudes<sup>2</sup> based on a cross-cultural opinion survey that was conducted at two comparable mid-sized universities in Lower Saxony, Germany, and in British Columbia, Canada. Our quantitative findings are the result of a larger-scale international 2012/13 research project titled “*Public Opinions and Attitudes in Post-Secondary Institutions in Germany and Canada*”.<sup>3</sup> Our study explores the relationship between students’ perceptions of anti-Muslim stereotypes, anti-immigrant attitudes, antisemitism, racism, sexism and prejudice towards homosexual persons. The present paper analyses our findings on anti-Muslim attitudes – which we define as a distinct expression of racialisation – among the two student populations. Higher rates of psychological distress and lower mental well-being of Muslim members’ communities have been clearly connected to higher rates of anti-Muslim prejudices.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, analysing anti-Muslim attitudes is not just a matter of “political correctness” but particularly a demand for the stability of modern, multicultural societies.

In this context, it is worthwhile noticing Halm’s study<sup>5</sup> finding that the discursive power of the anti-Muslim stereotypes also affects the Muslim community itself. Muslim communities are forced to distance themselves from positions the receiving western society perceives as problematic (e.g. Islamist). In doing so, Muslims are forced to accept, at least partially, the division and the interpretation into a Western enlightened and an Eastern anti-liberal Islam. Following Uslucan’s observations of this process,<sup>6</sup> an assimilated, not an integrated, Islam seems to be the Western societal goal. An incorporation of Muslim culture into Western societies is only accepted as long as it does not entail any consequences for the receiving society.

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- 2 Although we recognise that the neologism “Islamophobia” is widely used in current political and scholarly debate – especially in Britain in the wake of a report published by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia (1997) – we refrain from using “Islamophobia” as an analytical term as it is often and “imprecisely applied to very diverse phenomena, ranging from xenophobia to anti-terrorism.” (Jocelyne Cesari, *Securitization and Religious Divides in Europe. Muslims in Western Europe after 9/11: Why the Term Islamophobia is More a Predicament than an Explanation*, Paris 2006, p. 6). Moreover, the use of the concept of “Islamophobia” might suggest that Muslim identity operates solely within a religious framework (see also Richard T. Schaefer [ed.], *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society*, Thousand Oaks 2008; Andrew Shryock, *Islamophobia/Islamophilia: Beyond the Politics of Enemy and Friend*, Bloomington/Indianapolis 2010; Chris Allen, *Islamophobia*, Farnham/Burlington 2010). Burak Erdenir in his “*Islamophobia Qua Racial Discrimination: Muslimophobia*”, in: Anna Triandafyllidou (ed.), *Muslims in 21st Century Europe: Structural and Cultural Perspectives*, Abingdon/New York 2010, pp. 27-44, uses the term “Muslimophobia” and makes the compelling argument that “in mainstream politics and media it is not Islam but the Muslims who are in the spotlight” (p. 29).
  - 3 Wassilis Kassis/Charlotte Schallié, “*Public Opinions and Attitudes in Post-Secondary Institutions in Germany and Canada*”, unpublished survey, 2012, for which we gratefully acknowledge the contributions by Gerlinde Weimer-Stuckmann, Myriam Gerber, Jonas Löbber, Sabrina Strasen and Elise Polkinghorne, who assisted us in administering and entering the survey data.
  - 4 See Thijs Fassaert et al., “*Acculturation and Psychological Distress among Non-Western Muslim Migrants. A Population-Based Survey*”, in: *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 57 (2/2011), pp. 132-143.
  - 5 See Dirk Halm, “*The Current Discourse on Islam in Germany*”, in: *Journal for International Migration and Integration* 14 (3/2013), pp. 457-474.
  - 6 See Hacı-Halil Uslucan, „*Muslime zwischen Diskriminierung und Opferhaltung*“, in: Thorsten Gerald Schneiders (ed.), *Islamverherrlichung: Wenn die Kritik zum Tabu wird*, Wiesbaden 2010, pp. 367-377.

We will discuss the prediction of anti-Muslim sentiments among undergraduate students, correlating them with socio-demographic factors, gender role stereotyping, prejudices against immigrants and violence acceptance against minorities. A cross-cultural analysis will allow us to determine which forms of campus prejudice might be “pancultural”, and which could be considered “culturally idiosyncratic”.<sup>7</sup> Of particular interest is the fact that Germany and Canada have distinctly different national diversity frameworks: assimilation models (AS) vis-à-vis multiculturalism policies (MC). Previous empirical research findings suggest that public support for national pro-diversity MC policies in Canada will lead to decreased levels of prejudice and ethnocentric stereotyping.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to this, participants residing in countries with national AS policies, such as Germany and France, tend to express higher degrees of ethnic, cultural, social and religious bias against minority groups.<sup>9</sup> Most recently, in the comparative study by Guimond et al., the authors maintained that “the lowest level of prejudice toward ethno-religious outgroups [in the general population] was observed in Canada, and the highest level was observed in Germany”.<sup>10</sup>

Bearing these insights and salient results in mind, we designed our German/Canadian survey in summer 2013. In identifying social prejudices of students at the two universities as social control mechanisms (according to Scotson and Elias)<sup>11</sup>, both our methodological approach and our analytic strategy were guided by the following research questions:

- What are the weakest and strongest predictors for anti-Muslim prejudice in both student populations?
- Do socio-demographic factors (such as higher education) play any significant role in the prediction of anti-Muslim attitudes?
- Can we detect a strong correlation between gender role stereotyping (e.g. the perception of gender inequality in Muslim groups) and anti-Muslim opinions?
- Are students holding prejudices against minority groups, such as new immigrants, more likely to express anti-Muslim bias as well?
- Is violence acceptance against minority groups a reliable predictor for anti-Muslim attitudes?

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7 Susan T. Fiske/Amy J. C. Cuddy, “Stereotype Content across Cultures as a Function of Group Status”, in: Serge Guimond (ed.), *Social Comparison and Social Psychology: Understanding Cognition, Intergroup Relations and Culture*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 249-263, p. 255.

8 See John W. Berry, “Acculturation: Living Successfully in Two Cultures”, in: *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29 (6/2005), pp. 697-712; idem, “Mutual Attitudes among Immigrants and Ethnocultural Groups in Canada”, in: *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 30 (6/2006), pp. 719-734.

9 See Rodolphe Kamiejski/Pierre De Oliveira/Serge Guimond, “Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in France”, in: Dan Landis/Rosita T. Albert (eds.), *Handbook of Ethnic Conflict: International Perspectives*, London 2012, pp. 483-506.

10 Serge Guimond et al., “Diversity Policy, Social Dominance and Intergroup Relations: Predicting Prejudice in Changing Social and Political Contexts”, in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 104 (6/2013), pp. 941-958, p. 952.

11 See Elias/Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders*.

### Prejudice against Muslim minority groups

As shown in previous studies, biased and hostile attitudes against Muslims are the result of social processes that encourage ethnocentrism and prejudice formation.<sup>12</sup> Several scholars have argued that most negative attitudes towards Muslims essentialise cultural and religious differences to the point of creating a specific set of racialised attributes which are collectively superimposed onto the outgroup.<sup>13</sup> In *The Myth of the Muslim Tide*, Canadian journalist and author Doug Saunders dismantles widespread assumptions and suspicions about Islam in both Europe and North America while critically examining “the invention of the Muslim people” in the Western imagination.<sup>14</sup> He argues that the social and cultural marginalisation of Muslims is a direct result of the “Muslim tide ideology”, whose supporters espouse the idea that “Islam” and “The West” are diametrically opposed, separate entities.<sup>15</sup>

For Germany, Pollack<sup>16</sup> highlights the fact that social contact between Germans who are members of a Christian denomination and Muslims who are either German citizens or German-based occurs less frequently than in neighbouring countries. The author thus considers the frequency of intergroup relationships to be a determining factor for reducing anti-Muslim sentiment. Yet, in other scholarly sources this role is clearly contradicted: “[P]ersonal experiences with Muslims do not contribute to the reduction of stereotypes. On the contrary, personal experiences are individualised and seen as exceptions to the rule in order to further strengthen stereotypes”.<sup>17</sup> In an attempt to establish other correlating factors, no direct connection between religiosity and anti-Muslim attitudes could be

12 The term “Ethnocentrism” is defined in the following way: “Ethnocentrism is a tendency to see one’s own group as the center of the world and to rate all other groups according to the norms, values, and characteristics of the observer’s group.” in: *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society*, ed. Schaefer, Thousand Oaks 2008, p. 465.

13 See Wulf D. Hund, *Rassismus. Die soziale Konstruktion natürlicher Ungleichheit*, Münster 1999; Iman Attia, *Die „westliche Kultur“ und ihr Anderes: Zur Dekonstruktion von Orientalismus und antimuslimischem Rassismus*, Bielefeld 2009; Yasemin Shooman, „Das Zusammenspiel von Kultur, Religion, Ethnizität und Geschlecht im antimuslimischen Rassismus“, in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 62, Issue: Ungleichheit, Ungleichwertigkeit (16-17/2012), pp. 53-57, URL: <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/130422/das-zusammenspiel-von-kultur-religion-ethnizitaet-und-geschlecht-im-antimuslimischen-rassismus> (accessed September 30, 2013); Jürgen Leibold et al., „Mehr oder weniger erwünscht? Entwicklung und Akzeptanz von Vorurteilen gegenüber Muslimen und Juden“, in: Wilhelm Heitmeyer (ed.), *Deutsche Zustände*, Folge 10, Frankfurt a. M. 2012, pp. 177-198; Dorothee de Nève, „Islamophobie in Deutschland und Europa“, in: Gert Pickel/Oliver Hidalgo (eds.), *Religion und Politik im vereinigten Deutschland. Was bleibt von der Rückkehr des Religiösen?*, Wiesbaden 2013, pp. 195-220.

14 Doug Saunders, *The Myth of the Muslim Tide: Do Immigrants Threaten the West?*, Toronto 2009, pp. 139-143.

15 Doug Saunders, „*The Unfounded Fear of Muslim Immigration*“, article in: *The Globe and Mail*, August 25, 2012, URL: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/doug-saunders-the-unfounded-fear-of-muslim-immigration/article4498250/?page=all> (accessed September 1, 2014).

16 See Detlef Pollack, „*Wahrnehmung und Akzeptanz religiöser Vielfalt*“, Study, WWU Münster 2010, URL: [http://www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/religion\\_und\\_politik/aktuelles/2010/12\\_2010/studie\\_wahrnehmung\\_und\\_akzeptanz\\_religioeser\\_vielfalt.pdf](http://www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/religion_und_politik/aktuelles/2010/12_2010/studie_wahrnehmung_und_akzeptanz_religioeser_vielfalt.pdf) (accessed September 30, 2013).

17 „Persönliche Erfahrungen mit Muslimen und Musliminnen tragen nicht dazu bei, Stereotype abzubauen. Im Gegenteil, eher werden diese individualisiert und als Ausnahme von der Regel gesehen, um die Stereotype weiter zu bestärken“ (our translation), in: Attia, „*Westliche Kultur*“, p. 48.

established.<sup>18</sup> Scholars argue, however, that it is possible to empirically verify a link between the belief in the superiority of one's own religion and hostilities towards Islam.<sup>19</sup>

In their "Mitte-Studien" (Studies on issues pertaining to the midst of society), dating from 2010, Decker et al. were able to establish that 55.4% of the people polled in regard to anti-Islamic sentiment agreed with the statement, "I find Arabs to be unsettling"; thus demonstrating the broad acceptance for anti-Muslim attitudes in the general German population. This percentage number further increased by 5.4% in 2012, when 60.8% of the people questioned agreed with anti-Islamic statements, answering, in this case, with one of the two affirming statements available on a five-point scale, namely, "I agree completely" or "I agree".<sup>20</sup>

Empirically, it is difficult to demonstrate if higher educational levels reduce or even prevent social prejudices.<sup>21</sup> Although some scholars claim that up to 15 percent of all German students today tend towards xenophobic radical right-wing positions,<sup>22</sup> there is not enough data available to establish a causal link between survey participants' level of education and their predisposition for social, ethnic and religious stereotyping.<sup>23</sup> According to Karin Scherschel, there is a general lack of polls about prejudices that have been conducted with higher educated participants.<sup>24</sup>

In Canada, described as "becoming one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world"<sup>25</sup>, where one in five Canadian residents is born abroad,<sup>26</sup> we can draw on several post-9/11 studies that discuss anti-Muslim prejudices both in the general population and

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18 See Jürgen Leibold/Steffen M. Kühnel, „Islamophobie. Sensible Aufmerksamkeit für spannungsreiche Anzeichen“, in: Wilhelm Heitmeyer (ed.), *Deutsche Zustände*, Folge 2, Frankfurt a. M. 2003, pp. 100-119, p. 105; Frank Asbrock/Ulrich Wagner/Oliver Christ, „Diskriminierung. Folgen der Feindseligkeit“, in: Wilhelm Heitmeyer (ed.), *Deutsche Zustände*, Folge 4, Frankfurt a. M. 2006, pp. 156-175.

19 See Jürgen Leibold/Steffen M. Kühnel, „Islamophobie. Differenzierung tut not“, in: Heitmeyer (ed.), *Deutsche Zustände*, Folge 4, pp. 135-155.

20 See Oliver Decker/Johannes Kiess/Elmar Brähler, *Rechtsextremismus der Mitte. Eine sozialpsychologische Gegenwartsdiagnose*, Gießen 2013, p. 140.

21 In some questionnaires, participants were asked to indicate whether they had received a school leaving qualification; no data was collected on the participants' post-secondary education. See also Michael Hofmann/Dieter Rink, „Vom Arbeiterstaat zur deklassierten Gesellschaft? Ostdeutsche Arbeitermilieus zwischen Auflösung und Aufmüpfigkeit“, in: Helmut Bremer/Andrea Lange-Vester (eds.), *Soziale Milieus und Wandel der Sozialstruktur: Die gesellschaftlichen Herausforderungen und die Strategien der sozialen Gruppen*, Wiesbaden 2006, pp. 262-284.

22 See Rainer O. Neugebauer/Matthias Rösener, *Studierende und Gesellschaft. Rechtsextremismus und Fremdenfeindlichkeit unter Studierenden an deutschen Hochschulen*, Harzer Hochschultexte, Nr. 4, Halberstadt 2002.

23 See Karin Scherschel, "Who is a Refugee? Reflections on Social Classifications and Individual Consequences", in: *Migration Letters*, Special Issue: Survival Strategies of Irregular Immigrants 8 (1/2011), pp. 67-76.

24 See Karin Scherschel, „Rassismus als flexible symbolische Ressource – Zur Theorie und Empirie rassistischer Argumentationsfiguren“, in: Claus Melter/Paul Mecheril (eds.), *Rassismuskritik*. Band 1: Rassismustheorie und -forschung, Schwalbach<sup>2</sup>2008, pp. 237-256.

25 Cited in: Alan B. Simmons, *Immigration and Canada: Global and Transnational Perspectives*, Toronto 2010, p. 7. See also Alain Bélanger/Éric Caron Malenfant, *Population Projections of Visible Minority Groups, Canada, Provinces and Regions, 2001-2017*, survey by Statistics Canada, Ottawa 2005; Jane Badets/Jennifer Chard/Andrea Levett, *Ethnic Diversity Survey: Portrait of a Multicultural Society*, survey by Statistics Canada, Ottawa 2003.

26 See Irene Bloemraad, "Canada: Multicultural Model or Cautionary Tale?", in: *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 35 (2/2010), pp. 309-315.

among students.<sup>27</sup> Sison,<sup>28</sup> citing the Leger survey,<sup>29</sup> points out that unfavourable opinions of Muslim Canadians are more prevalent in French-speaking Canada. Most recently, an Angus Reid Global poll confirmed these results, stating that 69% of Québécois expressed an unfavourable opinion of Islam, while also revealing that 66% among those sampled viewed Christianity in a favourable light. Among English-speaking Canadians, 54% of participants viewed Islam unfavourably, whereas almost three quarters of those sampled (73%) expressed a favourable view of Christianity.<sup>30</sup> In British Columbia – the home province of the Canadian university sampled in this study – 59% of all participants indicated that they held an unfavourable view of Islam (Christianity: 22%; Hinduism: 31%; Sikhism: 39%; Buddhism: 17%; Judaism: 26%). The survey results also reveal that “younger and university educated Canadian adults [are] holding more favourable opinions of non-Judeo-Christian religions.”<sup>31</sup> For example, among 18-34-year-old participants, 43% viewed Islam in an unfavourable light. Among those sampled with a university degree, more than half of all participants (54%) indicated that they held an unfavourable view of Islam. For survey participants with a college/post-secondary degree, the number equalled the average for British Columbia (59%). In the context of our own study, one survey item proved to be of particular interest: “Would it be acceptable or unacceptable to you if one of your children were to marry a person who was a follower of any of these religions?” In Québec, 48% of participants answered that it would be unacceptable to them if their children married a Muslim, whereas in the rest of Canada the number was 32%. In British Columbia, the percentage number was marginally less (31%). The unfavourable ratings from participants holding either a college/post-secondary degree or a university degree were (virtually) identical (31% and 30%, respectively).

To date, there is only one international comparative study examining the relationship between anti-Muslim attitudes and other forms of prejudice directed at racialised students and minority groups in Canada. An international research project, led by Serge Guimond,<sup>32</sup> sampled 219 German students – of which half were based in Eastern Germany –, 336 British students, 408 American students and 269 English-speaking students from the province of Ontario in Eastern Canada. Although the findings demonstrated that in

27 See John Biles/Humera Ibrahim, “Testing ‘The Canadian Diversity Model’: Hate, Bias and Fear after September 11<sup>th</sup>”, in: *Canadian Issues* (Fall/2002), pp. 54-58; Denise Helly, “Are Muslims Discriminated against in Canada since September 2001?”, in: *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 36 (1/2004), pp. 24-47; Paul Nesbitt-Larking, “Canadian Muslims: Political Discourses in Tension”, in: *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 20 (1/2007), pp. 1-24.

28 See Marites N. Sison, “Anti-Muslim Sentiments on Rise in Europe, Two out of Five Canadians Also Feel That Way.”, article in: *Anglican Journal* 134, November 1, 2008, URL: <http://anglican-journal.vhost1.publishwithagility.com:81/articles/anti-muslim-sentiments-on-rise-in-europe-two-out-of-five-canadians-also-feel-that-way-8192> (accessed September 1, 2014).

29 The Leger Marketing survey was commissioned by the Association for Canadian Studies in June 2008. Whereas 33% of English-speaking Canadians viewed Muslims as either “somewhat unfavourable” or “very unfavourable”, the number rose to 49% among participants in French Canada. For more information see URL: <http://www.acs-aec.ca/pdf/polls/12218487649334.pdf> (accessed June 12, 2014).

30 See Angus Reid Global, “Canadians view non-Christian religions with uncertainty, dislike”, article on website, October 2, 2013, URL: <http://www.angusreidglobal.com/polls/48830/canadians-view-non-christian-religions-with-uncertainty-dislike/> (accessed June 12, 2014).

31 Ibid.

32 See footnote 10.



Germany prejudice against “ethno-religious outgroups”<sup>33</sup> was significantly higher than in Canada, the study also revealed in all surveyed countries (Germany, the US, the UK and Canada) that “expressing negative attitudes toward Muslims is intimately connected with one’s general orientation toward group-based inequality”.<sup>34</sup>

With respect to Canadian student populations, the *Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario* decided to strike two task forces in 2006 (“*Task Force on the Needs of Muslim Students*”) and 2008 (“*Task Force on Campus Racism*”). Whereas the initial task force was called upon to “expand awareness and educational anti-racism campaigns to target Islamophobia on campus”,<sup>35</sup> the follow-up task force was asked to investigate incidences of racism on Ontario campuses while providing “a forum for racialised students, faculty, staff and campus community members to speak out about racism and racial discrimination.”<sup>36</sup>

Citing previous studies,<sup>37</sup> Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka state that “individuals who have higher levels of education and are employed tend to be more favourable to immigration than those who are unskilled and work at the margins of the labour market”.<sup>38</sup>

Barbara Perry has argued that intergroup relations on Canadian campuses continue to be fraught with conflict as “non-violent and violent forms of oppression coalesce to make the university an unwelcoming place for minority students.”<sup>39</sup> Barbara Perry has conducted the only Canadian survey on campus hate crime, collecting polling data at two smaller-sized post-secondary institutions in central Ontario. The total number of students participating in the survey, which was a modified version of a survey originally designed by the Prejudice Institute, was 807.<sup>40</sup> Perry’s study revealed that Muslim students – together with Aboriginal, Afro-Caribbeans and Jews – “were over-represented as reported

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33 Guimond et al., “*Diversity Policy*”, p. 952.

34 Ibid., p. 954. See also Felicia Pratto/James Sidanius/Shana Levin, “*Social Dominance Theory and the Dynamics of Intergroup Relations: Taking Stock and Looking Forward*”, in: *European Review of Social Psychology* 17 (1/2006), pp. 271-320.

35 Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, “*The Final Report of the Task Force on the Needs of Muslim Students*”, Report, March 2007, URL: <http://cfsontario.ca/en/section/88> (accessed June 12, 2014).

36 Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, “*The Final Report of the Task Force on Campus Racism*”, Report, March 22, 2010, URL: <http://cfsontario.ca/en/section/66> (accessed June 12, 2014).

37 See Rima Wilkes/Neil Guppy/Lily Farris, “*Canadian Attitudes towards Immigration: Individual and Contextual Influences*”, Working Paper Series No. 7-8, Metropolis British Columbia, October 2007; Jessica Fortin/Peter John Loewen, “*Prejudice and Asymmetrical Opinion Structures: Public Opinion toward Immigration in Canada*”, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, June 3, 2004, URL: <http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2004/Loewen-Fortin.pdf> (accessed September 3, 2014); Donald E. Blake, “*Environmental Determinants of Racial Attitudes among White Canadians*”, in: *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 36 (3/2003), pp. 491-509; Glen Filson, “*Class and Ethnic Differences in Canadians’ Attitudes to Native People’s Rights and Immigration*”, in: *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 20 (4/1983), pp. 454-482; John W. Berry/Rudolf Kalin/Donald M. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and Ethnic Attitudes in Canada*, Ottawa 1977.

38 Keith Banting/Will Kymlicka, *Canadian Multiculturalism: Global Anxieties and Local Debates*, in: *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 23 (1/2010), pp. 43-72, p. 57, URL: [http://post.queensu.ca/~bantingk/Canadian\\_Multiculturalism.pdf](http://post.queensu.ca/~bantingk/Canadian_Multiculturalism.pdf) (accessed September 3, 2014).

39 Barbara Perry, “*‘No Biggie’: The Denial of Oppression on Campus*”, in: *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 5 (3/2010), pp. 265-279, p. 267.

40 See Barbara Perry, “*Identity and Hate Crime on Canadian Campuses*”, in: *Race and Justice* 1 (4/2011), pp. 321-340, p. 328.

victims.”<sup>41</sup> Whether and how anti-Muslim opinions and attitudes contribute to a racially charged campus climate has not been comparatively examined to date. Therefore, to the best of our knowledge, our survey is the first cross-cultural study of this scope conducted at two post-secondary institutions in Canada and Germany.

### **Correlating anti-Muslim attitudes with prejudices against new immigrants, gender role stereotyping, and violence acceptance against minorities**

To date, several large-scale empirical studies in both Europe and North America have produced empirical data suggesting “that individuals that are prejudiced against one outgroup also tend to be prejudiced against other outgroups.”<sup>42</sup> In Germany, recent studies have linked anti-Muslim sentiments in the general population to other pre-existing cultural, ethnic and social prejudices. The Bielefeld-based research team at the *Institut für Interdisziplinäre Konflikt- und Gewaltforschung* (Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence) systematically investigated selected elements of group-focused enmity [GFE], correlating these with conditional factors such as social disintegration, a lack of orientation/anomia and authoritative aggression, thereby revealing: “strong interrelations of six different elements of the GFE-syndrome [*Menschenfeindlichkeits-Syndrom*]: anti-immigrant attitudes, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim attitudes, racism, sexism, and prejudice towards homosexual persons.”<sup>43</sup> The historian Yasemin Shooman even observes an “ethnification” of the term “Muslim”.<sup>44</sup> Due to this ethnic stereotyping process, a strong correlation has been detected between anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes in a recent GFE-study. The latter was carried out over a period of ten years (2002-2012) and included a Europe-wide comparative study.<sup>45</sup> During the empirical assessment stage, it is often difficult to separate anti-immigrant attitudes from anti-Muslim sentiment. For example, statements concerning respondents’ preferred neighbours (e.g. “I would prefer living next to Germans”, “I would prefer living next to Turks”, etc.) only reveal which groups are liked, tolerated or disliked in particular regions.<sup>46</sup> Some scholars, such as Leibold and Kühnel, postulate that Islamophobia can thus be seen as a religious component of

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41 Ibid., p. 335.

42 Zan Strabac/Ola Linstead, “Anti-Muslim Prejudice in Europe: A Multilevel Analysis of Survey Data from 30 Countries”, in: *Social Science Research* 37 (1/2008), pp. 268-286, p. 272, URL: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X07000142> (accessed September 3, 2014). See also John Duckitt, *The Social Psychology of Prejudice*, New York 1992; John J. Ray/F. H. Lovejoy, “The Generality of Racial Prejudice”, in: *Journal of Social Psychology* 126 (4/1986), pp. 563-564.

43 Andreas Zick/Beate Küpper/Hinna Wolf, “European Conditions. Findings of a Study on Group-Focused Enmity in Europe”, Material for the Press Conference, Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence, University of Bielefeld, November 13, 2009, URL: [www.uni-bielefeld.de/ikg/zick/Press%20release%2013Nov\\_english.pdf](http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/ikg/zick/Press%20release%2013Nov_english.pdf) (accessed October 12, 2012), pp. 1-21, p. 5.

44 Yasemin Shooman, „Das Zusammenspiel von Kultur, Religion, Ethnizität und Geschlecht im antimuslimischen Rassismus“, pp. 53-57.

45 See Leibold/Kühnel, „Islamophobie“, pp. 100-119; Andreas Zick/Beate Küpper/Hinna Wolf, „Wie feindselig ist Europa? Ausmaße von Gruppenbezogener Menschenfeindlichkeit in acht Ländern“, in: Wilhelm Heitmeyer (ed.), *Deutsche Zustände*, Folge 9, Berlin 2010, pp. 39-60; Andreas Zick/Beate Küpper, „Die sind doch selbst schuld, wenn man was gegen sie hat!“ – oder Wie man sich seiner Vorurteile entledigt“, in: Wilhelm Heitmeyer (ed.), *Deutsche Zustände*, Folge 3, Frankfurt a. M. 2005, pp. 129-143.

46 See Dorothée de Nève, „Islamophobie in Deutschland und Europa“, pp. 195-220.



xenophobia.<sup>47</sup> Various recent studies have confirmed and specified this interconnectedness: “The more xenophobic a person is, the more likely he/she is to see Islam as a threat in Germany and thus create stronger attitudes of rejection towards Muslims.”<sup>48</sup>

Both in 2004 and 2006, the *IfD – Meinungsforschungsinstitut für Demoskopie Allensbach* (Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research) published two questionnaire-based qualitative studies on the topic of “Islamophobia” in Germany.<sup>49</sup> The implicit-association tests from the questionnaires revealed that, in 2004, 85% of respondents correlated the term “Islam” with “the oppression of women”. By 2006, this percentage had increased to 91%. Also in 2006, 83% of respondents drew a connection between Islam and the terms “fanatic” and “radical”, the percentage thus rising another 8 points since 2004. Additionally, over half of those polled in 2006 deemed Islam to be “backward-looking” – by comparison, 49% of participants had responded in this manner in 2004. In the 2006 study, 61% voiced concerns that conflicts were inevitable due to religion; 65% responded that conflict was unavoidable due to cultural differences. The authors of these two surveys claimed that those polled were convinced that permanent peaceful cohabitation of Western and Islamic world would not be possible. Compared to survey participants in other European countries, Germans displayed a considerably more contentious relationship to non-Christian religions.<sup>50</sup> When posed the question, “What is your personal stance towards the members of the following religious groups?”, 62.2% of German respondents answered either with “somewhat negative” or “very negative” in regard to Islam. In France, for example, only 36.7% of those polled responded in this manner. German survey participants also associated Islam more frequently with religious fanaticism and a disadvantaged position for women.

Wolf et al. investigated the connection between anti-immigrant attitudes and readiness to use violence in 2003.<sup>51</sup> The authors concluded that the connection between anti-immigrant attitudes and readiness to use violence is highly moderated by the atmosphere of violence in people’s social surroundings. A first investigation into the question whether enmity accompanies an increased acceptance of violence and readiness to use violence shows, in general, a moderate correlation between the syndrome of enmity and these two violence indicators.<sup>52</sup> An even clearer correlation between enmity and discriminating behaviour becomes apparent especially when assessing group-focused enmity and behaviour with group-specific questions, thereby detecting, amongst other responses, all identified group-focused enmity elements excepting sexism and the frequently mentioned statement, “that one has problems moving to a neighbourhood in which many Muslims live”. According to the authors, these findings possibly correlate with the fact that Muslims

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47 See Leibold/Kühnel, „Islamophobie“, pp. 135-155.

48 Jürgen Leibold, „Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Islamophobie: Fakten zum gegenwärtigen Verhältnis genereller und spezifischer Vorurteile“, in: Thorsten Gerald Schneiders (ed.), *Islamfeindlichkeit: Wenn die Grenzen der Kritik verschwinden*, Wiesbaden 2010, pp. 149-158, p. 156 (our translation).

49 See Elisabeth Noelle/Thomas Petersen, „Allensbach-Analyse: Eine fremde, bedrohliche Welt“, article in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Mai 17, 2006, URL: <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/allensbach-analyse-eine-fremde-bedrohliche-welt-1328270.html> (accessed September 4, 2014).

50 See Detlef Pollack, „Studie, Wahrnehmung und Akzeptanz religiöser Gewalt“.

51 See Carina Wolf et al., „Druckvolle Ermunterungen. Das Meinungsklima fördert menschenfeindliche Gewaltbereitschaft“, in: Heitmeyer (ed.), *Deutsche Zustände, Folge 2*, pp. 73-91.

52 See *ibid.*

are seen as prototypical for “the other” and that all of the elements of the enmity syndrome contain a negative attitude towards “others” in their various facets.<sup>53</sup> Küpper and Zick based their study (2008) on the observation that readiness to use violence and the acceptance of violence are typically connected with ideological arguments. As a result, the two researchers investigated the inherent relationship between social dominance orientation and the acceptance of violence. Their research findings revealed that social dominance orientation, i.e. the support of hierarchies and inequality between social groups, intrinsically accompanies readiness to use violence and violence acceptance: “A person who supports an ideology of inequality and thus privileges between groups, also is more likely to support violence as a means of establishing social hierarchies.”<sup>54</sup> It appears thus that cultural relativism and the preference to establish cultural hierarchies characterise and predict most negative attitudes towards Muslims. Anti-Muslim attitudes essentialise cultural and religious differences to the point of creating a specific set of racialised attributes, which allows members of the ingroup to create dichotomies between “us” and “them”,<sup>55</sup> the “enlightened West” versus the “backward Islamic world”. These legitimising myths<sup>56</sup> consider followers of Islam to be “backward-looking” and associate Muslims with “oppression of women”, thus reflecting cliché-based judgements, as well as with the condemnation and discrimination of Muslim men’s wives, sisters and daughters.

In North America, a number of recent studies have combined scales measuring attitudes towards ethnic, social and religious minorities with scales reflecting religious affiliation. For example, the study by Burdette, Ellison and Hill (2005) correlates conservative Protestantism with public opinions of homosexuality.<sup>57</sup> Olson, Cadge and Harrison (2006) examined religious affiliation as a predictor for or against gay marriage and same-sex unions.<sup>58</sup> Until now, no international study has discussed the relationship between campus anti-Muslim attitudes and other forms of prejudice against minority groups in post-secondary institutions in Germany and Canada. As such, our survey, which was administered simultaneously at Osnabrück University and the University of Victoria, provides first empirical insights as viewed through the lens of a cross-cultural comparative study.

## THE STUDY

### Student demographics: an overview

The purpose of our survey was to examine different forms and expressions of social, ethnic and religious prejudices among post-secondary students within a cross-cultural and

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53 Ibid.

54 Beate Küpper/Andreas Zick, „Soziale Dominanz, Anerkennung und Gewalt“, in: Wilhelm Heitmeyer (ed.), *Deutsche Zustände*, Folge 6, Frankfurt a. M. 2008, pp. 116-134.

55 See Elias/Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders*.

56 See Felicia Pratto et al., “Social Dominance Orientation: A Personality Variable Predicting Social and Political Attitudes”, in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67 (4/1994), pp. 741-763.

57 See Amy M. Burdette/Christopher G. Ellison/Terrence D. Hill, “Conservative Protestantism and Tolerance toward Homosexuals: An Examination of Potential Mechanisms”, in: *Sociological Inquiry* 75 (2/2005), pp. 177-196.

58 See Laura R. Olson/Wendy Cadge/James T. Harrison, “Religion and Public Opinion about Same-Sex Marriage”, in: *Social Science Quarterly* 87 (2/2006), pp. 340-360.

interdisciplinary framework. In this article, we report on anti-Muslim attitude patterns in two undergraduate university populations (age 17 and above), one in British Columbia, Canada, and the other in Lower Saxony (Niedersachsen), Germany. The data was collected from self-selected samples and included 1,800 undergraduate students (see Table 1) from 37 classes in seven faculties. The Canadian survey was administered during the month of January 2013; the German survey was conducted in both May 2012 and January 2013. The total number of undergraduate students enrolled at the Canadian university in the spring term 2013 was 16,395, of which 14,593 were Canadian residents.<sup>59</sup> In contrast, the total number of German undergraduate students enrolled in the summer semester 2012 was 6,939. During the winter semester 2012/2013, the number of undergraduate students at Osnabrück University increased to 7,383,<sup>60</sup> and of those, 185 were international students.

In Germany, almost all instructors who were personally contacted by the co-investigator agreed to have their students participate in the survey. At the University of Victoria (UVic), the majority of instructors who were approached by the Canadian co-investigator declined to have the surveys administered in their undergraduate courses. The most frequently stated reason for not being able to participate in our study was the fact that we requested 30 minutes of class time.<sup>61</sup>

**Table 1:** Sample descriptors by university

	Osnabrück University		University of Victoria		Overall Sample	
	in %	n	in %	N	in %	N
University	55.8	1,004	44.2	796	100	1,800
Sex						
Female	77.5	774	60.7	480	70.1	1,254
Male	22.5	225	38.8	307	29.7	532
Other	-	-	0.5	4	0.2	4

59 “Student Program – Head Count”, Office for Institutional Planning and Analysis, University of Victoria: “[A] student is considered international if his or her immigration status is ‘Awaiting Verification’, ‘Study Permit’, or ‘Work Permit’.” Data provided by Robert Lee, analyst/statistician at UVic Institutional Planning and Analysis, in an email message to the co-author Charlotte Schallié, April 4, 2013.

60 See “*Student Statistics*”, Osnabrück University, released data on the university website, URL: <http://uni-osnabruck.de/universitaet/Zahlendatenfakten/studierendenstatistiken.html> (accessed April 25, 2013).

61 Although the actual time allotment for filling out the questionnaires was estimated to be approximately 15 minutes, it took another 5 minutes to read the consent and debriefing scripts. In addition, students were asked to fill out and submit consent forms. At the end of the survey time, students were given 5-10 minutes to ask questions and voice their potential concerns.

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	Osnabrück University		University of Victoria		Overall Sample	
	in %	n	in %	N	in %	N
<b>Belong to a religious community</b>						
Yes	81.6	797	20.2	159	54.1	956
No	18.4	180	79.8	630	45.9	810
<b>Citizenship</b>						
Citizenship of the specific country	97.5	979	91.1	725	94.7	1,704
Citizenship of a different country	2.5	11	8.9	71	5.3	96
<b>Age</b>						
17-19	8.9	88	41.5	326	23.3	414
20	16.6	165	16.4	129	37.0	657
21-22	40.5	402	24.6	193	21.5	382
23 and higher	34.0	337	17.6	138	18.3	325

At the University of Victoria, we surveyed 27 first- to fourth-year classes in seven departments – English, Geography, Germanic and Slavic studies, Hispanic and Italian Studies, History, Philosophy and Sociology in the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences. At Osnabrück University, questionnaires were distributed in classes with students enrolled in Education and Cultural Studies, Biology, Human Development Sciences, Social Sciences as well as Language and Literary Studies. All questionnaires were completed anonymously and without the instructor being present. The Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Victoria reviewed and approved the questionnaire as well as the introduction and debriefing scripts.<sup>62</sup> For the surveys conducted at Osnabrück University, the Code of Ethics of the German Educational Research Association was followed.<sup>63</sup> Neither of the two universities provided any monetary or token incentives. Consent forms, from both the instructor and all students involved, were obtained for all surveyed classes in Canada. At both universities, the participants received a short oral informational presentation about the survey prior to beginning and a debriefing after completing the questionnaire. Participation in this study required a time commitment of about 30 minutes. Students were informed initially that

62 The ethics approval was granted by the Protocol Number 12-440.

63 See “Code of Ethics of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, DGfE (German Educational Research Association, GERA)”, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, URL: [http://www.dgfe.de/fileadmin/OrdnerRedakteure/Service/Satzung/Ethikkodex\\_en.pdf](http://www.dgfe.de/fileadmin/OrdnerRedakteure/Service/Satzung/Ethikkodex_en.pdf) (accessed April 23, 2013).

their choice to participate was entirely voluntary and that they could complete the questionnaire in part or request that their partial or fully completed questionnaire be discounted and destroyed at the time of collection. All participants were provided with the contact information of the two co-investigators, the ethics board and on-campus counselling services. This information was also made available on the consent forms.

The questionnaire was adapted from a number of surveys, questionnaires and different measuring devices previously used by one member of our investigation team.<sup>64</sup> The survey consisted of 83 statements and questions, which were listed on six pages; a final blank page was added for personal comments and questions.

In analysing the two samples (see Table 1), several differences can be detected between them. These distinctions prove to be essential to our research focus and approach. Based on the findings in both Canada and Germany, 70.1% of the participants were female, and 0.2% declared their sex as "Other". In the German sample, we had significantly more female and fewer male students than in the Canadian sample ( $\chi^2 = 62.238$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $N = 1,790$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

At the University of Victoria, there were significantly fewer students ( $\chi^2 = 663.281$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $N = 1,766$ ,  $p < .001$ ) who indicated that they belonged to a denominational community than was the case at Osnabrück University (Canadian university = 20.2%; German University = 81.6%). It is important to note that the German numbers do not suggest that 80% of the students are actively engaged in their faith-based communities; neither does it necessarily indicate that Canadian students are more secular-minded than their German counterparts. As a matter of fact, findings in recent German surveys on religious practice reveal that 22% of Germans (hereof 12% of Germans in the former East) attend a religious service at least once a month.<sup>65</sup> These numbers would be compatible with our Canadian findings. Surprisingly, however, the Canadian sample showed a much greater diversity of religious life, including 29 different faiths or religious affiliations.<sup>66</sup> In comparison, nine different faith or religious communities in total were listed by the Osnabrück students.

Just 0.8% ( $n = 6$ ) among UVic participants and only 0.2% ( $n = 2$ ) of the German students indicated an affiliation with Islam as their religion.<sup>67</sup> Due to the specific emphasis of our joint study, it is relevant to note that the chance for the participants of both universities to come into contact with Muslim students in their everyday campus-life was very low. We found that 2.7% ( $n = 27$ ) of Osnabrück students and 0.9% ( $n = 7$ ) of UVic students provided no answers to the question on faith or religion.

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64 See Wassilis Kassis et al., "Finding the Way Out: A Non-Dichotomous Understanding of Violence and Depression Resilience of Adolescents Who Are Exposed to Family Violence", in: *Child Abuse & Neglect* 37 (2-3/2013), pp. 181-199.

65 See Detlef Pollack/Olaf Müller, „*Religionsmonitor – verstehen was verbindet. Religiosität und Zusammenhalt in Deutschland*“, survey on the status of religion in Germany, commissioned by the Bertelsmann Foundation, 2013, URL: [http://religionsmonitor.de/pdf/Religionsmonitor\\_Deutschland.pdf](http://religionsmonitor.de/pdf/Religionsmonitor_Deutschland.pdf) (accessed June 12, 2014), p. 11.

66 This also includes a set of religious affiliations that seemed to have been listed for comic relief.

67 Koriath and Augsberg argue that due to a lack of reliable data, we can only estimate how many Muslim people are currently living in Germany (approx. 4%). See Stefan Koriath/Ino Augsberg, „*Neue Religionskonflikte und staatliche Neutralität – Erfordern weltanschauliche und religiöse Entwicklungen Antworten des Staates?*“, in: *JZ* 65 (2010), pp. 828-834.



At Osnabrück University, significantly more students ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 36.353$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $N = 1,800$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were citizens (German citizens = 97.5%), compared to the University of Victoria, where 91.1% reported that they held Canadian citizenship. In the Canadian sample, 54 different native countries were listed, while the participants in Germany indicated 17 countries of origin. In the German sample, 3.1% ( $n = 31$ ) stated that they were citizens of another country besides Germany. The UVic sample showed a far wider range of additional citizenships: 17.1% ( $n = 136$ ) of the participants had a second citizenship, and 1.1% ( $n = 9$ ) reported that they held a third citizenship.

With regard to the participants' age, the students in Germany were significantly older ( $\text{Chi}^2 = 278.717$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $N = 1,778$ ,  $p < .001$ ) than the students in Canada. The total age span among undergraduate students at Osnabrück University ranged from 17 to 71 and from 17 to 64 at the University of Victoria.

### Data collection

As a means for generating reliable incidence rates, we based all measures on sum-score scales of the students' self-reports.<sup>68</sup> Missing values have not been replaced, as we did not want to dilute the respondents' answers. For the items used in the two referred scales of this paper, the missing values were between 2.6% and 4.7%. The items were measured on a four point Likert scale (range = "disagree", "disagree somewhat", "agree somewhat", "agree"). We elected to have no middle category (e.g. "unsure") in order to prevent creating a comfort zone of political correctness.<sup>69</sup> Factor analyses support the consistency of all scales for each of the two countries as well as for the overall sample. Just one dimension of all four scales has been detected (eigenvalue  $>1$ ).

Single items were combined into patterns and scales, as composite measures are empirically more reliable and provide higher theoretical validity.<sup>70</sup> Empirical research has also demonstrated that multiple-item indices have the advantage of creating a reliable profile.<sup>71</sup> Extremely complex concepts such as "anti-Muslim attitudes" or "prejudices against immigrants" are more adequately and robustly measured by grouping related single attitudes into scales. By applying such a fine-tuned statistical approach, we were able to establish a broader theoretical and empirical framework for the specific constructs in question.

68 See Christine Alder/Anne Worrall, "A Contemporary Crisis?", in: *Girls' Violence: Myths and Realities*, ed. Christine Alder/Anne Worrall, Albany 2004, pp. 1-20; Anthony N. Doob/Carla Cesaroni, *Responding to Youth Crime in Canada*, Toronto 2004; Anthony N. Doob/Jane B. Sprott, "Youth Justice in Canada", in: *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research 31* (2004), ed. Michael Tonry/Anthony N. Doob, pp. 185-242.

69 See Zick/Küpper/Wolf, "European Conditions", pp. 1-21.

70 For an overview of the existing empirical research, see Donald G. Gardner et al., "Single-Item versus Multiple-Item Measurement Scales: An Empirical Comparison", in: *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 58 (6/1998), pp. 898-915; Lars Bergkvist/John R. Rossiter, "The Predictive Validity of Multiple-Item versus Single-Item Measures of the Same Constructs", in: *Journal of Marketing Research* 44 (2/2007), pp. 175-184.

71 See Jeff A. Sloan et al., "Assessing the Clinical Significance of Single Items Relative to Summated Scores", in: *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* 77 (5/2002), pp. 479-487.

### **Anti-Muslim attitude scale**

Given the inherent offensiveness of the language and the sensitive nature of the subject matter, we worked closely with the Canadian Human Research Ethics Board, conform with the policy statement of the Canadian Tri-Council Agencies, and designed a debriefing statement that recognised both the aforementioned issues.

In order to gauge the persistence of negative stereotypes and prejudices among the student population, negative statements using discriminatory language needed to be included in our survey. For that purpose, we largely refrained from mitigating or “defusing” the statements – even those examples that expressed highly inflammatory opinions.

The *anti-Muslim attitudes* scale was adapted from two different sources. In the first step, we transmitted the ALLBUS<sup>72</sup> Inventory “*Antisemitic-Attitudes*” to anti-Muslim attitudes; in a second step, we adapted the scale “anti-Muslim attitudes” as developed by Leibold et al.<sup>73</sup> Modelling our survey items after these two templates, we developed the following nine statements (overall sample  $C\alpha = .85$ ; German sample  $C\alpha = .87$ ; Canadian sample  $C\alpha = .83$ ):

1. Muslim Canadians/Germans<sup>74</sup> tend to provoke anti-Islamic attitudes with their behaviour.
2. Canadian/German women should think twice about marrying Muslim Canadians/Germans.
3. Muslim Canadians/Germans are more inclined to show criminal tendencies than other Canadians/Germans.
4. There are too many Muslims living in Canada/Germany.
5. Smaller numbers of Muslims should be welcomed into Canadian/German society.
6. If Muslims wish to live here, they should try to integrate more strongly into our society.
7. Islamic culture shouldn't be an important part of Canadian/German culture. (reverse coded)
8. The higher birth rates of Muslims indicate that Muslims will soon outnumber Christians in many Canadian/German communities.
9. Muslim Canadians/Germans demand too much from the federal government.

### **Gender role stereotyping scale**

Various forms of gender bias and gender role stereotyping occur “when a person is expected to enact a series of norms or behaviours based upon their sex”.<sup>75</sup> In our questionnaire design, we used a scale from Kassis (2003) with the following six statements (overall sample  $C\alpha = .74$ ; German sample  $C\alpha = .70$ ; Canadian sample  $C\alpha = .79$ ):

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72 The “*Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften*” (German General Social Survey) is a German Research Data Centre which conducts surveys on attitudes, behaviour and social structures in Germany.

73 See Leibold/Kühnel, „*Islamophobie*“, pp. 100-119.

74 The specific nation name was used in the respective country's questionnaire.

75 Kathryn Scantlebury, “*Gender Role Stereotyping*”, in: *Psychology of Classroom Learning: An Encyclopedia, Volume 1*, ed. Eric M. Anderman/Lynley H. Anderman, Detroit 2009, pp. 430-432, p. 430.

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1. Both men and women should participate in household chores and the tasks involved in child-rearing. (reverse coded)
2. Jobs that require technical and mechanical skills are more suitable for men than women.
3. For a woman, it is more important to support her husband in his career than to work on her own career.
4. Women make better health care and social service professionals (e.g. nurse, social worker, etc.) than men.
5. The old saying "a woman's place is in the home" is true.
6. When it comes to sexuality, women often do not exactly know what they want. In such cases, it is appropriate if the male sexual partner takes the lead.

### **Violence acceptance against minorities scale**

This scale introduces statements that endorse prejudice-driven acts of violence against marginalised social minorities. For this study, we adapted a scale, drawing from two different sources, Heitmeyer<sup>76</sup> and Kassis<sup>77</sup>, respectively. Designing our survey items after these two templates, we developed the following seven statements (overall sample  $C\alpha = .71$ ; German sample  $C\alpha = .64$ ; Canadian sample  $C\alpha = .74$ ):

1. Homosexuals and transgender individuals should not act surprised if they are met with physical violence.
2. The homeless are a major burden on society, and they should not act surprised if they are met with physical violence.
3. People with physical and mental disabilities are a burden on society.
4. Deliberating on a decision is a sign of weakness.
5. Victims of violence have mostly themselves to blame.
6. A person who does not fight back or defend himself/herself is a coward.
7. Violence can be an effective means to gain respect.

### **Prejudice against new immigrants scale**

The scale *prejudices against immigrants* explores a wide set of xenophobic attitudes. For our study, we adapted a scale gathered from the two different sources as already mentioned above, Heitmeyer<sup>78</sup> and Kassis<sup>79</sup>. Modelling our survey items after these two templates, we formulated the following five statements (overall sample  $C\alpha = .74$ ; German sample  $C\alpha = .77$ ; Canadian sample  $C\alpha = .70$ ):

1. People seeking to immigrate to Canada/Germany are not interested in being employed in Canada/Germany. They just want to take advantage of our social programmes.

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76 See Wilhelm Heitmeyer, „Rechtsextremistische Gewalt“, in: Wilhelm Heitmeyer/John Hagan (eds.), *Internationales Handbuch der Gewaltforschung*, Wiesbaden 2002, pp. 501-546.

77 See Wassilis Kassis et al., „Right-Wing Extremist Youth: Motivations for Exiting the Right-Wing Extremist Scene and Clique Structure“, in: Marcel Alexander Niggli (ed.), *Right-Wing Extremism in Switzerland. National and International Perspectives*, Studien zur Schweizer Politik, Baden-Baden 2009, pp. 181-192.

78 See Heitmeyer, „Rechtsextremistische Gewalt“, pp. 501-546.

79 See Kassis et al., „Right-Wing Extremist Youth“, pp. 181-192.

2. People seeking to immigrate to Canada/Germany are equally trustworthy and reliable as Canadians/Germans. (reverse coded)
3. There would be fewer problems in Canada/Germany if there were fewer foreigners living here.
4. New immigrants to Canada/Germany need to be constantly supervised by a law enforcement officer.
5. Immigrants are decent human beings, but are more likely to be a burden on the Canadian/German social welfare system.

### **Analytic strategy**

The statistical analyses for this study were conducted in two stages:

- (1) During the first stage, a four-step hierarchical regression analysis was carried out for the purpose of investigating the prediction strength of the following socio-demographic factors: “sex”, “belonging to a religious community”, “nationality” and identifying the university-specific relations for the three scales “gender stereotypes”, “violence acceptance against minorities” and “prejudices against immigrants”.
- (2) For the purpose of identifying anti-Muslim attitude patterns, a hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the university-specific connection to socio-demographic factors and to gender stereotypes, prejudices against immigrants and violence acceptance against minorities.

For both analytic stages, hierarchical regression analyses were conducted in two stages: in the first instance, these were carried out separately for each university sample, and, in the second instance, they were performed for the overall sample, using the regression steps for modelling the specific patterns. With the goal of identifying the specific effects of each model in a more differentiated manner, we closely examined the changes in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2$ ).

### **Results**

Of the 1,800 students who participated in our study, only 374 (20.8%) disagreed strongly with gender stereotypes (Osnabrück 15.9%; UVic 27.1%). If we take into consideration that the statements listed in our survey are highly inflammatory, the resistance expressed against these statements by only every fifth respondent raises a series of concerning questions for both campus communities. Approximately 72% of the combined respondents (Osnabrück 78.8%; UVic 64.9%) answered within the grey area of response options, i.e. “disagree somewhat” (31.9%) and “agree somewhat” (40.4%). Overall, 6.4% of the students (Osnabrück 5.2%; UVic 8.0%) agreed strongly with the listed statements reflecting gender stereotypes. Consequently, we could argue that, in total, almost eight out of ten participants (79.2%) identified, or partially identified, with some of the gender stereotypes listed in the questionnaire. Only 0.5% of the students ( $n = 5$ ) chose not to respond to any of the four statements.

Our findings on students’ responses to violence acceptance against minorities are equally startling: In the addition of both samples, only 39.2% ( $n = 705$ ) of the participating students disagreed strongly (Osnabrück 46.4%; UVic 31.0%) with violence acceptance against minorities. More than 55% of the responses (Osnabrück 51.5%; UVic 61.7%) were distributed within the grey area (“disagree somewhat” 38.7% [ $n = 696$ ]; “agree somewhat”

16.8% [n = 302]), and 4.4% (n = 79) of students in Canada and Germany agreed strongly (Osnabrück 2.1%; UVic 7.4%) with violence acceptance against minorities. Adding the Canadian and German samples together, more than six (38.7% + 16.8% + 4.4% = 59.9%) out of 10 students are receptive to the idea of blaming victims for violence they are suffering. Only a small number of the students (1.0% [n = 18]) opted not to respond to any of these questions.

Despite the strong xenophobic undertones in statements such as, “New immigrants to Canada/Germany need to be constantly supervised by a law enforcement officer“, only 158 (8.8%) of the participating 1,800 students disagreed strongly (Osnabrück 7.3%; UVic 11.4%) with survey items discussing the role and status of new immigrants and foreigners (*Ausländer*). Approximately 80% of the combined respondents answered within the grey area (Osnabrück 86.0%; UVic 79.7%) of “disagree somewhat” (42.3%) and “agree somewhat” (38.1%). At both universities, 7.4% of the students agreed strongly (Osnabrück 6.7%; UVic 8.9%) with the listed statements on prejudices against immigrants. Consequently, we could argue that, in total, more than nine out of 10 participants in the overall sample (91.2%) partially or fully agreed with statements that were to varying degrees hostile towards new immigrants and foreigners.

### Identifying patterns for anti-Muslim attitudes

Adding up both samples, an almost negligible amount of 1.9% (n = 33) of the participating students (N = 1,800) disagreed strongly (Osnabrück 1.7%; UVic 2.3%) with anti-Muslim opinions and prejudices. Given the overtly pejorative language used in the survey statements, this number seems relatively low. About 77% of the responses (Osnabrück 75.4%; UVic 78.9%) were within the grey area of response options (“disagree somewhat” 19.2% [n = 328]; “agree somewhat” 57.7% [n = 984]), and every fifth student (21.1% [n = 360]) of the overall sample (Osnabrück 22.9%; UVic 18.9%) agreed strongly with anti-Muslim attitudes. In order to rule out multicollinearity problems in our analysis, we first tested the intercorrelations of all four scales ( $r \leq .29$ ).

Table 5 displays the findings for anti-Muslim attitudes, listed according to regression steps 1-3. The first regression analysis step, *Sex*, is just for the Canadian and the overall sample a predictive variable for anti-Muslim attitudes (UVic  $R^2 = 2.2\%$ ; overall sample  $R^2 = 0.4\%$ ). Male students in these two samples showed significantly higher rates of anti-Muslim attitudes than did female students.

The second step of the analysis, *Belonging to a religious community*, produced significant but almost negligible results ( $\Delta R^2 = 0.4\%$ ) for the overall sample. In regression step three, *Citizenship of the specific country* was detected as being not significant for the prediction of anti-Muslim attitudes, applying to all samples.

Table 6 presents the findings for anti-Muslim attitudes in relation to regression steps 4-7. For all samples in regression step four, the analysis for *Gender stereotypes* detected this variable as a moderate and significant predictor for anti-Muslim attitudes with a very similar prediction strength ( $\Delta R^2 = 7.8\%$  for the German university;  $\Delta R^2 = 8.0\%$  for the Canadian university; and  $\Delta R^2 = 8.3\%$  for the overall sample). In all samples, students showing higher levels of gender stereotypes were significantly connected to higher levels of anti-Muslim attitudes.



The fifth step of the analysis, *Violence acceptance against minorities*, produced a low and again similar prediction for all three samples ( $\Delta R^2 = 2.5\%$  for the German university;  $\Delta R^2 = 2.7\%$  for the Canadian university; and  $\Delta R^2 = 2.1\%$  for the overall sample). Students in Canada and Germany who indicated higher levels of violence acceptance against minorities showed a significantly higher average of anti-Muslim attitudes.

The sixth regression step, *Prejudices against immigrants*, reveals for the Osnabrück University sample a high prediction ( $\Delta R^2 = 13.4\%$ ) and for the University of Victoria ( $\Delta R^2 = 4.3\%$ ) and the overall samples ( $\Delta R^2 = 8.5\%$ ) a moderate prediction for anti-Muslim attitudes. A higher average of prejudices against immigrants predicts higher levels of anti-Muslim attitudes for all samples.

Finally, the regression step seven, *University*, which was exclusively used for the overall sample, showed a low but significant prediction of anti-Muslim attitudes for the specific university ( $\Delta R^2 = 1.1\%$  for the overall sample). At Osnabrück University, students showed a significantly higher prevalence of anti-Muslim attitudes than did students from the University of Victoria.

The survey revealed that just a little less than 2% of participating students disagreed strongly with the inflammatory anti-Muslim prejudices introduced in the questionnaire, and 20% agreed strongly with them. In total, taking all samples into account, we identified a negligible (Osnabrück  $R^2 = 0.0\%$ ) or just a low prediction strength (UVic  $R^2 = 2.0\%$ ) of socio-demographic factors, and a high prediction strength of the three introduced predictors, i.e. gender stereotypes, violence acceptance against minorities and prejudices against immigrants, for anti-Muslim attitudes ( $\Delta R^2 = 23.7\%$  for the German university;  $\Delta R^2 = 15.0\%$  for the Canadian university; and  $\Delta R^2 = 20.0\%$  for the overall sample). For the Osnabrück sample, prejudices against immigrants was the best predictor ( $\Delta R^2 = 13.4\%$ ), followed by gender stereotypes ( $\Delta R^2 = 7.8\%$ ) and violence acceptance against minorities ( $\Delta R^2 = 2.5\%$ ). For the University of Victoria sample, gender stereotypes had an almost identical prediction strength ( $\Delta R^2 = 8.0\%$ ) for anti-Muslim attitudes as for the Osnabrück sample, but was the clearly better predictor than prejudices against immigrants ( $\Delta R^2 = 4.3\%$ ) and violence acceptance against minorities ( $\Delta R^2 = 2.7\%$ ) in the Canadian sample. To summarise all our analysis steps, we identified a high prediction for anti-Muslim attitudes for the German sample ( $R^2 = 23.7\%$ ) and a moderate prediction strength for the Canadian sample ( $R^2 = 17.0\%$ ).

Our findings are cause for considerable apprehension with regard to the prevalence of religious and ethnic prejudices in the surveyed student bodies at two post-secondary campuses in Canada and Germany. The reported results also indicate that higher education is by no means a safeguard against ethnic, cultural, religious and social prejudices.

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**Table 5:** Validating the Prediction Model of Anti-Muslim Prejudices in all samples: summary of hierarchical regression analysis, model steps 1-3

Sample	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$
Osnabrueck University, n = 1,004									
Sex	.02 (.05)			.01 (.05)			.01 (.05)		
Religion				.02 (.06)			.02 (.06)		
Origin							.04 (.16)		
Gender Stereotypes Accept Violence Prejudices against immigrants									
University of Victoria, n = 796									
Sex	.15*** (.05)	2.2%***		.15*** (.05)	2.0%***		.15*** (.05)	2.0%***	
Religion				.00 (.06)			.00 (.06)		
Origin							.03 (.09)		
Gender Stereotypes Accept Violence Prejudices against immigrants									
Overall Sample, N = 1,800									
Sex	.06** (.04)	.4%**		.07** (.04)	.8%**	.4%	.07** (.04)	.8%**	
Religion				-.07** (.03)			-.07** (.03)		
Origin							.02 (.08)		
Gender Stereotypes Accept Violence Prejudices against immigrants University									

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ .  $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  is described only if the specific step is significant. Sex (1 = Female; 2 = Male); Religion (1 = Yes; 2 = No); Origin (1 = Yes; 2 = No); University (1 = German; 2 = Canadian)

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**Table 6:** Validating the Prediction Model of Anti-Muslim Prejudices in all samples: summary of hierarchical regression analysis, model steps 4-7

Sample	Model 4			Model 5			Model 6			Model 7		
	$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$ (SE)	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$
Osnabrueck University, n = 1,004												
Sex	-.04 (.05)	7.8 *** %	7.8%	-.06 (.05)	10.3* ***%	2.5%	-.01 (.05)	23.7* ***%	13.4 %			
Religion	.03 (.06)			.04 (.05)			.05 (.05)					
Origin	.02 (.16)			.01 (.16)			.00 (.14)					
Gender Stereotypes	.29** *			.24** *			.15** *					
Accept Violence				.17** *			.09** (.03)					
Prejudices against immigrants							.39** *					
University of Victoria, n = 796												
Sex	.09** *	10.0** *%	8.0%	.05 (.05)	12.7* ***%	2.7%	.04 (.05)	17.0* ***%	4.3%			
Religion	.01 (.06)			.01 (.06)			.03 (.06)					
Origin	-.01 (.09)			-.02 (.09)			-.03 (.09)					
Gender Stereotypes	.29** *			.23** *			.17** *					
Accept Violence				.19** *			.14** *					
Prejudices against immigrants							.24** *					
Overall Sample, N = 1,800												
Sex	.02 (.04)	9.1 *** %	8.3%	-.01 (.04)	11.2* ***%	2.1%	.00 (.03)	19.7* ***%	8.5%	.01 (.03)	20.8* ***%	1.1 %
Religion	-.04 (.03)			-.06* (.03)			-.03 (.03)			.05 (.04)		
Origin	-.01 (.08)			-.02 (.08)			-.02 (.08)			-.01 (.07)		
Gender Stereotypes	.30** *			.25** *			.17** *			.16** *		

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Accept Violence	.17** *	.10** *	.12** *
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)
Prejudices against immigrants		.32** *	.32** *
University		(.02)	(.02)
			-
			.14** *
			(.04)

Note: \* =  $p < .05$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ .  $R^2$  and  $\Delta R^2$  is described only if the specific step is significant. Sex (1 = Female; 2 = Male); Religion (1 = Yes; 2 = No); Origin (1 = Yes; 2 = No); University (1 = German; 2 = Canadian)

## Discussion

*“A blunt questionnaire whose questions hit you in the face but at the same time make you think.”* (Anonymous feedback from the German survey)

In following Scotson’s and Elias’s analysis of power dynamics in established-outsider relations,<sup>80</sup> we identify social prejudice of students at the two universities as an expression of social control mechanisms (“praise and blame gossip”). The latter are collectively constructed as a function of an artificial cultural elitism<sup>81</sup> by the established ingroup in order to separate between “we-images” and “they-images” and, in doing so, apply *pars pro toto* stereotypes towards minority groups such as Muslims.

With this theoretical framework in mind, we designed our cross-sectional quantitative study in summer 2012. Our research objective was to examine the prediction of anti-Muslim opinions and attitudes in two undergraduate student populations: one at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, the other at Osnabrück University in the federal state of Lower Saxony. The questionnaire data was collected both in May 2012 and January 2013. At Osnabrück University, the surveys were distributed among 1,004 undergraduate participants who attended ten individual classes in five departments. At the University of Victoria, the questionnaires were administered in 27 separate classes in the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences. Our sample size consisted of 796 undergraduate participants enrolled in both lower- and upper-level classes.

Our German/Canadian findings are part of a larger-scale pilot study titled *“Public Opinions and Attitudes in Post-Secondary Institutions in Germany and Canada”*. To the best of our knowledge, our survey is the first international cross-cultural research project conducted at two representative public institutions of higher education in Canada and Germany.

In order to detect anti-Muslim attitude patterns, a hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the university-specific connection to socio-demographic factors and to the three scales “gender stereotypes”, “violence acceptance against minorities” and “prejudices against immigrants”. With this analytic strategy, we were able to identify the specific predictive weight of the introduced factors in the specific country. Additional testing revealed that the predictions were identical for both the German and the Canadian students.

80 See Elias/Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders*.

81 See Pratto et al., *“Social Dominance Orientation”*, p. 741.

Our findings demonstrate that socio-demographic factors (*Sex*, *Belonging to a religious community* and *Citizenship of the specific country*) are very weak predictors for anti-Muslim attitudes in both the German as in the Canadian sample. *Sex* was just for the Canadian sample a weak predictor on anti-Muslim attitudes, where male students displayed significantly higher rates of anti-Muslim attitudes than did female students. In Germany, no sex differences were identified. Replicating Leibold's and Kühnel's findings in 2005,<sup>82</sup> no direct connection between religiosity and anti-Muslim attitudes could be established for either sample. It is due to this reason that we conclude that hostility towards Islam cannot simply be tagged as a linear function of religiosity. Consistent with the findings of Leonardelli and Brewer (2000)<sup>83</sup>, students of ethnic numerical minority groups do not exhibit greater intergroup discrimination than members of ethnic numerical majority groups. This demonstrates that this relation is far more complex than just a minority-majority issue.

For the German sample, the strongest predictor for anti-Muslim opinions was prejudice against immigrants, followed by gender stereotypes and violence acceptance against minorities. In the Canadian sample, we discovered a high positive correlation between gender role stereotyping and unfavourable opinions about Muslims.

Adding up both survey samples, a total of 21.1% of all students endorsed statements that express a strong bias against Muslim minority groups. Approximately 77% of the respondents partially agreed with the statements listed in our questionnaire, picking the answering choices within the grey area ("disagree somewhat"; "agree somewhat"). Only a small fraction (1.9%) of participants selected "disagreed strongly" in response to questionnaire items that expressed a set of negative attitudes towards Muslims.

At both universities we ascertained similar amounts of prejudice for gender role stereotyping and prejudice against immigrants, but we found considerably higher violence acceptance rates in the Canadian sample. In all samples, students showing higher levels of gender role stereotypes were significantly more likely to express higher levels of anti-Muslim attitudes. Quite ironically, this result could also suggest that those participants who critically commented on the perception of gender inequality in Muslim groups were more likely to hold gender bias themselves.

Moreover, students in Canada and Germany who indicated higher levels of violence acceptance against minorities showed a significantly higher average of anti-Muslim prejudice. A higher average of prejudice against immigrants was also a strong predictor for higher levels of anti-Muslim bias. Summarising all analysis steps, we identified a high prediction for anti-Muslim attitudes for the German sample ( $R^2 = 23.7\%$ ) and a moderate prediction strength for the Canadian sample ( $R^2 = 17.0\%$ ). Therefore, the need for additional prediction factors for the Canadian sample indicates, along with the prediction similarities, the existence of a country's distinctive pattern. These findings confirm that students holding prejudices against minority groups, such as new immigrants, are more likely to feel negatively towards Muslim people, too.

The data at hand is surprising and even unexpected on many levels. To begin with, our cross-cultural analysis of two representative university populations challenges recent

82 See Leibold/Kühnel, „Islamophobie“, p. 105; see Asbrock/Wagner/Christ, „Diskriminierung“, pp. 156-175.

83 See Geoffrey J. Leonardelli/Marilynn B. Brewer, „Minority and Majority Discrimination: When and Why“, in: *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 37 (6/2001), pp. 468-485.



empirical findings which argue that “anti-Muslim prejudice was significantly reduced when the pro-diversity policy [such as in Canada] was high.”<sup>84</sup> Our empirical data suggests that “a more powerful multicultural norm” does not necessarily have a significant impact on students’ negative perceptions of minority Muslim groups in Canada.<sup>85</sup>

Our results also illustrate that violence acceptance and prejudicial thinking cut through all social strata. As such, our study expands on – but also contradicts – the Bielefeld Disintegration Approach (*Disintegrationstheorie*)<sup>86</sup>, which explains “the devaluation and repulsion of weak groups [...] as resulting from a society’s unsatisfactory integration performance.”<sup>87</sup> Our survey-based research findings demonstrate that university students are *as* receptive to anti-Muslim prejudice as socially underprivileged groups. Thus we posit that higher education *per se* is no safeguard against negative stereotyping and prejudice formation.

### Methodological Limitations

For this study, our survey data was limited to only one sample source – the self-selected participants who filled out the questionnaires in class. Ideally, we would have liked to include additional campus survey findings by asking university administrators, faculty members, adjunct instructors and other staff to participate as well. A broader methodological approach is needed to be able to gain a more comprehensive assessment and understanding of the proliferation of ethnic, social and religious stereotypes and prejudices among university populations.

Further limitations occur as a result of our sample sizes. A larger-scale international study including more universities would allow us to replicate our model and test its validity more broadly. The cross-sectional character of this study implies that we can only speculate about the origins and persistence of these prejudices. A mixed methods approach of personal interviews and focus groups may illuminate how attitudes are formed and the way in which prejudices are modelled, learned and reinforced:

[P]rejudices are not personal traits, but social attitudes that must be understood through the context of the person who holds them. As attitudes they are learnable – and unlearnable – even if this is often a long and difficult process in cases where attitudes are deep-seated.<sup>88</sup>

84 Guimond et al., “Diversity Policy”, p. 941. See also John W. Berry/Rudolf Kalin, “Multicultural and Ethnic Attitudes in Canada: An Overview of the 1991 National Survey”, in: Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science 27 (3/1995), pp. 301-320; Jennifer A. Richeson/Richard J. Nussbaum, “The Impact of Multiculturalism versus Color-Blindness on Racial Bias”, in: Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 40 (3/2004), pp. 417-423; Maykel Verkuyten, “Ethnic Group Identification and Group Evaluation among Minority and Majority Groups: Testing the Multiculturalism Hypothesis”, in: Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 88 (1/2005), pp. 121-138.

85 Guimond et al., “Diversity Policy”, p. 952.

86 See Wilhelm Heitmeyer/Reimund Anhut, “Disintegration, Recognition, and Violence: A Theoretical Perspective”, in: New Directions for Youth Development 119 (2008), pp. 25-38.

87 Ibid., p. 25.

88 Beate Küpper/Andreas Zick, “Prejudice and Group Focused Enmity”, Statement on website, The European Wergeland Centre, URL: [http://www.theewc.org/uploads/content/Kuepper\\_Zick\\_statementfinal\\_1.pdf](http://www.theewc.org/uploads/content/Kuepper_Zick_statementfinal_1.pdf) (accessed June 12, 2014). See also “Prejudice InSite”, website by Diane Maluso and her students, URL: <http://faculty.elmira.edu/dmaluso/prejudice/main-frameset.html> (accessed September 15, 2014).

Some of the feedback received together with the surveys might shed further light on what issues and concerns informed the participants' answers. As part of our survey design, we left the last page blank in order for students to freely comment on the nature of the single statements. At the University of Victoria, we received 148 comments (19% of all returns), and at Osnabrück University we received a total of 106 comments (11% of all returns). Many Canadian students lamented the fact that they could not choose a neutral response (such as "unsure" or "no opinion"). They often mentioned "lack of knowledge" as the reason for why they felt uncomfortable committing to an answer. Many Canadian students also felt offended by the generalisations and criticised the fact that the survey perpetuated stereotypes. Another segment of students raised concerns that participants would be unlikely to provide politically incorrect answers. The German students' comments largely echoed the Canadian feedback regarding the first three points of contention (i.e. neutral response, lack of knowledge, generalisations), but differed on the concern for "political correctness": Although many students noted that the survey questions were quite "in-your-face", only two students specifically mentioned this factor in the German questionnaires.

These student answers also highlight that distinct cultural sensitivities in Canada and Germany might pose transnational challenges for future comparative survey designs. Yet, comparing distinctly different cultural sensitivities is also immensely productive for us as researchers; it allows us to analyse our own ethnocentric assumptions and prejudices through a cross-comparative lens. Despite all indicated similarities between the two samples, the differences in the country model's prediction strength lead us to the need for broader international comparisons on anti-Muslim attitudes, which are able to reveal the specific patterns of prejudice prediction. To accomplish this objective, it would be necessary to survey more than one university per country and, of course, far more than two countries.

On the whole, we were quite astonished to learn how many survey participants opted to (partially) agree with anti-Muslim opinions and other power related attitudes, even though some of these students indicated a complete lack of knowledge about "Muslims"; thus reflecting what Halm has observed for Germany:

It is worth noting at this point that, for the most part, the widespread negative connotations of Islam are not based on experience with Muslims in Germany but are "imported" from the international environment and derived from reports on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and terrorism in the Muslim world.<sup>89</sup>

From our point of view, the overwhelming majority of our sampled students appear to play the "othering card" and exclude Muslims from the collective "we." Empirically based we conclude that ethnicity-based myths and prejudicial behaviour are, even in highly educated groups and enlightened institutions, all too prevalent.

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89 Halm, *"The Current Discourse on Islam in Germany"*, p. 466.