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**A NATION IN FLUX: MIGRATION, ISLAM AND THE REDEFINITION OF  
GERMAN NATIONAL IDENTITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Germany, being the Western nation with the largest Muslim population in Europe - estimated at approximately 5.3 to 5.6 million people based on 2021 data from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) - has implemented highly restrictive and exclusive government policies toward Muslim immigrants. As a result, Islamophobia cases frequently grab headlines in German media, closely linked to the breakdown of multicultural policies that have fostered a negative portrayal of Islam. These cases often serve as manifestations of societal tensions and prejudices, exacerbating the perception of Muslims as the 'other' within German society. Based on descriptive research that depicts ongoing phenomena and aims to uncover the roots of discrimination in Germany, the study results indicate that through a deeper historical examination, Germany indeed has significant interactions with the Muslim world despite not having colonies. Multiculturalism in Germany, contrasting with its history, is believed to have emerged after World War II. A labor shortage prompted a substantial influx of immigrants, primarily from Africa, seeking work opportunities. Many arrived with their families, belonging to African ethnic groups and practicing Islam, contributing to the diverse fabric of Germany. This immigration-induced diversity played a pivotal role in shaping Germany into a multicultural society. As the immigrant populace continued to grow, its presence exerted influences on societal, political, and cultural landscapes. Social disparities between locals and immigrants sparked tensions, culminating in conflicts within shared living spaces and resulting in discriminatory and racist behaviors.*

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**ABSTRACT**

*Jerman, sebagai negara Barat dengan jumlah populasi Muslim terbesar di Eropa - diperkirakan sekitar 5,3 hingga 5,6 juta orang berdasarkan data tahun 2021 dari Kantor Federal untuk Migrasi dan Pengungsi (BAMF) - telah menerapkan kebijakan pemerintah yang sangat restriktif dan eksklusif terhadap imigran Muslim. Sebagai hasilnya, kasus Islamophobia sering menjadi sorotan utama di media Jerman, yang erat kaitannya dengan keruntuhan kebijakan multikultural yang telah membentuk representasi negatif terhadap Islam. Kasus-kasus ini seringkali menjadi manifestasi dari ketegangan dan prasangka-prasangka dalam masyarakat, memperburuk persepsi terhadap Muslim sebagai 'orang asing' dalam masyarakat Jerman. Berdasarkan penelitian deskriptif yang menggambarkan fenomena yang terjadi dan untuk*

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*mengetahui akar diskriminasi di Jerman, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa melalui tinjauan sejarah yang lebih mendalam, Jerman sebenarnya memiliki interaksi yang cukup signifikan dengan Dunia Muslim meskipun tidak memiliki jajahan. Hal ini membuat posisi Jerman sangat unik dibandingkan dengan bangsa Eropa lain yang memiliki sejarah kolonial. Multikulturalisme di Jerman diyakini mulai berkembang di era pasca-Perang Dunia II. Kehadiran imigran (terutama dari Afrika) ke Jerman karena kekurangan tenaga kerja, banyak di antaranya membawa keluarga dan menetap di sana. Sebagian berasal dari suku bangsa Afrika dan memeluk Islam. Keragaman yang dihasilkan oleh imigrasi telah mengubah Jerman menjadi negara multikultural. Dengan terus meningkatnya jumlah imigran, keberadaan mereka mempengaruhi bidang sosial, politik, dan budaya. Ketidaksetaraan sosial antara masyarakat lokal dan imigran menciptakan ketegangan sosial yang berujung pada konflik dalam kehidupan bersama, terutama terkait lokasi tempat tinggal imigran, serta terjadinya perilaku diskriminatif dan rasisme.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Germany emerged as a union between the former West Germany (Federal Republic of Germany) and the former East Germany (German Democratic Republic), merging on October 3, 1990. It operates as a federal state comprising 16 states, each enjoying comprehensive autonomy except in matters of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Finance, which are governed by the Federal Government/Central Government. The German Parliament decreed the reinstatement of Berlin as the capital of Germany, leading to the relocation of the capital from Bonn to Berlin by the end of 1999.<sup>1</sup>

Following the Crusades, Germany embraced religious tolerance. It was during this era that European nations gained a deeper familiarity with Islam, nurturing the ongoing relationship between Germany and Islam. In 1739, the establishment of a mosque in Potsdam by Frederick William I signaled the initial acceptance of Islam within Germany. At present, Germany has legislation concerning religious freedom encapsulated in the Grundgesetz (German Basic Law), Article 4, Section 1, affirming, “Die Freiheit des Glaubens, des Gewissens und die Freiheit des religiösen und weltanschaulichen Bekenntnisses sind unverletzlich” (The freedom of belief, conscience, and the freedom of religious and philosophical creed are inviolable). This statement

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<sup>1</sup> Ningsih, A., S., (2016). *Sebab-Sebab Munculnya Diskriminasi Terhadap Islam Di Jerman*, Yogyakarta: Fak. Sosial dan Politik, Universitas Muhammadiyah.

underscores the German government's endorsement of the sanctity of religious freedom, an ideal that should be upheld and honored.<sup>2</sup>

Wildan's findings, based on YouGov's 2022 research, demonstrate that while 30% of Germans identify as religious, 35% express no religious affiliation. Further insights from the World Population Review in 2022 highlight Christianity as the dominant faith in Germany, encompassing both Protestants at 29.9% and Catholics at 29.8%. Meanwhile, a minority practices Islam, constituting 5.3-5.6 million Muslims with immigrant backgrounds in Germany (6.4-6.7% of the 83.1 million population), alongside an undisclosed number of non-immigrant Muslims. There are also followers of Buddhism and Judaism within this demographic.<sup>3</sup>

According to projections from the Pew Research Center, the current population of 5 million Muslims in Germany (6.1%) is expected to rise, reaching around 5,545,000 (7.1%) by 2030. These statistics exclude ongoing immigrant arrivals, as Germany maintains its status as the primary destination for immigrants. Concurrently, global population statistics suggest a continued decline in the German population due to a decreasing birth rate compared to mortality rates. The average birth rate in Germany spans from 8.7 to 9.8 births per thousand individuals, while the mortality rate ranges between 11.6 to 15.8 deaths per thousand individuals. The influx of immigrants to Germany is anticipated to persist until 2050.

The religious environment in this nation offers considerable freedom, granting each inhabitant the liberty to define and select their beliefs. Nonetheless, most residents perceive religion as a mere ritual. It's commonplace for individuals in Germany to alter their beliefs easily. While converting to Protestantism or Catholicism is generally accepted when changing religions, transitioning to Islam or Judaism presents more challenges. This is due to the minority status of Islam and Judaism among the population in Germany. This disparity lies at the heart of the nation's religious landscape and persists as a prominent issue within the country.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Zarkasyi, H., F. (2011). *Islam HAM dan Kebebasan Beragama*. Jakarta: INSISTS.

<sup>3</sup> Wildan, M. (2019). Perkembangan Islam di tengah Fenomena Islamofobia di Jerman. *Temali: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial*, 2(2), 244-271.

<sup>4</sup> Wildan, M. (2019). Perkembangan Islam di tengah Fenomena Islamofobia di Jerman. *Temali: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial*, 2(2), 244-271.

In Germany, there's a noticeable preference for the Protestant religion over others, particularly Islam. An illustration of this preference is seen in a Catholic Church in Frankfurt, repurposed as a revered venue for presenting the Nobel Peace Prize to accomplished figures. Among Nobel laureates from 1950 to 2012, comprising individuals like Max Tau and Liao Yiwu, 80% belonged to the Protestant Christian community, with the remaining 20% being Jewish. Notably, there's no recorded instance of individuals from Catholic or other faiths receiving this esteemed recognition. This trend suggests that the emergence of European capitalism was influenced by the Protestant work ethic, leading to their acquisition of strategic roles.<sup>5</sup>

Ningsih outlines the escalating discriminatory tendencies within German society directed at minority Muslim citizens. This results in differing rights acquired by Muslim individuals in Germany compared to those of other religious groups.<sup>6</sup> Take, for instance, Turkish immigrants, predominantly adhering to the Muslim faith and comprising the largest Muslim populace in Germany; they encounter discrimination on multiple levels. Discrimination has surfaced across diverse sectors in Germany, particularly within economic spheres, impacting both employment and educational prospects for the Turkish minority- a pivotal aspect in job acquisition.

Some Turkish individuals who have successfully obtained German citizenship have indeed been able to advance towards better political and economic positions. However, as a group, the Turkish minority still doesn't benefit economically and continues to be employed in low-wage sectors. Social and cultural discrimination against the Turkish minority generally occurs in the form of cultural restrictions, such as informal social discrimination, as well as grievances concerning Islamic religious practices.<sup>7</sup>

The emergence of the Turkish ethnic group in Germany traces back to immigration, leading to differential treatment compared to native Germans. This discriminatory behavior

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<sup>5</sup> Supradi, B. (2019). Potret Pendidikan Islam Di Jerman. *Hikmah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 8(1), 1-22.

<sup>6</sup> Ningsih, A., S., (2016). Sebab-Sebab Munculnya Diskriminasi Terhadap Islam Di Jerman. *Skripsi*. Yogyakarta: Fak. Sosial dan Politik, Universitas Muhammadiyah.

<sup>7</sup> Setiadi, I., J., & Ozi. (2019). Politik identitas Muslim di Jerman dan Perancis. *POLITEA: Jurnal Politik Islam*, 2(2), 135-146.

manifests in bureaucratic procedures that sideline this community. Moreover, Turkish ethnicity encounters challenges in obtaining citizenship within the political realm. The barriers to citizenship, alongside opposition from Germany's far-right, contribute to the political marginalization of the Turkish ethnic group. In 1997, The Runnymede Trust defined anti-Islam as "fear or hatred of Islam and thus, a dislike or fear of all Muslims," highlighting its connection to discriminatory actions that exclude Muslims from the country's economy, social spheres, and communal life.<sup>8</sup>

From the provided context, a range of pivotal inquiries arises in this research context. These include the historical trajectory of Islam's introduction into Germany, the evolution of Islam within the country, and the significant role played by Muslim communities in shaping the dynamics of German society.

### **ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

Theory provides the foundation for establishing analytical units in research and is crucial for examining and comprehending data gathered during the study. Thus, to clarify the involvement of the Muslim community in the dynamics of German society, various theories are utilized by the author. The discussion surrounding the Muslim community's role in Germany inherently connects to the arrival of Islam in the country. Islam's introduction to Germany happened in stages through multiple migration waves. Migration is defined as the relocation of people aiming to settle from one location to another across political or national borders.

Migration involves people relocating from one place to another, crossing administrative borders with the intention of settling. The study of migration encompasses two key dimensions: the regional and temporal aspects. In terms of the regional dimension, it broadly includes two categories: international migration and internal movement within a country, such as between provinces, cities, or districts. As for the temporal dimension, there isn't a specific timeframe defining someone as a migrant. As per Mantra's perspective, migration represents the geographic mobility of a population, encompassing all movements that traverse specific territorial boundaries within a given period.

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<sup>8</sup> Islamy, P. S., & Andriyani, L. (2021). Islamophobia Di Jerman Dan Prancis. Independen: *Jurnal Politik Indonesia dan Global*, 2(2), 36-45.

A portion of immigrants who moved to Germany decided to go back to their home countries, while others preferred to establish roots in Germany. Among these settled immigrants arose a new group—the Muslim community coexisting with non-Muslim German inhabitants. A community represents a social cluster consisting of diverse entities sharing an environment, usually united by shared interests and habitats. In human terms, individuals in a community might share comparable aims, beliefs, resources, preferences, needs, risks, and various other circumstances. In essence, a community is an assembly of individuals living within a particular environment, bonded by mutual interests.

Hence, a community represents a small part of a container known as an organization. It can be categorized that a community isn't far different from an organization where within it lies the freedom and human rights in social life to associate, gather, form groups, and express opinions. Studying communities is inseparable from examining organizations since the collection within a community has shared objectives they seek to achieve together, not merely a gathering of people living together.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, examining the German Muslim community intertwines with the study of the coordinating organizations within Germany's communities. The nation hosts diverse and growing communities, often rooted in their countries of origin and the areas they settle in. These Muslim communities have notably fostered Islam's growth within the secular dynamics of German society. Their pivotal role in facilitating Islam's development amid multifaceted challenges remains undeniable. Thus, the author intends to explore and comprehend the essence of this role.

The Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia defines "peran" (role) as a collection of behaviors an individual is anticipated to display within their societal role, depicting a dynamic aspect of their stance. Fulfilling rights and responsibilities in alignment with their position signifies playing a role. Thus, a role comprises actions or behaviors that align with one's rights and obligations, eagerly awaited by many. An individual's or group's role plays a pivotal part in framing their position as the subject or participant in a historical occurrence.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Atthariq, M. (2019). *Pengkaryaan Komunitas Dakwah Jalanan dalam Film Dokumenter Bidang Penyutradaraan. Skripsi*. Bandung: Universitas Pasundan.

<sup>10</sup> Soerjono, S. (2012). *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers.

## METHODS

This study examines the qualitative research methodology, employing deductive analysis within its paradigm. The chosen approach entails a meticulous exploration of materials, aligning with the qualitative method's objective of understanding specific conditions, events, groups, or social interactions. This investigative process facilitates a gradual comprehension of social phenomena, involving activities such as differentiation, comparison, reproduction, cataloging, and classification of research subjects. Engaging in such research requires researchers to immerse themselves in natural settings, albeit within a contextual framework.

This research is primarily supported by literature review techniques in data collection related to the research title, making the data exploration library-based. Therefore, data collection will be carried out through a literature review such as library materials, magazines, newspapers, journals, and other data sources. To support the data, information is gathered from available internet resources and other sources believed to still be relevant to the issues being examined.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Islam's Arrival in Germany's Early Days*

Integral to Europe, the Islamic presence in Germany holds a rich historical narrative. The inception of German Muslims can be linked to the intimate ties between Germany and the Ottoman Turks, encompassing times of both conflict and harmony. Preceding this, subsequent to the Ottoman Turks' second siege of Vienna in 1683 and their subsequent loss, numerous Muslims were captured and relocated to the regions of the Kingdom of Prussia (present-day Germany). From that point forward, the Muslim community in Germany has endured, standing the test of time through subsequent centuries.<sup>11</sup>

Up until the 17th century, concerns about the "Turkish threat" and potential conflicts with Turkey influenced perceptions of interactions involving Muslims. It wasn't until approximately 1701 that changes started to emerge. During this period, Sultan Mustafa II extended congratulations to Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia following his coronation. This

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<sup>11</sup> Setiadi, I., J., & Ozi. (2019). Politik identitas Muslim di Jerman dan Perancis. *POLITEA: Jurnal Politik Islam*, 2(2), 135-146.

gesture contributed to a relatively more transparent diplomatic rapport between the two nations. By around 1731, Prussian leaders such as Friedrich Wilhelm I regularly enlisted Muslim soldiers, and the Duke of Courland recruited 20 Turkish individuals for Wilhelm.<sup>12</sup>

To honor the presence of Turkish Muslim soldiers, King Friedrich Wilhelm I, in 1732, transformed a meeting space adjacent to the garrison church in Potsdam into a mosque within the Brandenburg Bundesland, intending it to be their place of worship.<sup>13</sup> This pivotal event signifies the inception of Islam's history in Germany. The Prussian King's response to the Muslim community was empathetic, reflecting a notable regard for the Islamic faith. Under Frederick II's rule in 1745, a unit of Muslim soldiers, named the "Muslim Riders," consisting of 1,000 individuals from Bosnia, Albania, and the Tatar regions, was established within the Prussian army.

Concurrently, immigration from various Islamic countries in the Balkan region persisted, resulting in a continuous rise in their numbers. In 1798, the Third Ambassador, Ali Aziz Effendi, passed away in Berlin. King Friedrich Wilhelm III, the Prussian ruler at that time, established a burial ground in Tempelhof Berlin as a tribute to him. Since then, this location has served as a Muslim cemetery in Germany. Subsequently, in the 1980s, the Masjid Sehitlik Mosque was constructed adjacent to it. By the year 1900, there were over 10,000 Muslims in Germany, the majority of whom originated from the Balkans and Turkey.

During the early 20th century, the bond between Germany and the Ottoman Empire strengthened. Enver Pasha, the Minister of War for the Ottoman Empire, forged a partnership with Germany in 1912, dispatching several German diplomats and officers to provide military training for the Turkish army. Subsequent to the culmination of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), Turkey entered World War I (1914-1918) as an ally of Germany. Following Germany's defeat in the war, numerous Ottoman Turks became prisoners of war. Instead of repatriating to Turkey, they opted to establish residence in Germany, particularly in Berlin.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Setiawan, T. (2002). *Denyut Islam di Eropa*. Jakarta: Republik.

<sup>13</sup> Wildan, M. (2019). Perkembangan Islam di tengah Fenomena Islamofobia di Jerman. *Temali: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial*, 2(2), 244-271.

<sup>14</sup> Wildan, M. (2019). Perkembangan Islam di tengah Fenomena Islamofobia di Jerman. *Temali: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial*, 2(2), 244-271.

The expansion of the Muslim population in Germany marked a significant progression. Even amid World War I, the German government partnered with the Turkish Embassy in Berlin to facilitate mosques and religious leaders for incarcerated Muslim individuals. In 1922, Muslims hailing from 41 nations established the “Islamische Gemeinde Berlin,” inaugurating a mosque in the city the same year (later recognized as “Deutsch-Moslemische Gesellschaft” from 1930 onward).<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, the mosque’s operations were brief and eventually ceased.

Following the war, a modest Muslim enclave, composed of intellectuals and students, persisted in Berlin. A second mosque, the Ahmadiyah Mosque, was erected in Berlin specifically for this community, formally opened in 1924. On October 31, 1932, an offshoot of the World Muslim Congress emerged, striving to unite German Muslims, but faded from prominence after 1945.<sup>16</sup> Since then, the Islamic community has steadily evolved, engaging in educational initiatives and organizational endeavors.

The Muslim community’s existence during Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime persisted due to Islam’s significant contribution to Germany’s development. Despite the rise of Nazism, Muslims were not specifically targeted. Adolf Hitler consistently expressed his belief that Islam’s perceived gentler nature made it more fitting compared to Christianity for the German race. The Nazis also enlisted Muslim volunteers into various units of the German armed forces, including several divisions of the Waffen-SS and other World War II groups. However, Germany’s defeat in the war resulted in the country’s economic devastation.

The requirement for overseas labor to support post-World War II restructuring efforts and boost economic growth resulted in immigration to European nations like Germany.<sup>17</sup> By the 1950s, West Germany’s economy was experiencing rapid expansion, leading to a surge in labor demand. However, some regions faced difficulties in sourcing labor. To address this scarcity, the Federal Republic of Germany initiated the recruitment of foreign “guest workers”

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<sup>15</sup> Al-Hamarneh, A & Thielman, J. (2008). *Islam and Muslim in Germany*. Netherlands: Leiden University.

<sup>16</sup> Martin, P., L. (1981). Germany’s Guestworkers. *Challenge*, 24(3), 34-42.

<sup>17</sup> Martin, P., L. (1981). Germany’s Guestworkers. *Challenge*, 24(3), 34-42.

known as Gastarbeit. The migration of these guest workers was facilitated through bilateral agreements established with various sending countries.<sup>18</sup>

West Germany officially began recruiting workers from Turkey in 1961, marking the start of the first wave of Muslim immigration to the country. Recruitment contracts were later signed with other Muslim-populated countries such as Morocco (1963), Tunisia (1965), and Yugoslavia (1968). However, Turkish immigrants remain the largest group of Muslim immigrants so far and continue to be the most significant Muslim community in Germany even today.<sup>19</sup> The initial influx involved around 7,000 Turkish laborers entering Germany, mostly single men aged between 20 and 35, arriving independently and adept at meeting local production needs. From 1963 to 1966, roughly 180,000 Turkish workers migrated to West Germany, while some also moved to Belgium, the Netherlands, and Austria.<sup>20</sup>

The majority of immigrants in Germany were unskilled laborers earning meager wages for industrial tasks. During that period, West Germany implemented a rotational scheme for these “guest workers,” allowing individuals to stay for a defined period before being replaced by new arrivals. However, Germany itself declined to bring in fresh workers, stating that many employers were hesitant to retrain new hires, opting instead to retain existing workers to cut costs. Due to the Middle East oil crisis, the recruitment of foreign labor was halted in November 1973. Since then, migration has been predominantly comprised of workers’ family members. The number of immigrants in Germany rose significantly, including women and children, who began forming the societal framework and altering relationships with social and public authorities, including schools.

Family reunification led to 1 million Turkish residents in Germany, with only 600,000 in employment. The majority of the Muslim community in Germany settled in major industrial

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<sup>18</sup> Nordbruch, G. (2012). *Germany: Migration, Islam and National Identity*. University of Southern Denmark: Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

<sup>19</sup> Nordbruch, G. (2012). *Germany: Migration, Islam and National Identity*. University of Southern Denmark: Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

<sup>20</sup> Wildan, M. (2019). Perkembangan Islam di tengah Fenomena Islamofobia di Jerman. *Temali: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial*, 2(2), 244-271.

cities such as Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Munich, and Hamburg.<sup>21</sup> The next wave of Muslim migration to Germany occurred from conflict zones in the Middle East and Africa between 2010 and 2016. The Arab Spring and ISIS led to prolonged conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, causing numerous migrants and asylum seekers to flock to developed countries in Europe. While some victims of conflict in the Middle East and Africa sought immigration and political asylum in prosperous Middle Eastern countries, many ended up in Europe.

Germany became a primary destination for immigrants due to its economic stability, high standard of living, and a continued display of high moral standards and humanitarian values towards immigrants and asylum seekers.<sup>22</sup> Angela Merkel's implementation of the Open-Door policy in August 2015 resulted in the admission of over 1 million predominantly Muslim immigrants into Germany. However, this move sparked protests from other European Union nations in the Balkans like Serbia, Slovenia, and Hungary. They contended that Germany's decision to welcome refugees from the Middle East created challenges for Balkan countries dealing with refugees passing through the region.

As a result, Hungary and Serbia closed their borders, preventing refugees from reaching Germany. However, Germany maintained its policy, continuing to accept refugees.<sup>23</sup> Despite the increasing population of Muslim immigrants in Germany, Muslim Europeans, particularly within the country, frequently experience minority status, marginalization, and are perceived as distinct from Western social and cultural norms. This perception arises because the majority of European Muslims come from non-European countries such as Turkey, Syria, among others, resulting in significant cultural differences with European society.

### ***The Development of Islam in Germany***

Islamic representation in Germany showcases increased uniformity within its religious sects. Sunnis occupy 74% of this representation, while 8% align with Alevism and 4% identify

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<sup>21</sup> Mühe, N. (2007). *Muslim in EU: Cities Report; Preliminary Research Report and Literatur Survey*. Germany: Open Society Institute.

<sup>22</sup> Zairani. (2016). Motivasi Jerman Menerima Pengungsi Asal Timur Tengah Tahun 2015. *Jurnal Ilmu Hubungan Internasional Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik*, 3(2), 1-15.

<sup>23</sup> Avissa, T. P. (2017). Kebijakan Jerman terhadap Pengungsi Eropa pada Tahun 2015-2016. *Skripsi*. Yogyakarta: Fak. Ushuluddin dan Filsafat, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

as Shia. Each of the Ahmadiyya and other sects contributes one percent. Overall, the Muslim community in Germany is characterized by substantial racial and sectarian diversity. Yet, despite these differences, they harmoniously coexist. For instance, in Neukölln, previously seen as a socially problematic area in Berlin, it has evolved into a symbol of tolerance, especially for Muslims. Here, Sunni, Shia, and Ahmadiyya communities practically live in close proximity.<sup>24</sup>

Based on the 2020 Study on Muslim Life in Germany presented during the German Islam Conference, roughly 82% of migrants who are Muslims in Germany are devout or hold religious beliefs. Yet, daily prayers are observed by only around 40% of German Muslims, while 25% do not pray at all, and merely 24% actively attend mosques. Furthermore, the research revealed that approximately 70% of Muslim women and girls in Germany opt not to wear a headscarf.

The development of Islam in Germany is closely tied to Islamic organizations that have supported and contributed to the rapid growth and wider acceptance of Islam in the country. Most Islamic organizations in Germany are built along the ethnic lines of their people, with Turkish Muslim organizations being the most prominent. Some of these organizations include.<sup>25</sup>

The Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren (VIKZ) translates to the “Association of Islamic Cultural Centers.” Established in 1973, VIKZ stands as the oldest religious group in Germany. Functioning as a Sufi organization, it boasts over 100,000 members and provides courses on Imam training, Quranic studies, and Sharia teachings. VIKZ encompasses 300 branches and 160-250 places of worship. With roots tied closely to the Sufi movement of Suleymani (1888-1959), it gained prominence during the 1920s and 1930s. Although not directly associated with any political parties or specific Islamic movements and administrations, numerous mosques operating under VIKZ have actively engaged in “Open Mosque Day” across different cities.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Pfündel, K., et al. (2021). *Muslimisches Leben in Deutschland 2020 - Studie im Auftrag der Deutschen Islam Konferenz. Forschungsbericht 38 des Forschungszentrums des Bundesamtes*. Nürnberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge.

<sup>25</sup> Wildan, M. (2019). Perkembangan Islam di tengah Fenomena Islamofobia di Jerman. *Temali: Jurnal Pembangunan Sosial*, 2(2), 244-271.

<sup>26</sup> International Crisis Group. (2007). Islam and Identity in Germany. *Europe Report*, no. 181

The Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Türk-İslam Birliği - DITIB) stands as the largest representative body of Turkish Muslims in Germany. Beyond Germany, this organization extends its presence to various European nations housing Turkish Muslim communities. Originating in Berlin in 1984, the German segment of DITIB saw significant growth within two years, attracting over 250 Islamic organizations from the Turkish Muslim community by 1986. Currently, DITIB oversees more than 300 Islamic entities and 800-900 places of worship, even engaging in providing Islamic education within public educational institutions. Among its diverse roles, DITIB handles visa management, grants permit for imams, facilitates mosque establishments, offers religious education, and conducts German language training.

The Milli Görüş Islamic Community (IGMG), founded in 1985 as a rival to DITIB, maintains strong connections with Turkish Islamist political parties. Boasting approximately 26,500 members and 400-600 places of worship, the organization sets up Quranic schools, runs mosques, and facilitates pilgrimages. Overall, the leaders and members of IGMG are well-assimilated into German society; they speak German and are familiar with their rights, yet they endeavor to construct an Islamic community. In Europe, the group operates 14 branches and aims to establish an Islamic State of Turkey, imparting anti-Western Islamist ideologies to younger generations.

The Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland (Central Council of Muslims in Germany, ZMD) was established in 1994 as a German Islamic organization. Under the leadership of Ayyup Axel Kohler, its members are distributed across eight German states. Funded by the Muslim League of Saudi Arabia and having affiliations with the Muslim Brotherhood, it oversees around 400 places of worship and coordinates 18 religious' organizations, boasting a membership ranging from 12,000 to 20,000. The composition of ZMD reflects the diverse Muslim population in Germany. Recognized as one of the most prominent Muslim organizations in the country, ZMD recently released a charter aimed at regulating the relationship between Islam and the state, encompassing full acknowledgment of the constitution.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> International Crisis Group. (2007). Islam and Identity in Germany. *Europe Report*, no. 181

As part of social integration initiatives, the German government introduced the teaching of Islamic education in Muslim schools. Originally absent from the offerings of the government or the state in Germany's public schools, Islamic classes emerged in mosques, later recognized as Quran Schools around the 1980s. Following this, German public schools gradually began accommodating Islamic studies. Primarily, this initiative aimed to assist Turkish Muslim children in preparing for their potential return to Turkey.

As a result, the instruction was conducted in Turkish, following curricula sourced from Turkey, and educators were purposely imported from Turkey. Ultimately, the teaching of Islam was determined to not comply with the provisions of Article 7.3 of the German Constitution since it lacked involvement from the state or the German government in developing the curriculum or educational materials. Essentially, these initiatives weren't under state control in teaching Islam.

The teaching method was no longer deemed crucial, given that most children of Turkish descent hadn't returned to Turkey. This was particularly significant as the classes were conducted in Turkish, inaccessible to Muslim students from non-Turkish backgrounds. Subsequently, from 2006 onwards, a fresh approach to the Islamic curriculum was introduced in German public schools. The application of this curriculum differs across the various federal states of Germany.

Islamic education has been incorporated not only within the educational system but also within academia through the creation of Departments of Islamic Theology in multiple German universities. Academic learning is seen as a potential avenue to tackle the diversity within Muslim communities and engage with their involvement in the country's political discussions. The German government recently unveiled intentions to institute specialized centers for Islamic studies, aiming to equip Muslim leaders and religious educators with better adaptation skills to Western society.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Dynamics of Muslims in Germany***

Since the attacks on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent declaration of a "global war on terror" by the United States, the perception of Muslims as terrorists, ancient warriors,

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<sup>28</sup> Supradi, B. (2019). Potret Pendidikan Islam Di Jerman. *Hikmah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 8(1), 1-22.

or adherents of an antiquated faith has seeped into Germany's national public discourse. Research indicates that 21.4 percent of Germans advocate for halting "Muslim immigration to Germany." When questioned about the compatibility of "Muslim culture with our Western world," three-quarters of respondents expressed a negative view. Islam and the identity of being Muslim are often seen as starkly different from being German. Post-9/11, the term "Muslims" was largely associated with a security threat, leading to a sense of alienation.

A recent study carried out by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, associated with the Social Democratic Party and titled "Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report," examined anti-democratic tendencies across eight European nations. It concluded that "Europeans generally share a common stance in rejecting Muslims and Islam. The most prevalent anti-Muslim sentiments were notably observed in Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Poland, followed by France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. Almost half of Germans voiced the opinion that the country hosts an excessive number of Muslims, despite comprising only 5 percent of the population. They perceive this minority as overly demanding and regard their religion as intolerant."<sup>29</sup>

The arrival of migrants from conflict-stricken Middle Eastern nations to Germany in 2015 heightened existing sentiments towards migrants within the country. A prevalent xenophobia exists against immigrants in German society, stemming from fears among Germans of being economically overshadowed by incoming migrants. This sentiment has also intertwined with Islamophobia, given that a significant number of migrants' hail from Islamic nations embroiled in conflict, like Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and others.

Syria stands as the largest immigrant group in Germany, being the native land of ISIS, an extremist Sunni militant faction primarily originating from Iraq and Syria. Considering Syria's direct association with ISIS, it's understandable that there's widespread reluctance to welcome newcomers from Syria. The potential infiltration of ISIS among Syrian migrants poses

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<sup>29</sup> Foroutan, N. (2013). *Identity and (Muslim) Integration in Germany*. Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute.

a genuine concern, providing an easy gateway for the group to enter the country under the guise of migrants.<sup>30</sup>

Occasional animosity toward Muslims manifests in violent or aggressive actions. Mosques have been targeted in multiple attacks, people seen as Muslim have encountered threats, and daily hate mail plagues Muslim organizations. Hence, individuals from Muslim backgrounds face reduced job prospects on social and economic fronts; if their names hint at non-German origins, securing job interviews becomes challenging. Finding housing is also tougher for them due to similar biases, and students with migrant backgrounds often miss out on teachers' endorsements for higher educational pursuits.<sup>31</sup>

From this fear emerged the anti-Islam movement, Pegida or Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes, a European patriotic group opposing the Islamization of the West. Pegida's masses organized a series of protests to spread anti-asylum and anti-Islam sentiments. Pegida stands as a right-wing movement in Europe, acting as a conduit for radical nationalist groups against the desires and concerns of Islamic migrants arriving in Germany. By the end of 2015, the German government had received as many as one million asylum seekers.<sup>32</sup>

Pegida has attracted apprehensive segments of German society worried about Islam's influence on the community. Those supporting Pegida typically object to the German government's decision to welcome immigrants. The Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, a right-wing group opposing the Euro and advocating strict immigration policies, also aligns itself with Pegida. Alexander Gauland, AfD's leader, stands as a political ally of Pegida. Pegida also conducts smaller protests in various cities.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ningsih, A., S., (2016). Sebab-Sebab Munculnya Diskriminasi Terhadap Islam Di Jerman. Yogyakarta: Fak. Sosial dan Politik, Universitas Muhammadiyah.

<sup>31</sup> Foroutan, N. (2013). *Identity and (Muslim) Integration in Germany*. Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute.

<sup>32</sup> Ningrum, A., A., S., et al. (2016). Eksistensi Kelompok Pegida Serta Propaganda Anti-Pencari Suaka Dan Islamofobia Di Jerman. *Journal of International Relations*, 2(4), 1-9.

<sup>33</sup> Ningsih, A., S., (2016). Sebab-Sebab Munculnya Diskriminasi Terhadap Islam Di Jerman. *Skripsi*. Yogyakarta: Fak. Sosial dan Politik, Universitas Muhammadiyah.

Pegida's opposition targets Germany's immigration and asylum strategies, which have recently provided shelter to numerous refugees from conflict zones in the Middle East. Furthermore, the actions of radical Islamic groups establishing Sharia courts and Islamic policing in several German cities have heightened anti-Islam sentiments among Pegida's supporters. Criticism from German politicians and religious leaders has been directed at Pegida's anti-Islam initiatives. Through its activities, Pegida has encouraged racism, religious bias, and the nurturing of xenophobia within German society.

Based on the latest government data in Germany, there were 950 anti-Muslim attacks and incidents targeting mosques in Germany in 2017. The German Ministry of the Interior stated in a parliamentary response that at least 33 Muslim citizens were injured in these attacks, including assaults on Muslim women wearing headscarves and attacks on mosques and other Muslim institutions. The ministry noted that at least 60 of last year's attacks targeted mosques and other Muslim institutions. In most incidents, the perpetrators were right-wing extremists.

Merkel emphasized that newly arrived migrants and refugees must understand the values of modern liberal Germany, such as tolerance, openness, religious freedom, and freedom of expression. She urged German citizens to maintain an open mind regarding the immigration crisis. "We know very little about Syria, Iraq, or African countries. We should see this as an opportunity to learn more," said Merkel. Immigration and security are major issues in Germany at present.<sup>34</sup>

In response, German Muslims are striving to counteract the rising anti-Islam movement and Islamophobic influences in Germany. Various forms of reactions have emerged against those identifying with the anti-Islam movement, including Muslims in Germany, Islamic communities or organizations, and social movements in Germany. They employ various efforts as tools to confront and resist the anti-Islam movement, which has negatively impacted the development of Islam in Germany. Efforts undertaken by German Muslims to address the anti-Islam movement include the Muslim Women's Movement in Germany, Official Dialogue

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<sup>34</sup> Welas, I., R. (2019). Dampak Propaganda PEDIGA atas Refugee Terhadap Keamanan dan Kestabilan Jerman. *Journal of International Relations*, 5(4), 818-825.

Forums Among Muslims, Demonstrations Against the Anti-Islam Pegida Movement, and Hosting Islamic Conferences.

The Muslim Women's Movement in Germany. As per research from the Karlsruhe University of Education in Germany, young Muslims in the country actively participate in societal activities. The findings suggest that 70% of these active participants are women. The primary initiative taken by the Islamic community to counter the anti-Islam movement in Germany is through the Muslim Women's Movement in the country. Led by women dedicated to confronting Islamophobia and the increasing anti-Islam sentiments in Germany, this movement was established in 2011 and welcomes all Muslim women in the country. They coordinate diverse agendas aimed at introducing Islam and endeavoring to portray it as a religion centered on peace, in contrast to the perceptions held by Islamophobes.

In 2012, the community in Witten, among Germany's largest Muslim-populated cities, convened for diverse endeavors promoting Islam. These initiatives notably involved fashion campaigns, selling pre-owned clothing carrying messages advocating peace. T-shirts were adorned with phrases like "terrorist has no religion" or "hijab my right, my choice, my life." Similar undertakings took place in Berlin, where migrants actively participated in integration programs alongside official German institutions. These programs encompassed language classes and educational facilities, spanning from early childhood education to elementary schools. For instance, language centers such as VHS (Volkhochschulen) provided tailored courses for immigrant parents—both mothers and fathers—seeking to learn German or enhance their literacy skills at exceptionally low fees.

Moreover, the Muslim community in Germany actively participates in supportive initiatives orchestrated by the Muslim Women's Movement. This engagement involves various organizations like the Union of European-Turkish-Islam (ATIB), the Central Committee of Muslims in Germany (ZMD), the Federation of Democratic Workers' Associations (DİDF), and the Islamic Community National Vision (IGMG). The increasing presence of Muslim women in Germany signifies substantial progress over the years, reflecting their ongoing efforts, which notably coincided with the German government's decision to lift the ban on

women wearing the hijab in 2013. German Muslim women persistently strive to bring Islam closer to society.<sup>35</sup>

The Official Dialogue Forum among Muslim Peers. This official forum for dialogue among Muslims in Germany serves as a platform dedicated to discussing matters pertaining to Islam. Founded in 2010 by the German Muslim community, specifically the Union of European-Turkish-Islam (ATIB), the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (ZMD), and the Islamic Community National Vision (IGMG), its primary purpose is to tackle various instances of discrimination and prejudicial attitudes propagated by individuals or groups exhibiting Islamophobic sentiments, such as the anti-Islam Pegida movement. It also delves into human rights concerns, individual liberties, and the implications of globalization on the evolution of Islam in Germany. In April 2013, a forum led by the Muslim community in Berlin was convened to specifically address Islamophobia and the rising anti-Islam movement in Germany.

Protests Opposing the Anti-Islam Pegida Movement. Driven by the German Muslim community, including organizations like the Turkish-Islamic Union (DITIB), the Central Cultural Association of Islam (VIKZ), and the Muslim Initiative Berlin, these demonstrations stood as a direct reaction to the highly provocative anti-Islam stance of the Pegida movement. Pegida's conspicuous anti-Islam stance significantly contributed to spreading diverse forms of hatred against Islam. Among the notable demonstrations was a march featuring German Chancellor Angela Merkel, joined by nearly all members of her cabinet. On March 12, 2015, Angela marched through the streets of Berlin in solidarity with the Muslim community, advocating for "An Open and Tolerant Germany."

Conducting an Islamic Conference. An Islamic Conference is a gathering where the German government meets with the Muslim community. Unlike the Official Dialogue Forum among Fellow Muslims organized by the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (ZMD) and the Union of European-Turkish-Islam (ATIB), this assembly occurs directly within the German parliament. It involves representatives from the Islamic community, notably the Turkish-

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<sup>35</sup> Nata, K., D. (2015). Upaya Umat Islam Di Jerman Dalam Menghadapi Gerakan Anti Islam. *E-Journal Ilmu Hubungan Internasional*, 3(2), 653-664.

Islamic Union (DITIB), alongside government officials and other political figures. This annual conference takes place regularly in Berlin.

In response to demonstrations from anti-Islam movements, the German government has taken action. Chancellor Angela Merkel highlighted the freedom of assembly in Germany while cautioning against incitement and misinformation regarding individuals arriving in the country. The combined efforts of the German Muslim community have demonstrated a degree of effectiveness; instances of discriminatory or racist treatment toward the anti-Islam movement in Germany have been reduced. Islam in Germany is genuinely acknowledged and embraced, both by German society at large and within the German community.<sup>36</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Germany, situated in Europe, operates under a Federal Parliamentary Republic system and stands as one of Western Europe's most advanced and prominent nations. Encompassing an area of 357,340 square kilometers and housing around 83.1 million people across 16 states, Germany is a significant member of the European Union (EU). It serves as a vital transport nexus for international goods and services and hosts the world's third-largest immigrant population. Despite having minimal colonial history in the Islamic world compared to other Western nations, Germany wields a substantial influence. The roots of German Muslims can be traced back to the historical ties between Germany and the Ottoman Empire, spanning periods of both peace and conflict. Predating this, following the Ottoman Turks' second siege of Vienna in 1683 and their subsequent defeat, numerous Muslims were taken as captives and sent to the territory of the Prussian Kingdom, now part of modern Germany. Since then, the Muslim community has thrived and persisted over successive centuries.

The narrative of Islam's evolution and historical trajectory in Germany is closely linked to the arrival of Turkish settlers in the late 17th century, a response to Western colonialism. These settlers established roots and families within Germany. As Europe underwent industrial expansion, numerous Muslims from Turkey and the Middle East migrated to various European nations, including Germany, seeking employment opportunities. Germany is home to 5.6

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<sup>36</sup> Nata, K., D. (2015). Upaya Umat Islam Di Jerman Dalam Menghadapi Gerakan Anti Islam. *E-Journal Ilmu Hubungan Internasional*, 3(2), 653-664.

million Muslims, marking it as the second-largest Muslim population in continental Europe, trailing only behind France.

The Muslim community plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the interests of German Muslims. They engage in various initiatives aimed at addressing and countering anti-Islamic sentiments that could detrimentally affect Islam's progress in Germany. These efforts encompass diverse activities such as the Muslim Women's Movement in Germany, formal dialogues among Muslim peers, organized protests against the Pegida Anti-Islam Movement, and the facilitation of Islamic conferences.

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