



Bundeswehr Institute of Social Sciences



Muslim Service Members in Non-Muslim Countries

Experiences of Difference in the Armed Forces
in Austria, Germany and The Netherlands

Iris Menke
Phil C. Langer
(Eds.)

FORUM International 29

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Preface

Preface

Iris Menke & Phil C. Langer

“I think the armed forces (...) are a powerful instrument for integration, because we have many minorities in the armed forces. Actually, yesterday a young soldier was killed in Afghanistan, and only judging by his name, I can assume that he's Muslim. Without exploiting that, we should point out to people that somebody who is willing to risk his life for this society should be awarded for this and should be welcomed in this society, not be seen as a potential threat.”

Frans Timmermans, Dutch Minister for European Affairs, 2010¹

For the Armed Forces the integration of soldiers with different ethnic or religious backgrounds has become a challenge. Being a government institution, the Armed Forces, on the one hand, have an obligation to implement politically desired concepts aimed at integrating minorities. On the other hand, considering demographic changes in society and political debates which call the obligation to render compulsory military service into question in many countries the Armed Forces will increasingly be faced with the necessity to develop a recruitment program that takes these changes into account.

For this reason, the following compilation of reports on servicemen and -women of Muslim faith from three neighbouring countries – Germany, the Netherlands and Austria – aims at providing a first insight into the question of how to facilitate a successful integration of soldiers who belong to a religious minority.²

Yet the results of the four reports which are presented in this publication cannot be compared directly. There are several reasons for this:

First of all, the respondents in the different research studies exhibit great variation in their migration backgrounds which refer to different forms of Islam in all three countries. Also the time and reason for immigration and the legal status of Islam as a religion (especially whether it is legally considered to be equal to the traditional Christian churches) must be taken into consideration.

1 Cit. in the interview “From Tolerance to Integration: The Dutch Experience” with J. J. Myers. Source: <http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/resources/transcripts/0145.html> (last access on 16.10.2010).

2 The selection of national contexts that are addressed in this volume is due to established research co-operations. It does not reflect a certain conceptual framework. The integration of countries like France, the United Kingdom or Israel poses an exciting and necessary challenge for further research in this area.

Secondly, all of the four research projects pursue different research objectives and therefore use different methods of data collection and analysis. In addition, the selected target groups cannot be directly compared either, as the Austrian research studies, for instance, focus on conscripts while the Dutch study does not include them.

The German article by Iris Menke, Phil C. Langer and Maren Tomforde is part of a broader research project on intercultural competence in the German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr). It outlines the institutional conditions that determine the integration of Muslim soldiers today: what are the different challenges the integration pose for the military? Which institutional strategies of diversity management have so far been implemented to deal with them? And where do the chances of cultural diversity lie for the armed forces in the future – especially after the suspension of the general conscript?

The study on Dutch Muslim soldiers by Femke Bosman is part of her dissertation, “Uniformed Diversity”, which focuses on the climate of diversity in the Dutch defence organization. Here, the multicultural attitudes and behaviour between majority and minority groups were analysed. The fieldwork on Dutch Muslim soldiers focused on the following questions: how do defence employees perceive multiculturalism in general? In what way do they perceive diversity policy activities and how does this manifest itself in an army training platoon? What are the advantages and disadvantages of multiple identities during deployment? How do Dutch Muslim soldiers perceive the interaction with their majority group colleagues?

Two research studies have been included in this book that relate to the situation in Austria. Both of them form part of the authors’ diploma theses. The first article on Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces by Peter Fußl provides an overview of the situation of Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces. It is composed of an outline of the general situation for Muslims in Austria and a historical overview of the legal situation regarding religious liberty and the attitudes of Austrian political parties towards Islam. The second part deals with official rules concerning Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces and the general question of integrating migrants: how are migrants treated (especially Muslims)? How do they feel? What kind of obstacles are they faced with? What do people without an immigration background think about them? What influence do special regulations (diet, prayer times etc.) have according to ‘non-migrants’ and superiors?

The second research study, conducted by Ulrich Krainz and Thomas Slunecko, deals with Muslim conscripts in the Austrian Armed Forces. This study centres on the nego-

tiation of cultural differences in the Armed Forces as a “total institution”. The study is based on the reconstruction of knowledge obtained from narrations of someone’s actions and everyday routine. Here the documentary method of interpretation was used as a methodological approach in accordance with Bourdieu’s habitus concept. The aim of this interpretation was to find out, how reality is constructed through communication. Thus collective patterns of orientation, in this case collective orientation regarding cultural integration, i. e. the notion of “otherness”, were analysed.

It has been a long way from the conception of this compilation in 2008 to its publication in 2011. For most of the articles were finished in autumn 2009, probably not all later developments in the lively migration and integration debate in the respective countries could be taken into account.³ Nevertheless they present various innovative approaches and empirical findings that will hopefully be able to enrich the current discussion on cultural diversity in the armed forces today.

Of course the volume would not have been realized without the support of many people. First of all we would like to thank the authors, who have contributed to this project, for their great efforts and patience. In addition, we owe a great deal to the dedication shown by our colleagues of the Bundeswehr Institute of Social Sciences and to Carola Reinholz in particular. Last but not least many personal thanks go to Stefanie Wnuck, Angela Kühner, and Ludwig Krysl.

3 For Germany one might think of the highly emotional and controversial debate on Thilo Sarazin’s book “Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen” (Munich: DVA 2010), which essentially determined the public and political discourse on migration and integration in 2010.

Part I: Germany

Challenges and Chances of Integrating Muslim Soldiers in the Bundeswehr: Strategies of Diversity Management in the German Armed Forces¹

Iris Menke, Phil C. Langer & Maren Tomforde

1 Introduction

In the last decade an accelerated pluralisation process within the German armed forces can be observed as a result of wider societal changes and jurido-political discourses. In 2001 the European Court of Justice ruled that all areas of the Bundeswehr, even combat units, must be opened to women.² A directive on sexuality was enacted in the same year that allowed homosexuals to serve openly in leadership positions. Migration dynamics in the post-cold-war era and in the context of European enlargement and integration as well as globalised mobility led to a new ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in the armed forces. However, the integration of minorities poses considerable challenges and chances likewise for an organization that has long been perceived as homogenous and mono-cultural. It is not astonishing, therefore, that the topic of diversity management has been brought up only recently.³

Although an institutional discourse on intercultural competence is established in leadership education and military training there has been only few empirical research on religious or ethnic minorities in Germany as well as in other European nations.⁴ So far the Bundeswehr has focused on those groups that have been associated with causing difficulties or on areas in which it was considered to be likely that problems would arise in the future. Furthermore, the debate on minorities was frequently connected to considera-

1 The article offers a revised and modified version of an original paper by Iris Menke and Maren Tomforde. In the course of the revision the figures were partially updated, esp. concerning the migration dynamics in Germany.

2 The integration of women into the Bundeswehr has been the subject of several qualitative and quantitative studies carried out by the Bundeswehr Institute of Social Sciences, see e. g. Biehl/Kümmel 2001 and Kümmel 2008.

3 The first conference on Diversity Management took place at the Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre in Koblenz in December 2010.

4 Biehl/Klein/Kümmel 2007: 171; cf. Bosman 2008; Bertossi 2007; Soeters/van der Meulen 2007; Danker/Mason 2003; Katzenstein/Reppy 1999.

tions on how to recruit personnel. The analysis of a questionnaire-based survey conducted in 2001 (Biehl/Kümmel 2001) revealed that particularly the group of recently arrived ethnic German repatriates from Russia⁵ was identified as a “problem group” by the battalion commanders and heads of Bundeswehr agencies interviewed. The violation of service regulations, the consumption of large amounts of alcohol and considerable language deficits characterized this group. The interviews also revealed that social isolation of the individuals concerned often led to the formation of gangs, which in turn resulted in their being stigmatised by peers (being called the “Russian Mafia”) and rated as “difficult to integrate” by their superiors (Biehl/Kümmel 2001: 37–38). Since the immigration to Germany of recently arrived ethnic German repatriates subsided in the late 1990s, interest has now shifted to Muslims. The new Nationality Act introduced in 2000 provides children of foreign parentage born in Germany with the option of choosing German citizenship upon attaining majority, with the result that young men who do so are liable to military service. This concerns in particular descendents of former foreign workers from Turkey.

In 2006 the Bundeswehr Institute of Social Sciences set up a research project on intercultural competence that addresses questions of effectiveness of intercultural competence in deployments, aims at evaluating the training of intercultural competence and particular trainings methods, and examines experiences with cultural diversity within the armed forces. In this sense this article presents considerations of the state of integration of Muslim service members in the Bundeswehr. From a quantitative perspective the issue seems to be of minor interest: The estimated number of service personnel of Muslim faith adds up to 1,000–2,000. However, there are three arguments that demonstrate its institutional relevance. Firstly, public discourse on migration and integration in Germany centres on the social figure of “the Muslim” as the typical “other”, so their experiences may reveal in an ideal-typical way, how cultural and religious differences are handled in the Armed Forces. Secondly, research can show which strategies are being developed to help Muslim service members integrate into an organization that appears to be homogenous and highly hierarchical. Thirdly, and with a view to the Bundeswehr’s operations in predominantly Muslim regions, a debate initiated by this study may help to underline the multicultural potential of Muslim service members as well as the opportunities and limitations linked to their deployment abroad. In the light

5 At the beginning of the new millennium, this minority group was the most important one in the Bundeswehr in terms of size.

of the suspension of conscription in Germany, which was recently enacted, these arguments can be linked to the question, how to recruit qualified military personnel in the future. Assumingly minorities that hope for social advancement in serving for the armed forces will constitute privileged subjects of recruitment strategies, so the analysis of Muslim soldiers' experiences in the military adverts to the general institutional framework that is necessary for their successful integration, job satisfaction, and performance in the Bundeswehr.

On the basis of a descriptive view on the German society as a migration society the situation of migrants in Germany in general and of Muslims in particular will be outlined in the next chapter. Chapter three and four will discuss current challenges for the armed forces and institutional strategies of dealing with them. Finally future perspectives that mark the chances of diversity will be presented in the fifth chapter of this article.

2 Context: Societal Pluralisation in Germany⁶

In order to facilitate a better evaluation of the situation and experiences of Muslim personnel in the Bundeswehr, the general conditions for people with a non-German cultural background in general and for Muslims in Germany in particular need to be discussed first. How open is the German society for "otherness", the alleged "strangeness"? How tolerant is the German society towards minorities? The statement made by the chairman of the Siemens group, Peter Löscher, provides a general idea. In June 2008, a year after assuming his position, he criticised his own company for being *too German, too male, too bland* (Balser 2008: 15). Löscher's words were not meant just for his own group, they rather targeted Germany's business world as a whole. He said that globalisation had not yet entered the everyday routine of German companies. Multiculturalism was not seen as an enrichment but as a source of problems and a threat to the status quo.

In an age marked by globalisation and demographic change, however, many companies and public institutions have by now realized that the acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity might even contribute to the success of their businesses. In 2006 several companies started an initiative called the "Charta of Diversity" which aims to sup-

6 For further scientific research on migration and integration in Germany refer, for instance, to Bade et al. 2008; Bade/Oltmer 2008; Herbert 2001; Bade 1997. Cf. Brettfeld/Wetzels 2007, chapter 2.2 for an overview of the religiosity of Muslims in Germany.

port a positive diversity and anti-discrimination climate. More than 800 companies, universities and public institutions have joined the network until now.⁷ Migrants are strongly underrepresented in public life, even though almost every political party has a migrant representative as a Member of Parliament. Since the general elections in September 2009 there have been 15 representatives in the German Federal Parliament who have their family roots in a foreign country (Preuß 2009: 6). Still, equal opportunity is an exception for many positions in public life (Buettner 2007: 17; Spiewak 2008: 33). Demands for more diversity are therefore not surprising (Balser 2008: 15), not only to meet the necessities caused by international globalisation but also to address the issue of so-called “parallel societies”.

In Germany the discussion on “parallel societies” (Ateş 2007: 16ff.)⁸ has focussed mainly on trouble spots in big cities such as Berlin. These discussions show a very biased picture of people with a migration background within German society (Buettner 2007: 17).

Frequently, a low graduate rate is regarded as a proof for the notion that immigrants themselves are not interested in integration. In fact, a study on “Muslim Life in Germany”, organised by the German Islamic Conference, shows distinct shortcomings in structural integration, especially amongst immigrants from Turkey, not only in comparison to immigrants from other South European countries but also to immigrants from other Islamic nations. A possible explanation for these results may be found in the history of the recruitment of economic migrants from low class families in poor rural districts (Haug/Müssig/Stichs 2009: 211, 220).

The 2007 OECD report on the education of children proves that children from migrant families usually lag one year behind “native” children, in Germany even two years (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung 2007; Kahlweit 2007: 2; cf. Haug/Müssig/Stichs 2009: 219). Referring to the well-known fact that children with a migration background have very few opportunities for success in the German education system, migrant and integration representatives have repeatedly called for changes in the public education system (Haug/Müssig/Stichs 2009: 221).

The report of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC 2006) shows that Muslims living in Europe (approximately 13 million people) have to

7 Cf. www.vielfalt-als-chance.de

8 Cf. Kaschuba 2007 for the conception of “parallel societies” and the construction of strangeness.

face discrimination in almost all aspects of their life: Muslims frequently work for extremely low wages and live under poor conditions. Even a family name that sounds Arabic minimizes the chances of being considered when applying for a job.

2.1 Immigration to Germany: Facts and Figures

Up until the early 20th century, Germany was a typical country of emigration (cf. Özcan 2007: 1; Bade 1997). Between 1800 and 1930 around seven million Germans emigrated overseas for political or economic reasons. This migration pattern did not change until the end of World War II. In the turmoil of war and its aftermath more than 12 million displaced people had settled in the four occupation zones in Germany until 1949. During the second half of the 20th century Germany even became the country with the highest immigration figures in Europe (Münz 1999: 19–20).

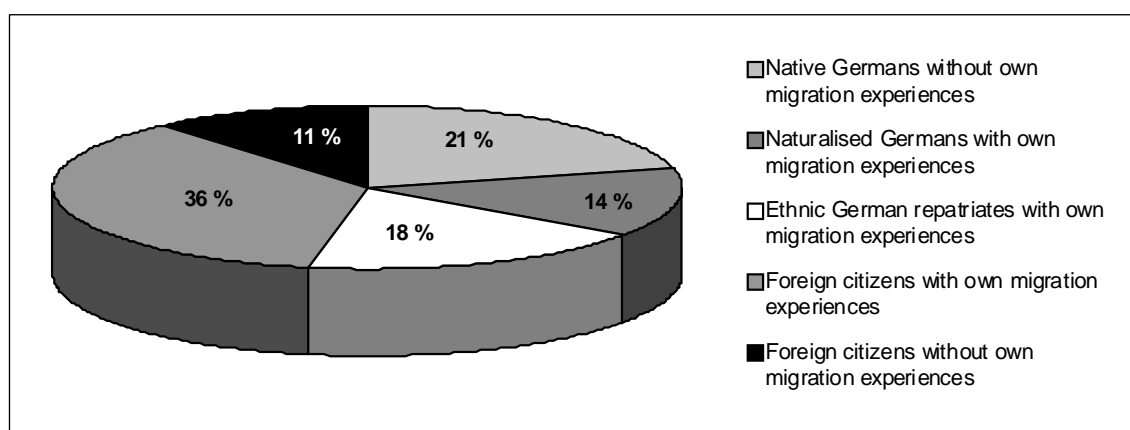
For decades this fact was not taken into consideration at all. Instead, many politicians as well as ordinary people considered immigration to be a threatening factor that was there to last and could pose a danger to the *German Leitkultur* (cf. Münz 1999: 21, 27). This defensive stance was also reflected in the law. It was only after years of tough negotiations, which were repeatedly doomed to fail, when Germany's first immigration act was finally implemented on January 1, 2005. It was not before the 21st century, decades after the first *Gastarbeiter* or migrant workers had arrived, that the act could be passed since the Federal Republic changed only gradually from an informal to a formal country of immigration. This transformation was reflected in the reform of the Foreigners' Act in 1990, of the Nationality Act in 2000 and finally in the Immigration Act of 2005. These references highlight the predicament of the current integration policy: The formal recognition of immigrants comes at a point in time when many opportunities that would have helped to successfully integrate migrants living in Germany have been missed.

Despite the mistakes made in the past it should be recognized that at least since the creation of an immigration commission in Germany in 2001, a paradigm shift has taken place at the official level. As a consequence, a large number of integration projects have been initiated, which, to some extent, may counterbalance the negative results of an unsuccessful integration policy and the rise of xenophobia in Germany. Measures such as those undertaken by the Federal Office for Migration und Refugees (BAMF) that are aimed at promoting migrant self-support organizations and multi-cultural projects are important steps towards anchoring multi-culturalism and multi-religiosity in everyday

life in Germany (cf. Bommers 2008: 25; see also Kaube 2007). Legislative changes alone will not suffice to improve the integration of present-day migrants and future generations. What is primarily needed in Germany is a change of attitude towards the concept of the nation and citizenship. Hence, political scientist Rainer Münz calls for Germany to develop a more realistic image of itself as a country of immigration, for greater calmness in “dealing with diversity, but also for an offensive discussion on the basic values that all Germans, naturalised persons and foreigners living in Germany, should be committed to share” (Münz 1999: 28).

According to recent estimates by the Federal Statistical Office, a total of 15.4 million persons with a migration background – i. e. 19 percent of the total population – lived in Germany in 2008 (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2010). The figures indicate that Germany is headed towards becoming *a migration country*. In 2008, the resident population of foreigners in Germany, that is the persons who do not have German citizenship, was estimated at 7.3 million (9 percent of the total population) and includes the 1.7 million foreign citizens who were born in Germany. Individuals with a Turkish background are the largest immigrant group in Germany. There are around 2.5 million Turks and Germans with a Turkish family background. This accounts for about 16 percent of people with migration background and about 3 percent of the total population.

Figure 1: Composition of population with migration background in Germany



Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2010: p. 213.

Even the naturalisation test, that came into effect on September 1, 2008, and is a prerequisite for naturalisation, cannot eradicate the disadvantages mentioned before. Parliamentary opposition, migrant associations and other interest groups reject the nationwide test of a person’s knowledge of the legal order, social system and living conditions

in Germany as being unnecessary and discriminatory (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung 2008).

2.2 Muslims in Germany

Islam is the second strongest religion in Germany after Christianity. The majority of Muslims came to Germany either as foreign workers or they are descendents of the first-generation foreign workers from Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia or former Yugoslavia (Lemmen 2001: 17; 1999: 10–32). According to the Federal Statistical Office (1990: 20–43) the census revealed that there were a total of 1,650,951 Muslim believers (2.7 percent of the population at that time) before 1990 in the former FRG. The main regions they live in are in former West Germany and Berlin (Federal Statistical Office 2007; Heine 2001: 200).

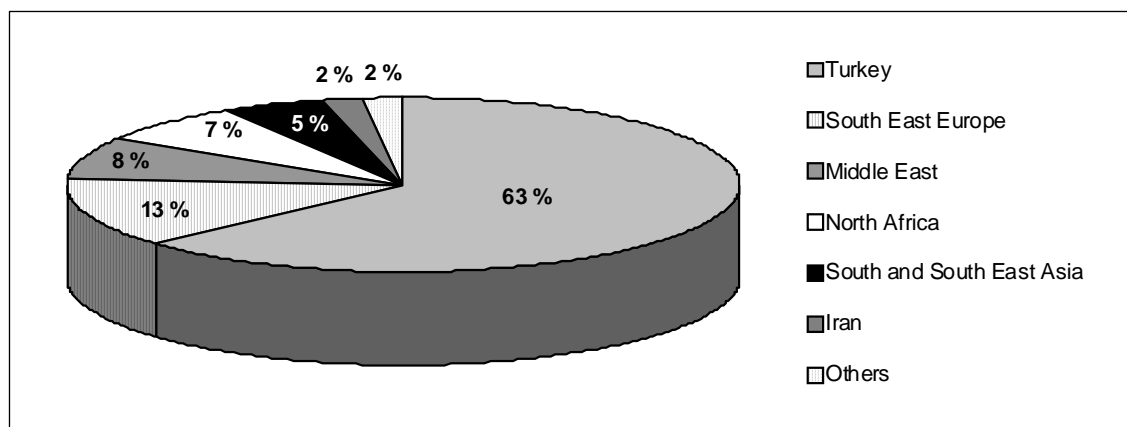
Figures are imprecise due to the fact that the resident registration offices only record residents' liability to pay church tax (for Protestants and Catholics). Muslims are thus registered under *Miscellaneous* (Lemmen 2001: 19). What makes matters even more difficult is the image Muslims have of themselves. Not all believers who define themselves as Muslims have their faith registered with the authorities or are officially recognised as Muslims by their fellow believers. This is particularly true for the Alevites who originally come from Turkey and, with their 400,000 followers, constitute the second largest Islamic group in Germany (Spuler-Stegemann 1998: 42; cf. Lemmen 2001: 19). The high proportion of Alevites brings the number of Sunni Muslims in Germany to a total of 81 percent "only" (90 percent of all Muslims worldwide are Sunni) (Lemmen 2001: 21), approx. 7 percent are Shiites and approx. 12 percent are Alevites⁹.

Due to historical and religious differences, only around 15 percent of Muslims belong to an association. The total number of Muslims living in Germany can only be estimated and there is no reliable statistical data on membership in Muslim organizations. Visiting a mosque run by one of the associations or organizations does not necessarily mean that people are also members of these particular associations or organizations (Lemmen 2000: 28). The study "Muslimisches Leben in Deutschland" (*Muslim life in Germany*), which was carried out on behalf of the Deutsche Islam Konferenz (*German Islam Conference*) estimates that between 3.8 and 4.3 million Muslims with migration background

9 Cf. Religionswissenschaftlicher Medien- und Informationsdienst e. V. 2009.

live in Germany, i. e. about five percent of the overall population (Haug/Müssig/Stichs 2009).

Figure 2: Regional backgrounds of Muslim population in Germany



Source: Haugg/Müssig/Stichs 2009: p. 93.

In Germany, as in other so called “Western” countries, Muslims have a representation problem: What organization/institution can act as a representative for all Muslims when their ethnic, religious, social and political backgrounds differ so much? The absence of hierarchy and the relatively simple dogma of Islam¹⁰ are the reasons for the great flexibility and mobility of the religion. The flexible structures have also led to large-scale regionalisation, which, in the course of history, has been followed by a merging with local cultures and created various forms of Islam. These differences within Islam remain largely ignored in the reception by the western world (cf. Manger 1999).

Muslims in Germany face a number of serious problems where the largely non-structured Islamic forms of organization are juxtaposed with the hierarchical structures of bureaucracy that exist in Germany (Heine 2001: 200). These structural differences require Muslims to set up their own organizations. Muslim believers themselves must provide the infrastructure and funds needed for building and maintaining mosques and for training and employing Imams (Halm 2001: 192). Another challenge is the diversity among German Muslims. Although the majority of believers are of Turkish descent, they have to unite Muslims from a great variety of backgrounds in their mosques. Muslim migrants from all over the world speak many languages, represent very different (nationality-based) views of religion and may be followers of various forms of political

¹⁰ Generally Muslims are guided by two principal sources that show them *the right way*: by the Quran, and by the example set by the Prophet Mohammed.

Islam (e. g. Arab Muslim brotherhoods). Hence, German Muslims do not only have to overcome the structural differences that exist between Islam and the nation-state (that is secular by definition but based on Christian tradition), but also internal differences such as varying doctrines, political characters and language competence.

2.3 The German Integration Debate in the European Context

Christophe Bertossi, head of research for the research programme on *migration, identities and nationality* at the Paris-based *Institut français des relations internationales* (Ifri) examines the gulf that exists between the public debate on the difficulties Muslims experience with integration and their insufficient recognition as citizens in society. He examines the hypothesis widely propagated by politicians that the Muslim identity is incompatible with European values and therefore an impediment to integration. According to Bertossi, the real problem, which in 2005 led to the unrest in the suburbs of Paris, lies in the lack of opportunities for socio-economic advancement and the crisis of the welfare state (Bertossi 2007: 4).

Bertossi investigates why the descendents of former immigrants are not recognised as ordinary fellow citizens despite the fact that they are legitimate citizens (Bertossi 2007: 4). He makes two important observations with regard to this issue:

1. While the question during the 1980s was how foreigners could be naturalized, the integration debate during the 1990s centred on those people who already had the nationality of their country of residence (Bertossi 2007: 5).
2. Previously, the respective population groups were named after their country of origin or their ethnicity. Today, the “new” citizens are often referred to as “Muslims”. In order to differentiate, a new European identity a *Judeo-Christian* identity, was created during the debate on a European constitution in 2002. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EU was not *Judeo-Christian*; it was *The West* (Bertossi 2007: 5–6).

In the meantime Europe itself has become the target of the transnational terrorism that is linked to radical Islam. Some of the people who have committed acts of terrorism were European citizens. This breach of loyalty has thrown Europe into an identity crisis and given new momentum to the arguments of those politicians who insist on the primacy of security where immigration is concerned (Bertossi 2007: 6).

Often, no distinction is made between Islam, Muslims, Islamism and terrorism. The global fear of terror leads to the assumption that Muslims cannot identify themselves with the constitutional principles of the countries that have taken them in. As a consequence, their loyalty is being questioned. This is a rejection of the ideal of a common citizenship¹¹ (Bertossi 2007: 7).

A study published by the Federal Ministry of the Interior in 2007 on attitudes by German Muslims towards democracy, the rule of law, their sympathies for radical Islamism and religiously motivated violence showed that there was a growing potential for Islamist radicalisation in Germany. According to the authors, this radicalisation cannot be ascribed to religious orientation only but also to the image educated Muslims have of themselves as victims of suppression and exclusion from Western/Christian systems (Brettfeld/Wetzels 2007: 40–45). In the media this study was received rather one-sidedly, which further heightened the prejudices and clichés against German Muslims, in particular against Muslim youths in big cities. As a consequence, major Muslim associations in Germany have called for the results of the study, commissioned by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, to be handled cautiously (cf. Reimann 2007).

3 Muslim Soldiers in the Bundeswehr: Current Challenges for the German Armed Forces

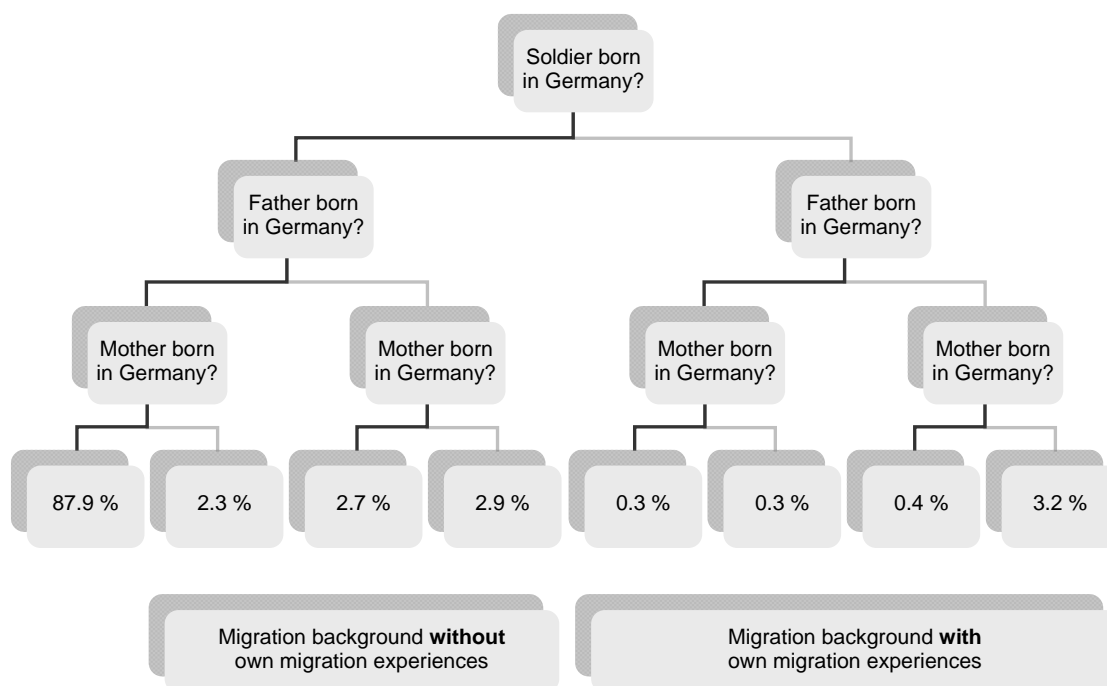
3.1 Estimated Number of Muslim Service Personnel in the Bundeswehr

There are about 12 percent soldiers with a migration background in the German armed forces;¹² this number slightly exceeds the percentage of migrants with German nationality in the general population. Nearly five percent of all German soldiers were not born in Germany and, therefore, have own migration experiences. In the following illustration, which distinguished between own migration experiences of soldiers and those of their parents, the distribution of different kinds of migration backgrounds is shown.

11 Cf. the concept of the citizen in uniform in the new version of the German Joint Service Regulation ZDv 10/1 (Bundeswehr 2008: 6).

12 Estimates by the authors on the basis of current studies carried out by the Bundeswehr Institute of Social Sciences.

Figure 3: Distribution of different kinds of migration backgrounds in the German armed forces – black lines indicate a “yes”-, grey lines a “no”-answer to the questions stated in the decision tree



Source: The estimates refer to current research experiences of the Bundeswehr Institute of Social Sciences in 2009/2010.

Nearly half of the soldiers with own migration experiences have roots in former Soviet Union countries, esp. Kazakhstan. In addition, over a third of them come from the European Union, esp. from Eastern European countries like Poland. Interestingly, only a minor proportion of about six percents reports to be born in countries with a Muslim majority population like Turkey or Afghanistan.

The current number of Bundeswehr service personnel of the Muslim faith, however, cannot be determined, since military personnel is not required to inform the personnel management agency about their religious affiliation (except for the purpose of church tax registration). The only official source that allows a rough estimate of the number of Muslim personnel is the interview survey by the Psychological Service of the Bundeswehr with former service members and with career soldiers in 2003. Those interviewed in the survey were basic service conscripts, temporary career volunteers and career soldiers who volunteered to participate in these interviews carried out on a regular basis.

Table 1: Religious affiliation of former Bundeswehr personnel interviewed in 2003 (basic service conscripts – BSC, temporary career volunteers – TCV, and career soldiers)

	BSC		TCV				Career Soldiers			
	N	%	NCOs %	Officers %	Total	%	SNCOs %	Officers %	Total	%
Protestant	1,377	39	35	39	621	36	42	40	1,442	41
Catholic	1,296	31	29	32	509	29	34	32	1,145	33
Muslim	23	(0,5)	0	0	4	0	0	0	5	0
Jewish	9	–	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	0
Other	64	1	1	1	12	1	1	1	29	1
Undenominational	1,340	27	34	27	576	33	22	26	833	24
Do not wish to answer	86	2	1	1	21	1	1	1	55	1
Total	4,195	100	N=1,667	N=79	1,747	100	N=1,792	N=1,694	3,510	100

Source: <http://www.medienbank.bundeswehr.de>

Taking into account that the figures are from 2003 and that the current number of Bundeswehr personnel is around 250,000, it can be assumed that there are at least 800 service members of the Muslim faith in the armed forces. Due to the probability that an additional number of Muslims may have ticked the *Do not wish to answer* box – perhaps for fear of possible negative consequences¹³ –, there could be far more Muslim believers serving in the Bundeswehr than this number indicates.¹⁴

It must be assumed that a considerable number of Muslims in Germany have dual nationality.¹⁵ In general, people with dual nationality who are obliged to attend military service are fully liable to military service in both Germany and the respective other country. In order to avoid a draft into both the German Armed Forces and into the forces of another country (e. g. Turkey), both German and Turkish military laws include several provisions that are intended to prevent such a dual burden. The key factor in this

13 There was also the choice of ticking the *Undenominational* or *Other* boxes.

14 A current article in an official journal of the armed forces vaguely suggests “more than 1,000 soldiers of Muslim faith in the Bundeswehr” (Adami 2010). Translation by Phil C. Langer.

15 The contents of this paragraph are based on information provided by the German embassy in Ankara. See: <http://www.ankara.diplo.de/Vertretung/ankara/de/04> (last access on 25.02.2008). The new Nationality Act introduced in 2000 generally rules out dual nationality. Exceptions are granted, however, where the country of origin does not release people from their nationality or where the release from nationality constitutes an unreasonable hardship for the applicant. However, the statistics on naturalisation show that multiple nationality is no exception by any means. In 2005 nearly one in two naturalised individuals (47 %) was able to keep their previous nationality. The presumably largest group of people with dual nationality in Germany is that of (recently arrived) ethnic German repatriates (Özcan 2007: 4).

context is the permanent place of residence. Persons liable to military service who permanently live in Germany will be drafted into the Bundeswehr. By law, the obligation to render military service in Germany is suspended if the individual concerned wishes to reside in Turkey permanently. The term of compulsory military service is much shorter in Germany than in Turkey, however, persons liable to military service in Turkey will not have to serve extra time in the Bundeswehr. Turkey treats individuals obliged to render military service differently depending on their age at the time of their migration to Germany. German military service, civilian service or non-draft may be accepted if a person liable to military service was born in Germany or moved to Germany before attaining majority.

3.2 Potential Challenges

What challenges does the service of Muslim soldiers in armed forces in non-Muslim countries like Germany pose? Usually one points to religious practices, whenever this question arises: the religious rules that refer to praying times, fasting, the consume of alcohol and pork are widely mentioned and seen as causing problems in the context of military duties and military social life.¹⁶ Analytically two aspects can be distinguished that have to be taken into account in discussing the question, how to deal with religious diversity in the German armed forces: the conditions of fulfilling the religious rules and obligations by the Muslim soldiers on the one hand and the perception and assessment of sticking to these rules by the fellow non-Muslim soldiers on the other.

The execution of certain religious practices seems to be difficult to arrange with daily military service. This corresponds to the obligatory regular praying that may, for example, hardly be realized during a 24-hour-exercise or a longer operation outside the camp in a dangerous context like Afghanistan. Following the rules of fasting may confront a soldier with physical limits in performing strenuous operations. In particular the difficulty of eating in accordance with religious rules in the Bundeswehr and the necessity of repeatedly justifying oneself is an everyday problem faced even by those Muslims who are not particularly religious. Theoretically, it is possible to select the individual components of the meal, so that Muslim soldiers can choose – guaranteed by official

¹⁶ *Haram* is an Arabic term and denotes things which are forbidden under Islamic law. The dietary rules are prescribed in the *Koran* and the *Sunnah*. Generally, all foods are permissible except for those which are expressly and definitely forbidden. Muslims are not allowed to consume alcohol and blood. The consumption of animals which eat meat themselves, such as pigs, dogs and cats, and products which are made from these animals, such as gelatine, is prohibited as well. (Ebeling 2007: 23 et seqq.)

directives, as it will be outlined in the next chapter of this article – pork-free food. But practically (similar to every canteens in larger companies) much depends on the understanding and cooperativeness of the kitchen personnel, e. g. with regard to the indication whether a sweet dessert contains gelatine or whether pig fat is used.¹⁷ Also most of the different one-man rations that are distributed during field exercises and operations usually contain elements of pork and may therefore bring about the necessity to add own food to maintain one’s corporeal fitness. However, Muslim soldiers in Germany are assumingly very heterogeneous in their own assessment and practice of their religiosity. Many of them went to school in Germany or grew up in a secular environment and were raised by their parents in a “western” manner, so some of them may not strictly adhere to religious rules. One can say that the more strictly a Muslim adheres to religious rules, the more difficult the matter becomes in the armed forces in non-Muslim countries. Strict compliance with religious rules is proportionate to the difficulties involved in putting them into practice.

Especially with regard to the perception of fellow comrades this seems to play an important role. The more obvious a Muslim soldier performs religious practices within military social contexts, the easier she or he can be marked as “outsider” and may have to justify him- or herself before peers or superiors. Even if Muslim soldiers do not attach much importance to their own religiosity themselves, they are inevitably confronted with Islam.¹⁸ As “representatives” of their religion, they must answer questions about Islam, explain practices associated with it and even face questions about Muslim fundamentalists. Their perception as Muslim therefore is rather a kind of projection than a consequence of an own identification.

One theoretical presupposition with regard to the minority status of the target group studied that can explain this phenomenon is the *tokenism* approach. Kanter developed this approach, based on the sociologist Simmel’s insights, to form a socio-scientific theory (Kanter 1977). The term *token* means that the members of a minority group are not perceived as individuals by the people around them but as representatives of their group. Also, they draw attention, which makes the person under observation feel inse-

17 There are hints, however, that there are no such problems in the theatres of operations. For example, the field kitchen in Termez (Uzbekistan) is highly praised as it always offered a special meal for Muslims. If inquiries are made and requests are submitted, troop kitchens in Germany seem to adapt and comply with the regulations for preparing meals for devout Muslims.

18 Names that somehow sound Arabic are often (and sometimes misleadingly) interpreted as a sign for Muslim faith by comrades and superiors and serve as a source of (potentially stigmatizing) assumptions.

cure and reinforces the stereotyping on the part of the observer. Individual's mistakes and successes alike attract further attention and are associated with all the other members of the minority group they belong to. As representatives of a minority group, Muslims in the Bundeswehr seem to be subject to overobservation. Those concerned can respond in two ways to this situation: Either they attempt to exploit the attention they draw for their own purposes and get high qualifications through first-class performances. Or else they do everything they can to maintain a low profile. Both behavioural patterns in turn influence their status and role within their group.

In this sense, in order to avoid attracting attention every day as "the person of a different faith" by behaving differently, many Muslims in the Bundeswehr have adapted to the conditions at their offices for the sake of improving integration, maintaining good comradeship, and avoiding to be stereotyped.

Assimilation (or even over-assimilation) may, therefore, be an essential strategy that Muslim service members use to cope with (real or imagined) problems that occur due to their religion and to facilitate their integration into military life in the Bundeswehr and the compatibility of their faith with a Christian or non-religious environment. They try to avoid attracting attention, e. g. not praying during working hours or not asking for pork-free meals for fear of being conferred special status. In a secular manner a distinction between religious privacy and non-religious public work, also a situational adherence to the Islamic rules (for the preparation of meals, praying and so on) can be mentioned that calls for a more strict obedience at home than on duty in the Bundeswehr. The acceptance of people of minority religions in the Bundeswehr therefore strongly depends on the importance a Muslim (or a member of another religious group) attaches to compliance with religious rules and the extent to which a person tries to observe them during everyday work.

It is noteworthy that an official representation of Muslims in the Bundeswehr that constitutes institutional support for the interests of the soldiers does not exist at present. Muslim servicemen and -women in the Bundeswehr have not yet been provided with a chaplain service of their own. The establishment of such a service is theoretically possible, but depends on the size of the religious community, which must also present itself as such and file a request for the establishment of such a service (Deutscher Bundestag 2007b). Other countries have already gone a step further. In the UK, several military bases, such as the elite military academy at Sandhurst, provide official prayer rooms for

Muslims. Some years ago, the first Imam was hired by the British army. In France there are 15 Imams who are employed as chaplains (see Schmidt 2008).

In view of the outlined issues it can be assumed that the subjective need for an Imam and/or the representation of interests depends on the religiousness of soldiers and their experienced problems due to their minority status. Those who feel well-guided and counselled within the existing structures usually do not regard additional points of contact as necessary. In addition, hiring an Imam as a chaplain could be difficult as many denominations (Sunnis, Shiites etc.) would have to be taken into consideration. An Imam, for example, is regarded as higher an authority by the Shiites (comparable to the Pope) than by the Sunnis or Alevites. However, the use of an institutional representation of Muslim service members can be discussed firstly with regard to operations abroad as they may provide a “neutral” point of contact and “pastoral care” in the broadest sense. Secondly, in case of legal issues as it may be able to act as mediators to negotiate with superiors or work out practical compromises in case of difficulties. This refers e. g. to particular aspects, which are not comprehensible to many non-Muslim service members, such as patterns of behaviour and values.¹⁹ Thirdly, it would lead to a general increase in the official lectures given by experts such as scholars in Islamic studies and result in an institutional surplus. This may be relevant for pre-deployment training in particular and for civic education in general for it helps reducing identified deficiencies in peers’ knowledge about Islam and, hence, aims at elimination existing stereotypes and prejudices.

A second kind of challenge, that the service of Muslim soldiers in the German armed forces poses, refers to the question of social cohesion that is widely discussed in military sociology. In modern armed forces – which have historically emerged as a keystone of the national state – social homogeneity and wide experiences are seen as a prerequisite for military cohesion (see e. g. Stouffer et al. 1949 and Shils/Janowitz 1948). Following this argument, concerns about the integration of certain groups into the military (for instance women, homosexuals, and foreigners) that may affect the effectiveness of the armed forces due to their negative influences on cohesion and motivation legitimated long-lasting exclusion practices. Although in the last decades, studies have impressively shown that such a kind of social cohesion is only of minor importance for

¹⁹ For a male soldier, for instance, being left by his wife may be felt as a “loss of honour” with certain implications for the family that are not experienced by non-Muslim comrades in the same way. In this case an official Muslim contact person the soldier could talk to about this sensitive topic may be beneficial.

military performance today, the issue of “otherness” still seems to play an important role, especially with regard to Muslims that socially serve as paradigmatic “other” and reference point of collective projection (see Kühner 2010).²⁰

In this respect German service personnel of the Muslim faith – similar to Muslims in the Armed Forces of other European countries²¹ – have been confronted with the issue of loyalty both inside and outside the Bundeswehr, and all the more so since the 9/11 attacks that have brought about a discourse of imputation towards the Muslim “other”. In the context of a broader social discourse that contrasts the category of “the Germans” with that of “the Muslims”, that is nationality and religion (see e. g. Langer, in print), serving in a national institution like the Bundeswehr as member of a religious minority may lead to identity problems and insinuations can be very insulting as one’s identity as a German citizen in uniform is seriously called into question. When it comes to drawing a comparison with other nations, however, a clear distinction must be made: In contrast to the Netherlands or France, where former immigrants frequently have dual citizenship, the Muslims interviewed as part of our study only have German citizenship. A comprehensive comparison would also require to take into account the different legal prerequisites for citizenship, the colonial past, the Muslims’ various countries of origin and the prevalent form of Islam in these countries.

However, the loyalty and affiliation of German-Turkish servicemen and -women (as the largest group of Muslim soldiers in Germany) may be doubted by three groups:

1. German service members who have doubts about the Turks’ affiliation to Germany and assumptions that they might experience a conflict of loyalty which are both fuelled by the biased and mostly negative image of Islam propagated by the media;
2. German-Turkish Muslims who suspect them of being infidels because they do not pray regularly, do not strictly observe Ramadan and behave more liberally than some of their fellow believers in Germany to facilitate integration into the Bundeswehr and German society; and
3. Turks (such as relatives or friends) living in Turkey who have doubts about their affiliation to Turkey.

20 In this sense Bosman formulated in her study on Muslims in the Dutch Armed Forces the hypothesis that dual citizenship, which is often granted in the Netherlands, may cause conflicts of loyalty. People with more than one citizenship sometimes assume multiple identities. As identity is a combination of self-attribution and attribution by others, it may result in cultural frame switching (see Bosman 2008: 171–183).

21 Cf. Bosman 2008: 169; Bertossi/Wihtol de Wenden 2007: 244.

The first aspect especially refers to international operations that take place in Islamic regions like Afghanistan and bring about the question, how Muslim experience their deployment and their relationship to the local population. This, however, should not only be seen as a challenge under the perspective of (national) loyalty, but as a chance with regard to the mission success that increasingly implies intercultural competence. This will be discussed in the final chapter of this article.

4 Dealing with the “Other”: Strategies of Integrating Muslim Service Members into the Bundeswehr

The Bundeswehr does not yet have an explicit diversity management concept. In recent years, the Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre published guidelines (working papers) on how to deal with ethnic and religious minorities. They do not constitute an overarching concept though, as they are heavily geared to specific target groups and aim to present practical solutions for problems. Even though the integration of the minorities concerned into the mainstream Bundeswehr culture is given top priority, certain changes in the style and purpose of the working papers have recently become evident: the minorities are no longer considered across the board as “the others” who behave “wrongly” and need to adapt; the idea is for them to be involved in a joint dialogue. This step is essential because a dialogue can only take place when both parties, the minority and the majority, play a role.

The working paper on *Ethnic German Repatriates in the Bundeswehr* (Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre 2000a) issued in 2000 still maintains that the aim of integration is to achieve a one-sided adaptation to the values and standards of the majority culture. Genuine attempts are made to explain the underlying reasons for the difficulties in the day-to-day dealings with both ethnic Germans and recently arrived ethnic German repatriates and to convey understanding for their special situation. Yet the focus is on formulating clear strategies that will enable superiors to solve problems.

The first version of the working paper entitled *Muslims in den Streitkräften* or Muslims in the Armed Forces (Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre 2000b) seems to be somewhat defensive towards the needs of service members of different faith. Actually achieving religious freedom in everyday military life, for example by providing a pork-free diet, is partly declared to be unfeasible due to the immense organizational and logistic efforts required:

“The provision of troop meals on board navy ships and vessels in compliance with religious dietary laws is generally not possible.” (Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre 2000b: 21–22)

Similarly, assumptions made about the attitudes of Muslim service personnel expected to serve in the Bundeswehr in the future seemed to be quite speculative:

“Reservations vis-à-vis the opposite sex in issues concerning comradeship and equality or even the non-acceptance of superior-subordinate relations will not be tolerated.” (ibid.: 23)

Fortunately a distinct change can be observed in the 2007 revised version of the working paper (Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre 2007). The first indication of this is a change in the title. The working paper now is entitled *Deutsche Staatsbürger muslimischen Glaubens in der Bundeswehr* or German Citizens of the Muslim Faith in the Bundeswehr. This is indicative of a much more positive attitude vis-à-vis the target group and suggests that the working paper no longer speaks of a threat emanating from the “others” or the “foreigners”, but of belonging and religious liberty. At the very beginning the paper quotes the definition issued by the Ministry of the Interior as the aim for the integration of Muslims:

“Integration means equal opportunity to participate in cultural, social, societal and economic life and represents a task for the whole of society.” (Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre 2007: 3)

Hence, integration is no longer understood as one-sided assimilation but as a dialogue and a process based on reciprocity. This may be seen in connection with the directive issued in 2003 by the Chief of Staff of the Bundeswehr, which clearly states that it is the task of superiors to ensure religious freedom and the right to pastoral care (Bundeswehr 2003).

A document that will have a similar impact on the new way of dealing with diversity in the Bundeswehr is the revised version of Joint Service Regulation ZDv 10/1, Leadership Development and Civic Education, promulgated in January 2008. Chapter 6 contains the following statement on the subject of *The Scope for Shaping Leadership and Civic Education and General Leadership*:

“620. Cross-cultural competence – the ability to deal with people from a different cultural background – increases the confidence of servicemen and -women in their actions and ensures the acceptance of minorities in the Bundeswehr. On operations abroad, cross-cultural competence is also an essential prerequisite for mission accomplishment and force protection.

By demanding and promoting cross-cultural competence, superiors ensure that their subordinates are confident in their actions and respectful when dealing both with the local population and members of the Armed Forces of other nations.” (Bundeswehr 2008)

With the foundation of the Central Co-ordination Agency For Intercultural Competence at the Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre in Koblenz a decisive step to institutionalize the issue of religious diversity was done in 2008. The Agency not only aims at networking between the different actors in the field of intercultural competence in the armed forces in Germany, but actively trains multipliers and therefore contributes to sensitising the Bundeswehr on an institutional level for the needs and interests of its members of different religion. This development reflects the increasing significance of the topic “intercultural competence” in military contexts. Böhmer, the federal minister in charge of integration issues, recently noted:

“In the future intercultural competence has to play a role even in the basic training. This poses an important sign for natives and migrants in the Bundeswehr. The message for the public in our country and the entire world is: Germany is a diverse and cosmopolitan country. (...) At the same time migrants get the chance of saying ‘yes’ to our country in a privileged way by serving in the armed forces! The willingness to serve as soldier impressively shows, which responsibility one likes to take for our country.” (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 2010)²²

With regard to the current ISAF deployment in Afghanistan the issue of Islam has achieved particular significance. However, it will be subject to further studies, whether these intercultural trainings will have extensive and sustainable success that allow to cope productively with the outlined challenges. The implementation of the present guidelines and directives on religious diversity will certainly depend on the behaviour of the direct superiors of Muslim service members that may be seen as a model for the fellow comrades.

In general previous experiences of Muslim soldiers with their direct superiors range from largely positive to very positive. The Bundeswehr is generally perceived as a tolerant employer that considers personal achievement as the ultimate assessment criterion and that takes religious freedom very seriously. Superiors become more and more sensitive or at least aware of religious matters and they do take care that the religious needs of Muslim soldiers are met. Ex negativo this can also be deduced from the annual reports of the Parliamentary Commissioner of the Armed Forces (Wehrbeauftragter des

22 Translated from the German original by Phil C. Langer.

Deutschen Bundestages), in which complaints of Muslim soldiers about stigmatizing or discriminating statements or behaviour of their superiors are a rare exception.

However, the institutional diversity management of the German armed forces still needs to be improved, as the lack of an official representation of Muslim service members (esp. with regard to pastoral care) illustrates. This not only lies in the interest of individual soldiers of Muslim faith, but offers an institutional surplus for the Bundeswehr that will briefly be outlined in the following chapter.

5 Chances of Diversity: Some Future Perspectives

To what extent does a religious minority status that has been discussed in this article bring about certain advantages and options? In particular during operations abroad Muslim soldiers may experience an advantage over their peers due to their religion, their linguistic skills and their intercultural knowledge.²³ In operations abroad Muslim service members have already been employed as translators and interpreters because of their intercultural competence and linguistic abilities and performed special tasks as “cultural interpreters” that are also responsible for giving lessons on the culture in the country of deployment, codes of conduct or Islamic customs and traditions as part of the training conducted to prepare soldiers for operations abroad. By maintaining closer and longer-term contacts with their peers, Muslim soldiers may manage to enter into a dialogue about their religion and cultural background and to fill knowledge gaps. Moreover, servicemen and -women with a multicultural background can benefit from their abilities in their relations with the local population e. g. in Afghanistan as well as in the multinational environment, in which dealing with military personnel from other nations with different military cultures may require a certain sensitivity and openness.

The Bundeswehr obviously acknowledges the fact that these service members have grown up in two cultures and tries to take advantage of their special expertise. However, linguistic skills and intercultural competence are not registered centrally but are often discovered “accidentally” and are subsequently used by individual superiors. As soon as these capabilities are “discovered”, there usually is quite a demand for them.

²³ These skills and competences, however, are not (yet) being registered centrally. They seem to be discovered incidentally by superiors who then sometimes support the individual service member in applying and developing these skills.

In the social sciences the intercultural abilities of migrants are discussed as “culture brokering”. The term is rooted in anthropological discourse. It refers to the observation that some individuals in the investigated culture were acting as mediators or negotiators between their own and the investigators’ culture (see e. g. Geertz 1960).²⁴ In this sense culture brokering is defined “as the act of bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons of differing cultural systems for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change” (Jezewski 1995: 20). Experiences from other countries like the United Kingdom, France, and Belgium show that soldiers with ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds that are related to the theatres of operations have already been used systematically and widely respected as culture brokers.²⁵ In order to productively act as a culture broker in the Bundeswehr soldiers of Muslim faith must institutionally be given recognition with regard to their abilities and, therefore, their experience of difference. Culture brokers have to be “comfortable with the ambiguity of working within a variety of social frameworks and are typically very effective within them. They are often sought out as cultural interpreters and highly valued as cultural guides” (CultureBrokers L. L. C. 2008).

In this sense the use of an institutional recognition of religious (cultural, ethnic...) difference fosters the development of intercultural competence of non-migrants in the armed forces that become more sensitive and capable of acting concerning religious (cultural, ethnic...) issues by serving together with comrades of different religion (culture, ethnicity...) (see Langer, in print). Böhmer mentions:

“In light of the increasing globalization, the integration of Germany in international missions all over the world, intercultural competence is getting more and more important for the Bundeswehr. Migrants can cope with different cultures, religions, and life contexts with their languages skills and their sometimes own migration experience.” (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 2010)²⁶

However, still a plethora of open questions remains which should be the subject of a more extensive study. The main purpose of such a study should be to establish contact with a greater share of the target group to provide a more differentiated picture of Muslim servicemen and -women in the Bundeswehr and to systematically analyse the ex-

24 The concept has been transferred to other areas of research like health care in the meanwhile (see e. g. Strobel 2009).

25 This observation refers to several discussions with soldiers of these countries in the context of presentations on intercultural competence within so-called “partner seminars” at the Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre in Strausberg in 2010.

26 Translated from the German original by Phil C. Langer.

periences of their “culture brokering” in operations abroad, where the effectiveness of intercultural competence can paradigmatically demonstrated.

Successfully dealing with religious difference not only is an essential ethical responsibility, but signifies an institutional necessity. The integration of religious minorities must not be understood as a one-way obligation, but has to be based on a “culture of reciprocal recognition” (Beck 2005: 4).

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Part II: The Netherlands

Dutch Muslim Soldiers in the Dutch Armed Forces

Femke Bosman

1 Introduction

The study on Dutch Muslim soldiers is part of the dissertation “Uniformed Diversity”, focusing on the diversity climate in the Dutch defence organization¹. In this dissertation to receive the Ph.D. in Social Sciences, the multicultural attitudes and behaviour between majority and minority groups were analyzed. The actual fieldwork of the Dutch Muslim study has been conducted in the period between the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007. The dissertation comprised four studies, which all tried to answer the following central question:

How can the diversity climate in the Netherlands defence organization, in particular regarding ethnic minorities, be described?

On this basis further questions arose such as:

- How do defence employees perceive multiculturalism in general?
- In what way do they perceive possible diversity policy measurement?
- How do these attitudes manifest themselves within an army training platoon?
- What are the merits and demerits of multiple identities during deployment?
- In what way do Dutch Muslim soldiers perceive the interaction with their majority group colleagues?

Some ten years ago, Choenni (1995) found that the Dutch defence organization’s integration climate was one of the factors impeding the integration of Dutch Surinamese servicemen. Richardson, Bosch and Moelker (2007) put some additional more recent examples forward on this subject. For instance in 2000, a major of the Air Mobile Brigade had to cover up tensions he witnessed between ethnic minorities and majority

1 Bosman, Femke (2008): Uniformed Diversity. A multifaceted approach towards the diversity climate in the Netherlands Defence organization. This dissertation contains four studies on the multicultural climate in the Netherlands Defence organization. Part of this dissertation is also the study on Muslim soldiers. The research has been fully independent. Although the researcher was employed by the Royal Military Academy, this institution enjoys scientific freedom.

group members, and the limited number of resulting measures. In the end, he could not cope anymore, which led him to resigning from the Brigade. Another incident the authors referred to, related to a Dutch-Turkish private who was threatened and harassed by his colleagues in one of the training centres. These incidents were partly reason to further study ethnic minorities within the Armed Forces, and Muslim soldiers in particular; as today's humanitarian and peacekeeping operations more and more take place in Muslim societies, which further complicates their position within the Armed Forces.

In order to theoretically understand the position Muslim troopers find themselves in, theories regarding social categorization have been adapted. Tajfel and Turner's (1986) well-known social identity theory often precedes minority research, in which social categorization, identification and comparison are key features. Accordingly, Kanter (1977) has developed a theory, *tokenism*, specifically based on organizational numerical distributions. According to this theory, small numbers of people who are socially divergent, attract the attention of the majority group. Those 'few' are referred to as *tokens* and are often seen as representatives of their social category. When noticed, they will receive more attention, as they simply stand out more than others do. Being in such a position gives rise to performance pressures. Failures as well as overachieving behaviour instantly attract attention.

2 Immigrants in the Netherlands

2.1 Migration in the Netherlands since World War II

In the Netherlands, political, economic as well as social factors have been motives for migration. After World War II, between 1945 and 1962, about 400,000 people from the former Dutch colonies, East Indies and New Guinea migrated to the Netherlands. They were followed by more than 200,000 young, male labour migrants between 1964 and 1973, from Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey. The Dutch government maintained contracts with these countries, but besides these contracts, spontaneous immigrant flows also existed. The immigrants all worked on temporary contracts and were therefore referred to as 'guest workers'. In contrast to the expectation that they would return again after a few years, the larger parts of both Turkish and Moroccan migrants established themselves permanently in the Netherlands. Accordingly, family reunification caused more and more Mo-

roccan and Turkish immigrants to follow in the seventies. Immigrants from Surinam (after the declaration of independence or December murders) and the Dutch Antilles (due to economic reasons) raised immigration numbers. In the 1980's and 1990's more and more asylum seekers turned to the Netherlands, mainly from countries such as Somalia, former Yugoslavia, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Table 1: Composition of the Dutch population

		Absolute X 1000
Total		16,405,4
Dutch		13,190,0
Ethnic minorities (non western)		1,765,7
	Turkish	372,7
	Moroccan	335,1
	Surinamese	335,8
	Dutch Antilles	131,8
	Other	590,2
Ethnic minorities (western)		1,449,7

Source: Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek (CBS) 2008.

In 2006 the number of immigrants has increased again for the first time since four years. A quarter of these are Dutch people returning from other countries, including second generation ethnic minorities. Due to the economic growth, many citizens from the European Union have decided to migrate to the Netherlands, mostly Polish people. The number of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants has decreased last year (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS] 2007).

In the Netherlands ethnic minorities are usually referred to as “allochtoon”. This term will not be used in the further course of this article. First of all, because it is actually a non-existing English term. Secondly, it may cause confusion (between western and non-western migrants). Although the term indicates all those who are born (or have one or both parents who are born) abroad, it is usually only used to indicate ‘non-western’ persons and has a negative connotation when used in the Dutch mass media.

The exact definition of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands has been previously formulated by the Wet Samen (“Act Together”), a law that formerly committed Dutch government departments to accelerate recruitment of ethnic minority groups. According to this bygone law, an ethnic minority is defined as a person born in Turkey, Morocco,

Surinam, Netherlands Antilles, Aruba, former Yugoslavia, or other countries in South- or Central America, Africa or Asia (with the exception of Japan and the former Dutch East Indies) and the children of the people referred to above. In spoken or popular language, in particular people of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean (and Aruban) descent are referred to as ethnic minorities, as they simply cover the largest number of minorities.

When immigrants wish to acquire Dutch citizenship, they have to file an application with the local government of the city they currently live in. In order to be taken into consideration, a few conditions apply. Applicants have to:

- have been living in the Netherlands for the last five years without interruption. When married to a Dutch man or woman (or has a registered partnership²), they must have been living together for at least three years.
- have successfully passed the civic integration examination test, or be adequately fluent in the Dutch language (certifiable by an NT2 diploma). This diploma can be achieved by two different programs, depending on the education or job level one wants to apply for.

The IND (Immigration and Naturalization Service), part of the Ministry of Justice, is responsible for all requests regarding the implementation of policy on foreigners. Both applications for Dutch citizenship as well as applications for residence permits in the Netherlands are evaluated by the IND. They further examine the request and determine whether or not to provide a person with Dutch citizenship.

2.2 Brief Description of the Societal Debate in The Netherlands

Various Dutch social monitors regarding the perception of the majority towards minority group members, have displayed downward tolerance curves for years, (Coenders/Lubbers/Scheepers 2006; EORG 2002; Socio-Cultural Planning Agency 2004). Ethnic tensions have manifested themselves in different forms, varying from local small-scale disputes to ethnocentric utterances and national debates discussing the (lack of) integration of ethnic minorities. Negative attitudes were already apparent well before events such as 9/11, terrorist attacks or political murders resulting from religious extremism, such as the murder on the Dutch filmmaker, director and columnist Theo van

2 A registered partnership in the Netherlands is nearly equal to a marriage and provides similar (legal) rights.

Gogh in 2004. With respect to the latter example, van Gogh outspokenly criticized Islamic religion, habits and traditions and made no attempt whatsoever to disguise his beliefs, even displayed in the movie “Submission”, which he produced together with Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Dutch politician and harsh critic of Islam. A young radical Dutch Muslim fundamentalist took severe offence and believed he was justified to shoot and stab the critic to death leaving a warning letter for all other unbelievers. This murder brought about two weeks of total disorder, during which mosques, Islamic schools and churches became targets of violence and were set on fire.

Due to these societal developments, deteriorating interethnic relationships, terrorist threats, and 9/11 in particular, the perception of majority members towards minority members has deteriorated. In March 2007, the political debate in the Netherlands centering around the problem of double nationalities flared up on the initiative of the political party Party for Freedom (PVV). Double nationalities or dual citizenship may exist because different countries use different criteria in establishing citizenship. The newly installed Dutch cabinet holds two Secretaries of State from the Dutch Labour Party (Nebahat Albayrak and Ahmed Aboutaleb) who have both a Dutch as well as a Turkish or Moroccan nationality respectively. The political discussion about double nationalities and thus double loyalties of members of government also entered the defence organization, questioning the loyalty of Muslim servicemen. At present, a military union has indicated that Muslim service members have approached organization representatives and have indicated to perceive the double loyalty discussion as a painful ordeal. Accordingly, defence leaders have sent word that their Muslim personnel’s loyalty is not under discussion. By definition, this discussion is not beneficial to the work atmosphere and even more important, the effectiveness of deployments.

Nevertheless, even well before incidents such as these, extensive research has been conducted comparing the attitudes of majority and ethnic minority members in Dutch society (Arends-Tóth/van de Vijver 2003; Coenders/Lubbers/Scheepers 2003; Gijsberts/Dagevos 2004; Oudenhoven/Eisses 1998; Phalet/Lotringen/Entzinger 2000; Tubergen/Maas 2006; Verberk 1999; Verkuyten 2005; Verkuyten/Thijs 2002). These studies show different views of majority and minority group members regarding multiculturalism and acculturation processes. Some of these findings, for instance relate to the increasing ethnic distance people perceive in the Netherlands (Socio-Cultural Planning Agency 2004), or the increasing resistance toward a multicultural society (Coenders et al. 2003).

2.3 Muslims as a Case

Differences between norms and values postulated by different ethnic groups have come to the fore as societies become more and more multicultural. While ethnic minorities have been a generic category in the debate upon integration worldwide – and in the Netherlands – for years, this general category seems to have become lost in the mists of time. In contemporary societies it appears to have shifted towards a discussion about Muslim immigrants only. News coverage, political and societal debates only appear to address Muslim related issues. Whereas formerly discussions centered around the differences between “modern” and “pre-modern” values, they today mostly look at the differences between Islamic and western values (Demant 2005). Discussions about wearing or not wearing a veil in public positions, double loyalties of biculturals who hold governmental positions are the order of the day. Some political parties (such as the PVV) even seem to have declared the subject to their central party manifesto, criticizing all that is related to the Islam and Muslims.

As for the Netherlands, for the larger part ‘Muslims’ seems to be analogous to Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish (Coenders et al. 2006), but also for instance Dutch-Afghan or Dutch-Somali. The acceptance of these Muslims in Dutch society proceeds with difficulty (Sniderman et al. 2003). A number of opinion polls indicate a third of majority group members having ambiguous feelings towards Muslims; twenty percent feel threatened by this group (TNS NIPO 2005). However, even before the advent of terrorist attacks or political murders nurtured by religious extremism, societal monitors have displayed downward tolerance curves (EORG 2002; Socio-Cultural Planning Agency 2004). This declining tolerance towards Muslims also reveals itself when majority group members are asked to rank the value they attribute to different ethnic groups (Verkuyten et al. 1996). An ethnic hierarchy is distinct, in the course of which Moroccans are perceived the least positive, followed by Turks and concluded with Surinamese, who are perceived the least negative (Gijsberts/Dagevos 2004).

3 Minorities in the Dutch Armed Forces

The Netherlands defence organization did not fail to notice the relevance of (studying) ethnic diversity. In 2005 the Inspector-General of the Netherlands Armed Forces asked for an inventory of the diversity climate and -policy within the various defence units.

The attention for the subject as such emanated from current and future developments and the organization's desire to reflect Dutch society as much as possible, because of legitimacy reasons, but also because of the exemplary function incumbent on governmental institutions.

However, in contrast to Dutch society, the Dutch Armed Forces do not represent a similar distribution, as portrayed in table 1. There are several underlying reasons for this. First of all, one needs to be in possession of a Dutch passport in order to qualify for the Dutch Armed Forces. This means that all generations of immigrants from the Netherlands Antilles, Aruba, Surinam and from the Moluccas are eligible. However, for migrants from Morocco and Turkey this – in general – only applies for second and third generation immigrants. A second reason why this distribution differs from the societal picture refers to the fact that the Dutch Armed Forces were formerly conscript forces. Prior to this change, demographic and societal processes did not give cause for specific recruitment policies. The current trend in the distribution of ethnic minorities within the Netherlands defence organization is depicted below.

Table 2: Distribution of ethnic minorities in the Dutch Armed Forces (in percent)

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Navy	6.4	6.0	5.4	5.6
Army	8.9	9.4	9.3	8.9
Air Force	6.0	6.1	6.5	6.1
Military Police	6.5	7.0	7.3	8.0
Average	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.2

Source: Richardson/Bosch/Moelker 2007.

However, these figures appear to be 'polluted' (Richardson et al. 2007), as the numbers of ethnic minorities also include immigrants with an Indo-European background and Moluccans. This specific ethnic group differs somewhat from others due to the fact that they have already been participating in the forces for a few decades; they originally formed part of the KNIL, the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, which comprised both Dutch as well as colonial Indo-Europeans.

Although the difference between ethnic minorities within the Dutch Armed Forces and ethnic minorities in society at large does not reach an alarming magnitude, it is likely that it gains significance when the younger labour potential is considered.

Figure 1: The official recruiting website of the Dutch Air Force



Source: <http://www.werkenbijdeluchtmacht.nl>

Figure 2: The German Netherlands Corps



Source: Audiovisuele Dienst KM, Katwijk.

The defence organization has acknowledged the relevance of cultural diversity within its forces. Several actual measurements have been initiated. Since 1997 the organization actively aims at recruiting and acculturating ethnic minorities within the Dutch Armed Forces.

Up until now, the organization has mainly focused on recruitment; as a consequence the 'chain approach' (recruitment, education, retention, outflow) has hardly been adopted (Bosman/Richardson/Guns 2006). Some tangible policy measurements have been initiated though. First, besides Christian holidays, a number of other holidays and anniversaries for Jewish, Muslim and Hindu servicemen or civil servants have been officially recognized (Bosman/Richardson/Guns 2006). Secondly, official regulations have been put in place to ensure alternative dishes can be served if required for religious reasons (Bosman/Richardson/Guns 2006).

Another development refers to the fact that a serviceman may substitute the name of "God" by the name of "Allah" when the oath is taken. Fourth, recently, the Armed Forces have assigned two pundits³, who represent and are focal points for Hindu servicemen. Additionally, official diversity meetings take place regularly, in which representatives of different defence units as well as different minority groupings deal with diversity issues, developments and policy initiatives. Finally, since 2003 an official multicultural network has been established, which aims to optimize public support for a multicultural defence organization (Multicultural Network Defence, MND).

Besides the 'usual' Protestant and Catholic clergymen, humanistic counsellors, a Jewish Rabbi and even two Pundits (representatives and focal points for Hindu servicemen) are available in the Dutch defence organization. Discussions within the organization about appointing an Imam are still ongoing. Up until now, Dutch Muslim service members in mental distress can turn to a Jewish Rabbi, an offer which some of them gratefully accept. Designating an Imam is still problematic, as the different Islamic movements cannot agree on one representative, according to the Dutch Defence Assistant Secretary of State.

Ethnic diversity and managing diversity thus have become serious issues for Dutch politicians and policymakers in the Armed Forces. The recruitment and integration of ethnic minorities became an active policy measurement in 1997 and since then 'diversity' has

3 A pundit is someone who is skilled in Sanskrit and Hindu law, religion, music or philosophy and someone who can be approached with religious, spiritual or other types of questions.

become a new concept introduced and acted upon in the Dutch Armed Forces. In line with general minority policies of the Dutch government (Arends-Tóth/van de Vijver 2003), the goal was to emphasize equal access for culturally different groups to the Armed Forces and an equal share in services supplied by these forces. In addition, developments on the labour market indicated a growing pool of potential recruits from ethnic minorities, especially Dutch Turks and Dutch Moroccans (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS] 2004). Although these groups are still underrepresented in the Armed Forces, the Dutch Department of Defence aims for a realistic reflection of societal structures in the Armed Forces and therefore concentrates on recruiting minority members by means of special recruiting techniques. All recruitment material, such as brochures, online advertising campaigns or short movies, is considered thoroughly and

Figure 3: A female soldier receiving a mention



Source: <http://www.defensie.nl/actueel/foto/personeel/landmacht>

makes use of visible diverse imagery in its recruitment campaign. However, a comparison of several governmental departments has revealed a minimal interest of ethnic mi-

norities to work in the defence organization (Rosenbrand/Waasdorp 2007). This is disturbing, as the Dutch Defence organization holds up to approximately 7,000 vacancies at the moment.

4 Multi-ethnic Background and Cultural Awareness Skills

In the Netherlands, a cultural training is part of the standard curriculum for everyone who is to be deployed. Topics include basic knowledge of the cultural heritage, local customs, mentality, and desired communication skills of the country they will be deployed to. Depending on the duration of the deployment, the participants are trained in several ways. Some of the officers even go to a mosque and are trained in what to do and what not to do when deployed to a Muslim society. This is particularly valuable, as today's military operations have shifted from the traditional conduct of war towards more humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, in which negotiations, interaction and communication with the local population are essential. Feedback from the participants of these trainings indicate a general appreciation of the heightened cultural awareness. However, it is acknowledged that it is difficult not to offer an image that is too simplified and stereotypical of the local culture and population (Gooren 2006). Dutch Muslim service members are likely to have this cultural intelligence (Triandis 2006) naturally at their disposal. It would appear to be self-evident to employ criteria such as cultural intelligence, as a source of know-how, competence, and skills, for the selection of specific peacekeepers in preparation of the deployment. As a rule, however, this procedure is not in effect within the Dutch defence organization. As for language, a register of language skills currently does not exist. At times people from within the Dutch Armed Forces are trained with language courses and at other times external interpreters join the operations abroad.

Figure 4: Diversity in everyday military exercises



Source: Remmers.

Figure 5: In today's military operations negotiations, interaction and communication with the local population are essential



Source: Militaire Spectator, Beylemans 2003.

Figure 6: Cultural awareness also includes dealing with different hierarchical structures of society, religion and gender roles



Source: Militaire Spectator, Beylemans 2003.

In the above, I have described the current situation regarding ethnic minorities in general and Muslim(s) (soldiers) in particular, within the Netherlands and within the Netherlands Armed Forces, in order to outline the position Muslim soldiers find themselves in today. In the next chapter, the findings from the interviews will be presented.

5 The Study

In this chapter, the results of the study will be presented. The objective was to bring the experiences to light that Dutch Muslim service members have regarding the interaction with their majority group colleagues and their *token* position within the organization. In order to find respondents for this study, the Netherlands Defence Organization was approached to provide names of potential respondents who met the set criteria (Dutch soldiers having roots in a Muslim society – either children of first generation migrant workers or asylum seekers – and who had recent deployment experience). This was followed by ‘snowball sampling’, simply asking a respondent if he or she knew names of other people whom they knew had similar characteristics. Eventually, this resulted in interviews with 19 respondents, in-depth and semi-structured, addressing the encounters

the servicemen had with the local population during their deployment and the way they experienced working in the military. Two interviewers conducted the interviews. Both interviewers had an ‘ethnic’ background, one of them originating from Morocco and the other from Indonesia.

Respondents themselves were not always keen on participating. Out of the twenty-two intended interviewees approached, there were evident difficulties in reaching three respondents. Ideas were ventilated with some of the respondents why these difficulties existed. To them, this was not surprising at all and alleged this was all due to the fact that Muslims in general do not like to be addressed on account of ‘being Muslim’. In particular since all that is currently being discussed revolves around the negative coverage of this identity.

The specifics of the respondents are outlined below.

Table 3: Characteristics respondents

Descent	Deployment Experience	Rank	Unit	Age
Moroccan	9	Afghanistan 3	High 4	Navy 1 <25 3
Turkish	5	Iraq 4	Middle 6	Army 11 25>35 12
Afghan	2	Bosnia 14	Low 9	Air Force 1 35> 4
Surinam	3			Military Police 4
				Interpreters 2
Total	19			

Fourteen respondents were deployed several years ago to Bosnia, where Croatian, Serb, and Muslims were in conflict. Three respondents were deployed to Afghanistan (of which one respondent had also been deployed to Bosnia) and four to Iraq (of which one respondent had also been deployed to Bosnia). The male majority was of Moroccan descent, followed by Turkish and Afghan. Although the army outnumbered the other branches, all services were included. Most respondents were aged between 25 and 35 years. The most senior respondents were an army captain and a medical doctor with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Of these nineteen respondents, most were soldiers or non-commissioned officers, four females and two (militarized civilian) interpreters. Meanwhile, three respondents had left the organization because of personal reasons, career motives or a labour dispute. All four services were included, however, the army was

clearly overrepresented. This inevitably produced a very heterogeneous group, which consequently offers only explorative findings.

Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that since 1997 mandatory military service in the Netherlands Armed Forces no longer exists. Although conscription still exists, the current security situation does not require such attendance. Therefore, all our respondents were enlisted and deployed on a voluntary basis. Their contracts varied from fixed contracts to unlimited contracts. None of the respondents practiced their religion very intensively and none of them had a Shiite or Alevite background. In this respect the sample was fairly homogeneous. These characteristics resulted in a relatively small group of respondents, estimated to constitute about 5 percent of all deployed Dutch Muslim servicemen.

6 Results of the Study

6.1 Daily Experiences

In describing the findings of the Dutch Muslim service members, first of all the experiences regarding their minority position outlined. Most respondents acknowledge their mere appearance to be eye-catching, and different from that of ‘the typical Dutchman’ (often due to hair or skin colour). Often their appearance differs from their majority group colleagues (who are usually white). In general they do not speak of any “problems” because of this. At the same time, however, being Muslim did engender some of the perceptual tendencies described by Kanter (1977). Obviously, they did stand out, as they simply were the apparent visible minority within their platoon, battalion, squadron, or unit. If it was not their physical appearance, it was their name tag.

Some reactions the respondents gave were as follows:

“Of course you always attract attention, wherever you are.”

“If you are one of few dark people, you stand out. When I entered the Armed Forces, there weren’t many dark people. So then you are confronted with cultural differences. I was in a platoon that I knew rather well, so it was not so bad.”

Besides merely standing out, the respondents did experience most stereotyping incidents shortly after 9/11. Kanter (1977) describes such processes as role encapsulation, where Muslim soldiers were perceived as representatives of the social group they belong to. The fragments of the interviews below illustrate this phenomenon.

“In the new group, after September 11th, they sometimes called me Bin Laden. Those were people I consorted with. They did it with a smile and it wasn’t really bothering. Apparently they thought of it as funny, but it wasn’t all the time.”

“I noticed something these last years. Actually since the attacks of 9/11. Muslim troopers who are to be deployed are being viewed differently by their own Dutch group. They are actually accused of a double loyalty. In fact they don’t have any, but they are placed in that corner. That’s just Dutch society at the moment, almost ‘we’ against ‘them’.”

According to Kanter (1977) stereotyping behaviour of minorities may lead to performance pressure for the specific soldiers. As they are more conspicuous, more eyes will turn to them, irrespective of what they are doing. Every mistake will be blown out of proportion, every success will be marginalized. Although the majority of the soldiers said not to have experienced these specific pressures, some of them did. One of the respondents narrated on this account:

“My colleagues treat me as a Moroccan. Just as they do it in the Netherlands. You know (...). They saw me as a ‘Moroccan’. Their perception was not in balance. They just don’t trust Moroccans. (...) I don’t have the option of becoming too sentimental. I have to deal with it. At those moments, I’m practical and don’t care what they think. If they think something of me, they can do it after duty hours, but not with me present. Then I will solve it with them, no problem, but then I am blunt too. They give you the feeling of distrust; they ignore you, double check to see if you’re doing your work well enough.”

6.2 Experiences with the Local Population during Deployment

A previous study (Soeters et al. 2004a and 2004b) revealed that Dutch and Turkish Armed Forces manifest marked differences in the interaction with the local populations in areas of operations, such as Afghanistan and Kosovo. The attitudes and behaviour of both contingents differed considerably. Whereas Dutch soldiers at times gave offence to the local population whilst sunbathing half naked, doing sports in shorts and easily interacting with the other sex, Turkish soldiers endeavoured to approach the locals more emphatically, and recited Koran verses to prove their Muslim status. For this reason, the interaction with the local population has also been part of the interviews. In order to find out the merits and demerits of the multiple identities of the Dutch Muslim soldiers from the interviews, four types of interactions with locals during deployment were distinguished.

1. First of all, one can speak of the “positive encounter”. In general, these positive mutual views had the upper hand. Dutch Muslim troopers had particularly easier en-

trances into the local communities due to their specific cultural knowledge. They were often recognized Muslims and hospitably received. According to the Muslim soldiers, this sometimes even led to special friendships. This can also be understood in the realm of *Ummah*, the Islamic notion of community or brotherhood.

2. Another experience relates to the “encounter with obligations”. Due to their specific background, the Muslim troopers were often treated and seen as a focal point. Sometimes pressure from the locals was put upon them, simply because these locals expected being favoured, because they were ‘brothers’. At those times, the Muslim soldiers could easily draw on their cultural knowledge. However, in this clash between ‘cultural expectations’ and more neutral ‘bureaucratic styles’, religious affiliation appeared to be subordinate to the formal and official rules and regulations of the organization.
3. The third encounter is characterized by a “masked appearance” of the Muslim troopers, indicating that they sometimes had to conceal their identities, or consciously switch between cultural frames. This applied most strongly to the Bosnian context, where local Serbs and Muslims were in conflict. There, the local Serbs perceived Muslims negatively, which induced the Muslim soldiers to hide their Muslim identity every so often, as they were not sure what would happen if they would show their Muslim identity. In addition, some of the respondents made mention of questions they received from some of their friends regarding the fact that they had to fight ‘their brothers’.
4. A last type of encounter may be called the “hostile encounter”. Although only few of the interviewees had experienced individual hostilities, the ones that did were very clear about what to do and how to act/handle the situation. The fact that they were facing ‘their brothers’, was not at all of importance in such instances. Their professionalism, own safety and will to survive surpassed every background, ethnicity or identity.

6.3 Mental Support

The absence of an Imam in the Dutch defence organization has already been mentioned. In this chapter, the daily experiences of the Muslim soldiers regarding this absence are outlined.

Especially during the deployment, the absence of an Imam in the Dutch Armed Forces caused serious concerns. Dutch Muslim soldiers were clearly dissatisfied and worried about this fact. One of the respondents narrated the following on this account:

“We are in an organization that is provided with everything regarding mental care. But since the day I’m here they say that they are trying to arrange an Imam. To this day, it’s still not realized. (...) What if I came to die during a deployment? It’s just too awful to think about the coffin they will send me home in. My parents see me coming in a coffin with a cross on it, without me being washed, without the rituals being performed. (...) I think it’s terrible. Especially now. That’s the reason why I became an army confidant. To give people with a Muslim background the feeling that they can express their feelings to me.”

In order to prevent incidents such as described above, some of the Dutch respondents indicated to have made mutual agreements with their fellow Muslim colleagues (either deployed or in the Netherlands) about the specific religious and ceremonial actions that need to be undertaken in case one of them would die.

“Nothing was arranged regarding specific rituals when I die. Before I left [for deployment] I asked the organization what they arranged, in case something would happen. Nothing was arranged. Then I arranged it with two others [i. e. other Muslims in the organization]. If they die, I’ll do everything to arrange things. We have a deal together, personally. Why? Because nothing is arranged, but we have the contacts. We swore together, that you just do it. It’s a kind of brotherhood with each other.”

Clearly, the absence of a military Imam causes the Muslim soldiers to find other ways to deal with this fact. Small informal and personal networks seem to give the support the organization fails to provide.

One of the most revealing moments during the course of this study relates to the awareness of the social relation between ‘the researcher’ and ‘the researched’. One can be part of the dominant group in one situation but simultaneously be a complete ‘other’ in other situations. This ‘otherness’ for the researcher consisted of aspects as ‘being civilian’, ‘being female’ and ‘being Indo-European’. These three aspects make one visible when surrounded by only servicemen, wearing their green battle dress. Never before have I been that much aware of my own appearance. And furthermore, although I have never been that much occupied with my non-Dutch roots, it has been brought to my attention several times during this study. Of course one becomes more aware of one’s own identity whilst studying others, but additionally, in particular those ‘others’ have reminded me of this fact repeatedly.

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Part III: Austria

Muslims in Austrian Fatigues: Findings of a Survey among Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces

Peter Fußl

This article gives an overview of the situation of Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces and is composed of three main sections. It starts with an outline of the general situation of Muslims in Austria with facts and numbers concerning immigration, a historical overview of the legal situation of religious liberty, the attitudes of Austrian political parties towards Islam, mosques and Islamic institutions in Austria. The second part deals with official rules concerning Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces by referring to regulations and official instructions for the treatment of Muslims in the military. The emphasis of the article rests primarily on the final part: the research project on the status quo of the situation of migrants/Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces and its results. This chapter's introduction contains information on the purpose of the study, challenges that emerged during realization, methods employed and general information on the participants followed by the results divided in category groups and a brief conclusion. Additionally this article contains some photographs of Austria's first Islamic prayer room within the walls of a barracks.

1 Muslims in Austria: Outline of the General Situation

This introductory chapter aims to give a short overview on the situation for Muslims in Austria starting with facts and figures followed by a short history of the legal situation concerning Islam in Austria and political debates including decisions and religious organizations. For reasons of topicality and verifiability for readers who do not have access to (older issues of) Austrian newspapers abroad, it was decided to refer to internet sources and databases.

1.1 Immigration: Facts and Figures

According to the 2001 population census (the last official statistical data in Austria) the percentage of Muslims living in Austria is 4.2 percent as compared to the total population. This amounts to a duplication compared to the year 1991. In total figures, in 2001 338,998 Muslims were living in Austria – with an upwards trend¹. In 2006, the Official Islamic Community in Austria² (IGGiÖ) published an estimate, which put the number of Muslims living in Austria between 390,000 and 400,000 (equal to 4.9 percent) for the year 2006.

The majority of Muslims in Austria immigrated from Turkey and Bosnia (-Herzegovina)³. The percentage of Muslims in Vorarlberg stands at 8.4 percent and thus exceeds the nationwide average, followed by Vienna with 7.8 percent. Here (in Vienna) the statistic shows 121,149 Muslims, which represents more than a fourth of all Muslims living in Austria. Generally, Muslim concentration is higher in urban centers than in rural regions. In the provinces Styria and Burgenland the share of Muslims is particularly low (at 1.6 percent and 1.4 percent, respectively). The 8.4 percent in Vorarlberg and 7.8 percent in Vienna indicate, that in these regions Muslims constitute the second largest religious community behind the Roman Catholics. Throughout Austria, Muslims are the third largest religious community.

1.2 Religious Liberty: Brief Historical Overview of the Legal Situation

As stated in Article 14 of the ‘Basic Law of 21st December 1867 on the General Rights of Nationals in the Kingdoms and Länder represented in the Imperial Council’⁴ – which “laid down the fundamental rights and the right of personal liberty of citizens of the Austrian half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and, with amendments (freedom of art, data protection), (...) [is] still part of the Austrian Constitution [and wherein] (...) fun-

1 Short excursus concerning the historical trend: beginning from 1971 with 0.3 percent, 1991 with 2.0 percent and 2001 with 4.2 percent the ratio of Muslims measured against the entire population of Austria went up to (estimated) 4.9 percent in 2006.

2 The original German term is: Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich (IGGiÖ), which literally translates to Islamic Denomination in Austria

3 According to Statistics Austria (Statistik Austria) the ratio of immigrants from Turkey totals up to a percentage of ~30.5 percent and those from Bosnia (-Herzegovina) to ~15.7 percent of all immigrants in Austria in the years 1998 to 2007. Cf. www.statistik.at, calculations by the author.

4 Orig. German term: Staatsgrundgesetz vom 21. Dezember 1867, über die allgemeinen Rechte der Staatsbürger für die im Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreiche und Länder.

damental laws of a liberal state under the rule of law were established to protect individual liberty against encroachment by the state authority”⁵ – freedom of conscience and creed is guaranteed for everyone, as the below-mentioned extract from the original text of law shows:

*“Art. 14. Everyone is guaranteed complete freedom of conscience and creed. The enjoyment of civil and political rights is independent of religious beliefs. Nevertheless duties incumbent on nationals may not be prejudiced by religious beliefs. No one can be forced to observe a ritual act or to participate in an ecclesiastical ceremony in so far as he is not subordinate to another who is by law invested with such authority.”*⁶

In Article 15 is further determined that “Every Church and religious society recognized by the law has the right to assemble for public religious practice, and arranges and administers its internal affairs autonomously, and retains possession and enjoyment of its institutions, endowments and funds devoted to worship, instruction and welfare, but is like every society subject to the general laws of the land.”⁷ Article 16 of this Basic Law says that everyone is allowed to practice their religion (whether recognized by law or not) with special restrictions:

*“Art. 16. *) The members of a legally not recognized confession may practice their religion at home, in so far as this practice is neither unlawful, nor offends common decency.*

**) See however Art. 63 para. 2 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, StGBI. No. 303/1920.”*⁸

As regards the legal status of Islam, Austria was one of the countries that led the way, and this can be traced back to the occupation of Bosnia in 1879. At that time the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy granted the Ottoman rule religious liberty. 33 years later, on July 15, 1912, the Islamic Law was proclaimed by Francis Joseph, “referring to the adherents of Islam practising the Hanafite rite as a religious community”⁹. Article 1 states, that “[t]he adherents of Islam shall be granted recognition as a religious community in the kingdoms and crown-lands represented in the Imperial Council”¹⁰.

5 Source: http://aeiou.iicm.tugraz.at/aeiou.encyclp.s/s732634.htm;internal&action=_setlanguage.action?LANGUAGE=en (last access on 21.01.2009).

6 Source: http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/ErV/ERV_1867_142/ERV_1867_142.pdf (last access on 21.01.2009).

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Source: <http://www.derislam.at/islam.php?name=Themen&pa=showpage&pid=6> (last access on 13.01.2009).

10 Ibid.

Article 63 para. 2 of the above-mentioned Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye from 1920 states, that all citizens of Austria have the right to practice all forms of belief, religion or creed in public or private unless this practise is inconsistent with the public policy or morality.¹¹ So this can be seen as another step towards the right of free practice of religion in Austria.

The Federal Law Gazette for the Republic of Austria from 1958, 210 is called ‘Convention for Protecting Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms along with an additional protocol’¹². In this Gazette’s Article 9 some additional aspects concerning religion, belief etc. are laid down as the following excerpt clarifies:

*“(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
(2) Freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.”*¹³

1.3 Political Parties and their Attitudes towards Islam

Although the right of freely practising one’s religion in Austria is granted by the above named laws, and Austria could be seen as a recipe for success abroad as various news articles and reports suggest, e. g. the German news magazine “Tagesschau” featuring an article entitled ‘Austria, a Recipe for Success in Europe?’¹⁴, numerous opinions have been voiced that could be summarized as being ‘Anti-Islam’. Therefore the next section aims to give an explanation concerning the different positions of the five relevant political parties in Austria documented with statements representative for each party programme.

11 Cf. <http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Bundesnormen/NOR12000956/NOR12000956.pdf> (last access on 21.01.2009) translation by the author.

12 Orig.: Konvention zum Schutze der Menschenrechte und Grundfreiheiten samt Zusatzprotokoll, translation by the author.

13 Source: http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblPdf/1958_210_0/1958_210_0.pdf (last access on 22.01.2009)

14 Cf. <http://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/meldung210998.html> (last access on 24.01.2009), translation by the author.

Presuming that the right-wing populist Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) assumes a stiff anti-Islamic attitude is not really far-fetched. Statements and slogans like “Daham statt Islam”, which means ‘home instead of Islam’ and rhymes in German and was seen on posters in the National Assembly campaign in 2006, “Pummerin statt Muezzin” – Pummerin (the bell of Vienna’s St. Stephan’s Cathedral) instead of muezzin – as seen in the same campaign or “drohende Islamisierung Europas” (cit. H. C. Strache) what literally translated means ‘the threat of the Islamification of Europe’ are part of the party’s image. But even upon completion of this election campaign, the FPÖ did not (and does not) abandon the topic of Islam and continues to make it the subject of discussion. So they urged for example to ‘stop the uncontrolled growth of Islamic boardhouses in Vienna’ in the borough council of Vienna on October 5, 2006. In this conference a couple of statements were given but essentially with the same anti-Islamic twist; the FPÖ-representative, Mr Harald Stefan, for example stated, that in effect the point was that a community is piling into Austria which is incompatible with our society. Another example for this negative approach is Susanne Winter, front-runner of the FPÖ Graz, who caused a stir saying at FPÖ’s new year’s meeting in 2008 that if Islamic prophet Mohammed were measured against today’s standards he would count as a child abuser. For this she was sentenced due to sedition and vilification of religious doctrines on January 22, 2009. Overall the Austrian Freedom Party’s position on Islam is consolidated in the so-called position paper ‘Wir und der Islam’, which means ‘Us and the Islam’. In fact, the title itself implies the negative approach and the exclusion of Islamic culture and Muslims as ‘something’ not belonging to ‘us’. Still the FPÖ openly emphasizes that they espouse religious freedom and have sought to network as a political power with Islamic countries for years. But beyond that, this paper inter alia details measures to handle problems as regards the integration of Muslims and dealing with radical Islamic tendencies. Those are for instance:

- language courses (as for all immigrants),
- prohibition of minarets (by amending the Austrian federal constitution),
- prohibiting veils in public spaces,
- monitoring of Islamic schools and religious education,
- inspection of Islamic school books with a view to antidemocratic contents,
- German-only preaching of Imams and religious education,

- teachers with a lack of knowledge of the German language are barred from obtaining a didactic licence etc.¹⁵

This supports the conclusion that the FPÖ is not as liberal towards Muslims and the Islam as leading politicians of this party keep claiming.

The second right-wing Populist Party in Austria, the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ), equally makes Islam the subject of public discussion. One of the seemingly most important issues concerning Islam for this party is the dispute on prohibiting mosques in Carinthia, and this has to do with former leader of the party and governor of the province Carinthia Jörg Haider (who died in 2008) as I will show in more detail later. On the BZÖ parliamentary group's homepage, however, delegate for National Council Gerald Grosz comments on this subject-matter (not concerning building mosques). He states, that radical-Islamic teachers of religious education contaminate society and he goes on saying: "It is unbelievable, what a kind of dangerous sub-society has been shaped in the cloak of religious freedom." Grosz (ironically spokesman for human rights) then continues: "Every Islamic religious education which refuses democracy, our legal system and human rights, has to be prohibited. Those who think they have to practise this in our country, have to be deported."¹⁶

It is fair to say in this context and keeping the prior statements in mind that both – the FPÖ and the BZÖ – are not really exposed towards Islam. To summarize – and this might be the real problem, it can be said that Islam is looked upon equipollent with radical fundamentalism.

The above mentioned positions of these two political parties in Austria seemed to be most important because in the last legislative election in 2008 the FPÖ and the BZÖ together garnered 28.2 percent of all cast votes. And this means, that hadn't they split up the FPÖ to form two separate parties in the year 2005, the right-wing-block or in this case the right-wing party respectively would be the second strongest in Austria.

But also the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and especially the state parliament of Vienna comments on this subject. On the one hand they advocate unhindered and free practice of religion for Muslims living in Vienna but on the other hand their internet appearance shows for instance a short article which deals with free practice of religion –

15 Cf. http://fpoe.at/index.php?id=477&backPID=1741&tt_news=17423 (last access on 01.02.2009), translation by the author.

16 Cf. http://www.bzoe-parlamentsklub.at/Pressedienste/Januar2009/27.01.2009_Grosz.html (last access on 01.02.2009), translation by the author.

but only considering the Islam from a quite negative perspective. Wolfgang Ulm, member of the Vienna parliament, says that it is absolutely inadmissible for Austria to permit free practice of religion, since Christians have to suffer from national reprisals in other countries. According to Ulm, Turkey should allow the construction of Christian churches as well as the education of priests and teachers of religious education. Further he calls for strengthening the exceptional position of the Roman Catholic Church in Austria by all means.¹⁷

The other two politically significant parties in Austria, the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and The Green Party (DIE GRÜNEN) declare themselves liberal and open towards Islam, as well as towards the subject of immigration and the integration of immigrants in general. The SPÖ, for instance, appointed a commissioner for Islamic matters – Omar Al-Rawi, who acts as intermediary towards the IGGiÖ in questions concerning integration and migration. The Greens recently demonstrated their attitude during the EU-debate on Turkey's entry into the European Union, vehemently opposing one-sided hostile positions towards Islam.

Despite the different positions regarding the issue of Islam (and concerning migration and the integration of migrants in general), the political parties in Austria agree about teachers of Islamic religion. In particular on this subject a so called Islam study was published in the end of January 2009 by sociologist and Islamic scientist Mouhanad Khorchide (within the scope of his dissertation entitled "Der islamische Religionsunterricht zwischen Integration und Parallelgesellschaft: Einstellungen der islamischen ReligionslehrerInnen an öffentlichen Schulen" or "Islamic religious instruction between integration and parallel society: attitudes of teachers of Islamic religion at public schools"), causing excitement in Austria and abroad. This study documents that one in five (21.9 percent) Islam teachers reject the democratic constitution and 14.7 percent of all position themselves against the Austrian constitution. Additionally the survey reveals a percentage of 13.9 who think, that the participation in elections is incompatible with Islam and 28.4 percent, who think being a Muslim is inconsistent with simultaneously being European. 27 percent reject the human rights declaration because it is incompatible with Islam and finally 17 percent stated, that Islam prohibits the participation in Austria's culture (art, theatre etc.)¹⁸. Thus all parties argue for more and better monitor-

17 Cf. <http://wien.oevp.at/9148/?MP=61-157> (last access on 01.02.2009), translation by the author.

18 Cf. http://diepresse.com/home/bildung/schule/447494/index.do?direct=449134&_vl_backlink=/home/bildung/449134/index.do&selChannel= (last access on 03.02.2009), translation by the author.

ing of the teachers of Islam and the syllabus of instruction (both appointed and developed by the IGGiÖ).¹⁹

1.4 Mosques in Austria

In the context of the earlier mentioned (legal) process of freedom of religion and Islam gaining legitimacy, the dispute on building mosques in Austria should be briefly brought up here. Like in many other countries the (more or less political) debate on building mosques is a nearly every-day headline in the media. Due to the above mentioned Islamic Law, it is legal to build them as long as building regulations and other provisions effective in Austria for putting up buildings are observed. Nevertheless discussions on building mosques in Austria, especially the debate on the legal prohibition of building mosques in Carinthia in 2008, provoked by Jörg Haider and the Alliance for the Future of Austria, the BZÖ, do not abate. The online issue of the Austrian daily newspaper “Der Standard” headlined for example on February 13, 2008 ‘Legal Prohibition of Mosques in Carinthia’ and goes on quoting Theo Öhlinger, lecturer in constitutional law, who said, he was afraid that this new law was legal. Interestingly, unlike in the first draft there is no explicit prohibition of mosques and minarets (which would be unconstitutional because of the Austrian legal principle of free practice of religion). The new bill only refers to extraordinary constructions whether profane or sacred to conceal the proper motive, Öhlinger stated.²⁰ But not only the BZÖ deals with building mosques in its political work, the FPÖ does so as well. For instance, already mentioned FPÖ member Susanne Winter set the cat among the pigeons in Graz with the slogan ‘our imperative is the ban of mosques’ (“Unser Gebot heißt Moscheenverbot”²¹).

In this regard, it is essential to know the quantity of mosques and prayer rooms in Austria. The website of the IGGiÖ shows an overview of 105 mosques in Austria (45 of

19 The Ministry of Education’s respond was a five-issues-agenda for democratisation of Islam-teachers on February 2, 2009 which includes new working contracts for the teachers including an introduction that lays down the merits of democracy, human rights and the constitution, the threat of cancellation of the education licence in case of neglect, a new syllabus (finalised until the end of April), inspection of teaching materials and activity reports to the Ministry of Education. In addition to this, there is another reformation: in case of lacking knowledge of the German language the education licence can be cancelled as well. The reactions to this package of measures leads to varied reactions by Austria’s political parties.

20 Cf. <http://derstandard.at/?url=?id=3223966> (last access on 18.01.2009), translation by the author.

21 Source: http://fpoe.at/index.php?id=477&backPID=1741&tt_news=19974 (last assess on 02.02.2009).

those in Vienna)²². According to other internet sources, however, a total of about 200–260 mosques in Austria are counted. Most of them (assuming that there are 260 mosques in Austria, nearly 100 percent) are prayer rooms and only two (one in Vienna and one in Telfs/Tirol) are what a considerable part of the Austrian society makes out as ‘mosques’ because of the minaret and the typical look.

1.5 Islamic Institutions, as Sociations and Clubs in Austria

In Austria there are numerous Muslim associations, but the umbrella organization is the already mentioned IGGiÖ officially representing Muslims in Austria. The range of functions of the IGGiÖ varies from Islamic education in Austrian schools, appointment of teaching staff, providing agency services, issuing certificates (like for name-giving, weddings or before the start of military service), administration of an Islamic cemetery to cross-linking between several mosques and associations. The IGGiÖ sees itself as connecting piece between public and civil institutions and establishments.

Other Austrian Islamic or Muslim clubs respectively are for instance the IIDZ – Austria²³ (which is Austria’s only supplier for halal-certification and provides actual commentaries, a clipping report, external articles or book-reviews and publication references on its homepage), the IBIKUZ²⁴ (whose field of activities comprises inter alia round-table discussions with persons responsible for other religions, publishing brochures on different issues, religious education for Muslim children, introductory courses in Arab language and in the Koran, work with youth groups etc.), the IMÖ²⁵ (with media and press relations work, civil-societal activities particularly with regard to anti-racism, political participation of migrants generally and Muslims in particular, inter-religious dialogue and inner-Muslim integration tasks) or the MJÖ²⁶ (who wants to establish a new Austrian-Islamic identity far away from religious extremism and without fully giving up established identities, mainly via alternative recreational activities like summer-camps or voyages and further education of youth through various seminars). There are also

22 Cf. <http://www.derislam.at/islam.php?name=Themen&pa=showpage&pid=101> (last access on 13.01.2009).

23 Islamisches Informations- und Dokumentationszentrum Österreich (Islamic Information and Documentation Centre Austria).

24 Islamisches Bildungs- und Kulturzentrum Österreich (Islamic Centre of Education and Culture Austria).

25 Initiative muslimischer Österreicherinnen und Österreicher (Initiative of Muslim Austrians).

26 Muslimische Jugend Österreich (Muslim Youth Austria).

numerous local clubs like the IRG Linz²⁷ for instance. In addition to this, there are almost innumerable websites on the subject Islam.

This short round-up concerning the general situation of Muslims in Austria, data and facts, will be followed by a detailed consideration of special regulations for Muslims (on prayer times, food etc.) in the Austrian Armed Forces in the next chapter.

2 Official Rules for Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces

In Austria free practise of religion is, as mentioned earlier, a general legal principle; and so this pertains within the Austrian Armed Forces as well. Special regulations in treating religious minorities (concerning food, prayer times etc.) are laid out in the ‘Official Publication I issued by the Austrian Ministry of Defence – As of 2006 – 53. Routine Duties; Treatment of Religious Minorities – Conscription and Assignments; Key Regulations – Revised Edition’²⁸. The regulations concerning Muslims were developed in cooperation between the Austrian Ministry of Defence and the Austrian Armed Forces, respectively, and the IGGiÖ. This paper contains eight chapters, seven of which deal with religious minorities, the 8th deals with abrogation’s: pious (Orthodox) members of the Jewish Community, pious members of the Islamic Community, highly pious members of the Islamic Community, non-pious members of the Islamic Community, pious members of the Sikh Community, members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and members of other religious communities. Here Muslims are divided into three groups (pious, highly-pious, non-pious). What this means for the affected recruits is obvious: through this classification scheme Muslims are not as free in practising their religion as they should be. The following excerpts of this paper will illustrate the special regulations concerning the treatment of Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces and will point out the problems which will be specified at the end of this article in detail.

Regulations concerning pious members of the Islamic Community

1. *Conscription* to military service with the *Vienna Military Command* on certain *call-up dates* to be determined by the Vienna Military Command. The Vienna Military

27 Islamische Religionsgemeinde Linz für Oberösterreich und Salzburg (Islamic Religious Community Linz for Upper Austria and Salzburg).

28 Orig.: Verlautbarungsblatt I des Bundesministeriums für Landesverteidigung – Jahrgang 2006 – 53. Dienstbetrieb; Behandlung religiöser Minderheiten – Einberufung und Verwendung; Zusammenfassende Richtlinien – Neufassung. Cf. attachment, p. 161.

Command will decide to which unit each conscript is assigned and will inform the Personnel Department at the Ministry of Defence accordingly.

(...)

Conscripts must *prove* that they are *pious members of the Islamic Community already during pre-induction examinations* by submitting a certificate of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community in Austria which is entitled “*confirmation of practising the Islamic religion*”.

In justified exceptional circumstances it is possible to hand in the certificate to the conscription division of the competent Military Command up to one month after the pre-induction examinations.

2. *The conscription target will be exceeded.*

3. Training and further assignments:

Pious Muslim believers will receive a two-month basic training before being assigned to administrative or service functions in the territorial organization of the Vienna Military Command.

4. The Vienna Military Command or the units involved will make the necessary *arrangements for special religious requirements* including messing, dietary regulations as well as praying facilities and times directly with the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community in Austria (...) according to paragraph 4 above.

5. *Changed time schedule* for pious members of the Islamic Community and supporting measures:

a) *Pious Muslims are bound by their religion to pray five times a day:*

- *salat al-fajr* – dawn prayer, before sunrise
- *salat al-zuhr* – midday prayer, after the sun passes its highest point in the sky
- *salat al-'asr* – afternoon prayer, the late part of the afternoon
- *salat al-maghrib* – sunset prayer, just after sunset
- *salat al-'isha* – night prayer, between sunset and midnight

As the list shows, soldiers performing basic and training military service normally do not have to hold the dawn, sunset and night prayers during duty hours.

For official reasons it is therefore not necessary as a rule to let the soldiers perform all the five daily prayers together in the evening.

Constraints during training, the performance of duties in accordance with general service regulations, on operations or during exercises under operational conditions cannot always be avoided. But even in such cases, appropriate organizational measures should be taken to guarantee that pious Muslim believers can perform their daily prayers.

On Fridays, the midday prayer is replaced by the *Friday prayer*. This is a very important obligation for every Muslim who is of full age and can be held accountable. Unlike the daily mandatory prayers, Friday prayers must be performed together with the community of believers. They are closely connected with instructions in religious duties, obligations and prohibitions. Friday prayers do not necessarily have to take place in mosques. The important thing is that they are performed inside and attended by at least three Muslims, one of whom must be an Imam who leads the prayer. Every adult Muslim can fulfil the task of an Imam.

As the Friday prayers have special significance for pious members of the Islamic Community, Muslims are to be granted leave so that they can attend these prayers. However, this does not apply to missions of the Austrian Army in cases specified in Article 2, Paragraph 1, Letters a) and b) of the 2001 Defence Law.

- b) Muslim holidays for which pious members of the Islamic Community are to be granted leave are as follows:
- *Id-ul-Fitr* – holy day which marks the end of *Ramadan*, the Islamic holy month of fasting: three days
 - *Id-ul-Adha* – Festival of Sacrifice: four days

In return, pious Muslim soldiers should be assigned duty more frequently on Sundays and other Christian holidays.

6. Adapted to the Gregorian calendar, the Muslim holy days will be announced separately each year.
7. (...)
8. Soldiers who fail a drug test twice will automatically lose their status as pious Muslims. The provisions of Article IV of this directive will then apply to them.

Regulations concerning highly pious members of the Islamic Community

Highly pious members of the Islamic Community are persons who not only clearly profess their faith in Islam and abide strictly by its religious rules but also try to lead their lives in accordance with their religion and God's will.

In addition to the traditional set of religious rules including obligations, prohibitions and the attendance of prayers, they also have to obey special standards of behaviour which they consider indispensable for their religious life. They act in line with the traditional codes of conduct established by the Prophet Muhammad and great Islamic scholars.

Their strict religious attitude is seen in a very positive light not only by themselves but also by the other members of the Islamic Community.

As the percentage of highly pious Muslim believers within the Islamic Community is very small and the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community in Austria handles the certification of their status as highly pious members of the Islamic Community very restrictively and only after a thorough examination of the individual case, the Supreme Council was authorised to grant permission, on a case by case basis, for highly pious Muslim believers to grow a beard.

However, the Austrian Ministry of Defence reserves the right to grant official permission for highly pious members of the Islamic Community to wear a beard on duty. If soldiers are granted such permission, they are exempted from wearing NBC protective masks and gas seal testing.

If a highly pious member of the Islamic Community who has received the appropriate certification by the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community is conscripted into the Austrian Army, the responsible unit must submit an application to the Ministry of Defence for the soldier to be granted permission to wear a beard on duty.

The soldier is free to have a full beard until the ministry makes a decision.

(...)

Soldiers who fail a drug test twice will automatically lose their status as highly pious Muslims. The provisions of Article IV of this directive will then apply to them.

Regulations concerning non-pious members of the Islamic Community

Due to the demographic development in Austria, an increasing number of conscripts are called up to render service throughout Austria who are Muslim believers but do not meet the criteria for being treated as pious members of the Islamic Community.

The problem during their basic military service is that these soldiers refuse to consume pork (or products made of pork) for religious and/or cultural reasons but are not pious Muslims according to the strict criteria.

With the intention of giving these conscripts and all the other soldiers who prefer non-pork food the opportunity to receive this kind of special messing, the directive entitled “Alternative Messing in Troop Kitchens”, Reference No. 51590/7-4.11/99, was issued on 18 January 1999 and distributed down to unit level.

This directive is to be seen as a measure with which the Army can meet its obligation to care for its soldiers in compliance with Article 4, Paragraph 1 of the Austrian Army Service Regulations and is to be implemented within the bounds of duty. It should be pointed out that no legal claims can be derived from the above-mentioned directive if supply with alternative non-pork food is not possible in justified exceptional cases.

Muslim soldiers performing basic military service are not granted any privileges as members of the Islamic Community excluding the provision of non-pork food. However, in accordance with Article 45 of the 2001 Defence Law the commanders in charge can, upon request and within the bounds of duty, grant this group of persons leave on the holidays as granted to pious members of the Islamic Community. The loss of duty hours must then be made up for by more frequent duties on Sundays and/or other Christian holidays. This may not, however, result in a loss of training hours that cannot be made up for. (cf. *Verlautbarungsblatt I*²⁹)

In addition to this official publication concerning Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces, in 2004 a prayer room has been established in the Maria Theresien-Barracks in Vienna. This room of about 40 square metres is designed to accommodate 60 individuals for their daily prayers. Because of this, the Austrian Armed Forces are anxious to station Muslim recruits in these barracks to give them the opportunity to practise their religion freely and to adapt religion to daily duty requirements. Furthermore the appointment of Imams as military chaplains in the Austrian Armed Forces is in

²⁹ Translation by the author.

discussion since 2006 (brought up for discussion by Austrian Ministry of Defence under leadership of former minister of defence Günter Platter) but was not realised up to the present.

3 Research Project on the Status Quo of the Situation of Migrants/Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces

As already pointed out in the introduction, this chapter contains detailed descriptions regarding the research project itself, its purpose, challenges met during realisation, methods, general information on the participants and finally the results.

The research project initially was planned to provide an empirical background for my diploma thesis and was accomplished in cooperation with the National Defence Academy of Austria within the scope of a seminar at Vienna University. In the course of time my work transformed from an independent to a commission research dealing with military duty as a factor for integration of migrants on the one hand and on the other hand with research concerning integration of migrants and people with migratory background into society in general and into the military system in particular.

In the following chapters the (theoretical) framework, the setting and obstacles (e. g. incompatibility with terms of service) that were encountered in the realisation of this research project will be explained. Following this introduction to the study and its underlying conditions, general information on the participants (e. g. age, country of origin, level of education of the participants themselves and their parents respectively) will be given. Subsequently, the results of the survey and the interviews will be illustrated. Concluding, a concise analysis of all assembled data will be attempted.

3.1 Purpose

The principal aim of this study was to learn about the status quo concerning migrants in the Austrian Armed Forces. First and foremost it was important to find out whether the Austrian Armed Forces play a role in the integration of migrants and if so, what this process looks like in detail. For the above mentioned second part it was essential to reassess whether this process of integration (if any) supports the integration of migrants into Austria's society in general. In summary, it was important to find out IF there is integration in the Austrian Armed Forces and HOW this integration works particularly

with regard to improving the current situation: Is there something that needs to be done – or to be more precise – to be changed?

Besides that, for me it was quintessential to find out how migrants or, people with a migration background, and especially Muslims are treated. How do they feel, what kind of obstacles they are faced with, how are they regarded by people without an immigrant background? How do the special regulations (meals, prayer times etc.) influence them and what kind of effect do these regulations have on ‘non-migrants’ and superiors respectively? Last but not least, how do superiors act towards migrants/Muslims in general?

For the purpose of this article not all of the results of this study were helpful, so it was obvious to concentrate on fundamental data, facts and information of the participants (all respondents) on the one hand, and on the other hand to focus on Muslims. Therefore some additional interviews explicitly with Muslims and a modified guideline were employed.

3.2 Challenges

In general, the cooperation with the Austrian Armed Forces and especially with the National Defence Academy can be described as good with some exceptions. First of all one problem turned out to be fundamental: within the Austrian Armed Forces data concerning migratory background, country of origin or religion are neither recorded nor saved (because all draftees are Austrian residents otherwise they would have no duty to serve in the Austrian Armed Forces). The only data concerning religion saved is if recruits declare themselves as pious during induction examinations. So establishing contacts to migrants, recruits with migratory background and in this special case Muslims was not always easy, and in the majority of cases had not been done before I was on site in the barracks. Here another problem emerged: sentences like ‘Bring me some Muslims!’ or requests in lecture rooms like ‘Three Muslims come along with me now!’ from superiors highlights Muslims as someone different, anomalous and demonstrates the unfortunately negative general atmosphere towards Muslims in Austrian barracks.

A second problem was the partial incompatibility with the terms of service in the daily routine in the Austrian Armed Forces. So the first two interviews took place after official hours which resulted in relatively reserved and blocked recruits and inferior

output. But this problem was resolved after the first two interviews and thereafter all interviews took place during daily duty hours.

The third and literally the last problem was that I was on my own when trying to approach my contacts – recruits and superiors – in the barracks with the intention to gain them as participants of the study. In one case access to the barracks chosen for this study was denied to me as a civilian. Therefore a directive from higher headquarters was needed to gain entry and a great deal of time was wasted until I got the chance to interview recruits in those barracks. In general, most of the time was wasted fixing appointments with the superiors and their subordinates; the waiting time from the telephone call to the fixed date usually amounted to weeks.

3.3 Methods

This research study was planned as a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data collection by use of a questionnaire and (half-structured) guideline-based in-depth interviews. Both the questionnaire and the guideline for the interviews were adapted in the course of the study as a result of the gathered empirical values and to improve the data output. The aim of this mixed approach was to get basic information on a preferably wide range of recruits with the aid of the questionnaire and (after a brief analysis) to establish the guideline and the selection of the interview partners on its results in further consequence.

The realisation of the quantitative questionnaire was planned in two stages: during the first stage (preferably all) recruits of 3 companies stationed in the Maria Theresien-Barracks (short: MTK) in Vienna with enlistment dates starting in January, March and May 2008 were consulted, amounting to 225 surveys in total. After a short analysis of the first questioning – especially after analysing the questions ‘Did you miss any question(s)?’ and ‘If so, which questions did you miss?’ respectively – the questionnaire was modified and ten additional questions were attached. Thereafter in the second stage 229 recruits in three different barracks (two of them outside Vienna) were polled – among them 68 had already been polled in the first stage – to provide the possibility to compare the situation in urban and rural areas. Hence the questionnaire was used in the Ostarrichi-Barracks in Amstetten and the Wallenstein-Barracks in Götzendorf. Not only was the comparison between urban – rural settings of interest and the reason behind questioning outside Vienna but also the special hypothesis, that in rural barracks

considerably less recruits with migratory background are stationed and that this might be causing fundamental differences in the migrants' situation. In addition, one company of the MTK participated a second time. This was planned to afford the opportunity to observe changes in the responses of the polled recruits over time in the Austrian Armed Forces (since about two and a half months had passed between the first and the second survey). Therefore, an additional question was added to the question paper: 'Has something changed for you since the last questioning?' To summarise, there were 454 completed questionnaires from altogether 385 different recruits.

The latest version of the questionnaire includes 36 queries. The ones most important for this article are listed in the following in no specific order: besides questions on demographic issues like age, country of origin, duration of stay in Austria, number of inhabitants of the home-town, occupation, highest completed qualification of the recruits and religious affiliation (and in this context the question on the intensity of faith – non-pious, pious and highly pious), questions concerning the recruit's parents like their country of origin (to get information on second-generation migrants as well, since this information was lacking in the first stage of questioning) or their highest completed qualification were asked. In the following the most important questions will be specified:

- What did you like during your period of service in the army?
- What didn't you like so much?
- Thinking about your time in the army, do you think any improvements are necessary?
- What would you like to improve?
- Which of the following is an important issue within/outside the Austrian Armed Forces (with given answers: language, personality, religion, job, colour of skin, origin, education)?
- Were you informed about the possibility of free practice of religion prior to your enlistment?
- Do you make use of the possibility of free practice of religion in the Austrian Armed Forces?
- How do you assess the relationship between Austrian and nationalised Austrian recruits?

- Do you think that Austrian and nationalised Austrian recruits are treated equally?

In chapter 3.5 the results of the questionnaire and these questions will be specified and afterwards analytically summed up in chapter 3.6.

The evaluation of the quantitative questionnaire was computer-based, miscellaneous statistics and spreadsheet programs were used, and resulted in a descriptive overview, tables and graphics.

The qualitative part of this study was realised by use of (half-structured) guideline-based in-depth interviews. For this purpose 15 interviews in three different barracks (Vienna, Amstetten and Götzendorf, thus the same three barracks as the questionnaire was realised in) were conducted on a voluntary basis, recorded and afterwards transliterated for analysis. The interviewees were chosen to participate based on a 2 (migrants): 1 (born in Austria) ratio. In total 15 interviews were conducted with five recruits born in Austria and ten first-generation migrants from which six were Muslims. This article mainly focuses on the latter.

In the following the guideline for the interviews, which is segmented in three parts – open initial question, questions on social issues/migratory background etc. and finally demographic questions, is listed. Not all of these questions were actually asked. The plan was to ‘follow’ the flow of the discourse with the interview partners, but to keep these questions in mind):

- What did you expect from the Austrian Armed Forces?
- How was it in reality? Did it live up to your expectations or was it different?
- How was the relationship with the comrades? How was the relationship with people outside the Austrian Armed Forces?
- Has this relationship changed over time in the Austrian Armed Forces?
- Has a formation of groups occurred – and if yes, what were the influences by these group(ing)s?
- Has something changed outwards the Austrian Armed Forces?
- How do you perceive the social assistance within the Austrian Armed Forces?
- What was communication amongst recruits like?
- Did your origin/colour of skin/religion/language/communicative ability play a(ny) role?

- Can you give me an example for this?
- Did this influence the group(ing)?
- Has something changed (in the group, for the group etc.)?
- Did you want to report this incident (if any)? If yes: how/whom did you notify? If no: why not?
- Was your religion considered within the Austrian Armed Forces?
- How would you describe your superior's attitude towards you?
- Do you think, others recognize you as 'more-Austrian' through fulfilment of the mandatory military service?
- How do you feel wearing the Austrian uniform?
- How do you generally feel in Austria?
- Questions on age, origin, migration background, how long in Austria, why not civil service? etc.

The interviews were fully transliterated, prepared for analysis and finally analysed. As dictated by the re-constructive approach, which was one of the analytical methods employed, the analysis not only looked at WHAT was said but HOW and WHEN it was said as being of vital importance. Beyond this, relevancy also had been considered by what the recruits talked about without being asked, as this was probably most important for them.

3.4 General Information on the Participants

For this research project only recruits were chosen to participate. On the one hand this choice was made because of the lack of professional soldiers with migratory background and accordingly Muslim professional soldiers in the Austrian Armed Forces and the employer's parameters for the study, and on the other hand it was obvious that in the Austrian Armed Forces with its mandatory system people from all walks of life are represented and potentially it may be possible to extrapolate from this survey to the parent population of Austria. As mentioned earlier in chapter 3.3, in total 385 different recruits in three barracks in Austria were questioned in this survey split into to stages of questioning. Additionally 15 interviews were conducted in the following composition (Table 1):

Table 1: Overview of conducted interviews

	fictive name ³⁰	country of origin	in Austria for	age	barracks
Interview 1	Alexander	Austria	from birth	20	MTK (1 st Comp.)
Interview 2	Milan	Bosnia	16 years	28	MTK (1 st Comp.)
Interview 3	Kimi	Romania	20 years	25	Götzendorf
Interview 4	Ruben	Mexico	22 years	26	Götzendorf
Interview 5	Raik	Serbia	22 years	22	Götzendorf
Interview 6	Paul	Austria	from birth	22	Götzendorf
Interview 7	David	Austria	from birth	19	MTK (3 rd Comp.)
Interview 8	Arda	Turkey	6 years	18	MTK (3 rd Comp.)
Interview 9	Mahel	Dominican Rep.	5 years	18	MTK (4 th Comp.)
Interview 10	Maximilian	Austria	from birth	19	MTK (4 th Comp.)
Interview 11	Felix	Austria	from birth	19	Amstetten (2 nd C.)
Interview 12	Eldin	Bosnia	18 years	19	Amstetten (2 nd C.)
Interview 13	Goran	Turkey/Croatia	19 years	24	MTK (1 st Comp.)
Interview 14	Ercan	Turkey	23 years	23	MTK (1 st Comp.)
Interview 15	Fatih	Turkey	19 years	19	MTK (1 st Comp.)

Essential for this study was certainly the question concerning the country of origin of the recruits. In this regard the survey reveals that nearly one quarter of all respondents (22.5 percent) was not born in Austria (first-generation migrants). Most recruits immigrated to Austria from Bosnia and Herzegovina (4.2 percent), Romania (2.4 percent), Turkey (2.4 percent), Serbia and Montenegro (2.4 percent), Kosovo (1.8 percent), Croatia (1.3 percent), Poland (0.8 percent) and Iraq (0.8 percent). 0.5 percent of the recruits were born in India, Egypt, Slovakia, Germany and the Ukraine, respectively. And in each case 0.3 percent came from the following countries to Austria: Czech Republic, Hungary, Philippines, Italy, Afghanistan, Colombia, Iran, France, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Japan, USA and Ghana.

In addition it was important to find out something about so-called second-generation migrants as well. Therefore the question concerning the country of origin of the recruits' parents was asked (in the second stage of questioning) and it revealed, that 35.4 percent of the recruits' mothers (28 different countries) and 30.9 percent of the recruits' fathers (22 different countries) were born abroad. So this shows that the mothers are more often not born in Austria than the fathers.

30 The names in this table are imaginary and have nothing to do with the real names of the interviewees.

Table 2 gives an overview of the ratio of migrant recruits versus recruits with migration background and their distribution in the tree locations, the MTK barracks in Vienna, and the barracks in Götzendorf and Amstetten. It shows a significant high number of migrants (and especially recruits with migration background) in the barracks in Götzendorf. This is not in line with the previously mentioned attempt to station Muslim recruits in the Maria Theresien-Barracks in Vienna, and illustrates, that this attempt does not always work due to various circumstances (e. g. shortage of staff).

Table 2: Recruits' migration background according to barracks

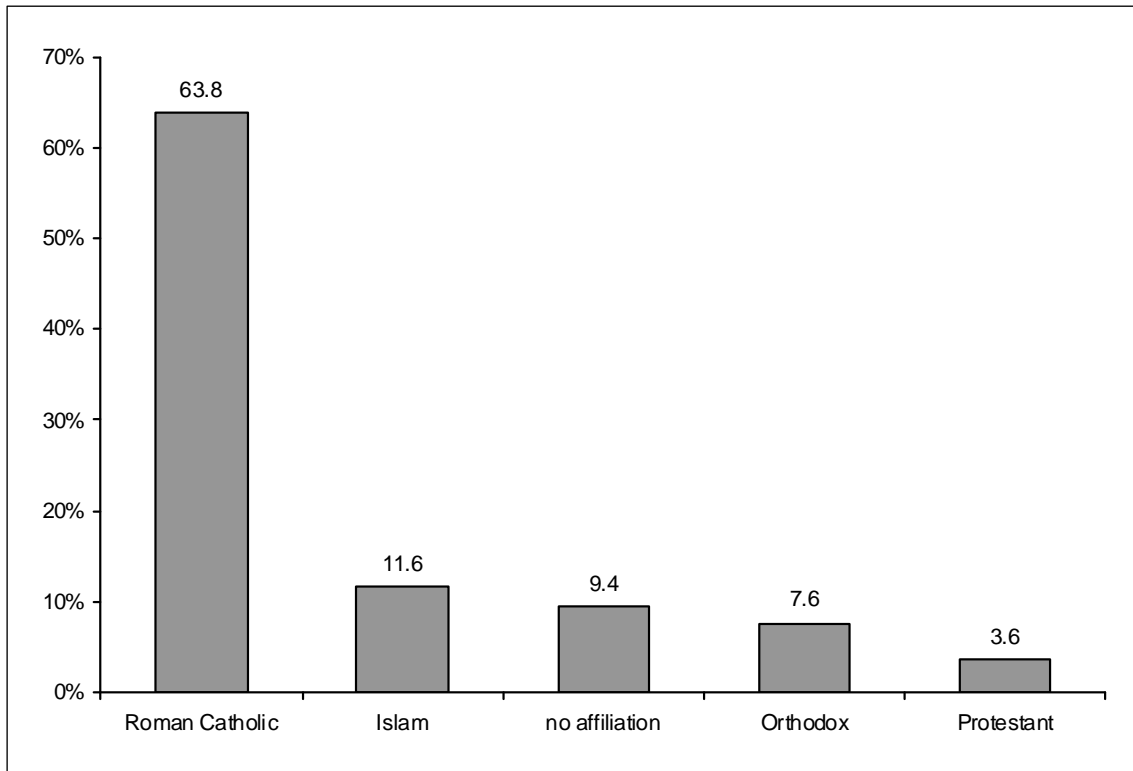
	migrant recruits	recruits with migration background
1st Guards Company MTK	20 (of 87)	–
2nd Guards Company MTK	18 (of 69)	–
3rd Guards Company MTK	17 (of 86)	27
4th Guards Company MTK	17 (of 70)	33
Götzendorf	11 (of 28)	22
2nd Company Amstetten	4 (of 45)	6

As regards the respondents' time of stay in Austria the survey revealed, that 76 percent of all recruits were born in Austria. 12.8 percent have been living there longer than 15 years; that they have lived in Austria for 11–15 years answered 3.1 percent. 4.7 percent stated they are 6–10 years resident and at least 3.4 percent have been living in Austria for five years or less.

The majority of the participants polled in the survey and interviewed (barely above 75 percent) were aged between 19 and 21. 'Under 18' was the answer of 14.3 percent and '22 years or older' of 10.1 percent. This corresponds with pre-survey assumptions, as only recruits in their basic military service were chosen to participate.

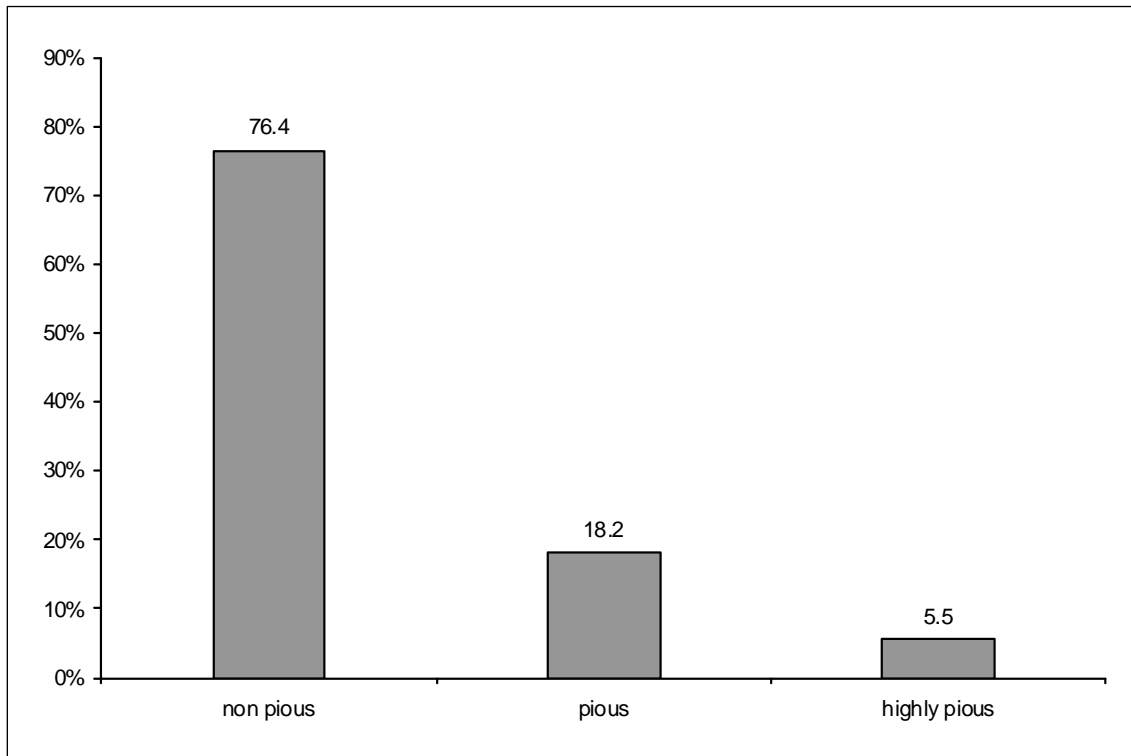
Most (63.8 percent) polled recruits were Roman Catholic. The second largest group in the survey belonged to Islam with 11.6 percent. 9.4 percent stated not to have any religious affiliation. 7.6 percent were orthodox respectively 0.9 percent Serb-orthodox. The percentage of Protestants was 3.6 percent. 0.9 percent were members of Pentecostalism and 0.4 percent in each case Sikh, Buddhists, Old Catholics, Methodists and an equivalent number who seceded from Church (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Common religions



The question concerning the intensity of their faith was answered (as Figure 2 shows) as follows: 76.4 percent of all polled recruits were non-pious, 18.2 percent were pious and at least 5.5 percent stated, they were highly pious (more detailed information concerning religious affiliation and intensity of faith is to be found in the results chapter of this article).

Figure 2: Intensity of faith



The question on the highest completed education respectively qualification made it possible to compare the educational standard and level of migrants/recruits with migration background and recruits without migration background. Most respondents (35.8 percent) mentioned an apprenticeship closely followed by matriculation with 34.3 percent. 15.1 percent completed a vocational school without matriculation and 8.6 percent of the recruits finished elementary school. Only 2.3 percent have an academic degree and 3.4 percent answered with 'other'.

Additionally Table 3 (numerically) compares the educational standard of questioned recruits with the one attained by their parents:

Table 3: Highest completed qualification: comparison recruits – parents

	recruits	mothers	fathers
elementary school	33	51	36
apprenticeship	138	120	143
vocational school (without matriculation)	58	74	52
school leaving examination	132	70	62
university/college of higher education	9	50	63
nursing school	–	2	–
no school attended	–	4	1
other	13	3	4

Comparing these numbers it is obvious that the educational standard of the recruits is higher than the one attained by their parents. Even if the quantity of recruits with academic degree is considerably lower than those of the parents, this can be traced back to the average age of the recruits. Looking at the numbers concerning school leaving examination the difference is most evident. Nearly twice the number of recruits completed a school with matriculation compared to their parents. Regarding an apprenticeship as highest completed education both groups balance each other out. Interestingly none of the recruits stated, that they did not attend school at all.

Altogether, the recruits work in 93 different jobs. It is noticeable, that only 6.2 percent are students at the present or were students before military service, respectively. The most frequent answer (26.7 percent) was student/high-school graduate. The spectrum of professions is very broad: it ranges from painters, IT-managers, printers, students, bar-keepers, barbers, electricians, jewellers, journalists, carpenters, to car-technicians and locksmiths.

Across the board, the language skills of the recruits appear to be good or excellent – this might be ascribed to the fact that most recruits were born in Austria – with some exceptions: two of the interviewees spoke a very broken German and hardly understood my questions. But on the other hand the questionnaire revealed that most grammatical and spelling mistakes were made by Austrian-born recruits.



Entrance to the prayer room

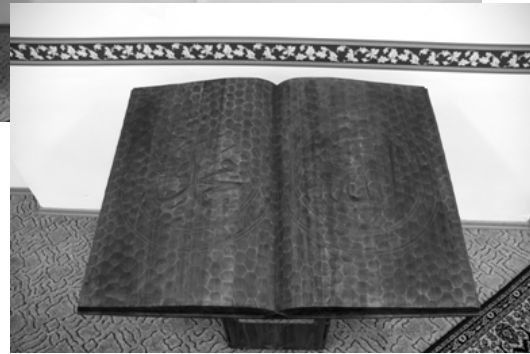
Austria's first Islamic prayer room within the walls of a barracks was initiated by Atila Külcü and opened its doors in February 2004. This room of about 40 square metres is designed to accommodate 60 individuals for their daily prayers.
© photos by Peter Fußl



Prayer room – interior view



Koran inside the prayer room



Mecca-symbol on the wall

3.5 Results of the Survey

This chapter contains the results of the questionnaire and the interviews, illustrated by tables, graphics and statements. It is not restricted to Muslims but focuses on this group, and is divided in six subchapters: everyday experiences/general situation, experiences with superiors/fellow soldiers, nutrition/supply of pork-free food, discrimination, hidden problems and finally a conclusion.

Explanatory notes: the recruits partly were asked to judge different issues like the superior's attitude towards themselves or the relations amongst fellow comrades by means of a grade point system (from 1 = very good to 5 = unsatisfactory). Other questions were supposed to be judged by virtually the same system but with the following pattern: very good, good, neutral, not as good and bad.

The names of quoted interviewees are, as mentioned earlier, imaginary and have nothing to do with the real names of the recruits. These fictive names have been adopted to provide better legibility and identify the individual recruits to the reader.

3.5.1 *Everyday Experiences/General Situation*

The everyday experiences and the general situation of the recruits were very important for the survey, because this is what matters most for them in their daily routine and therefore is most meaningful. Hence, this chapter will show differences in cognition, feelings, sensation etc. regarding various issues, e. g. what is important about being Austrian. Several issues were excluded as they deserve to be given a separate chapter due to their importance.

The recruits were asked what they consider to be important about being Austrian. Initially this was asked to find out if and potentially how the migrants' and/or the Muslims' opinion respectively differs from general consensus. As a result, being born in Austria is of minor importance for Muslim recruits compared to the average of polled recruits. For approximately 15 percent it is very important to be born in Austria and for almost 38 percent it is completely unimportant. Furthermore considerably less Muslim recruits stated on the one hand, that it is important to be an Austrian citizen (approx. 38 percent compared with ~52 percent in total), and on the other hand that it is important to have spent the majority of one's life in Austria (~31 percent stated that this is quite unimportant compared with the average of ~10 percent) for being an Austrian. Being able to speak German is for all polled recruits a decisive factor for being Aus-

trian; here no big differences can be detected. Religion seems to be irrelevant for being Austrian: here ~55 percent of all and ~85 percent of Muslim recruits (i. e. roughly up to one third more) answered with unimportant. Fulfilling the military service within the Austrian Armed Forces overall is rather unimportant, but it is noticeable that the amount of Muslims, who answered with important, is more than twice as high as the average, which is perhaps due to the fact that many migrant and especially Muslim recruits think that fulfilling the military service simply is necessary and belongs to being male (as heard in interviews several times). Respecting Austrian political institutions and laws is generally quite important, but here again it is a bit more unimportant for Muslims with ~15 percent. Interestingly it is important for considerably less Muslim recruits to feel as Austrian as measured by the average. For all details see Table 4 below:

Table 4: Things that are important about being Austrian³¹

	very important		important		rather important		rather unimportant		unimportant	
	total	M.	total	M.	total	M.	total	M.	total	M.
to be born in AUT	26.6	15.4	20.1	7.7	15.4	23.1	16.2	15.4	21.7	38.4
to be an Austrian citizen	52.3	38.5	20.6	23.1	16.1	23.1	5.7	11.5	5.3	3.8
majority of life in AUT	31.1	26.9	24.0	19.2	20.4	11.5	14.4	11.5	10.1	30.9
to be able to speak German	76.3	57.7	15.1	38.5	4.9	0.0	2.1	0.0	1.6	3.8
being Christian	8.9	3.8	5.5	3.8	9.4	0.0	20.7	7.7	55.5	84.7
to respect Austrian political institutions/ laws	46.0	30.9	26.7	34.5	15.9	15.4	5.7	3.8	5.7	15.4
to fulfil military service	15.9	19.2	15.2	30.9	18.0	11.5	22.2	19.2	28.7	19.2
to feel as Austrian	46.3	19.2	22.5	30.9	14.7	11.5	7.9	19.2	8.6	19.2

Furthermore, the recruits were asked, which of these things (language, personality, religion, occupation, colour of skin, origin and education) matter in the Austrian Armed Forces. Origin-based factors like colour of skin, origin itself and religion are definitely more important and therefore matter quite more for Muslims in the Austrian Armed Forces. 50 percent of the latter for instance stated that religion matters, compared to ~12 percent in total. Concerning one's origin twice as many Muslims as the average think this matters. These numbers are quite alarming because the origin-based factors

³¹ The numbers in this table are percentages (due to shortage of space without percent sign); M. stands for Muslims.

possibly matter more for Muslims in total as they are affected adversely by the perceived effects of these factors. Table 5 includes all data and numbers concerning this question group:

Table 5: Do these things matter within the Austrian Armed Forces?

	applicable		rather applicable		rather not applicable		not applicable	
	total	M.	total	M.	total	M.	total	M.
language	57.0 %	57.7 %	30.0 %	30.8 %	8.5 %	3.8 %	4.5 %	7.7 %
personality	53.0 %	56.0 %	23.0 %	32.0 %	13.8 %	0.0 %	10.2 %	12.0 %
religion	11.9 %	50.0 %	9.5 %	3.8 %	26.5 %	23.1 %	52.1 %	23.1 %
occupation	11.4 %	12.5 %	15.5 %	20.8 %	32.9 %	20.8 %	40.2 %	45.9 %
colour of skin	12.7 %	36.0 %	11.8 %	16.0 %	25.0 %	20.0 %	50.5 %	28.0 %
origin	15.0 %	32.0 %	15.4 %	20.0 %	33.2 %	20.0 %	36.4 %	28.0 %
education	15.9 %	16.0 %	26.8 %	12.0 %	29.6 %	28.0 %	27.7 %	44.0 %

Listed below are some sentences quoted from the interviews with Muslim recruits concerning the role of religion within the Austrian Armed Forces to illustrate their opinion:

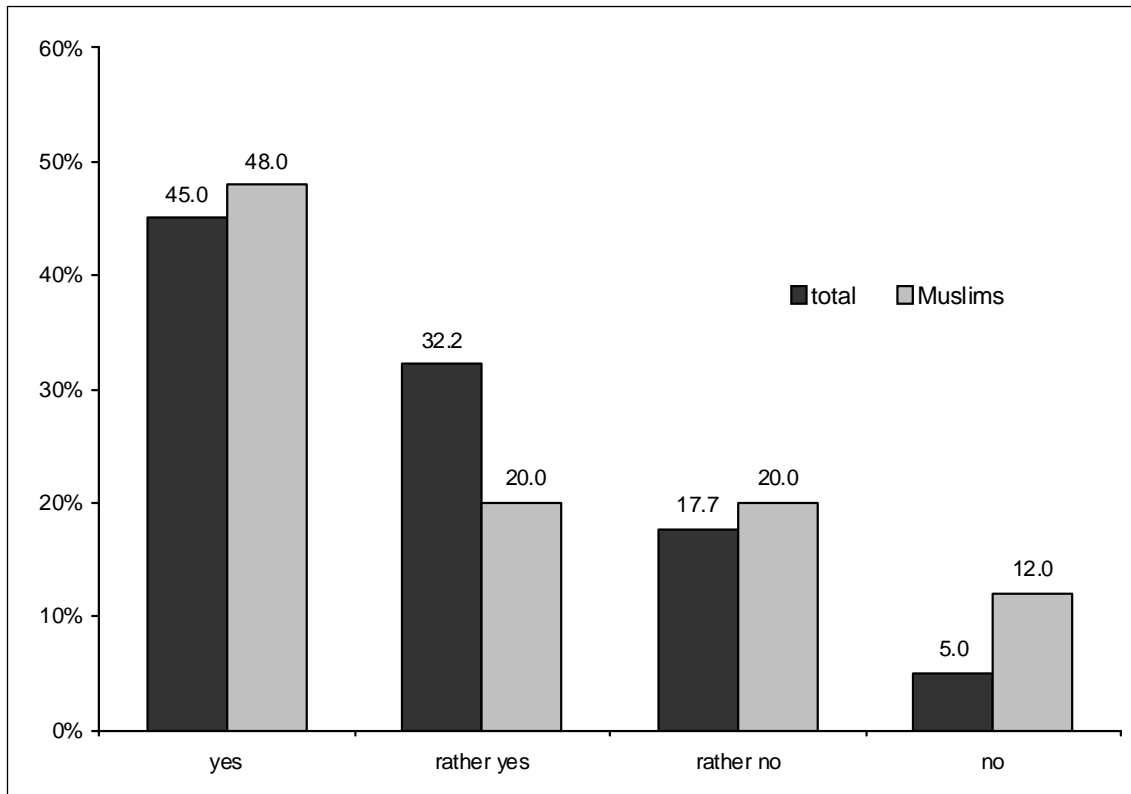
“Religion does not even matter here within the Austrian Armed Forces.” (Arda)

“If someone says he is pious and wants to hold his prayer times, I don’t really think, that anybody would want to put obstacles in his way.” (Goran)

“Religion absolutely doesn’t matter within the Austrian Armed Forces (...) it is not relevant. But I think, it’s a bit curious, that one of those representatives of the Christian Community and one of the Protestant Community gave a lengthy speech at the swearing-in ceremony. I think, that this is a bit out of line. By my standards (...) if there is a speaker for the Christian and the Protestant religion, then they should also arrange for a Muslim to say a couple of words. Or alternatively omit it completely.” (Goran)

In general the polled recruits feel fine during their service term in the Austrian Armed Forces. But the question concerning necessary improvements (If you remember your time in the Austrian Armed Forces, are there improvements that you think are necessary?) was answered by 77.3 percent with ‘yes’ and ‘rather yes’. It is interesting that more Muslims answered with ‘rather no’ and ‘no’ as the average (together 32 percent compared to the average with 22.7 percent) as they are unprivileged due to the above mentioned origin-based factors:

Figure 3: Are improvements in the Austrian Armed Forces necessary?



On the other hand Muslim recruits feel generally worse wearing the Austrian uniform. This can be interpreted to the effect that they do not feel comfortable to represent Austrian soldiers as expressed by the uniform, as Table 6 shows:

Table 6: How do you feel wearing the Austrian uniform?

	very good	good	neutral	not as good	bad
total	27.2 %	29.0 %	25.8 %	9.0 %	9.0 %
Muslims	15.4 %	34.6 %	19.2 %	11.6 %	19.2 %

3.5.2 Experiences with Superiors/Fellow Soldiers

Overall the relations between the recruits and their superiors respectively the superior's attitude towards recruits are described as within the range from satisfactory to good. But Muslim recruits seem to feel treated worse than the total average: 34.6 percent answered this question with 5 corresponding to unsatisfactory, as Table 7 shows.

Table 7: Superior's attitude towards recruits

	1	2	3	4	5
Total	10.5 %	32.0 %	26.5 %	13.8 %	17.2 %
Born Austrians	9.6 %	34.5 %	24.9 %	14.7 %	16.3 %
Migrants	14.5 %	24.1 %	31.3 %	10.8 %	19.3 %
Muslims	11.6 %	19.2 %	26.9 %	7.7 %	34.6 %

On the other hand about 20 percent of all polled recruits answered the question about necessary improvements in the Austrian Armed Forces with responses concerning the cadre like tone, attitude towards recruits, treatment, cruelty etc. One alarming statement by Kimi exemplifies the rather poor relations between recruits and superiors:

“I feel treated lowly. I think, this is really unfortunate.” (Kimi)

Additionally it can be noticed, that there is a coherence between the rank of the superior and their way of treating recruits, as the following statement by Raik will illustrate:

“Yes, there are some, who are brilliant. These are rather older people, warrant officers and higher ranks. The lower ranks are a bit not really racist but a bit rude towards migrants.” (Raik)

The following statement makes the previous quotations appear in a light that no differences are being made between the recruits, but actually it illustrates the superiors' general attitude towards them:

“Yes, they are the same for all! (...) Blacks, Whites, all are equal anyway. They scream at everyone!” (Fatih)

Most of the recruits characterize the relations among themselves as good to very good. Especially the relations to people with whom they share a room is described as very good, partly even as amicable. Some respondents said, they already have found new friends within the Austrian Armed Forces, with whom they meet and spend their time after official hours. Besides it can be observed that the relations among fellow comrades and the camaraderie improve with time.

“People do help each other! (...) it is not like everyone goes their own separate ways. In the meantime we have grown as a group.” (Goran)

The following table (Table 8) underlines the relation amongst comrades, which is generally described as good. Indeed there is a slight abnormality on the part of the Muslim

recruits, who rate this relation as neutral with 23.1 percent, which means more than twice as much as the total opinion.

Table 8: Relations amongst fellow comrades

	1	2	3	4	5
Total	41.1 %	45.7 %	10.9 %	1.8 %	0.5 %
Born Austrians	34.0 %	49.7 %	12.9 %	3.1 %	0.3 %
Migrants	34.5 %	50.0 %	10.7 %	2.4 %	2.4 %
Muslims	34.6 %	38.5 %	23.1 %	0.0 %	3.8 %

In general, the relationship between recruits born in Austria and naturalised recruits can be described as good regarding the results of the study. The questionnaire revealed that about 40 percent of all polled classifies this relation as neutral with a (positive) trend to good and very good. But again, migrants and especially Muslims feel a little bit different: about half as many (7.7 percent compared to the percentage of all polled recruits with 14.3 percent and recruits born in Austria with 15.9 percent) stated that the camaraderie is very good. On the other hand more than twice as many answered with bad. Table 9 shows all data:

Table 9: Camaraderie born Austrians – naturalised recruits

	very good	good	neutral	not as good	bad
Total	14.3 %	32.1 %	41.5 %	8.9 %	3.2 %
Born Austrians	15.9 %	33.0 %	42.0 %	6.3 %	2.8 %
Migrants	8.3 %	29.2 %	39.6 %	18.8 %	4.1 %
Muslims	7.7 %	19.2 %	46.2 %	19.2 %	7.7 %

Further corresponding to the experiences with fellow comrades it was essential to find out, if there are groupings within the different barracks and if so, what they look like. Therefore different statements that illustrate the whole issue are taken from the interviews and listed below:

“Yes, for sure! The Turkish crew and the Austrians and the quasi native Austrians, well, different groups, who better understand each other.” (Raik)

“All Turks instantly sat together, on the first day already and they talked Turkish.” (Ruben)

“I see that Austrians are rather with Austrians and foreigners rather with foreigners.” (Ercan)

“Regarding the nationality it gets separated a bit. Certain people hang out together. Regarding religion it is almost indifferent. There is no difference.” (Goran)

These statements support the conclusion, that people indeed form groups based on their origin or shared backgrounds within the Austrian Armed Forces. However, this does not lead to problems:

“(…) but there are no quarrels or anything. Everyone is cool.” (Fatih)

Religion is not a decisive factor for group formation. However, as recruits form groupings due to origin, a group of Turks for instance is equivalent with a group of Muslims.

3.5.3 Meals/Supply of Pork-free Food

Meals in general and in particular the supply of pork-free food for Muslims seems to be vitally important for many of the recruits polled/interviewed. Whereas only 11 percent of all recruits answered the question about what they didn't like so much in the Austrian Armed Forces, with responses concerning food, all of the Muslim recruits interviewed referred to problems with the supply of pork-free food without being specifically asked.

The following statements illustrate the problems for Muslim recruits:

“There is other kind of meat sometimes, but most often there's only dumplings filled with fruit or something like this.” (Ercan)

“We only eat salad every day. That will never do. No extra food for Muslims. (...) We almost die of hunger!” (Fatih)

As these two quotes abundantly make clear, the supply of pork-free food within the Austrian Armed Forces is a problem. But there are different opinions as well:

“If there is pork for dinner for the rest of the company, then there is as compensation for Muslims, quite often some other meat or fish or something else.” (Goran)

Interestingly Goran is stationed in the same barracks as Ercan and Fatih but does not sense this problem at all.

In addition it must be pointed out, that the quality of food varies between barracks. Here the Maria Theresien-Barracks in Vienna definitely does worst. Polled recruits stationed in the MTK completed their basic training in Allentsteig and all of them reported that

the meals and the supply of pork-free food as compensation for Muslims were a great deal better there.

3.5.4 Discrimination

Referring to discrimination firstly the recruits were asked whether they think that Austrian and naturalised Austrian recruits were treated equally within the Austrian Armed Forces. The answers to this question revealed that Muslims feel treated unequally, as an alarming 46.2 percent answered with no. For a detailed list, see Table 10 below:

Table 10: Equal treatment

	yes	rather yes	rather no	no
Total	32.2 %	41.4 %	11.4 %	15.0 %
Born Austrian	37.4 %	39.1 %	11.2 %	12.3 %
Migrants	12.5 %	50.0 %	12.5 %	25.0 %
Muslims	11.5 %	26.9 %	15.4 %	46.2 %

Not only differences in treatment but explicit statements bear witness to day-to-day discrimination in the Austrian Armed Forces. On the one hand there is discrimination in general (against all ‘foreigners’) and on the other there is some kind of specific discrimination against Muslims. The former is frequently expressed through remarks³² like

“Foreigner, get out of Austria!”

“Everyone who is not willing to adapt: Get out!”

“Too many Turks! Far too many!”

from fellow recruits who were born in Austria. On the flip side migrants/recruits with migration background comment on this issue as well, but in most cases their statements deal with discrimination from the superiors’ part:

“Many superiors act in a too racist way.”

“I feel treated unjustly, I felt certain that I am Austrian, but I do no longer ever since I am in the army, because I am not treated like one.”

These statements were given to the open question concerning what the recruits didn’t like so much during their service term. Attention should be paid to the fact that more than 3 percent of all polled recruits’ responses deal with racism and discrimination. At

32 Quoted from the questionnaires.

first view this percentage doesn't seem too high, but according to the fact that overall only about 27 percent responded, this definitely gains in importance and precariousness.

The two subsequent statements will substantiate and further illustrate the above mentioned problem of discrimination within the Austrian Armed Forces:

"(...) among the others, who do not live as long in Austria (...) they are a bit suppressed (...) Well, they are faced with more severe penalties like prohibition to go out." (Raik)

"Yet it can be determined, if somebody is racist, by looking at how he is dealing with people or reacts to mistakes of two different people, whether the mistake was made by a native or a foreigner, the differences can be seen (...) in the way he speaks and his manners. Towards foreigners it is obviously more unkind." (Goran)

Vice versa some recruits born in Austria feel discriminated against as the following statement shows by way of example:

"Sometimes I am relatively aggressive, because I notice that for example a black man receives preferential treatment. (...) but as a matter of fact we are discriminated against as well, because he is preferred to us." (Maximilian)

The mentioned discrimination against Muslims most often manifests itself in the treatment by superiors. For example a story was told when the voice recorder already had been switched off: Once the recruits were in the cafeteria having lunch and were told by superiors to line up in two queues: one for Muslims and one for "normal humans".

3.5.5 Hidden Problems

One of the less obvious problems is the degree of prior information on the possibility of freely practising one's religion within the Austrian Armed Forces. Therefore the following question was asked: Did you know of your right to freely practise your religion in the Austrian Armed Forces before you received the conscription order? The result is a disillusioning one: only 31.1 percent answered with yes; the rest (68.9 percent) stated that they did not know about this privilege.

"No, I was not informed." (Ercan)

"No, we did not know previously, no. (...) Nobody knew that." (Fatih)

According to the interviewees the recruits were not informed until they had taken up duty in the barracks. They wanted to pray and so asked for it. They were told that they needed a waiver, which would provide them the necessary exemption to comply with

prayer times. On the part of the Austrian Armed Forces it was said that people have to be and are informed during the induction to the Armed Forces. Hence this question was included in the guideline for the pending interviews as well. But the result was the same with the consequence that about 78 percent stated that knowing about this provision had no effect on the designated barracks. Some Muslim recruits did not even know that there is a prayer room in the Maria Theresien-Barracks until they were asked about it in the interviews.

The resulting problem is that Muslim recruits cannot really make use of their privilege to practice their religion freely while on duty in the Austrian Armed Forces because of the lack of information prior to their conscription. Consequently Muslims do not submit the ‘Confirmation of Practising the Islamic Religion’ certificate that is needed to obtain the ‘pious’ status or ‘highly pious’ (as stated in the Gazette [Verlautbarungsblatt I]) and which permits freely practising one’s religion.

The following table (Table 11) shows the impact of this problem: 74.3 percent of pious recruits and 70 percent of highly pious recruits do not make use of their privilege to practise their religion freely:

Table 11: Use of free practice of religion within the Austrian Armed Forces

	yes	rather yes	rather no	no
non-pious	0.6 %	0.0 %	6.6 %	92.8 %
pious	5.1 %	10.3 %	10.3 %	74.3 %
highly pious	0.0 %	10.0 %	20.0 %	70.0 %

Fatih talked about this during the interview, specifically mentioning the non-use of the privilege of freely practising one’s religion:

“Nobody knew about that in the beginning, now nobody does [pray], me neither. (...) it is used rarely, very rarely, yes.” (Fatih)

In the same breath, Fatih (in his own words 80 percent pious) described and somewhat qualified the problem of not being able to pray:

“Anyway, God knows that we want [to pray], but we cannot. The will to do it is enough.” (Fatih)

3.6 Conclusion

First of all, the Gazette (Verlautbarungsblatt I) quoted in chapter 2 (cf. attachment p. 161) causes a segregation of Muslims by introducing three different categories. Instead of simplifying the Muslims' right to freely practise their religion, it makes it more difficult. On the one hand it is not fair to permit only highly pious Muslims the right to hold their prayer times – especially the Friday prayer – because either you qualify as Muslim or you do not (like in the case of Christians or Protestants), and on the other hand this division is not made anywhere else, so Muslims again get singled out.

Corresponding to this, information regarding the right to freely practice one's religion in the Austrian Armed Forces must be made more readily available before sending out conscription orders to ensure that Muslim recruits are properly informed and as a result in a position to avail themselves of this privilege more freely.

Looking at the results of the survey, several things are obvious: Muslims are not treated like other recruits. This is a circumstance also experienced by migrants in general, which results from the described discrimination, unequal treatment and exclusion on the part of some superiors. It can be observed that Muslims, in this case especially Turks, see themselves as non-Austrian (every single one speaks of himself as Turk and not as Austrian in the interviews), and then end up somewhat isolating themselves. But this probably is a consequence of negative everyday experiences made by the recruits.

Supply of pork-free food is another problem Muslims are faced with during routine duty in the Austrian Armed Forces. Substitutions for pork are rare and as one recruit so aptly put it, they were almost starving to death. Special food for Muslims is highly dependent on the conditions in the individual barracks, leading half of the respondents in the Maria Theresien-Barracks in Vienna and the Wallenstein-Barracks in Götzendorf to complain about the supply of pork-free food for Muslims.

Regarding the observed problems there is an interesting interdependency: the fewer migrants are stationed in a barracks the fewer problems seem to come up. So in the Ostarrichi-Barracks in Amstetten, where the fewest recruits with migratory background and Muslim recruits respectively are stationed, the recruits reported almost zero problems as opposed to the situation in the MTK and in Götzendorf.

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Negotiating Cultural Differences in a Total Institution: Muslim Conscripts in the Austrian Armed Forces

Ulrich Krainz & Thomas Slunecko

1 Background of the Study

In Austria, the public and political debates and discourses about integration are explicitly (as much as implicitly) geared towards the Muslim community. Particular Islamic cultural symbols like headscarves, or the building of mosques and minarets are stressed by some parties as a threat to Austrians national identity. In this sense, Islamic culture is seen as a barrier for successful integration into a modern and enlightened central European society¹.

In the last 25 years, developments in sociological systems theory have put a question mark behind too simple ideas of integration. This is because modern theories of society have seriously questioned the idea of society as a monolithic entity (see Luhmann 1997; Nassehi 1997; Willke 2006). Rather, society is to be more aptly described as comprising a number of subsystems (e. g. economy, science, law, education, religion, art). If society is not a monolithic whole, however, the idea of integration has to be reformulated too. Rather than being integrated in a monolithic whole (or not), migrants are confronted with and perhaps integrated into particular subsystems. These subsystems constitute social fields (organizations, institutions) and as such also provide frames within which the social life, its forms and problems, can be investigated empirically. It becomes especially interesting when members of different “social worlds” (Soeffner/Zifonun 2005: 400–401) meet in sub-systemic organizations or institutions. This is true for the ‘classical areas’ like school, work, and neighbourhood, but also for the military and civilian service.

In Austria, roughly at age eighteen, male adults that hold the Austrian citizenship are confronted with two alternatives: To serve in the military (for a period of six months) or in the civilian sector (for a period of nine months). This decision affects people with and

1 This is especially true for the right-wing Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), which conducted an explicit (and somewhat effective) anti-Islamic campaign in the Austrian general elections in 2006. In this campaign, the FPÖ, for example, employed the slogan “Vienna must not become Istanbul”.

without a migrational background, since this service is a statutory duty for every Austrian citizen. Due to the increasing migration in the recent years, more and more men with different cultural backgrounds are to be found in both forms of services. The Muslim community is by far the greatest among those with different cultural backgrounds.

As opposed to the Austrian civilian service, the Austrian Armed Forces offer specific concessions for Muslim conscripts. As early as 2004 an Islamic prayer room was established in the Maria Theresien casern in Vienna. Further measures and implementations are the provision of pork-free food, the possibility to comply with Islamic prayer times and holidays, and the employment of Imams for the military. The statutory regulations for the “treatment of religious minorities” are written down in the “Verlautbarungsblatt I” of the Federal Ministry of National Defence (Verlautbarungsblatt I, cf. attachment, p. 161)². This document lists different criteria for the “conscription and employment” of religious minorities like Muslims, (orthodox) Jews, Sikhs and Seventh-day Adventists. The Austrian Armed Forces established these criteria and regulations in cooperation with the different religious communities. Furthermore, the Austrian Armed Forces introduced a differentiation between ‘not strictly religious’, ‘strictly religious’ and ‘very strictly religious’ Muslim conscripts, a division that was suggested by the “Islamic religious community in Austria” (IGGiÖ)³. In doing so, the IGGiÖ is the only religious community that demands such differentiation in terms of strictness from their followers. To be counted in the categories ‘strictly’ and ‘very strictly’ religious, Muslim conscripts have to hand in a specific document at the time of their medical and psychological examination for their military service⁴. If they do not hand in this document, they are automatically seen as ‘not strictly religious’. As a result, the Austrian Armed Forces know three different categories of ‘Muslims’ – a differentiation which carries fundamental consequences for Muslim conscripts. ‘Strictly’ and ‘very strictly religious’ Muslims are mainly used for indoor services in the barracks (like kitchen, office ser-

2 In this context, it is interesting to recall that the Austrian Armed Forces have a long historical tradition in the conscription of members from religious minorities. From 1848–1918 the army in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy included different religious communities like Catholic, Greek-Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and after the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the year 1878, even Muslim soldiers. However, this historical situation cannot be directly compared to the present situation, since the regiments of the Habsburg monarchy were almost culturally homogenous. Each religious community had their specific regiments, each of them with different uniforms and functions. The Muslim regiments were called the *Bosniacs* (see Allmayer-Beck/Lessing 1989; Schachinger 1994).

3 The IGGiÖ is the official association for Islamic religious matters and interests in Austria. (<http://www.derislam.at>)

4 In Austria, young men are around seventeen years old when they have their compulsory medical and psychological examination.

vices etc.), allowing them to comply with religious customs such as the five obligatory prayers of the day. Within the working procedures of a regular conscript this would just not be feasible. ‘Very strictly religious’ Muslims are additionally allowed to wear a full beard during their military service. ‘Not strictly religious’ Muslims, however, are deployed and used in all different functions and services of the Armed Forces; they are only entitled to a pork-free diet. If the visit of the Friday Prayer is compatible with the working procedures of ‘not strictly religious’ Muslims, their direct superiors may allow them to attend. However, in terms of the legal situation, ‘not strictly religious’ Muslims have no general right to do so.

2 Methods and Methodological Approach

The study⁵ is oriented on the reconstructive social research perspective (see Bohnsack 2008; Przyborski/Slunecko 2009), i. e. a thriving branch of qualitative methodology. The aim of this methodological approach is the process- and sequence-analytical reconstruction of implicit practical knowledge. This specific type of knowledge is not explicitly available for a subject in a conceptual form, since it is embedded into concrete and immediate actions. In this context, Mannheim (1980) speaks of this implicit knowledge as an “atheoretical knowledge” (Mannheim 1980: 73), since it is not a matter of theoretical or lexical explanation. Rather, this knowledge enables everyday communication and secures immediate understanding within a group or community. Since it is implicit and embedded into social practice, it is not easily accessible, i. e. subjects cannot directly provide information about these orientations. Therefore, this methodological approach does not primarily focus on what someone says or means (i. e. the manifest content); rather it is concerned with the structure of meaning that is underlying someone’s actions. In the sense of Bourdieu (1982), it aims at the “modus operandi” that constitutes social practice and other social matters, i. e. at the “habitus” (Bourdieu 1982: 281). It is all about (implicit) habitual knowledge and it wants to reconstruct this knowledge from narrations of someone’s actions and everyday practice.

5 The data of this study originate from a diploma thesis (Krainz 2009) conducted at the department of Psychology at the University of Vienna. It is primarily concerned with the collective orientations of young Austrian Muslim men of the so-called second generation in regard to their cultural integration. The particular field of study is the military and civilian service – compulsory as it is for Austrian male citizens. The focus of attention is on the situation, the everyday practice, and the *Lebenswelt* of Muslim conscripts and other young Muslim adults who do their civilian service. In particular, the study aims at detecting problem areas and difficulties of integration or inclusion that are associated with the different cultural backgrounds.

In this study seven group discussions (see Loos/Schäffer 2001; Przyborski 2004; Bohnsack 2008) were conducted, five of them with Muslim conscripts in the Austrian Armed Forces and two with Muslim civilian servants. All group discussions were analysed within the frame of the documentary method of interpretation (see Nohl 2006; Bohnsack 2008). Altogether, the aim of this interpretation is not to describe the participants' reality as it is, but rather how this reality is construed through communication.⁶ To do so, the analysis differentiates between two levels of meaning. The first level is the immanent or literal meaning ('what is said?'); the second level is the documentary meaning ('how is it said?' and what collective orientation thereby documents itself). In doing so, the documentary interpretation of group discussions aims for the reconstruction of collective patterns of orientations, in this case collective orientations regarding cultural integration.

2.1 Participants

All discussions were carried out between June and July 2008. In the Austrian Armed Forces five group discussions, each of them with four Muslim conscripts, were conducted in the Maria Theresien casern in Vienna. Only one person is 'strictly religious', all others belong to the 'non-strictly-religious' group as defined by the Armed Forces. All twenty participants are Austrian citizens and belong to the so-called second generation. The majority is born in Austria, all of them have been living in Austria for at least fifteen years. The participants are aged between eighteen and twenty-two years, the sole exception being a twenty-eight year old conscript. Fifteen participants completed an apprenticeship, five of them have a higher educational attainment (Matura⁷, studying). The vast majority of the interviewed conscripts are of Turkish descent, other countries of origin include Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Egypt and Iraq. In the Austrian civilian service two group discussions were carried out with young Muslim civilian workers in two different social organizations in Vienna. All seven participants are Austrian citizens and aged between eighteen and twenty-seven years. The majority is born in Austria and of Turkish descent, the sole exception being one participant of Iraqi descent. All partici-

6 Along these lines, Mannheim speaks of a bracketing of validity claims (Mannheim 1980: 88). It is by bracketing the ontological validity that we concentrate on *how* a particular social behaviour comes into being (ibid.: 91). Mannheim refers to this perspective as a "socio-genetic" or "genetic" one, as it explains the social structures as the results of a socio-psychological context of experience ("Erlebniszusammenhang", ibid.: 89); it is exactly this "context of experience" that has to be reconstructed.

7 The Austrian "Matura" is a diploma from secondary school that generally qualifies its holder for university admission. It is equivalent to the Abitur in Germany.

pants have completed an apprenticeship, none of them has attained higher education. The German language skills of all participants are excellent and flawless, a fact that eased the research process, the performing, and interpretations of all group discussions.

3 Results

From the data of all group discussions two basic orientations are reconstructed that play an important role in the relevance system of all participants. The first one is concerned with the relation between their Islamic religious background and the predominant religious and cultural practice (this orientation is called ‘otherness in regard to the religious background’). The second one is about the relation between them as people with a migrational background (the allochthonous) and the ‘other’ Austrians (the autochthonous population). This second orientation is called ‘otherness in regard to the migrational background’. In the group discussions both orientations are not a matter of explicit argumentations and explanations: they are reconstructed, since they appear in an implicit or “atheoretical” (Mannheim 1980: 73) way through narrations and descriptions. Furthermore, both orientations are characterized by a discriminatory potential that separates into a we- and a they-group.

3.1 Otherness in Regard to the Religious Background

The religious background is a central theme in all group discussions, from which hardly any participant dissociates explicitly. However, the narrations and descriptions of religious practice and of the compliance with religious commandments in the actual situation, i. e. in the context of the military service, reveal different orientations and prioritizations. The decision to comply with Ramadan, to pray, or to refuse alcohol strongly varies among different participants. However, all interviewed Muslim conscripts agree on the importance to comply with a pork-free diet. Overall, the study exposes six different types of orientations concerning religiosity.

3.1.1 Religiosity as a Guidepost

This type is characterized by a fundamental orientation on religion and its commandments. It is featured through highly normative formulations like ‘have to’, ‘allowed’, ‘should’ etc., when the participants talk about their practice of religion. The orientation

on commandments and prohibitions is conceived as compulsory and obligatory and not questioned or scrutinized. At the same time, participants experience these normative orientations as something not always feasible and realizable during their military service. For example, some participants catch up on their prayers in their rooms, if it is not possible for them to visit the Friday Prayer. The same is true for the provided pork-free food, since it is not prepared with respect to Islamic rules, so that the resulting food is actually not eatable for religious Muslims. In one sequence of a group discussion the participants address this issue:

D: “They don’t pay attention to the details, you know. How it is slaughtered, who is doing this and so on. [They say] Turkey hen is Muslim! Pork is Austrian! Austrian or Christian or whatever. I mean we are very happy that they have this distinction but that doesn’t say that we are allowed to eat this.”

B: “Actually we are not allowed to eat this. It’s a sin if we eat this, you know! [2 seconds break] I mean some Muslims don’t care anyway but –”

D: “Don’t care? Okay. If we have to get along with this food the whole day – We have to eat something, because we have longer working hours. You will not starve to death but – It’s just unpleasant if you don’t eat anything. And that’s why – [2 seconds break] That’s also the truth.”⁸

Even though the conditions in the Austrian Armed Forces do not allow a strict compliance with Islamic religious rules, the participants try to comply with their religious commandments as effectively as possible. Furthermore, this type shows no doubt on the importance to catch up on missed religious customs (e. g. praying in the rooms).

Since this normative behaviour varies tremendously from an established code of behaviour of a non-Muslim environment, mockery and insults by other people are characteristic of this type. Another feature is the basic assumption that all people are generally religious and believing. In this understanding people differ in terms of their religious affiliations (Christians, Muslims etc.), but not in terms of their overall religiosity. In other words, this type is characterized by the implicit assumption that in spite of the different religions, at least the belief ‘in something’ is shared. By communicating with non-Muslim comrades, this initially expected religiosity is not always affirmed, a fact that is described as ‘shocking’ or ‘thought-provoking’.

A: “We Muslims do have our faith. We try to live according to our religion but the non-Muslims, they are pretty much off the track I would say, because – If you listen to them how they talk about – How they deride their own religion that’s very thought-provoking. That should be mentioned as well! Here, this

8 Group discussion I, Military service, Vienna, June 24, 2008.

concerns no less than half of the soldiers or conscripts who do their service – I have noticed this fact that is very shocking to me.”⁹

In this type, a strict compliance with the religious commandments is seen as obligatory since these rules set ‘the right way’ for a (religious) community. In this context, participants of the group discussions use the metaphor of a ‘track’ from which non-Muslims go astray. According to Giesen (1999), this can be described as a special form of a “universal coding of collective identity” (Giesen 1999: 56). This coding has fundamental consequences in regard to the outsiders of a group or community. Along its lines, outsiders are already potential members of a community, but only ‘misguided’ or ‘on the wrong track’ at the moment. However, this orientation is not associated with an explicit belonging to the Islamic religious community. In fact, it refers to a ‘community of belief’. In this type religiosity is an ideal or quality by itself. Since all religions are seen as normative and guiding for their particular followers, this type respects all different ways. Therefore, it is not important to belong to a certain, but rather to *a* religious group. In this orientation, not the different religions are assessed as ‘wrong-right’ or ‘superior-inferior’, but their followers as ‘practicing-not practicing’. In this regard, the participants see a major difference between them as devout and believing Muslims and followers of other religions who do not comply with their religious commandments.

3.1.2 Religiosity as a Personal Orientation

This type is characterized by strong emphases on individual freedoms and autonomy regarding the own lifestyle including religiosity. However, this ‘freedom’ is not taken for granted and remains the subject of strong justifications and argumentations. A central feature of this type is a clear separation between a public and a private sphere, in which religiosity and the compliance with religious customs are clearly seen as private matters. Since religion is not conceived as a matter of public concern, no ‘outsider’ should interfere. In this orientation the individual is about to decide (privately) what is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for him or her. Therefore, this orientation rejects all cultural and normative regulations that impose commandments and prohibitions. However, religion is still important for the participants. As opposed to the type described above, this orientation is not about the compliance with prescribed and obligatory rules that indicates heteronomy. On the contrary, this orientation stands out due to the ideal of a personal religiosity.

9 Group discussion I, Military service, Vienna, June 24, 2008.

In the Austrian Armed Forces, problems arise immediately when this autonomy is seen as inadequate by the military staff, since the concessions and measures for Muslim conscripts are oriented on highly normative guidelines of Islam. A ‘relaxed handling’ of cultural customs and rules can cause conflicts with the military staff. One group discussion recalls a situation in which a member of the military personnel argued with Muslim conscripts, because they got caught drinking alcohol in their free time. The Austrian Armed Forces consider this fact as impossible for Muslims, since it is prohibited by a religious rule.

B: “You know what? You know what bugs him? It is not about you being a Muslim but – In the kitchen – You demand Muslim food and other – You claim other things. And then, suddenly you are drinking alcohol. That is what bugs him! (...) You get specific food and so on. You don’t want to eat pork but then you booze up on weekends or you are coming back to the barracks totally drunk. That’s the thing they don’t understand. And you do this so noticeable, that it sticks out in the barracks! That’s the problem!”

C: “It should not be of any interest for the staff if I – if a Muslim drinks alcohol or –”

D: “That’s none of his business!”

C: “That’s his belief! If he wants to then he is doing it, if not – Nobody can force you! Nobody can forbid things! You know!”¹⁰

This personal and ‘relaxed’ orientation towards religious customs and rules is not only complicated by contradictory expectations of non-Muslims, e. g. in the context of the Austrian Armed Forces. The group discussions also indicate conflicts with older Muslims, since they expect the second generation to be strictly religious and interested in going to mosques every Friday, a fact that is not compatible with this idealized personal orientation.

3.1.3 Religiosity as a Habitual Practice

This type is characterized by a highly relaxed and eased condition concerning religious rites and commandments. Self-determination and autonomy regarding all religious actions are taken for granted; there is, thus, no need of further justifications. Presumably, this type corresponds most likely to the category ‘not strictly religious’ introduced by the Austrian Armed Forces and the IGGiÖ. According to this orientation, people may have different religious affiliations, but these religions do not have to be practiced very actively and with a strong conviction by their followers. In this sense, religion is more

¹⁰ Group discussion III, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

like the realisation of traditions and customs that have become a ‘normal’ part of ones social reality over the course of time. Most notably in this context are (religious) customs starting with Muslim holidays right up to Ramadan or the attendance at the Friday Prayer.

B: “I always join the Friday Prayer if I have the time but – Here I don’t want to risk it so that I have to stay in the barracks. Saturdays –”

D: “I’m not going to the Friday Prayer as well because it does not fit with my work anyway. Before. [the military service]. Maybe if it were Bayram¹¹ or something, I would take a day off but –”

A: “If I had the time –”

B: “Yes, then I will take a day off as well, and if they [the military staff] don’t give it to me, I’ll run away. I don’t mind. That’s my right!”¹²

Since the compliance with religious rules needs special regulations in the Austrian Armed Forces (e. g. extra duty on weekends in exchange for visiting the Friday prayer), participants of this type rather ‘save up’ their time and use it for other things than religious matters. In this sense, participants do not want to ‘risk’ that these special regulations take place, since they would prolong their military service on weekends. Nevertheless, they claim their right to practice their religion. Obviously both components contradict each other. Consequently, individuals of this type can interpret the situation ‘opportunistically’. By no means, the participants want to spend their possible free time in the barracks, on the other hand they stress the freedom of religion. Religious customs are seen as a general and constitutional authorisation, where all people are legally entitled to practice them, if they want to. However, a ‘right’ unlike a ‘duty’ is not obligatory. In fact it opens up the possibility of a free decision, whether someone wishes to comply with religious rules or not, a freedom of choice unimaginable in a normative or binding orientation. In this sense, the type ‘religiosity as a habitual practice’ is similar to the type ‘religiosity as a personal orientation’ described above. However, they differ significantly with regard to the importance of religion and in the need to justify personal freedoms and decisions. Here, whether to comply with religious commandments or not, is not associated with ‘wrong’ or ‘right’ behaviour. That is why participants of this type never have to catch up on something if they miss out on any religious customs. Non-compliance with religious rules (be it because of a lack of time or other ‘collisions’) is

11 Bayram is the Turkish word for festival or celebration. Following the Oxford Dictionary of Islam (Esposito 2004: 131), this name can either refer to the “Feast of the sacrifice” (*Id al-Adha*) or the “Feast of the Breaking of the Fast” (*Id al-Fitr*).

12 Group discussion IV, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

not interpreted as ‘a big deal’, since this orientation shows no primary ideas of a ‘right way’ or similar beliefs. As a result, Muslim conscripts orientated on this type hardly narrate any complications concerning their religious background during their military service.

3.1.4 Religiosity as a Social Event

In this type, the Friday Prayer appears as a general exception as compared to other religious commandments and customs. The attendance is not seen as obligatory, rather it is described as ‘normal’ or as ‘standard’. Their formulations indicate a habitual practice, which is accompanied by narrations like ‘all Muslims over the world visit the Friday Prayer’. Different to the type described above, the participants orientated on this type show a strong desire to attend the Friday Prayer during their military service, even though they stress explicitly that this visit has nothing to do with them being religious or not.

B: “Since I don’t have the ‘strictly religious’ status, I am not allowed to go to the mosque on Friday. (...) Because they only assume that only strictly religious Muslims are going to pray on Friday. Whereas it’s rather the Friday Prayer- This is visited by all Muslims all over the World.”

D: “That’s standard!”

B: “It doesn’t matter how strictly religious you are. That’s just normal. That’s standard! (...) If you go to the prayer on Friday, it’s a lot more sense of community and so- You see the people you haven’t seen for a long time. People just gather. It’s like in the church. Similar. I don’t know, but church is not common anymore.”¹³

Taking the above into account, this type is characterized by the fact that the attendance of the Friday Prayer not necessarily serves religious but social needs and purposes. The Friday Prayer is regarded as an event, which opens the opportunity to meet and to get in contact with other people. Therefore, this event is seen as highly significant besides its religious meaning. In this orientation the mosque or the praying room appears more like a ‘meeting place’. Following Allport’s (Allport 1966; Allport/Ross 1967) classical distinction, this motive can be described as part of an “extrinsic religious orientation”.¹⁴

13 Group discussion III, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

14 Such extrinsic religiosity refers to a utilitarian use of religion. For an extrinsically motivated person, religious behaviour – e. g. to visit the Friday Prayer – is a means to an end: to be seen, to meet other people, to show expected behaviour, to display or gain social status. On the other hand, an “intrinsic religious orientation” in Allport’s sense constitutes an end in itself. Here, religion constitutes the organizing principle of someone’s personal experience and life apart from social expectations.

Participants of this type generally describe the church attendance of Christians in a similar extrinsic vein. However, based on their experiences with non-Muslim comrades in the Austrian Armed Forces and their experiences with non-Muslims in general, the church is regarded as ‘not common anymore’.

3.1.5 *Religiosity as a Decision*

This type stands out due to a clear – and dichotomous – decision for or against religion, a decision that seems basically feasible for everybody. In this sense, someone does not ‘have’ religion, people can freely decide for or against it. Up to that point, this orientation can be linked up with the type ‘religiosity as a personal orientation’ described above. However, it is clearly to be distinguished in respect to the consequences of each decision. If someone decides in favour of religion, then all commandments and rules become obligatory. It is impossible to choose only particular religious aspects that are considered adequate and appropriate. Following a positive decision – that is to say a decision for religion – all rules do matter. In case of a negative decision, on the other hand, a person is thought to be completely set free from prescribed rules and released from all normative obligations. However, such a person is not allowed to call himself as ‘Muslim’ any longer. This orientation especially appears in narrations, in which participants discuss the system-immanent distinction of ‘strictly’ and ‘not strictly religious Muslims’.

B: “Strictly religious! [laughing] That is kind of – For the Austrian Armed Forces that’s only a piece of paper (...) but for us – (...) If you heartily believe in all this what is written down [in the Koran] then I would say you are religious. Because strictly religious not strictly religious – Such a thing doesn’t exist because –”

C: “That does not exist!”

B: “Either you believe in this or not at all! If someone says, yes I believe in this and this and this but the rest – That’s a joke. Such a thing doesn’t exist. Either or!”¹⁵

Such an either/or-situation tolerates no compromise or ‘middle course’ regarding religious behaviours and, thus, renounces the strictness labels of the Austrian Armed Forces. Even the concessions and other special regulations made for so-called ‘strictly religious Muslims’ are criticised, since any kind of differentiation of religiosity is fundamentally rejected. In this context, the participants ridicule the document that ensures

15 Group discussion V, Military service, Vienna, July 7, 2008.

special treatment in the Austrian Armed Forces as a ‘piece of paper’. They also criticise fellow Muslim conscripts who receive special treatments, for the ‘strictly religious’ label. This special treatment is associated with assumed ‘easier’ and ‘less exhausting’ tasks in the kitchen and in indoor or office services, respectively. In this orientation, religious commandments (like the attendance of the Friday Prayer) have a central meaning and should, thus, not be utilized for any individual advantages.

B: “That the people just exploit things! Things that prove advantageous.”

D: “So that they have more free time for example.”

B: “Even though they are not religious. Even though they don’t comply- they don’t keep to the [religious] rules and so – And that’s exactly the case I mean – I don’t know. Furthermore, here they make this situation available I mean – If you have this piece of paper you can do it, if not then not. (...) They just exploit it. And on the other hand there are people who really want to comply, who really want to practice it, practice because they believe in this.”

D: “But they have no piece of paper.”

B: “And those who just want to have a nice time, they spoil it for the others.”¹⁶

Indignations towards ‘pseudo’ confessions of faith are characteristics of this type. However, this orientation significantly differs from the normative type (‘religiosity as a guidepost’) in that it knows of (and endorses) the basic possibility of a non-religious life. In this sense, being not religious bears no risk of being ‘misguided’ or ‘on the wrong track’.

3.1.6 Religiosity as Identity Formation

This type differs from the others through its striking emphasis on being a Muslim or on belonging to the Islamic religion, an emphasis that is stressed in many different contexts. In this regard, participants again see a major difference between the ‘real Austrians’ as Christians and themselves as Muslims.

D: “But that’s how it is! On Sundays – (...) Christians have to go to the church on Sundays. To pray, and for us it’s the Friday. But I have never heard of a young Christian so far who is going to the church on Sundays.”¹⁷

These accentuations of their own religiosity, however, are not related to any kind of normative or personal orientation towards religion. Nevertheless, the participants stress to be Muslims. In this type, religion represents a special role, a ‘status’ or ‘label’ for its

¹⁶ Group discussion V, Military service, Vienna, July 7, 2008.

¹⁷ Group discussion I, Civilian service, Vienna, June 3, 2008.

followers. Through the self-designation as ‘Muslim’ such participants automatically set themselves apart from non-Muslims, a separation that leads to a sense of unity with the own community or group. Here, it is irrelevant if someone actually believes or complies with religious commandments or not. The only necessary criterion to belong to this community is a confession of faith. However, this confession is not related to the actual compliance with religious rules or religiosity or spirituality in the proper sense. Rather, it is associated with a clear affiliation to a social, in this case a religious group. This relaxed handling concerning religious commandments is especially apparent in those sequences of the group discussions in which the participants discuss their working procedures on Fridays.

C: “On Fridays we finish our work at twelve o clock. But for example the other one[another participant] he is a little bit older than we are. He is a bit more strictly religious you know. He is – We got to pray five times a day and so on, you know how this is for Muslims. But youth you know! [laughing]”¹⁸

The participants of this type draw a clear distinction between older, strictly religious Muslims (mid-twenties) and younger, less strictly religious Muslims (around twenty years old), who show a relaxed attitude concerning religious commandments (‘But youth you know!’). As opposed to the type ‘religiosity as a habitual practice’, however, the (young) participants oriented on this type extravert their religious affiliation. This extraversion of a religious confession serves as a social differentiation that distinguishes a group of ‘members’ from a group of ‘outsiders’. This clear affiliation to a social group is connected with feelings of social exclusion at school or at work etc. The self-designation ‘Muslim’, thus, seems to provide and define the individual’s identity.

3.2 Otherness in Regard to the Migrational Background

Apart from their religious background the participants of the group discussions especially broach the issue of their migrational background and the resultant otherness in relation to ‘other Austrians’. “Ethnic metaphors” (Nohl 2001: 263) as, e. g. ‘Arabs’, ‘Turks’, ‘Bosnians’, ‘Austrians’ appear in each discussion. However, these formulations do not refer to the imagination of a specific ethnic or national affiliation; they rather refer to the existence or lack of a migrational background. Nevertheless, the participants use a clear differentiation between them as ‘foreigners’ (sometimes they use the word

¹⁸ Group discussion I, Civilian service, Vienna, June 3, 2008.

‘Tschuschen’¹⁹), and the ‘real’, ‘true’ or ‘pure Austrians’. This distinction is not just accepted, but also largely maintained throughout all discussions. As a consequence, their own citizenship seems ‘unreal’, ‘untrue’ or ‘impure’ to the Muslim men. They do not understand themselves as ‘real Austrians’, even though they are Austrian citizens. Only a few participants stress the citizenship as an option for equality.

3.2.1 *Refused Recognition from all Sides*

Compared to the first generation of labour migration immigrants, the so-called second generation experiences a significant change in the scope of “significant others” (Mead 1973). Their peer group is no longer confined to members of the own family and to people of the same ethnic affiliation; rather, they grow up with autochthonous children and adolescents. As a consequence, older and established group members of their ethnic community tend to reject the second generation as being ‘foreign’ or ‘different’ in many cases and do not recognize them as being part of their own group. At the same time, the participants of the group discussions, due to their migrational background, experience social exclusion from the autochthonous population.

C: *“You know, I am born in Austria but sometimes its like – They say why are you here? Get lost! You know, what can I do if my parents were already here and I was born here.”*

B: *“Yes, but that’s nonsense! That’s nonsense what they are saying.”*

C: *“Yeah, I mean it’s not like if I had any choice!”²⁰*

Participants in that situation feel socially rejected from all sides, since comparable exclusions are also true for their parents’ countries of origin: there, the participants are likewise considered as ‘outsiders’ and ‘foreigners’. They are seen as foreigners in Austria, yet as Austrians in their countries of origin. Common to both contexts are feelings of social rejection, of alienation, and of non-affiliation.

C: *“If I go back [to Turkey] they recognize that I am coming from abroad.”*

B: *“Yeah, its like living between two worlds, you know?”*

C: *“They recognize immediately – Say, you didn’t grow up here, right? I say no – They recognize – I don’t know from what, maybe my hairstyle.”*

D: *“And then they even rip you off!”*

19 In Austria the word ‘Tschusch’ is regarded as a strong and highly derogative label for foreigners.

20 Group discussion III, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

C: *“Is it about how I talk, how I look like or –”*

B: *“They can smell it!”*²¹

In the group discussions the participants display a general strangeness and a lacking familiarity with their parents' countries of origin. They conceive of themselves as being 'homeless' or as living 'between two worlds'. Their otherness manifests itself on a primordial level of existence, i. e. in a distinct smell, from which one cannot hide. A clear affiliation with a social group or community would be a positive horizon. However, all they experience is rejection and refused recognition, be it implicit or explicit, be it in their parents' country of origin or from the autochthonous group. Altogether, this leads to a kind of 'disorientation' in terms of identity formation. Authors like e. g. Goffman (1975), Taylor (1994), or Hall (2002) maintain that the understanding of one's identity (how you see yourself) is heavily depended on others, and that this understanding can differ significantly from the perceptions of other people (how you are seen by them). For Taylor (1994: 25), this condition of disorientation can be described as a direct consequence of a general "misrecognition" of the participants' identities.

3.2.2 Outward Appearance as the Central Feature of Affiliation

A 'different' or 'other' look that separates people of a community turns out to be the most central characteristic of being regarded as a foreigner. Therefore, the situation is different for second generation migrants who 'just' have a different cultural and geographical background, and other such migrants, who additionally stand out due to their different outward appearance; only the latter group is seen as 'real foreigners'.

Since a resemblance of body features is a traditional sign of affiliation to a social group, an inconspicuous or 'adapted' look of migrants can enhance opportunities of inclusion. The group discussions indicate that participants with light skin and bright hair colours are less confronted with insults and verbal assaults despite their migrational background. Participants with a 'Western' or 'European' look report fewer conflicts with the autochthonous group. They tend to refer to other conscripts with a migrational background who show a different outward appearance and consider the latter as the 'real foreigners'. In this context, the participants speak about 'black', 'brown', or 'Chinese conscripts', but not about themselves.

²¹ Group discussion III, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

C: *“Come on, what does this look like? If there is an official reception for a national guest and there is the guard of honour. And then there is a brown or Chinese [conscript] or what? That just doesn't look like an Austrian!”*

D: *“Yes, but then they will know that they do accept them.”²²*

Here, participants see themselves at least ‘a bit more’ Austrian compared to the other conscripts, since they do not differ significantly in their outward appearance from the autochthonous population. On the other hand, migrants with darker skin and hair colours regard their visible otherness as an important feature of their experienced discriminations. For example, conscripts of Turkish origin are consistently called ‘Schwarzkopf’²³ (= ‘black head’) by a member of the military staff – an affront that refers to a distinctly different attitude towards conscripts with a migrational background.

In addition, some participants stress that a ‘Western’ or ‘European appearance’ may implicate conflicts with their own ethnic group, i. e. in contact with other Muslim conscripts. This is especially true in situations, in which it is important to be recognized as a member of this religious community. In the Austrian Armed Forces a lot of ‘strictly religious’ Muslim conscripts are working in the canteen or kitchen. Some Muslim conscripts with light skin and hair colours narrate that they have to argue with the kitchen personnel to get a pork-free food, since they are not believed to be Muslims. Their ‘Western’ or inconspicuous look is generating other problems, since they are regarded as ‘one of them’ by other Muslim comrades with darker skin and hair colour.

3.2.3 *Sense of Community as a Separating Ideal*

Social cohesion, honesty, and a sense of community are the central positive attributes of the we-group – qualities that the autochthonous population seems to lack. The data from the group discussions indicate that participants see a general difference in the behaviour, traits, and characteristics of conscripts with and without a migrational background. For instance, the behaviour of Austrians without a migrational background is considered as ‘false’ and ‘inconsistent’.

B: *“I think here it's a shame because we Muslims stick together if something difficult is coming towards us – Then we hold together, we launch into it and help each other but the Austrians – Mostly they are – They are nice to each other but they are dishonest.”*

C: *“When it comes to the crunch –”*

22 Group discussion IV, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

23 Group discussion II, Military service, Vienna, June 25, 2008.

B: “Yes! They are nice and friendly but when they walk away they backbite you and stuff! I think that’s not correct of them. They miss out on that! (...) But if they would be like us, then they can become a good person as well. So, that’s sad because – I have never seen something like that from an Austrian, like it is for us, simply [the sense of] community.”²⁴

Here, ‘good’ community qualities are strictly reserved for the own group. Although this idealized sense of community is also portrayed when participants talk about the Friday Prayer, the differentiation between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviour does not primarily take place between different religions (Muslims vs. non-Muslims) but rather between different provenances (foreigner vs. native). Speaking with Mühlmann (1996), we here face a kind of “cultural narcissism”, in which the own behavioural patterns and attributes are construed as superior compared to other groups. This feeling of predominance of one’s own group is a central and constitutive feature of all cultures. Such cultural orientations cannot easily be abandoned, since they are always regarded as ‘right’ and ‘correct’ for a particular social group. In this sense, any culture appears to be a “selfish culture” (Mühlmann 1996: 1), i. e. one that is inherently convinced of its own superiority.

Members of the they-group could, in principle, be incorporated in the we-group. However, this affiliation would require a radical change and adaptation of their behaviour (‘If they were like us ...’), since their present orientations towards community are seen as ‘wrong’ or ‘false’. Again, this features a fundamental idea of a ‘right way’ that is typical for a “universal coding of collective identity” (Giesen 1999: 54). Even though the participants tend to distance themselves and their qualities from Austrians without a migrational background, this distance could be reduced if the potential members (that is to say the autochthonous population) were willing to change.

3.2.4 Respect as a Separating Ideal

The participants claim a distinct difference in the mentality and culture of conscripts with and without a migrational background. Once more, their own behaviour is construed as ‘higher’ and ‘better’, whereas (mutual) respect and good manners constitute the positive attributes in this orientation.

The participants of all group discussions report insults and jokes about their cultural and religious customs, value systems, and ethnic affiliations. However, these assaults are not always conceived as vicious attacks. Rather, they are regarded as an indication of lack-

²⁴ Group discussion I, Military service, Vienna, June 24, 2008.

ing respect. In this sense, the they-group is not primarily a hostile, but rather a disrespectful community. For instance, one participant of a group discussion narrates that he got laughed at because he was saying his prayers during his military service.

*D: "One conscript came to me when I was saying a prayer in my room and he [said] Allah, Allah, Allah! I was just continuing my prayer and then I turned around and said do I laugh at you in church? That was my question. So, I am allowed to conduct it (...) but still I get laughed at. These are the tough situations."*²⁵

This example illustrates that the Muslim conscript tries to treat his fellow comrade in the way of mutual respect ('... do I laugh at you in church?'). Again, this example reveals the basic assumption that all people, regardless of their specific religious affiliation, are generally believing and religious.

A central feature of this orientation is that participants claim respect for their private matters or their 'inner spheres', especially their families. This is also found in the group discussions with Muslims who are doing their civilian service. The participants summarise the categories 'country of origin', religion' and 'family' as three central characteristics of their 'honour'²⁶. Insults against any of these categories (and therefore against their honour) are narrated and conceived as severe offences. In this context, participants also stress that they have to behave differently and more respectful, if they are at home with their families or 'outside' with friends. These examples indicate that people with a migrational background differentiate clearly between an inner and an outer social sphere, a typical distinction that is also described by other authors (see Nohl 2001; Bohnsack/Loos/Przyborski 2001). One Muslim conscript stresses that Austrian comrades are generally disrespectful, since they consider the use of a slogan like 'son of a bitch' as a joke. This use of language seems impossible for him, since this 'joke' incorporates the mother of the person addressed in this way.

*A: "They [other comrades] say that foreigners are aggressive and contentious and stuff! But it's the opposite! We are not – For example, they just don't understand us. We have a different culture and mentality. For example, it's stricter at home for us! With the parents and so on. I mean you are not allowed to say piss off to your parents or other things. For us it's – And they just don't understand it! How should I say this? For them it's just a slogan. For them, son of a bitch is just as if you say a joke like piss off."*²⁷

25 Group discussion I, Military service, Vienna, June 24, 2008.

26 Group discussion I, Civilian service, Vienna, June 3, 2008.

27 Group discussion V, Military service, Vienna, July 7, 2008.

The group discussions indicate that participants especially claim respect in regard to their private sphere, less about their public behaviour. (Mutual) respect is seen as a general ideal that seems not possible for members of the they-group. However, respect turns out to be pivotal and socially obligatory, if the inner sphere – that is to say the family or other features of the we-group (religion, descent, ethnic affiliation) – is affected.

3.2.5 *The Importance of being Inconspicuous*

In the Austrian Armed Forces, participants of all group discussions narrate a continual generalized accentuation of their migrational background by the military staff.

C: “For example, a Turk screws something up they immediately say: Yeah, always the Turks, always the slackers! Always the people from the east! We already know this. Old story. I mean such words should be –”

D: “Yes, but they put it in another way. They don’t say fucking Turks or fucking Bosnians or so. They say those not descended from Austria –”

B: “Those who don’t have the Austrian –”

D: “Yes, so that you can’t call them to account.”²⁸

Even though this example shows no evidence of direct insults through the military staff, the participants experience over-simplifications and social discriminations. Furthermore, they assume an explicit intention of the military personnel to discriminate against them. The comments by the military personnel are deliberately in disguise (or ‘politically correct’), so that no insults can be proven and staff members cannot be called to account. This is how another group discussion puts it:

B: “I am a hundred percent sure! If a Turk or if a Muslim screws something up, they make a big deal out of it. But if a real Austrian is doing something wrong, they say okay that’s it and they will forget it. But if a Turk is doing this, he gets fucked until the end! And then they think the same of the other Turks and we get treated more harshly.”²⁹

To dissociate oneself from these generalizations, it is important not to stand out from the crowd and to remain inconspicuous. For conscripts with a migrational background, it is essential to avoid any kind of ‘missteps’, since such misbehaviour is treated more draconic than comparable misbehaviour of ‘real Austrians’ – and it may affect fellow Muslim conscripts, too. Therefore, there is much talk about ‘correct’, ‘good’, ‘desir-

28 Group discussion III, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

29 Group discussion I, Military service, Vienna, June 24, 2008.

able', or 'right and proper behaviour' – i. e. terms which convey a high behavioural adaptation to the norms of the current situation. For Muslim conscripts it is becoming highly significant not to provide any occasions or fuel for conflicts.

'Western' or 'European looking' Muslim participants, i. e. those with light skin and hair colours also report conflicts with, and generalizations by the military personnel. However, they rather refer to other conscripts in their narrations. Rarely do they appear as 'victims' of such generalizations themselves, obviously since they do not differ from other Austrians in their outward appearance. Muslim participants who do not comply with their religious commandments and therefore do not demand special regulations in the Austrian Armed Forces appear even more inconspicuous. This group experiences the fewest insults and discriminations.

4 The Military as a Special Social Field – a Socio-Genetic Consideration

According to Goffman (1973) and Foucault (1994), military institutions like barracks can be called "total institutions" – due to their structural features, the 'games' played within, and the consequences for the persons concerned. Compared to the strict operational procedures and the time structure in the barracks, the compulsory civilian service much more appears as a 'normal' institution. A comparison of the two institutional settings reveals that questions of diversity and potentials for conflict are more critical in total institutions. In the group discussions, the civilian service is often described as a 'job' or as 'work'. Participants who are working in the civilian service see a similarity to other working experiences. In the group discussions they never broach issues like special nutrition or compliance with Islamic praying times. However, that does not mean that they renounce pork-free food or that they are basically not religious. The reason for this rather lies in the 'openness' of the institutions they work for and in the more flexible time structure of their work, which altogether allow for a much higher degree of freedom from the work context. Some participants of the group discussions in the civilian service wait until the end of their work before they get something to eat, others report buying pork-free food during the midday break etc. These options are not possible for Muslim conscripts, since they cannot leave the barracks during their services and therefore depend heavily on their system and its constraints.

A central feature of total institutions is the breakdown of the normal separation of spheres of life, i. e. where people work, spend their free time, and usually sleep (see Goffman 1973: 17). If all this is to happen in one place – as is the case in the barracks – phenomena and problems arise that are not present under other circumstances or living conditions. All Muslim conscripts are more or less interested in living according to their religious rules and value systems, even though they are following different orientations (see the different types described above). By doing so, they are confronted with the general contradictoriness of their religious commandments and the demands of their military service. So they try to adapt to conflicting situations as effectively as possible. Since the Friday Prayer occurs during the (Christian) workweek, it inevitably collides with regular working procedures and daily routines and this collision has to be managed somehow. To do so, the Austrian Armed Forces have come up with special regulations like compensatory extra duties and different service hours for Muslim conscripts. The following chapters present the pivotal and milieu-specific problems of Muslim conscripts in the Austrian Armed Forces.

4.1 The View of the Others – the Central Role of Expectations

The military service in Austria constitutes a social system, in which people with a Muslim religious background become recognisable and visible as such. This visibility does not only refer to their outward appearance, but also to their behaviours and granted rights (e. g. special food). As mentioned above, the “Islamic religious community in Austria” (IGGiÖ) and the Austrian Armed Forces know a differentiation between ‘strictly religious’ and ‘not strictly religious’ Muslim conscripts. From this differentiation the Austrian Armed Forces expect smoother and ‘frictionless’ working procedures, since in total institutions the essential needs and necessities of ‘inmates’ have to be planned in advance (see Goffman 1973: 21). In terms of system theory (Luhmann 1984: 261–262), this internal differentiation is a possibility to reduce complexity for subsystems like the ‘strictly’ and ‘not strictly religious’ group. However, the separation leads to an increase of complexity for the total system. So-called ‘strictly religious Muslims’ are becoming part of the environment of ‘not strictly religious Muslims’ and vice versa. Inevitably, this differentiation itself is observed which generates a variety of mostly critical comments.

Whenever special regulations and arrangements are made for a certain group of people, assumptions about this group already exist. In further consequence, this can constitute specific expectations, which may lead to envy and discomfort for excluded people. In this study, dissatisfaction is especially narrated in regard to non-Muslim comrades, who observe that Muslim conscripts leave their work at certain times (e. g. to attend the Friday Prayer). In addition, envy also hits some Muslim conscripts who are seen as ‘not strictly religious’ by the Austrian Armed Forces. They suspect that some ‘strictly religious Muslims’ are not really ‘strictly religious’, they only pretend to be so – because of the assumed ‘less exhausting’ and ‘easier’ functions they will be assigned to (*‘Privately they never go to a mosque, but they start doing so in the forces!’*³⁰). In this context, the Austrian Armed Forces offer the possibility of compensation, i. e. missed working hours have to be made up for. As a result, all conscripts do their service of equal length, although not at the same time. In the sense of Bateson (1981a), this can lead to a “dynamic equilibrium” (Bateson 1981b: 108–109) of the groups involved (in the negative case it would be conflict).

Since these established concessions for Muslim conscripts are developed in cooperation with an official religious community (IGGiÖ), the criteria used for the differentiation carry normative and deeply religious references. As a result, only ‘strictly religious Muslims’ are assumed to be interested in Ramadan or in the Friday Prayer, so that appropriate concessions should only be reserved for this particular group – an assumption that is unanimously rejected in the group discussions.

In this respect, preconceived opinions and resulting expectations about what it means to be a Muslim or how Muslims should behave already exist in the Austrian Armed Forces. Therefore, Muslim conscripts obtain a specific “social identity” (Goffman 1975: 10), as they are seen as representatives of a category or cultural group with specific roles, attributes and characteristics. However, these assumptions and views contain a high potential for conflict. If an actual behaviour differs from these expectations – or if there is a discrepancy between a “virtual” and an “actual social identity” (Goffman 1975: 10–11) – the military superiors may react annoyed. In the group discussions the participants narrate conflicts with the military staff in which such expectations and the system-immanent differentiation of ‘strictly’ and ‘not strictly religious’ conscripts play a prominent role (*‘No, only strictly religious Muslims are going to pray in the mosque!’*,

30 Group discussion I, Military service, Vienna, June 24, 2008.

*'How can you be a Muslim if you got drunk yesterday?'*³¹ etc.). Such attributions and expectations about a counterpart play an important role in all social situations, not only in those in which people from different social and cultural backgrounds meet. They are becoming especially problematic in total institutions, since all aspects of life are conducted in the very same place, widely and publicly observed, and under the same central authority. In total institutions discrepancies between the virtual and actual identity of Muslim conscripts are highly probable. Following Taylor (1994), the specific expectations and assumptions about Muslims as a cultural group can be described as a "misrecognition" (Taylor 1994: 25) of their identity, because the identities and needs in question are determined from 'outside' and from other people.

Basically there are two ways to deal with these expectations: adaptation or resistance. Adaptation is a form of submission to the prevalent norms and standards. Muslim conscripts conform to these rules and expectations and behave appropriately, even though they see and criticise them as misconceptions. The group discussions of this study indicate that on one hand the participants generally reject expectations from the military staff, but on the other hand they see no way to change their actual situation – and adapt to it. For example, if hindered attending the Friday Prayer some participants have a compensatory prayer in their free time; others abstain from praying at all.

This study indicates yet another form of adaptation, which can be described from a psychoanalytic angle. Anna Freud (1936/2006) speaks about an unconscious psychological reaction, a defence mechanism, which she calls "identification with the aggressor" (Freud 1936/2006: 109): Instead of being overwhelmed with anxiety, a threatened individual unconsciously adopts and copies values and behavioural patterns of an aggressor. The 'exterior threat' can be criticism or imposition of sanctions by an authority, most typically by a father figure. For instance, though some group participants are highly disappointed because they are not allowed to attend the Friday Prayer (since they are seen as 'not strictly religious' by the staff), they display a general understanding and somewhat endorsement of this differentiation.

B: "If you are a strictly religious Muslim and you got the notification from the Islamic religious community you're used in the kitchen or in some other back area. But I don't want to waste my time with cleaning toilets and kitchen you know!"

31 Group discussion III, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

A: “Yes!”

B: “I want into the company of honour! (...) I want to exercise!”³²

Here, the recruit does not want to spend his military service with ‘lowly’ tasks (‘kitchen’ or ‘cleaning toilets’), but rather with honourable functions (‘company of honour’, ‘exercise’). This example shows an identification with the values of the military system. Even though all group discussions reveal strong criticism about the experienced heteronomous regulations, this criticism is occasionally put into a different perspective (‘*Actually we are far too spoiled.*’³³, ‘*It [the military service] is much harder in Egypt or Turkey.*’³⁴, ‘*We should not forget, that we are not in Turkey but in Austria and not in a Muslim state (...) nevertheless we get Muslim-suitable food.*’³⁵). Such relativization is protective and helps to cope with the restrictions and the general heteronomy of the actual situation.

Resistance is the second possibility to react. However, in total institutions the potential for resistance is highly restricted, as it is not possible to walk out of the situation altogether. Since the military is a system that operates with “discipline and punishment” (Foucault 1994), insubordination is a ‘dangerous’ form of protest – not only for Muslim conscripts. The only form of resistance found in this study is an increase of autonomy claims. Following Bourdieu (1982), these claims can be seen as a habitualized form of coping with heteronomous regulations: an idealized autonomy is established as an antithesis to the experienced heteronomy. However, this autonomy remains pretty rhetoric (‘*If I do something, I do something! (...) Nobody can force you, nobody can forbid things! You know!*’³⁶). In this context, the group discussions show a great emphasis on the legal and statutory framework. In those sequences in which the participants discuss the normative regulations of their own culture and religion (Islamic praying times, prohibition of alcohol) and how they comply with them during their military service, they refer to the individual and constitutional rights of Austrian citizens. For example, one participant stresses that he is old enough to drink alcohol, wherefore his decision to do so in his free time should be tolerated by his superiors (‘*I am eighteen years old you know. What’s it to you, if I drink or not?*’³⁷). In terms of system theory (Luhmann

32 Group discussion III, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

33 Group discussion V, Military service, Vienna, July 7, 2008.

34 Group discussion III, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

35 Group discussion I, Military service, Vienna, June 24, 2008.

36 Group discussion III, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

37 Group discussion III, Military service, Vienna, June 27, 2008.

1984/1997) this emphasis implies an invocation of the subsystem ‘law’, with its seemingly overriding importance. Therefore, the interviewed participants generally expect their behaviour to be tolerated as long as it is conforming to the Austrian law. Despite being legally entitled to do so, Muslims are not allowed to drink alcohol for religious reasons. It thus becomes unclear, if a misdemeanour – like the consumption of alcohol – is negotiated within a legal or a religious frame. In such a situation, how can the tension between the two frames – or subsystems in the perspective of systems theory – relax? Considering a potential relaxation of cultural customs of second generation migrants, it seems helpful not to think of ‘Muslims’ in general, but of a ‘subspecies’ called ‘Euro-Muslims’ as described by Tibi (2005) in his works on “Euro-Islam” (see Tibi 2005). ‘Euro-Muslims’ in this sense, are conceived as a group of people who lean towards a less strict religious orientation with a liberal and progressive interpretation of Islam and its customs. However, currently, the concessions for Muslim conscripts in the Austrian Armed Forces follow a very conservative notion of Islam.

As a result, the orientation of Muslim conscripts oscillates between (an exaggerated plea for) freedom and the encountered constraints.³⁸ It is becoming ambiguous, whether the special regulations for Muslim recruits are seen as a general right or as an obligation. Once the concessions for Muslim conscripts are implemented, they have a stringent character. If preconceived assumptions about Muslims by the military staff (e. g. ‘Muslims do not drink alcohol.’) contradict the obvious reality, it is not the expectation that is modified, but the individual person (an alcoholised Muslim conscript) is criticised. In doing so, Muslim conscripts are ‘forced’ into a specific image – a specific “social identity” (Goffman 1975: 10) – that becomes part of the overall heteronomy. Their idealized claims for autonomy amount to a somewhat helpless form of resistance. More frequent forms of coping are submission and adaptation.

4.2 Communicated Difference

In all group discussions in the Armed Forces, interviewees report discriminations because of their religious, and especially because of their ethnic affiliations. These dis-

38 In terms of the documentary method of interpretation (see Bohnsack 2008: 136) this idealized freedom can be called a “positive horizon” of an orientation. This horizon reveals positive ideals, and distances itself from the opposite, from a “negative horizon” that means rejected ideals (in this case heteronomy). The evaluation of the potentials to realize or to reach a positive horizon is called “Enaktierungspotential” (Bohnsack 2008: 136; Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr 2008: 290). Here, the participants see no such potentials.

criminations both come from non-Muslim conscripts and comrades, and from the staff. The communication of a general difference between people with and without a migrational background takes place again and again. Nothing of that kind is mentioned in the group discussions of civilian servants.

Whereas conflicts with other comrades are described as open and direct arguments, conflicts and problems with superiors appear to be 'hidden' and indirect. This fact is associated with a central feature of total institutions, where the social order is described as a "fundamental distinction" (Goffman 1973: 18–19) between personnel and inmates. Any contact and collaboration is regulated by a formal and prescribed social distance. Conflicts and disputes with staff members cannot be negotiated openly, since total institutions are characterised by a strong hierarchical organizational structure and a unilateral or one-way communication operating with commands and reports. Open and direct disputes with superiors are virtually impossible in this communication system.

Discriminations coming from members of the staff are rather indirect and appear in three different forms. Muslim conscripts are either indirectly put at disadvantage; or they encounter a constant emphasis of their ethnicity; or they have to listen to inappropriate generalizations and over-simplifications. Overall, the original descent of people with a migrational background is addressed in negative contexts. As a result, difference or 'otherness' in contrast to the other conscripts is communicated, a fact that participants describe as disturbing, sometimes even as painful. Beyond that, superiors in the Austrian Armed Forces are authorities who represent the institution and its interests. For this reason, the interviewed Muslim conscripts regard discriminations from such an 'official source' as insults with a higher degree of severity, as compared to those of comrades who are hierarchically on the same level.

Referring to system-theoretical considerations about the "inclusion" of people into sub-systems of a society (Luhmann 1994/1997; Nassehi 1997), such descriptions reinforce and underpin the image of non-affiliation or extraneousness of conscripts with a migrational background. Although they serve in the military, they are not fully included in it in a system-theoretical sense, since the term inclusion stands for communication strategies that define members as relevant interaction partners (see Nassehi 1997: 121). One can hardly speak of inclusion, when communication patterns are dominant, which address and characterize conscripts with a migrational background as 'foreign' or 'different' and thus permanently reinforce the distinction between a we- and they-group. In the group discussions, this clear distinction is also perceivable in those sequences, in which

the participants talk about themselves as being Austrian citizens – a fact that seems somewhat ambiguous for conscripts with a migrational background.

In dealing with experienced discriminations, again, adaptation and to remain inconspicuous seem to be the ‘safest’ forms of coping. Furthermore, the experienced discriminations, disadvantages, and communication patterns are described as a ‘familiar thing’, as ‘nothing new’, as something the participants have already got used to.

A: *“We are, I mean the Muslims are disadvantaged a little bit. But in the civilian life it is the same.”*

D: *“Yes, they made fun of me during school as well. I have – Among the comrades. Here. At work. Everywhere it is the same.”*

A: *“Lets say we already got used to this.”*

D: *“Exactly! It has happened here in the Austrian Armed Forces as well. Good Lord! That is not an unknown or new thing. [4 seconds break] It was painful in the beginning but you get used to it.”³⁹*

Altogether, the image of (two) separated groups – the ‘real Austrians’ and the ‘foreigners’, or the “established” and the “outsiders” (Elias/Scotson 1993: 10) – is adopted, internalized, and maintained. The power imbalance implied in this situation typically leads to developments in the symbolic realm: the excluded may be the moral victors (they may be more powerful, but we are morally ‘better’). In this sense, conscripts with a migrational background regard their we-group as endowed with better and higher qualities (‘sense of community’, ‘social cohesion’, ‘respect’, ‘religiosity’). Such enhancement of the own group and disaffirmation of the they-group, respectively, may amount to a “counter-stigmatisation” (Elias/Scotson 1993: 15) that can relativise the imbalances of power.

5 Conclusion

This study is concerned with the situation of young Muslim men of the second generation in the Austrian Armed Forces and in the Austrian civilian service. The two fields differ in important aspects: Muslim conscripts in the Austrian Armed Forces are highly adaptive and submissive to the norms that govern their actual situation, since they experience specific expectations about their social identity. Furthermore, they express a general feeling of social exclusion that is sometimes accompanied by direct insults from

³⁹ Group discussion I, Military service, Vienna, June 24, 2008.

non-Muslims. Because of experienced generalizations by their military superiors they try to remain inconspicuous. In the civilian service, on the other hand, participants neither see themselves confronted with specific expectations and assumptions about them as a cultural group, nor with disadvantages or insults, a fact that makes a conflict-free work possible.

This study, thus, alludes to the fact that conflicts concerning cultural integration are not an inevitable result of different cultural behavioural patterns; rather, they are mainly spawned by the social structures of particular institutions, especially by their degree of totality (in Goffman's sense). All interviewed Muslim conscripts narrate a general contradictoriness of their religious and cultural commandments and the general working procedures of their military service. This is especially true for those conscripts who show a strong and normative religious orientation. The systematic comparison of group discussions with young Muslim men in the Armed Forces and in the civilian service makes it evident, that religiosity is becoming a 'problem' only in total institutions, since the compliance with religious norms requires special regulations that severely disturb the regular course of action in these institutions. The military is a system that is not accustomed to operate in relation to individual needs; quite the contrary, it rather wants to mold individuality into collective actions and motions. In other words, it is a generator for uniformity. To deal with cultural differences, thus is a systematic challenge for Armed Forces, be it in Austria or elsewhere.

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Conclusion

Conclusion

Iris Menke

An analysis of Muslim service members' experience in their daily life may provide an indication as to how successfully people of a different faith have been integrated into society. As has been stated in the preface already, a direct comparison of Muslim service members' experiences in the German, Dutch and Austrian Armed Forces is not possible as the migration backgrounds of the target groups differ substantially in line with different historical developments in the respective countries. Different specific forms of Islam in the countries of origin must therefore be taken into consideration. In addition to this, it makes a tremendous difference for the perception of acceptance or discrimination whether a person is a descendant of former immigrant workers ("Gastarbeiter") or of immigrants stemming from a former colony.

At first glance, one might deduce from the empirical results and descriptive arguments that soldiers of the Muslim faith in the Dutch and Austrian Armed Forces experience much more discrimination than in the German Bundeswehr. Here it is important to bear in mind that the target groups in both Austrian studies centre around recruits. For the Dutch study it must be noted that the physical appearance (especially colour of skin) of the interviewees varies to a great extent. While several of the German soldiers whose families come from Turkey obviously seem to benefit from their "Mediterranean" look, Dutch soldiers coming from Surinam physically stand out as being "black" and are more likely to perceive subliminal distrust based on this fact. The Austrian respondents whose physical appearance was declared as being 'European' reported having less trouble as well.

Coinciding results of the Dutch and the German studies are partly due to the interaction between the researchers throughout the conduction of the projects. It is therefore not surprising that both studies refer to Kanter's theory on *tokenism*. In both countries soldiers of the Muslim faith seem to use several strategies of "not attracting attention" to ease their integration into the group. Nevertheless, even without referring to this theory, the Austrian research results by Krainz/Sluneko lead to the same conclusion: To dissociate from generalizations, Austrian recruits as well try to avoid missteps and remain inconspicuous. Muslims who do not comply with their religious commandments and

therefore do not demand special regulations experience the least problems in the Austrian Armed Forces.

Other similarities between the results of the German and the Dutch studies relate to experience in missions abroad. Due to their linguistic skills and knowledge of cultural patterns of behaviour, such as greetings or the display of respect for elders, in both cases it seems to be easier for Muslim soldiers to establish contact with the local population and to gain their confidence.

Moreover, the research results show consistency in the construction of “otherness” in Austria and in Germany: participants in both Austrian research studies used a clear differentiation between themselves as ‘foreigners’ (‘Tschuschen’) and the ‘real’, ‘true’ or ‘pure Austrians’ even though they were Austrian citizens themselves. In Germany, too, likewise soldiers seem to contrast the category of “we Muslims” with “them Germans”, which in addition leads to a mixing up of the categories of nationality and religion. In either case these observations support the assumption that descendants of migrants frequently do not seem to feel accepted as “real” citizens even though they have had the respective citizenship since their birth.

The Austrian Armed Forces introduced a differentiation in terms of strictness of religiosity which leads to three different categories of ‘Muslims’. Intended to facilitate religious practice, the numerous official regulations based on these categories lead to even more problems, especially inclusion or exclusion from a certain group and accordingly to envy and discomfort of their comrades.

Similarities between the German Bundeswehr and the Dutch Armed Forces can again be observed when it comes to missions abroad. In both projects the absence of any form of representation of interests or a chaplain service becomes manifest. Especially during deployment this caused serious concern as there are no regulations on the specific religious rites and ceremonies that need to be performed in case of death. Some of the Dutch Muslim soldiers have built personal networks to solve this problem.

Concluding, once again it must be stressed, that this compilation of research results on Muslim service personnel in three neighbouring European countries can only provide a first insight into both common features and differences in the way in which the Armed Forces deal with religious minorities. Still many questions remain unanswered and should be the subject of a comparative research study which is designed as such.

Attachment

Verlautbarungsblatt (Austria)

Translation from the German

(Bundessprachenamt – Referat SMD 3)

Official Publication I issued by the Austrian Ministry of Defence – As of 2006 – 53.
Routine Duties; Treatment of Religious Minorities – Conscription and Assignments;
Key Regulations – Revised Edition

(Original title: Verlautbarungsblatt I des Bundesministeriums für Landesverteidigung –
Jahrgang 2006 – 53. Dienstbetrieb; Behandlung religiöser Minderheiten – Einberufung
und Verwendung; Zusammenfassende Richtlinien – Neufassung)

Official Publication I
issued by the
Ministry of Defence

As of 2006

Vienna, 25 September

53. Routine Duties; Treatment of Religious Minorities – Conscription and Assignments; Key Regulations – Revised Edition

Directive as of 30 August 2006, Reference No. S93109/9-FGG1/2006

The regulations valid from 1 October 2006 on the conscription and assignment of religious minorities are re-promulgated in the following.

CONTENTS

- I. Pious (Orthodox) Members of the Jewish Community
- II. Pious Members of the Islamic Community
- III. Highly Pious Members of the Islamic Community
- IV. Non-Pious Members of the Islamic Community
- V. Pious Members of the Sikh Community
- VI. Members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church
- VII. Members of Other Religious Communities
- VIII. Supersessions

I. Pious (Orthodox) Members of the Jewish Community

1. **Conscription** to military service with the **Vienna Military Command** possible on **no more than two call-up dates** to be determined by the Vienna Military Command, whereby preference January and July should be given preference.

The Vienna Military Command will decide to which unit each conscript is assigned and will inform the Personnel Department at the Ministry of Defence (FGG1) accordingly.

Conscripts must prove that they are orthodox members of the Jewish community already during the pre-induction examinations by submitting a certificate of the Israelite Religious Community.

2. The **conscription target will be exceeded.**

3. **Training and further assignments:**

Orthodox members of the Jewish Community will receive a two-month basic training before being assigned administrative or service functions at units of the Vienna Military Command.

4. The Vienna Military Command will make the necessary **arrangements** for special **religious requirements** including messing, dietary regulations as well as praying facilities and times directly with the Israelite Religious Community (A-1010 Vienna, Seitenstettengasse 4, Tel. +43/1/533 04-0).
5. Orthodox members of the Jewish Community are allowed to wear the skullcap with their military uniform. Over the skullcap, however, they must wear the appropriate military **headgear** so that a consistent appearance is maintained in public.
6. The Army must cater for **kosher messing** by offering the following possibilities:
 - a) providing, in cooperation with the Israelite Religious Community in Vienna, hot dishes or meals that the basic service conscripts can heat up themselves
 - b) self-catering at the barracks that must meet the following requirements:
 - refrigerator, microwave, kettle, dishes and a cupboard for the dishes in each room
 - opportunity for the basic service conscripts to buy kosher food and to
 - make dishes and kitchen equipment kosher
 - c) in exceptional cases, when the possibilities specified under 6a) and 6b) cannot be applied, orthodox members of the Jewish Community must be granted leave to have kosher meals.

Provisions on the supply of special food are included in the directive dated 20 February 1989, Reference No. 51590/213-4.8/89. Z 2.

7. **Changed time schedule** for orthodox members of the Jewish Community and supporting measures:

- a) Appropriate action must be taken to ensure that orthodox Jews can say **morning prayer at the barracks by 7.30 a.m., individual prayer in the afternoon and evening prayer after sunset.**

They may pray alone or together in a group. A suitable room, e. g. a classroom, is to be made available for this purpose. When pious members of the Jewish Community receive combat training or “live on the battlefield” a tent or place in the terrain must be made available where they won’t be disturbed.

- b) If the provisions laid down under 7a) cannot be applied, basic service conscripts must be **granted leave to attend a synagogue.**

Such leave is to be granted until 8.30 a.m. for morning prayers and one and a half hours before sunset for evening prayers.

- c) **In the event of death of a family member** (parents, brothers or sisters, wife and children), basic service conscripts must be allowed to say both a morning and an evening prayer together with at least 10 other members of the Jewish Community during the year of mourning. A death in the family during basic military service is an important personal reason for being granted leave from the day the death is announced until seven days after the funeral. Only the commander of the unit is authorized to grant such compassionate leave.

- d) **Shabbat:** Shabbat starts two hours before sunset on Friday and ends two hours after sunset on Saturday.

- e) **Jewish holy days** always start two hours before sunset on the previous day and end two hours after sunset on the holy day.

Jewish holy days for which orthodox members of the Jewish Community are to be granted leave are the following:

- *Rosh Hashanah* – Jewish New Year (two days)
- *Yom Kippur* – Day of Atonement (one day)
- *Sukkot* – Feast of Booths (two days)
- *Pesach* – Passover (two days at the beginning and two days at the end)
- *Shavuot* – Feast of Weeks (two days)
- *Shemini Atzeret* – Eighth Day of Assembly (one day)
- *Simchat Torah* (one day)

In return, orthodox Jewish soldiers should frequently be assigned duties on Sundays and other Christian holy days.

The above provisions are binding during the entire period of basic military service with the exception of missions of the Austrian Army under Article 2, Paragraph I, Letters a) and b) of the 2001 Defence Law. It must be ensured, however, that the total number of duty hours per week equals the average of all personnel.

8. Adapted to the Gregorian Calendar, the Jewish holy days will be specially announced each year.

II. Pious Members of the Islamic Community

1. **Conscription** to military service with the **Vienna Military Command** on certain **call-up dates** to be determined by the Vienna Military Command. The Vienna Military Command will decide to which unit each conscript is assigned and will inform the Personnel Department at the Ministry of Defence accordingly.

If necessary, the Joint Forces Command will request the Ministry of Defence (FGG 1) to designate another Military Command to initiate the conscription and further assignment of pious members of the Islamic Community in accordance with this directive.

Conscripts must **prove** that they are **pious members of the Islamic Community already during pre-induction examinations** by submitting a certificate of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community in Austria which is entitled “**confirmation of practising the Islamic religion**”.

In justified exceptional circumstances it is possible to hand in the certificate to the conscription division of the competent Military Command up to one month after the pre-induction examinations.

2. **The conscription target will be exceeded.**
3. **Training and further assignments:**

Pious Muslim believers will receive a two-month basic training before being assigned to administrative or service functions in the territorial organization of the Vienna Military Command.

4. The Vienna Military Command or the units involved will make the necessary **arrangements** for special **religious requirements** including messing, dietary regulations as well as praying facilities and times directly with the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community in Austria (A 1070Vienna, Bernardgasse 5, Tel. +43/1/526 3122) according to paragraph 4 above.
5. **Changed time schedule** for pious members of the Islamic Community and supporting measures:
 - a) **Pious Muslims are bound by their religion to pray five times a day:**
 - *salat al-fajr* – dawn prayer, before sunrise
 - *salat al-zuhr* – *midday prayer, after the sun passes its highest*
 - *salat al-'asr* – *afternoon prayer, the late part of the afternoon*
 - *salat al-maghrib* – *sunset prayer, just after sunset*
 - *salat al-'isha* – *night prayer, between sunset and midnight*

As the list shows, soldiers performing basic and training military service do not normally have to hold the dawn, sunset and night prayers during duty hours.

For official reasons it is therefore not necessary as a rule to let the soldiers hold all the five daily prayers together in the evening.

Constraints during training, the performance of duties in accordance with general service regulations, on operations or during exercises under operational conditions cannot always be avoided but even in such cases, appropriate organizational measures should be taken to guarantee that pious Muslim believers can still hold their daily prayers.

On Fridays, the midday prayer is replaced by the **Friday prayer**. This is a very important obligation of every Muslim who is of full age and can be held accountable. Unlike the daily mandatory prayers, Friday prayers must be held together with the community of believers. They are closely connected with instructions in religious duties, obligations and prohibitions. Friday prayers do not necessarily have to take place in mosques. The important thing is that they are held inside and attended by at least three Muslims, one of whom must be an Imam who leads the prayer. Every adult Muslim can fulfil the task of an Imam.

As the Friday prayers have special significance for pious members of the Islamic Community, they are to be granted leave so that they can attend these prayers. However, this does not apply for missions of the Austrian Army in cases specified in Article 2, Paragraph 1, Letters a) and b) of the 2001 Defence Law.

- b) Muslim holy days for which pious members of the Islamic Community are to be granted leave are as follows:
 - *Id-ul-Fitr* – holy day which marks the end of *Ramadan*, the Islamic holy month of fasting three days
 - *Id-ul-Adha* – Festival of Sacrifice four days

In return, pious Muslim soldiers should be assigned duty more frequently on Sundays and other Christian holy days.

6. Adapted to the Gregorian Calendar, the Muslim holy days will be announced separately each year.
7. Provisions on the supply of special food are included in the directive dated 20 February 1989, Reference No. 51590/213-4.8/89. Z 3 and in the directive of 18 January 1999, Reference No. 51590/7-4.11/99.
8. Soldiers who fail a drug test twice will automatically lose their status as pious Muslims. The provisions of Article IV of this directive will then apply to them.

III. Highly Pious Members of the Islamic Community

Highly pious members of the Islamic Community are persons who not only clearly profess their faith in Islam and abide strictly by its religious rules but also try to lead their lives in accordance with their religion and God's will.

In addition to the traditional set of religious rules including obligations, prohibitions and the attendance of prayers, they also have to obey special standards of behaviour which they consider indispensable for their religious life. They act in line with the traditional codes of conduct established by the Prophet Muhammad and great Islamic scholars.

Their strict religious attitude is seen in a very positive light not only by themselves but also by the other members of the Islamic Community.

As the percentage of highly pious Muslim believers within the Islamic Community is very small and the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community in Austria handles the certification of their status as highly pious members of the Islamic Community very restrictively and only after a thorough examination of the individual case, the Supreme Council was authorised to grant permission, on a case by case basis, for highly pious Muslim believers to grow a beard.

However, the Austrian Ministry of Defence reserves the right to grant official permission for highly pious members of the Islamic Community to wear a beard on duty. If soldiers are granted such permission, they are exempted from wearing NBC protective masks and from tightness testing thereof.

If a highly pious member of the Islamic Community who has received the appropriate certification by the Supreme Council of the Islamic Religious Community is conscripted into the Austrian Army, the responsible unit must submit an application to the Ministry of Defence for the soldier to be granted permission to wear a beard on duty.

The soldier is free to have a full beard until the ministry makes a decision.

Otherwise, the provisions of Article II of this directive will apply to this group of persons.

Soldiers who fail a drug test twice will automatically lose their status as highly pious Muslims. The provisions of Article IV of this directive will then apply to them.

IV. Non-Pious Members of the Islamic Community

Due to the demographic development in Austria, an increasing number of conscripts are called up to render service throughout Austria who are Muslim believers but do not meet the criteria for being treated as pious members of the Islamic Community.

The problem during their basic military service is that these soldiers refuse to consume pork (products) for religious and/or cultural reasons but are not pious Muslims according to the strict criteria.

With the intention of giving these conscripts and all the other soldiers who prefer non-pork food the opportunity to receive this kind of special messing, the directive entitled “Alternative Messing in Troop Kitchens”, Reference No. 51590/7-4.11/99, was issued on 18 January 1999 and distributed down to unit level.

This directive is to be seen as a measure with which the Army can meet its obligation to care for its soldiers in compliance with Article 4, Paragraph 1 of the Austrian Army Service Regulations and is to be implemented within the bounds of duty. It should be pointed out that no legal claims can be derived from the above-mentioned directive if supply with alternative non-pork food is not possible in justified exceptional cases.

Muslim soldiers performing basic military service are not granted any privileges as members of the Islamic Community excluding the provision of non-pork food. However, in accordance with Article 45 of the 2001 Defence Law the commanders in charge can, upon request and within the bounds of duty, grant this group of persons leave on the holy days as granted to pious members of the Islamic Community. The loss of duty hours must then be made up for by more frequent duties on Sundays and/or other Christian holy days. This may not, however, result in a loss of training hours that cannot be made up for.

V. Pious Members of the Sikh Community

The increased numbers of naturalized Sikhs requires the competent authorities to make special considerations particularly for the pious members of the Sikh Community.

The following provisions are to be implemented in order to ensure the appropriate performance of basic military service, paying due regard to the special religious rules for life that pious members of the Sikh Community must obey:

1. Taking into account the exceptions laid down, conscripts can perform their basic military service at any unit of the Austrian Army.
2. If members of the Sikh Community who are liable to military service declare to the selection board that they are pious members of their religious community they must meet the following criteria:
 - they must wear a turban
 - their hair and beard must be unshorn.

If conscripts do not mention that they are pious members of this community until they join the unit to which they have been assigned, their commander has to check whether they meet the above-mentioned criteria. Only if this is the case will the respective conscripts be officially granted the status of pious members of the Sikh Community and are therefore to be treated in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

3. These conscripts will receive a two-month basic training before being assigned administrative or service functions.

4. The following exceptions to the existing regulations and directives will apply for these soldiers:
 - permission to wear their hair long and remain unshaven
 - permission to wear a turban instead of the military headgear (including lining) on duty and on leave
 - exemption from attending training courses in which wearing a steel helmet for safety reasons would be mandatory
 - exemption from wearing the NBC protective mask and from tightness testing
5. Upon request, they are to be granted leave on the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev.
6. Within the bounds of duty, the commanders in charge must ensure that these soldiers can keep to the rules of their faith as follows:
 - They must be enabled to take part in daily prayer and
 - They must be provided with special messing (vegetarian options only at certain times, no beef). Acceptable solutions such as serving more side dishes or vegetables are to be sought in consultation with the soldiers concerned.

VI. Members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church can be granted leave on Saturdays to attend religious service from 9 to 11 a.m., allowing them time to get there and back, and youth assemblies in the afternoon if they are able to prove their status as members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

It is not possible, however, to derive legal claims from this privilege.

Soldiers who request and are granted such a privilege must be assigned duty on Sundays.

VII. Members of Other Religious Communities

The commanders in charge can, within the bounds of duty, grant members of other religious communities (e. g. Serbian Orthodox or Greek Orthodox Church) leave on high church days in accordance with Article 45 of the 2001 Defence Law. The loss of duty hours must then be compensated for by more frequent duty on Sundays and/or other Christian holy days. This must, however, not result in a loss of training hours that cannot be made up for.

VIII. Supersessions

The directive of 2 January 2006, Reference No. S93109/13-FGG1/2005, Official Publication No. 2/2006, is superseded by the directive of 30 August 2006 with immediate effect.

About the Authors



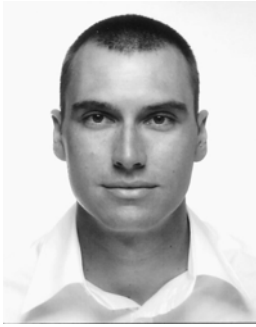
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About this book: In recent years the integration of soldiers of ethnic or religious minorities has become a major challenge for the armed forces in many European countries. As a government institution, on the one hand, the armed forces have the obligation to implement politically intended ambitions to intensify diversity management enhancement. On the other hand, considering demographic changes in society, the armed forces will be faced with the development of recruitment programs that take these changes into account.

For this reason, the following compilation of reports on the personal experiences of Muslim service personnel from three neighbouring countries – Germany, The Netherlands and Austria – aims to provide a first insight into both common features and differences in the way in which the armed forces deal with religious minorities and to raise awareness for hitherto unexploited potential.

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About the Institute: On behalf of the Federal Ministry of Defence, the Bundeswehr Institute of Social Sciences (Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr; SWInstBw – “SOWI”) deals with military-related empirical social research as well as with military-sociological basic research. In 1974, the Institute emanated from the Scientific Institute of Education in the Armed Forces, and in 1995 it was relocated from Munich to Strausberg. With a core of about 15 social scientists, the research work of the Institute is mainly empirical, multidisciplinary, and problem-oriented, linked within a network of national and international scientific, political, and military bodies and institutions. Both in a national and multinational context, the Institute pursues and analyses situation and development of the Bundeswehr and its staff, thus generating a sensorium for the internal situation of the Armed Forces and for the public opinion with regard to problems of security and defence policy. As a department research body of the Federal Government, the Institute contributes with its research findings to the Bundeswehr’s capability for the future, by tackling current problems and continuously developing its research and knowledge interests.