ACCEPT PLURALISM

Extending the limits of intolerance The Sarrazin-Debate and its effect on members of the targeted minority

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Extending the Limits of Intolerance

The Sarrazin-Debate and its effect on members of the targeted minority

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ACCEPT PLURALISM is a Research Project, funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Program. The project investigates whether European societies have become more or less tolerant during the past 20 years. In particular, the project aims to clarify: (a) how is tolerance defined conceptually, (b) how it is codified in norms, institutional arrangements, public policies and social practices, (c) how tolerance can be measured (whose tolerance, who is tolerated, and what if degrees of tolerance vary with reference to different minority groups). The ACCEPT PLURALISM consortium conducts original empirical research on key issues in school life and in politics that thematise different understandings and practices of tolerance. Bringing together empirical and theoretical findings, ACCEPT PLURALISM generates a State of the Art Report on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe, a Handbook on Ideas of Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe, a Tolerance Indicators' Toolkit where qualitative and quantitative indicators may be used to score each country's performance on tolerating cultural diversity, and several academic publications (books, journal articles) on Tolerance, Pluralism and Cultural Diversity in Europe. The ACCEPT PLULARISM consortium is formed by 18 partner institutions covering 15 EU countries. The project is hosted by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and co-ordinated by Prof. Anna Triandafyllidou.

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The **Faculty of Social and Cultural Sciences at the European University Viadrina** seeks to research the complicated process of transformation taking place in current Europe by promoting the interdisciplinary relationship between the humanities and social sciences in these representative disciplines: Cultural History, Social Sciences, Literature and Linguistics.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This report analyses the national debate about the book "Germany does away with itself" by the former politician Thilo Sarrazin, that draws a future scenario of the German nation being overwhelmed by Muslims, who lower the national levels of intelligence and economic performance. The arguments of the author draw on already existing images of Muslims as the significant other in society and takes them even further to a point, where tolerance towards this other and its religious practices does not seem appropriate any more. Although the book does not open a new debate, but connects to similar discourses in other European countries, it takes this debate further and supports the social boundaries towards Muslims being drawn narrower. This survey is interested in how this debate developed and how it can be seen as supporting the construction of a significant other against whom fears and anxieties are awaken that are hardly open any more for rational deliberation but support intolerant and even racist attitudes towards Muslims with a large part of the German population. Apart from the analysis of the Sarrazin debate, the report also looks at possible effects this national discussion has on members of the targeted minority.

The main questions of the present study are thus: Has the overall effect of the debate been to make intolerance towards a specific minority more socially acceptable? For this purpose we look into the development of the debate its effects on social and political life. Has the political debate about Muslims and/or minorities and maybe also political measurements changed during and after the debate? And how do these developments, especially the changed acceptability of intolerance or intolerant speech affect the people involved? How does it change both their everyday life, their self-perception as entire part of the German society and their also their engagement in political life?

The analytical frame for analysing these questions is the interest in discursive mechanisms of boundary drawing and the construction of a significant other. The study seeks to collect insight into these mechanisms as well as their effects on changing (in-)tolerance towards Muslims in Germany and Europe.

The methodological tools of the analysis are a short discourse analysis of two major national newspapers and expert interviews with members of the Muslim community and professionals, who work within the community. For the media analysis the left-liberal Die Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) and the rather conservative Die Welt were followed between the 30th of September and the 20th of November 2009 after Sarrazin had already given a widely noticed interview in the magazine Lettre International, and between 23rd of August and the 9th of November 2010 right after the publication of the mentioned book, that quickly became a bestseller. Additionally individual articles were taken into consideration that appeared about a year after the debate.

The second part of the analysis deals with the perception of the Sarrazin debate by members of the targeted minority groups and reactions of individual Muslims towards it. It consists of 6 expert interviews and one group discussion with a political group of 5 young Muslims and one of their group leaders, who had invited Thilo Sarrrazin in order to meet the person behind the book and personally discuss his views with him.

The specific anti-Muslim discourse in Germany of which Sarrazin is a spokesperson, has an important function for the construction of a national identity especially in times of fundamental changes of the country turning into an immigration country and witnessing steadily growing (religious) diversity. The immigrants and/or Muslims and their apparent cultural or religious difference is created as the absolute 'other' to German society by attributing with them every negative aspect that Germans want to distance themselves from - from Homophobia to anti-Semitism and misogyny. Following this ascription of negative attributes and values the group is then quite justifiably positioned outside the borders of 'what can still be tolerated' by German society. At the same time this exclusion of the other helps to construct a common national identity that is otherwise hardly to be found regarding the strong

inner diversity of Germany and other European nations. Drawing the border towards the significant other and to what one is not however gives some kind of common identity and unifies interests from very different political persuasions. This process of exclusion becomes stronger with the degree of public fears that the discourse raises. The worse a future scenario is constructed, in which the significant other becomes the dangerous other and takes over important parts of society, the more irrational the public fears become.

One of the factors of Sarrazin's success were the already existent anti-Muslim debates in other European countries and especially the growing populist parties, warning the European citizens against an apparent Islamisation of their societies and through this scenario creating a common European fear of the Muslim other, that is like the Sarrazin discourse quite untouched by rational deliberation. This significant other takes over a similar role on the European level as it does on the respective national levels, as it helps to define Europe through its perceived borders and 'limits of tolerance' and thus supports the unification process of the diverse European countries.

The Sarrazin debate reflects many of those arguments that turn around the 'limits of tolerance' towards the marked minority. In the case of Muslims it is mainly the visibility of religion through mosque buildings, headscarves or prayers in public that is negotiated as a limit of tolerance where the still tolerable other, Muslims who do not obviously identify as such and/or exclusively practice their religion in private, transgresses the boundary into public visibility and therewith the boundary to what can still be tolerated. Those issues typically become public debates in which those boundaries towards the tolerable other are negotiated.

Regarding the effects of the Sarrazin debate and the general construction of Muslims as significant others on members of the Muslim minority, this survey found, that it caused detrimental social divisions by enforcing the perception of many Muslims not to be welcome in German society. Some young Muslims obviously reacted with drawing back into their smaller communities and looking for other possible identity concepts than the German one, even if they were German citizens. Especially young people, who had already been active in civil society organisations and projects however managed to empower themselves and strengthen their self-confidence by learning more about both their own religion and German politics and how to handle both and engage into critical debates and even social activism.

Besides the empowerment of members of the minority that is targeted by the intolerant discourse, political conclusions could be the countering of the construction of a significant other through stronger counter discourses and national debates about this construction of others and its effects in racist attitudes that have already reached large parts of the population also within the middle of society.

1. Introduction

In August 2010 Thilo Sarrazin, a prominent member of the SPD (Social Democratic Party) and then board member of the German Federal Bank, presented his book *"Deutschland schafft sich ab"* (Germany does away with itself) and incited a major public debate. In his book he laid out views and data about how immigrants, in particular Muslims, allegedly threatened the future of the country with their supposedly lower intelligence and higher birth-rate. While some considered these arguments as social Darwinist and outright racist, others perceived them as a form of liberation: the breaking of a public taboo that had been in place for too long. Sarrazin's book and the debate that it incited influenced the discourse about integration, immigrants and Muslims in Germany so strongly that a time 'before' and a time 'after Sarrazin' can be discerned.

Although Sarrazin's book was presented as a milestone in the breaking of significant taboos, the issues it raised in public debate and the fears connected to these issues were not new and were not discussed for the first time. Shortly after the reform of German citizenship law in 2000, the conservative politician Friedrich Merz (CDU) initiated a debate about the 'leading culture' of Germany (*Leitkulturdebatte*) and demanded immigrants to adapt to this particular culture, if they wanted to stay in Germany for good. The concept of *Leitkultur* – which was introduced in opposition and as an alternative to the idea of multiculturalism – expresses certain fears about the loss of ethnic homogeneity and cultural hegemony in the newly declared 'immigration country' (*Einwanderungsland).*

While the *Leitkulturdebatte* in 2000 had still focused on immigrants in general, the concentration on Muslims became stronger in the following years. The majority of immigrants to Germany had long been Turkish labour migrants and their children, whose major identity features became religion after 9/11: what used to be 'Turks' turned into 'Muslims' in the public perception and the 'significant other' (Schiffauer forthcoming 2013, Triandafyllidou forthcoming 2013) in German society was more and more perceived in religious terms. While the significance of so-called cultural difference was still debated as an important issue, especially in the sense that it might keep immigrants from fully integrating into society, religious difference was added to it and strengthened the perceived difference between (mainly Muslim) post-immigrant groups and majority society.

The appearance of the *Leitkulturdebatte* at the moment of a major reform of German citizenship law was not accidental. The legal changes that would eventually lead to a different understanding of society, one in which immigration would be an important characteristic and majority-minority relations would be in flux, were heavily contested. New discourses and political measures that questioned the social status of Muslims and their belonging can be viewed as attempts to construct a significant other and a national identity that would be defined in opposition towards what this 'other' represent (Triandafyllidou forthcoming 2013).

Societites of modern nation states are heterogenous with regard to values, worldviews and ways of life. The construction of a certain group as the 'significant other' and as completely apart from the rest of society allows for collective identification in opposition to this group. As Schiffauer explains, this construction of the 'significant other' is achieved by means of a double negation (Hoffmann 1997): The first step is the construction of a certain group as adhering to values and practices, which are seen to stand in total opposition to the values and practices of the nation. In a second step, the nation and its values are constructed as the complete opposite of what the stigmatized group represents. In the course of such constructions of significant others, clear boundaries between the dominant society and members of the 'otherized' group have to be drawn. Schiffauer (forthcoming 2013) shows that questions of tolerance, intolerance and especially a prevailing discourse of 'no tolerance to intolerance' play an important role in drawing these boundaries in public discourse and in political practice.

In an analysis of the debate about Sarrazin's propositions this report focuses on the drawing of boundaries in public discourse as well as on the relevance of this debate for German political practice and for the social reality of the targeted group. For this purpose we analyse in a first step the role of the media in the debate about Sarrazin and his statements, focussing on the possible effect the debate had on the construction of Muslims as the significant other in German public discourse. The extent of tolerance or intolerance towards a certain group and its members and practices arises more urgently where the boundaries of what counts as (in)tolerable are more clearly drawn and defended. The question of (in)tolerance arises where minorities are perceived to be strongly deviating or even opposing values and practices of the majority (Schiffauer forthcoming 2013). This leads us to the question of whether stricter boundaries that are drawn around Muslim 'difference' in political discourse also lead to heightened intolerance towards this group both in society and in politics and eventually to different political measurements regarding multiculturalism, integration and diversity. The question is, what the social and political effects of the Sarrazin debate, if any, might have been. In the second step of the analysis we therefore focus mainly on members of the targeted minority, on how the debate was perceived by them and if it changed their way of political engagement both on a local level and within political parties in general.

2. Political participation of migrants and/or Muslims in Germany

2.1 Membership in political parties

Before analysing the related debate, it is important to outline the contours of political participation of immigrants and their descendants in Germany so as to appreciate the specific context and timing of these debates. Germany had long upheld a predominantly ethnic conception of citizenship excluding not only migrants but also following generations from naturalisation. The German citizenship law has been notoriously reformed in 2000 opening up citizenship to the children if migrants and also relaxing requirements for citizenship acquisition for the first generation. Actually the most important outcome of the citizenship reform laws of 2000 was the possibility for children of immigrants to acquire German citizenship, if they were born in Germany. However, significant numbers among immigrant communities in Germany are still without German nationality; they remain excluded from national elections and many of them (ie. non EU-nationals) are also excluded from local elections.

Since the 1990es partner- and sub-organisations were formed for migrants within the established German political parties, mainly along lines of nationality such as the German Turkish Forum (*Deutsch-Türkisches Forum* DTF) close to the CDU or the Liberal Turkish-German Union (Liberal Türkisch-Deutsche Union) close to the liberal party FDP (Hunger, 2004 quoted by Müller-Hofstede, 2007). However full participation within the parties is limited to German citizens. Even politicians from post-immigration groups, who hold German citizenship are confronted with unequal treatment within the established political parties (Schmitz/Preuß, 2009). This is one of the reasons, why in 2010 the first party founded mainly by Muslims with immigrant background, BIG (*Bündnis für Innovation und Gerechtigkeit* – Alliance for Innovation and Justice) ran for office in elections in the state of North Rhine Westphalia and in 2011 in Berlin.

Membership in organisations that are perceived as extremist or Islamist by the intelligence services can be another reason for exclusion from political participation. For example the membership in the Turkish Muslim organisation IGMG (Islamic Community Milli Görüs), has been a legal obstacle to naturalisation for a number of Muslim immigrants, which again prevents them from being a regular member of a German political party (Mühe 2007).

2.2 The main political debates

Apart from the different migrant organisations mentioned above, a point of major debate is the question of representation of religious Muslim organisations vis-à-vis the German state. This question is of high importance in the current developments and negotiations regarding the introduction of Islamic religious education in public schools in different federal states, but is also vital for the establishment of Islamic theological chairs at German universities and many other issues. The question, who is entitled to speak for all Muslims in Germany or at least for the majority, is highly controversial.

Although openly religious Muslims are very rare on the political stage, even decidedly non-religious politicians with Muslim affiliation or simply with a family background in Muslim countries can trigger severe disputes as soon as they come into higher power positions. One such debate started in 2010, when the first politician with Turkish immigrant background, Aygül Özkan, was appointed Minister in the German federal state of Lower Saxony. When Özkan stated in an interview that both Christian crucifixes and Muslim headscarves should be banned from public schools, this statement was not perceived as an expression of strongly secular views, but as a Muslim onslaught on Christian crucifixes and religiosity (Spiegel online, 25.04.2010). The Minister was also criticised for being intolerant, although her arguments regarding crucifixes in school were perfectly in line with what the constitutional court had ruled. The blame of intolerance, which called into question the "tolerant" act of appointing a Muslim woman as Minister, was clearly due to her religious background.[1] As Schiffauer explains, this is a good example for the "standpoint epistemology" of the concept of tolerance. If a statement or a practice can be tolerated or not has a lot to do with who is the actor. *"The significant other is met with distrust, because all he represents challenges our vested opinions about the world"* (Schiffauer forthcoming 2013).

As a general trend, anti-Muslim views and statements have become stronger in a range of political parties, first of all the traditional right-wing extremist parties. In September 2009, shortly before the federal elections the NPD (National Democratic Party Germany) sent seemingly official letters to all political representatives from post-immigration groups, asking them to prepare for their return journey to their 'home countries' (Stern.de 22.09.2009). During the electoral campaigns in the *Land* Berlin in August and September 2011, the NPD heavily employed anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim slogans, such as "*GAS geben*", which means 'accelerating' but literally taken means "giving gas", thus hinting at the murderous practices of the National Socialists.

Apart from such overtly racist positions, new parties have been formed lately that use the fear of 'Islamisation' as their major focus of politics, while resisting their description as racist or anti-immigrant in general. Two newly-founded parties, "*Die Freiheit*" (Freedom) and "*Bürgerbewegung Pro Deutschland*" (People's Movement Pro Germany) have also been running for office in Berlin in 2011. Among their slogans has been "*Wählen gehen für Thilos Thesen*" (voting for Thilo's statements) before the background of a crossed out mosque. The latter referred to the debate about Thilo Sarrazin's book mentioned above and was changed into "*Wählen gehen für zensierte Thesen*" (Voting for censored statements) after Sarrazin was granted an injunction against the use of his name by the right-wing populist party.

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[1] In this case it seems as if her cultural or ethnic background was the reason for prejudiced against the Minister. Her arguments were in fact secular and even in opposition to headscarves and crucifixes in classrooms. The mere perception of the Minister as Muslim, due to her Turkish ethnic background, made her appear as a significant other and her comments about the crucifix as a particular affront to majority feelings..

3. Boundary drawing in German politics: the role of the Sarrazin debate

3.1. Overwiew of the two parts of the debate in 2009 and 2010

The then board member of the German Federal Bank, Thilo Sarrazin, had often been quite provocative in his public statements, especially with pejorative utterances about immigrants but also about socially deprived people. In October 2009 he had given an interview to the newspaper *Lettre International*, in which he declared:

> *"The Turks conquer Germany just as the Kosovars have conquered the Kosovo: By a higher birth rate. I would appreciate that, if it were Eastern European Jews with an IQ 15% above the one of the German population."* He further said: *"I do not have to accept anyone, who lives on welfare money, rejects this state, does not reasonably care for the education for his children and continuously produces new little headscarf girls."*[2] (N42.de 2009)

After a great expression of public disgust about these statements the police investigated, if they qualified for prosecution under the criminal act of 'incitement of the people' (*Volksverhetzung*) and Sarrazin offered a public excuse, saying he had not wanted to discredit any specific community. One year later, however, he published his book "*Deutschland schafft sich ab*" (German does away with itself), where he further elaborated the above quoted ideas into a threatening scenario of the European future:

> *"In every country of Europe the Muslim migrants, because of their low labour participation and high claiming of social benefits, cause more costs for the treasury than they bring in economic surplus. Culturally and regarding civilisation, the societal models and moral concepts, they represent, mean a step backwards. Demographically the enormous fertility of Muslim migrants constitutes a threat for the cultural and civilisational balance within aging Europe."* (Spiegel 23.08.2010) [3]

After this publication the Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel criticised the author and his statements as *"exceedingly offending and defamatory" (Spiegel-online 25.08.2010)* [4], the Federal Bank did not want to keep Sarrazin as a board member and even the Federal President (*Bundespräsident*) Christian Wulff intervened until the author finally voluntarily resigned from this position. The book, however, sold about 800,000 copies and has considerably changed political life in Germany in a number of significant ways, some of which will be explained in the following analysis.

3.2 Tolerance, Intolerance and Boundary Drawing

These quotes from Sarrazin's book provide examples for the articulation of public fears, which lie at the core of the process through which boundaries of tolerable and intolerable difference in society are drawn (Schiffauer forthcoming 2013). The anxieties and fears that are characteristic of such debates generally point to the future rather than the present, which could also be observed in Sarrazin's rhetoric. It is less the present conditions of society but rather future scenarios of catastrophic collapse that are predicted.

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[2] Quoted from N24.de, translated by the author.

[3] Quoted from Spiegel, translated by the author.

[4] Quoted from Spiegel-online, translated by the author.

Schiffauer distinguishes between anxieties, fears and concerns regarding the 'significant other'. Different from concerns and fears, in his view anxieties are *"emotions, which are little grounded in empirical evidence but are strongly imaginative. They often result in moral panic and are hardly open to argument."* (Schiffauer forthcoming 2013). The dynamics of boundary definition in the case that we have studied here strongly draw on emotions rather than the rational evaluation of facts. For this reason it seems that a rational or scientific refutation of Sarrazin's ideas, statements and figures might not have the desired effect since their appeal is not primarily based on rational fact.[5]

Processes of boundary drawing are strongly determined by the different types and strengths of those anxieties, fears and/or concerns. The less those discourses are open to rational argumentation and the more anxiety they produce, the more likely they are to produce strong and impenetrable boundaries. The result of such boundaries, which draw on anxieties about Muslims as biologically inferior and demographically dangerous 'underachievers', is a tendency to intolerant attitudes towards the group in question.

Many of the character traits and vices attributed to this group represented the exact opposite of the ideal German citizen. This included portrayals of Muslims as essentially homophobic, anti-Semitic, misogynist, anti-democratic, backward, anti-modernist and drawn to violence and criminality. Such processes of demarcation could not be successfully challenged by a counter-discourse that would alert to the rising intolerance in German society. Rather the double negation process that Schiffauer describes was discernible in this case: Muslims were successfully constructed as the significant other to German society and, then, all the attributes that this society holds negative were projected onto them. At the same time, those that subscribe to this construction could also perceive themselves as being the opposite of what they attribute to the significant other: democratic, modern, peaceful and tolerant, rather than homophobic, anti-Semitic and misogynist.

These ideas and debates are not specific to the German context but have been similarly developing in other European countries, which points to the same process of the construction of a European identity by the help of constructing a significant other. Especially at the peak time of European enlargement from the year 2000 onwards the question of the common identity of all the old and new European states arose strongly. Like on the national level also on the European level, the construction of Islam and Muslims as the significant other helped to construct a common European identity by defining its absolute other while at the same time playing on fear about this other 'taking over' by imposing itself on the majority societies. This feared development was widely referred to as *Islamisation*, a term rarely defined but prone to capture all kinds of collective fears. Thilo Sarrazin is only continuing on this line of thought, but he went further than demanding a 'leading culture', which had been called for earlier by different public officials. Sarrazin instead explained that Muslim immigrants were per se less intelligent and less productive than other social groups and even other immigrants. Thus, rather than demanding their integration, he denied not only their willingness but mainly their ability to integrate. He than touched upon the fear of a changing composition of the social body in general and Islamisation in particular by explaining, that (less intelligent) Muslims were very procreative while (more intelligent) educated ethnic Germans were not procreative enough in order to prevent the Muslims from future domination. Thus an anxiety is mobilized in which the other is seen as unchangeably and dangerously different. The question that arises and is explored in this report is whether and how this new anxiety is accompanied by a new quality of intolerance in practice.

The case of Sarrazin's book, together with parts of the following discourse, is one of heightened and wide-spread intolerance and even one that uses the concept of tolerance in an excluding manner by cautioning against a 'wrong kind of tolerance'. Even the Federal Chancellor, Angela Merkel, who had criticized Sarrazin's statements directly after the book was published, declared in October 2010 that

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[5] The political scientist Dr. Naika Foroutan and members of her research project Heymat (Hybride europäisch-muslimische Identitätsmodelle) at the Humboldt-Universität Berlin has collected a lot of scientific evidence from different surveys in order to prove Sarrzin's theses about Muslims in Germany wrong. This countering of his ideas on a scientific level has however not shown great response within the pubilc debate. (Foroutan 2010)

'*Multukulti'* had failed (Spiegel.de 16.10.2010). She explained her view saying, that integration could be enabled through supporting and demanding (*fördern und fordern*), but the demanding had been too weak in the past. Some months later in February 2011 the British Premier David Cameron explicitly supported Merkel's analysis of multiculturalism as having failed and explicitly named a wrong kind of tolerance to be one of the main reasons for it. Tolerance in these debates is thus framed as the problem rather than the solution for increasing social diversity.

The notion of 'no tolerance for intolerance' emerged in Germany mainly after World War II and the Nazi era, where the tolerant weakness of the Weimar Republic towards its enemies was seen to have led to the worst case of intolerance ever imagined. Regarding the ability of a society to defend itself against the enemies of tolerance, the refusal to 'tolerate intolerance' is thus perceived as a logical and healthy attitude. However, as Schiffauer points out, a problem arises when the discourse changes from not accepting *intolerance* to not accepting the *intolerant*. This is when particular social groups or individuals are suspected of being essentially intolerant. Even if the group in question does not hold the intolerant view in reality or at the current moment it can still be suspected of potentially adopting in the future or of concealing its intolerance. The effect of such constructions is the growing tendency to draw the boundary between "us" and "them along lines of "tolerance" and "intolerance". It is important to highlight how difficult it is to resist this stigma of intolerance; suspicions persist and can never be fully defeated as even the public demonstration of tolerance cannot dispel anxieties about alleged views that are held privately or in secret.

The Sarrazin debate thus seems to provide good examples for examining these processes of boundary drawing that are supported by, and strongly intertwined with, the discourse and practice of (in-)tolerance. Tolerance according to this logic is seen to constitute a danger to social peace and becomes necessary to safeguard peace, with the effect, that social and political practice tend toward stronger intolerance rather than tolerance towards specific groups in society.

The main interests of the following analysis lie in the questions whether the Sarrazin debate and related debates have shifted German public discourse towards more or less tolerance of diversity, especially towards Muslims and how this affected members of the targeted minority. Has the overall effect of the debate been to make intolerance towards a specific minority more socially acceptable? And how does this changed acceptability of intolerance or intolerant speech affect the people involved?

4. Methodology

This study examines the development of the Sarrazin debate as well as the way in which members of the targeted minority have perceived it. Its analytical frame is the aforementioned interest in discursive mechanisms of boundary drawing and the construction of a significant other. The study seeks to collect insight into these mechanisms as well as their effects on changing (in-)tolerance towards Muslims in Germany and Europe.

The analysis is split into two parts: Part 1 consists of a short discourse analysis of two major national newspapers that reflect two rather opposite sides within mainstream discourse: *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) is a daily newspaper, which is published in the south of Germany, but is one of the biggest national newspapers for its popularity and range of readers. The SZ is perceived as rather left-liberal in its opinions, while *Die Welt,* a national daily belonging to the Axel Springer AG, is regarded as reflecting the conservative spectrum. The media analysis itself is again divided into the time after the publication of the interview with Sarrazin in the magazine *Lettre International*, that had already caused a debate about him and his views in 2009 and the time after the publication of his book "*Deutschland schafft sich ab*", when a wide-ranging debate about integration, migration, Muslims and

other topics started. The analysis encompasses 54 articles, published between the 30th of September and the 20th of November 2009 and 74 articles, published between 23rd of August and the 9th of November 2009 and some later articles, that were of relevance for the analysis.

Part two of the analysis deals with the perception of an dealing with the aforementioned debate by members of the targeted minority groups and consists of 6 expert interviews and one group discussion with 6 further participants. The experts chosen were people who are active either in party politics or in civil society organisations. In order to gather knowledge about the possible effects of the debate, we chose interview partners, that had significant contact with the Muslim community, such as Lydia Nofal, the project leader of a network against the discrimination of Muslims; or respondents that were active within local politics and/or dealt with the issues on an academic level, such as Yasemin Shooman, who works on anti-Muslim racism at the Centre for the research on anti-Semitism (*Zentrum für Antisemitismus-forschung ZfA*). Apart from one interviewee all were part of the Muslim community themselves. Some of them are mentioned by name and organisations, others wanted to stay anonymous and are thus mentioned with their major field of activity.

The group discussion was held with a group of young Muslims, who had invited Thilo Sarrazin in order to meet the person behind the arguments and personally discuss his views. They were participants of a dialogue project at their school that was initiated by the Federal Agency for Political Education and the Bosch Foundation and aimed at raising political awareness, political participation and counter extremism with young Muslims. Within this course, with the support of two group leaders, the young people decided to invite the author after his first interview in the magazine *Lettre International*. The latter accepted the invitation and met the young Muslims at the peak time of the debate about his book. The group discussion was held with 5 young Muslims and one of the group leaders, while the other group leader was one of the individually interviewed experts.

While the media analysis focuses on the public discourse around the publication of Sarrazin's theses, the interviews were rather centred on how his positions were experienced, debated and perceived within the targeted community. While the former is analysed using the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (e.g. Ruth Wodak 2007), the latter were carried out as problem-centered interviews a method of qualitative social science for gathering and analysing data of interviewees (e.g. Witzel 1982). This method mainly focuses on the interviewees' common perceptions of a stated problem as well as on their different reactions to this problem. The interviews were conducted on the basis of a semi-structured interview guideline, which helped to both focus on the specific topic/problem in question while leaving the process of the interview open for individual issues and thoughts of the different interviewees.

5. Media-analysis of the Sarrazin debate and its role in the construction of the siginificant other

5.1 The first phase of the debate after the interview in Lettre International in 2009

Throughout his career the former Berlin Senator for Finances, Thilo Sarrazin, had often attracted attention with provocative statements towards vulnerable groups in society, among them mainly people depending on welfare and immigrants. In September 2009 he gave an interview to the magazine "Lettre International" titled "*Klasse statt Masse. Von der Hauptstadt der Transferleistungen zur Metropole der Eliten.*" (Not mass but class. From the capital of aid money to the metropolis of elites.) As the title suggests, this interview mainly turned around questions of economic capacity of citizens, among them also immigrants. One of the major quotes from the interview that was repeated in almost all newspapers was the following:
 "*I don't have to accept anybody, who lives on state support, rejects this state, does not care for the education of his children adequately and continuously produces new little headscarf girls.*"

Less noted in the following media articles was the following sentence targeting poor Germans:
"The same holds true for a part of the German underclass (...)"
or the one, already pointing at his later ideas of reproduction and intelligence:
"There is also the problem, that forty percent of all births are happing in the underclass."

Sarrazin presents two major groups in society as possible others from the viewpoint of the white, prosperous middle and upper classes: People who are less economically productive, on the one hand, and immigrants/Muslims, on the other. The reason why the following discussion focuses on the latter, while the former is largely ignored, is the fact that the ideas about Muslims were built on already existing tropes and stereotypes regarding their position as the significant other in society. The same is not true for the statements about poor people, mainly because they generally belong to the "In-Group". This is the case at least as long as they do not belong to a post-immigration group as well, which would then make them part of the "Out-Group" that is mainly defined by its (alleged) ethno-religious background.

Schiffauer (2013 forthcoming) defines four major tropes within public discourses that belong to different political spheres, but all contribute to the construction of Muslims as the significant other in society, mainly through the anxieties that they help to raise. Since all of them could be found already within the first quoted statement of Sarrazin, they shall be shortly explained:

1. The "master-in-your-own-house"-trope refers to the fear of demographic change that goes hand in hand with religious domination or "Islamisation". Anxieties about higher birth rates of immigrants/Muslims and their religious practices, such as the visibility of mosques, contribute to this trope.
2. The "social cohesion"-trope is concerned with the presence of "too much" difference, which is seen to eventually lead to social conflict. An important concept in German discourse is the idea of "parallel societies" (*Parallelgesellschaften*), which are seen to undermine common values and the cohesion of society.
3. The "regression"-trope refers to the danger of seemingly backward beliefs and practices that are associated with Islam and which are seen to endanger progress that has been achieved but is now turned back. One major field of this trope is the emancipation of women but also the very presence of deep religiosity in allegedly secular contexts.
4. The "social responsibility"-trope deals with the idea that multiculturalism has been too blind towards problems with certain social groups, mainly the Muslim community, which leads to abuses of the rights of women or children within this group. To not tolerate certain practices is perceived as a social responsibility that is owed individuals within such groups.

While the first two tropes are rather associated with the right-wing political discourse, the third and fourth trope mainly belong to leftwing groups in politics and civil society. The political demands derived from them are however often very similar.

With the beginning of the sentence quoted above: *"I don't have to accept anybody, who…"* Sarrazin frames the debate with a claim about the conditions of acceptance in German society. The "I" can be seen to refer to his own person but equally appears to represent the position of the majority in German society, mainly the white middle and upper classes, that are in the power to accept or not accept and which he harshly differentiates from two other groups in society – poor people and immigrants/Muslims – that don't have the power to accept or reject and are in the inferior power position compared to the speaker.

The conditions leading to non-acceptance are then listed in the quote *("…who lives on state support, rejects this state, does not care for the education of his children adequately and continuously produces new little headscarf girls"*). They include living on welfare money, intolerant/undemocratic attitudes, lack of interest in and success within education, having too many children and being backward and/or

visibly religious especially Muslims. With intolerant/undemocratic attitudes and the production of "headscarf girls" two different areas of "backwardness" regarding Muslims are pointed out. By stating that they reject the state, the logical conclusion of non-acceptance is already implied, following the idea of "no tolerance towards intolerance". It draws on anxiety about a weak and overly tolerant society that cannot defend itself and its values. It also raises the idea of backwardness, of undemocratic ideas, that bear the danger of destabilising German democracy and thus should not to be tolerated. The "headscarf girls", especially for how they are "continuously produced", dehumanises Muslim women and invokes their alleged lack of emancipation in relation to oppressive male counterparts. This draws on stereotypes that are frequently reiterated in the so-called 'headscarf debates' in which "educated, liberal, non-religious" modernists (even with Muslim background) are separated from "backward, un-educated, religious" traditionalists. Without even mentioning these debates, the reference is made through allusions, a widely used strategy to achieve agreement on an emotional level without referring to rational deliberations. This image however also refers to the "social responsibility"-trope and to the "liberation" of these girls and women from their oppressive cultural, religious and familiar surrounding, which has been a strong argument within the debate on Islam in Germany over the last several years.

This single sentence thus illustrates the efficacy of tropes that are well-known and have a considerable social resonance. Different people might associate different aspects with such speech acts and as such they not only avoid long and difficult rational arguments but also raise emotional reactions and allow for agreements on the basis of shared anxieties to be more easily achieved.

First reactions to the publication of the interview were critical and Sarrazin's positions were rejected by many politicians. Axel Weber, the president of the Federal Bank, where Sarrazin had a position on the executive board, distanced himself from *"content and form of the discriminating statements"* (Schulz 2009). The trade union ver.di demanded his dismissal from the Federal Bank, the local SPD association of the Berlin district Pankow initiated internal proceedings against him, the Berlin state attorney examined the interview with a view to a charge of incitement and the chairman of the Central Council of Jews accused Sarrazin of demagoguery and closeness to the National Socialism of Hitler (Sueddeutsche.de 09.10.2009). Sarrazin reacted to this criticism by stating that *"not all the expressions in the interview had been well chosen."* His intention had been to describe problems of Berlin but not to discriminate against ethnic groups (welt-online, 01.10.2009).

The Federal Bank finally decided to keep Sarrazin on the board but to take away some of his responsibilities. Following this decision first voices could be heard claiming that Sarrazin's freedom of opinion had been infringed if he would need to fear for his position in the bank. Also both newspapers analysed in this study in the following days and weeks featured more and more voices of public figures who rejected the tone of Sarrazin's statements but supported him in the content. "Die Welt" titled on 5th October:

"His choice of words ("Headscarf-Girls"; "Turkish warm rooms[6]*) felt offensive not only for foreigners. Regarding the content hardly anybody contradicts him – And how could one?"* (Clauß 05.10.2009). Support of Sarrazin's ideas is now more often linked to the criticism of 'political correctness' or '*Gutmenschentum*' and expression for starry-eyed idealists not dealing with reality in the necessary way. In articles of SZ among others the author Ralph Giordano is quoted: *"Sarrazin describes (…) reality how it is and not how it has been presented by political correctness for many years".* The minister for integration of North-Rhine Westphalia Armin Laschet also criticised Sarrazin's choice of words but supported him in the content of the interview and took this debate as an opportunity to demand the establishment of a Federal Ministry for Integration, because it seemed obvious that many people were interested in the topic. (Sueddeutsche.de 14.10.2009)

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[6] "Wärmestube" is an expression for warm rooms for homeless people, which Sarrazin used regarding Turkish elder men meeting in specific cafés.

This frequent movement between half-supporting and half-rejecting Sarrazin's ideas is a good example for how the debate was generally instrumentalized in order to acquire support for political demands or political power. It could be well observed throughout the Sarrazin debate.

On the other hand many articles provided counterexamples of Sarrazin's characterisation of Muslims, Turks and their allegedly inferior educational and professional performance. Many voices could be heard from German-Turkish people, trying to show a 'different picture' by explaining that not all Turks were as Sarrazin described them: many were well integrated and well performing in society. This presentation of Turks and/or Muslims by both Turkish and German journalists however does not address the construction of Muslims as the significant other to German society. It remains within the same logic of boundary drawing and only tries to draw them somewhat differently, as the characteristics ascribed to the Muslim other are not questioned or even deconstructed. They are left untouched in principle and, in fact, another boundary is drawn between significant others and those Muslims that qualify as part of the in-group since their characteristics are sufficiently similar to those that the German majority ascribes to itself. It is essentially a differentiation between the "good" and the "bad" Muslim, which leaves the strong boundary towards the "bad ones" untouched. And even the status of the "good" others is fragile, as they remain others, not part of the dominant group, and are thus continue to face the risk of having tolerance withdrawn at a later point.

The whole debate in the end has turned from a discussion about Sarrazin and if and how he should be dealt with ('tolerated') by the Federal Bank, the SPD and also by the state attorney, into one about integration and the perceived lack of willingness to integrate perceived with Muslim immigrants. In the following the possible political instruments against this lack of integration are discussed such as the creation of a Ministry for Integration, shortening of social money or further restriction of immigration.

Already in the interview Sarrazin had stated, that *"Integration is an achievement of the one who integrates"* and clearly rejected the suggestion of the interviewer that politics should be held accountable for integration too. On the other hand he stated that certain groups, namely Turks and Arabs, were to a large extent not only not willing, but not able to integrate. This understanding of integration was in the following discussion more and more the basis for the discussion: rather as a duty of the immigrants themselves than as a duty of the state institutions to provide equal chances and counter discrimination. Although Sarrazin was blamed for discrimination and racism by several public figures and institutions, such as the German Institute for Human Rights or the trade union ver.di, in the following weeks the debate did not focus on these issues any more.
This development of the debate is probably a result of how the aforementioned tropes further reinforced Muslims as the other. Sarrazin had touched upon these motifs and significant parts of the German population could connect with them at the time of the interview. The question of racism within German society – following a representative EMNID survey about 51% of the population supported Sarrazin – is not yet widely debated.

5.2 The second phase of the debate after the publication of the book "Deutschland schafft sich ab" in 2010

Some months later, in late August 2010, Sarrazin published a whole book about the statements of his interview, entitled "Germany does away with itself." With the help of a broad range of statistics and quotes of different researchers he took his former ideas even further and developed a future scenario of a German population not only being taken over by more reproductive immigrants but also becoming mentally poorer through this development, as the respective Muslim groups were hereditarily less intelligent.

Both the weekly *"Der Spiegel"* and the tabloid *"BILD"* had published long passages of the book shortly before its actual publishing date without any accompanying comments.

Similarly to the first part of the debate the main reaction in the first days was strong opposition to Sarrazin's ideas and even disgust. The Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel was quoted with a criticism that was perceived as a strong official intervention stating that the book contained wording *"that can only be offensive for many people in this country, that are defaming (…) and that are not at all helpful with the big national task in this country to progress with integration." (Kamann 26.08.2010).* The chairman of the SPD, Sigmar Gabriel, suggested that Sarrazin should leave the party because his ideas were not in line with it any more, and announced a detailed analysis of the book, especially of whether Sarrazin assigned character traits to specific ethnic groups and thus could be accused of racism. Leading figures of the NPD, the rightwing extremist party of Germany, praised the book and signalled the wish to discuss possible cooperation with Sarrazin in the future.

The Federal Bank this time decided to dismiss Sarrazin from the executive board, alleging that he had damaged the reputation of the institution. Similarly as in the previous year, right after the decision of the Federal Bank a wave of outrage was followed by a debate about freedom of expression and voices arose that portrayed the author more and more as a courageous breaker of taboos and a victim of the political correctness of the political elite. Interestingly his own strong elitism did not prevent him from becoming an idol for a broad range of German citizens feeling oppressed by a perceived elitist discourse of political correctness. The image of Sarrazin as the one who speaks for the people has been expressed by the media scientist Norbert Bolz in a TV talk-show on the 5th of September 2010:
"The crucial point is that the people are no longer willing to be forbidden from speaking by the political class and especially by arrogant new Jacobins, also in the feuilletons." (quoted after Friedrich 2010: 13)[7]

The fact that Sarrazin became the voice of the masses although he clearly favoured an elitist social model and the social exclusion of economically less productive people is a clear sign that the author and the debate fulfil a function that works quite independently from the actual content of the book. As pointed out above, the discourse of othering through the invocation of anxieties is highly irrational and hardly reached by rational deliberation. The function of this othering of Muslims for strengthening national German identity and defining its boundaries becomes clearer when we follow the development of the debate further. Many surveys have been conducted, that found a high support of Sarrazin's ideas within the German population.[8] Especially the question of who was accountable for the alleged failure of integration was answered by a significant majority in the same way as by Sarrazin: migrants are responsible for their own integration (N24.de 01.09.2010)[9]. This attitude of the German majority was one of the major factors turning the debate and causing many politicians to show stronger understanding for the ideas of Sarrazin and especially for "the fears of the population", an often suggested reason for the strong support of Sarrazin in society.

Also within 'out-groups' certain fears were raised by the Sarrazin-debate, namely the fears of increasing discrimination, racism and social exclusion. As these fears are not perceived as dangerous for the "we-group" they are hardly given voice in media and politics. This caused a group of Muslim intellectuals to write an open letter to the Federal President Christian Wulff on the 13th of September 2010 in which they described the fears of many Muslims and other people with immigration background. The letter included an account of everyday situation of discrimination, of having to deal with offensive attitudes and stereotypes about themselves such as in education and work, and the

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[7] Translation by the author.

[8] An EMNID survey from the 1st and 2nd of September 2010 found, that 62% of the interviewees affirmed the question: "Does Thilo Sarrazin in your opinion give qualified food for thought with his utterances about migrants?". 31% affirmed the question: "Do you share the view, that Germany will become more stupid by an uncontrolled immigration?";

[9] An EMNID-survey of the 30th of August 2010 found, that 56% of 1000 interviewees held migrants responsible for their own integration, while only 11 % thought, that mainly Germans were responsible for the difficulties in integration.

growing hostility of their co-citizens. They thus asked Wulff to *"advocate and publicly promote the principles of an open democratic culture that is characterised by mutual respect." (taz.de 13.09.2010)*

This letter might have been one of the reasons why the Federal President decided to deal with the issues of integration and social diversity in his speech on 3rd October 2010, the day of German unity. He asked the population to reject offenses against people of foreign origin and, after focussing on Judeo-Christian history of the country, he added: *"but Islam by now also belongs to Germany."* In the same speech Wulff also mentioned that belonging to Germany had to be conditional upon acceptance of the constitution and common rules. *"Who does not do that, who despises our country and its values, has to count on a determined defence of everybody in our country."* (Focus-online 03.10.2010)

Wulff's quite unspectacular statement caused a huge wave of political objection. One of the strongest was the 7-point plan on integration issued by the CSU chairman and Minister-President of Bavaria Horst Seehofer, who directly connected his position to Sarrazin's statements, demanding for example to add the criteria of *"willingness and ability to integrate"* as another prerequisite for immigration besides qualification and demanded strict sanctions for those who refuse integration. He stressed that Germany was "no immigration country", although this political line of denial had finally and officially been abandoned about ten years earlier. He also demanded to stop immigration from "foreign cultural spheres" (welt-online 16.10.2010). The general secretary of the Central Council of Jews in Germany heavily criticised Seehofer and remarked that mainstream politicians clearly felt less and less inhibition to catch votes with Xenophobic statements. He argued that they were thereby endangering social peace.

Angela Merkel (CDU) directly backed Seehofer when she publicly remarked that the efforts to construct a multicultural society had failed in Germany: *"This approach has failed, absolutely failed."* She added that in the past society had demanded not enough from immigrants and further spoke about their lack of command of the German language, about forced marriages, the necessity for immigrant girls to participate in school trips and the necessity to quickly convict criminals. She however also supported the Federal President, in saying *"Islam is a part of Germany – This is not only to be observed in the footballer Özil"* (Sueddeutsche.de 16.10.2010)

It can be observed that after several weeks the debate about integration was now solidly connected to issues to do with Islam and Muslims and to the question of German "*Leitkultur*" (leading culture). This term was now increasingly also used by leftist politicians even though it had traditionally been a concept of conservative parties like the CDU. The Social Democrat chairman, Sigmar Gabriel, and others defined *Leitkultur* as the common values of the constitution, the rule of law and the inviolable dignity of human beings. Still the question remains why the chairman of the SPD, a party that had always rejected the concept of *Leitkultur*, now used a term that evokes a hierarchy of cultures in society. The answer might be found in the efficacy of discourses that constructed Muslims as the significant other and which generally drew the boundaries of toleration, the borders of in- and out-groups, narrower. This would also be supported by the turn of Merkel who had shown utter disgust towards the statements of Sarrazin, but shortly afterwards declared multiculturalism to have failed. Also Sigmar Gabriel, SPD party leader, who had initially urged Sarrazin to quit the SPD because of his racist ideas, some weeks later in a long article in the German weekly "*Die Zeit*" supported a number of major points that Sarrazin had made about integration before criticising "*Sarrazin's hopeless idea of man*":

"There are parallel societies where Sharia is more important than the constitution. There are hate preachers and a significantly higher criminality. And there is also lack of education and refusal of education. (…) the highly visible problems don't only originate from the failure of the German society and its politics to integrate, but also from considerable refusal by many migrants to integrate.

Therefore there is no reason to criticise Thilo Sarrazin and others, when they denounce a lack of willingness to integrate." (Gabriel 15.09.2010)[10]

The statements about the so-called parallel societies did not need to be proven by evidence, since they touched upon deep-seated ideas about Muslims as the other in society and were thus not likely to be heavily criticised by Gabriel's audience. His comments however both seemed to criticise the extreme ideas of Sarrazin and at the same time still helped to draw the boundaries towards the other and thus identify the "in-group" as reasonable, well educated and distant to criminality and violence.

Like Gabriel, even those opposing Sarrazin often used their criticism to propose their own stereotypes about Muslims and immigrants. A frequent demand for more integration was made, postulating the lack of integration as the major cause of socio-political problems, an assessment that had caused Sarrazin to write his book. The major reasons for Sarrazin's ideas were thus not seen in his social Darwinist mindset or racist attitudes, which he had proposed one year earlier in the widely debated interview in "*Lettre International",* but in the lacking willingness of immigrants/Muslims to integrate into German society and the failure of national politics to not strictly demand integration and adaptation in the past.
Another function of a clearly defined other in society and the negative stereotyping of this group can be observed here: Instead of questioning official political decisions and practices regarding the integration and inclusion of immigrants, the blaming of the other distracts from this political responsibility. One leading article in the *Welt*, after providing an exhaustive list of all the problems that Muslims caused, asked: *"Is this not a good reason for displaying more than just disinterested tolerance towards immigrants?"* (Held 09.09.2010)
The author here uses a widely available trope of "too much tolerance" that was seen to have been practiced towards immigrants. Significant social problems are seen to result from the fact that immigrants had not been forced strongly enough to integrate and adapt to the values of their host country. The addition of "disinterested" tolerance addresses the alleged need for strict demands towards the 'other' who requires interested concern.

What this alternative relationship with Muslims/immigrants (different from "disinterested tolerance") could look like is illustrated by Chancellor Merkel, as quoted in the *Welt* article "*Kanzlerin fordert mehr Anstrengung bei der Integration*" (Chancellor demands more effort with integration). Although Merkel refers to statements by Sarrazin as "*nonsense*" that she cannot "*accept*" because "*whole groups in our society feel hurt by it*", she criticised that "*in many Muslim families, women and girls still have to submit*" and demanded from immigrants to "*learn German and stick to the German laws*" (welt-online 04.09.2010). Using the (rather left-wing) trope of social responsibility towards members of the immigrant community, the Chancellor in this quote clearly draws the boundaries of toleration in relation to language learning and female emancipation.

Although Merkel seems to protect immigrants from Sarrazin's attacks, at the same time she reinforces widely held stereotypes about Muslim women, which she can even support by distinguishing them from Sarrazin's more extreme views, making them seem less severe. By asking a whole group to comply with the law, she postulates a general criminal tendency among immigrants and supports an overall suspicion and higher caution towards this specific social group. While criticising Sarrazin's generalisation and degradation of this social group, she does the same with different words. Within this quote the trope of backwardness of Muslims – especially in the submission of Muslim women - comes together with the "social-responsibility"-trope that aims at helping those oppressed ones. Both coincide with more restrictive boundaries that are drawn towards Muslim others and are reflected in political demands, such as the demand to integrate.

The dichotomy between insiders and outsiders was hardly ever challenged in the whole debate. Indeed, it was reinforced by a growing conviction that immigrants were mainly culpable for various

[10] The original title of Sigmar Gabriel's article "Welch hoffnungsloses Menschenbild" (What hopeless idea of man), had been "Anleitung zur Menschenzucht" (Guide for breeding of human beings), but was changed by the weekly "Die Zeit", translation by author.

shortcomings and social problems. The concept of 'integration' was hardly ever challenged at all and mainly interpreted as 'assimilation': the idea that a minority, that is distinct from the majority, would need to adapt itself. This understanding corresponds to the process of 'other'-construction and boundary drawing that we have identified above. If a group is understood as essentially different from the majority with regard to its norms and practices, it consequently has to be strongly differentiated from the majority and its adaptation to the dominant values has to be closely monitored and enforced, if necessary, by applying political and social pressure.

6. Analysis of the effects of the Sarrazin debate

6.1 Extending the limits of (in)tolerance

After analysing the construction of Muslims as significant others within the Sarrazin debate, the question remains how pressures, that emerged as a result of more narrowly drawn boundaries towards a specific social group, were perceived by its members and how they dealt with this experience. Although we consider one particular debate, we can make some more general observations regarding the effects of the construction of significant others in society.

For doing so we interviewed different experts, most of which had some type of Muslim background, and a political group of young Muslims who had invited Thilo Sarrrazin in order to personally discuss his views about them. In order to gather knowledge about the possible effects of the debate on members of the targeted community, we chose experts as interview partners who had significant levels of contact with the Muslim community, such as the project leader of a network against Islamophobia, or actors that were active within party politics and/or dealt with the issues on an academic level.

One of the major outcomes of the analysis of the media discourse above has been that even most of Sarrazin's critics supported many of his statements but mainly criticised the way he presented them. As the discourse had largely been presented as one of integration, rather than one of discrimination and racism, most public officials who countered his statements, also had to make sure that they were not seen as "starry-eyed" idealists and ignorant towards the problems of integration and migration. It seems that some actors sought to pre-empt this characterisation and thus often added some type of criticism towards immigrants and/or Muslims to their criticism of Sarrazin's book.

Accordingly, many of the interviewed experts and participants in the Muslim political youth group remarked that limits of what could legitimately be said about Muslims in public discourse had been shifted. Some explained, for example, that the tone of everyday encounters on the street had changed and that more and more people felt entitled to openly articulate their discontent with immigrants and/or Muslims or to comment upon visible aspects of their 'otherness'. Lydia Nofal, leader of a network against Islamophobia in Berlin, spoke about the daily experiences of one of her colleagues with an Arabic background who had raised her children bilingually and sometimes talked to them in Arabic:

> *"She tells me that now she is permanently addressed in the bus by elderly women who say 'we were in Germany here' and that she would have to talk German. Everybody feels entitled and even obliged to address her in the name of integration and to remind her that she would kindly have to talk German with her children.(…) This woman is surely much more educated than those who address her like that."* [11]

One major effect of the construction of Muslims as the significant others in Germany can be observed within this quote. By speaking Arabic with her child, the woman – although well educated – is perceived as belonging to a 'problematic' population, which is largely defined for their lack of 'integration'. The image of this group of others has become so strong in society that nobody, elderly ladies or otherwise, doubts its truth and acts upon this belief, such as by reprimanding those that are visibly 'outsiders'. Besides this defining power of the othering discourse we can also observe how it devalues those it targets: although meeting her for the first time and on a public bus, the elderly ladies perceive themselves as part of the "in-group" and thus as naturally entitled to tell others, defined as part of the "out-group" by her language, what to do.

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[11] Expert interview with Lydia Nofal

Yasemin Shooman, another interviewed expert and PHD candidate at the Centre for Research on anti-Semitism, who observes anti-Muslim internet blogs, states that Sarrazin was perceived as a folk hero (*Volksheld*) within rightwing populist and anti-Muslim webpages that strongly refer to his ideas and statements. The newly founded political party "*Die Freiheit*" (Freedom) mobilized with reference to Sarrazin during their election campaign in Berlin: campaign adverts were titled "*Wählen gehen für Thilos Thesen*" (Go and vote for Thilo's statements) and displayed underneath the image of a crossed-out mosque. Yet not only populist movements but even neo-fascist groups like the rightwing extremist party NPD celebrated the author. It was stated that Sarrazin's ideas about immigration were in line with NPD tenets and that he also had contributed towards making their ideas more popular and less assailable since he belonged to an established social democratic party.[12]

While one of the experts thought that Sarrazin only sehd light on resentments that existed in the population anyway, and thus enabled an honest examination of them, others suggested that Sarrazin's positions voided taboos that had previously been upheld in public debate. One of the major topoi in the debate was the one of the courageous 'breaking' of taboos and that Sarrazin had dared to confront a 'politically correct' establishment. A comment in *Die Welt* criticised the taboos allegedly imposed by so-called "do-gooders" (*Gutmenschen*), which hampered a serious analysis of social problems. Sarrazin however was portrayed as "*honest and courageous*" and as a person that "*described the facts and problems […] without regard to any taboos*".[13]

Shooman however explains, that taboos can indeed be useful within public discourse. Not only can they protect vulnerable minorities from humiliation and harm, but she suggests that resentments against a minority tend to be reinforced by a perceived agreement that is assumed to be held by the majority in society. Accordingly, anti-Semitism in Germany had been pushed aside and into what she called "*Kommunikationslatenz*", a state of communicative latency that made it more difficult to express as social taboos became stronger in the course of German post-war history. Anti-Semitic ideas still existed in German society but anti-Semites could not count on broad acceptance of their ideas and would thus refrain from expressing them.

What Shooman describes as the establishement of taboos is to a certain extent the opposite discursive movement to what is described here as the construction of the significant other. It sheds some light on the connection between this construction and racism, too. While the latter is still present in the form of racist and/or anti-Semitic ideas and attitudes, the development of a taboo that prevents a group from being actively constructed as the significant other makes these attitudes less acceptable and thus less likely to be expressed publically. In the case of the significant others, however, expressions of racism seem less severe – not even racist at all – and many more people feel legitimate and entitled to articulate them and thereby further push the discourse in the direction of intolerance.

There is thus a striking difference between how anti-Semitic and the anti-Muslim discourses are considered in society. Shooman pointed to the example of the CDU-politician Martin Hohmann, who had been excluded from his party in 2003 because of anti-Semitic statements, and contrasted this example with the aborted procedure of excluding Sarrazin for his racist and anti-Muslim statements from the SPD. Another expert, a politically active woman, who had left the SPD because of the party's handling of Sarrazin, expressed a similar perception of different standards:

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[12] Voigt, the head of the NPD uttered: *"Additionally it would become more and more difficult to sue NPD officials because of "incitement of the people", if established politicians also "dare to express this",* in: (Menkens 31.08.2010), *t*ranslation by the author.

[13] Letter to the editor: "Sarrazin is right", 6th of October, 2009, in welt-online: http://www.welt.de/die-welt/debatte/article4747408/Leserbriefe.html?print=true#reqdrucken

> *"Three (...) delegates of the SPD, have been excluded from the party because they have been critical towards Israel and not anti-Semitic (...). They have been excluded immediately. And then there comes some random stupid idiot and expresses his inhuman ideas. I don't care if it is about Muslims, or about Jews, if it is about Turks, about Arabs or Greeks. It is just inhumane, what he says. (...) And then they want to exclude him and suddenly all petitions that existed in order to exclude him are withdrawn."[14]*

Considering the observations of the different interviewees, it could be stated that the Sarrazin debate reinforced and extended intolerance towards Muslims as the significant other and as a group that is conceived in opposition to the imagined 'in-group'. While other groups, like Jews or different immigrant groups, might not be perceived as part of the dominant "we", they are not labelled by this specific discourse as being in opposition to society and as dangerous strangers that can be justifiably excluded. They are however still constructed as groups that are different, and changes in the discourse can quickly turn a group that is perceived to be integrated and acceptable into one that cannot be accepted and towards which intolerance can or even should be practiced.

6.2 Reactions to the social division and exclusion as significant others

Regarding the response of the Muslim community to the Sarrazin debate, the interviewed experts point in particular to withdrawal from political and social activity on the one hand and an attitude of 'Now more than ever' on the other. This could be observed in the context of political and social participation but also in how a sense of belonging was expressed more generally.

One very active local SPD politician with Muslim affiliation explained that she had left the party after 10 years of active work and good opportunities for a political career because Sarrazin had not been excluded and she felt like doing politics on the back of those Muslims who were, unlike her, mainly targeted by Sarrazin as poor or doing pity jobs:

> *"I cannot look in the mirror, if I support this kind of hypocrisy. (...) On the one hand I am really supported [within the party] and could have made a career (...) I have withdrawn from everything, I cannot do that on someone else's back. (...) Only because I'm not a greengrocer[15]? Or because I don't sell döner? No, that is not possible."*

She explained, that about 10 colleagues of her immediate circle had left the party for the same reason. On the other hand, she recognised about the same amount of people who had the same opinion about Sarrazin and the SPD, but who remained inside the party explicitly in order to be able to counteract the tendencies that Sarrazin represented and to reform the party from within.

Another Muslim expert, a woman who is strongly involved in party politics, explained that she had experienced a lot of frustration within the Muslim communities, which made it more difficult to motivate Muslims for activities in social projects and/or political participation after the Sarrazin debate:

> *"Many Muslims think: 'no matter, what we do, in the end we are not welcome in this country', and have become more sceptical about the possible effects of projects. 'Why should we actually approach them? (...) At the end of the day, it will not have any effect.'"[16]*

On the other hand, she knew many young Muslims, especially those that were already active in different social projects and had a good education that appeared quite resistant against the Sarrazin debate.

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[14] Expert-interview with female local politician and ex-SPD member

[15] In his interview in Lettre International in 2009 Sarrazin had suggested that "a high number of Arabs and Turks in this town (…) had no productive function other than as fruit and vegetable merchants".

[16] Expert interview with a politically active Muslim woman.

> *"Those people feel German and integrated and they insisted on being German; (...) strengthening their German, but at the same time their Muslim identity; that they insist on not being pushed into hiding their Muslim identity because of the debate. (...) They feel motivated and think 'Now more than ever!' which is good because you have to reach young people in particular."*

Other stakeholders, like Nofal from the network against discrimination of Muslims, perceived the overall situation less optimistically. She observed, that Muslims felt *"personally rejected, defamed and devalued"* by the whole debate. One of the effects she noticed even among young people was the polarisation between "us" and "them", which had become stronger.

> *"That has been a fundamental problem even before Sarrazin, that Germany has such an image of itself, to which you cannot belong and cannot be a real German, if you have Turkish roots, if you are Muslim (...) and this has intensified with Sarrazin."*

We can observe here the strong effect of the boundary that is established towards Muslims who are defined as the significant other. This boundary between 'Us' and 'Them', which Schiffauer has identified as an integral part of the construction of the significant other, is thus internalized by these young people who through the process of othering perceive themselves as part of the 'out-group' and have to find new types of identification. The construction of the self as 'other' is to a certain extent adopted and reinforced. Others however try to resist this exclusionary process and insist on their belonging to the 'We'-group against the dominant discourse.

These two major ways of reacting to the discursive exclusion and refusal of belonging could also be observed among the group of young Muslims that had invited Sarrazin for a discussion. They all expressed strong disappointment with how the former politician conducted himself during the meeting:

> *"It was just like a monologue. He just talked, we asked and he talked. I mean he did not even let us finish our sentences. (...) He was not interested, he just sat there, very distant, with folded arms (...) It was just like he erected a wall in front of us."*[17]

They were disappointed in their wish to reach him personally and maybe make him change some of his perceptions. Although Sarrazin acknowledged that they were different from the average immigrants that he described, he just saw them as an exception from the rule. Especially the young girls wearing the *hijab* felt stigmatised and excluded by his ideas. One of the group leaders described what he called a key situation of the encounter, when a young woman with *hijab* confronted Sarrazin in the following way:

> *"I watch German TV, I read German newspapers, I speak German, I watch soccer, I support the German soccer team (...), I do everything, that a German does. Am I now German?"*

They described the reaction of Sarrazin as follows:

> *"No, with the headscarf you will never be German. You will never be integrated with this headscarf."*

Like the headscarf, outwardly visible signs of religion have been strong markers of otherness in the debate about Islam and integration. As in this debate between young Muslims and Sarrazin, the visibility of religion is often perceived as marking the boundary between those – still tolerable – Muslims that are not visible as such and those who through clothing, beards or visible performance of prayer are recognisably practicing Muslims. The latter cross the boundary not only between 'the own' and 'the other' but often – as in this case – between the tolerable, private performance of the religion and intolerable, publically visible religiosity.

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[17] Group discussion with politically active young Muslims

The question of private and public practice of religion plays a crucial part in the debate about (Muslim) religion religion in general. Considering religious expressions that can be defined as Muslim, we observe that certain practices, such as the ritual prayer, can be tolerated in private but rarely in public places, such as schools.[18] Other practices, however, like the female headscarf, tend to mark otherness in every regard and, in the case of Sarrazin and his perspective, point to the inability to be 'integrated' and thus to the irreversible otherness.

Another example where the crucial role of visibility became apparent in the experience of the interviewees was in the area of political participation. The Muslim woman, who had left the SPD because of Sarrazin, explained the barriers of outwardly identifiable Muslims within political parties:

> *"If you don't immediately identify as Muslim, you don't have these problems. I was spoilt, (…) they knew I was a Muslim, but I was not perceived as Muslim (…). My Muslim background was never in the foreground. But, if a lady with headscarf would appear there and would like to be active there, then she would have problems. And those [problems] she would have – and of this I can assure you – in every party, also with the Greens."*[19]

The interviewee thus explains that outwardly recognisable signs of Muslim religious affiliation are perceived as markers of otherness. The signifier of otherness is so strong, especially with the *hijab* that parties of all different political colours partake in its interpretation as beyond the boundary of tolerable 'difference'.

The young Muslims from the group interview also reported that the opinions of Sarrazin, like in this case the exclusion of women with the *hijab*, even extended into the realm of education:

> *"We had an English teacher (…), who always confronted us with it, he repeated most of it and showed 'Yes, that's how Germans think.' (…) so typical things like with headscarf you can never be German and similar things. And then he said (…) 'This is how the majority of Germans think'."*

Asked whether the teacher did or did not perceive them as German, they answered:

> *"As long as we are wearing the hijab we cannot be Germans for Sarrazin and neither for our teacher."*

In the group discussion, however, the young people seemed to deal with these experiences in a proactive way, trying to express their Muslim identity self-consciously and to combine it with their German identity as good as it was possible for them in these particular surroundings.

> *"Generally I see myself reassured in that I wear my hijab more confidently now and also show that I am Muslim."*

Young people thus described how persistent questioning and attacks made them turn towards their religion, which in turn made them more knowledgeable and self-confident.

They also expressed that through being good persons and teaching other young Muslims to be decent human beings as well they could change the perception of Muslims in society in the long run. One young male was less optimistic about his chances of equal belonging both due to his Turkish background and his religion. He pointed the idea of economic success as the only way of finding a way in society and of proving stigmatizations wrong. This is an interesting reaction as it directly responds to Sarrazin's demands for economic performance and achievement. Although Sarrazin is convinced that Muslims were generally less successful and less educated as a direct result of their cultural and ethnic heritage, the young people referred precisely to these ideas and this respondent tried to prove Sarrazin wrong and thus to possibly undo the hurt of social exclusion.

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[18] Further interviews and analysis regarding the (non-)toleration of prayer in public German schools please refer to the project report on school life in Germany (Nina Mühe 2011).

[19] Expert-interview with female local politician and ex-SPD member

Although the young people tried to create their own way beyond stigmatising and racialising labels that are ascribed, they remain caught up in the same type of argumentation that dominates the Sarrazin discourse: they refer the question of 'integration' to themselves and agree to carry the main responsibility for other people's stereotypes and racist views about them. They often claim to possess the power to change them by just 'behaving in the right way'.

6.3 Ways of dealing with the challenge

However, the possibilities of rejecting and circumventing exclusion appear to be limited. Considering the experiences of the different Muslim interviewees, it seems that certain types of political activity, such as for example involvement in projects for empowerment of Muslims and engagement with party politics, might provide one way of responding to social stigmas.

Good examples for such efforts of empowerment are the mentioned group of young Muslims that had been part of a pilot project called "Youth culture, religion and democracy[20]" and also the Berlin project JUMA[21], that aims to empower young religious Muslims and to motivate them for participation in political life by making them encounter high-level politicians. In the case of the invitation of Sarrazin, the encounter seemed to disappoint the young Muslims that were involved. Yet Jochen Müller, one of the leaders of the group and an expert interviewed for this report, explained that already the involvement with and discussion of the ideas of Sarrazin had helped the young people out of sense of passive frustration and hurt and motivated them to actively deal with both author and his arguments. It thus gave them the feeling of self-confidence and power to affect change.

The political participation of (religious) Muslims in general was mentioned as a means of countering the construction and stigmatisation of Muslims as the significant other in society. However, some interviewees also mentioned different barriers that had to be overcome in this respect. The Muslim woman, who had ended her political career in the SPD because of Sarrazin mentioned that, besides the headscarf as a strong barrier to participation in political parties, that it would also in other respects be hard for Muslims to integrate into party politics in Germany, such as for their praying five times a day, refusing alcohol or the hugging of a member of the opposite sex. Those barriers were however generally not described as conscious exclusions[22], but rather as informed by a habitus among established party members where the common visit in the pub and other customs that are at odds with Muslim religiosity were an important part of party-political rituals:
One Muslim SPD member explained:

> *"I don't see a conscious discrimination of Muslims there but structurally things have to change. The SPD has now introduced something like quota."[23]*

The introduction of a 15% quota for immigrants or people with an immigrant background in leading positions of the party has been one of the reactions of the SPD to the contested decision not to remove Sarrazin from the party. Since then, some activists with Turkish background have climbed the career ladder within the party both nationally and locally.[24] Most of the interviewees were quite sceptical

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[20] The project has been implemented in six Berlin schools since 2009 and is a cooperation between the Federal Agency for Civic Education and the Robert Bosch foundation and aims at fostering political participation of young immigrants.

[21] See also: http://www.juma-projekt.de/

[22] One of the interviewed experts, who has been active member of the CDU for many years, however explained, that his party explicitly excluded members of the Muslim organisation Milli Görüs. Whether someone wanted to engage in the youth department or in the party in general he/she had to sign, that he/she was not a member of this organisation.

[23] Expert interview with a politically active Muslim woman.

[24] Kenan Kolat, that head of the NGO *Türkische Gemeinde Deutschland* (TGD) was subsequently appointed member of the party executive committee. See also: Jan Almstedt: "SPD holt Vielfalt in die Parteiführung" (SPD gets diversity into the

about the quota but acknowledged its necessity in order to change power structures and the homogenous culture within the political arena.

None of the interviewed experts, even the one that had left the SPD because of Sarrazin, favoured the establishment of an immigrant or a specifically Muslim party. All supported the idea of migrants and Muslims claiming their space within the established parties and reforming them from within.

7. Conclusion

Although the debate about Sarrazin and his book in many ways reflects German particluarities, it closely corresponds with related debates about Muslims and integration in other European countries. The reason for the international prevalence of such debates seem to lie in features that we have explored in this report and in the construction of a group as the significant other in society and in the importance this other has for the construction of national identities.

The specific anti-Muslim discourse in Germany, of which Sarrazin is a spokesperson, has an important function for the construction of a national identity especially in times of fundamental changes in which Germany is turning into an immigration country and witnesses the steady growth of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. This growing diversity is accompanied by a countermovement that is driven by certain social groups, mainly from within the well-established middle classes that try to maintain older social, political and power structures. The construction of a certain group – in this case: Muslims – as the socially significant other serves different aims of different political parties at the same time. Immigrants and/or Muslims and their apparent cultural or religious difference is perceived as the absolute 'other' of German society through the creation of a contrast with negative aspect that German society wants to distance itself from, at least in theory: from homophobia to anti-Semitism and misogyny. Following this projection of negative attributes and values the group is then quite justifiably positioned outside the borders of 'what can still be tolerated' within German society. This process of exclusion becomes stronger with the degree of public fears that are raised. The more a future scenario is constructed as negative or apocalyptic, in which the significant other becomes the dangerous other and takes over important parts of society, the more irrational the public fears become.

One of the factors of Sarrazin's success was the existence of anti-Muslim debates in other European countries and especially the growing strength of populist parties that warn European citizens of the alleged *Islamisation* of their societies. Public figures like Geert Wilders in the Netherlands or Heinz-Christian Strache in Austria have been cautioning against a 'foreign infiltration' of immigrants, especially Muslims, and draw on a common European fear of the Muslim other – a fear that is, similar to the Sarrazin discourse, quite untouched by rational deliberation. This significant other assumes a role on the European level that corresponds to the various national levels. It helps to define Europe through its perceived borders that run along the faultlines of the 'clash of civilizations' and thus supports the unification process of the diverse European countries.

Looking at issues of tolerance and intolerance the Sarrazin debate reflects many of those arguments that turn around the 'limits of tolerance' towards the marked minority.

On the one side the borders of intolerance can be observed to have extended towards discriminatory and even racist discourse by Sarrazin, as one of the effects of the debate was an opening of the field of what can be openly said in society, that was directly followed by ordinary people on the streets feeling obliged to rebuke persons, they perceived as Muslims. On the other side also the racism of Sarrazin and in general anti-Muslim racism has been named more explicitly after the publishing of Sarrazin's book, and a debate started, if what he said, was still tolerable. The Federal Bank, where he was a

(Contd.)
party executive committee), 9th of May 2011, in: spd.de, online: http://www.spd.de/aktuelles/News/11980/20110509_vielfalt.html

One of the interviewees mentioned Dilek Kolat and Raed Saleh as two other people with immigrant background who had lately been apoointed high positions in the SPD in Berlin.

member of the board, broke up with him after the book was published and his party, the SPD thought about excluding him. While many perceived his ideas as non-tolerable, others thought they were protected by the freedom of speech and thus had to be tolerated. The topos of the 'limits of tolerance' is an interesting figure as it helps observing, who thinks, what has to be tolerated by whom in society. In the case of Muslims it is on the one hand mainly the visibility of religion through mosque buildings, headscarves or prayers that is negotiated as a limit of tolerance while on the other hand anti-Muslim statements and actions like the book of Sarrazin or on the international level the comics of Kurt Westergaard are possible limits of tolerance. The respective other side is generally claiming liberalism, either the freedom of speech or the freedom of religious expression. (In-)tolerance and its limits is thus an interesting concept to observe, as it can either promote in- or exclusion, depending on who uses it and in which context.

Regarding the specific case of the Sarrazin debate and the general construction of Muslims as the significant other and its effects on the Muslim minority, it can be stated, that it caused detrimental social divisions by enforcing the perception of many members of the targeted minority not to be welcome in German society. Some young Muslims obviously reacted with drawing back into their smaller communities and looking for other possible identity concepts than the German one, even if they were German citizens.

Especially young people, who had already been active in civil society organisations and projects however managed to empower themselves and strengthen their self-confidence by learning more about both their own religion and German politics and how to handle both and engage into critical debates and even social activism.

One of the political conclusions would be to carefully consider taboos in the case of dehumanising speech, no matter which social group is targeted. Experience from anti-Semitism has shown, that those taboos do not abolish respective attitudes in society, but they hinder people in uttering them and receiving support from like-minded thinkers. They probably do so through preventing a certain group from being constructed as the significant other, towards whom intolerance seems to be a justifiable attitude, because he symbolises all that is rejected in terms of practices, attitudes and values. Therefore taboos could protect vulnerable groups from hurt and degradation and thus help prevent deep divisions in diverse contemporary societies.

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Annex II: Interview-Guidelines

Interview with Lydia Nofal, project leader of "Network against Discrimination of Muslims" of the Muslim NGO Inssan e.V. in cooperation with the Anti-Discrimination project ADNB in Berlin, 12.01.2011

1. Has the debate about the book of Thilo Sarrazin „Deutschland schafft sich ab" changed anything for you personally within your direct surroundings?
2. Has the debate changed anything within your professional field? Do you notice any differences in the debate about Muslims before and after the book?
3. Do you notice any kind of change in the media discussions since then?
4. How has the debate and the following debate about integration affected those Muslims, with whom you talk about discrimination in the mosques (referring to awareness campaigns that the network carries out)? Have those people, who have made experiences of discrimination or others ever mentioned Sarrazin and the debate about him?
5. How do you perceive the political participation of Muslims in Germany? Are there any barriers to full participation?
6. How have you perceived the failed attempt to exclude Sarrazin from the SPD?
7. Leading politicians of the SPD have promised changes in their politics towards migrants after the decision not to exclude Sarrazin. Especially the political participation shall be improved by introducing a quota. What do you think about it and what would have to be done differently in order to raise the participation of migrants/Muslims in politics?
8. Is there anything important, that you would like to add?

Interview with Yasemin Shooman, PHD candidate at the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung (Centre for the Research about Anti-Semitism), 20.01.2011

1. You work about anti-Muslim discourses within your research. Has the Sarrazin debate caused any kind of caesura and if so, in which way? What can still be felt today, and which kind of changes regarding the general debate about Muslims and Islam would you state?
2. Are there any changes for you personally within your direct surroundings?
3. You also work voluntarily within the field of anti-Muslim racism, especially in the field of education, you are active in the GEW (trade union for education) and you are creating school materials about this issue. How do you think the Sarrazin debate and the following debates about integration have affected the area of education? How do teachers and (Muslim) pupils to your experience deal with it?
4. How do you perceive the political participation of Muslims in Germany? Are there any barriers to full participation?
5. How have your experienced the failed attempt to exclude Sarrazin from the SPD?
6. Leading politicians of the SPD have promised changes in their politics towards migrants after the decision not to exclude Sarrazin. Especially the political participation shall be improved by introducing a quota. What do you think about it and what would have to be done differently in order to raise the participation of migrants/Muslims in politics?
7. Is there anything important, that you would like to add?

The other guidelines for the Expert interviews have been similar like these two with slight changes due to personal field of experience of the respective interviewee.

Interview with young Muslim participants of the discussion with Sarrazin, 01.02.2012

1. Could you please describe shortly, what you are generally doing in the „Dialoggruppe" (dialogue group)? Why were you interesting in taking part in it in the beginning? What are the aims of this group? Have your expectations been met?
2. How did the idea to invite Thilo Sarrazin come up?
3. Have you read the interview with him in Lettre International together? What emotions and thoughts came up when reading it? Have you known such kind of arguments before or did it have a new quality for you?
4. Have you also read his book? How were your reactions to it? Do you have the impression that he is targeting Muslims in particular or are there also other social groups that he speaks about in a negative way?
5. What were your hopes regarding the meeting?
6. What kind of questions have you created fort he meeting with him and how?
7. Has he answered them and were you satisfied with those answers?
8. Did you have the impression, that he really engaged with you and maybe even changed his mind?
9. Do you think, that many people in Germany think like Sarrazin?
10. Have you heard of other people, you know, that they agree with him? If so, how does this make you feel? How do you react to it?
11. Has anything changed in Germany – to the positive or to the negative - since Sarrazin
12. Has the debate about Sarrazin and similar debates discouraged you? Has it changed anything for you regarding your self-identification as Muslim Germans, as part of the society?
13. What can you do in order to change these kinds of debates/ to engage yourselves within them?
14. Do you have the impression, that you can change anything in society with your dialogue work? Are there other projects/ideas that might change something?
15. Has your interest in politics changed through the dialogue group and maybe through the meeting with Sarrazin?
16. What has to be changed in order for Muslims to participate more actively in German politics?