

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hamburg, with its long history of immigration, is home to diverse minority communities. The city has a population of 1,720,632 originating in more than 180 countries,¹ with 14.3 per cent having a foreign passport and 26.8 per cent having a migrant background.² A substantial majority of the non-ethnic German population (70 per cent) is from Europe and over a quarter from Member States of the European Union (EU). Of the remaining foreign population, 6 per cent are from Africa, 19 per cent from Asia and 4 per cent from the Americas.³ Hamburg's historical familiarity with diversity has created an environment where inter-religious dialogue and inclusion of its Muslim residents are a visible part of the political and civic landscape.

The exact number of Muslim inhabitants of Hamburg cannot be determined as direct data on grounds of ethnic or religious affiliation are not collected.⁴ However, the estimated number of Muslims in Hamburg is approximately 90,000, with at least 71,000 of them living in the newly created administrative district of Hamburg-Mitte.⁵

This report sets out to explore the everyday experiences of ordinary Muslims living in the district of Hamburg-Mitte, with a particular focus on the impact of public policies aimed at improving integration and social inclusion.⁶ Integration is understood as a

¹ Behörde für Soziales, Familie, Gesundheit, Verbraucherschutz, "Hamburger Handlungskonzept zur Integration von Zuwanderern" (Hamburg Action Plan on Integration, HHAP), Hamburg, 2007, p. 10, available at <http://www.hamburg.de/contentblob/128792/data/konzept.pdf> (accessed January 2010) (hereafter HHAP). For basic information about Hamburg see the website of the Statistical Office of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein, http://www.statistik-nord.de/uploads/tx_standdocuments/Stadtporrait_2009_Englisch_01.pdf (accessed 11 March 2010).

² "Hamburg hat den bundesweit höchsten Ausländeranteil" (Hamburg has the highest percentage of foreigners at the federal level), *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 2 July 2008, available at <http://www.abendblatt.de/daten/2008/07/02/901676.html> (accessed January 2010).

³ Behörde für Soziales, Familie, Gesundheit, Verbraucherschutz, *Hamburger Handlungskonzept zur Integration von Zuwanderern* (Hamburg Action Plan on Integration, HHAP), Hamburg, 2007, p. 75, available at <http://www.hamburg.de/contentblob/128792/data/konzept.pdf> (accessed January 2010).

⁴ The absence of statistical data based on ethnic and religious affiliation also has historical reasons primarily dating back to the Second World War, the Nazi regime and treatment of the Jewish population. See Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldmann, *Hannah Arendt. The Jewish Writings*, Schocken Books, New York, 2007.

⁵ Defining Muslim communities by religious affiliation or country of origin is not an accurate reflection of their identity as it can be centred on ethno-national and/or ethno-religious aspects rather than overt faith. Religious affiliation is only one part of a complex identity construction. Estimates are made on the basis of residents from Muslim countries living in Hamburg. More than 30 per cent of the population in Hamburg-Mitte (240,000) originates in Muslim countries.

⁶ In the context of this report the identification of an individual as a Muslim has been left to the self-perception of the interviewee and has not been associated with any previously fixed religious or cultural definition.

two-way process that requires both engagement by individuals and opportunities for participation. Emphasis is placed on the local area, in this case three neighbourhoods of the district of Hamburg-Mitte. Focus on the locality offers new insights and possibly for the first time portrays the city from the perspective of its Muslim population.

The Open Society Institute (OSI) research reveals a range of attitudes, experiences and opinions. There is a developed sense of belonging to the city, especially at the local and neighbourhood level among Muslims and non-Muslims. For many Muslim participants, a feeling of alienation and exclusion from other parts of the town and even more at the national level has strengthened the connection with their own neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods like Veddel or Wilhelmsburg attract people because of their ethnic diversity. The neighbourhoods in the district convey a feeling of heterogeneity and belonging which is viewed as different from the homogeneous population in other parts of the city.

Findings from the OSI data suggest Muslims feel a closer tie to the city of Hamburg than to Germany. A large majority of those interviewed felt there was a pervasive perception of them as foreigners and that their refusal to see themselves as German was not an assumed renunciation of German society and its values but rather their perception that the German majority still defines being German as an ethno-national (German) and ethno-religious (German-Christian) identity. This sense of exclusion, widely shared by many Muslim respondents, has been further heightened as hostility towards Islam and Muslims is felt to have risen nationally. Racist discrimination against foreigners is perceived by the majority of the population to take place on the fringes of German society and is considered to be an expression of right-wing extremism, but there is a widespread belief among Muslims that discrimination and prejudice against Muslims have to a certain extent become socially acceptable, adding to pre-existing ethnic discrimination, particularly towards Turks.⁷ The murder of Marwa al-Scherbini, a pregnant Muslim pharmacist, in a court in Dresden in July 2009 after taking legal steps against Islamophobic insults, highlights the fact that this perception is based on real everyday experiences.⁸ Even if their mother tongue is German, Muslims are identified as “other”. This was felt to be especially prevalent in

⁷ This supports the findings of Brettfeld and Wetzels in their quantitative survey on Muslims in Germany, where 80 per cent of the young Muslim respondents had experienced some kind of exclusion or negative treatment because of their attributed trait of being a foreigner. Almost 30 percent of the respondents had even reported heavy or very heavy forms of discrimination. See Kathrin Brettfeld and Peter Wetzels, *Muslims in Deutschland. Integration, Integrationsbarrieren, Religion und Einstellungen zu Demokratie, Rechtsstaat und politisch-religiös motivierter Gewalt (Muslims in Germany. Integration, Barriers to Integration, Religion and Attitudes Toward Democracy, the Constitutional State, and Politically and Religiously Motivated Violence)*, Publikationsversand der Bundesregierung, Hamburg, 2007, p. 241 (hereafter Brettfeld and Wetzels, *Muslims in Germany*).

⁸ “Mordprozess am Tatort” (Murder trail at the crime scene), available at <http://www.tagesschau.de/inland/marwaprozess108.html> (accessed January 2010).

expressions of religious identity and affiliation such as wearing headscarves, prayers at public places like schools or the building of mosques.

Education is crucial to integration and highly valued by the Muslim respondents in this report. The experiences and concerns of Muslims towards the educational sector suggest that obstacles stemming from real and perceived discrimination, which are hampering academic achievement, are directly related to their experiences as Muslims and their ethnic group. Alongside reported questionable quality and selection processes within the educational sector, the impact includes low educational attainment levels among Muslim pupils, the effects of racism on self-esteem and aspirations, and the role that a lack of recognition of a person's faith can play in ensuring that an individual cannot fully participate in society. Low academic achievement can also be directly linked to challenges and barriers in finding employment, both skilled and unskilled, in the labour market.

Although there are no legal provisions prohibiting the wearing of headscarves in Hamburg, there are indications that visible forms of faith can be a barrier to employment in public professional careers, including teaching and policing. Current concerns expressed include the feeling that Muslim women with headscarves are not excluded when employed in administrative and low-skilled jobs but are under-represented in leading positions and positions which require higher qualifications and visibility. The research suggests that policies are needed that address issues arising in the educational sector and that link to initiatives to improve Muslim engagement in the labour market in a holistic manner.

The majority of Muslims in the OSI study live in social housing, while the majority of non-Muslims live in houses belonging to private landlords. Rents have increased following the redevelopment of central areas of the district. This has led to a movement of poorer and larger families into the more affordable outer fringes of the district, where larger flats are still available.⁹

The health sector in Hamburg has been successful in offering a culturally-sensitive service to the specific needs of Muslims. Reforms in the public-health sector, including government spending, appear to be leading to reduced consultation time with doctors and poorer delivery of service for specific groups. The different health reforms in recent years were reported to be generally affecting people living in poorer areas, but specifically older Muslim men and women.

Although there is a recognition that the public sphere, including public institutions and leaders, are responsible for creating and maintaining the prevailing and often stereotyped view of Muslims and Islam, trust in the criminal justice system among

⁹ Bernd Hallenberg, "Migranten und der Hamburger Wohnungsmarkt. Ein Beitrag zum vhw-Verbandstag 2007" (Migrants and the Hamburg housing market. A report for the vhw-association meeting 2007), vhw FW 5, Oct.–Nov. 2007 (hereafter Hallenberg, "Migranten und der Hamburger Wohnungsmarkt").

Muslims in Hamburg was strong. One explanation is the view that key political institutions such as the government and parliament can change policies and sway opinions but that the police and law courts have to act according to rules and evidence, and despite the conduct of individual police officers general trust is not undermined.

The media play a vital role in creating and sustaining perceptions in the wider society. The OSI research indicates a certain criticism by surveyed Muslims towards the media for what are perceived to be sensationalist and hostile attitudes towards Islam and Muslims. There was, however, an acknowledgement that recent portrayals of and stories about Muslims have taken a more balanced and less polarising slant in Hamburg. Muslim voices, though, remain largely absent among both media workers and commentators.

In recent years, immigration and citizenship laws in Germany have changed considerably and national as well as local integration policies have increased in effort, design and implementation. The city administration in Hamburg has made significant efforts to include Muslims and Muslim organisations in policy debates and to support their participation in society and its institutions. The 2006 Hamburg Action Plan on Integration (HHAP) emphasises the positive contribution of migrant communities to city life and the importance of policies which are mutually inclusive and reinforcing. Indicators for action include education, employment, housing and security. However, the HHAP is not a directive but more a call for better practice and policies. It does not adequately address the role of discrimination as an obstacle to integration and instead promotes language acquisition as the key means to greater integration and cohesion. Although Muslims recognise the importance of learning German, it is not necessarily seen as the major barrier to successful integration.

The above are some of the chief concerns and views expressed by Muslims residing in parts of Hamburg, but there is a heightened acceptance and inclusion of Muslims in key political and public institutions. The Senate of Hamburg has fostered dialogue with the chief Muslim representatives from the council of Muslim communities (known as SCHURA) on the creation of a legal instrument which gives Islam equal status to Christianity. The SCHURA has established an annual *Iftar* reception where representatives of the city council, civil society, senior politicians and Muslim leaders and organisations meet and dine together during the fasting month of Ramadan.¹⁰ An equally positive step is the participation of government employment agency staff at the Friday prayers in mosques in a bid to recruit young Muslims for vocational training and apprenticeships. At the same time, there is an absence of Muslim voices from many important public debates on issues that affect Muslims, thus increasing the lack of public information on crucial issues.

This study of Hamburg offers a snapshot of the diverse Muslim population and its concerns. The needs and priorities of Hamburg's Muslim communities are similar to

¹⁰ *Iftar* is the evening meal eaten after sunset for breaking the fast in the month of Ramadan.