

Austria

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Introduction

2014 was an eventful year for Austria's Muslims marked by contradictory short- and medium term trends. Employing a short-term focus of analysis, it would be fair to say that the long-standing phenomena of xenophobia, Islamophobia,¹ and structural racism both by state agencies and citizens have become more deeply pronounced in public debates and everyday encounters between Muslims and non-Muslim Austrians.² This may not be surprising, as the public debate on Islam and Muslims is structured by the prevalence of two right-wing populist institutions, which follow a decidedly anti-Muslim and anti-immigration discourse: a tabloid newspaper (*Neue Kronenzeitung*) with a circulation of over 800,000 daily copies and hence a penetration rate of 40% of Austrian society, and the extreme right-wing Austrian Freedom Party (*Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs*, FPÖ) with electoral support rates of up to 30%.³

The deepening of Islamophobia has been aggravated by the mounting violence of global jihadi groups and the growing public attention given to that violence in European societies. This attention is visible in the widely reported dehumanising methods of warfare of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) but also takes on specific local relevance with reports of the involvement of Austrian citizens therein. Islamophobic reactions made

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1 See Hafez, Farid (ed.), *Jahrbuch für Islamophobieforschung 2014* (Vienna: New Academic Press, 2014); Müller-Uri, Fanny, *Antimuslimischer Rassismus* (Wien: Mandelbaum, 2014); Bunzl, John, and Farid Hafez (eds.), *Islamophobie in Österreich* (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2009); Bunzl, Matti, *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Hatreds Old and New in Europe* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2007).

2 The racism monitoring agency ZARA testifies to a significant rise in racist and Islamophobic attacks. See, Schäfer, Claudia (ed.), *Rassismus Report 2014: Einzelfall-Bericht über rassistische Übergriffe und Strukturen in Österreich* (Vienna: ZARA—Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit, 2015).

3 Kremling, Lisa, "Feindbild MuslimInnen: Zur Konstruktion anti-muslimischer Fremdbilder", in Schäfer, *Rassismus Report 2014*, pp. 64–65.

inroads into public debates on the *Islamgesetz* (*Islam Law*), shaping the final text that became law in February 2015, and into controversies over the alleged absence of “willingness” among Muslims to integrate. The idea that Muslims not only do not belong to Austrian society but also that they fail to make an effort to belong, is captured in a neologism imported from the German anti-immigration debate: *Integrationsunwilligkeit* or “lacking the willingness to integrate.” In public debates, such euphemisms have largely supplanted more meaningful and policy-relevant discussions on discrimination, racism, class-biased access to education, and constraints on social capital to the domain of less audible experts. These developments have consolidated the idea that Islam does not really belong to Austria, with more than 50% of Austrians in December 2014 supporting the statement that “Islam is a danger for Austria’s culture.”⁴

A medium-term analysis would probably tell a different story: despite the prevalence of kneejerk reactions to the challenges of jihadi violence, two important processes appear to have consolidated the conditions for the acceptance of Muslims and their permanence in Austria. A growing trend towards naturalisation meant that the citizenship ratio of Muslims in Austria increased from below 30% in 2001 to over 50% in 2014.⁵ It is highly probable that this will lead to a growing number of Austrian citizens with a Muslim heritage in political office and positions of power, following the patterns of Muslims in Germany and other European countries in the last decade. The debate on the *Islam Law* (*Islamgesetz*) and its current promulgated version leave much space for improvement. The *Islam Law* nevertheless reaffirms the recognition of Muslims by the Austrian state, which has its roots in the initial law dating back to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It has the potential to create a framework whereby Muslims are eventually placed on an equal footing with other religious communities.⁶

4 See Seidl, Conrad, “Jeder Zweite sieht Islam als Gefahr für Österreichs Kultur”, *DerStandard.at*, 9 January 2015, <http://derstandard.at/2000010210943/Jeder-Zweite-sieht-Islam-als-Gefahr-fuer-Oesterreichs-Kultur>, accessed 10 January 2015.

5 According to Aslan and Yıldız, the ratio of naturalised Muslims reached 49% in 2012. As circumstantial evidence strongly suggests, this trend has continued since, resulting in a citizenship ratio above 50% in 2014. See Aslan, Ednan, and Erol Yıldız (eds.), *Muslimische Alltagspraxis in Österreich: Ein Kompass zur religiösen Diversität. Zwischenbericht für das Projektjahr 2013* (Vienna: Universität Wien, Institut für Islamische Studien, 2014), pp. 19–22.

6 Kifayat, Adnan, *A New Model for Integration: Austria’s New Law on Islam* (Washington: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2015), www.gmfus.org/blog/2015/04/09/new-model-integration-austria-s-new-law-islam, accessed 10 April 2015.

Public Debates

Throughout 2014, the Austrian public has been incensed by stories pertaining to Islam in one way or another. These were all linked to global events of jihadi violence and transnational Islamist mobilisation. Most share a negative subtext. The debate on the *Islam Law* has been a constant in this landscape of debates and responses to jihadi mobilisation. In chronological sequence, the following stories shaped the debate on Muslims in Austria most forcefully: The “Jihadi Poster Girls” story began in April 2014 and lasted through much of the year; Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan’s election visit to Vienna led to an outcry against the involvement of foreign actors in Austrian Muslim communities in June 2014; a simmering conflict over the Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) escalated in September 2014.

The case of two teenagers, Samra Kesinovic and Sabina Selimovic, who travelled to Syria in April 2014 to join the so-called Islamic State captured Austrian, and increasingly international, media interest.⁷ The two girls, aged 15 and 16, were not from religiously conservative families, and the transformation of their appearance from flirtatious Viennese schoolgirls of Bosnian origin to fully covered women in ISIS-controlled Syria was intriguing for the Austrian public. Tabloid as well as quality papers were fascinated by this conversion into “Jihad brides” and “Playmates for Jihadists.”⁸ Despite the veritable media frenzy around the two girls, however, a public debate on the responsibility of head teachers and public agencies failed to materialise, even after it became evident that neither chose not to act, despite clear signs of radicalisation.⁹

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s election trip to Vienna and his forceful rejection of “assimilation” in June 2014 sent shockwaves through the Austrian political establishment. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Integration, Sebastian Kurz, described Erdoğan’s visit as “detrimental” and suggested that “we had made progress on the identity issue. Due to his gig, things have become more

7 Sherwood, Harriet, Sandra Laville, Kim Willsher, Ben Knight, Maddy French and Lauren Gambino, “Schoolgirl jihadis: the female Islamists leaving home to join Isis fighters”, *The Guardian.com*, 29 September 2014, www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/29/schoolgirl-jihadis-female-islamists-leaving-home-join-isis-iraq-syria, accessed 11 April 2015.

8 Kraitt, Tyma, “Dschiha in Wien”, *falter.at*, 12 August 2014, www.falter.at/falter/2014/08/12/der-dschiha-in-wien/, accessed 11 April 2015.

9 The head teacher of the school attended by Samra Kesinovic, simply expelled her without calling on community representatives, social workers or the police. See Steinberger, Karin, “I love al-Qaida”, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 11 October 2014.

complicated.”¹⁰ The Turkish Prime Minister’s visit and his allusions to Ottoman grandeur were seen as interference in Austrian domestic affairs and as an attempt to roll back efforts for integration, or what Kurz described as “progress on the identity issue.” This overall sentiment was further aggravated by reports that ATIB, the Austrian Association of the Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) was involved in mobilisation efforts prior to the Erdoğan visit, leading in turn to a reappraisal by the Austrian government of foreign country funding of religious communities.¹¹

The Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID,¹² henceforth Centre) was established in 2012 as a Saudi-funded international institution for interreligious and intercultural dialogue in Vienna. While the Centre sparked criticism by left-wing and some Muslim groups even before its establishment,¹³ an episode in 2014 led to particular public concern. It was an interview with the Centre’s vice-secretary, former Austrian Minister of Justice Claudia Bandion-Ortner, who played down criticism of capital punishment in Saudi Arabia with the rather compromising statement: “decapitations do not take place every Friday.”¹⁴

Transnational Links

Transnational links pertaining to Muslim networks are varied, multifaceted and complex. Almost all of Austria’s Muslims are embedded in transnational, or at least bi-national, spaces of cultural, economic, and political interaction.

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- 10 Ultsch, Christian, “Erdoğan’s Einmischung war schädlich”, *DiePresse.com*, 20 June 2014, http://diepresse.com/home/politik/aussenpolitik/3824747/Erdogans-Einmischung-war-schaedlich?_vl_backlink=/home/politik/aussenpolitik/3820502/index.do&direct=3820502, accessed 1 April 2015. The author goes further in proposing that it was this incident which ultimately led the Government and Foreign Minister Kurz to ban foreign country funding in the revised *Islam Law*.
- 11 Neuhold, Clemens, “Der Halbmond hängt schief”, *WienerZeitung.at*, 27 February 2015, www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/oesterreich/politik/737835_Der-Halbmond-haengt-schief.html, accessed 1 April 2015.
- 12 www.kaiciid.org, accessed 1 April 2015.
- 13 Ultsch, Christian, and Erich Kocina, “Dialogzentrum der Saudis in Wien löst hitzige Debatte aus”, *DiePresse.com*, 4 October 2011, <http://diepresse.com/home/politik/innenpolitik/698385/Dialogzentrum-der-Saudis-in-Wien-lost-hitzige-Debatte-aus>, accessed 11 April 2015.
- 14 “Interview mit Claudia Bandion-Ortner zum Alltag in Saudi-Arabien: ‘Nicht jeden Freitag wird geköpft’”, *profil.at*, 21 October 2014, www.profil.at/oesterreich/interview-claudia-bandion-ortner-alltag-saudi-arabien-nicht-freitag-378239, accessed 1 April 2015.

The countries of origin of first generation immigrants, like Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, or Macedonia, play important roles for the identification of young Muslims and their cultural and political socialisation. Yet, it was particularly the transnational nature of global jihadi mobilisation and the pull of the Syrian war that attracted public interest. This interest was closely followed by debates on institutions and activities associated with the Turkish state, particularly with the role of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) and its Austria-based union called ATİB, but also the Gülen movement. Such interest peaked especially during and after Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to Vienna in June 2014.

Existing transnational jihadi networks in Austria have been reinvigorated by the civil war in Syria and aggressive recruitment by the *Al-Nusrah* Front and the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) affiliates. In August 2014, several would-be fighters on their way to Turkey and Syria were intercepted at the Austrian border.¹⁵ A comprehensive series of raids against jihadi networks took place in November 2014. It led to the arrest of 13 suspects thought to be associated with the *Al-Nusrah* Front,¹⁶ and drew attention to a “Bosnian connection” of jihadis who use Salafi prayer rooms in Vienna to radicalise young Muslims and then send them to Syria after military training in Bosnia.¹⁷ While any numbers of Austrian residents joining jihadi networks can only be perfunctory, experts estimate the number to be at least 270.¹⁸ This is a relatively high number considering the size of the Austrian Muslim population.

Law and Domestic Politics

The amendment of the *Islam Law (Islamgesetz)*, scheduled for debate in the Austrian Parliament in early 2015 constituted the most important, but also the most contested, development in the legal sphere. In response to the

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- 15 Ritterband, Charles, “Die Gefahr der ‘Austro-Jihadisten’—Von Österreich in den ‘heiligen Krieg’”, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 24 August 2014, www.nzz.ch/international/von-oesterreich-in-den-heiligen-krieg-1.18369384, accessed 23 February 2015.
 - 16 “13 Festnahmen bei Großrazzia gegen Islamisten”, *DiePresse.com*, 28 November 2014, <http://diepresse.com/home/panorama/oesterreich/4606718/13-Festnahmen-bei-Grossrazzia-gegen-Islamisten>, accessed 13 February 2015.
 - 17 Wetz, Andreas, “Bosnien Connection: Al-Qaidas Netzwerk in Österreich”, *DiePresse.com*, 29 November 2014, http://diepresse.com/home/politik/aussenpolitik/4607236/BosnienConnection_AlQaidas-Netzwerk-in-Oesterreich, accessed 23 February 2015.
 - 18 Weissensteiner, Nina, “Terrormitgliedschaft: Verfahren im Vorjahr mehr als verdoppelt”, *DerStandard.at*, 20 January 2015, <http://derstandard.at/2000010603446/Oesterreich-269-Verfahren-wegen-Terror-Mitgliedschaft>, accessed 23 February 2015.

growing activity of jihadi networks, the Government also tightened criminal law and passed several measures against the radicalisation of young Muslims.

For a long time, Austria has been marked by an intriguing contradiction. Despite a generally unsympathetic sentiment towards immigrants and Muslims in Austrian society, the country possessed quite a unique legal framework for the incorporation of Muslim communities into state structures. This unique situation was owed to the country's imperial past and the aim of the Austro-Hungarian state to control and manage the Muslims of annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁹ First promulgated in 1912 and obsolete well into the 1960s with the arrival of first Yugoslav and Turkish immigrants, the *Islam Law* (henceforth also referred to as Law) did create a sense of legal certainty and formal structures for Muslim communities. Since 1979, an officially recognised Muslim community exists, the Muslim Religious Community of Austria (*Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich*, IGGiÖ), established according to the provisions of the *Islam Law*.²⁰ Unlike in annexed Bosnia, where the Law was successful in establishing a single catch-all Muslim community representative of all Muslims, diversity in Austria's post-World War II immigrant society made such a goal unattainable. Debates for an amendment of the Law had been going on since 2012 and included representatives of the existing Muslim communities. Debates reached a peak towards the end of 2014 with most Muslim communities rejecting the amended Law.

The Law in its version discussed in 2014 is characterised by two conflicting logics: an integrative and a securitising one. Following the first logic, it includes positive gestures, ranging from the recognition of the Muslim community to the safeguarding of Islamic dietary requirements in public institutions and the right to attend Friday prayers. The second logic is at least as consequential and rooted in the general suspicion that Muslims constitute a substantial security threat. In consequence, the Law obliges Muslim communities to declare the primacy of the laws and values of the State and makes it impossible for Muslim groups not associated with the official IGGiÖ to continue their religious

19 For a concise discussion of the *Islam Law's* history, see Schmidinger, Thomas, "Austria", in Jørgen S. Nielsen, Samim Akgönül, Ahmet Alibašić and Egdunas Račius (eds.), *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, vol. 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 47–64 (49–51).

20 Heine, Susanne, Rüdiger Lohlker and Richard Potz (eds.), *Muslimen in Österreich: Geschichte, Lebenswelt, Religion: Grundlagen für den Dialog* (Innsbruck, Vienna: Tyrolia-Verlag, 2012), p. 56.

services. Most controversially, it explicitly outlaws the funding of religious services by bodies outside Austria.²¹

Leading legal experts have pointed out that the clause prohibiting foreign funding violates the principle of equal treatment, since such prohibition does not apply to any other religious group in Austria.²² Yet, the ban also constitutes a blatant interference into the autonomy of a religious community, and it is unlikely that the current amendment would hold up to scrutiny by the Austrian Constitutional Court, or, that failing, by the European Court of Human Rights. Despite the positive signals, which the *Islam Law* also sends to Austria's Muslims, it may create more problems than it promised to solve if it becomes law in the current form. It snubs the country's largest Muslim association ATIB, whose very existence is based on Turkish funding and being part of the larger structures of Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs. For smaller associations, who are not yet affiliated with the IGGiÖ, the situation may dramatically worsen, as they will be explicitly banned from operating prayer rooms after 2015. And finally, for Shi'i and Alevi groups, the need arises for a rapid re-orientation, either towards the IGGiÖ or towards applying for registration as a distinct community. Some Alevis have successfully done this, establishing the Muslim Alevi Community in Austria (*Islamische Alevitische Glaubensgemeinschaft*, IAGÖ), only to be challenged by a dissenting Alevi organisation, which has contested IAGÖ's claim to represent all Alevis. Considering that Alevism as a distinct religious community that stands outside Islam, the Federation of Alevi Communities in Austria (*Föderation der Aleviten Gemeinden in Österreich*, AABF) also applied for registration.²³ Another such application is expected from the Islamic Shi'i Religious Community in Austria.

21 The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Integration Sebastian Kurz justified this choice in stark words: "With other religions, there is not the challenge that we have to fear influences from abroad and therefore have to be stricter with the funding. . . . We want an Austrian form of Islam." See Bell, Bethany, "Austria's Muslims fear changes to historic Islam law", *BBC News*, 4 November 2014, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29814688 accessed 5 December 2014.

22 Fritzl, Martin, "Experten gegen Islamgesetz", *DiePresse.at*, 24 October 2014, <http://diepresse.com/home/politik/innenpolitik/4195325/Experten-gegen-Islamgesetz>, accessed 12 April 2015.

23 Karabulut, Deniz, "AABF Presseerklärung", *aleviten.com*, <http://aleviten.com/index.php/de/start/78-haberler/176-aabf-presseerklarung>, accessed 13 February 2015.

In response to the growing number of “foreign fighters” in Syria hailing from Austria, the Government passed a set of legal initiatives with the intent to fight jihadi recruitment and incitement to terrorism.²⁴ In a move exemplary of Austrian ambiguities towards inclusive notions of citizenship, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Integration Sebastian Kurz was considering a change in the citizenship law to ensure that “Austro-Jihadists” found to be fighting abroad can be stripped of their Austrian passports.²⁵

Activities and Initiatives of Main Muslim Organisations

At first sight, Muslim organisations seem to act, above all, within the framework set by a “majority society” and a public sphere structured by populist tabloids overwhelmingly unsympathetic to Muslims and immigrants. Muslim organisations and their representatives hence are generally called upon to apologise for, or at least to express their shock about, atrocities committed by global jihadi groups. Every so often, they will respond to Islamophobic public debates (i.e. *Integrationsunwilligkeit*) or comment on legal initiatives like the *Islam Law* or the measures against jihadi radicalisation. In this sense, Muslim organisations are held captive by the agenda, fears, and animosities of the majority society.

It would, however, be misleading to think of Muslim organisations in Austria as lacking agency. Despite a structure tilting towards Islamophobia and xenophobia, Muslim organisations have been active in a wide range of fields, from community and spiritual work and dialogue events with other religious communities in Austria to mobilisation for transnational “Muslim interest issues.” The most visible organisations were the official Islamic Religious Community (IGGiÖ) and its two largest constituent members, the Austrian Turkish Islamic Union (ATIB) and the Islamic Federation (IF), the Muslim Youth of Austria (MJÖ) and the two organisations representing Turkish and Kurdish Alevis, IAGÖ and AABF. Despite a significant presence of Muslims

24 “Verhetzungsparagraf wird verschärft”, *news.orf.at*, 14 October 2014, <http://orf.at/stories/2249580/2249578/>, accessed 23 February 2014. “Anti-Terror-Paket im Nationalrat beschlossen”, *news.orf.at*, 10 December 2014, <http://orf.at/stories/2257176/>, accessed 23 February 2015.

25 Aichinger, Philipp, “Minister Kurz will Jihadisten ausbürgern”, *DiePresse.com*, 19 January 2015, <http://diepresse.com/home/politik/innenpolitik/4642366/Minister-Kurz-will-Jihadisten-ausbürgern>, accessed 12 April 2015.

from the ex-Yugoslav space, the IGGiÖ and its affiliated communities on state level are dominated by Muslims from Turkey.²⁶

The celebration of religious festivities and community work is the main area of activity of all Muslim organisations in Austria and elsewhere. They include the celebration of Muslim holidays, collective dinners during Ramadan, and particularly in the Turkish-Hanafi tradition, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday and the "Holy Birth Week," complemented by Qur'an reading events. During the month of Ramadan, many Muslims dedicate their *zakat* to Muslims in poorer countries, an activity that also serves to create a sense of commitment to the concerns of Muslims elsewhere.²⁷ Crucial community services extend from language and religious courses to the "burial funds" by ATIB or the Islamic Federation.²⁸

Particularly the Muslim Youth Austria, which is one of the few associations not shaped by strong links to the "country of origin"—at least among Turkish and Balkan Muslim associations—is committed to a bottom-up logic of dialogue and cooperation with other religious communities and initiatives against racism and xenophobia. They are members of the National Youth Representation (*Bundesjugendvertretung*) and hence share a platform with young Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Buddhists, and other religious groups. This is particularly important from a medium-term perspective, as it is in such forums that young people are socialised into modes of collective belonging that are more inclusive than the *tendentally* exclusivist structure of Austrian society.

It is in the domain of transnational Muslim interest issues that "Muslim agency" creates the largest potential for friction with the Austrian majority society. Particularly demonstrations against the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the Al-Quds-Day in July 2014 are seen through the lens of Austria's historical responsibility for the Holocaust, and are hence often classified as anti-Semitic.²⁹ The most contested transnational issue of Muslim concern in

26 Heine et al., *Muslime in Österreich*, p. 58.

27 I would like to thank Dudu Küçükgöl (Muslim Youth Austria) for her valuable contributions to this section.

28 Especially Turkish Muslims up to the grandchildren of immigrants tend to opt for a burial in Turkey rather than in Europe. Burial funds hence play an important social, cultural and religious function. In Vienna, approximately 70% of all Muslim funerals are transferred to the country of origin. See Heine et al., *Muslime in Österreich*, p. 134.

29 See "Anti-israelische Kundgebung in Wien", *DerStandard.at*, 26 July 2014, <http://derstandard.at/2000003576278/Anti-israelische-Kundgebung-in-Wien>, accessed 12 April 2015. A coalition of Jewish, Zionist and Green Party groups formed an alliance against the Al-Quds-Day: See "Bündnis gegen den Al Quds Tag in Wien gegen Antisemitismus

Austria—if only within its Turkish constituencies—was the election visit of then Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on 18 June 2014, his speech to an audience of more than 7,000 sympathisers and the involvement of Turkish associations in the preparation of the visit. This visit was especially insightful, as it revealed the extent to which history shapes Austrian attitudes and fears towards Islam and Muslims. Erdoğan's appraisal of Turks in Vienna as the “grandchildren of Suleiman the Magnificent . . . and Kara Mustafa”—the commanders of the first and second Ottoman sieges on Vienna—exposed a raw nerve in the complex landscape of Austrian identity politics.³⁰

Demographics and Statistics

The last available census data using the explicit category of religious affiliation dates back to the micro-census of 15 January 2001.³¹ According to the 2001 census, 338,988 residents of Austria were identified as Muslims, which corresponds to 4.2% of the total population. A large majority of 71.7% held foreign country citizenships. A 2009 study by Stephan Marik-Lebeck, a demographer with the state demography agency Statistics Austria, estimated the country's Muslim population to be 515,914.³² The most recent projection from January 2012 was compiled by Ednan Aslan and Erol Yıldız.³³ The following data is based on the Aslan and Yıldız projection and on Marik-Lebeck's study, which they take as the point of departure.

und Islamismus”, <https://gegendenalqudstagwien.wordpress.com/2014/07/24/aufwurf-zur-kundgebung-gegen-den-al-quds-tag-in-wien-2014/>, accessed 12 April 2015.

30 Özkan, Duygu, “Erdoğan in Wien. Die Enkel der Belagerer”, *Zeit Online*, 20 June 2014, www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2014-06/recep-tayyip-erdogan-wien, accessed 1 March 2015.

31 Statistik Austria, *Bevölkerung 2001 nach Religionsbekenntnis und Staatsangehörigkeit* (Wien: Statistik Austria, 2007), www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/bevoelkerung/volkszaehlungen_registerzaehlungen_abgestimmte_erwerbsstatistik/bevoelkerung_nach_demographischen_merkmalen/022894.html, accessed 10 March 2015.

32 Marik-Lebeck, Stephan, “Die muslimische Bevölkerung Österreichs: Bestand und Veränderung 2001–2009”, in Alexander Janda and Mathias Vogl (eds.), *Islam in Österreich* (Vienna: Österreichischer Integrationsfonds, 2010), pp. 5–9 (7).

33 Aslan and Yıldız, *Muslimische Alltagspraxis in Österreich*, pp. 19–22.

Muslim Population 573,876 (6.8% of population in 2012).³⁴

Ethnic/National Backgrounds 49% of Muslims in Austria hold the Austrian citizenship (in 2009).³⁵

Largest ethnic/national groups:³⁶

Turkish: 21.2%

Bosnian: 10.1%

Montenegrin, Serbian, Kosovar: 6.7%

Russian: 3.6%

Macedonian: 2.7%

Afghani: 0.8%

Egyptian: 0.8%

Iranian: 0.8%

Pakistani: 0.5%

Tunisian: 0.3%

Iraqi: 0.3%

Bangladeshi: 0.3%

Other: 3.2%

Inner-Islamic Groups Most Muslims in Austria belong to the Sunni-Hanafi School prevalent in Turkey and most Balkan countries. There is a sizeable Alevi community with origins in Turkey, which is estimated at 10–20% of the total Muslim population.³⁷ Roughly 1% of all

34 Aslan and Yıldız, *Muslimische Alltagspraxis in Österreich*, p. 20.

35 Marik-Lebeck, "Die muslimische Bevölkerung Österreichs", p. 7. Please note that the percentage points add up to slightly more than 100% due to the separate rounding off of each country figure.

36 These figures are based on citizenship and not on ethnic or linguistic roots. Turkish passport holders, for instance, can be Turks or Kurds. Based on the available data, a further distinction into ethnic and linguistic groups is therefore not possible.

37 Medien-Serviceestelle Neue ÖsterreicherInnen, *Türkische Community—Zahlen und Daten* (Vienna: MSNÖ 2011), http://medienserviceestelle.at/migration_bewegt/2011/08/17/turkische-community-zahlen-und-daten/, accessed 12 March 2015. Thomas Schmidinger suggested in 2008 that the share of Alevis may be as high as 25–30%, even though this is probably an overestimation. Schmidinger, Thomas, "Islam in Österreich—zwischen Repräsentation und Integration", in Andreas Khol, Günther Ofner, Stefan Karner und

Muslims in Austria emigrated from countries with a Shi'i majority population.³⁸

Geographical Spread

Most Muslims in Austria live in the Northern states on the German border, with 38% or 216,345 in the capital Vienna alone. 30% live in the states of Upper- and Lower Austria.³⁹

Number of Mosques

There are 205 mosques registered with the official Islamic Religious Community in Austria (*Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich*, IGGiÖ),⁴⁰ and several hundred non-registered prayer rooms. Four mosques in Vienna, Telfs, Bad Vöslau, and Saalfelden are purpose-built structures with minarets, with a fifth such structure awaiting completion in Graz.

Muslim Burial Sites

- Muslim Cemetery Vienna (*Islamischer Friedhof Wien*, Großmarktstraße 2a, 1230 Wien, cemetery administration: Ali Ibrahim, tel.: ++43 6764706920, islamischer.friedhof@gmx.at). Operated by the Islamic Religious Community in Austria (IGGiÖ), 4000 burial plots.
- Muslim Cemetery Altsch (*Islamischer Friedhof Altsch*, Schotterried 1, 6844 Altsch, <http://altsch.at/buergerservice/bestattungen/islamischer-friedhof-altach>, Cemetery administration: Ali Can, tel.: ++43 664435927). Public cemetery, 700 burial plots.
- Interconfessional Cemetery Graz (*Interkonfessioneller Friedhof Graz*, Alte Poststrasse 343, 8020 Graz, bestattung@holding-graz.at). Public

Dietmar Halper (eds.), *Österreichisches Jahrbuch für Politik 2007* (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2008), pp. 235–256 (242).

38 Aslan and Yıldız, *Muslimische Alltagspraxis in Österreich*, p. 21.

39 Aslan and Yıldız, *Muslimische Alltagspraxis in Österreich*, p. 21.

40 Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich, *Registrierte Moscheen* (Wien: IGGiÖ, 2015), www.derislam.at/?c=content&p=suchen_moschee&v=vereine&cssid=Moscheen&navid=410&par=40&cssid=Moscheen&navid=410&par=40, accessed 8 March 2015. Schmidinger estimates the number of prayer rooms at 260–280. Schmidinger, "Austria", p. 56.

cemetery, contains a Muslim section with 200 burial plots.

- Central Cemetery Vienna (*Zentralfriedhof Wien*, Simmeringer Hauptstraße 234, 1100 Wien, tel.: ++43 153469–28405). Public cemetery which contains several sections for Muslims, also one dedicated to Egyptian Muslims. Since 2011 the Islamic Alevi Religious Community in Austria has its own section at the central cemetery Vienna too.⁴¹
- Muslim Cemetery at Linz/St. Martin (*Islamischer Friedhof im Linz/St. Martin*, Wiener Bundesstraße 101, 4050 Traun). Public cemetery with a Muslim section.⁴²

Places of Islamic Learning and Education

- Academy for Muslim Religious Education (*Islamische Religionspädagogische Akademie*, IRPA, Eitnergasse 6, 1230 Wien, tel.: ++43 18674400, www.irpa.ac.at/). Private Degree Course for Islamic Education (*Privater Studiengang für das Lehramt Islamische Religion*). The Academy is run by the Islamic Religious Community in Austria (IGGiÖ) and offers a three-year Bachelor of Education in Islamic Religion for teaching Islamic Religious Education at elementary and compulsory school level.
- Private Degree Programme in continuing religious education for Muslims (*Privater Hochschullehrgang für Islamische Religionspädagogische Weiterbildung*, IHL, Neustiftgasse 17, 1070 Wien, tel.: ++43 178632244, www.ihl.ac.at/). Like the Academy, the programme is administered by the IGGiÖ and offers further education and seminars for Islamic religious teachers.

41 www.aleviten.at/de/?p=90, accessed 24 July 2015.

42 <https://portal.linz.gv.at/Serviceguide/viewChapter.html?chapterid=121612>, accessed 24 July 2015.

- University of Vienna, Centre for Teacher Education (*Universität Wien, Zentrum für LehrerInnenbildung*, Porzellangasse 4, 1090 Wien, tel.: ++43 1427760060, www.islamische-religionspaedagogik.at/home.html). Two-year Master's Degree in Islamic Religious Education (*Masterstudium Islamische Religionspädagogik*). Graduates are qualified to teach Islamic Religious Education at secondary schools.
- University of Vienna, Institute for Islamic Studies (*Universität Wien, Institut für Islamische Studien*, IIS, Thurngasse 8, 1090 Wien, tel.: ++ 43 1427725202, <https://iis.univie.ac.at/home/>). The IIS was established as an interdisciplinary and cross-faculty research platform in 2012 with the aim to further research on Islamic religious pedagogy and Islamic theology. It does not offer degree programmes, but its faculty is involved in academic teaching at the University of Vienna.
- University of Innsbruck, Institute of Education (*Universität Innsbruck, Institut für Fachdidaktik, Bereich Islamische Religionspädagogik*, Karl-Rahner-Platz 1, 6020 Innsbruck, www.uibk.ac.at/irp/studium.html). Three-year Bachelor in Islamic Religious Pedagogy (*Bachelor Islamische Religionspädagogik*).
- University of Innsbruck, Institute of Education (*Universität Innsbruck, Institut für Fachdidaktik, Bereich Islamische Religionspädagogik*, Karl-Rahner-Platz 1, 6020 Innsbruck, www.uibk.ac.at/studium/angebot/uf-islamische-religion/). Four-year Bachelor of Education Secondary Level, Teaching Subject Islamic Religion (*Bachelorstudium Lehramt Sekundarstufe, Lehramtsstudium Unterrichtsfach Islamische Religion*). Both degree programmes were inaugurated in fall 2014, when Islamic religious pedagogy was introduced as a special area at the Institute of Education, including a new professorial chair.

The BA track is the only Islamic religious pedagogy undergraduate degree at an Austrian public university and, like the private IRPA, qualifies graduates for

teaching at elementary schools. The second bachelor degree in Islamic Education, in combination with a second teaching subject, qualifies graduates for teaching Islamic Religious Education at all types of secondary schools in Austria, including grammar and vocational schools. The introduction of a Master's Degree in Islamic Religious Pedagogy at the University of Innsbruck is being planned for 2016.⁴³

Alevi Religious Education

The Federation of Alevi Communities in Austria (AABF) established an intra-organisational Alevi Academy (*Alevi Akademisi*) in 2008 which prepares for teaching in AABF-affiliated Alevi Cultural Centres only, as the AABF is not entitled to teach Religious Education at public schools. Due to its status as officially recognised religious community, the IAGÖ is tasked to oversee Alevi Religious Education at public schools. The Islamic Theology Department will offer a new Master's Degree⁴⁴ in Islamic Religious Pedagogy with two tracks—one for Sunni and one for Alevi Islam—from January 2016.⁴⁵ For now, teachers of Alevi Religious Education can obtain their qualifications in two ways. The IAGÖ offers a four-month certificate programme which has been completed by more than 60 participants in Vienna, Innsbruck and Vorarlberg.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the IAGÖ cooperates with the Inter-religious College for Teacher Education (*Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/ Krems*, KPH), where prospective Alevi religion teachers can obtain a four-year Bachelor Degree in Religious Pedagogy (combined

43 Author's interview with Martina Kraml, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Education, University of Innsbruck, 28 July 2015.

44 Until 2014, there was the possibility to enrol for a Master's of Religious Pedagogy at Innsbruck University with two tracks, one for Sunni and one for Alevi Islam. The Master's degree was identical to the IRP and jointly operated by both Vienna and Innsbruck universities, but is not offered anymore.

45 Author's interview with Rıza Sari, press spokesperson of the IAGÖ, 28 July 2015.

46 Interview with Rıza Sari.

with a second teaching subject) qualifying for teaching at elementary school and secondary school level. In 2014, there were 32 teachers of Alevi Religious Education at public schools.⁴⁷

Confessional Schools

There are four Muslim elementary schools, and six high schools in Vienna. The majority of these educational institutions are private schools with public status in compliance with public education curricula. Teaching staff is usually mixed; non-Muslim students are also admitted. Confessional schools offer a combination of science curricula with a setting that respects Muslim religious values and enables children to live according to religious requirements through access to prayer rooms and the availability of halal food.

- Al-Andalus Elementary and Middle School (Altmannsdorferstraße 154–156, 1230 Wien, tel.: ++43 12312035, <http://alandalus.at/>). Run by the Al-Andalus Association, which seeks to promote intercultural understanding and also operates two Muslim nursery schools.
- Austrian International Schools Vienna, AISV (previously Al-Azhar International Schools). The AISV operates an elementary and middle school (Weisselgasse 28, 1210 Wien, tel.: ++43 16077059) and an upper-secondary grammar school Nordbahnanlage 4, 1210 Wien, tel.: ++43 16077059, www.aisv.at/en/). It has close ties to Egyptian Al-Azhar University and offers teaching in Arabic as elective study. AISV has a stronger focus on the principles of Islam and until 2010 its curriculum included courses on Islamic law and the interpretation of the Qur'an.⁴⁸ In 2014, the AISV was

⁴⁷ Interview with Rıza Sari.

⁴⁸ Vasari, Bernd, "Islamschule im Kreuzfeuer", *Wiener Zeitung.at*, 12 November 2014, www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/wien/stadtpolitik/704035_Islamschule-im-Kreuzfeuer.html, accessed 28 July 2015.

- accused of promoting radical Islam and some of its students and staff showing support for ISIS.⁴⁹
- Avicenna Elementary School (Pragerstraße 124, 1210 Wien, tel.: ++43 12700044, vs.avicenna@a1.net). This private school is for Muslim students only and was founded in 2014 by a group of parents and other individuals.⁵⁰
 - Islamisches Realgymnasium Wien (Rauchfangkehrergasse 34, 1150 Wien, tel.: ++43 18972715, office@irgw.at, www.irgw.at/). Established and run by *SOLMIT-Solidarisch miteinander*, an association that promotes the integration of Muslims into Austrian society and intercultural understanding. The school operates according to the public school curriculum.
 - Isma Muhamed Asad Comprehensive School (Reschgasse 20, 1120 Wien, tel.: ++43 1235080808, schule@is-ma.at). This private confessional school was established in 2012 by the International Organisation for Science and Education (IOSE, www.iose.at/). Since 2012 the school is run by a self-governing body (*Isma—Verein zur Erhaltung Privater Schulen*) with a *waqf* foundation as financial basis. Like the AISV the Isma School has a stronger orientation on Muslim values and principles than the other schools run by Muslim associations in Vienna. Isma has its own curriculum and offers comprehensive education for 6 to 14-year olds.
 - Phönix Elementary School (*Phönix Volksschule*, Gudrunstraße 11, 1100 Wien, office@phoenixvs.at, tel.: ++43 1607950010, http://phoenixvs.at/).
 - Phönix Grammar School (*Phönix Realgymnasium*, Knöllgasse 20–24, 1100 Wien, office@phoenixrealgymnasium.at, tel.: ++43 12084657, http://phoenixrealgymnasium.at/). Both schools are run by the Phönix Association and are affiliated with the movement of the charismatic Turkish preacher Fethullah

49 Vasari, “Islamschule im Kreuzfeuer”.

50 www.eslam.de/begriffe/p/private_volksschule_avicenna_wien.htm, accessed 28 July 2015.

Gülen. The Phönix schools offer teaching according to public curricula.

Muslim Media and Publications

- *Der Islam*—Quarterly e-magazine published by the IGGiÖ since 2012; no issues published in 2014.⁵¹
- *Qalam*—Children’s magazine with a subscription fee. Published by Islamic Centre Vienna (*IZW Wien*), small selection of free issues available online: www.qalam.at/.
- *Eimaan*—Children’s magazine (in German, first editions were Bosnian), published by the Bosniak Islamic Cultural Centre Graz (*Islamisches Kulturzentrum Graz*), available both in print and online: <http://issuu.com/eimaangraz>, www.islamgraz.org/eimaan/.
- *Dewa*—Online news portal (in Turkish) with a general focus not limited to religious issues; published by Islamic Federation Vienna (*IF Wien*): www.dewa.at/.
- *Der.Wisch*—special interest web magazine with a focus on Islam, politics, and culture; not affiliated to religious organizations, run by a student association (*Wiener Studentenverein, wsv*): <http://der-wisch.net/>.

Main Muslim Organisations

- Islamic Religious Community in Austria (*Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich*, IGGiÖ, Bernardgasse 5, 1070 Wien, tel.: ++43 15263122, www.derislam.at/). The IGGiÖ exists since 1979 and was the only Muslim public institution until the official recognition of the IAGÖ as a religious society in 2010. It is an officially recognised religious community endowed with special privileges and specified as one of two main public Muslim bodies in the draft *Islam Law (Islamgesetz)*.
- Austrian Turkish Islamic Union (*Österreich Türkisch-Islamische Union*, ATIB, Sonnleithnergasse 20, 1100 Wien, tel.: ++43 13346280, www.atib.at/). ATIB is the umbrella association of mosque societies supported financially and clerically by Turkey’s Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri*

51 www.derislam.at/index.php?c=emagazine&o=emagazin&cssid=eMagazin&navid=1154&par=80, accessed 24 July 2015.

Başkanlığı). It is Austria's largest Muslim organisation with currently 65 mosque associations.

- Islamic Federation Vienna (*Islamische Föderation Wien*, IF, Rauchfangkehrergasse 36, 1150 Wien, info@ifwien.at, www.ifwien.at/). The Islamic Federation is the Austrian branch of the Turkey-based but transnationally operating Islamic Community Milli Görüş (İGMG) with around 60 mosque associations.⁵²
- Union of Muslim Cultural Centres (*Union Islamischer Kulturzentren in Wien*, UIKZ, Pelzgasse 9, 1150 Wien, tel.: ++43 19831295, www.uikz.org/jm/). The Union is affiliated with the Turkey-based Sufi *tariqa* of the followers of Süleyman Tunahan, often called *Süleymanlılar* or *Süleymanlılar*, and runs 44 prayer rooms.⁵³
- Initiative of Liberal Muslims in Austria (*Initiative Liberaler Muslime in Österreich*, ILMÖ, Hackingerstraße 42–44/2/10, 1140 Wien, tel.: ++43 69910333243, www.initiativeliberalermuslime.org/home/). ILMÖ is a rather insignificant association with no claim to represent the interests of a particular faith group. Due to its criticism of İGGİÖ and ATİB for their ties to external countries like Saudi-Arabia and Turkey, however, its members are given visibility in Austrian media outlets.
- Muslim Youth Austria (*Muslimische Jugend Österreich*, MJÖ, Eitnergasse 6/5, 1230 Wien, office@mjoe.at, www.mjoe.at/) The MJÖ was the official youth organisation of the İGGİÖ until 2012, when under the then newly elected president Fuat Sanaç a new youth organisation of the İGGİÖ (*Jugendrat der Islamischen Glaubensgemeinschaft*, JİGGİÖ) was established. The estrangement between the MJÖ intensified in 2014 during the debates on the new *Islam Law* with Sanaç accusing the MJÖ of having ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, provoking a prompt denial by the MJÖ.⁵⁴ The multi-ethnic and multi-national MJÖ has been, together with the recently established grassroots Network of Muslim Civil Society (*Netzwerk Muslimische Zivilgesellschaft*, NMZ; <http://dieanderen.net/>), one of the fiercest critics of the new *Islam Law* and the İGGİÖ. It is also one of the few organisations which are not shaped by bounds to a particular country of origin.
- Islamic Alevi Religious Community in Austria (*Islamisch Alevitische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich*, İAGÖ, Schererstraße 4, 1210 Wien, tel.: ++43 6764418468, www.aleviten.at/de/). The İAGÖ is the second officially recognised Muslim religious community (*Religionsgemeinschaft*) in Austria

52 See Schmidinger, "Austria", pp. 47–64.

53 www.uikz.org/jm/index.php/uikz/uikz-einrichtungen, accessed 11 April 2015.

54 "Muslimische Jugend wehrt sich gegen Vorwürfe", *religion.orf.at*, <http://religion.orf.at/tv/stories/2692196/>, accessed 25 February 2015.

and has been promised equal status to that of the IGGiÖ in the draft *Islam Law*. The organisation itself now uses the acronym ALEVI and identifies with the principles of the Turkey-based *CEM Vakfi* (Cem Foundation). Both consider Alevism as a tradition that stands within Islam.

- Federation of Alevi Communities in Austria (*Föderation der Aleviten Gemeinden in Österreich*, AABF, Schererstraße 4, 1210 Wien, <http://aleviten.com/index.php/de/>). AABF is member of the European Alevi Confederation (*Avrupa Alevi Birlikleri Konfederasyonu*), which considers the Alevi faith as a distinct religious community outside Islam that does, however, share a Muslim heritage. AABF challenges IAGÖ's official status as sole representative community of Alevis in Austria and has applied for recognition as an official faith community (*religiöse Bekenntnisgemeinschaft*). A small Kurdish-Alevi organisation (*Alt-Alevitische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich*, AAGÖ), which stresses the pre-Islamic origins of Alevism and is based in Vienna, gained that status in 2013.
- Islamic Centre Imam Ali (*Islamisches Zentrum Imam Ali*, IZIA, Mollardgasse 50, 1060 Wien, tel.: ++43 15977065, info@izia.at). IZIA was established in 2000 and maintains close ties to Iran. It represents Twelver Shi'is in Austria. The IZIA operates a mosque and a cultural centre. The Ahl-ul-Bayt Federation of Shi'i Associations in Austria (*Islamische Vereinigung Ahl-ul-Bayt, IVAÖ*), an umbrella organisation comprising six associations with 5000 members⁵⁵, mostly from Iran and Afghanistan, has its seat at the IZIA.
- Islamic-Shi'i Religious Community in Austria (*Islamische-Schiiitische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich*, Schia, Pezlgasse 58, 1170 Wien, tel.: ++43 69911979350, office@schia.at). The Islamic-Shi'i Religious Community was granted the status of an official faith community in 2013 and represents the Iraqi Shi'i *hawza ilmiya* tradition. It has its seat at the Ahl-ul-Bait Cultural Centre Vienna which was established in 1992. The centre's Ahl-ul-Bait Mosque is also used as the main prayer room of the Al Mufid Centre (*Islamisch Kulturelles Zentrum Al Mufid*, IKZ).
- Federation of Bosniak-Islamic Associations (*Verband der Bosniakisch-Islamischen Vereine*, IZBA, Arndtstrasse 28/2, 1120 Wien, tel.: ++43 476236664, <http://izba.at/>). The federation serves as umbrella organisation for

55 www.islam-landkarte.at/sites/default/files/Islamische%20Vereinigung%20Ahl-ul-Bayt_o.pdf, accessed 24 July 2015.

40 Bosnian religious associations and was established in 2012. It is the largest Muslim umbrella organisation in Austria after ATIB, IF, and UKIZ.⁵⁶

- *FRIEDE—Institute for Dialogue* (Rotenturmstrasse 1–3/3, 1010 Wien, tel.: ++43 19580021, <http://derfriede.at/>). *FRIEDE* does not present itself as an explicitly religious association but it is committed to the “furthering of intercultural and interreligious dialogue.” It is affiliated with the Hizmet movement of the charismatic preacher Fethullah Gülen.

56 www.islam-landkarte.at/sites/default/files/Verband%20der%20bosniakischen%20islamischen%20Vereine%20in%20%C3%96sterreich_0.pdf, accessed 24 July 2015.